Learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying at secondary schools in Lesotho and how it can be controlled

By:

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Dissertation

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved of 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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DECLARATION

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I declare that the study entitled "Learners' Perceptions about the Causes of Bullying and how it can be Controlled at Secondary Schools in Lesotho" is my own work, and that where other people's works were used, such sources were acknowledged through complete references.

……………………………   July, 2020

Ramonki Egnetus Seisa   Date

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APS	Authoritarian Parenting Style
CRC	Convention on the Rights of a Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Disorders/Difficulties
EFA	Education For All
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
HOD	Head of Department
LBSE	Life-skills Based Sexuality Education
LIEP	Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NUL	National University of Lesotho
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

Nowadays learners present various emotional and behavioural challenges to the mainstream education system because they come from diverse cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, and have different abilities, gender orientation, ethnicity and so on. This study explores learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. Data for the study was collected using a qualitative approach employing a case study design and was analysed through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Thirty learners participated in the study through focus-group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study indicate that learners experience various forms of bullying either as bystanders, perpetrators and/or victims. They further reveal that many

learners have frequently experienced physical, verbal, emotional and cyber-bullying in different contexts.

The study concludes that while there are existing punishment mechanisms like corporal punishment, verbal reprimands, manual labour and suspension, most participants reflected that one of the most effective ways to control school bullying is the learners' home background which could be used to influence the change. Finally, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) should establish a National Anti-Bullying Policy with clearly spelled out guidelines on how individual incidences of bullying should be dealt with in secondary schools. The policy should be disseminated and implemented across all schools in the country to safeguard learners' sense of safety, fundamental freedom and basic right to education.

Key Words: Bullying, School Violence, Aggression, Bully, Victim, Perpetrator, Learners, Perceptions, Anti-Bullying Policy, Secondary Schools, Lesotho

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background to the study and explains the problem which has been investigated. It also presents the research aims and objectives, and the questions that the current study aspires to respond to. It shows the significance that this study will have on various groups of people and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Then, it briefly describes the theoretical framework as well as the research methodology adopted by the study. Finally, the chapter describes the limitations of the study and gives an outline of chapters for the entire study followed by a summary of the whole chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 School Bullying and Its Effects

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO, 1948) advocates education for all children and calls for schools to be safe havens (Dollard & Neser, 2013) where learning opportunities are provided and where learners' sense of safety is provided and ensured.

However, one wonders to what extent this holds sway in our present society where Fareo's (2015) describes an increasing spate of violence and bullying in Nigerian secondary schools. Holley, Haase, Chui and Bloch (2017) in their view of education in California, United States argue that schools are apparently sites of exclusion and disappointment instead of havens that should be pointing the way to excellence and achievement for all students. Excellence in teaching and achievement for all, as explained by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), can be achieved only in an environment that is safe and conducive for all to attain educational goals. Nevertheless, schools seem to be sites where young people are at risk of falling victims to bullying (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) which infringes on their right to education.

School violence, particularly bullying, is a worldwide concern that challenges and defies a school's traditional role as a place of safety, learning and encouragement (Leung & Ferris, 2010). Additionally, Fareo (2015) postulates that bullying is not only a pervasive problem in schools, but it is also becoming a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. Reflecting on bullying in Nigerian secondary schools, Okoiye, Anayochi, and Onah's (2015) observe that bullying among students

has led to serious school violence that in most cases culminates in death from the use of dangerous weapons like knives and guns. Consequences of bullying can render schools unjust, unsafe and deadly given its tremendous increase in the past ten years globally (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Okoiye, Anayochi, and Onah (2015) also argue that the bullying problem needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in schools because it can create a sense of fear that is detrimental to the sense of comfort and safety needed in order for learning to occur.

Research has both documented the prevalence of bullying and the fact that it can have serious negative implications for the victim as well as the bully (Georgia Department of Education, 2009 & Neiman, 2011). The consequences of bullying can manifest immediately and can continue to affect the bully and the victim well into adulthood. A qualitative study by Neiman (2011) affirms that bullying victims may become depressed, have substance abuse problems and/or have difficulties with relationships. Additionally, Reddy, Visser, Winnaar, Arends, Juan, Prinsloo and Isdale, (2016, p.280), in their review of research on long-term consequences of bullying, state that adults who were bullied "were found to have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem". Reddy et al. (2016) report that victims of bullying exhibit anxiety and internal conflict in adult social situations. This premise is supported by Espelage, Aderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, McMahon, Reddy and Reynolds (2013) in their discussion and recommendations on understanding and preventing violence in secondary schools.

Of all the physical, social and emotional consequences resulting from being bullied, a great concern is one of suicide (Litwiller & Brausch, 2013). Stuart-Cassel, Bell and Springer (2011) point out that there is a public outcry relative to recent reports of young people committing suicide among other serious consequences. This is because these young people are bullied where there are lawmakers, school officials, parents and other stakeholders to take action against bullies (Stuart-Cassel, Bell & Springer, 2011). Stuart-Cassel et al. (2011) further stress that while this response was important and timely, suicides alleged to be a result of bullying were not a recent phenomenon. Moreover, Smith (2010) posits that relative to victims of bullying, there is also evidence suggesting that bullies themselves experience emotional and social problems in adulthood. Not only are bullies prone to fighting regularly, committing vandalism, stealing, using drugs and alcohol but they also demonstrate other negative behaviours and their misconduct also continues beyond their school years (Wang, Iannotti & Luk 2012). In addition, Crick, Nelson and

Casas' (2011) qualitative study notes that by the age of 24, 60% of 6-9 Graders, who had been involved in bullying incidents, had at least one criminal conviction. Another qualitative research by Olweus (2013) also indicates that bullies exhibit many types of socio-emotional and behavioural problems in adulthood. These concerns include poor social adjustment, psychiatric problems, divorce, social isolation, diminished professional success and possibly transference of their adjustment issues to their children (Espelage et al. 2013).

1.2.2 International Perspectives on School Bullying

Bullying is an international problem which negatively affects learners' academic performance in various countries (UNESCO, 2017). Global independent studies have indicated that secondary school level bullying is a phenomenon that affects majority of countries worldwide (Isidiho, 2009; Olweus & Limber, 2010; James, 2010; Román & Murillo, 2011). Different countries have reported incidences of bullying in secondary schools. From an international perspective, bullying incidents have been documented in countries such as the United Kingdom (James, 2010), the United States of America (Roman & Murillo, 2011), Australia (Butler, 2012), Ireland (Livesey, 2010), to mention but a few.

1.2.2.1 School Bullying in the United States of America

In the USA, the findings of one qualitative study revealed that there is an alarming number of approximately 2.7 million victims of bullying in American schools (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Akpaida, 2010). More recently, however, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) (NCES, 2017) has reported on data collected in 2015 and has found a 21% prevalence rate of bullying, which marks a decline from Nansel et al. (2001) 29% figure, as well as the U.S. DOE's own figure of 28% from 2005. U. S. Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance Report (2017) points out that students aged 12-18 years in the USA have experienced the following types of bullying: 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%). Despite numerous anti-bullying policies in the USA, school bullying takes place in many forms (physical, verbal, emotional and psychological) and technological advances have opened new ways for bullies to hide behind anonymity (McCann, 2018). Each month 282,000 students are physically assaulted in some way in secondary schools throughout the United States – and the number is growing (National Center

for Education Statistics, 2018). The Association for Psychological Science (2019) argues that students who are bullies, victims or both are more likely to experience poverty, academic failure and job termination in their adulthood stage than those who are neither.

1.2.2.2 School Bullying in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 3) stipulate that academies and independent schools should ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners in schools. "The proprietor must ensure that bullying in schools is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing and implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy," (Education Regulations 2014, Part 3). However, Hinde's (2018) qualitative study argues that 46% of secondary school students in England are worried about returning to school after holidays because of being bullied by others. It is estimated that from April 2017 to March 2018, 17% of learners aged 10-15 years in England were bullied in the previous 12 months in a way that made them frightened or upset (Department of Education, 2018). Gaffney and Farrington's (2018) qualitative research postulates that in the UK, cyber-bullying and cyber-victimisation are growing problems which have undesirable health-related outcomes and are significantly related to school bullying and school victimisation.

1.2.2.3 School Bullying in Ireland

In Ireland, bullying is not only an issue which affects thousands of students in secondary schools, but primary schools and colleges also (Livesey, 2010). For example, in a qualitative study carried out in 2002 for the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland, the findings revealed that 40% of primary school pupils and 30 % of post-primary school pupils had been bullied (Ndebele & Msiza, 2014). To control the situation, the Ireland Department of Education and Skills published Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools in September 2013 (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). These Procedures include the requirement that all schools should have an anti-bullying policy within the framework of their overall code of behaviour. But, according to Kent's (2018) exploratory study, the latest statistics in Irish secondary schools reveal that over 175,000 learners are falling victims to cyberbullying. The nationwide study on bullying in Irish schools indicates that secondary school level students reported 47% of bullying incidents in the corridors, and 27% in the playgrounds (Kent, 2018).

From the 870,000 ongoing school population in Ireland, 200,000 children are at risk of suffering the ill effects of bullying or being bullied, and that may contribute to later mental health problems (Lee & Vaillancourt, 2018).

1.2.2.4 School Bullying in Australia

With mental wellbeing one of the top challenges facing young people, and with every student having the right to a safe and supportive schooling experience, the prevalence of bullying in Australian schools is referred to as a national crisis (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). A qualitative study by Katz, Keeley, Spears, Taddeo, Swirski and Bates (2014) points out that the majority of Australian students have been bullied and one in five of these are bullied at least weekly. Despite the constant improvement in school facilities, education curriculum, teaching methods and training, bullying is a serious problem in Australian secondary schools (Department of Education and Training, 2015). Make Bullying History Foundation surveyed 692 students in 2018 and found out that four in five students believe that bullying is a serious problem in their schools (Murray, 2018). In order to curb this situation, "with 15 March being the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence, it is a pertinent time to be raising awareness of this huge national crisis," (Murray on behalf of the Make Bullying History Foundation, 2018).

1.2.2.5 School Bullying in Sweden

A qualitative research by Swearer-Napolitino (2011) reports that school bullying is a widespread problem in Sweden, and many students complain about being ostracized or picked on by groups of classmates. According to a Swedish non-governmental organization called Children's Rights in Society, despite various problems regarding children and teenagers being reported, the biggest issue is bullying, and their report on the problem led to a new law that compels teachers to alert the authorities and help a student when bullying occurs (European Union, 2012). Failure to do so results in the school, especially the teachers, being fined (The U.K. New Sunday Times Newspaper, 18.11.2012). The municipality, the school district, and an individual school in Sweden are obliged by law to establish, follow up and constantly evaluate their anti-bullying documents in order to prevent and take measures against peer bullying (Laftman, Ostberg & Modin, 2017). However, Thornberg Pozzoli, Gini and Hong's (2017) qualitative study reveals that verbal bullying is a high-profile issue in Sweden with politicians and school authorities often speaking out about the need to find ways to combat the problem.

