

**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM STRATEGIES TO CURB BULLYING IN  
MAFETENG SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND  
LEARNING**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the  
degree of Master of Education**

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**July, 2023**

## **DECLARATION**

Student Number: 200604376 STRATEGIES

I declare that the study entitled ***School management team strategies to curb  
bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools for effective teaching and learning*** is  
my own work, and that where other people's works were used, such sources were  
acknowledged through complete references.

.....

**Mosala Limpho**

## **Certification**

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved as having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho, for the award of the degree, Master of Education.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

DBE	Department of Basic Education
GSHS	Global School-based student Health Survey
HOD	Head of Department
LBSE	Life-skills Based Sexuality Education
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
LIEP	Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMT	School Management Team
SSD	Somatization Disorder
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TL	Transformational Leadership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the “inner me”. It is a simple proof that I can do anything I set my heart upon. This work is also dedicated to my children (Lehakoe and Tau Monethi); guys believe in yourselves and always remember to put God first.

## **Abstract**

Lately, learners show different negative emotional and behavioural changes in schools due to bullying. These bullying incidences have affected learners' performance and attendance at school. Some learners have resorted to dropping out of school because of fear of being bullied. This study explores strategies that School Management Teams could use to curb bullying for effective teaching and learning because School Management Team is the administrative team in the school responsible for daily running of the school. The collection of data was done using qualitative approach employing a case study design as it allowed the researcher to gain deeper first-hand information about the extent of bullying in schools. Data was then analyzed using thematic analysis. Twenty six purposively selected participants were interviewed.

The findings of the study show that learners go through different types of bullying because of socio-economic backgrounds, gender orientation, ethnicity and other differentiation factors. They also reveal that physical and verbal bullying are the most common types of bullying. Moreover, the findings also reveal that in some schools, victims are not supported while in others they are counseled and perpetrators punished. Participants also showed that in order to curb bullying, perpetrators should be expelled while other participants were of the view that they should be suspended as that will give them time to reflect on their actions. The study recommends to the Ministry of Education and Training development of clear policies that address bullying with the aim to help SMTs and create favourable teaching and learning environments. Additionally, the study recommends that SMTs should also develop school-based policies that address bullying.

**Keywords:** Bullying, curb, School Management Team, effective, teaching and learning.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Orientation of the study**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Education grants people the freedom to think and be imaginative. It gives individuals opportunities to be healthy and progressive (Naziev, 2017). It also helps people to become socially, economically and politically developed. Sharna (2018), states that it is through education that people earn self-respect and respect from others. According to the Children Protection and Welfare Act (2011), every child has a right to education. However, there are incidences of bullying recorded in schools. This pandemic is threatening the creation and sustainability of a conducive school environment since it promotes learners' exclusion from school activities and, as such, hinders their academic performance in many different ways (Lekena, 2016). Bullying is a serious issue facing schools not only in Lesotho but around the globe. Boswell (2016) postulates that bullying is a worldwide problem that affects the emotional, social, and physical wellbeing of school-age children globally. Despite the efforts to curb bullying in schools, reported cases seem to rise every day, and Lesotho schools are not an exception. Factoring into School Management Team (SMT), this study as a result aims at contributing knowledge on the strategies that could be used to curtail bullying in secondary schools. With the above in context, this chapter presents the introduction, the background of the study, research questions, objectives and theoretical framework underpinning this study. The significance of this study and statement of the problem and purpose of the study are also discussed. Furthermore, the chapter presents a brief overview of the research design and methodology. Lastly, issues pertaining to the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations will be presented.

#### **1.2 Background of the study**

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), along with most education departments worldwide, postulate that children have a fundamental right to education and that they are entitled to a safe school environment (UNESCO, 2015). In order to operationalize this fundamental human right, governments agreed to the enactment of Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). According to UNESCO (2015), governments should ensure the provision of inclusive and quality education which necessitates promotion of lifelong learning opportunities. Thus according to Goals 3 and 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, states and governments through their relevant portfolios should ensure that both boys and girls complete primary and secondary education and guarantee that schools are safe for every learner, (UNESCO, 2015).

Despite literature on bullying in schools having grown rapidly since the 1970s, (O'Brien, 2019), most learners are still being bullied in schools to date. Bullying is a global pandemic and has tormented learners for the past 30 years and continues to be a threat to learners' safety in schools. To date, learners are still being teased, harassed, and bullied, for the amusement or horror of others (Espalage, 2018).

Bullying in schools still remains a thorny issue worldwide and results into many unpleasant consequences ranging from learners dropping out of school to alarming suicidal reports (Sekol & Farrington, 2016). For instance, bullying in the United States has been labeled a triggering factor for unprecedented suicides among the youth (Marsh, 2018). The U.S Department of Education (2019) has pointed out that in the USA, learners at the age of 12-18 have experienced name calling (44.2%); teasing (43.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing others' belongings (27.3%); sexual comments or gestures (23.7%); and e-mail or blogging (9.9%) as the most prevalent types of bullying. Regardless of many anti-bullying policies in the USA, it is reported that every month 282,000 learners are assaulted physically and the number is growing (National Centre Education Statistics, 2018).

The United Kingdom is also not an exception in this pandemic despite the enactment of the Independent School Standards Regulation of 2014 which clearly states that academics and independent schools should make sure that arrangements are made that safeguard and promote the welfare of learners (National Centre Education Statistics, 2018). A qualitative study undertaken by Robinson et al. (2021) revealed that in England 46% of secondary schools learners worry about returning to school after holidays due to bullying acts. Furthermore, in England it is estimated that from April 2017 to March 2018, 17% of learners aged 10-15 were bullied in the previous 12 months in a way that made them scared and angry (Department of Education,

2018). Gaffney and Farrington's (2018) further postulate that in the UK, cyberbullying and cyber victimization are growing problems with unpleasant health-related results which are significantly related to school bullying and school victimization. Over 175,000 learners in Irish secondary schools are becoming victims of cyberbullying (Kent, 2018). Kent further states that a study on bullying conducted nationwide in Irish schools showed 47% of bullying incidents in the corridors, and 27% in the playgrounds.

The African continent too is no exception to incidents of bullying in secondary schools. African countries which took part in the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS, 2017) published bullying victimization prevalence rates which indicated that bullying is indeed prevalent in African schools. Reported school bullying victimization prevalence rates for the participating African countries are: Zambia 65%, Ghana 59%, Kenya 57%, Botswana 52%, Namibia 52%, Uganda 46%, Mauritius 40%, and Tanzania 28% (GSHS, 2017). In addition to the above, Nigeria also reported cases of bullying. According to Akpunne et al. (2019), there is a high prevalence of bullying behaviour among Nigerian secondary school adolescents. Their study revealed that prevalence and rates of bullying include verbal bullying (42.5%), social bullying (42.3%), physical bullying (37.9%) and the overall bullying behaviour (44.8%). Kenyan schools are also prone to bullying so much that research has revealed that physical bullying is more prevalent among boys while verbal bullying is common among girls (Itegi, 2017). It was also reported in Zimbabwe that in 2019 that the Bulawayo Police arrested three Hamilton High School learners for physically bullying three learners in the lower classes (The Chronicle Newspaper, 28/02/2019). It was indicated in the newspaper that the bullies claimed they were initiating them. In Botswana in 2018, an angry parent also pointed out that at Mmadinare Senior Secondary School, a group of learners terrorized and bullied others (Mmegionline Newspaper, 02/11/2018).

In South Africa also, bullying seems to be taking place despite the country's commitment to protect children from any form of maltreatment, negligence, abuse or degradation (Mullis et al., 2016). Thus, according to the Teaching and Learning International (TALIS) study, conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), South Africa has the highest rate of bullying and intimidation among learners in 48 surveyed countries (City Press, 02/07/2019).

With incidences of bullying increasing each day in schools, some governments, educational departments and schools have long since developed and implemented programs aimed at curbing bullying in schools. For, example, the Norwegian government implemented an initial wide-ranging anti-bullying program. The Olweus bullying prevention program targeted people who victimise others, victims themselves, peers, teachers, as well as the whole school (Sekol & Farrington, 2016). This intensive national program began in Bergen and its subsequent evaluation showed a very huge decline in the victimization of those who were being bullied by about half after the program. From that point onwards, at least 15 other extensive anti-bullying programs which were stimulated by Olweus and others building on same principles, have been implemented and evaluated in about 10 countries such as Zambia, Algeria, Colombia, Italy, USA, Spain, Germany, England (Sekol & Farrington, 2016). In a similar fashion, in Northern Florida, the Kia Kaha anti-bullying program was developed and carried out in schools. The assessment of the program was constructed on information from learners who were in Grade 7 with initiatives from four school teachers (Keating & Collins, 2021). The program took 12 weeks and ran twice in one week concurrently with the curriculum. It placed emphasis on methods that could be used to solve matters of the community. Keating and Collins (2021) further state that the programs also raised consciousness and directive orders against bullying as well as teacher training, learner evaluation and parental evaluation forms. Keating and Collins (2020) indicate that methods of detention and workshops were used for those who bullied others as a strategy to curb bullying. New Zealand also used the Kia Kaha program which aimed at developing respectful relationships (Yang et al., 2015). The participating schools in this program reported less bullying in comparison to before (Gaffney et al, 2019). Thus, learners who were exposed to Kia Kaha in the past three years reported less victimization by bullies than those that were not (Gaffney et al., 2019).

Canadian schools used the Ecological Anti-bullying program which looked thoroughly into a group of learners with the same interests and school environment processes using a structured reciprocal model with assessment at every stage of intervention (Clarkson et al., 2019). The whole objective of the program was to create an encouraging as well as conducive school environment whereby strict measures opposed to bullying were set. The specified aim of the program included

making people aware of the negative effects of bullying. It focused on inducting individual learners to empathize, to stand their ground against bullying as well as drawing up transparent rules opposing bullying (Clarkson et al., 2019). In the Netherlands, a Dutch Anti-Bullying Program which was encouraged by the Olweus program of Norway was developed and implemented (Kennedy, 2020). The program was made specifically to address bullying behaviour by including teachers, parents together with learners. Since the program was introduced, bullying instances decreased by 50%.

In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education and other stakeholders have developed different policies together with actions to make sure that learners are safe in schools, (DBE, 2018). This was after the SMTs and educators experienced a surge in both physical and emotional forms of bullying among boys and girls (DBE, 2018). In addition, Axford et al. (2020) indicates that South African schools introduced a behavioural program for boys' victimization which was aimed at reducing bullying in schools.

As already reiterated, bullying behavior among learners in Lesotho is on the rise and as such, several studies have also been conducted to gain insight into the extent of the problem. For example, Emenike (2009) carried out a study aimed at explaining bullying challenges from learners' perspectives. The study revealed that bullying does indeed take place in Lesotho schools; and that 29.5% happens in the classrooms in the absence of teachers. It also revealed that peer victimization is common in Lesotho public schools.

Mosia (2015) also conducted a study to determine the prevalence of bullying in selected secondary schools from both teachers and learners' perspectives. The study explored how teachers and learners perpetuate bullying through their own behaviour. The study found that bullying is rampant in Lesotho schools; and 41.9% of learner participants disclosed that they were threatened by their peers. The study further indicated that verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying and is most common in the classrooms and that most schools do not have rules and regulations governing normal learners' behaviour related to bullying. As a result, teachers respond to bullying incidents as they see fit. Another study investigated learners' experiences of bullying and their reaction to it (Lekena, 2016). The findings of the

study revealed that learners are exposed to various forms of bullying, such as, physical and verbal bullying. It further revealed that bullying has psychological and emotional consequences, especially for its victims.

Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) also conducted a study exploring the micro politics of education in Lesotho, with a particular focus on bullying. This study, conducted in two secondary schools in the Roma valley, found that bullying is not only prevalent during school activities but even after school activities which learners are involved in. The findings suggested that learners, who are visually impaired, physically disabled and those from poor backgrounds are more prone to bullying. They further found out that newly arrived learners are the ones mostly targeted by bullies. They state that it often happens under the pretence that they are being taught the ways and culture of the school.

Makafane (2019) also conducted a study which attempted to identify the effects of bullying on learners in Lesotho secondary schools. The study reported that bullying has very serious effects on learners to the extent that death may occur. The study further reported that the bystanders are also aware of the negative impact of bullying even though they still encourage and give bullying energy.

Despite the above mentioned studies acknowledging the prevalence of bullying in Lesotho schools, none have attempted to explore the mechanisms SMTs could use to curtail bullying in the schools they are entrusted to lead. Inspired by Sebola (2015), who conducted a study exploring the roles of SMTs in running and controlling bullying in South African schools, this study sought to explore the strategies SMTs could use to curtail the prevalence of bullying in secondary schools in Mafeteng district. The decision to engage in a study exploring the mechanisms SMTs could use to improve school safety was because the SMT is a legitimate managerial structure in schools which arranges sorts, and guides school activities as well as managing school assets to see to it that the school runs smoothly (Department for Education, 2018). Thus, it is the duty of SMTs to ensure that schools are safe for both teaching and learning to take place (Hove, 2015). SMT comprises of the principal, deputy principal and heads of department.

According to Okoiye et al. (2015), bullying is a problem that needs to be addressed immediately in schools because it can cause a sense of fear in schools instead of a safe learning environment. In order to avoid what Kennedy (2020) has labeled quick fixes initiatives, such as targeting a few difficult learners and hosting experts for a day or two, the current study - by factoring in what could be done at school administrative level - aims at adding more knowledge on the already existing and rich Lesotho literature on bullying by attempting to suggest strategies that SMTs could use to combat bullying in Lesotho secondary schools.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Mafeteng is renowned to be a violent place (Sello, 2022). Mmotsi (2015), states that since social contracts manifest mostly in schools, there are alarming reports of learner to learner bullying at Molapong High School (pseudonym) located in Mafeteng district. Having been a teacher for nine years at Molapong High School, I have come across disciplinary cases where learners are reported to have been bullied by others. In 2021 alone, the school had more than six bullying-related disciplinary cases. These cases also affected teaching as teachers had to sit for hours resolving bullying cases and this resulted in them missing classes.

This problem is not only unique to Molapong High School; it is also prevalent in other neighbouring schools in Mafeteng district. In different teacher forums, neighbouring school teachers also reported high cases of bullying amongst the learners which they believe, in most cases, are caused by imbalance of power in boys, initiation school and socio-economic background. This behaviour, according to these teachers, is on the rise, and sustainable resolutions need to be constituted promptly because if not, the idea of having safe and conducive environments will remain elusive.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

#### **1.4.1 Main research question**

The study seeks to respond to the following question: *What best practices could SMTs use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?*

#### **1.4.2 Subsidiary research questions**

The main question is supported by the following questions:

1. What is the nature of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?
2. What is the impact of bullying on the victims?
3. How could the victims of bullying be supported in schools?
4. Which administrative strategies could SMTs use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?

### **1.4.3 Objectives**

The following are the research objectives:

1. To investigate the nature of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools.
2. To investigate in depth the impacts of bullying on the victims.
3. To determine the practices that the SMT could use to support the victims of bullying.
4. To explore the practices that the SMT could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools.

## **1.5 Study aim**

### **1.5.1 Aim**

The study aims at suggesting mitigating strategies that SMTs could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study will benefit Lesotho schools and stakeholders since it will make contributions at two major levels: policy and practice. From the policy perspective, the findings will benefit the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) by suggesting strategies that may need to be legislated or supported by policy so that all Lesotho schools could be uniform when implementing them. Moreover, the study will provide more insight into how emotional and behavioural matters such as bullying could be addressed because the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP, 2018) does not

have such provisions. This uniformity will help in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of suggested strategies to curb bullying in schools.

Furthermore, with regard to practice, the findings could assist SMTs to sufficiently develop and implement anti-bullying programs in schools that will guide and inform how learners should interact. It will further inform other school stakeholders such as parents, non-academic staff, and school boards to be aware of the forms of bullying and the strategies they could use to curb it in the school environment. The study will also be of benefit to teachers as it will help them identify strategies they could use while dealing with bullying incidents. It will further help parents to get involved in the disciplining of their children, which may make it easy for schools to manage learners' bullying behaviour. The findings may also make learners aware of the seriousness of bullying and may empower them with best practices to mitigate bullying incidences.

Thus, the study will add more knowledge to what already exists with regard to bullying. This includes the techniques to be incorporated while curbing bullying in schools by SMTs, policy makers and other stakeholders.

### **1.7 Summary of the Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by transformational leadership theory (TL). TL is defined as a leadership theory where the leader works with the subordinates to point out the needed behavioural change (Asad et al., 2021). Niphadkar (2017) postulates that transformational leadership is an act geared towards changing learners' behaviour, attitude and culture to enable coexistence. Korejan and Shahbi (2016) further state that the transformational leadership approach guides and affirms the morally and socially acceptable behaviour amongst learners. The preceding is upheld because TL is based on the premise that the school administrative body should get into a consensus with all stakeholders, in particular learners, for the realization of school and national objectives. SMT as the legitimate body should influence learners to behave in a particular way that does not degrade others. With the above in perspective, this theory is relevant to the study in the sense that it advocates cultural and behavioural change amongst learners for effective creation of safe teaching and learning environments.

### **1.8 Research Design and Methodology**

Under this section, issues pertaining to the research paradigm, approach, design, data collection and analysis techniques are discussed.

### **1.8.1 Research Paradigm**

According to Nickerson (2022), a research paradigm is a shared worldview that presents the beliefs and values in a discipline and guides how problems can be solved. There are different types of paradigms; however, this study adopted the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is concerned with developing and constructing meaningful understanding of a phenomenon under study by attaching meaning to participants' text (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). With interpretivist, the researcher intends to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon instead of generalizing (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Interpretivist paradigm allows the researcher to gain insight into human events in a social context by conducting studies in a natural setting, (Nickerson, 2022). The researcher's intention was to interact with various participants to investigate the nature of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and to recommend strategies that SMTs could use to combat it.

### **1.8.2 Research Approach**

Qualitative research approach was used in this study to investigate the strategies that could be taken by the SMTs to curb bullying in secondary schools in Mafeteng district. Qualitative research allows for an interaction between the researcher and participants in their natural setting, (Walia, 2015). That is, it provides an opportunity to fully understand a social phenomenon under study by providing central reasons, opinions and motivations to its occurrence (Walia, 2015; De Franzo, 2019). It provides in-depth knowledge into the problem and also helps to build ideas for curbing bullying in schools. This therefore means that qualitative approach was more suitable because the study intends not only to document the experiences and beliefs of participants in relation to combating bullying but also to explore best practices SMTs could use to curtail bullying in secondary schools in Mafeteng.

### **1.8.3 Research Design**

The study employed qualitative case study design. Yazan (2015) defines a case study as a structured inquiry that finds more about the issue and aims to explain or describe the issue of interest. Case study was used because it allowed the

researcher to gain deeper first-hand information about the extent of bullying in schools and the strategies that school administrative teams could use to curb it (Schoch, 2020). Yazan (2015) sees it as one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies as it enables in-depth examination of the lived experiences of participants. Moreover, the study employed case study design because it allowed coverage of specific contextual conditions perpetuating these undesirable acts of bullying because they are believed to be contributing to the phenomenon under study.

#### **1.8.4 Data generation tools**

The study used interviews to generate data. Rahman (2021) defines interviews as a face-to-face data generation method where the researcher talks face-to-face with the research participants. Schoch (2020), states that interviews help researchers to understand the situation clearly as they will also study the body language and facial expressions of the research respondents. Interviews can also be very useful in helping to understand respondents' opinions, beliefs, and values (Rahman, 2021). Interviews allow for generation of rich insights pertaining to participants' attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Wilson & Mclean, 2020). Interviews help the researcher to clarify to participants some of the questions they do not understand, which enables them to provide accurate responses.

##### **1.8.4.1 Population**

Population is the overall number of people in an area (Creswell, 2016). In research, population is defined as the total number of participants who the researcher is interested in getting information from (Shukla & Satishprakash, 2020). The population in this study comprised of SMT members of secondary schools in Mafeteng, teachers, head prefects and other learners holding no managerial portfolios.

##### **1.8.4.2 Selection of participants**

Selection of participants is defined by Johnson and Aldea (2021) as the process of choosing participants from the population based on the characteristics the researcher wants to study. In this study, purposive sampling method was used to select participants. Naderifah et al. (2017) define purposive sampling as the

choosing of participants because of the expertise they have or because they are the only ones with the necessary information the researcher is interested in. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to gather qualitative responses, which leads to better insights and more precise research data (Silverman 2017; Turner, 2020). As a result, the 26 participants in this study, comprising twelve members of the SMT, four learners, four head prefects, and 4 teachers, were purposively selected. The reason is that they manifested certain characteristics that the researcher was interested in, which included among others, their availability, teaching experience for teachers, having experienced, witnessed or being bullied and other characteristics which helped the researcher to achieve the stated objectives of the study (Silverman, 2017). These 26 participants were drawn from four schools: Molapong High School, Molisaneng High School, Lebelonyane High School and Lifemeng High School. These four schools were selected not only because they were accessible to the researcher but also because bullying is prevalent as teachers have often raised concerns about many bullying cases.

### **1.8.6 Data analysis**

Data analysis is defined by Voce (2019) as cutting down of data into pieces and arranging them through grouping in order to give meaning. In this study, data was analyzed using thematic analysis which involved studying and coding the data, noting similarities, differences, relationships, and categorizing these into patterns or categories of meaning (Johnson & Aldea, 2021). Thematic analysis was used because it helps to identify themes and patterns that are significant or compelling in data, and these patterns were used to respond to the research questions (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

### **1.8.7 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is defined as the authenticity and truthfulness of the researcher's findings (Cypress, 2017). In order to determine whether the findings in this study were accurate, the following four components of trustworthiness were observed: credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability.

#### **1.8.7.1 Credibility**

Credibility is whether the study findings are correct and accurate (Creswell, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) also define credibility as the point in which the explanation of the phenomena corresponds with what is real in the world. In this study, credibility was ensured by sharing data, interpretations and conclusions with participants so that they could clarify, make corrections and provide additional information.

#### **1.8.7.2 Dependability**

Dependability is the degree to which the research could be repeated by other researchers and the results would still be the same (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). To make sure the data generated remained consistent participants were allowed to use their language of choice; Sesotho or English. They were also provided with a detailed description of the research methods.

#### **1.8.7.3 Conformability**

Conformability describes the degree to which the research findings portray a true picture of participants' responses (Jeckins, 2021). In order to achieve conformability of the study, the researcher provided all relevant information regarding the research design with the aim of providing a detailed audit trail should there be a researcher(s) who wishes to replicate this study in other contexts.

#### **1.8.7.4 Transferability**

According to Creswell (2016), transferability refers to the dense description of processes and procedures used in a study to try and answer the overarching research question. In order to enhance transferability of the findings, the researcher provided a thorough explanation of the phenomena which was being investigated along with data collection techniques.

### **1.8.8 Ethical Considerations**

As a way of ensuring ethical procedures in this study, consent forms were given to participants and they were clearly informed of what the research entailed. Among others, the researcher received permission from Mafeteng District Education Office to conduct the research in selected schools (see Appendix A). Letters were written to the principals, deputy principal and heads of department requesting them to take part in the study (see Appendix D and F). Parents of learners who took part in the study

were also asked through letters to allow their children to participate in the study (see Appendix G). Participants were not forced to participate. They were also given the assurance that information gathered would be kept confidential and that it would only be used for the objective of the study. Lastly, the researcher used pseudonyms instead of the real names of the participants (see Tables, 1, 2, 3, 4 in Chapter 3). A detailed description of ethical considerations is in Chapter 3, Section 3.91.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

The sample size in this research created a limitation as data was collected from four schools which are close to the researchers place of work and not in town. Thus, the study only focused on schools that were within reach for the researcher, and this posed a problem because the findings might not be applicable to some schools around the district and the entire country. Time was also one of the factors that held back the research process because the researcher was also a full-time teacher. This, as a result, was a limitation since the researcher had limited time to generate data and it caused delays in the research. The fact that the researcher used only one tool to generate data was also a limiting factor as participants had no options and also, the results generated from one tool sometimes could not be valid because participants felt uncomfortable with the method the researcher had decided to use.

### **1.10 Layout of chapters**

This section outlines the layout of all the chapters in this study.

#### **Chapter One**

Chapter One outlines the introduction and the background of the study, the main research questions, and the aim of the research. The theoretical framework underpinning this study and the significance of study are also discussed. The chapter also briefly discusses the research design and methodology. The chapter concludes with issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study.

#### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical framework and the literature review.

#### **Chapter Three**

This chapter focuses on the research paradigm, ontological and epistemological assumptions. Research design and approach, data collection methods and data analysis methods are also discussed in this chapter. Moreover, the chapter gives a full description of validity and reliability in relation to this study. In conclusion, Chapter Three talks about the ethical considerations to ensure the protection of the rights and safety of the study participants.

## Chapter Four

Chapter Four presents data and the findings of the study. It also presents a discussion on the best practices that SMTs could use to manage and control school bullying.

## Chapter Five

Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings concludes the study and suggests recommendations. The limitations of the study are also presented.

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

An introductory overview and the background of the study were presented in this chapter. The overarching and subsidiary research questions were also presented.. Additionally, the chapter detailed the problem statement, the aims and objectives of the study. Furthermore, the research methodologies as well as the data collection methods were discussed. The importance of this study was also discussed. The chapter also presented an overview of the ethical considerations and trustworthiness. Data analysis methods were also discussed in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this study is to investigate best practices that SMTs could use to mitigate bullying incidences in Mafeteng secondary schools. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study in terms of its origin, the objectives, the justification of the choice and its basic assumptions. Furthermore, the chapter presents the review of literature on bullying, the impact of bullying on the victims and best practices for both supporting victims of bullying and curbing the practice in schools.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research is anchored on the transformational leadership theory (TL); a system aimed at not only changing stakeholders', particularly learners', attitudes and beliefs but also their conduct (Deschamps et al., 2016). According to Ismail (2020), TL is a theory which explains how SMT should influence change in learners' disruptive behaviour. TL has also been conceptualized by Iskandar and Matriandi (2019) as the task that the SMT does to support learners to develop and mobilize the vision of what they wish to attain in a near future. Lily (2017) also points out that SMT should encourage learners in particular to obey the social orders so that the stated school, educational and national aspirations could be attained.

Korejan and Shahbazi (2016), similarly, see TL as a way of generating ideas and new perspectives to engender a new way of development and prosperity in schools. SMT, as suggested by Top et al., (2020), does not only develop dedication, passion and devotion among learners but also prepares external school members to contribute towards the attainment of set school objectives. SMT should, as a consequence, influence a change of behaviour so that schools could undertake their mandate as effectively as possible. That is, according to Almutairi (2016), SMT should incorporate components of TL with the aim of inspiring learners to refrain from acts that degrade others and to be resilient towards bullying. Thus, TL puts emphasis on the fact that SMT, as the school administrative body, should take the lead in developing innovative strategies that will help in curtailing bullying incidences

in schools. The preceding is argued because TL is anchored on the premise that SMT could influence learners to bring out a desirable behavioural change (Kim & Shin 2019). TL is therefore aimed at empowering SMT to guide and encourage learners to demonstrate anti-bullying behaviour for creation of a positive school learning climate (Al-Amin, 2017). Northhouse (2016) has identified four dimensions of transformational theory in school context. These are discussed in the next sub-sections.

### **2.2.1. Intellectual Stimulation**

This is whereby the SMT takes an initiative to influence a change of the status quo amongst members of the school community by finding alternative and innovative methods of dealing with the rampant bullying behaviour in schools (Muhammad & Sari, 2021). Intellectual stimulation is also defined as having SMT that leads the way in helping learners to reform so that a safe school vision could be realized (Nickerson, 2021). Thus, SMT must empower learners to be proactive and be anti-bullying activists who shall not tolerate bullying to take place because they are empowered with well thought out protocols that are aimed at uprooting bullying behaviour in schools (Nickerson, 2021). This will enable learners in particular to confront the status quo. The inception of anti-bullying programs in schools will empower learners, teachers and, in particular, SMT to effectively and consistently confront any reported or observed bullying incidences.

### **2.2.2 Individual Consideration**

SMT should not dictate ideas from a bubble and then leave them for learners to carry out. Instead, it should involve all stakeholders in making primary decisions relating to school effectiveness (Muhammad & Sari, 2021). Thus, SMT should be concerned with sensitizing learners about the desired conduct. Thus, it should keep lines of communication open and attend to learners' individual needs and grievances (Allen et al., 2017). With the above in context, this TL component affords learners a sense of responsibility and security. When the school creates a policy against bullying, learners should be involved so that they can own the conventions made. In that way they will regard themselves as part of the processes and are likely to align and abide by the policy provisions. This component therefore argues that when the SMTs constitute the anti-bullying policies and campaigns, all learners should participate. In

that way, they will be empowered with competencies that will enable them to change their behaviour and to report any bullying incidences.

### **2.2.3. Inspirational Motivation**

Inspirational motivation is defined as SMT that inspires and motivates learners to conduct themselves in the most desirable manner (Iskandar & Matriali, 2019). It is therefore expected that SMT should impart a school vision that appeals to learners' conscience for them to see themselves as agents of change (Northhouse, 2016). Waters (2022) also shows that a sense of inspiration and motivation can be achieved when SMT communicates its vision adequately with learners for them to internalize and make initiatives which they will aim to achieve. The motivation is to achieve a conducive learning environment free from prejudice (Waters, 2022). As a result, SMT should set high standards and expectations for themselves and then remodel them for easier comprehension by learners in particular. SMT should recognize the efforts of anti-bullying activists. In this way, they will be motivated to persevere and support future anti-bullying programs (Wang et al., 2016).

### **2.2.4. Idealized Influence**

According to Jackson (2020), idealized influence in TL refers to the leadership style in which SMT behaves in a manner that evokes learners' trust, respect and their desire to imitate them. SMT should ensure that it puts and considers the interest learners first before theirs (Ngaithe et al., 2016), because this will stimulate learners to emulate what SMT as leaders does. If the preceding is achieved, then the attainment of educational objectives becomes a priority for all stakeholders (Afsar et al., 2019). It is evident, according to Afsar et al. (2019), that there is a relationship between learners' performance and leadership style as learners who are respected and treated well by their leaders are more likely to be better performers in their respective schools. Owing to this, it is therefore important that SMT predisposes a positive behaviour that is characterized by respect and trust for learners to copy. This will, as a result, help in sustaining a school environment free from prejudices and other injustices.

In addition, Yue et al. (2019), suggest that idealized influence is said to be similar to charismatic leadership as it predisposes SMT to be role models who motivate and

inspire their learners. SMT will therefore manifest strong personal values and will establish positive images for their learners to copy in this case. That is, SMT should also be role models to learners so that they can uphold the ideal of bully-free schools.

Moreover, idealized influence states that SMT is expected to communicate effectively the vision of the school to the leaners by giving them enough information for them to possibly attain the vision or objectives at hand (Yue et al., 2019). This means that SMT, as the legitimate school leadership body, should at all times communicate clearly with learners the school vision for them to know the priorities of the school. This vision can only be achieved when all learners in particular understand it. In addition, when communicating the vision of the school, SMT should put an inclusive mind-set that includes all the stakeholders of the school. This will give all stakeholders including learners a chance to take part in decision-making processes and will make it easy for learners to obey the policies since they participated in their formulation.

Under Idealized influence SMT should come up with other strategies that could be used to curb bullying in schools, and different ways to put those strategies into practice. Because of the motivation that learners get from SMT, they will put more effort to ensure that the anti-bullying programs and other related protocols are implemented and followed. This as a result helps in developing and sustaining a conducive learning environment for all learners which is likely to translate into good academic excellence and overall school competitiveness.

### **2.2.1 ORIGIN OF THE THEORY**

TL originated from the works James V. Downton in 1973, and was later developed by James Burns in 1978 (Northhouse, 2016). Ikhram and Fauduputra (2021), state that the theory first began in the developed countries during restructuring and decentralization with the objective of transforming schools. The theory also focused on the objectives and true mandate of the school administrative to stimulate learners to be responsible members of the school community (Ugochukwu, 2021). Northhouse (2016) further states that TL was developed because of the need to create conducive and high performing schools which required SMT to inspire and motivate members to perform beyond requirement.

### **2.2.2 Assumptions of the theory**

The basic premise of this theory is that it is the role of SMT to influence learners to behave in the most desirable manner so that the schools could easily achieve stated priorities (Manaseh, 2017). TL assumes that school success is largely dependent on the efforts and abilities of the administrative team that can sufficiently deal with organizational complexities (Campos, 2020). Niphadhar (2017) points out that the TL approach puts more emphasis on strong leadership, which should institute behavioural change and beliefs so that in the overall instructional activities could be achieved. Northhouse (2016) also states that TL assumes that leadership is a personality trait instead of behaviour that individuals can learn given the circumstances prevailing in schools. That is, TL presupposes that learners are likely to follow the SMT that inspires them and is constantly guided by a clear vision stating ethos and priorities to be achieved (Ogochukwu, 2021). Thus, it is the school leadership team's mandate to effectively influence learners' change of behavioural patterns to facilitate creation of a safe school environment (Niphadkar, 2017).

### **2.2.3 Objective of the theory**

TL is aimed at inspiring SMT to come up with strategies that will bring about sustainable change in learners' behaviour such that a safe school environment free from bullying behaviour is created and sustained. It is also aimed at changing the status quo with the aim of equipping learners with mechanisms to confront bullying incidences. In this way, learners will be equipped with competencies to be law-abiding and productive citizens (Khalili, 2017).

### **2.2.4 Justification for the theory**

TL aims at liberating the SMT from traditional school leadership approaches to focus on solving contemporary issues in schools (Northhouse, 2016). This therefore makes TL relevant to this study because schools are tasked with nurturing children to become responsible citizens who abide by national rules and social orders (Arnold, 2017).

Moreover, TL is relevant to this research as it strives to change the attitudes of SMT. Thus; this theory enables SMT to be reminded about their core objectives which are not just to manage schools but also to actively intervene in solving contemporary

challenges facing learners individually or collectively (Eliyana et al., 2019). TL focuses on inspiring a positive change which operationalizes school objectives and influences learners' success (Kim & Shin, 2022). As a result, Korejan & Shahbazi (2016) agree that SMT should deal with bullies at school to create a safe environment for teaching and learning. Berkovich (2016) is also of the view that SMT needs to give learners defensive and survival strategies to curb violence in schools and beyond. These defensive strategies will help learners to be able to stand for themselves whenever they go through bullying or violence since bullying often occurs away from teachers. As a result, learners who are equipped with defensive strategies against bullying develop resilience and assertiveness which help them to stand their ground. Moreover, Kim and Shin (2022) further postulate that transformational leaders in education should consider the background of all the people they lead and try to implement context-based change. This approach will raise learners' self-consciousness and empower them to confront the status quo.

## **2.3 Literature Review**

This section will uncover some of the literature that has been investigated and published in relation to bullying. The section begins with a discussion of the operational terms and strategies that SMT in other countries have used to curb bullying.

### **2.3.1 Definition of operational terms**

This part of the study defines operational terms and how they are used in this study.

#### **2.3.1.1 Bullying**

Bullying is a behaviour that is repeatedly done by an individual or group to another group or individual with the intention of hurting them physically or emotionally and, in most cases, bullying involves the imbalance of power (Department for Education, 2017). Holly et al. (2017) also define bullying as an action of causing pain to a person who is less powerful or lacks something that others have. McCann (2018) also defines bullying in the context of school as victimization and intimidation of students by their fellow peers in a school environment which happens many times with the intention of making the victim feel ashamed or embarrassed. Akpunne et al. (2019) add that bullying can sometimes include ignoring others' opinions in class

which will then make them feel insecure and afraid of participating later on. Bullying can be physical, verbal, social exclusion or online (cyberbullying).

For the purpose of this study, bullying is defined as an activity that occurs when a weaker learner or learners is being hurt, intimidated or persecuted by another stronger learner or learners which then results in negative impacts.

### **2.3.1.2 Curb**

This is a deliberate effort to control or to limit something (Gilliver, 2016). Victor (2021) also defines curb as slowing down something so that it does not persist on happening. It is basically the process of suppressing something that is bad or harmful from happening. So in this study, it is defined as methods that can be used to try and stop an awful incident from happening.

### **2.3.1.3 Effective teaching and learning**

This is a process of passing and acquiring knowledge with the aim of gaining some skills (Department for Education, 2018). Mushemeza (2016) also defines effective teaching and learning as engaging learners while teaching them so as to make sure they gain knowledge and application. Cheng (2022) also defines effective teaching and learning as methods or ways that are used by the teacher with the aim of generating good learner outcomes. Effective teaching and learning helps learners and teachers to achieve their goals as the teacher tries very much to engage learners during teaching (Clarke & Phehan, 2017). Furthermore, effective teaching and learning also helps learners to understand the content that was learned in class as they will be involved in the learning process. Effective teachers effectively give learners time to get involved in hands-on experiences, to discuss and process content in order to make meaningful connection (Cheng, 2022). Effective teaching and learning is seen when the teacher has planned a lesson that has learners' activity, clearly stating that they will be hands on. In addition, learners concentrate and continue carrying on even when they encounter problems. In this study it will be defined as the process of imparting knowledge to learners in a way that they will later on apply it to everyday life. That is, it is defined as approaches that ensure that learning takes place in a safe environment.

#### **2.3.1.4 School Management Team**

According to Mkhulu (2022), SMT is a management structure in schools, responsible for the professional and day-to-day running of the school. The role of this team is to ensure proper functioning of the school on a daily basis on activities including but not limited to curriculum management and discipline (Department for Education, 2018). Kelly (2022) states that the role of SMT is to support both teachers and learners to make sure that quality teaching and learning takes place. Kelly further points out that in order for SMT to support teaching and learning activities, they should not only be trained in their roles but also understand school policies and wider educational aspirations for them to perform their duties with confidence. Mkhulu (2022), states that SMT consists of the principal, deputy principal (if available), and heads of department. Jurs and Kulberga (2021) state that for effective teaching and learning, the principal should always consult other members of the SMT. In this study, SMT is defined as the body which is responsible for not only disciplining learners at school but also for ensuring that there is quality teaching and learning in schools.

#### **2.3.1.5 Strategies**

Strategies are general plans of action for achieving one's goals and objectives (Kindred, 2020). (Visser, 2021) also defines strategies as actions that leaders take to accomplish one or more of the organization's goals. It is also defined by Morrison-Potter (2021) as methods that are used to get something done. In a school setting, strategy is a fully written down plan that informs stakeholders of what the school wants to achieve in future and how it plans to get there. Visser (2021) further indicates that strategies help schools to have a vision of what the school wants to achieve and also helps administration for good decision-making. In this study, they are defined as ways which will be used to achieve something like stopping bullying.

#### **2.3.2 The nature of bullying in schools**

According to Tharishimi & Baker (2021), bullying can occur in different ways which include verbal, online (cyberbullying), physical or exclusion. According to Tharishini and Bakar (2021), verbal bullying can be in oral or written form. Verbal bullying is the type of bullying whereby one uses words to hurt another, and in most cases it is done in public so that the victim can feel embarrassed (Itegi, 2017). It includes

calling names, threatening to harm, inappropriate sexual comments, and abusive language. Verbal bullying is basically hurting someone through the use of words. Antoniadou et al. (2019) indicate that verbal bullying can also be seen as emotional abuse. It can lead to physical violence which can later cause injury to the person being bullied. Swear and Hymel (2015), state that effects of verbal bullying can manifest themselves in a person's life for a long time and it is closely related to mental health. Learners, who are bullied verbally, begin to see themselves as valueless, useless and stupid just like their perpetrators tell them they are (Swear & Hymel 2015). Like any other forms of bullying, verbal bullying can result in poor performance, poor self-image and suicide if this bullying is allowed to persist (Strindberg et al., 2020). Thornberg et al. (2017) revealed in their study that verbal bullying in Sweden is a very serious issue so much that politicians and school authorities are discussing different ways on how to curb it.