1.2.2.6 School Bullying in Argentina

In Argentina, one feasibility study revealed that almost a third of secondary school students report having their belongings taken from them or broken while in schools (Román & Murillo, 2011). Roman and Murillo further posit that physical bullying and psychological intimidation constitute a growing problem in Argentina's schools according to a joint study by UNICEFArgentina and FLASCO (The Latin-American School of Social Studies). Moreover, a three-year investigation which surveyed 1,695 students in Buenos Aires' public and private secondary schools found that a shocking 66% of students polled were victims of bullying, 22% are afraid of being victimized by a bully in the near future (Buscaglia, 2016). Buscaglia (2016) further argues that while physical violence was cited by students in public schools, psychological intimidation was prevalent in private schools. According to Bullying Without Borders Report (2017), Argentina is one of the countries with a high prevalence of bullying, and this problem is rising dramatically with annual cases increasing from 822 in 2013 to 2,907 in 2017.

1.2.2.7 School Bullying in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, school bullying had long been recognized as a problem and initiatives had to be taken to stop it (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). According to Limber (2004) cited in McEchem's (2010) qualitative study, one out of twelve secondary school children in the Netherlands is "very regularly" or "regularly" bullied. In addition, Huitsing, Barends and Lokkerbol's (2019) qualitative research reveals that in 2013, the then education minister Sander Dekker and the children's ombudsman drew up a plan of campaign to tackle school bullying, and in 2015 all schools were required by law to tackle bullying. Another qualitative study by Huitsing, Lodder, and Veenstra (2019) reports that although schools are obliged by law to teach children about bullying, its prevalence is more widespread than previously assumed as more students complain that they are being bullied more than once a week. Based on the aforementioned information and statistics, it can be concluded that bullying is prevalent in schools internationally.

1.2.3 African Perspectives on School Bullying

Africa as a continent is no exception to incidents of bullying in secondary schools. African countries participating in the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS, 2017), published bullying victimisation prevalence rates which indicate significant variations. Reported school bullying victimisation prevalence rates for participating African countries are as follows: Zambia

65%, Ghana 59%, Kenya 57%, Botswana 52%, Namibia 52%, Uganda 46%, Mauritius 40%, and Tanzania 28% (GSHS, 2017). It is therefore important to discuss school bullying incidents in some selected African countries.

1.2.3.1 School Bullying in Nigeria

Bullying incidents have been reported in countries such as Nigeria (Egbochuku, 2008; Fareo, 2015). For example, Omoteso's (2010) qualitative study results in Nigeria have shown that the prevalence of bullying among secondary school level students was 67.2%, and from this, 88.1% had been bullied while 33.1% were bullies. Furthermore, Omoteso (2010) reports that the bullied students exhibited fear (63.6%) and depression (58.1%). The findings of another qualitative study carried out in one of the secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria revealed that 62.4% of the respondents have been victims of bullying while 29.6% have bullied others within one academic session (Fareo, 2015). Akpunne, Lanre-Babalola and Alo's (2019) exploratory study reveals that there is a high prevalence of bullying behaviour among Nigerian secondary school adolescents. The authors report that prevalence rates include verbal bullying (42.5%), social bullying (42.3%), physical bullying (37.9%) and the overall bullying behaviour (44.8%); and classroom size is the significant predictor of the individual factors of bullying behaviour.

1.2.3.2 School Bullying in Kenya

According to Gendron, Kirk and Nancy's (2011) qualitative study, bullying is one of the major problems in Kenyan schools; and both intra-school and extra-school factors are related to the incidences of bullying in schools. The authors further posit that effects of bullying in Kenyan secondary schools are manifested in many ways including absenteeism, violence, high school drop-out rates, low self-esteem and poor academic performance. Their study also recommends that teacher-parent partnership is crucial for eradicating bullying in Kenyan schools. Another qualitative research by Ngesu, Samson, Lydia, Evanson and Atieno Kili (2013) affirms that bullying is a significant problem in Kenyan schools; and it is rampant in boys than girls, and victims are junior students among boys while among girls are from various class levels. Itegi (2017) argues that physical bullying is common among boys while verbal bullying is the common type among girls, and their study recommends empowerment of teachers to enhance supportive school environment and collaboration among Kenyan education stakeholders.

1.2.3.3 School Bullying in Zimbabwe

According to Tatttum and Herbert's (2010) qualitative study, numerous accounts of bullying behaviour in Zimbabwean schools have been reported; and the worst case was where a secondary school student was beaten to death by fellow schoolmates who suspected that he had stolen their money. Tattum and Herbert (2010) again point out that the most common forms of bullying are physical (fighting, punching, hitting), verbal (threatening, swearing, teasing) and social (deliberately going out of a playing game or discussion group, ignoring). Moreover, an exploratory research by Gudyanga, Mudihlwa and Wadersango (2014) reports that boys are the main perpetrators of bullying in Zimbabwean secondary schools; and their bullying behaviour is influenced by home-based factors, peers and school-based factors. To combat this situation, Ncube, Muranda, Tshabalala and Mapolisa's (2015) study recommends that schools should encourage teachers to engage all learners in productive work all the time; and also liaise with parents on best ways of guiding the behaviour of learners who exhibit characteristics of bullies. Early in 2019, police in Bulawayo arrested three Hamilton High School Upper Six students for assaulting three Lower Sixth newcomers as part of the school's alleged "initiation" programme (The Chronicle Newspaper, 28/02/2019).

1.2.3.4 School Bullying in Botswana

In Botswana, both students and school personnel have acknowledged the occurrence of bullying among students in school settings (Hulela & Matsolo, 2011; Tjavanga & Jotia, 2012). Tjavanga and Jotia, (2012) postulate that bullying occurs both in school and outside school premises. In Mangope, Dinama and Kefhilwe's (2012) study which consisted of both day and boarding schools from urban and rural areas, respondents from day schools indicated that bullying occurs outside school premises whereas the opposite was reported by students in boarding schools. Similarly, at Oodima Secondary School which is a day school, more than half (60%) of the student research participants confirmed that the majority of bullying incidents happened outside the school campus (Tjavanga & Jotia, 2012). Selemogwe, Setlhare-Oagile and Mphele's (2014) qualitative study argues that there is a need to train more school personnel who will provide interventions in light of the fact that some school teachers trivialise the occurrence and impact of bullying in their schools. But, an enraged parent at Mmadinare village raised a concern about a group of unruly students at Mmadinare Senior Secondary School who call themselves "Lemphizi" and terrorise and bully fellow students and teachers alike (Mmegionline Newspaper, Friday 02/11/2018).

1.2.3.5 School Bullying in the Republic of South Africa

Bullying has also been reported to be as high as 61% in a sample of high-school students in Tshwane, South Africa (Protogerou & Flisher, 2012). Additionally, Ncontsa and Shumba, (2013: 16) state that 15.3% of all South African learners have experienced incidents of school violence with approximately 1, 821 054 learners having been either threatened, assaulted, robbed or sexually violated while at school. Moreover, Juan, Zuze, Hannan, Govender and Reddy's (2018) exploratory study from a nationally representative sample of 12,514 Grade Nine South African students who participated in the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science revealed different patterns of bullying victimisation and perpetration by the socioeconomic status (SES) of the school. Juan and colleagues reveal that students attending schools with a low SES reported higher levels of bullying victimisation and perpetration.

These incidents of bullying and violence in South African schools are taking place despite the country's constitution which aims to protect children from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and to ensure their right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Hooper, 2016). The findings from the Teaching and Learning International (TALIS) study, conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), found out that South Africa has the highest rate of bullying and intimidation among students in 48 surveyed countries (City Press, 17:28, 02/07/2019). The foregoing discussions highlight the pervasive nature of school bullying among African adolescents and clearly, bullying is a widespread crisis on the African continent.

1.2.4 School Bullying in Lesotho

An extensive literature search on school bullying in Lesotho, which is the context of this study, yielded five studies and two newspaper reports. The first one is an explorative study conducted by Isidiho (2009) investigating bullying in a sample of public schools in Lesotho explaining the challenge from learners' perspectives. The quantitative research method was applied, which included an analysis of the data obtained from a questionnaire containing 33 close-ended questions divided into six sections: general information; observation of bullying; experience of bullying; impact of bullying; participation in bullying activities and reasons for bullying and measures against it. The questionnaires were distributed among 1,373 learners from various public secondary schools in Lesotho which were used in the study. The study found out that bullying

takes place in Lesotho schools; and that 29.5% happens in the classrooms. These school bullying incidents turn into serious crimes because learners carry weapons to school (De Wet, 2007 cited in Isidiho, 2009). For instance, the Lesotho Times Newspaper reported that a student in one of the high schools in Maseru stabbed and killed a fellow Form A student in the school toilets during break time in November 2010 (Maama, 2010). Maama further reports that the death came two weeks after a different student had stabbed and injured another in the same school. In another incident, a 16 year old student from Quthing was arrested for stabbing a 15 year old during a fight (Maama 2010).

On a separate incident, on the 3rd February 2012, the Public Eye Newspaper reported that two first year students were killed at Lerotholi Polytechnic (a technical college in Maseru district) by senior students during an annual initiation rite (Khanyela, 2012). One of the main shortcomings of quantitative studies such as that conducted by Isidiho is that results are limited as they provide numerical descriptions rather than detailed narrative; and they generally provide less elaborate accounts of human perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). So, the present study on the other hand intends to have a detailed and in-depth qualitative understanding of learners' perceptions on the causes of bullying; and how it can be controlled in secondary schools as learners' natural settings.

The second study was conducted by Mosia (2015) on the prevalence of bullying at high schools in Lesotho. Mosia's study qualitatively examined how both teachers and students can inadvertently sustain bullying by their behaviours. One thousand one hundred and seventy questionnaires (450 for teachers and 720 for learners) were distributed to 18 purposively sampled high schools in three districts: four schools in Leribe, eight schools in Maseru and six schools in Mafeteng. Mosia's exploratory study accentuates that bullying occurs in Lesotho schools; and 41.9% of respondents indicated that they had been bullied by other learners. The findings of Mosia's (2015) study indicate that verbal bullying is the most common type of bullying, and it happens most frequently in the classrooms where teachers are supposed to be in total control. Mosia further points out that most schools do not have regulations which control learners' general unbecoming behaviour and teachers punish incidents of bullying as they see fit. Although Mosia's study included more learners than teachers as research participants, it basically focused on how both teachers and students' behaviours can perpetrate bullying in schools. Therefore, it limits the

understanding on how learners perceive the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled in secondary schools.