Antoniadou et al. (2019) further show that there is also relational or social bullying which involves spreading rumors about a person, deliberately excluding someone in an activity, intimidation or making silly comments about someone. Tharishini and Bakar (2021) define social bullying as a situation where one is excluded in school activities, forcing others to mistreat the victim, embarrassing them in public, and spreading things that are not true. This will make people to hate such a victim and exclude them in a lot of activities like playing games (Naidoo et al., 2016). Antoniadou et al. (2019) also add that if a person is bullied socially, they want to isolate themselves and withdraw from all social situations either online or face-to-face trying to protect themselves. Social bullying is often done to make the victim feel bad, as a result it becomes difficult for someone who is socially bullied to keep relationships let alone have them (Buscaglia, 2016). The perpetrators intentionally drag the victim's name through the mud with the aim of socially isolating them from other people. This makes the victim to start seeing themselves as not good enough and their self-esteem drastically drops resulting in depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

Online (cyberbullying), is the type of bullying whereby phones or computers are used to send negative, harmful posts or messages about a person. In most cases it happens through the use of social media, especially Facebook since it is accessible to most learners (Juan et al., 2018). This type of bullying is done to ruin a person's

reputation and to ensure that they think less of themselves (Buscaglia, 2016). It is basically using of information technology to provoke others and make them feel bad about themselves. This type of bullying is very common lately amongst teenagers as most of them own phones and computers. Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) also report that cyberbullying is the latest form of bullying which is more harmful than any other form of bullying. Cyberbullying comes in different forms. Sometimes perpetrators post negative comments about the victim to make them look bad. At times it may include spreading rumours through social media to defame them. Since most people have access to social media, it is easy for learners to misuse it to humiliate others using social media platforms such as Facebook (Buscaglia, 2016).

Physical bullying as defined by Itegi (2017) is any act of using physical actions with the intention of hurting another. Physical bullying often results in wounds that could be seen. It is a form of bullying that involves kicking, hitting, spitting, breaking the victim's belongings, rude gestures, and even ripping (Rose & Cage, 2016). It occurs between people of different physical presence as the bullies are mostly physically stronger than their victims (Nguyen et al., 2017). Reason et al., (2016), state that physical bullying is more common among males as women are most of the time the victims or bystanders of this type of bullying. This type of bullying has the same features as physical abuse and is dangerous to both the victim and the perpetrator as well since it may result in physical injury to the person being bullied (Kowalski, 2017). At some point, the injuries can be so bad that they may lead to disability which could inhibit such a learner from excelling in their studies to the extent that some may leave school (Montero-Carreto et al., 2020).

Physical bullying is a threat to people's lives and may lead to death. Perpetrators of this type of bullying may end up prosecuted since beating up a person is a crime (Hellstrome et al., 2015). This gives a school where all this happens a bad reputation which could affect the performance of the school to the extent that its enrolment could drastically decrease.

Despite the fact that amongst all forms of bullying verbal bullying is the most common, cyberbullying however is also on the rise of late because children make more use of cell phones and laptops, (Espelage, 2018). Children access social

media platforms to victimise others (Rigby & Johnson 2016). All these types of bullying have negative psychological effects on the victim. Bullying can be relational - it includes instances of spreading rumours, social exclusion or gossiping (Gaffney et al., 2021).

United Nations (2016), notes that it is also important to describe the causes of bullying before actually discussing strategies that can be used to curb it. Volk (2017) adds that the remedial action to any problem depends on the causes. These causes among others include those discussed in the next sub-sections.

### **2.3.2.1 Societal factors**

Societal factors include, among others, neglect from parents, instability in the families, aggression within the home, and rejection from the community, which may influence the behaviour of the child (Schussler et al., 2017). Learners who have experienced rejection often become bullies at school. It has been stated by Mosia (2015) that another societal factor causing bullying in Africa is traditional initiation. Mahlaloka et al. (2016) argues that initiation (*lebollo*) is a traditional cultural practice in most African countries which involves the process which indicates a boy is transitioning to manhood. This traditional school is aimed at turning these boys into law-abiding citizens and responsible human beings who can take part in society building and is also aimed at instilling morals in them. However, Mohlaloka, et al., (2016) posit that boys returning from initiation school become so silly that many teachers in formal education battle to deal with their unpleasant behaviour and they also refuse to take part in activities that include boys who have not gone to initiation school. In this regard, Mosia (2019) postulates that bullying in schools is a sign of decline in moral values and degeneration in African schools, so it needs to be curbed.

### **2.3.2.2 Environmental factors**

Stone & Carlisle (2017) state that teachers' attitudes, behaviour and supervisory routine play are environmental factors that play a very important role in determining the extent to which the problems of bullying can happen in a classroom or at school. Lack of teachers' interest to attend to bullying cases also fuels the bullying incidences in schools. Rivara and Menestrel (2016) affirm that it is teachers' duty to

make sure that learners are always supervised even in places such as school playgrounds to ensure their safety and prevent acts of bullying. Furthermore, a toxic environment where learners are always insulting others even in the presence of teachers promotes bullying.

### **2.3.2.3 Biological factors**

Rivara and Menestrel (2016) further state that it is evident that other people act viciously because of the fact that some of their body parts cannot function well or there is imbalance in the production of body hormones. Others are just bullied because of the way they look or behave, for example, one may be bullied because of just being short or being born with a certain disorder.

Lastly, there is peer group influence which is described by Tzani-pepelasi et al. (2019) as a group of children who are in the same age group and the child interacts and plays with. In most cases, age mates are the people that learners spent most of their time with than they do with their parents and teachers. At times, learners may bully others just to make their peers happy and proud of them. Sometimes learners may engage in substance abuse due to peer pressure which will then cause them to bully others. Thus, children's actions are highly influenced by their peer group (Sanchez et al., 2019).

### **2.3.3 Learners at risk of being bullied**

#### **2.3.3.1 LGBTQI Youth (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex)**

It has been seen that learners who are likely to be bullied by others fall under the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) groups (Patchin & Hinduja, 2019). Studies portray that most learners are being bullied, harassed, and victimized in schools because of their sexual identity or gender expression (Semp & Read, 2015). Fox (2021) notes that compared to other learners, LGBTQ learners in America found schools more unwelcoming for them. Their school experiences were often characterized by bullying, discrimination, and in some cases, physical or sexual assault (Arimori, 2020). In Europe, 54% of 17,000 surveyed LGBTQ students aged between 13 and 24 admitted that they had been subjected to bullying at least once based on their sexual identity (UNESCO, 2020). A report by UNESCO (2015)

similarly indicated that the majority of LGBTQ learners in Asia-Pacific had also experienced some forms of bullying or violence at schools.

Rhodes (2015) has also shown that LGBTQI bullying stems from stigma which then results in social exclusion. Schools have indeed become hostile environments for LGBTQI groups because of bullying incidences and this result in them hating school because they are not accepted in schools by their peers. Research shows that the LGBTQI group claims that they feel unsafe and unsupported at schools by their classmates and sometimes they even demand to see their private parts (Rhodes, 2015). In addition to that, Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) indicate that most LGBTQI bullying occurs in hidden places away from other people such as bathrooms and toilets. In most cases teachers are not there and learners, who are LGBTQI, sometimes do not report these incidences. Rhodes (2015) indicates that the LGBTQI group experiences bullying that undermines their mental and physical health making them feel worthless and embarrassed. In schools, learners who fall under this group are often abused both verbally and physically by their peers. It is therefore the duty of SMT and the rest of the teaching staff to keep an eye on the learners so as to ensure that a conducive teaching and learning surrounding is created which will then enhance successful teaching and learning.

### **2.3.3.2 Learners with disability and certain special needs**

Rose and Gage (2016), state that learners with disabilities such as physical disability, developmental, intellectual, emotional and sensory disabilities are at greater risk of being bullied. Learners with disability and special needs are mostly bullied because they lack strong peer support as in most cases their peers do not want to be associated with them (Fred, 2017; DeLara, 2019). It is also indicated by Fogdon et al. (2016) that learners with disabilities are more concerned by school safety and being hurt by their classmates rather than focusing on their school work. To make matters worse, some learners even laugh at these disabled learners even when they try to participate in class and other school-based activities and this causes them to obtain lower grades or avoid school (Migliaccio, 2015). Therefore, these learners see schools as unsafe for them. This happens because disabled learners and those with special needs are mostly passive and cannot speak for themselves, communicate what they need, or even take action, while their bullies on

the other hand are more powerful and aggressive (Menesining & Salmivalli, 2017). As a result, it makes it very hard for the victims to report the bullying cases because of fear that reporting may make matters worse. This affects their learning as they are often afraid. This constant fear lowers their self-esteem. Thus, they often feel helpless and powerless.

Furthermore, Meldrum et al. (2020), state that learners with special health need such as epilepsy or food allergies are also bullied. These learners are often made fun of because of the allergies or even exposed to things that they are allergic to by other learners just to see how they react resulting in harmful consequences (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Other learning difficulties such as brain injuries or neurological conditions can impact a child's understanding of social interactions which make it difficult for them to even know when they are being bullied. Such learning difficulties include, among others, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism spectrum disorder and other conditions, some of which could make a child to struggle with coordination and speech, making such a child to be vulnerable to bullying (Meldrum et al., 2020). Lee and Vaillan court (2018) add that learners with special needs may have impaired speech, movement, comprehension and cognitive abilities. Therefore some learners often make fun of them and embarrass them in front of others. Menesining and Samivalli (2017) state that it is therefore important for SMT to educate learners about special health needs and the dangers associated with certain actions such as exposing other learners to toxic elements that could negatively affect their health. SMT should also host sports activities that are led by people with special health needs where people without disabilities play amongst each other pretending to be disabled. A study by Vinutha et al. (2021) showed that youth at one school held a wheelchair soccer night where learners with special health needs who used wheelchairs coached their peers without special needs on how to use and navigate the wheelchairs to play. This empowers learners with special health needs and helps them to see that as much as they are disabled, there are things they can do and this also fosters peer support and, as a result, reduces bullying. Basically, such an exercise would be aimed at empowering the disabled while also sensitizing the abled.

### **2.3.3.3 Learners with low socio-economic status**

Learners with low socio-economic status, according to King and Trinidad (2021), are those with less access to financial, educational, social and health resources. These kinds of learners are poor as they come from families that do not have money to meet their basic health and educational needs hence their victimization. Studies reveal that different forms of bullying victimization are perpetrated by socio-economic status (Bradshaw et al. 2017; Makafane & Khalanyane 2018). Juan et al. (2018) also revealed that learners with a low socio-economic status reported higher levels of bullying victimization. The preceding is reported because learners from low socio-economic status cannot afford some of the learning resources such as textbooks so some classmates may not share their textbooks with them during lessons (Zuze et al., 2016). Victims often do not have friends as most learners do not want to be associated with poverty and some may humiliate and spread nasty rumours like they smell, so much that most learners do not want to sit next to them nor even play with them.

Ren et al. (2021) indicate that bullying is linked to bad parental education, parental unemployment or being poverty-stricken therefore victims of bullying often come from the aforementioned family features. In most cases, because of poverty, victims do not look as clean as their bullies; as a result, they are harassed because they cannot afford some of the things that their peers have.

Moreover, Lucas et al. (2016) argues that since victims have been bullied over and over again, they often hide during recess and lunch time when they have to eat because some learners make fun of their food and other belongings. As a result, the victims often feel lonely, isolated and depressed. This makes victims to hate school and their families as they wish they were not born from such families and even blame their parents since it is difficult for them to accept themselves

#### **2.3.3.4 Race/ethnicity**

According to Rose and Cage (2016), racist bullying singles out people because of their skin colour, race or ethnic background. This type of bullying, according to McBride (2015), is still very prevalent in most South African schools. Learners who are bullied based on ethnicity or race are often laughed at by their peers. Anything they say about where they come, their background that is, seems funny to their bullies as in most cases the lifestyle of the victims is different from that of their

bullies. In some cases the blacks are even called monkeys by the white learners (Sarzosa & Urzua, 2015). Moreover, the National Centre Educational Statistics (2019) shows that victims who fall under either the white or black minority group are often attacked and called names based on their skin colour. Reports show that 23% of African American students, 23% of Caucasian students, 16% of Hispanic students and 7% of Asian students report cases of being bullied (National Centre Educational Statistics, 2019). Jackman (2020) shows that racist bullying occurs when a learner experiences repeated offensive behaviour against them based on their skin colour, culture, and perceived ethnicity.

This abusive behaviour sometimes embarrasses victims to the extent that they hate where they come from (Xu et al., 2020). Furthermore, these learners who are attacked because of their skin colour, religion and cultural background fail to concentrate on their school work as they always feel intimidated and scared (Vitoroulis, 2018). Rose and Gage (2016) have also pointed out that racial/ethnic groups perceived as minority groups may be at high risk of being bullied and victimized by majority groups as they may begin to think they own the school. Gordon (2020) adds that it is very unfortunate that black learners are often regarded as thieves because when everything disappears in class it is pinned on them and not on white learners. In most schools, white learners are perceived as intelligent, sweet, dominant and strong, while black learners are assumed to be ignorant, submissive, and lonely (Gordon, 2020). For example, in most cases white learners are given leadership roles in schools and black learners are always followers. That too perpetuates racial bullying because white learners begin to see themselves as more important than black learners (Hollis, 2018).

### **2.3.4 Effects of bullying**

According to Turner et al., (2015) the effects of bullying can be serious to the extent that they can even last into adulthood. All these types of bullying have results that can be noticed in children's health, academic performance, their social and emotional wellbeing and their cognitive and behavioural development.

#### **2.3.4.1 Health-related effects of bullying on the victim**

The impacts of bullying do not only manifest themselves physically. According to Jennings et al. (2017), bullying is associated with greater exposure to adverse health problems such as asthma, rhinitis, and obesity. Victims who are physically abused are in particular the ones who are obese.

Hager and Leadbeater, (2015) further assert that bullying does not only cause physical injury but also sleep disturbances. These sleeping disorders are a result of the bullying incidents that a learner experienced at school. As the victims sleep, the bullying episodes bring back nightmares and fears of future victimization which affect a learner's sleep, and some may start bedwetting, suffer from sleep apnea (problems with sleeping that cause loud snoring) and experience sleep talking (Matthiesen & Mageroy, 2015). As a result, when the victims do not get adequate sleep, they develop complications that may cause decreased brain functioning, memory loss and obesity (Veronese et al., 2017).

Hager and Leadbeater, (2015) further point out that the issue of chronic headaches and somatization disorder (SSD) is a form of mental illness that causes one or more bodily symptoms including pain. In addition, Garmy (2019) states that migraine is one the chronic headaches a victim of bullying can go through and it may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting and even extreme sensitivity to light and sound. Bullied victims can also experience anxiety which they often carry forward to their adult life and will be noted as psychological trauma.

Victims of bullying sometimes experience stomach problems caused by eating disorder (Hager & Leadbeater, 2015). While some victims' eating habits may accelerate when being bullied, research has shown that victims do not react the same way in the same situations as some victims, instead of eating too much, lose appetite when bullied hence stomach problems (Garmy, 2019). These stomach problems are not only a result of eating disorders but also a result of peptic ulcers which are caused by bullying-related stress (Matthiesen & Mageroy, 2015). This stress causes the body to produce more acid which causes wounds within the stomach lining resulting in internal bleeding that can claim a victim's life. Garmy (2019) also points out that eating disorders seen in most bullied victims sometimes result in hypothermia - a disease which in this context is explained as a disorder

where a person's body temperature drops due to lack of energy to fuel its metabolic fire to keep the body warm.

Moreover, drugs and the use of substances that the victims of bullying resort to results in health-related diseases such as liver cirrhosis, alcoholism caused by frequent alcohol abuse and other drug and substance-related diseases (Rigby, 2015). This could,, in the later stage, result in death of a victim suffering from such diseases. All these health effects are closely related to the academic performance of a learner hence they end up being deprived of their future (King'endo, 2015).

#### **2.3.4.2 Academic effects**

According to Husain and Jan (2015), learners who are bullied lack connectedness with their teachers because they believe that the bullying case is beyond the teacher's control hence do not report it. Also, they normally develop difficulties in paying attention, concentrating in class and often miss more school leading to poor academic performance (Husain & Jan 2015). Hanger and Leadbeater, (2015), state that because of being unable to focus at school, victims suffer academically. This creates stress to the victims as they often give excuses to their parents for missing school to avoid bullying incidents coupled with stress brought by poor school grades. As a result, they may avoid places where there are people, either adults or peers. In most cases, they resort to alcohol and drugs to take their pain away. UNESCO (2018) states that victims of bullying are more likely to start abusing drugs and this, as a result, will affect academic performance.

Zyeh et al. (2015) states that victims of bullying become scared of the environment where they were bullied because they believe is not safe. As a result, most of the victims drop out of school because the learning environment does not feel conducive for them. This means that even if a victim may be allowed to transfer to a different school, it becomes very difficult for such a person to adapt to the new school environment even if it is conducive to learning (Holley et al., 2017). The reason behind this may be that a victim has been bullied so much that they hate anything that has to do with a school setting even if bullying incidents do not occur hence they may completely leave school.

#### **2.3.4.3 Social effects**

Apart from that, literature has also revealed that loneliness is common in people who were bullied. The victims become anti-social and it gets difficult for them to find and keep healthy friendships because of fear (Due et al., 2019). This problem is caused mainly by low self-esteem due to the hurt and humiliation brought by the perpetrators of bullying.

Worse, as children grow into adulthood, they continue to struggle with self-esteem and find it hard to trust a person, which often affects their work (Chan et al., 2020). People who are anti-social normally do not believe in team work and it is very difficult to work with them. So they fail to fulfill responsibilities related to work or family as long as it involves working with other people or even seeking help from other people (Clarkson et al., 2016). Moreover, as these victims of bullying grow up with this anti-social personality disorder, they make it difficult for people to correct them when they go wrong as they believe they are always right. Nyawo (2016), states that victims of bullying are often hostile, aggressive and violent.

Moreover, Due et al. (2019) adds that victims of bullying struggle to maintain personal relationships to the extent that some remain swamped in the belief that bullying is not as wrong as it is and start blaming themselves. These beliefs later manifest themselves as the victim portrays an abusive behaviour to their partners at some point, believing that that is the right way to treat a partner (Oliveira, 2020). This affects their relationships because they end up being left alone which results in loneliness which will later on lead to depression. One other thing about the victims of bullying is that they constantly lie and end up being engaged in criminal activities that may lead to being incarcerated (Garmy, et al., 2017).

#### **2.3.4.4 Emotional and psychological effects**

The victims of bullying according to Evans et al. (2019), experience a set of diverse emotions as they are usually called names that make them believe that their bullies are right about how they look. As a consequence, victims tend to be bitter, angry, vulnerable, frustrated, helpless and isolated from people (Hickey, 2017). Jan and Husian (2015), indicate that the bitterness, anger, stress and other emotional effects can escalate if the bullying behaviour is not stopped and this can affect the mental health of a victim. Jan and Husian further add that victims eventually give up on life because they believe no one will stop the bullying incident. The Association for

Psychological Science (2019) also shows that bullies or victims or both are more likely to experience poverty, academic failure and job termination in their adulthood stage as they resort to giving up easily, and bullies tend to lack the knowledge of solving daily problems and always resort to violence when they are faced with conflicts.

In some cases, victims may develop anxiety and depression and even think of suicide because of peer victimization (Rigby, 2015). Reddy et al. (2016) have also reviewed in their research that adults who were found to have higher levels of depression and poor self-esteem were victims of bullying. Victims of bullying show anxiety and have internal conflict which makes it difficult for them to solve their problems (Laftman et al., 2017). As suicide is one of the consequences of peer victimization, Al-Raqqad et al. (2017), state that there are reported cases of children who committed suicide due to repeated victimization and to add on that, most children have left notes that pointed to peer victimization while some have reported having had suicidal thoughts which they opened up during counseling sessions when parents choose to intervene.

### **2.3.5 Support for bullying victims**

SMT plays an important role not only in bullying prevention but also in bullying intervention as they are mandated to facilitate the creation of a safe school environment. Hong et al. (2019) states that helping victims of bullying through a bullying ordeal helps to solidify the child's future academically and overall well-being. This therefore shows that is important to support the victims of bullying. After all, teachers are trained to serve as lay counselors. Teachers can support the victims through an array of activities that could be incorporated in the actual teaching processes (Ncube et al., 2015). That is, in their lessons they can touch as much as possible on the issue of bullying and how the victims are weak. This will enhance power and a sense of belonging in the victim. Furthermore, Najam and Kashif (2018) cite that learners should be made to feel safe while and after reporting bullying incidences by respecting the anonymity of the victim and/or reporting learners. Consequently, the support the victims will get from teachers will make them feel safe.