The third study was conducted by Lekena (2016) exploring learners' experiences of bullying and how it makes them feel excluded in a case study of one secondary school in Botha-Bothe district. A qualitative research method was applied, which included analysis of data obtained from narrative essays and from individual, semi-structured interviews. The study explicates that learners were exposed to multiple forms of bullying, for example, physical and verbal bullying. Furthermore, it established that bullying exhibits psychological and emotional effects, particularly on the victims. Lekena's study described various forms of bullying, the effects and factors that contribute to bullying which make learners feel excluded in a school environment.

But the present study seeks to explore secondary students' views on the causes of bullying and how it can be managed.

The fourth study was undertaken by Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) exploring the micropolitics of schooling in Lesotho, with a particular focus on bullying. A qualitative research design was adopted to probe for in-depth information about bullying in a case study of two high schools in the Roma valley. The population of the study was all teachers and students in the two high schools in Roma valley, while the sample comprised only six teachers and eight students, who were purposively selected. Makafane and Khalanyane argue that bullying exists not only during school activities, but even after school activities which learners are involved in. The findings of their study reveal that the minority members of the society like visually impaired people, physically challenged and students with poor background are more prone to bullying because most of them do not have power to counteract bullies. They further found out that newly arrived students are the ones who are mostly targeted by bullies under the pretext of being taught the culture of the school. Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) also report that cyber bullying is the latest form of bullying which is more harmful than any other form of bullying.

The fifth and latest study was conducted by Makafane (2019) focusing on the ramifications of bullying in Lesotho schools. A qualitative research design was adopted to probe for in-depth information about consequences of bullying in a case study of two high schools in the Roma valley. The population of the study was all teachers and students in the two high schools in Roma valley, while the sample consisted of only six teachers and eight students, who were purposively

selected. Makafane (2019) reveals that bullying contributes to depression and low self-esteem, which can lead to poor school performance and suicidal tendencies amongst the victims and bystanders. The study recommends that the Lesotho government should come up with a policy to eliminate bullying in schools and establish programmes directed at teaching learners' attitudes, knowledge and skills which they can use to circumvent bullying (Makafane, 2019). It could be noticed that the authors (Makafane & Khalanyane, 2018; and Makafane, 2019) conducted their studies qualitatively at the same research sites, with the same population and sample, but none of their two studies' findings reflect on secondary school learners' views on the roots of the school bullying problem in Lesotho, and how it can be brought under control.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The scourge of bullying reflects a challenge in which children and adults fail to manage their emotions and behaviour and become civil with one another. The behaviour is noted across the globe and only differs in proportions. With the legal and policy framework in Lesotho supporting inclusive education, it is imperative to assess the extent to which learners feel included. According to the Education Act (2010), inclusive education in Lesotho is mandated by section 28 of the 1993 Constitution of Lesotho which stipulates that "Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all…" In an effort to achieve education for all, the Lesotho government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in schools, in order to enable all children to have access to education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010). Moreover, the government promulgated Children's Protection and Welfare Act No. 7 of 2011; and section 11(1) stipulates that "a child has a right to access education…". Ngakane, Muthukrishna and Ngcobo's (2012) study argues that despite the Lesotho government initiatives to provide access to education for all children, there are children who are not fully attaining education due to a number of factors which impede them from paying attention to their studies. Bullying for example, is one of the factors that can promote students' exclusion from schools and hinder their academic success in many various ways (Lekena, 2016). There are many recent studies conducted on school bullying in Lesotho, however, none of them focused on learners' perceptions on the causes of bullying in secondary schools. The Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy (LIEP, 2018) also does not give any provision of how Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBDs) such as bullying should be controlled in the school system. This therefore warrants the need for this study to explore secondary school learners' perceptions on the causes of bullying and how it can be managed.

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Aim of the study

This study aims to explore learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying at secondary schools in Lesotho and explain ways in which it can be managed.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The study will address the following objectives at length:

1. To explore learners' experiences of bullying in secondary schools.

2. To describe learners' views about the causes of bullying.

3. To explain existing mechanisms of controlling bullying in secondary schools.

4. To explore ways in which bullying can be controlled in secondary schools in Lesotho.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1 The Main Research Question

The key research question for this study is phrased as follows:

What do learners perceive as the causes of bullying at secondary schools in Lesotho, and ways in which it can be managed?

1.5.2 Sub-Research Questions

In an attempt to respond to the key research question of this study, the following sub-research questions were formulated:

1. What are learners' experiences of bullying in secondary schools?

2. What are learners' views about the causes of bullying?

3. What are existing mechanisms for controlling bullying at secondary schools?

4. What are the ways in which bullying can be controlled in secondary schools?

1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

An exploration of learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying will raise awareness to all education stakeholders that school bullying is one of the major impediments of Education For All (EFA) in Lesotho. The study will help the Ministry of Education and Training to assess its efforts towards accommodating bullying victims and perpetrators in the education system, and come up with an appropriate Anti-Bullying Policy to supplement the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018. The study will also help mainstream education teachers to reflect on their practices and identify challenges which they face while dealing with bullying victims and perpetrators, and seek additional help on how they could effectively support such learners in order to maximise their individual academic potential. The study may facilitate the development of proper anti-bullying strategies by both secondary school administrators and teachers on how they could work together to combat bullying practices within and among students in their respective schools. Both perpetrators and victims of school bullying will most undoubtedly benefit from the anti-bullying policy development. This study will also serve as base for further research on school bullying in Lesotho.

1.7 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (later termed Social Cognitive Theory) will be adopted as the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The Social Learning Theory (SLT) which is the main theoretical lens hypothesizes that people learn by observing (Observational Learning) others' behaviours, attitudes, as well as the outcomes of those behaviours (Bandura, 1978).

Broadly put, Social Learning Theory posits that a child's real-life experiences and that to which the child is exposed either directly or indirectly shapes future behaviour (O'Connor &Scott, 2007). This theory also suggests that children learn strategies for managing their emotions, resolving conflict disputes and engaging with others through these interactions or exposures (O'Connor &Scott, 2007). Studies utilising the Social Learning Theory as a foundation for understanding bullying behaviours have examined childhood and adolescent aggression (Bandura, 1971; 1978); family conflict (Low & Eselage, 2012; Wilson, Parry, Nettelbeck & Bell, 2003); drug and alcohol use (Akers, Krohn, Lanzakaduce & Radosevich, 2007; Eiser, 1985; Low & Espelage, 2012); intimate partner violence (Bauer, Herrenkohl, Lozano, Rivara, Hill & Hawkins, 2006); and other violent and non-violent criminal behaviour (Akers & Matsueda, 1999). In the 1960s, Albert Bandura developed the SLT into the Social Cognitive Theory which is composed of four processes

of goal realization: self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction and self-efficacy (Redmond, 2010). The four components are interrelated, and all have an effect on school bullying motivation and goal attainment (Redmond, 2010). So, the current research aims to understand all dimensions of students' perceptions about the causes of bullying within the lens of Social Cognitive Theory.

1.8 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Research Methodology and Design

This section of the study presents a brief description of the research methods and methodology that will be adopted by the study and how data will be gathered and processed. This study perceives reality as socially constructed and true for people who value and believe in it.

1.8.2 Research Paradigm

The research is underpinned by constructivist/interpretive paradigm which according to Willis (2007, p.4) usually "seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed". The paradigm asserts that participants "make meaning" of a phenomenon or situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22). Thomas (2003, p.60) maintains that qualitative methods are usually supported by interpretivists, because the interpretive paradigm "portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever-changing". In addition, a constructivist paradigm is explicated as an individual effort to understand the world in which people live (Creswell: 2014). Willis (2007, p.90) asserts that "interpretive paradigm tends to favour qualitative methods such as case studies and ethnography". This study explores learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying, and how it can be managed in secondary schools. Therefore, the use of a constructivist/interpretive perspective will help the researcher to investigate what participants make of their world and to evaluate how his role in interacting with participants affected the outcome of the study. The philosophical assumption underlying this study is that social phenomena are truly understood in the contexts in which they are constructed and reproduced through activities (Åkerlind, 2005).

1.8.3 Research Approach

This study will adopt a qualitative approach. Creswell (2009) states that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon

within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Comprehensive data collected in understanding secondary school learners' perceptions about causes of bullying and how it can be managed will be documented (Laher & Botha, 2012,). Therefore, the researcher requires face-to-face interaction with the participants in their natural setting for better understanding, and qualitative approach and case study design are found to be suitable. Taken as a whole, qualitative research is inductive, subjective and contextual in nature, and it offers an opportunity to capture the unique experiences and beliefs of participants in their interaction with their context (Morgan, 2014). The strategy is inductive, the outcomes are descriptive, and the meaning is mediated through "the researcher as an instrument" (Merriam, 2002, p.178). Denzil and Lincoln (2003) maintain that qualitative research is mainly a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive practices that render the world visible.

1.8.4 Research Design

The study will adopt a single case study design and use two data generation methods which are focus group and individual interviews. The goal of this qualitative study is to explore secondary school learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled. De Visser and Smith (2006) state that single case-studies represent in-depth examinations of the lived experiences of a single person while Yazan (2015) sees it as one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies. Smith (2011, p.37) views case study as a bounded system and Stake (1995) views it as "an integrated system". Stake (1995, p.37) states that "a case study is an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of the study". According to Yin (2003, p.18), a case study design is "considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) when one cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) when one wants to cover contextual conditions because she/he believes that they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context". The researcher will select one secondary school in Berea district as the unit of analysis for this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) in exploring learners' perceptions about causes of bullying and how it can be controlled.

1.8.5 Participant Selection

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007, p.178), "a small sample" is used in qualitative studies because the purpose is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. A

combination of convenience and purposive sampling will be applied as the most appropriate sampling methods (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Convenience or opportunity sampling is the most common type of sampling in studies where the only criterion according to Dornyei (2007) is the convenience of the researcher. Convenience sampling is "a type of non-probability sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study" (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016, p.2). Convenience sampling was used to select one secondary school in Berea district where the researcher lives and students who indicated availability to be interviewed, either individually or in a focus-group, were selected to participate.

Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain some insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants whom the researcher thought would give "valuable data addressing the purpose of the study" (Leedy, 2005, p.207). Fraenkel and Wallen (2005) note that, in purposive sampling researchers use their personal judgments to select a sample, situating themselves upon the previous knowledge of a population in conjunction with the specific purpose of the research. Purposive sampling ensures that only those participants who could contribute meaningfully to the research are included. Oliver (2010, p.110) says: "Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher identifies certain participants as being potentially able to provide significant data on the research study". After submitting my letter of application and talking to the principal about bullies, bystanders and perpetrators, I was provided with the total sample of 30 Form C (Grade 10) and Form E (Grade 12) learners from that secondary school. There were 18 learners from Grade 12 and 12 from Grade 10 in the sample. Out of 30 participants there were 20 girls and only 10 boys. Ordinary learners, school prefects, class monitors and monitresses participated in the mixed focus group discussions and each group comprised of 10 students, and each lasted 60 to 100 minutes. There were individual interviews specifically for bullies and victims so that they could feel free to express their experiences about the causes of bullying and how it could be controlled in their school. Individual interviews took 50 to 60 minutes. McMillian and Schumacher (2014) claim that a researcher selects particular elements from the population which represent the topic of interest.