Literature further asserts that there should also be psychologists at school so that they can deal with the victims of bullying professionally. According to Hong et al. (2019), SMT should also introduce peer counseling at schools. Peer counseling is an activity whereby older students at schools are used as counselors to support the victims of bullying (Espelage, 2018). This has worked in most schools in America because some victims are free when talking with their peers than they would be if they were to talk about the same bullying issues with their teachers or any member of the SMT (Oliveira et al., 2020). Parents of the victims should also be urged to take them for counseling sessions or see a psychologist outside the school as they may feel unsafe and might not completely open up in schools (Espelage, 2018).

### **2.3.6 Strategies to curb bullying in schools**

According to Voight and Nation (2016), bullying has long been tolerated by many people as a rite of passage among children and teens. Wolke and Lereya (2015), however show that it is very dangerous not only to the child who is being bullied but also to the bully and the bystanders as well. With the above in perspective, literature has suggested a number of strategies that could be used to curb bullying incidences in schools.

#### **2.3.6.1 School-based anti-bullying policies**

One of the key strategies in mitigating bullying in schools is through development and amendment of policies which govern the school. The Department of Education (2017) pointed out that the policies should clearly define what bullying is for every learner to understand, state the signs of bullying, the consequences of bullying to the victim and the perpetrator together with the precautions. When implementing the policy, Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) advise that firstly, the government of Lesotho should develop a policy that is clear and will regulate bullying in schools. They further state that in as much as Section 8(1) of the 1993 Constitution of Lesotho stipulates that “no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment...”, there should be a clear school policy that speaks for victims, helps with counseling of the perpetrators and victims and makes bystanders aware that there will be punishments given to perpetrators.

SMT should also develop a policy at a school level which aligns with that of the government. Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) also advocate that schools should develop a policy that focuses on the use of social media as the new curriculum requires learners to have a tablet or at least a cellular phone so that they can do research. Whatever the policy SMT develops, it should include all stakeholders such as parents, staff and school boards. Sampasa (2017) indicates that in order for the policy to be more effective, it should include all school stakeholders and learners be fully represented. This will therefore make it easier for them to obey the policies as they were made part of them and also, for parents to try by all means to see to it that their children abide by the laws of the policy. In addition to that, this will show parents that bullying is not tolerated at all at school and those whose children might be bullied will be assured that the school will take complaints about bullying very seriously and solve the issue for victims to feel protected and safe in the learning environment for better results (Analina & Indartono, 2019). Over and above that, Sampasa (2017) add that if the policy is clear to everyone, it makes it easier for all learners to take part in preventing bullying even when they find themselves as bystanders of bullying.

The anti-bullying policies should also be explicit on the long-term and short-term effects of bullying so that learners see the seriousness of bullying incidents and learn that they are unacceptable and inhumane. Al-Raqqad (2017) indicates that there should be disciplinary sanctions which include, among others, detention and suspension. However, schools are advised to engage community stakeholders such as police and children's services to agree on a suitable way of disciplining learners in instances where bullying is very serious and continuous as well as in cases where crime is committed (Department of Education, 2017). These anti-bullying policies should be re-visited time and again for certain developments where necessary and learners should always be reminded of what the policies are with regard to bullying.

### **2.3.6.2 Anti-bullying sign posts/anonymous suggestion box/anonymous website**

One other strategy that could be used to curb bullying in schools is through classroom signs prohibiting bullying or a suggestion box or website where learners can anonymously report or talk about bullying. Makafane and Khalanyane (2018)

have also suggested the use of anonymous suggestion box whereby every secondary school should have a suggestion box or even an unknown internet site or website that will help learners, especially bystanders, to report bullying to teachers without fear for their lives because bullies have a tendency of threatening those who tell on them. Diliberti et al. (2019) also indicate that some schools in America have introduced bully boxes where learners can anonymously write down their concerns and place them in the box, and that seemed to curb bullying incidences because SMT attended those concerns. Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) also proposed that the suggestion box or website should be checked by teachers almost every week end, and whatever tip they get from the box there should be proper investigations so that measures can be taken without any favour or prejudice.

Anti-bullying signs can be posted to provide more information about bullying. According to Alter & Hadon (2017), SMT should post charts or posters showing different incidents of bullying, consequences of bullying and age appropriate penalties that should be applied as a means of punishment for those who disobey the school rules. These posters or signs should not be written by teachers but by learners themselves so that they feel involved in actions that prohibit bullying. Furthermore, these posters should not only be in the classrooms but even around hidden places like toilets where most of the bullying incidents take place. Alter and Hadon (2017) state that the anti-bullying sign posts strive to create a conducive environment for effective learning. This anti-bullying signs can help create no bully zone which shows learners that bullying is not welcome at school (Alter & Hadon, 2017).

### **2.3.6.3 Bullying prevention programs**

Equally important, Evans et al. (2019), state that schools should work with the parents to implement bullying prevention programs and these programs should have a mix of activities for all learners that can be carried out using class time to discuss bullying. Moreover, it is recommended by Makafane (2019) that programs should be established in secondary schools which are aimed at teaching learners' knowledge and skills to reduce their involvement in bullying. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC, 2020), has introduced Life skills – Based Sexuality Education (LBSE) in secondary schools which addresses the issue of bullying. LBSE

is compulsory from Grade 8 in all secondary schools in Lesotho and helps equip learners with enough skills of resiliency and information about bullying (Makafane 2019). Moreover, the SMT according to Jimenez et al. (2016), should work together with parents to develop and monitor programs that will help to reduce bullying.

#### **2.3.6.4 Staggering recess, lunch and or reduction of anonymous space to learners**

According to Alter & Haydon (2017), one of the ways to curb bullying in schools is to reduce the amount of time learners spend together. This implies that learners will not have too much time to spend with each other in the absence of a teacher and therefore, it will be difficult for bullying to take place. This strategy of staggering recess, lunch time and or class release times according to Alter & Haydon (2017), helps in reducing bullying reports as it minimises learners' interaction and thus significantly reducing the perpetrators' and victims' chances of being present at the same location at the same time. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (2018) in South Africa states that secondary schools should adopt the primary school model of classrooms whereby classrooms belong to specific teachers who are always in the classrooms. This will help reduce bullying as learners are going to spend most of their time monitored by their class teachers

#### **2.3.6.5 Gay-straight alliances**

Schools should also form gay-straight alliances which can help limit LGBTQI youth against bullying. These alliances are normally learner-led school-based clubs that aim to improve the school climate for the LGBTQI and educate the community members about sexuality (Thornberg, 2015). Liboro et al. (2015), state that gay-straight alliances provide a positive and inclusive school climate for learners. These alliances do not only develop greater achievement and connectedness to school which results in higher academic achievement and lowers depression but also improves the mental health and well-being of students coupled with development of higher self-esteem (Rhodes, 2015). Baams et al. (2018) add that this strategy is of paramount importance in curbing bullying as it helps provide opportunities for

LGBTQI and allied students to develop advocacy, sense of empowerment, pride and hope in everyday life.

#### **2.3.6.6 Induction programs**

SMT should also educate teachers and parents about bullying and effective classroom management with the aim to make it easier for them to recognize the victims of bullying and also to help come up with the strategies that could combat this health pandemic. According to Diliberti et al. (2019), in Australia, parents, counselors and teachers are taught about bullying through workshops and seminars. These workshops have proved to be helpful because community members can help spot bullying behaviours at their communities where teachers are not necessarily present. Furthermore, Lussier and Achua (2015) points out that an effective way to prevent bullying in schools and improve teaching and learning is to teach learners to build resilience and develop some life skills to withstand bullying. In this way, learners can inform their parents about their unpleasant experiences related to bullying. Lussier and Achua (2015) further argue that efforts that educate learners and teachers about bullying should be made by the SMT to influence change in learners' behaviour in order to prevent bullying incidences in schools. For example, the morning assembly can have presentations on bullying.

#### **2.3.6.7 Intervention strategies at the individual level**

Bullying prevention can start at the individual level. Teachers can help identify students who are at risk of engaging in bullying situations, whether the learner can become a potential victim or perpetrator. Once these learners are identified, teachers can teach them appropriate skills and educate potential bullies about bullying and its consequences. In this way, schools can prevent bullying even before it begins. Thornberg (2015a) points out that researchers have found that victims of bullying who developed assertiveness skills experienced reductions in bullying. Training victims on self-affirmation skills, helping emotions arising from being bullied, helping bullies empathize with their victims, and creating support groups with victims and bystanders are recommended as important parts of bullying prevention efforts (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). Thornberg (2015b) further argues that there should be programs aimed at developing compassion and empathy for others in relation to bullying in individual learners. Additionally, Thornberg (2018) argues that learners

who may be bullied need to learn self-advocacy skills and how to deal with the emotions that arise from being bullied. Furthermore, while helping to prevent bullying cases at school, bullies should also be dealt with in a way that makes them better people.

#### **2.3.6.8 Intervention strategies by teachers**

Fisher et al. (2018) suggest that teachers need to develop their own methods of dealing with bullying. Because teachers are often the most accessible people in schools, they are usually considered a key factor in reducing bullying and harming in the classroom (Hall, 2017). Teachers are the people with the ability to make classrooms safe places for learning (Ullman, 2016). However, they may not be prepared to stop or intervene in bullying until they have a strategy to follow. These strategies will help teachers to address cases of bullying as they come up rather than thinking about what to do all the time. Because of lack of classroom strategies, bullies take advantage of teachers' inability to deal with bullying. Garandeau et al. (2016) state that teacher's play an important role in making sure that school plans are aligned to their school needs. Therefore, this means that teachers need knowledge to become more diverse on bullying behaviours so as develop skills to see and identify bullies. Lekena (2016) recommends that teachers should be provided with professional development by the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) which center on different features of bullying that will help teachers to clearly understand bullying. Provision of professional development will equip teachers with different ways for addressing bullying in their respective classrooms through curriculum (Thornberg & Delby, 2019). This increases their confidence in developing strategies to curb bullying and intervene (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). Teachers need to be able to recognize bullying before they can prevent or intervene in its situations. They should also work with learners in class to develop class rules against bullying. Teachers can help learners on how to interact using different activities such as modeling and coaching. In addition, teachers can teach social skills, conflict resolution, anger management and character building to deter bullying in schools (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) suggest

that it is of paramount importance that teachers intervene in the bullying situations both in the classroom and on the playground. The teacher is at the front line of any attempt to deal with the problem successfully (Otto, 2016).

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

The chapter discussed the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Different definitions to operational words were also provided. Furthermore, the chapter discussed literature from different sources relating to bullying which revealed that bullying is very serious because it has life-threatening effects and that sometimes the effects last up to adulthood and can even affect the choices one makes in life.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research paradigm the study adopted along with its ontological and epistemological assumptions. The research approach and research design are also presented. Furthermore, the data collection tools are presented. Population and criteria for participants' selection are also fully unpacked. The chapter also presents the methods of data analysis, and how issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations were observed.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

According to Shukla and Satishprakash (2020), a paradigm is a universal or widespread theoretical adaptation of the world as well as the identity of the topic under study. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) also define a research paradigm as a way of understanding what is real in life and studying it.

The adopted paradigm for this study is interpretivist. According to Shukla and Satishprakash (2020), interpretivist is the process of making meaning from participants' real words. William (2016) also defines interpretivist paradigm as creating meaning, thus making meaning from the experiences of participants. Sefotho (2018) further points out that the interpretivist researchers seek to study the topic in depth so as to fully understand. Interpretivists do not pretend they know the whole truth instead they rely on the participants' responses.

In this study, the interpretivist paradigm is adopted because it sought not only to unpack the nature of bullying in Mafeteng schools but further necessitates an interpretation of the mechanisms SMT could use to curb this undesirable behaviour (Green, 2018). Walia (2015) further presents that through interpretivist paradigm, meanings are attached and understanding is deduced. That is, the researchers who follow the interpretivist paradigm are participant observers and take part in the activities and then interpret the meaning of actions as portrayed within the social context (Green, 2018).

### **3.2.1 Justification**

Interpretivist paradigm was used because it enabled the researcher to discover how participants make sense of their social world in their natural setting (Igwenagu, 2016). It enabled the researcher to understand how participants view bullying in their school. That is, the paradigm helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied from the participants themselves. Different meanings and views were gathered from participants relating to bullying and the strategies that could be taken to combat it.

### **3.2.1 Ontological Assumptions**

Campbell (2020) states that ontology is concerned with the kind of world we live in; it is basically the logical study of what exists. It is concerned with the question of how the world is built (Adedoyin, 2020). The ontological assumptions of interpretivism paradigm are anchored on the idea that knowledge is cordially established (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The knowledge aspired to be unearthed in this study relates to what most learners, irrespective of their age, gender and experience, go through in schools. Thus, the researcher intended to explore SMT, learners and teachers' narratives and perceptions about bullying and how it could be curtailed.

### **3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions**

Campbell (2020) defines epistemology as a process of comprehension as well as interpreting what we know. Its concern is on giving theoretical grounding for determining the sort of understanding or knowledge possible and how we can justify its existence (Godwin, 2017). The epistemological assumption held by interpretive paradigm is that knowledge is made through maintaining a mutual connection between the researcher and the participant (Rehman & Alharti, 2016). The researcher interacted with SMT members, learners and teachers, to gather information relating to bullying in schools which allowed her, through the study, to create new knowledge.

## **3.3 Research Approach**

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Morgan and Ravitch (2020) define qualitative research as a one that seeks to understand why a particular

observable behaviour is happening. Qualitative research attempts to explain situations and why they are happening since it focuses on participants' words. It allows the researcher to ask questions that cannot be addressed in a quantitative research and works on items that cannot be interpreted in quantitative research like thought and experiences (Flick, 2018; Silverman, 2017).

Qualitative research is also defined by Rose and Johnson (2020) as analyzing the texts, which are non-numerical to clearly understand the concepts, opinions or experiences of participants. Marshall and Rossman (2016) also define qualitative research as a study that focuses on the lived experiences of the people. Sources of qualitative data comprise of observation, interviews and written descriptions of people, events, opinions, attitudes and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

### **3.3.1 Justification for the choice**

Qualitative approach was more suitable in this study because it permitted the researcher to investigate the distinctive experiences of the participants (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). It also allows the researcher to gather complete information of the phenomena studied in participants' natural setting (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Qualitative research affords the researcher rich and full descriptions of the participants' feelings, judgment and what they actually have gone through (Fletcher, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Qualitative approach was best because it allowed me to fully explore and understand bullying in schools as it gives the researcher the permission to seek further clarifications. In this research, qualitative approach enabled me to make sense of reality as it addresses the how and why of the study.

Qualitative research was also deemed suitable as it is interactive in nature and generates the space that is likely to bring out personalised understandings and experiences (Rahman, 2017). Qualitative research creates a safe environment for respondents to be free to discuss what they have been through without any fear (Antwi & Hanza, 2018).

### **3.4 Research Design**

Research design consists of research methods and techniques selected by a researcher to conduct a study (Shukla & Satishprakash, 2016). This study adopted a

qualitative case study design, which is defined as in-depth examinations of people or groups of people (Shukla & Satishprakash, 2016). Gonzalez and Forister (2020) also define a case study as the type of research whose main objective is to clearly understand what a person, a group, or community has gone through. In this study, some learners have been victims of bullying, as a result researcher intends to find out the effects of bullying. Glesne (2016) adds that the case study allows the researcher to explore the key characteristics and what is implied about the phenomenon. Qualitative case study allowed me to gain concrete, in-depth information on bullying incidents from selected four secondary schools in the Mafeteng district (Yazan, 2015). This approach helped one to understand the extent of bullying Mafeteng secondary schools and to suggest best practices to mitigate its prevalence.

### **3.4.1 Justification of the choice**

Case study was employed because it allowed description and understanding of different aspects of the research problem from different opinions of participants (Busseto, 2020). Gopaldas (2016) explains that a qualitative case study gives a chance for the issue to be studied in detail. Walia (2015) also mentions that case studies have the ability to intensify or strengthen understanding of the research phenomenon. Busseto (2020) further indicates that a case study design attempts to achieve broad understanding of the people taking part in a study to construct meaning of the phenomenon under study. The study sought to investigate bullying incidences, their consequences together with the mitigating strategies.

## **3.5 Data collection tools**

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate the data. Interviews are a data collection method where the researcher and the participants talk face-to-face (Arifin, 2018). Adhabi and Anozie (2017) indicate that researchers make use of interviews to get comprehensive or in-depth information about the phenomenon under study. The authors further point out that interviews give the researcher the chance to seek clarification on issues presented by the participants. As a consequence, semi-structured interviews give the participants a chance to elaborate more on the issues discussed. Interviews form the main part of data collection tools in qualitative research as they give participants and the researcher a chance to talk through the

situation being observed from their points of view (Anderson 2017). Semi-structured interviews help in soliciting knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs of participants on the subject under study (Schweizer et al., 2016). In this way, the richest data was gathered with greater depth (Gopaldas, 2016). The use of semi-structured interviews was very important in this study because it provided a chance to gather quality information and to get in-depth information about the phenomena.

A set of questions in the form of an interview schedule were designed to lead the interview process. To generate data, the questions were planned ahead and arranged in the correct order in relation to the research questions in Chapter 1 (see Appendices H and I).

To put this into operation, the researcher planned times and dates for the interviews. The interview schedule was also created for each group of participants. All interviews were audio-recorded using a mobile phone.

### **3.6 Population**

Population is defined as a group of people that the researcher is interested in (Clark & Braun, 2017; Creswell 2016). Silverman (2017) also explains population as a group of people from which the representative sample will be extracted. In this study, 14 secondary schools in Mafeteng district became the population from which the participants were selected.

### **3.7 Participants selection**

Only four schools were selected for this study. These four were within reach to the researcher hence there were chosen. Twenty six participants took part in the study.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Dana and Turner (2020) state that purposive sampling is choosing of participants by the researcher based on some characteristics the researcher is interested in. In this study, all participants were purposefully selected as they carried characteristics that were needed to conduct this study. In purposive sampling researchers use their personal judgment to select a group of participants given the knowledge they have (Norman & James, 2020). Jilcha (2019) also add that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who would provide valuable data. Thus, purposive sampling was used

as it ensured that only respondents who could contribute to the study were included. For example, in this study, SMT members were selected because they are mandated to help in effective school administration and as such their contributions could be vital towards the issue of bully-free schools. Teachers were selected because of their proximity to learners. As such, they could easily understand and relate to what is exactly happening on daily basis. Furthermore, one head prefect per school was selected to participate in the study because he/she is a leader. As a result, he or she could help to unravel the least known learner experiences because they are closer to the action, and suggest specific strategies that could be used to curb rampant bullying in schools. A learner from each school was selected because it was believed that they are often the bystanders during bullying incidences or could even be a victim of bullying. Below are the tables demonstrating a summary of the profile of each participant. It should be noted that the participants' names are not their real names.

**Table 1:** SMT PARTICIPANTS

<b>Names</b>	<b>Work experience</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Position held</b>
Mr. Mahlomola	2 years	A	Principal
Mr. Lillo	2 years	A	HOD
Mrs Fuluoane	5 years	A	Deputy
Mr. Ebola	5 years	B	Principal
Mr. Jerry	2 years	B	HOD
Mr. Pondo	6 years	B	Deputy Principal
Mr. Ranooe	2 years	C	Principal
Mr. Malope	6 years	C	HOD
Mrs. Sekake	10 years	D	Principal
Mr. Ramalefane	3 years	D	HOD

**NOTE:** some schools have only two members of SMT because they are so small that there are no deputy principals.

**Table 2:** Learner and prefects participants

Names	Grade	Sex	School	Position at school
Serapa	11	Female	A	Head prefect
Rapa	9	Male	A	Grade 9
Malefu	11	Female	B	Head prefect
Sello	9	Male	B	Grade 9
Mosoeunyane	10	Male	C	Head prefect
Molemo	8	Male	C	Grade 8
Refiloe	11	Male	D	Head prefect
Serialong	9	Male	D	Grade 9

**Table 3:** Teacher Participants

Names	Experience	School
Ms. Sebongile	12 years	A
Mrs. Seruo	2 years	A
Mr. Lepheo	22 years	B
Mrs Reaboka	4 years	B
Mr. Siloane	6 years	C
Ms. Lefika	11 years	C
Mr. Mohapi	15 years	D
Ms. Kedibone	5 years	D

### 3.8 Data analysis

According to Creswell (2016), data analysis is described as the action of creating logic and meaning from information that amounts to the results of the research. This study employed thematic analysis to analyse data. Thematic analysis is a systematic process whereby the researcher goes through the transcribed data derived from

interviews in search of meaning and patterns (Michelle et al., 2020). Braun and Clarke (2006) also define thematic analysis as identifying themes or patterns in a qualitative data that are important in addressing the phenomenon under study. The data was studied to determine themes, ideas and patterns that were important or interesting and these were used to address the issue. Data gathered from participants was explained in connection with the research questions stated in Chapter One (see Section 1.6). According to Creswell (2016), Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis consists of the following six stages which were adhered to.

### **Stage 1: Familiarisation with the data obtained**

A mobile phone was used to record the interviews. After the interviews, data was transcribed (see Appendix L). In order to create meaning out of the data obtained, the researcher repeatedly read through and listened to the recordings to ensure data correctness. This enable the researcher to be confident about the correctness of identified patterns from the data (Flick, 2018). Hence, this led to spending time scrutinizing the data to familiarize myself with the information which was later on was developed into the themes.

### **Stage 2: Generating codes obtained**

This is where the data was organized and arranged in a way that is meaningful and systematic. In order to identify patterns, the coding of data was done manually by writing notes on texts that were being analyzed and scribbling ideas using a pencil and highlighters. Coding was then done to reduce lots of data into small chunks and meaning (Nowell et al., 2017). Each piece of data was coded only if it was relevant or captured something interesting about the research questions (Nowell et al., 2017). Different highlighters were used to code and the codes were put together in a systematic fashion. After this process, I was able to place the information into meaningful groups (Caulfield, 2019). In addition to that, the grouping of data that had the same meaning in the data set was done and grouped together (Caulfield, 2019).

### **Stage 3: Finding Themes**

This is the stage where themes are collected and arranged into potential codes and data which is relevant to the theme (Caulfield, 2019). Bree and Gallagher (2016)

explain that a theme captures something that is important or interesting about the data. Bree and Gallagher (2016) further state that a theme should be relevant to the research question. In this study, the codes were examined and some of them generated themes. For example, a lot of data that highlighted the effects of bullying, was coded and the theme “effects of bullying” was developed (see Figure 4 below).

**Figure 4: Coding process**

Data extract	Coded for
<i>In my class I have noticed that the bullied learner will start missing school, it has actually happened whereby this particular boy had been bullied verbally here at school because of his sexual orientation and then after school they waited for him claiming that they wanted to straighten him. So the bullied guy stated missing school</i>	1.The effects of bullying on the victim 2.The nature of bullying

In the above example, the yellow colour during the coding process was used to show the effects of bullying on the victim and the blue color was used to show the nature of bullying during the coding process. A more detailed table showing clearly the themes and sub-themes generated is in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3).

#### **Stage 4: Reviewing Themes**

At this stage, the themes identified in step 3 were reviewed, modified and developed and then checked if they made sense. The researcher collected together all the data that was relevant to each theme (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). At this stage, the developed themes were checked in relation to how they related to the coded extracts. The researcher then read data associated with each theme and checked whether the data supported the themes (Javadi & Zarea, 2016).

#### **Stage 5: Naming and defining the Themes obtained**

This is the stage where the data from participants was reviewed and then refined. Particular themes were then specified and named. This clarified and singled out each theme independently (Caulfield, 2019).

### **Stage 6: Generating a Report**

The final step in thematic analysis is generating a report. The researcher in this study engaged herself rigorously with the data acquired through the interviews and then generated themes. Codes were used which made it possible to identify features of the data that appeared interesting (Michelle et al., 2020). The themes were cross-referenced against the research questions, objectives and theoretical framework to ensure that the data corresponded with the study focus.

## **3.9 Integrity of the study**

### **3.9.1 Ethical considerations**

According to Cameroon (2018), ethics are defined as a particular conduct or manners that are controlled by a person or set of people or community. Hammersley (2020) also states that ethics are believed or assumed to work on what is seen to be morally good or incorrect, proper and what is not proper. Hammersley (2020) further indicates that in research, ethical consideration is defined as steps a researcher follows when carrying out a study to ensure that respondents will not be subjected to any harm and that their dignity is respected and protected. In this study, permission was requested from the District Education Office in Mafeteng (see Appendix A) to conduct the research at the purposively selected schools. Invitation letters (see Appendix B and C) were also issued to purposefully select participants and they were also informed of the purpose of the study. Voluntary participation was allowed and participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw if ever they wanted to. Furthermore, the researcher sought permission to record participants.

### **3.9.2 Informed consent**

Teachers and other participants in the research were given consent forms which clearly stated what the research entailed. Parents of learners who also took part in the research were also given consent forms. Permission was granted by Mafeteng

District Education Office to conduct the research in the selected schools. The School Boards of the participating schools were also given letters requesting permission to conduct the study. Basically, no one was forced to take part in the study (see Appendices, A, B, D and G).

### **3.9.3 Confidentiality**

In order to ensure confidentiality, all respondents were assured that no one would know about anything they were discussing with the researcher. It was also explained to them that the information they gave would only be used for the purpose of the research. They were also informed that their personal information such as the identity and names of the schools would not be disclosed (see Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4). Lastly, the use of offensive or discriminatory language was avoided during the formulation of interview questions.

### **3.9.4 Trustworthiness**

This is defined as procedures taken by the researcher in an attempt to prove that the findings of the study are true and can be trusted (Dludla, 2020). It is also defined by Huberts (2018) as the transparency which the researcher portrays in data analysis. Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is based on determining whether the findings are accurate. Trustworthiness has four components, being credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability, which were taken into account.

### **3.9.5 Credibility**

Credibility is defined by Silverman (2017) as how true the results are with the findings. Lemon and Hayes (2020), also define credibility as the rate at which a research design is credible and suitable, with certain or specific reference to the level of agreement between respondents and the person undertaking the study. To ensure credibility, the transcribed data was shared with the respondents so that they could certify and verify the information before it could be analysed. Regular discussions were also held with the participants so as to member check data. Furthermore, the researcher intensively engaged with the recordings, notes and transcripts to demonstrate clear links between the data and interpretations.

### **3.9.6 Dependability**

It is the whether the findings can be consistent or repeatable under any condition (Silverman, 2017). To ensure that the study produces the same results consistently in the same issue or context, the participants were not coerced to use a particular language but were allowed to use either Sesotho or English. All study methodology was documented including procedures for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis throughout the study.

### **3.9.7 Transferability**

Silverman (2017) explains transferability as the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study can be generalized or moved to other contexts or settings. Lemon & Hays (2020) also define transferability in a research as the extent to which the findings can be generalized or passed on to other circumstances or settings. Transferability of the results was ensured by giving full explanation of the research methods, the number of participants together with data collection techniques. The researcher also described the research in detail as well as beliefs that were at the core of the study so that a person who wants to “transfer” the findings to another study in a similar context will take responsibility for judging how realistic or practical the transfer is.

### **3.9.8 Conformability**

Conformability is the objectivity of the researcher to make sure that the results of the research are molded by the participants and not on the researcher personal opinions and feelings (Rahman, 2021). It is there to justify that the results are from data collected from participants and analyzed by the researcher (Rahman, 2021). In order to achieve conformability of the study, a complete explanation of the research design has been provided to other researchers with a detailed audit trail in case they want to carry out the same research in different contexts. Also, while presenting the findings, the direct quotes from participants’ text are provided to illustrate how both interpretations and conclusions were drawn (see Chapter 4).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The chapter dealt with the research paradigm employed in the study together with ontological and epistemological assumptions. Additionally, the research approach, data collection tools and design were also presented in this chapter. The criterion by which participants were selected was also unpacked. Lastly, the chapter elaborated on how themes were generated from the collected dada.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Presentation of the Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study is to establish the nature of bullying and ways of supporting victims of bullying. It further aspires to suggest best practices that the SMT could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools for creation of safe school environments that will enable effective teaching and learning. This chapter presents data obtained from the participants. Thematic analysis is used and it is in line with the research questions and objectives stated in Chapter 1. The data was collected from the four purposively selected schools in Mafeteng.

#### **4.2 Description of the research site**

The study was undertaken in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. Mafeteng is located in the semi-rural areas in the southern part of the capital city of Lesotho, Maseru. Mafeteng is a district highly known for violence in Lesotho as it has been shown in the first chapter (see Section 1.3). The study was carried out in the northern part of Mafeteng on the outskirts of town. The schools sampled were those within reach of the researcher.

#### **4.3 Findings of the study**

Below are the themes and sub-themes that were generated during the coding stage.

**Table 4:** Themes and sub-themes

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Nature of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal bullying</li><li>• Physical bullying</li><li>• Social exclusion</li></ul>	4.3.1
The impact of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Missing school</li><li>• Dropping out</li><li>• Lack of concentration in class</li></ul>	4.3.2

Support for the victims of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Punishment of the bullies</li> <li>• No support at all to the victims</li> </ul>	4.3.3
Strategies that could be used to curb bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expulsion</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Teaching learners about bullying</li> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>	4.3.4

#### **4.3.1 The nature of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools**

Participants revealed that bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools is prevalent. Further scrutiny of data revealed that bullying manifests itself through three main types/forms. These types of bullying are categorized as sub-themes and discussed below.

##### **Sub-theme 4.3.1.1: Verbal bullying**

From the interviews, most participants indicated that verbal bullying is the most dominant type of bullying. When asked to explain the nature of bullying in their schools, participants indicated that it starts with verbal bullying. They further responded that it starts from name calling in classes in the absence of teachers. The following extracts highlight statements from the data collected during which participants were asked what kind of bullying normally takes place in their schools.

*...It was a case whereby Grade 9 learners' bullied Grade 8 learners claiming that they were not clean enough to be in high school and that they smelled. They were actually calling them names. (Mr Mahlomola, Principal and SMT member: School A)*

*Learners in our school normally belittle each other by calling each other names and, as If that is not enough, we normally get reports that the bullies*

*even wait for the victims after school to beat them up. (Mr. Lillo, HOD: School A)*

*...they were calling him names and talking of how he could not afford a girl like that one... (Mr Seruoe, teacher school A)*

*They would call me names, telling me how poor I was and claimed that I could not afford any girl. (Rapa, learner: school A)*

*Only this year in my Grade 8 class...there is this boy who looks like a mixed race...half Mosotho and half something else... so this boy is always wearing a hat to cover his curly hair...and this one time some learner grabbed the hat just to spite him... and his friend reported the matter to me as a class teacher. I had to call the bully and the one who was being bullied only to find out that he is always wearing a head to cover his hair because they were calling him names because of it. (Mrs. Reaboka, teacher: school B)*

*These learners normally call each other names, in most cases it is older boys who beat and call new comers names. (Ms Lefika, teacher: school C)*

*Yes. Learners bully each other every day. There has been this one case whereby the Grade 8 learner, by then she used to use mask every day to cover her mouth, even when the government had told us to stop wearing masks. Only to find out later that this particular girl had had operations on her mouth due to cancer and some girl who stayed with her at the village had told others that she had no lips and they started calling her names and making fun of her. (Mr. Ranooe, Principal: School C)*

#### **Sub-theme 4.3.1.2: Physical bullying**

Most participants indicated that physical bullying normally takes place after school hours in the absence of teachers. The results revealed that in most cases it happens between boys as girls are often bullied verbally.

They cited as follows:

*However, there was also physical bullying because some of the Grade 9 boys even waited after school to beat some of the Grade 8 boys. (MR. Mahlomola, Principal: school A)*

*....and it escalated to physical bullying as they waited for him after school to beat him up. (Mr Seruoe, teacher: school A)*

*... they even waited for me after school to beat me up (Rapa Grade 9 learner: school A)*

*...boys beat each other after school because they believe that beating one up boosts their manhood. (Pondo, Deputy Principal: school B)*

*...learners here physically and verbally abuse each other. Normally it starts as verbal bullying and then later on escalates to physical bullying and in most cases boys are the ones who physically bully each other (Mr Siloane, teacher: school C)*

*...This one time some guy had told him to stop calling him a sissy and he waited for him after school with his friends from the village and then beat him. (Selloane, head prefect: school C)*

*...with boys its physical bullying. (Mr.Ranooe, Principal: school C)*

*These boys sometimes fear going home on their own because that's where bullies take advantage of the idea that they are alone and beat them up. (Mr. Ramalefane, HOD: school D)*

*Apparently they sometimes pinched her to see if the skin will change colour (Mrs. Sekake, principal: school D)*

#### **Sub theme 4.3.1.3: Social exclusion**

Some participants showed that social exclusion also takes place in their schools. They explained that in some cases they are excluded by other learners in activities they would like to take part in. In some cases they are excluded from class group discussions. Participants revealed that they are sometimes excluded because of

sexual orientation, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation, albinism or the fact that they have not undergone initiation school.

Below are their responses:

*...these learners sometimes refuse to play with those they believe come from poor families. I have seen cases whereby they will even refuse to sit with those they believe are less fortunate in one table just to share school work with. (Ms. Sebongile, teacher: school A)*

*.....And to them looks matter too. This one time they had refused to play with one girl and their excuse was that she was too ugly. (Mr Lepheo, teacher: school B)*

*... and sometimes call me evil and refuse to be with me in groups if ever we were grouped together. (Molemo, learner: school C)*

*It has actually happened whereby this particular boy had been bullied verbally here at school because of his sexual orientation and then after school they waited for him claiming that they wanted to straighten him. So the bullied guy started missing school. (Mr Siloane, teacher: school C)*

*Some of them refused to eat with her in one bowl in the hostels like they usually do while others would shout out in the night asking her to go out at night so that they can see if she will change colour. (Mrs. Sekake, Principal, school D)*

*...to them it is as if albinism is contagious and so they refused to share anything with her. (Mrs. Sekake, Principal: school D)*

*....they claim they will not sit or play with boys who have not undergone initiation because they do not understand their language. (Mr. Malope, HOD: school C)*

### **4.3.2 The impact of bullying**

The participants mentioned that bullying has some negative effects on the victims. Further analysis of the data revealed the following sub-themes: missing of classes, dropping out of school and loss of concentration. These sub-themes are discussed below.

#### **Sub theme 4.3.2.1: Missing school**

Most participants indicated that as a result of bullying, some victims begin to miss school because of fear for their lives. Participants even revealed that they sometimes had to make excuses to their guardians just so they could miss school.

*... I don't think the learner was okay because he stopped coming to school for some time. (Mr Seruoe, teacher: school A)*

*The victim explained later on that he had stopped coming to school because he feared that they would bully him again. (Mr. Seruoe, teacher: school A)*

*My grades started dropping and I started missing school a lot. I would wake up and lie to my grandmother that I was sick and she would allow me to stay at home. (Rapa, learner: school A)*

*....Most of them miss school and when we do follow ups we often find that it is because they feared brother whoever in Grade 11. (Mr Seruoe, teacher: school A)*

*I think the victim was not okay because he often skipped school and could not concentrate in class but we did not know what the problem was. It only made sense after we found out about the issue. (Mr. Ebola Principal: school B)*

*It is so unfortunate; bullying is so serious that it even affects attendance of the learner which then affects their academic performance. (Mr. Jerry, HOD: school B)*

*...I missed school a lot and always pretended to be sick. (Sello, learner: school B)*

*...in my class I have noticed that the bullied learner will start missing school.*  
(Mr Siloane, teacher: school C)

*...because they are new in school, they start fearing school very much and sometimes even miss it.* (Miss Kedibone, teacher: school D)

*... At first I thought it was normally what was done to Grade 8 learners, but still it scared me and sometimes I would hide in the village and not come to school. Until I told my teacher and he handled it.* (Serialong, learner: school D)

#### **Sub-theme 4.3.2.2: Dropping out**

Data collected revealed that bullying is also the reason why some learners drop out of school. Participants mentioned that sometimes due to bullying, victims start dropping out of school, because they do not feel safe. These responses were shared:

*...I had to give the parent the transfer letter to another school because she claimed that the child did not want to come back to school when she was at home during month end. At first she pretended to be sick and later on told her parents the truth. So the mother had already made a decision to take her child to another school because she felt that ours was not safe enough. So there was no convincing the parent to give us another chance.* (Mrs Sekake, Principal: school D)

*...We even had two dropouts due to bullying.* (Miss Reaboka, HOD: school B)

*...It is actually sad that we only found out that some of our learners were dropping out because of being bullied.* (Mr. Ramalefane, HOD: school D)

*...Our school has lost brilliant learners because of this pandemic called bullying.* (Mr Mohapi, teacher: school D)

#### **Sub-theme 4.3.2.3: Lack of concentration in class**

Some of the effects of bullying on the victim, as pointed out by participants, is lack of concentration and productivity in class. They pointed out that some victims totally get

lost in class up to a point where it gets difficult for them to participate. These were some of the responses:

*I felt small, hated school and could hardly concentrate in class because being bullied was all I could think about.* (Rapa, learner: school A)

*...could not concentrate in class but we did not know what the problem was.* (Mr. Ebola, principal: school B)

*... I could not hear what was being said in class because my body was there but my mind elsewhere; I could not concentrate.* (Sello, learner: school B)

#### **4.3.3 Support for the victims of bullying**

One of the research questions sought to find out how the victims of bullying are supported in schools and participants indicated that teachers sometimes counsel them to accept themselves and to also overcome the trauma. Other participants explained that victims are given a chance to choose the kind of punishment they want to their bullies to get while other participants felt beating bullies was the appropriate punishment. They explained that punishing bullies soothes the victims. With the above in perspective, the sub-themes presented below emerged from the data.

##### **Sub-theme 4.3.3.1: Counseling**

Some participants pointed out that they counsel the victims after the whole trauma. They said this was because they had knowledge of the long-term and short-term effects of bullying. Some SMT members pointed out they use Life skills teachers to counsel bullied learners while others claimed that they make learners aware of bullying during the assembly.

*...Support? Okay...Because I'm a Life skills teacher, what I normally do is to take the victims and try to counsel them.* (Mr Siloane, teacher: school C)

*...had to sit the bullied down and told him to accept himself.* (Miss Kedibone, teacher: school B)

*...we asked Life skills teachers to help with putting the victim well as in most cases these learners feel free to talk to them. (Mr Lepheo, teacher: school B)*

*As a way of counseling the victims, I remember, I had to narrate the story of creation to them just so I could make them realize that they were like God themselves. That also made bullies aware that they were mocking what God has made in his image. (Mrs. Sekake, Principal: school D)*

*...the principal had this one time told me to read Genesis and told me that I should not be ashamed of who I am and that I was like the image of God. (Serialong, learner: school D)*

#### **Sub-theme 4.3.3.2: Punishment of bullies**

From the data collected, most participants indicated that what is often done is to punish the bullies. Most participants believed that when bullies are punished, the victims feel much better.

*...Bullies were beaten in front of them and the victims were seen smiling when they were watching victims being beaten. (Mr Seruo, teacher: school A)*

*I saw them lying on the table being beaten by every teacher in the staffroom. That made me very happy. (Rapa, learner: school A)*

*We called the victim and told him to next time report the matter and also told him that the boy who was bullying him will never be coming to school for some time as a way of being punished. (Mr. Ebola, Principal: school B)*

*...and I also asked other teachers to help punish the bullies. (Mr Siloane, Life skills teacher: school C)*

*What we normally do is, we ask the victims to choose the kind of punishment they want their bullies to get. (Miss Reaboka, teacher: School D)*

#### **Sub-theme 4.3.3.3: No support for the victims**

Some participants indicated that no support is given to the victims. Others spoke bitterly of how there was nothing done to the bullies in their school. These were some of their responses:

*In my school, we are not supported at all and the bullies are always set free hence they do it time and again.* (Molemo, learner: school C)

*...Nothing is done hence they always carry on bullying others.* (Mrs. Mohapi teacher: school D)

#### **4.4.4 Strategies that could be used to curb bullying**

Bullying is believed to be a pandemic in most schools, which needs to be controlled or even stopped. In an effort to suppress bullying in schools, the study also aimed to find strategies that could be used to curb it. The sub-themes that emerged are: expulsion, the teaching of learners about bullying, having policies that address bullying, counseling and suspension.