1.8.6 Instrumentation and Data Collection Techniques

Data for this study was collected through a focus group discussion with key informants, and semi-structured individual interviews. These interviews were used to explore secondary school learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be managed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014) semi-structured interview is a meeting in which the interviewer asks more open-ended questions allowing for discussions with the interviewees rather than a straightforward question and answer format. In-depth interviews enabled the study to document secondary school learners' perceptions about causes of bullying and how it can be controlled. An interview is recognised as a vital instrument in gathering qualitative data (Best & Kahn, 1993; Coll & Chapman, 2000). Individual interviews and focus group discussions (group interviews) were used with research participants from one secondary school in the district of Berea for data collection purposes. Focus group is a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). All interviews were conducted using an interview schedule of open-ended questions and they were audio-recorded. Participants' reactions were also recorded during the interviews as field notes to supplement the audio-recorded data.

1.8.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study adopts an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyse data. Interpretive phenomenological analysis is a qualitative data analysis approach rooted in phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experiences (Smith, 2011). This study uses interpretive phenomenological analyses as an approach that is most ideal for interpreting qualitative data. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) looks at individual cases one-by-one and subsequently compares cases to identify "convergent and divergent themes" (Kawulich & Holland 2012, p.239). Furthermore, Smith (2011) claims that IPA involves the detailed analytic treatment of each case followed by the search patterns across the cases and it balances convergence and divergence with the sample, not only presenting both shared themes, but also pointing to the particular way in which these themes play out for individuals. Therefore, IPA requires an intense qualitative case analysis of detailed personal accounts derived from participants.

1.8.8 Credibility and Trustworthiness

According to Shaw (2010), trustworthiness is explained as the transparency which the researcher shows in the analysis of data. Therefore, in order to assure credibility of results, all interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed word-by-word and the transcribed data was sent to each participant to verify if their views were captured accurately (Creswell, 2007). Informant feedback or respondent validation is considered critical for making results of a study trustworthy (Morse, Barret, Mayan & Olson, 2002) as participants have the opportunity to discuss and clarify the interpretation and contribute new or additional perspectives on the issue under study (Krefting, 1991). The research created safe and trustworthy relationships that allowed informants to give information freely while gathering data through interviews and focus group discussion.

1.8.9 Research Ethics

Researchers in the social sciences have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population and the larger society (Berg, 2004). The researcher ensured that the following minimum ethical considerations were met: (a) informed consent, ensuring no harm; (b) reciprocity/beneficence, and confidentiality. Besides seeking ethical clearance from the university, the researcher sought further permission from the Ministry of Education and Training (Berea Education Office), the authorities of the sampled institution (the secondary school in Berea) in Lesotho and solicited informed consent from the research participants themselves only those who were 18 years and above. For those who were below the age of 18; informed consent was requested from their parents, guardians or caregivers. The study considered the ethical issues related to the research by explaining the purpose and benefits of the study to the participants before they could decide to take part. The participants were also informed about their right to refuse to answer questions at any time, without any penalty. The learners were assured that their participation was free and voluntary, and their experiences and perceptions were shared anonymously in order to protect their identities. Pseudonyms were given to each participant to maintain the anonymity of the data.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to one secondary school in the district of Berea. It focuses on learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled, therefore, the findings cannot be generalised as they are not representative.

1.10 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

The study has the following outline of chapters:

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Chapter Four: Research Methods and Methodology

Chapter Five: Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Chapter Six: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has covered the background of the study which defines school bullying and its consequences, international and African countries' perspectives on bullying, and school bullying in Lesotho respectively. Furthermore, the aim, objectives as well as questions addressed by the study were explained. It also stated the significance of the study to the Ministry of Education and Training. The theoretical framework for the study was briefly described. Lastly, chapter one has indicated the methodology which includes research paradigm, approach, design as well as participants selection, data collection instruments, analysis, the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations that the researcher observed. Finally, the limitations of the study were provided.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is underpinned by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as the theoretical framework. In this chapter the Social Learning Theory, which is the main theoretical lens, is reviewed in terms of its key principles. Thereafter, a description of the Authoritarian parenting style is provided. The psychological and physical profiles of bullies, victims, and bully/victims are then outlined. With these profiles borne in mind, possible developmental pathways of bullying behaviours are reviewed, with reference to the Social Learning Theory and the Authoritarian parenting style.

2.2 Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Bandura postulated that individuals acquire aggressive responses using the same mechanism that they do for other complex forms of social behaviour, namely: direct experience or the observation-modelling of others (Hart & Kritsonis, 2006). The Social Learning Theory has been applied in numerous studies and its theoretical value has been supported (studies include those by Huesmann & Eron, 1989; Low & Espelage, 2012; Pakaslahti, 2000; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997; Wilson, Parry, Nettelbeck, & Bell, 2003). Studies utilising the Social Learning Theory as a foundation for understanding causes of bullying behaviours have examined childhood and adolescent aggression (Bandura, 1971; 1978); family conflict (Low & Espelage, 2012; Wilson et al., 2003); drug and alcohol use (Akers, Krohn, Lanza-kaduce, & Radosevich, 2007; Eiser, 1985; Low & Espelage, 2012); intimate partner violence (Bauer et al., 2006); and other violent and non-violent criminal behaviour (Akers & Matsueda, 1999). An area of research that has received considerable attention in the literature and is worth exploring further is how parental/caregiver behaviours impact on the behaviour of the child.

Several researchers highlight the importance of the family as a source of social learning, and have hypothesised that inappropriate, aggressive behaviours, such as bullying, are a result of social learning within the family (D‟Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971; Hogben & Byrne, 1998; Huesmann & Eron, 1989; Lochman & Lenhart, 1993; Low & Espelage, 2012; Pakaslahti, 2000). Researchers have hypothesised that bullies learn inappropriate and adverse conflict resolution tactics from their parents, which they then use in interactions with their peers (Schwartz et al. 1997; Wilson et al. 2003). Moreover, Barlow et al. (1984), and Loeber and Dishion (1984) maintain that children growing up in families where they are exposed to aggression, inconsistent and highly aversive discipline techniques, and physical punishment, learn and develop these behaviours, and then generalise them to their peer group, thus predisposing a child to display aggressive behaviours such as bullying.

2.3 Key Assumptions of the Social Learning Theory

Traditional theories of learning have often depicted behaviour as the product of direct experience (Bandura, 1971). Learning, rooted in direct experience, is largely governed by the consequences, in the form of reward or punishment. Although behaviour can be shaped to some extent by

rewarding or punishing consequences, Bandura and others suggest that most of the behaviours that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence and observation of a model (Bandura, 1978; Bandura, 1971; Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Mejia-Arauz, 2005).

Observational learning allows people to acquire large integrated units of behaviour, without having to build up the patterns gradually by tedious trial and error (Bandura, 1971). Bandura (1971) reported that emotional responses can be developed observationally as well, by witnessing the affective reactions of others. Negative behaviour can be exacerbated vicariously, by observing the way in which others engage in adverse activities, without experiencing any negative consequences (Bandura, 1971). Bandura (1978) identified three models of observational learning: (1) a live model, which involves an individual demonstrating the behaviour; (2) a verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of behaviour; and (3) a symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviours in books, films, television programmes, or online media.

Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) carried out a study of observational learning, which demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviours they have observed in live models. Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) hypothesised that children's observation of aggressive models would increase the likelihood that aggressive behaviours would be used during times of subsequent frustration (Bandura et al. 1963). Young children were placed in one of two rooms with adults interacting with a character named the "bobo doll". In one room, the adults attacked the bobo doll, and in another they did not. The adults acting as aggressive models attacked the bobo doll in a distinctly violent manner, using a hammer in some cases, and in other cases threw the doll in the air, shouting "Pow, Boom!" (Bandura et al. 1963, p.5). As a result, the researchers could be sure that if the behaviour was repeated, it was learned, rather than spontaneous (Bandura et al. 1963). Those children, who had witnessed the aggression displayed towards the bobo doll began to imitate the aggressive actions of the adults they had observed in their own interactions with the bobo doll (Bandura, 1978).

Later, Bandura (1965) carried out the same experiment, with the difference that the models that behaved aggressively were either punished, rewarded, or neither for their behaviour. Children who had witnessed the adult being rewarded (and those who had seen the adult neither rewarded nor punished for their behaviour) behaved more aggressively than those who had seen the adult

punished (Bandura, 1965). Overall, Bandura and associates proved that children readily mimicked aggressive behaviours of a live model, and generalised such responses to novel settings in the absence of that model (Hart & Kritsonis, 2006).

However, not all observed behaviours are effectively learned. Factors involving both the model and the learner play a role in whether or not social learning proves itself to be successful (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2008; Bandura & Walters, 1963; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; Bandura, 1978; Eyal & Rubin, 2003). Bandura (1971) suggests that the following four steps are involved in observational learning and modelling (illustrated in Figure 3.1), and are necessary for effective learning (Bandura, 1971, p.6):

Attention

In order to learn, an individual must pay attention. Anything that diminishes an individual's attention will have a negative effect on observational learning. If the model is interesting or there is a unique aspect to the situation, an individual is likely to pay full attention. Various factors increase or decrease the amount of attention paid, including distinctiveness, prevalence, complexity, and functional value (Bandura, 1971). An individual's characteristics (i.e., sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set and past reinforcement) may also affect attention.

Retention

Retention involves the ability to store information. Observers must not only recognise the observed behaviour but also remember it at some later time. The process of retention depends on the observer's ability to code the information in an easily remembered form or to mentally or physically rehearse the model's actions. This process can be affected by a number of factors, but the ability to recall information later and act on it is fundamental to observational learning.

Reproduction

If attention has been paid, and the information retained, the individual will perform the observed behaviour. Further practice of the learned behaviour leads to improvement and skill advancement.

Motivation

In observational learning, individuals learn by watching others and then imitating or modelling what those people do or say. Finally, in order for observational learning to be successful, an individual requires motivation to emulate the behaviour that has been modelled.

Figure 3.1: Depiction of Bandura's Social Learning Theory
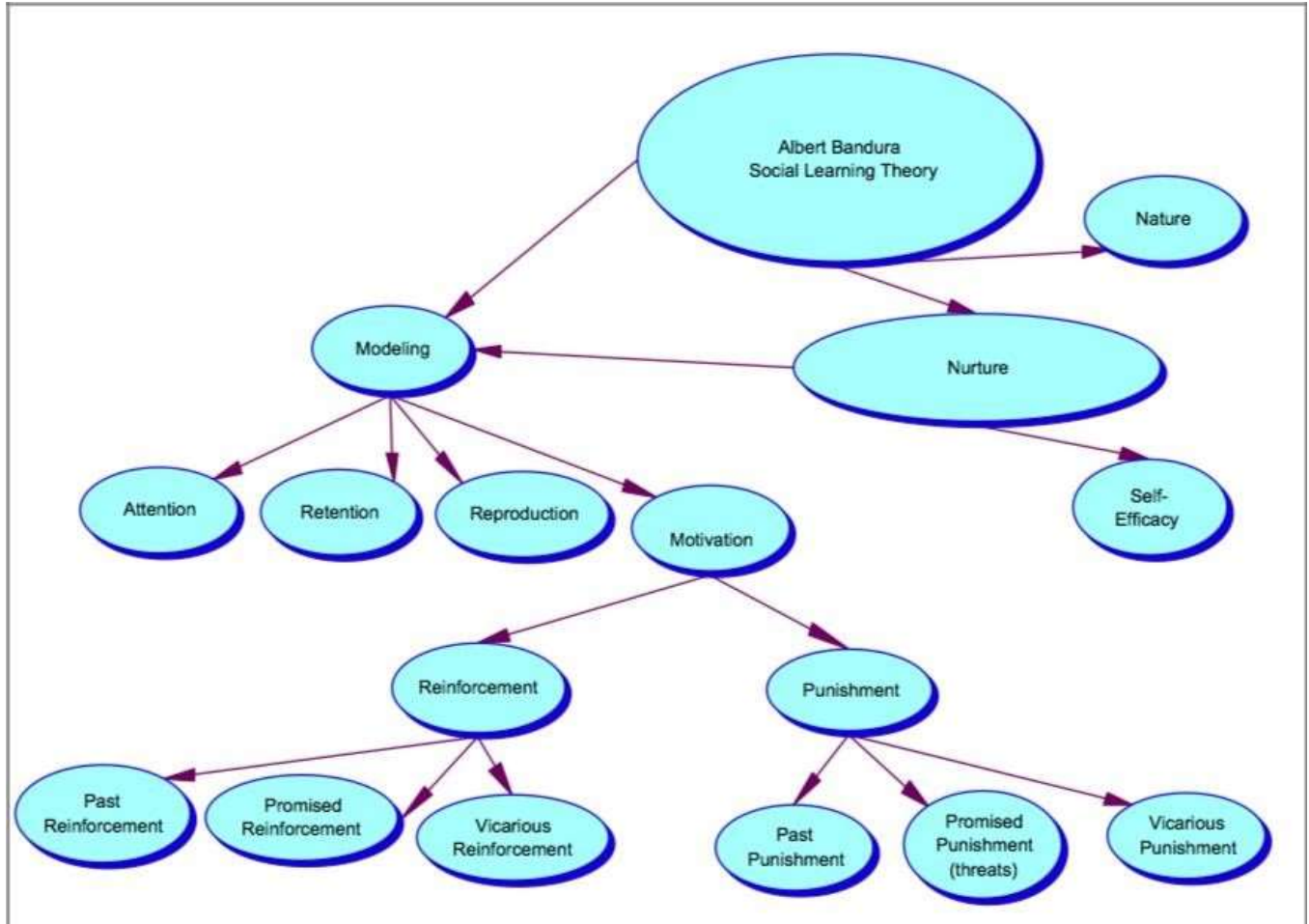
Figure 3.1: Depiction of Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Broadly put, Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggests that adolescents observe, interpret and imitate the actions, behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of their parents (Bandura, 1978). Bandura's theory has been used to show that, although adolescents spend an increasing amount of time away from home, parents and members of the community still have an influence on them and are likely to remain significant models in their lives (Bandura, 1978; Gecas & Seff, 1990; Notar & Padgett, 2013).

2.4 THE AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING STYLE

Developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind (Baumrind, 1991), claims that the way in which children are raised has a major impact on their functioning and well-being. Furthermore, Baumrind noted that the manner in which parents meet the needs of their children for nurturance and boundary-setting greatly influences the child's degree of social competence and future behaviours (Baumrind, 1991). Baumrind studied parenting behaviours and identified two dimensions in parenting practices: control and demandingness (which is cited as the extent to which the parent expects more mature and responsible behaviour from a child); and warmth and responsiveness (which refers to the degree to which the parent responds to the child's needs), respectively.

Initially, Baumrind used these two dimensions to classify parenting styles into three categories, namely: the Authoritative Parenting Style, which is characterised by high control and high warmth; the Permissive Parenting Style (Indulgent), characterised by low control and high warmth; and the Authoritarian Parenting Style (APS), in which the parent's behaviour is high in control and low in warmth (Baumrind, 1991). The APS is characterised by punishment, an indisputable power imbalance which favours the parents, and an absence of explanation and negotiation (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritarian-style parents emphasise their control over their child, restrict the child's autonomy, and decide which behaviour is appropriate for them (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritarian boundaries are strict, non-negotiable, and reinforced with punitive consequences. Parents adopting an Authoritarian parenting style often use enforced discipline, demand total obedience and expect children to adhere to their rules and orders unquestioningly (Baumrind, 1991).

Baumrind (1991) documented the APS as predisposing a child to harbour certain tendencies associated with a variety of bullying behaviours, such as enforcement, conflict and physical aggression. Furthermore, Becker, as cited in Horton, (2011) revealed that parental hostility and control foster a child's aggression towards others. Moreover, Grigg (2010) has suggested that bullies are more likely to come from families lacking warmth, a family in which violence is common, and where discipline is harsh and inconsistent. Similarly, Hong and Garbarino (2012) reported that bullying was fostered in families which are characterised by social isolation, parental conflict, positively reinforced aggression and punishment - all of which closely resemble the core aspects of the APS (Baumrind, 1991), and which are possibly learned through observation. Carney

and Merrell, as cited in Thornberg, (2010), have concurred with these research findings and have indicated that bullies tend to come from homes where they experience Authoritarian parenting.

2.5 UNDERSTANDING BULLY BEHAVIOURS USING THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Consistent findings reveal the aggressive nature of bullies (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Olweus, 1994; Yang & Salmivalli, 2015). The typical bully is characterised as having an aggressive reaction pattern, paired with physical and/or psychological strength (Olweus, 1994 cited in Eriksen, 2018). These children tend to display more organised and goal-oriented aggressive behaviour, and rarely engage in retaliatory aggression, as displayed by bully/victims (Olweus, 1978). Bullies often demonstrate their aggression not only towards their peers, but towards adults as well (Olweus, 1994). Furthermore, bullies utilise this aggression as an instrument for achieving peer dominance or acquiring objects and position (Dodge as cited in Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit & Bates, 1997). Bullies are often loud and assertive and have a low capacity for empathising with victims (Bendixen & Olweus, 1999; Olweus, 1994, 2006; Swart & Bredekamp, 2009, Yang & Salmivalli, 2015). They also tend to enjoy violence and often display a moral approval of bullying behaviours (Eriksen, 2018).

In general, bullies show more problematic behaviours, such as purposely damaging property, physically assaulting others, stealing and abusing drugs and alcohol (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a; Horton, 2011). A study by Volk, Veenstra and Espelage (2017) revealed that adolescents who bullied others were five times more likely to report alcohol use and seven times more likely to use drugs, when compared to their peers. Furthermore, Thornberg and Delby (2019) found that bullies often have trouble following rules, are more likely to fail at school and/or dropout and are more likely to commit criminal acts later in life.

Social learning advocates explain that children learn to be violent primarily through the imitation of violent role models and acquire aggressive responses in the same way they acquire other forms of social behaviour, that is, either by direct experience or by observing others (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bandura, 1973). As such, if parents/guardians rely on corporal punishment or verbal abuse to control their children (consistent with the Authoritarian parenting style), they are inadvertently acting as models for bullying behaviour (Bandura, 1973; Baron, 1977). The Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (as cited in Farrington, 1993) examined factors that

were alleged to be causes or correlates of offending and bullying. Results revealed that Authoritarian parents were one of the most significant predictors of bullying perpetration. Similarly, Baldry and Farrington (2000) aimed to analyse the personal characteristics and parental styles of bullies and delinquents, and to establish which factors were related to the bully/delinquent group, and which were related only to bullies, or only to delinquents. Results revealed that all of the parental variables were especially related to the bully/delinquent group (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). However, while unsupportive parents were observed to be a notable feature for delinquents, authoritarian parents were found to be a core feature for bullies (Baldry & Farrington, 2000).

2.6 UNDERSTANDING VICTIM BEHAVIOURS USING THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Identifying victims of bullying and creating a victim profile has been a complicated task, as throughout the literature, researchers often differ in their methods of gathering data (Greeff & Grobler, 2008; Swearer & Espelage, 2011). However, a typical victim is characterised by an anxious or submissive reaction pattern, most often combined with physical weakness (Olweus, 1994 cited in Jimerson, Swearer & Espelage, 2010). A typical victim tends to be physically smaller; withdrawn; unassertive and cautious; and often exhibits a sensitive, quiet persona (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Olweus, 1993, 1994; Smith & Brain, 2000; Swart & Bredekamp, 2009; Jimerson, Swearer & Espelage, 2010). Victims of bullying often hold a negative view of themselves and look upon themselves as failures (Olweus & Limber, 2010; Olweus, 1994). This attitude of a typical victim signals to others that they are insecure individuals, who are unlikely to retaliate if they are bullied. Similarly, Ringrose and Renold (2010) found out that victims rarely fight back and long for approval from more powerful children, even after they have been rejected or victimised.

Bandura (1971), who argued that all learning is socially acquired, discusses reciprocal determinism in later developments of the Social Learning Theory, where people are influenced by the environment and equally influence the environment themselves. This research is concerned with the theoretical reinforcement concept of learned helplessness, briefly defined as the perceived inability to surmount failure (Diener & Dweck, 1978). More specifically, learned helplessness relates to the feeling that an individual embodies after they encounter situations in which they repeatedly have no influence or control, similar to bullying scenarios (Bandura, 1971). Grigg (2010) states that children who are victims develop and learn helplessness patterns of perception and behaviour. This makes them an easy and preferred target for more frequent bullying attacks.

Continuous negative feedback has been shown to result in a persistent helplessness attribution style at the primary school age, with direct negative implications for social behaviour (Goetz & Dweck, cited in Grigg, 2010). Moreover, learned helplessness implies a retention over setting, which means that even when the situation changes (e.g., from primary school to high school), the learned helplessness patterns remain fairly stable, as any escape strategy a victim may try is likely to be followed by negative feedback (Goetz & Dweck, 1980).