##### **Sub-theme 4.4.4.1: Expulsion**

Participants were of the view that bullies should be expelled from school in order to guarantee that the teaching and learning environment is safe for all. Most of these participants argued that bullies threatened a healthy school environment. However, some argued that it is against the law to expel learners. These were some of the responses:

*The school should simply expel those who bully others to make sure the learning environment is safe.* (Serapa, head prefect: school A)

*Expulsion is the best strategy.* (Mr Lillo, HOD: school A)

*...they should have been expelled so that we could be free. Even in future, bullies should honestly be expelled from schools so that others are free to learn.* (Rapa, learner: school A)

*We are aware that every child has a right to education, however those who bully others should just be expelled.* (Mrs. Sello, Deputy Principal, school A)

*Learner should not be expelled as that is against the law.* (Mr. Seruoe, teacher: school A)

*It is important to create a safe environment for teaching and learning, so that anyone who threatens others is expelled from this school. (Mr. Ebola, Principal: school B)*

*...We honestly believe in zero tolerance against bullying in this school. So what we normally do is to expel those who bully others. (Mr. Lepheo, teacher: school B)*

*...They make me sick. They should be expelled. (Mr. Ebola, Principal: school B)*

*They should stay at home and not make others fear school. (Mr. Ebola, Principal: school B)*

*I would advise the management to expel bullies so as to create a safe space for teaching and learning. (Miss Kedibone, teacher: school B)*

*I say bullies should be expelled from school because they create unsafe learning environment for us who want to learn. (Sello, learner: school B)*

*...I think the school should immediately expel those who make others feel unworthy. (Mosoeunyane, head prefect: school C)*

*...and again I think the bullies should be expelled and the victims taken for counselling. (Serialong, learner: school C)*

*...I think people who hurt others should be expelled. (Molemo, learner: school C)*

*I cannot think of anything except Expulsion. (Mr. Ramalefane, HOD: school D)*

#### **Sub-theme 4.4.4.2: Suspension**

Some participants raised the point that at least bullies should be suspended from schools. Others indicated that suspension will make those bullies to think of what they have done and maybe consider repenting.

*...Expelling a child from school is too much; rather I suggest learners should be suspended. (Mr. Lillo, HOD: school A)*

*....Being out of school will somehow make the learner think of what they have done and maybe he/she will come back a better person. (Mr. Lillo, HOD: school A)*

*Bullying does make us mad but honestly, expelling is too much. Rather scare the bully by making him stay at home for two weeks or so. (Mr. Pondo, Deputy Principal: school B).*

#### **Sub-theme 4.4.4.3: Teaching learners about bullying**

Participants also pointed out that schools should teach learners about bullying. They stated that teaching about bullying in classrooms is vital because it helps prevent issues in the classroom and creates a welcoming environment. They stated as follows:

*As another way of curbing bullying in schools, these learners need to be taught about bullying in classrooms as that will help create a welcoming environment....Once they know about the effects of bullying they will maybe start treating each other better. (Mr. Jerry, HOD: school B)*

*I think what can be done is...learners should be well taught about the effects of bullying because some of them just take it lightly. (Molemo, learner: school C)*

*...We should also teach these learners about bullying because some of them honestly do not know. They think it's normal for some things to happen. (Mr. Mahlomola, teacher: school A)*

*...learners should be taught about bullying and its effects. (Malope, HOD: school C)*

#### **Sub-theme 4.4.4.4: Inception of anti-bullying policies**

Other participants emphasized that schools should formulate policies that clearly address bullying and stated that they could perhaps help curb bullying. They stated that the policies they have should be revised. Their responses were as follows:

*...I think as principals, what we can do is develop policies that are against bullying and actually follow them. (Mr Mahlomola, Principal: school A)*

*... I think SMT should think of other ways of punishing bullies other than whipping them... have policies that address bullying. (Mr Seruo, teacher: school A)*

*I think the government should give schools policies regarding bullying to follow, so that we cannot do anything against the law. (Mr. Malope, HOD: school C)*

*I think the policies we have should be followed and revised. (Mrs Sekake, Principal: school D)*

*The policies we have now are very old and do not address the issue of bullying because it was really not an issue then, so the school should formulate others. (Mohapi, teacher: school D)*

#### **Sub-Theme 4.4.4 5: Establishment of Counseling Unit**

Participants also pointed out that there is a need to establish counseling units in schools .They said schools should have professional counselors who will help to deal with issues of bullying. Participants pointed out that counseling sessions will be for bullies, victims and bystanders. Some pointed out that certain counseling sessions could help the victims with coping mechanisms to help avoid suicides. They also pointed out that counseling could help control acts of bullying and prevent mental health issues, and some advised that new comers should be counseled. These were their responses:

*...If only we were allowed to raise school fees. I would honestly hire professional counselors to help out because honestly speaking, bullying is so serious that some of its effects are long-term. The counseling sessions will also be for the bullies, victims and bystanders. (Mr, Mahlomola, Principal: school A)*

*...also think of having counseling sessions for the victims and the bullies. These bullies sometimes bully because of anger from home and so they take it out on others. (Mr. Malope, HOD: school C)*

*Honestly speaking, I think the bullies too need counseling. These kids are growing in an environment that is toxic and they are angry, so some of them need punching backs to take out their anger. So why not listen to them too and counsel them instead of being all mad at them? ...Don't you think they are also seeking for some attention? As a way of curbing bullying, let's also take them to counseling. (Ms. Sebongile, teacher: school A)*

*Our kids are very fragile hence they always think of killing themselves whenever something goes wrong. So counseling sessions will help them with coping strategies. The sessions will also help because the victims will not think of doing to others what was done to them. (Mrs. Sello, Deputy Principal: school A)*

*Counseling sessions will also help with prevention of mental health which is a result of bullying. (Refiloe, head prefect: school D)*

*I wish I could have been counseled first before actually being in class and being attacked. Primary school was nice and things like this did not happen. (Serialong,, learner: school D)*

#### **4.5 Summary of the findings**

The table below shows a summary of the findings.

**Table 5:** Summary of the findings

Themes	Sub-Themes	Findings	References
Nature of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal bullying</li><li>• Physical bullying</li><li>• Social exclusion</li></ul>	Dominant type of bullying  Happens outside school compounds and dominant among boys	4.31

		Often done to learners who appear to look different from others or behave differently	
The impact of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing school</li> <li>• Dropping out</li> <li>• Lack of concentration in class</li> </ul>	<p>Most victims begin to miss school as a result of fear</p> <p>Some victims choose to drop out as a result of being bullied; they transfer to other schools</p> <p>As a result of being bullied, some victims do not concentrate in class and that affects their academic performance</p>	4.32
Support for the victims of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Punishment of the bullies</li> <li>• No support at all to the victims</li> </ul>	<p>As a way of comforting the victims of bullying, counseling should be given to them to deal with the trauma</p> <p>Punishing of the bullies could also act as a form of support for the victims</p> <p>Painfully, some of the victims are not given support at all</p>	4.33
Strategies that could be used to curb bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expulsion</li> </ul>	<p>Participants stated that bullies should be expelled so as to create a safe environment for those who want to learn</p> <p>Some participants</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Teaching learners about bullying</li> <li>• Counseling</li> <li>• Suspension</li> </ul>	<p>recommended policies to be implemented with the aim to curb bullying in schools</p> <p>Some stated that learners should be taught about bullying as that will help them know about the long and short-term- effects of bullying</p> <p>Counseling of bullies, victims and bystanders of bullying to help curb bullying</p> <p>Some participants pointed out bullies should be suspended from schools to give time to think of whether they want to be in schools or not</p>	
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#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

Chapter 4 gave a description of the study site and also presented the themes and sub-themes that were generated during the coding stage. Lastly the chapter presented a summary of the findings. In brief, the summary shows that the most common forms of bullying in the participating schools are verbal bullying, physical bullying and social exclusion. In addition, the findings revealed the impact of bullying

on victims, and ways of supporting them were also suggested. Even more important, and as a long-term intervention, strategies that could be used to curb bullying in schools were proposed.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Discussion, Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of the study was to determine the strategies that SMTs could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools for effective teaching and learning to happen. The main focus of this chapter is to present the discussions, conclusion and recommendations based on the literature review in Chapter 2 and the findings in Chapter 4. Furthermore, an overview and the limitations of the study are given in this chapter.

#### **5.2 Overview of the study**

##### **Chapter One**

Chapter One gave the introduction and the background of the study, and the main research questions and subsidiary questions. The aim of the research and a brief presentation of the theoretical framework underpinning the study were also provided. The chapter highlighted the significance of this study and also briefly introduced the research design and methodology. Lastly, the chapter provided a brief overview of issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

##### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two provided the theoretical background that underpinned the study as well as the literature review.

##### **Chapter Three**

This chapter focused on the research paradigm, and its ontological and epistemological assumptions. It also discussed research design and approach in detail. Data collection tools and data analysis methods were also fully discussed in this chapter. Moreover, detailed steps on ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness were presented.

##### **Chapter Four**

Chapter Four presented the data and the findings of the study.

## Chapter Five

This chapter concludes the study and presents the discussion and conclusion. The limitations of the study are as well highlighted. The chapter ends with the recommendations that emanate from the study.

### **5.3 A brief description of the research questions and objectives of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to establish the strategies that could be used by SMTs to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools for effective teaching and learning. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain deeper knowledge and understanding of the topic. The study was guided by the following overarching research question and the four subsidiary research questions:

#### **Main research question:**

- *What best practices could SMT use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?*

#### **Subsidiary research questions:**

- *What is the nature of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?*
- *What is the impact of bullying on the victims?*
- *How could the victims of bullying be supported in schools?*
- *Which administrative strategies could SMT use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools?*

### **5.4 Major findings and discussion**

#### **5.4.1: Nature of bullying**

The findings of the study revealed that learners experience different types of bullying. Participants showed that verbal bullying and physical bullying are the most common types of bullying in their schools. These findings resonate with Espalage (2018) who states that among all forms of bullying, verbal bullying and physical bullying are the most common in schools. In addition, the participants further showed that social exclusion is occasionally experienced. They reiterated that some learners exclude others even in group works assigned by teachers. This finding also correlates with Tharishim and Baker's (2021) assertion that social bullying is mainly

characterized by exclusion of victims by bullies in various activities. This therefore implies that the learners go through various types in bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools but physical and verbal bullying seem to be the most common.

#### **5.4.2: Effects of bullying**

With regard to the effects of bullying, participants showed that bullying has negative effects on the victims. According to the participants, victims begin to miss school, some drop out of school while others lose concentration in the classroom. Results showed that due to bullying, learners perform badly. These findings are in line with Husain and Jan (2015) who indicate that victims of bullying normally develop difficulties in paying attention in class and often miss school which leads to poor academic performance. Hanger and Leadbeater also echoed the same sentiments that because the victims lack focus in class, they suffer academically, as a result they start hating school and begin missing it. Zyeh et al, (2015) state that victims begin to fear school as a result of being bullied so they choose to drop out. Bullying is a threat to the realization of educational aspirations in that it affects learners' social and psychological well-being.

#### **5.4.3 Support for the victims**

In relation to the findings, it appears that while some schools do not provide any support to victims, in other schools counseling is provided. In the light of the above, to create and sustain a conducive school environment, SMTs should develop counseling protocols for all victims. In that way, victims will feel supported and are likely to feel safe again. This suggested approach will not only ensure that learners are retained in schools but also will have a significant effect on their academic performance.

Another approach advocated by some participants is that SMT should punish the bullies. The purported punishment means using corporal punishment which is unlawful in Lesotho. According to the Lesotho Education Act of 2010, cruel punishment of learners in schools is prohibited. Lesotho's Constitution (1993)

Section 8(1) also states that a person shall not be subjected to torture or to inhumane degrading punishment. Despite the fact that the suggested approach may give victims some comfort and confidence in the school operations, it is reiterated in this study that its use is against the Lesotho laws. As such, alternative mechanisms like detention should be explored.

#### **5.4.4 Strategies that could be used to curb bullying**

The participants suggested a number of ways in which bullying could be curtailed in schools. They were of the view that bullies should be expelled from schools for effective teaching and learning to take place because they threaten those who are eager to learn. Some participants, principals in particular, indicated that in as much as they want to increase the school roll, they should however think of the interest of those learners who want to learn and expel those who bully them. In the wake of these debates, some participants advised SMT to suspend instead of expelling perpetrators as every learner has the right to education. The idea of suspension is in line with what Al-Raqqad (2017) has stated that there should be disciplinary sanctions which include suspension. Moreover, when these bullies are expelled or suspended they will have time to think of their wrong doings and maybe transform into better human beings. However, it should be noted that the Education Act (2010) clearly points out that once a learner has been admitted in an independent or public school, that particular learner shall not be expelled or suspended without the authorization of the school board. It further states that if the parent of the learner is not happy, he/he may appeal to the MoET which shall hand a final verdict. This shows that, as the SMT implement strategies to curb bullying in schools, they should be guided by the law. Thus, at all times they should act within the confines of the Lesotho educational laws. In that way they will avoid unnecessary lawsuits from parents and other stakeholders. Caution should also be exercised that the punishments handed out do not destroy the perpetrator forever. Instead they should be guided so that they can understand that bullying does affect lives negatively.

Furthermore, participants also advised SMT to create policies that clearly address bullying. This finding resonates with the recommendations of Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) that schools should develop a policy which addresses bullying.

Again the findings compare with another component of TL which is intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity in schools, and its inception should be inclusive for all stakeholders to participate. Through policies, learners and teachers can address bullying incidences and help in the creation of a school environment they want. It is through policies that vision can be transformed into reality and schools can perform well.

Participants also advised that learners should be taught about bullying as that will help them know about the short and long-term effects of bullying. These findings concur with Makafane (2019) who asserts that schools should establish programs that are aimed at educating learners about bullying. Other participants advised that schools should have professional psychologists to help the victims of bullying to overcome the trauma of being bullied.

## **5.5 Summary of the findings**

Based on the findings, it is evident that bullying is prevalent in schools and the most common type is verbal bullying, which often later translates to physical bullying. As a consequence, some learners miss school, others drop out while others lose interest in learning. The findings indicate that bullying has a negative impact on the academic performance of victims. It is also evident from the findings that SMT should be proactive in implementing strategies to curb bullying. Although some participants indicated that those who bully others should be denied that right and be expelled from school, it is however the researcher's opinion that other alternatives could be used such as detention or some garden or cleaning activities. The research findings further suggest that the SMT should develop programs whereby all learners will be sensitized about bullying and the negative effects it has on the wellbeing of others.

Sebola (2015) had found in his study that most schools in Tshwane West district, in Gauteng South Africa, had a code of conduct for learners and anti-bullying policies but SMTs and educators were still concerned about the implementation part of those in bullying prevention. On the contrary, the findings of this study show that there are no policies in schools regarding bullying and most participants revealed that it is high time that SMT develops school-based anti-bullying policies.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to only four schools in Mafeteng which were purposively sampled. The sampled schools were in the rural areas of Mafeteng meaning the data collected may not be relevant to schools in the urban areas. Furthermore, due to the fact that the study was not quantitative in nature, it meant the researcher could not determine the frequency of acts of bullying in a school. Furthermore, the fact that the researcher used only one method to generate data is a limitation as some participants could have felt more uncomfortable answering a questionnaire than being interviewed face-to-face.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

### **5.7.1 Recommendations for SMT**

Since schools, through the SMTs, need to manage and control the behaviour of learners, this study recommends as follows:

- SMTs should develop anti-bullying policies and programs to regulate acts of bullying and ensure protection of victims.
- SMTs should encourage and support teachers to teach learners about bullying with the aim to sensitise the school community about issues related to bullying.
- SMTs should constitute and or resuscitate disciplinary committees to enable speedy interventions as mitigation against bullying.
- Learners should be urged by SMT to speak about bullying behaviour in schools so that acts of bullying can be quickly attended to.

### **5.7.2 Recommendations for the parents**

Education is known as a three-legged pot and that parents also play a significant role in this partnership. Below are the recommendations for parents to help in curbing bullying in schools.

- Parents should be involved in the control and management of learner behaviour in schools to enable teaching and learning to take place without fear.
- Parents should encourage SMTs to implement safety rules or policies from the beginning of the year till year end.
- Parents should encourage their children break the silence on bullying behavior.
- Parents should also teach their children about the effects and seriousness of bullying.

### **5.7.3 Recommendations for policy makers**

- From the findings of the study, it is recommended that there should be clear policy documented by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) which addresses issues of bullying.
- SMTs should be trained on issues of bullying by MoET and other relevant stakeholders as this will empower them with needed competencies to create a safe school environment and keep SMTs on their toes to ensure effective implementation of anti-bullying policies.
- New members of SMT should be inducted by MoET on programs related to bullying so that they are equipped with skills on how to prevent it.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The main objective of this study was to determine the strategies that SMTs could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools. From the background the literature and the findings provided, it can be concluded that bullying is indeed a problem in schools and this severely affects the youth today in different contexts. Bullying is

associated with short and long-term negative impacts, and these affect both the victim and the perpetrator.

In addition, according to the findings in Chapter 4 and the literature review in Chapter 2, there seems to be a need for SMTs to develop strategies that could be used to curb bullying. It further appears from this study that parental involvement is never enough in learner discipline and that parents should play a significant role in curbing bullying as recommended by the study. To ensure there is effective teaching and learning in schools, the district education officers should also work hand in hand with SMTs and support each other to try and curb bullying in schools. With team work and a more coordinated approach between and among the different stakeholders, acts of bullying in schools could be addressed, thereby engendering effective teaching and learning environments.

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## **List of Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Letter to Mafeteng district office requesting permission to conduct a research**

Limpho Mosala  
P.O. Box 50  
Maseru 100  
  
Mafeteng Education Office  
P. O.Box  
Mafeteng 900  
  
Dear Sir/Madam

#### **RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE MAFETENG DISTRICT**

I hereby tender my request for consent to conduct research at secondary schools in the Mafeteng district. I am currently a registered Masters degree student at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and this research study forms part of the requirements for completion of my study.

My research topic is: "***School Management team strategies to curb bullying schools in Mafeteng Secondary schools for effective teaching and learning.***" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could SMT use to curb bullying. Data will be collected through interviews which will be held during lunch time or after school. I intend to collect data during the month of September and October 2022. Please note that the information collected will serve for no other purpose than that of my academic research study and will be kept highly confidential by the applicant.

Thank you for your corporation in advance

Limpho Mosala

Signature: .....

**Appendix B: Letter to school boards requesting permission to conduct a research.**

Limpho Mosala

P.O. Box 50

Maseru 100

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Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL.

I hereby tender my request for consent to conduct research at your school and also seek your participation, your deputy, your teachers and your learner's participation in the study, from which I will write letters to the principal, the deputy, teachers and parents of learners who will take part in the study seeking their permission as well. I am currently a registered Masters degree student at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and this research study forms part of the requirements for completion of my study.

My research topic is: "***School Management team strategies to curb bullying schools in Mafeteng Secondary schools for effective teaching and learning.***"

The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could be used by the SMT to curb bullying. Data will be collected through questionnaires which will be completed during lunch time or after school. I intend to collect data during the month of September and October 2022.

Please note that the information collected will serve for no other purpose than that of my academic research study and will be kept highly confidential by the applicant.