2.7 UNDERSTANDING BULLY/VICTIM BEHAVIOURS USING THE SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Children who fall into this dual category are characterised by both an anxious and aggressive reaction pattern and often experience problems in multiple areas of functioning (Olweus, 1994; Hong & Garbarino, 2012). These children tend to have concentration problems and are often described as restless and irritable by their peers. In addition, their disorganised behaviour, hyperactivity, and impulsivity play an active role in aggravating others (Olweus, 1994; Schwartz, 2000; Hong & Garbarino, 2012). The overly reactive behaviour of aggressive victims might be one important reason that they emerge as persistent targets of bullying (Olweus, 1994).

Bully/victims are described as asocial (defined predominantly by different behaviours to those describing prosocial activities) and anxious and are often excluded by other children (Wilson et al. 2003). Consistent with this finding, Schwartz (2000) revealed that aggressive victims were substantially rejected by their peers when compared to the other subgroups. Furthermore, aggressive victims display a greater acceptance of deviance and often stem from less supportive families (Craig, 1998; Haynie et al. 2001; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002; Schwartz, 2000, Yang & Salmivalli, 2015). Furthermore, Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2003) suggested that bully/victims are more likely to have diagnosable psychiatric disorders. A study by Schwartz (2000), which investigated the behavioural profiles and psychosocial adjustment of subgroups of victims and aggressors in Grades One to Five, revealed that aggressive victims had higher scores for emotional distress, emotion dysregulation, and social rejection than each of the other subgroups (Schwartz, 2000). More importantly, the study revealed that aggressive victims scored higher than the other subgroups on the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Rating Scale (ADHD-RS; Depaul, 1990).

The APS has been empirically linked to the characteristics and behaviours of aggressive victims (Baldry & Farrington, 1998). Aggressive victims reported more punitive, hostile and abusive family environments when compared to the other subtypes. Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates (1997) suggest that the behaviours of aggressive victims arise within a family environment in which the child has experienced poor management of emotional regulation, together with personal aggression, and that these circumstances result in inappropriate, over-reactive anger toward other children, as well as the behaviours that lead to victimisation by peers. An alarming feature of the early backgrounds of aggressive victims was their frequent exposure to violence in the home and their experience as an object of physical abuse (Schwartz et al. 1997). Mothers' responses indicated that the parents of aggressive victims tended to employ physically aggressive tactics during conflict situations with their children (Schwartz et al. 1997), which the child perhaps (socially) learns, and then employs in subsequent interactions with others.

2.8 SUMMARY

Overall, Bandura's Social Learning Theory has suggested possible adverse effects of Authoritarian parenting namely if parents are harsh, display aggression and physical violence, and are controlling and emotionally cold, children may perceive these actions as acceptable methods of resolving conflict and learn to imitate these patterns in their own interactions with peers. That increases the likelihood of inappropriate behavioural aggression, such as bullying (Bandura, 1978; Bauer, Herrenkohl, & Lozano, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Determining learners' perceptions on the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled is key to making the necessary policy and social transformation at secondary schools in Lesotho. Firstly, bullying will be generally defined before narrowing it to school bullying in particular.

Secondly, the learners' conceptualisation of bullying as a social and emotional scourge will be explored with the view to unearth why it occurs in schools. Finally, this chapter reflects on intervention strategies employed by various education stakeholders to control bullying in secondary schools.

3.2 Understanding the Concept of Bullying

Bullying is traditionally defined as repeated aggression or harmful actions directed at individuals who are disadvantaged or less powerful in their interactions with the perpetrators (Eriksen, 2018; Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage 2010; Yang & Salmivalli 2015). However, there is an ongoing debate among scholars about how to define bullying (Horton 2011; Schott & Søndergaard 2014; Volk, Veenstra & Espelage, 2017). For example, in the context of cyber-bullying, the criterion of repetition has been problematised since an act (e.g. writing a mean message or uploading a humiliating video clip) may be carried out just once and can then be repeatedly viewed by the victim and passed along by various bystanders (Grigg, 2010). The widespread definition has also been criticised for reducing our understanding of bullying to individual psychological characteristics of the bullies and the victims, excluding contextual, sociological, ideological and discursive understandings (Ringrose & Renold, 2010; Schott & Søndergaard, 2017). At the same time, there is a growing body of research that adopts the traditional definition of bullying with a social-ecological framework stating that bullying can be understood and examined as a social phenomenon that is established and perpetuated over time as a result of the complex interplay between individual and contextual factors (Espelage & Swearer 2011; Hong & Garbarino, 2012).

Several scholars have problematised the intention of harm built into the traditional definition of bullying. For instance, Volk, Dane, and Marini (2014) argue that this definitional criterion should be replaced with being goal-directed, meaning that students bully for things like resources and social reputation/dominance. In addition, bullying might, for instance, take place among students who interpret it as a harmless joke or playing (Thornberg, 2010). There are cases in which it is problematic to determine 'where the joke ends and where the abuse begins' (CarreraFernandez, Depalma & Maria, 2011). To address this grey area of intention, Rigby (2008) suggests a distinction between malign and non-malign bullying. The former refers to bullying that is carried out intentionally to hurt someone, in accordance with the traditional definition. The latter refers to bullying in which the perpetrators are unaware that what they are doing is harming the target. Considering the fuzziness of intention as well as the measurement problems of observing and measuring the intention (e.g. in self-reports of bullying victimisation and in peer nomination of bullies (Volk, Veenstra & Espelage, 2017), Thornberg and Delby (2019) argue that it is reasonable

to include both malign and non-malign actions in the definition of bullying. In other words, scholars should acknowledge the fuzziness of intention of harm and focus on harmful actions rather than intention of harm, together with power imbalance and repetition (Thornberg, & Delby, 2019). Various definitions and understandings of the word

'bullying' exist, particularly among students, but also among teachers and policy-makers (Chalmers et al. 2016; Craig, Bell, & Leschied, 2011; Eriksen, 2018; Hellström, Persson, & Hagquist, 2015; Purcell, 2012).

3.3 UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL BULLYING

School bullying can be described as victimization and intimidation of students by their fellow peers in a school environment. When students are frequently and repeatedly intimidated or victimized over time by more powerful peers, this results in psychological effects to the affected students (Undheim & Sund, 2010). Repeated threatening, verbal cursing, teasing, physical attacks or exclusion can occur anywhere anytime within the school environment (Purcell, 2012). Aggression among students is common but bullying is unique because it involves repeated pattern of harassment between two students or a group of students with one being stronger than others (Undheim & Sund, 2010).

School bullying and peer victimization are major social problems affecting children and adolescents in all parts of the world (Hong & Espalege, 2012). About one in five elementary schools and 1 in 10 middle school students in the United States is bullied (Volk et al. 2017). Approximately 15% of Swedish school children are involved either as victims or bullies, and even a greater number are involved if assistants to the bully or defenders of the victim are included (Hong & Espalege, 2012). Research studies report high prevalence of bullying worldwide and resultant increases in somatic complaints, depression, anxiety, school refusal, and an overall lower self-esteem in students who are bullied (Bowllan, 2011, p.167).

Bullying involves the bully, the victim and the bystanders, and has a negative impact on the health and academic performance of teenagers involved regardless of their level of participation (Volk et al. 2017). Brown et al. (2005) in their study enumerated that bully victims have documented somatic symptoms such as sleep difficulties, bed-wetting, headaches, stomach aches, fatigue, and school-related problems (Undheim & Sund, 2010). They can also experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, and may feel socially rejected or isolated. Children who

bully often suffer from low school bonding and adjustment, which can be associated with low school competence and increased truancy. Moreover, bullies are more likely to be involved in various self-destructive or antisocial behaviours such as fighting, vandalism, carrying weapons, stealing and getting in trouble with the law. (Brown et al. 2005).

Correlations have been found between school shootings and reports of perpetrators being bullied, persecuted, threatened, or injured prior to the violent attack (Purcell, 2012). Victims of bullying are more likely to feel socially unaccepted, and this weakens their ability to stand for themselves and even fight for certain positions (Volk et al. 2017). Erikson (2018) argues that in situations where someone cannot stand for themselves, he or she becomes more prone to becoming easy targets. Social withdrawal and shyness in anticipation of being bullied can be associated with peer rejection which is a result of victimization (Undheim & Sund, 2010).

Studies have documented several factors that propagate or slow down the possibilities of bullying occurring in schools; boys are more often likely to be involved in bullying than girls, both as bullies and as victims (Thornberg, 2010). Children from families with low socioeconomic status, divorce or separation, harsh home environments, child abuse, or authoritarian parenting styles, may be at a higher risk for both bullying and victimization (Undheim & Sund 2010). Race/ethnicity and urban/rural locale also play significant but minor roles in predicting bullying experience (Undheim & Sund 2010). Carrera-Fernandez (2011) points out that age also seems to determine whether someone is likely to be bullied or not, most victims had been bullied at younger ages, 7 to 9 years, and the bullies bullied others most often at a later period, 10 to 12 years. This age-related decline in the risk for becoming a victim of bullying can be explained primarily by younger children being among a greater number of children who are older than they are; and who are in a position to bully them (Volk et al. 2014).

3.4 UNDERSTANDING LEARNERS' EXPLANATIONS OF BULLYING AND WHY IT OCCURS

There is a small but growing body of studies exploring how students explain bullying, which shows that children and adolescents report a range of explanations, including being a result of victims' differentness, bullies' pursuit of social status, dominance and popularity, bullies suffering from

psychosocial problems, bullies' mean or bad personality, peer pressure, just having fun and avoiding boredom (Cheng et al. 2011; Purcell, 2012; Thornberg, 2010;

Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011; Thornberg, 2016). In previous studies, the word 'bullying' – with or without an explicit definition – has been used as a starting point in the interviews or questionnaires (Thornberg, 2016). However, when using this word "bullying", there is a risk that students might rely on their own understanding of it rather than the definition presented at the beginning of the questionnaire or interview and in the bullying literature (Felix et al. 2011; Volk, Veenstra & Espelage, 2017). Thus, in previous studies, researchers have examined what students say about why bullying – as they understand the term – occurs, rather than asking them about why repeated harmful actions directed at target individuals, who are disadvantaged or less powerful in their interactions with the perpetrator or the perpetrators take place.

Felix et al. (2011) posits that when students have been asked to give their explanations as to why bullying occurs, the issue of peers and social hierarchies are again identified as crucial. However, in the students' statements, bullying is, to some extent, associated with status and coolness and therefore is sometimes justified (Thornberg, 2010). It appears as if ongoing group processes and social hierarchies make bullying the norm, and when intended students want to fit in among their peers, they come to engage in bullying (Thornberg, 2015a). As such, bullying can be pinpointed as a group process where friendship and social hierarchies create bullying (Thornberg, 2015a). The two most common explanations for bullying, however, do not explain it as a matter of peer pressure or social hierarchies but rather define bullying as occurring (a) because of the victim or (b) because of the bully (Thornberg, 2011b). When attributing the cause of bullying to the victim, students describe the victim as odd, different or deviant, and view this as an explanation for why bullying occurs (Bibou-Nakou et al. 2012; Cheng et al. 2011; Thornberg, 2010). This is called the "odd student repertoire" a concept developed by Terasärjho and Salmivalli (2003), to describe how students tend to construct the victim as being deviant and responsible for the bullying. Just like previously mentioned as part of the students' way of describing the victims' responsibility as being linked with their own bystander responses, when victims are made responsible, bullying can be justified (Eriksson - Barajas & Lindgren, 2009; Salmivalli, 2010; Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Thornberg, 2010, 2015a).

These explanations of bullying strengthen how bullying might be portrayed as a social process that applies to the use of labelling and stigma theory; and how the construction of deviance is part of the students' repertoire of bullying (Thornberg, 2011b). When focusing on the "odd student repertoire", students' inclination to blame the victim may be an example of an interactional pattern of inhumanity and power abuse (Thornberg, 2011b). Furthermore, students' explanations may be understood as a collective action where the labelling of the victim as odd and responsible justifies the social act of bullying, in which the bullies at the same time are constructed as the "normal us" (Thornberg, 2015a). In this way the victim, described as the "odd student", is viewed as challenging a social order that needs to be re-established through bullying (Teräsahjo & Salmivalli, 2003; Thornberg, 2010). Social order among students, as an explanation for bullying, may therefore constitute normative moral orders which refer to processes by which certain norms are constructed among students (Ellwood & Davies, 2010).

The issue of social order as a process may be of relevance when students explain bullying as occurring because of the bully. The bully is described as someone striving for social status by ill-treating others (Thornberg, 2010; Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011a). However, students hold an individualistic view of the bully, describing the actions of the bully as being caused by social problems at home, poor self-esteem or being an insecure or distressed person; or simply describe the bully as just a bad or mean person (Thornberg, 2010; Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011a). Moreover, while bullies can function as protectors of moral orders; and therefore, can be associated with social value, the victims are positioned as always undesirable and representing deviance (Davies, 2011). Furthermore, there are students who reason that bullying can take place because it is fun and because students are bored (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008). Students further articulate that bullying is something that just happens without any specific reason or intent (Thornberg, 2010).

3.5 CAUSES OF BULLYING

Ponzo (2013) postulates that the effectiveness of any remedial action depends on the extent to which it adequately deals with the causal factors of the problems. It is therefore necessary to identify the causes of bullying among secondary school students. According to Fareo (2015) the causes of bullying can be categorized into four factors.

(a)   Societal Factors: These comprise early experiences which influence the behaviour of the child. They include parental neglect, family instability, and aggression within the home or in the

society, family stress, rejection, isolation, and exposure to violent movies, marginalization, child abuse, antisocial acts and inconsistent reinforcements (Thompson & Smith, 2010). Another societal factor in the African context is traditional initiation. Venter (2013) argues that initiation (lebollo) is a traditional cultural practice involving the process which indicates the transition from boyhood to manhood. Proponents of traditional initiation believe that it inculcates good moral values in boys and builds society by producing responsible, law-abiding citizens (Ntombana, 2011). However, Mohlaloka, Jacobs and De Wet (2016) posit that many formal education teachers struggle to deal with the deviant behaviour of boys returning from initiation schools because they act with disdain towards female teachers, uninitiated male teachers, refuse to do certain tasks and engage in gangster activities. In this regard, Mosia (2019, p.30) contends that school bullying is a symbol of moral decline and degeneration of the African

"UBUNTU/BOTHO principle."

(b)   Biological Factors: Science has proved that some individuals behave aggressively due to malfunctioning of the body organs or imbalance in the production of body hormones. Aggressive behaviours such as bullying can also be attributed to poor state of mental health (Olweus, 2013).

(c)   Peer Group Influence: Secondary school students spend most of their time with their agemates than they do with their parents and teachers. Salawu (2003) described a peer group as the group that the child interacts and plays with within his/her immediate environment. According to him, while in the group, the child enjoys a free world, more independent in thought and action and he/she has freedom to discuss matters of interest, which may be contrary to the interest shared by adults. For example, when some children realise that putting others down gives them approval from their peers and makes them feel more important, popular and in control, they are likely to do it repeatedly (Chabalala, 2011). In some peer groups children engage in drug and substance abuse; and Njeri and Ngesu (2014) postulate that drug abuse causes aggressive behaviour and withdrawal. Thus, the peer group has a considerable influence on a child's actions or inactions.

(d)   Environment Factors: Environmental influences such as teachers' attitudes, behaviour and supervisory routines play a crucial role in determining the extent to which these problems will manifest themselves in a classroom or a school. Lack of appropriate resources within schools is also associated with higher levels of school bullying. Olweus, (2013) affirms that bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision in places such as school playground, and when teachers have limited attention to and warmth towards the child.

3.6 WHY SHOULD BULLYING BE CONTROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

Bullying is pervasive and terribly harmful for bullies, victims, schools and communities; and it has to be controlled. One of the major effects of bullying is its "carryover syndrome". Children who display aggressive characteristics usually exhibit at adult stage, deviant behaviours such as sexual harassment, date violence, wife battering, gang attacks, child abuse and elder abuse (Eriksen, Nielsen & Simonsen, 2014). Bullying can have devastating effects on victims. For the victims of bullying, they go to school every day fearing harassment, taunting and humiliation (Olweus, 2013). For secondary schools, it is very important to realize that bullying is a problem, so that teachers and administrators can work to prevent it now or in the future (Sarzosa & Urzua, 2015). There are many repercussions of bullying that are quite shocking. According to Ttofi and Farrington (2011) these include:

(1)   Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed; 26% of girls who were frequently bullied reported depression as opposed to 8% of girls who were not. Similarly, the boys who were bullied and reported depression were 16% as against 3% who were not.

(2)   Victims are more likely to be suicidal, with 8% for girls and 4% for boys, compared to 1% overall for non-victims of bullying.

(3)   Bullies are more likely to carry weapons, with 43% carrying weapons to school at least once a week, compared to 8% who were not carrying weapons.

(4)   Forty six percent of bullies are more likely to be injured while only 16% of bullies are not likely to be injured.

(5)   As one middle-school student expressed it "there is another kind of violence, and that is violence by talking. It can leave you hurting more than a cut with a knife. It can leave you bruised inside" (Department of Education, London 2017).

(6)   Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork, and their academic performance tends to move from "marginal to poor" (Olweus, 2013). Typically, bullied students feel anxious, and this may in turn produce a variety of physical or emotional ailments (Eriksen et al. 2014).

(7)   Rates of absenteeism are higher among victimized students than among non-bullied peers, like drop-out rates (Omoteso, 2010). Thompson and Smith (2010) attest that youths who are bullied

generally show higher levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, physical and mental symptoms, and low-self- esteem.

(8)   Long--term effects on victims--persistent bullying during the school years may have long-term negative effects on the victims many years beyond school (Olweus, 2013). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviours into adulthood thus influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Eriksen et al. 2014).

(9)   Omoteso (2010) points out that victims of bullying tend to be less popular in school than other students not involved in bullying. As a result of being bullied, 16% boys and 31% girls reported being absent from school in an attempt to avoid being victimized (Thompson & Smith, 2010).

(10)   Bullying does not just affect the victim, but it also has consequences for the bully. First, for the victim, bullying can cause physical, academic, social and psychological problems (Fareo, 2015). Fareo further points out that some of the physical symptoms include headaches and migraines, skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athletes foot, ulcers, sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations and panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, aches and pains in the joints and muscles; and frequent illness such as viral infections. Secondly for the bullies, they are seldom able to conclude friendship, they are often anti-social adults; and bullying is sometimes the first stepping stone to juvenile crime and criminal activities (Fareo, 2015).

(11)   The psychological scars left by bullying often endure for years. For instance, Fareo (2015) posits that the feelings of isolation and the loss of self-esteem that victims experience seem to last into adulthood.

3.7 HOW CAN BULLYING BE CONTROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

3.7.1 Intervention Strategies by Teachers

Studies show that teachers need to involve learners and parents in addressing the concerns of bullying (Guerra, Williams & Sadek, 2011). The involvement of family is crucial. In a study by Bradely (2014), children who were socialised by their families could use the experiences as tools in their own peer interactions. Teachers are often identified as a key factor in sanctioning bullying and victimisation in their classrooms, mostly unintentionally (Guera et al. 2011). They are the ones who have the opportunity to create a safe learning environment in their classrooms. However,

teachers may not be willing to intervene until they feel adequately equipped to stop the bullying behaviour (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). At times, they feel that intervening may only intensify the bullying or force the problem "underground" (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). An intervention developed for teachers appears to be an effective process for helping to stop aggressive behaviours and bullying.

Many schools respond to bullying incidents as they arise rather than work systemically to reduce those incidents. When this occurs, physical bullying may be addressed. However, indirect bullying might be ignored due to its 'invisibility' (Guera et al. 2011). Even when intervention strategies are implemented, they address bullying among males and neglect bullying among females (Bradely, 2014). Bullies are able to take advantage of the fact that teachers are able to deal with physical bullying as it is more visible. Teachers and school administrators are in the front line of bullying prevention, both in their day-to-day interaction with students and in enforcing various schools' bullying prevention policies and programmes (Bradely, 2014). They are important role models for students, and in establishing a positive school climate. They also play a significant role in helping to tailor their school's bullying plan to match their school's needs. It is important, therefore, in school climate surveys, to have good lines of communication with the principal (Rigby, 2014).

Rigby (2014) argue that teachers frequently observe behaviour that they believe to be bullying but are not certain whether to take action. This implies that teachers require education which will help them to focus on the diversity of bullying behaviours to improve their skills of recognising and detecting bullying. This may, subsequently, enhance their confidence to intervene (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). Before teachers can prevent or intervene in bullying situations, they have to be able to recognise it. Research tells us that many teachers do not possess the knowledge or skills to recognise bullying behaviours among their students. Eadaoin, Sandra and Bella (2011) state that a greater proportion of studies have found out that teachers report lower prevalence rates of bullying than students do.

Teachers need to work with students at class level to develop class rules against bullying. Curriculum efforts in the classroom can teach those students directly involved in bullying alternative methods of interactions with role-playing exercises and related assignments (Eadaoin et al. 2011). Teachers are also encouraged to use cooperative learning activities where the students interact with their peers in the regular classroom to reduce social isolation (Cowie & Smith, 2010).

Students need to be taught how to interact using modelling, coaching, prompting, praise and other forms of positive reinforcement. Schools can take a proactive stance by implementing programmes that teach students social skills, conflict resolution, anger management and character education (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016).