Thank you for your corporation in advance

Limpho Mosala

### **Appendix C: Informed consent document**

Dear Principal

My name is Limpho Mosala. I am a student at National University of Lesotho (NUL) .I humbly request your consent to participate in my Master's research study in your school which is.....The title of my research is "**School management team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng schools for effective teaching and learning**" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could be used by the SMT could use to combat bullying. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for participating in the study.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_(full name of the principal ) hereby confirms that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project , and will consent to participate in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time

### **SIGNATURE**

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### **DATE**

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## **Appendix D: Informed consent document**

Dear Deputy Principal

My name is Limpopo Mosala. I am a student at National University of Lesotho (NUL) .I humbly request your consent to participate in my Master's research study in your school which is.....The title of my research is "**School management team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng schools for effective teaching and learning**" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could SMT use to curb bullying. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for participating in the study.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_(full name of the deputy principal ) hereby confirms that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project , and will consent to participate in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time

### **SIGNATURE**

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DATE

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## **Appendix E: Invitation letter and informed consent form for teachers.**

My name is Limpho Mosala. I am a student at National University of Lesotho (NUL). I humbly request your consent to participate in my Master's research study in your school which is.....The title of my research is "**School management team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng schools for effective teaching and learning**" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could SMT use to curb bullying. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for participating in the study.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_(full name of the teacher ) hereby confirms that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project , and will consent to participate in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time

### **SIGNATURE**

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### **DATE**

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## **Appendix F: Invitation letter and informed consent form for head of department**

My name is Limpopo Mosala. I am a student at National University of Lesotho (NUL). I humbly request your consent to participate in my Master's research study in your school which is.....The title of my research is "**School management team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng schools for effective teaching and learning**" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could SMT use to curb bullying. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for participating in the study.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_(full name of the teacher ) hereby confirms that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project , and will consent to participate in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time

### **SIGNATURE**

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DATE

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## **Appendix G: Invitation letter and informed consent form.**

Dear Parent

My name is Limpho Mosala. I am student at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). I humbly request your consent for your child to participate in my master's study to be conducted at your child's school. The title of my study is "**School Management Team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng schools for effective teaching and learning.**" The study aims at investigating the extent of bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools and which strategies could SMT use to curb bullying. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for participating in the study.

Your child will be interviewed. There are no possibilities of discomfort or any possible danger that I think would be involved. Information will only be used for the purpose of the study and anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Please note that there will be no financial benefits for your child for participating in the study.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (full name of parent) hereby confirms that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project, and will consent my child to participate in this study.

My child is at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time should he/she feel like.

### **SIGNATURE**

DATE

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### **Appendix Gb: LENGOLO HO MOTSOALI/MOHOLISI/MOIKARABELLI**

‘M’e/Ntate

Lebitso laka ke Limpho Mosala. Ke moithuti oa botichere sekolong se seholo sa sechaba(NUL). E le karolo ea mosebetsi oa ka oa sekolo lefapheng lena, ke etsa lipatlisiso ka “**mekhoa e bookameli ba sekolo boka e sebelisang ho nena bonkoapo likolong tsa Mafeteng ele etsa boithuto le ho ithuta ho be bobebe.**” ke kopa tumello ea hau ho lokolla ngoana oa hau ho nka karolo lipatlisisong tsena. Ho nka karolo lipatlisisong tsena ke boithaopo ka hohle-hohle ‘me ha hona litlamorao tse bosula tseo ngoana oa hau a ka li fumanang ka tse ha u ka oa khetha hore a se nke karolo. Ha u lumella ngoana oa hau ho nka karolo; u hlokomele hore ha hona lit’senyeheho tseo u tla kena ho tsona, ebile haho le pataloa e ngoana oa hae a tla e fuoa. Litaba tsohle tse tla fumanoa boithutong bona, litla bolokoa e le karolo ea liphuputso. Qeto ke hore liphuputso tsohle li tlilo sebelisoa mabakeng a boithuto feela.

Ka boikokobetso

.....

Limpho Mosala.

### **FOROMO EA TUMELLO EA MOTSOALI/MOHOLISI/MOHLOKOMELI**

Moithuti Ea Khabane

‘Na, .....motsoali/moholisi/mohlokomeli oa .....ke lumela hore ngoana oa ka a nke karolo lipotsong tse amanang le boithuto/lipatlisiso tsena. Kea tseba hore ngoana oa ka a ke ke a ba tlasa khatello efe kapa efe ho araba lipotso tseo a tla beng a sa ikemisetsa ho li araba. Kea lumela hore maikutlo a ngoana oa ka a hatisoe ‘me a sebelisoe feela molemong oa boithuto bona. Keautloisia hore lebitso la ngoana oa ka le la sekolo sa hae le ke ke la hlahisoa kae kapa kae ka hara lipatlisiso tsena kapa tokomaneng efe kapa efe ea phatlalatso.

Motekeno:..... Letsatsi:.....

## **Appendix H: Interview questions for SMT**

The research aims to find strategies that can be used by School Management Team (SMT) to curb bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools for effective teaching and learning.

1. How many cases of bullying have you had this year alone in your school?
2. What kind of bullying do you often deal with?
3. How do these bullying incidents affect the victims?
4. Does the school support the victims? If yes, How?
5. Are you satisfied with the punishments administered?
6. Were follow ups done to ensure that the victim was doing well? Yes/no
7. If yes, how was it done? And what was done?  
.....  
.....
8. Does the school have any anti bullying policies? Yes/No
9. If yes, do you know what is contained in the policy and if No, why?  
.....  
.....
10. Which strategies do you think the school should employ in an attempt to curb bullying?  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### **Appendix I: Interview questions for teachers.**

The research aims to find strategies that can be used by School Management Team (SMT) to curb bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools for effective teaching and learning

#### Personal information

SEX.....

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.....

TEACHING SUBJECTS.....

1. From the past two years how many cases of bullying have been reported?.....
2. In what nature was those bullying cases?.....  
.....  
.....
3. What was the impact of bullying on the victims?.....  
.....
4. Was any support given to the victims? If yes, what was done?
5. Do think something else could have been done besides what was done?.....  
.....  
.....
6. Which advice would you give to SMT in regard to bullying?.....

- 
- 
7. Are there any specific strategies you think the school should use in an attempt to curb bullying?

## **Appendix J: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS**

The research aims to find strategies that can be used by School Management Team (SMT) to curb bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools for effective teaching and learning.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

SEX.....

AGE.....

CLASS.....

STATUS AT SCHOOL.....

1. What is  
bullying?.....  
.....  
.....
2. Would you say there is bullying in your school? Yes/No
3. If yes, explain incidents of  
bullying.....  
.....
4. What is often the nature of bullying in your school?
5. How does the school support the victims of bullying?
6. What are the effects of bullying on the victim in most cases?
7. Are there any strategies you think the school should employ in an attempt to  
curb bullying?

## **Appendix K: Interview schedule learners**

The research aims to find strategies that can be used by School Management Team (SMT) to curb bullying in Mafeteng Secondary Schools for effective teaching and learning.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

SEX.....

AGE.....

CLASS.....

1. How were you bullied?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. How did it affect you?
3. How were you supported?
4. Is there anything else you wish the school did?
5. What do you think should be done to bullies at your school?
6. Are there any strategies you think the school should employ in an attempt to curb bullying?

## **Appendix L: Transcription**

### **SCHOOL A INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL**

Interviewer: Good afternoon sir. So how long have you been the principal at this school?

MR. Mahlomola: two years

Interviewer: How many cases of bullying have you come across since you arrived here, and they were in?

Mr. Mahlomola: Just one because I have not been here long enough. It was a case whereby grade 9 learner's bullied grade 8 learners claiming that they were not clean enough to be in high school and that they smelled. They were actually calling them names.

Interviewer: So we would call this type of bullying verbal bullying.

Mr. Mahlomola: However, there was also physical bullying because some of the grade 9 boys even waited after school to beat some of the grade 8 boys.

Mr.Mahlomola: Apparently they were fighting over some girl.

Interviewer And so...how were these grade 8 learners after the ordeal?

Mr. Mahlomola:To tell you the truth, their class teachers dealt with it and up to today...I honestly never made a follow up on the issue... but I sure they grade 9 learners were bitten.

Interviewer: Was there anything done to grade 8 to ensure that they are fine?

Mr. Mahlomola: Well I don't think there was. There was nothing honestly done to make sure they are fine after the whole ordeal.

Interviewer: Yah hey, that is what we normally do as teachers...we just wrong doers and live it like that. So are there any strategies you think should be done in schools to curb bullying?

Mr. Mahlomola: I think as principals, what we can do is develop policies that are against bullying and actually them. ... We should also teach these learners about bullying because some of them honestly do not know. They think it's normal for some things to happen. If only we were allowed to raise school fees. I would honestly hire professional counselors to help out, because honestly speaking, bullying is so serious that some its effects are long term. The counseling sessions will also be for the bullies, victims and bystanders

Interviewer: okay, okay... thank you.

### **Schoo1 A: teacher interview**

Interviewer: I am going to ask few questions in relation to my study...the one I had called about.

Interviewer: How long have you been a teacher here?

Mr. Seruoe: I have been here for 12 years, first I was a private and then I got a grand and became permanent.

Interviewer: You teach life skills right?

Mr. Seruoe: yes...and I love teaching it.

Interviewer: okay

Interviewer: How many cases of bullying have been reported for the past two years?

Mr Seruoe: Did the principal not answer that one?

Interviewer: Please answer the question.

Mr Seruoe : I can remember... two...Umm...the one whereby grade 9 learners were bullying grade 8 over some girl...they were calling him names and talking of how could not afford a girl like that one...and it escalated to physical bullying as they waited for him after school and beat him up.

Interviewer: Hmm...wow...at their age they are already fighting over girls.

Interviewer: So how was the victim affected?

Mr Seruoe: We got a phone call from the parent and she was very angry and the next morning she came to school just to see to it that the leaner was punished. So...I don't think the learner was okay because he stopped coming to school for some time.

Interviewer: hmm...so you're assuming he was not okay? You never made follow ups? Like none of the staff did?

Mr Seruoe: honestly we never did make follow ups on the victims.

Interviewer: okay...okay

Interviewer: So basically there was no support given to the victims

Mr Seruoe: yes there was no support given to the victims except the fact that the bullies were beaten in front of them.

Interviewer: But do you feel like something else could have been done? Maybe to the victim or the bully?

Mr Seruoe: well...now that I think about, I feel like maybe we could have comforted the victim and maybe made follow ups. Especially because he was new in school... we honestly don't know how he felt.

Interviewer: Are there any advices you would give to SMT in relation to bullying?

Mrmrs Seruoe: Well...now that's a difficult one...well... I think SMT should think of other ways of punishing bullies other than whipping them... have policies that address bullying and also think of having counseling sessions for the victims

Interviewer: okay...we done. Thank you for your time.

### **Interview with the head prefects**

Interviewer: Hi

Serapa: Hello...hi

Interviewer I believe your teacher did explain what in here to talk about.

Serapa: A little.

Interviewer: okay...I'm conducting a research on bullying and I'm here to collect data.

Serapa: Okay

Interviewer: Don't worry it's not a test and it's in Sesotho ...Is it your first time to hear the word bullying?

Serapa: no.....no

Interviewer...Okay...So what would you say bullying is?

Serapa: I would explain bullying as...as hurting others.

Interviewer: so would say there is bullying in your school?

Serapa: ...yah there is...because this one time...we discovered that some boys in grade 9 were bullying a grade 8 learner calling him names. Even in my class there was this one girl who they would call fat and every bad thing that happened in class they would say it was her when asked. This one time they even drew her on the board and wrote fat in the drawing.

Interviewer: How did you get to know about it?

Serapa: We were informed about it at the assembly about the one in grade 8 and so for the other one I could see it happening because it was in class.

Interviewer: so as the head prefect... no one ever complained to you about bullying?

Serapa: yah... no ...no one, I think it's because they don't trust us. No trust and respect

Interviewer: so what was done to those who bullied others and what was done to the victims?

Serapa: Bullies were bitten and victims nothing....nothing because they were the ones who were hurt.

Interviewer: do you think something else could have been done besides what was done?

Serapa: Yah...perhaps ...they could have been expelled.

Interviewer: Who could have been expelled?

Serapa: The bullies could have been expelled not the victims.

Interviewer: And the victims? What should be done to them after they have been bullied?

Serapa: I think because the victims have hurt, they at least be taken to counselling sessions.

Interviewer: okay...okay...thank you. We are done.

### **Interview with the learners**

Interviewer: Hi...how are you?

Rapa: I'm fine...

Interviewer: okay...That's great... you look good... so you do know I'm here to ask you questions relating to what happened to you last year with grade 9s?

Rapa: ... yes the principal told me.

Interviewer: okay...good...so how did the grade 9 hurt you?

Rapa: They would call me names, telling me how poor I was and claimed that I could not afford any girl. They even waited for me after school to beat me up.

Interviewer: and this was done over a girl?

Rapa: Yes.

Interviewer: so how did the whole thing affect you? And how were you supported by the school?

Rapa: I felt small, hated school and could hardly concentrate in class because being bullied was all I could think about.

Interviewer: What kind of punishment were they given?

Rapa: they were just bitten in the staffroom and I was still scared because they continued coming to school.

Interviewer: And how did that affect you academically?

Rapa: My grades started dropping and I started missing school a lot, I would wake up and lie to my grandmother that I sick and she would allow me to stay at home.

Interviewer: Sorry about that.

Interviewer: Are there any other methods you wish they could have employed? Or in future what do you think the school should do so that others are not hurt?

Rapa: Yah...they should have been expelled so that we could be free. Even in future, bullies should honestly be expelled in schools so that others are free to learn.

Interviewer: OH...okay... thank you... we are done...

### **Interview with the head of department**

Interviewer: Good afternoon

Mr.Lillo: afternoon Madam

Interviewer: How many bullying cases have you had in this school?

Mr.Lillo: 2

Interviewer: oh....okay, and how do they happen?

Mr.Lillo: Learners in our school normally belittle each other by calling each other names and as If that is not enough, we normally get reports that the bullies even wait for the victims after school to beat them up.

Interviewer: how are the victims normally affected?

Mr.Lillo: I cannot really say because they are dealt with by disciplinary committee.

Interviewer: Does the school support victims of bullying. If yes how?

Mr.Lillo: What the school does is normally to punish the bullies.

Interviewer: And are you satisfied with how bullying is handled here or would you like to add something on it?

Mr.Lillo: No I'm okay.

Interviewer: are there any policies addressing bullying at this school?

Mr.Lillo: Nope

Interviewer: Which strategies do you think should be used to curb bullying?

Mr.Lillo: Expulsion is the best strategy.

Interviewer: okay...thank you.

### **Interview with the deputy principal**

Interviewer: Good Morning

Mrs. Sello: Morning.

Interviewer: well, how many cases of bullying have you dealt with?

Mrs Sello: We writing exams as results I'm going to be very short.

Interviewer: I understand Madam

Mrs Sello: We have had cases of bullying here even though I cannot say how many, Bullies have been expelled and that was it.

Interviewer: so you just expel them

Mrs Sello: We are aware that every child has a right to education; however those who bully others should just be expelled. Counseling too...Our kids are very fragile hence they always think of killing themselves whenever something goes wrong, so counseling sessions will help them with coping strategies. The sessions will also help because, the victims will not think of doing what was done to them to others

Interviewer: So you believe expulsion is the best strategy to curb bullying?

Mrs Sello: Yes.

Interviewer: thank you. We have done.

### **Interview with the teacher (SMT member)**

Interviewer: Hello...

Ms Sebongile: hi, and please let's make it quick

Interviewer: okay, have there been any bullying incidences?

Ms Sebongile: yes, there have. Where there are learners they will always be bullying cases. These learners sometimes refuse to play with those they believe come from poor families. I have seen cases whereby they will even refuse to sit with those they believe are less fortunate in one table just to share school work with.

Interviewer: How does the school deal with those incidences? What do you do to the bullies and victims?

Ms Sebongile: Honestly speaking, I think the bullies too need counselling, these kids are growing in an environment that is toxic and they are angry, so some of them need punching backs to take out their anger, so why not listen to them too and counsel them instead of being all mad at them. ...Don't you think they are also seeking for some attention? As a way of curbing bullying, lets also take them counseling.

Interviewer: Okay.

Ms Sebongile: Can I be excused?

Interviewer: Yes and thank you.

Interview with the deputy principal:

### **School B interview with the principal**

Interviewer: Okay...we can start...how long have you been here?

Mr.Ebola: 12 years

Interviewer: Wow... So for the past two has there been any bullying incidents here?

Mr Ebola: Of cause...there has been one in particular whereby this one particular senior boy was bullying this one boy who was in grade 8 by then coz now he is in

grade 10. This senior boy made this one particular boy to do things for them in the boy's hostels. Like everything...He even took things on credit using that boys name and whenever the guy was given money at home he had to pay debts that were not made by him. And we got to know about this this one time when this guy had to go home but then he didn't because his money was taken by the bully... so his mum called him and he had to tell why he was still at the hostels. So, his mum got to know about it and she came to school and told us about it...so that's how we got to know about it.

Interviewer: So what kind of bullying was this one?

Mr. Ebola: I would say this was verbal bullying because he used words and even threatened him.

Interviewer: Okay... what happened to the boy if ever he refused to do any of the chores the senior guy assigned to him?

Mr Ebola: Apparently, the senior guy would twist his hand if ever he refused and he would do them.

Interviewer: So the boy never reported the incidents at school.

Mr Ebola: Yes he never reported...said he was afraid the boy might do something to him if he reported the matter.

Interviewer: so what did the school about the matter after finding out?

Mr Ebola: What we did was to call both parents to school, the one for the victim and the perpetrator but very unfortunate the bully refused to be punished instead he decided to leave school.

Interviewer: Okay...and what was done to the victim in order to show support?

Mr Ebola: we called the victim and told him to next time report the matter and also told him that the boy who was bullying him will never be coming to school.

Interviewer: But how do you think the victim felt?

Mr Ebola: I think the victim was not okay because he often skipped school and could not concentrate in class but we did not know what the problem was, it only made sense after we found out about the issue.

Interviewer: And after the ordeal? How did he feel?

Mr Ebola: He looked a bit relaxed, and he could see him playing around freely.

Interviewer: Okay... So are there any policies here at school regarding bullying?

Mr Ebola: Policies? Well...we do have school rules and regulations that clearly state no one should hurt another student.

Interviewer: Okay...and if they do harm others, what happens?

Mr Ebola: well we normally just punish them.

Interviewer: Okay... so are there any strategies we think the school should use to curb bullying

Mr Ebola: well...in as much as we are eager to increase the school roll, I honestly think bullies should be expelled. Learners should also teach learners about the effects of bullying on victims.

Interviewer: okay...okay...thank you...we are done.

### **Interview with Head of department**

Interviewer: Thank you for your time. How is you?

Mr.Jerry: I'm good and you?

Interviewer: So have there been any bullying cases here?

Mr Jerry: I have not been here for long, and there have not been any bullying cases.

Interviewer: okay, but how do you think bullying should be curbed in schools?

Mr. Jerry: As another way of curbing bullying in schools, these learners need to teach about bullying in classrooms as that will help create a welcoming environment ....Once they know about the effects of bullying they will maybe start treating each

other better. It is so unfortunate bullying it's so serious that it even affects attendance of the learner which then affects their academic performance.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

### **Interview with Deputy Principal**

Mr.Pondo: Thank you for the interview madam, let's get to the point.

Interviewer: thank you, so how many cases of bullying have you had ?

Mr. Pondo: I think 1, yes 1.

Interviewer: okay, what kind was it? And how did you deal with it?

Mr. Pondo: it was physical bullying. Boys beat each other after school because they believe that beating one up boost their manhood. We just punished the bullies by beating them.

Interviewer: any support for the victims?

Mr.Pondo: nooo

Interviewer: Are there any policies addressing bullying here?

Mr. Pondo: No.

Interviewer: Can you think of any strategy that can be used to curb bullying

Mr. Pondo: I can't think of anything.

### **Interview with the teacher**

Interviewer: Hi...like I have explained my study. Now I'm going to interview you on it and record it.

Mrs Reaboka: Okay...its okay...we can start

Interviewer: so how long have you been here?

Mrs Reaboka: since 2019

Interviewer: okay...so has there been any been any bullying incidences here at school?

Mrs Reaboka: Only this year in my grade 8 class...there is this boy who looks like a mixed race...half Mosotho and half something else... so this boy is always wearing a head to cover his curly hair...and this one time some learner grabbed the head just to spite him... and his friend reported the matter to me as a class teacher. I had to call the bully and the one who was being bullied only to find out that he is always wearing a head cover his hair because they were calling him names because of it

Interviewer: So the bullied learner never reported the case? And how was he behaving during the bullying?

Mrs Reaboka: Yes he never did until his friend did. Well in class I could tell that he was always destracted and always jumpy whenever other learners went past him, perhaps he was afraid they might grab his head.

Interviewer: what was done about the matter?

Mrs Reaboka: ...what I did was to punish the bully and had to sit the bullied down and told him to accept himself.

Interviewer: How did you punish the bully?

Mrs Reaboka: I asked one teacher to help me beat him.

Interviewer: And how did the victim feel?

Mrs Reaboka: I think the victim started accepting himself because he started taking the head off.

Interviewer: Are there any strategies you would advise the management to use to fight bullying?

Mrs Reaboka: I would advise the management to expel bullying so as to create a safe space for teaching and learning and would also advise them to take victims counseling.

Interviewer: okay...Thank you for your time. We are done.

### **Interview with the teacher**

Interviewer: Good Afternoon.

Mr. Lepheo: Good afternoon madam.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time. Now how many cases of bullying have you had in this school and there were of which kind?

Mr. Lepheo: We have had many but there was this particular one whereby learners were just insensitive ... And to them looks matter too, this one time they had refused to play with one girl and their excuse was that she was too ugly.

Interviewer: and so how was the learner after that? And what did the school do?

Mr. Lepheo: she was not good. We asked life skills teachers to help with putting the victim well as in most cases these learners feel free to talk to them.

Interviewer: do you think something else could have been? Can you propose any methods that can be used to curb bullying?

Mr. Lepheo: I cannot really say how I felt but.... We honestly believe in zero tolerance of bullying in this school, so what we do is to normally expel those who bully others.

Interviewer: okay. Thank you.

### **Interview with the learner**

Interviewer: Hi...did Sir explain to you what the meeting is about?

Sello: Yes Madam

Interviewer: Okay... do you know what bullying is?

Sello: yes.... It is when someone older hurts you or embarrasses you in front of others.

Interviewer: so has someone ever bullied you?

Sello: Yes...This older boy at the hostels used to come to our room and demand food and money from us. I was in grade 8 then. ...and sometimes I would be called

to pay debts I did not make. He would tell me that if I did not obey him he will beat me up.

Interviewer: So who did you tell about this? And how did it make you feel?

Sello: I told no one because I was afraid and also because they said whoever would tell would be called a sissy. I hated school very much and I could not concentrate in class.

Interviewer: so how did the school get to know about this?

Sello: This one time, I had to go home but couldn't because that guy had taken my money, so mum called me to ask why I was not at home so I had to tell her.

Interviewer: So if it hadn't been because of that, you would not have reported the matter.

Sello: yes

Interviewer: So how did the whole ordeal affect you academically?

Sello: I missed school a lot and always pretended to be sick.

Interviewer: And how about when you were at school? Say in class, how did you feel?

Sello: I could not hear what was being said in class because my body was there but my mind elsewhere, I could not concentrate.

Interviewer: so what did the school do about the matter and were you satisfied as to how they handled the matter?

Sello: We were told to bring parents, talks were done and there following year the guy was no longer with us at school.

Interviewer: were you happy with how it was handled?

Sello: Yes, I was happy because I became free.

Interviewer: so how do you think other bullying incidences should be handled?

Sello: I say bullies should be expelled from school because they create unsafe learning environment for us who want to learn.

Interviewer: okay. We are done. Thank you.

### **Interview with the head prefect**

Interviewer: so you're the head prefect?

Malefu: yah

Interviewer: I believe sir has briefed you about the interviews I'm holding here right? So how would you define bullying?

Malefu: Bullying is an act of harming another due to how they look their personal background.

Interviewer: So would you say there is bullying in this school?

Malefu: Well...there is but no one has ever complained about to me, Maybe because I'm always in my class.

Interviewer: ...okay...but how which strategies do you think the school should employ to curb bullying?

Malefu: I think the school should immediately expel those who make others feel unworthy.

Interviewer: okay...I think we done...thank you for your time.

### **School C**

#### **Interview with the Principal**

Interviewer: Good Afternoon and thank you for your time already

Ranooe: It's okay...you can sit.

Interviewer: So how long have you been a principal here at school?

Ranooe: For 2 years.

Interviewer: so have there been any bullying incidences here at school under your watch?

Ranooe: Yes. Learners bully each other every day. There has been this one case whereby the grade 8 learner, by then she used to use mask every day to cover her mouth, even when the government had told us to stop wearing masks. Only to find out later that this particular girl had had operations on her mouth due to cancer and some girl who stayed with her at the village had told others that she had no lips and they started calling her names and making fun of her.

Interviewer: So how did the school find out?

Ranooe: it's very unfortunate that they never report, but what happened was that the parent of the bullied child came to school and complained. That's how we got to know about it.

Interviewer: so this was verbal bullying right?

Ranooe: Yes...with girls its normally verbal bullying while with boys its physical bullying. So it was verbal bullying because they call her a fish, bad names that made her feel worthless.

Interviewer: So how was the victim during all these and what did the school do to support her?

Ranooe: I can't really say how she was during the whole bullying, but I believe the child could not concentrate and hated school in class because of that, and what the school did was just to punish the bullies...I believe that support.

Interviewer: Were there any follow ups made on the victim to ensure they are well?

Ranooe: I don't know...maybe teachers did.

Interviewer: Are there any policies regarding bullying?

Ranooe: I can't really say there are...But we have school rules and regulations, whereby if learners mistreat others, they should be expelled

Interviewer: Which strategies do you think the school should use to curb bullying?

Ranooe: I think learners who bully others should be expelled. And schools should formulate clear policies regarding bullying.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time.

### **Interview with the teacher**

Interviewer: hi...hi...how long have you been a teacher in this high school?

Mr Siloane: 6 years

Interviewer: so have there been any bullying incidences here for the past two years

Mr Siloane: Yah.... There has been...learners here physically and verbally abuse each other. Normally it starts as verbal bullying and then later on escalates to physical bullying and in most cases boys are the ones who physically bully each other.

Interviewer: Okay...how are the victims of bullying normally affected?

Mr Siloane: In my class I have noticed that the bullied learner will start missing school, It has actually happened whereby this particular boy had been bullied verbally here at school because of his sexual orientation and then after school they waited for him claiming that they wanted to straighten him. So the bullied guy started missing school.

Interviewer: so how does the school support the victims of bullying?

Mr Siloane: ...Support? Okay...Because I'm a life skills teacher, what I normally do is to take the victim and try to counsel them. That's what I do... and I also asked other teachers to help punish the bullies

Interviewer: Okay....its support I guess

Interviewer: So are there any strategies you think the school should employ to curb bullying?

Mr Siloane: The school should simply expel those who bully others to make sure the learning environment is safe.

Interviewer: well...Thank you...we are done.

## **Interview with HOD**

Interviewer: Good morning sir.

Mr. Malope: Good morning madam, can we get on it please, I have a class to prepare for.

Interviewer: So, how many bullying cases have you had in the past two years?

Mr. Malope: well, I can think of two actually. I do not really know if it's bullying but these boys from initiation... they claim they will not seat or play with boys who have not undergone initiation because they do not understand their language

Interviewer: It is bullying because they exclude others and make them feel little.

Mr. Malope: Yes, and it becomes the problem because most boys in this school have undergone initiation, and so those who have not feel small.

Interviewer: so what have you done about the issue?

Mr Malope: I can say anything has been done.

Interviewer: so as part of SMT, What do you think should be done curb bullying in your school?

Mr Malope: I think the government should give schools policies regarding bullying to follow, so that we cannot do anything against the law. And I also think of having counseling sessions for the victims and the bullies. These bullies sometimes bully because of anger from home and so they take it out on others.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. We have finished.

## **Interview with the teacher**

Interviewer: Good day Madam and thank you for your time.

Ms. Lefika: Good day, you're welcome.

Interviewer: So how many cases of bullying have you had and how were they?

Ms. Lefika: I have lost count honestly, how were there as in?

Interviewer: they were of which kind? Or they are often of which kind?

Ms. Lefika: These learners normally call each other names, in most cases it is older boys who beat and call new comers names.

Interviewer: okay, so what does the school do about these incidences? And are there any policies regarding bullying?

Ms. Lefika: we usually punish the bullies by beating them. There are no policies.

Interviewer: can you recommend something else to be done to curb bullying?

Ms. Lefika: I think punishing bullies and in worst case scenarios they should be expelled.

Interviewer: okay... thank you.

### **Interview with the leaner**

Interviewer: Hi...you have been told about me right?

Molemo: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay... let's start. How were you bullied here at school?

Molemo: They would just push me sometimes because they said I behave like a girl... and sometimes call me evil and refuse to be with me groups if ever we were grouped together.

Interviewer: Okay...how did that make you feel?

Molemo: Teacher, I hated school very much and sometimes I would miss school without any reason.

Interviewer: okay...is there anything you wish the school could do to stop bullying in schools?

Molemo: Yes, because these bullies scare us, I think they should be expelled in schools and punished by all teachers.

Interviewer: But are there any methods that you think they should be used to curb bullying?

Molemo: I think what can be done is...learners should be well taught about the effects of bullying because some of them just take it lightly, and again I think the bullies should be expelled and the victims taken to counseling.

Interviewer: Okay...thank you...we are done.

### **Interview with the prefect**

Interviewer: Hi...how have you been?

Mosoeunyane: Hi... I'm fine.

Interviewer: Has your teacher explained to you why I'm here.

Mosoeunyane: Yes.

Interviewer: Well... how can you define bullying?

Mosoeunyane: I would say it is when others call each other names, and sometimes beat them because they are bigger than them or stronger than them.

Interviewer: So do learners at your school do that to others?

Mosoeunyane: They do that. There was this one learner in grade 10 who was in a bit stronger than others in his class and very tall, that guy whatever he said should be done in class was done. He had his eyes on this particular girl, he would always mock her and called her a circle because she had a bad figure. Again because he went to initiation school he bullied other boys and called them sissies. This one time some guy had told him to stop calling him a sissy and he waited for him after school with his friends from the village and then beat him.

Interviewer: So what did the school do about the situation?

Mosouenyane: The school only found out after the boy had bitten this other one with the village boys and the parent of the bitten guy came and reported the matter. So the bully was punished by being told to wash the toilets the whole month alone and also to prepare wood for the kitchen.

Interviewer: What was done to the victim?

Mosoeunyane: I honestly don't know.

Interviewer: what do you think the management of the school should do so as to stop bullying in school?

Mosoeunyane: I think instead of bullies being punished, they should totally be expelled from school and in classes learners should be taught about bullying.

Interviewer: we have finished, thank you.

## **School D**

### **Interview with the Principal**

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to this. Now we can start. So how long have you been the principal at this school?

Mrs Sekake: I have been a principal here for 10 years.

Interviewer: So how many cases of bullying have you from the past two years?

Mrs Sekake: There so many cases of bullying here, especially in hostels. I have even lost count. But I remember this particular one because I felt like children can be so evil at times. They were bullying this other one because of albinism.

Interviewer: What exactly were they doing to her?

Mrs Sekake: Some of them refused to eat with her in one bowl in the hostels like they usually do while others would shout out in the night asking her to go out at night so that they can see if she will change color. It got really bad that she left school here and went to another one. Apparently they sometimes pinched her to see if the skin will change color. Children are very cruel I tell you....to them it is as if albinism is contagious and so they refused to share anything with her.

Interviewer: Did the learner report this behavior? Or how did you find out?

Mrs Sekake: No, she did not report, we found out when the parent was here to seek transfer letter.

Interviewer: So what did the school do about the situation?

Mrs Sekake: I had to give the parent the transfer letter to another because she claimed that the child did not want to come back to school when she was at home

during month end. Said at first she pretended to be sick and later on told her parents the truth. So the mother had already made a decision to take her child to another school because she felt that ours was not safe enough. So there was no convincing the parent to give us another chance.

Interviewer: I get it that you had lost the learner, But now it had come to your attention that there was bullying in your school, what did you do about it and what happened to the bullies?

Mrs Sekake: I had to make teachers aware of the situation, and then we talked to learners at the assembly and made them aware of bullying and its effects and we also punished those who were bullying.

Mrs Sekake: As a way of counseling the victims, I remember, I had to narrate the story of creation to them just so I can make them realise that they were like God themselves. That also made bullies aware that they were mocking what God has made in his image.

Interviewer: If the victim was still around what do you think you could have done as the school?

Mrs Sekake: Honestly I do not know.

Interviewer: Are there any policies here that address bullying?

Mrs Sekake: yes there are but we often don't follow them. We just always punish the perpetrators and that is.

Interviewer: so what do you think should be done to at least stop bullying or try to stop it?

Mrs Sekake: I think the policies we have should be followed and revised and learners should be taught about bullying and its effects.

Interviewer: Okay... Thank you...we have finished.

### **Interview with the teacher:**

Interviewer: How long have you been a teacher at this school?

Miss Kedibone: since 2018 and I have been teaching life skills and development studies.

Interviewer: Okay... So have you come across any bullying incidents here at school?

Miss Kedibone: Between learners or teachers?

Interviewer: Learners.

Miss Kedibone: Yes I have come across those, the grade 9 learners like bullying the grade 8 learners.

Interviewer: What do they do?

Miss Kedibone: They like calling them names, calling dogs and even refusing to play with them. Lately there is this new thing they do whereby they draw a line on the floor and stay if the grade learners gross, they are then bitten. This one time 1 boy had grossed the line and they whipped him.

Interviewer: So what kind of bullying is this one?

Miss Kedibone: Well I think its physical bullying mixed with verbal bullying.

Interviewers: How do the victims feel about this?

Miss Kedibone: Because they are new in school, they start fearing school very much and sometimes even miss it.

Interviewer: Is that all?

Miss kedibone: we even had two drop outs due to bullying.

Interviewer: So what does the school do about those cases?

Miss kedibone: This one case where there learner was bitten because of grossing the line, I handled it along with the disciplinary and we punished those leaners by assigning them manual work. But normally what the school does about bullying is they use different punishment, for example; cleaning toilets, sweeping the class or even cleaning the surroundings.

Interviewer: How does the school support the victims?

Miss Kedibone: What we normally do is we ask the victims to choose the kind of punishment they want their bullies to get.

Interviewer: But are there any policies that address bullying?

Miss Kedibone: Yes but I think they need to be revised.

Interviewer: Okay... But are there any strategies you think the schools should employ to curb bullying?

Miss Kedibone: Yes, I think bullies should also be taken to counselling to investigate why they are bullying and also the schools should teach learners about bullying

Interviewer: Okay...Thank you very much.

### **Interview with the learner**

Interviewer: Hi, how are you feeling?

Serialong: I'm fine thank you.

Interviewer: so do you know what bullying is.

Serialong: Bullying is hurting others.

Interviewer: Has someone ever hurt you here at school?

Serialong: Yes, they have... I was bitten by grade 8 learners because I had crossed the line they drew on the floor on my way home...and sometimes at the tap they would just stand there and tell us that we should not touch it because we are dogs.

Interviewer: How did you feel about all that?

Serialong: At first I thought it was normally what was done to grade 8 learners, but still it scared me and sometimes I would hide in the village and not come to school. Until I told my teacher and he handled it.

Interviewer: What was done by the school show it support?

Serialong: Nothing.

Interviewer: You mean nothing?

Serialong: Yes nothing except that later on they were punished and the principal had this one time told me to read Genesis and told me that I should not be ashamed of whom I am and that I was like the image of God. I wish I could have been counseled first before actually being in class and being attacked. Primary school was nice and things like this did not happen

Interviewer: were you happy with the way it was handled or do you think something else should have been done.

Serialong: I was happy because after that they no longer bothered us.

Interviewer: Are there any other measures you wish school should do to those who hurt others?

Serialong: I think people who hurt others should be expelled.

Interviewer: Okay... thank you. We have finished.

### **Interview with the Prefect**

Interviewer: Hello. How are you?

Refiloe: I'm fine madam.

Interviewer: Okay... You do know why I'm here right?

Refiloe: Yes, my class teacher told me.

Interviewer: Okay...So what can you say bullying is?

Refiloe: I would define bullying as an act of harm to someone.

Interviewer: Okay... has someone ever harmed anyone here at school?

Refiloe: Yes they always do harm others, boys in higher grades like beating the new comers. They just beat them if they do not do what they instruct them to do. Sometimes they beat them if they refuse to be called dogs.

Interviewer: so what the school do about this?

Refiloe: The principal has told us at the assembly to stop bullying others and also told us that we are family, and the perpetrators of bullying are often punished.

Interviewer: Do you wish there school could do more than that?

Refiloe: I sometimes, bullies bull because they have their own issues, as a result I think they should also be taken to counseling to find out why they do things they do. Victims should also be taken to counseling to sooth them. Counseling sessions will also help with prevention of mental health which is a result of bullying.

Interviewer: Okay... Thank you.

### **Interview with HOD**

Interviewer: Good day.

Mr. Ramalefane: Good day madam, can we make this quick.

Interviewer: So, how many cases of bullying have you had? And how do they happen?

Mr. Ramalefane: 1 and its normally physical bullying.

Interviewer: How are victims affected?

Mr. Ramalefane: These boys sometimes fear going home on their own because that's where bullies take advantage of the idea that there are alone and beat them up. And it is actually sad that we only found out that some of our learners were dropping out because of being bullied.

Interviewer: Can you think of any strategy that can be used to curb bullying

Mr. Ramalefane: I cannot think of anything except Expulsion.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you.

### **Interview with teacher**

Interviewer: Good morning

Mr.Mohapi: Good morning, I heard you're here to conduct interviews on Bullying. I have no information to that.

Interviewer: But have there been any bullying cases here?

Mr. Mohapi: yes and our school have lost brilliant learners because of this pandemic called bullying.

Interviewer: And what has the school done?

Mr. Mohapi: Nothing it's done hence they always carry on bullying others.

Interviewer: But do you think anything can be done regarding bullying and are there any policies?

Mr. Mohapi: ...learners should be taught about bullying and its effects. The polices we have now are very old and do not address the issue of bullying because it was really not an issue then so the school should formulate others

Interviewer: okay

Mr. Mohapi: can I be excused. Thank you

**Appendix M: Introduction Letter from the Ministry of Education**



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING - MAPETENG

P.O.BOX 13 MAPETENG 900

TEL:22700213 FAX:22701534

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

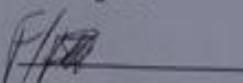
The National University of Lesotho  
Faculty of Education  
P. O. Roma 180  
Lesotho

Dear Sir / Madam

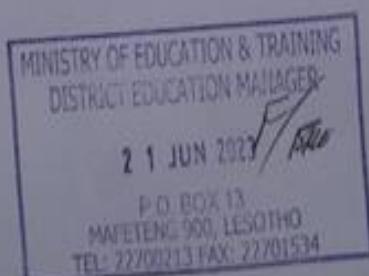
This serves to justify and confirm that Limpopo Mosala (Med student) at the National University of Lesotho has been granted a permission to conduct a research at four specified schools. Her topic: **"Strategies that the school management team could use to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary school for effective teaching and learning"**.

Thank You

Best Regards

  
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Mahlompho Shaabe (Mrs)

District Education Manager



**Appendix N: Introduction letter from the University**

The National University of Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22340601

<http://www.nul.ls>

P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

26<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

District Education Manager

Mafeteng

RE: Mosala Limpopo (200604376)

This letter introduces Mosala Limpopo as a student registered in the Faculty of Education

for

M.Ed. in EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES. She is in the final stages of her study and must generate data. Her topic is: "**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM STRATEGIES TO CURB BULLYING IN SCHOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING.**" and she wishes to interview teachers, learners, school management team. I will be glad if she gets the support she needs to complete the study.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sepiriti Sepiriti".

Sepiriti Sepiriti (PhD)

Cell: 59161566

Email: [s.sepiriti@yahoo.com](mailto:s.sepiriti@yahoo.com)

## Appendix O: Editor's Report

### THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

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P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho  
Southern Africa

### FACULTY OF EDUCATION

09<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The Supervisor  
Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education  
NUL

Dear Supervisor

#### Re: proof of language editing

This letter proves that I read and edited Limpho Mosala's dissertation titled:  
***School Management Team strategies to curb bullying in Mafeteng secondary schools for effective teaching and learning.***

Sincerely,

Mahao Mahao (PhD)  
Department of Language and Social Education  
Faculty of Education,  
National University of Lesotho

## **Appendix P: Turnitin Report**

L.Mosala (200604376)

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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