It is important for the teacher to intervene in the bullying situation not only on the playground, but also in the classroom as this is where the child spends most of his school day. The teacher is at the forefront of any effort to cope successfully with the problem (Guerra et al. 2011). Ttofi and Farrington (2011) advise that bullying is likely to be influenced by the quality of the social and educational climate in the classroom and school. This climate, as mentioned by Pepler, Sandra and Bella (2004), is one that discourages bullying and supports peer processes that help vulnerable children. Teachers are, therefore, seen as playing a key role in the problem of bullying, not only on the play field, but also in their respective classrooms.

Teachers working with their principals should be aware of additional programmes to assist with the integration of bullying prevention strategies in the school curriculum (Safe Schools, 2005). Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they help students to realise their full potential, develop their sense of self-worth, maintain consistent standards of behaviours for all students, demonstrate respect for all students, parents and members of the school community, and prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Teachers need to intervene when learners are attacked in schools. According to Rodkin and Hodges (2003), it is crucial to report incidents of violence, in order to combat violence successfully in schools.

Some teachers will need specific training on bullying prevention curriculum, but all school personnel need to know how to identify and respond to bullying, as well as how to model and reinforce positive problem-solving. They should know the symptoms of victimisation, how to reach out to victims and the protocol for contacting the appropriate staff members or a student's parents (Olweus, 2013). Teachers should educate students on certain issues related to bullying. Specifically, teachers should raise awareness by providing students with information about different participant roles and group mechanisms involved in bullying. Teachers should also

emphasise that certain beliefs about bullying are false, such as the belief that bullied students are at least partly to blame for their victimisation, that bullying makes the victims tougher and that teasing is simply done for fun (Guerra et al. 2011).

3.7.2 Intervention Strategies at the Individual Level

Prevention of bullying behaviour may well begin at the individual level. By identifying students at risk of involvement in bullying situations, the bullies become potential victims or aggressors, and providing these students with appropriate skills, the schools can prevent a bullying behaviour before it begins (Eduwen, 2010). Researchers have found that victims of bullying who developed assertiveness skills experienced reductions in bullying. Teaching victims selfassertion skills, helping emotions arising from being bullied, helping bullies to develop empathy for the victims, and forming a support group involving victims and bystanders have also been recommended as important components of any anti-bullying effort (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016).

However, to prevent bullying, schools may also look beyond those at-risk individuals. Cowie et al. (2010) suggest that the goal of the bullying prevention programmes should be to go beyond those students involved in bullying incidents and aim to change the culture of the school at large. Rigby (2014) posits that universal programmes are designed to modify the school climate so that bullying becomes unacceptable and is punishable, while positive behaviours are rewarded.

Instead of attempting to change one learner, they aim at changing the environment of the school by providing programmes that focus on enhancing awareness, improving the skills of students and teachers, and changing school policies. Researchers agree that the most effective and efficient system for reducing the incidents of disruptive and antisocial behaviour in schools is a school-wide system of behaviour support (Kelly, 2018). Once bullying incidents have been identified within a school setting; focus must be on efficient intervention programmes to rid a school of such social ill.

Bullying intervention programmes suggest that intervention may target individual students. For example, the victims may be taught self-assertion skills and how to handle the emotions arising from being bullied, while bullies may be helped to develop empathy for the victims and form a support group involving victims (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). Intervention at an individual level includes discussions held with bullies (or small groups of bullies) and victims, as well as their

parents, to ensure that bullying is ended and that victims receive the necessary support. Parents, educators and learners (including bullies, victims and other learners) should, therefore, be involved in the establishment and implementation of an anti-bullying programme (De Wet, 2005).

The rules-sanctions approach mainly focuses on setting clear rules against bullying behaviour, with consequences for students who break them (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016). These kinds of policies typically adopt a punitive approach and set sanctions such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension from school. Those that follow the "problem-solving" approach tend to respond in a non-punitive manner. Here, a school policy is more likely to utilise approaches to bullying such as counselling, with the emphasis on empathy-building and the rehabilitation of the bully rather than on blaming and punishing the bully.

Bradely (2014) postulates that typically, rules against bullying are developed along with punitive consequences that range from nonphysical sanctions, for example, withdrawal of selected student privileges, to school suspension and expulsion. An extreme form of this, best known as "zero tolerance", is an approach that was made popular in the 1990s (Losen & Skiba, 2010, p.10). This style of discipline that is intended primarily as a method of sending a message that certain behaviours would not be tolerated, has seen offenders being punished severely (through detention, suspension, or expulsion), no matter how minor the offense. In Australia in 1972, approximately 4.2% of the student population was suspended from school at least once

(Children's Defence Fund, 1975). In 2006, that number rose to 7% of the student population (Planty, 2009), and in 2010, the number had climbed again to 11.2% (Losen & Skiba, 2010).

As the use of exclusionary discipline rises, it is important to verify whether this approach is the right one. Forsberg and Thornberg (2016) observe that there are some problems with punitive approaches. First, they are consistent in nature with teacher approaches to learning. Teachers show learners where they might have gone wrong and re-teach the skills using different methods or materials. Secondly, aggressive forms of punishment can reinforce a bully's already-held views that the best way to be powerful is through aggressive methods. Administrators who use their power to accept the original punishment of students may be viewed as playing out a parallel process of "might make right". Furthermore, punishment is unlikely to convert a negative relationship into a positive one and, therefore, has the potential to make it worse for victims (Smith & Cowie, 2010)

and cultivate resentment in the bullies. Lastly, research has demonstrated that school suspension and expulsion appear to be effective only in removing troublesome students from school (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In fact, the well-documented long-term outcomes of these disciplinary methods appear to be further suspension and eventually school dropout (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

Developing both immediate and long-term strategies for identifying and working with bullies may be necessary. When teachers observe an incident of bullying, they can intervene by asking the bully to consider the consequences of his or her actions and to think how others feel (Eduwen, 2010). By talking calmly, yet firmly, to the bully, the teacher can make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. Teachers can show the bully alternative ways to talk, interact, and negotiate. At the same time, they can encourage victims to assert themselves (Guerra et al. 2011).

Rigby (2014) contends that when interacting with learners on a one-on-one basis, teachers should provide encouragement that acknowledges specific attributes, rather than dispense general praise, approval, or admiration for example that may appear to be contrived. Expressions of specific encouragement, as opposed to general praise, are descriptive, sincere, take place in private, focus on the process, and help learners to develop an appreciation for their efforts and work. While developing a learner's self-esteem is a worth-while goal, false praise may, instead, promote narcissism and unrealistic self-regard. Teachers should avoid encouraging learners to think highly of themselves when they have not earned it (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

Additional long-term strategies may include encouraging learners to resolve their own problems and use peers to mediate between bullies and their targets. Furthermore, teachers can spend time helping learners to form ties with peers who can offer protection, support, security, and safety, thus, helping to reduce learners' exposure to bullying (Sandra, et al. 2011). Individualised interventions target learners who have had significant involvement in bullying situations, either as perpetrators or victims. These interventions, typically, focus on remedying specific externalising problems of bullies or internalising problems displayed by victims, using interventions like social skills and assertiveness training and anger management (Smith, Ananiadou & Cowie, 2003).

The level of involvement in bullying and victimisation can vary from student to student. If students who are involved in bullying do not respond to school-wide and class-level interventions, they may require individualised services such as referral for mental health services to address behavioural

and emotional deficits related to their bully or victim behaviours. Juvonen, Graham & Schuster (2004) note that it is important to recognise the unique problems of each of the groups, in order to intervene appropriately and effectively.

Despite the growing body of research on the aetiology and dynamics of bullying and victimisation, there is little research on the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at ameliorating the behavioural and emotional deficits that have been identified as characteristic of those involved in bullying as bully, victim, or bully victim. Much of the literature about interventions consists of logical suggestions based on symptoms or behaviours that have been identified in the bullying research (Juvonen et al. 2004). In some cases, interventions are recommended because they have been used successfully with similar problems or with youth having similar symptoms. Such an approach makes sense since students who are labelled bullies or victims generally exhibit a number of clinical symptoms or behavioural deficits that are related to their involvement in bullying (Forsberg & Thornberg, 2016).

Intervention at the individual level must include support for and protection of the victims of bullying and discussions with the parents of bullies and victims (Olweus, 2013). Teachers or other school personnel should not suggest that victims of bullying brought it on themselves or chastise them for not being able to solve their own problems (Hong & Espelage, 2012)). School social workers should make every effort and encourage other school personnel to make similar efforts to protect children who are victims of bullying (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). It is important that bullies receive clear messages from school personnel that bullying will not be tolerated and should end.

3.7.3 Roles Secondary Schools Could Play to Address Bullying

Even though bullying in school stems from external social problems (Lee & Kim, 2004), Garrett (2003) states the importance of adult involvement with regard to the problem of bullying in the school environment. Schools have the capacity to make a difference (Lee & Kim, 2004). These adults need to become more aware of the extent of the problem in the school and not simply turn away and think it will just, 'go away'. They need to become focused and begin to change the situation (Garrett, 2003). Olweus (2013) is optimistic that once a school has decided to initiate systems against bullying, it is a good idea to organise a school conference day around the problem. The author mentions that various people such as the principal, teachers, school psychologist, school counsellor, as well as parents and students should be invited.

In order to bring about change in attitudes, schools need to make their communications and initiatives to involve individual learners, the school as an organisation, families and local communities. Schools should set a standard of behaviour which others will follow and unequivocally declare their abhorrence of bullying wherever it happens (Knox, 1997). Slee and Rigby (1993) deal with ways of using peer group pressure as a resource to reduce bullying.

It is also important that the school should engage teaching and non-teaching staff in the discussion and implementation of the anti-bullying programme. School officials should also encourage parents to report bullying if they suspect that their child is involved in bullying (Department of Education, 2003). The policy should describe how the school addresses incidents of bullying. School policies that address bullying must not be limited to student bullying, but should include bullying of students by adults in the school (Rigby, 2003).

Awareness should also be raised amongst peoples, as well as the promotion of positive people relationships. One way to do this as suggested by Lee and Kim (2004) is to begin to embed ideas of pupils' rights and responsibilities. One way to combat school violence is through prevention aimed at promoting positive youth development (Aspy, Oman, Vesely & McLeroy, 2011). This should be based on the belief that all youth can use their strength or assets for the betterment of society. This approach should specifically emphasise the development of those assets that enable youth to make positive contributions to their families and communities (Furlong, Felix, Sharkey & Larson, 2005).

The school needs to establish a whole-school approach to bullying, by raising an awareness of the bullying problem. The school needs to evaluate how tolerant it is toward bullying. Awareness of bullying both within and outside of the school can help reduce the act. Also, increased school safety features such as video monitoring can provide more protection to students (Olweus, 2013). Olweus, (2013) suggests the following interventions: (a) the school should develop a student watch programme by training student volunteers to patrol and report instances of bullying, (b) in the classroom, teachers may use stories and drama to create awareness of bullying, and bully courts can be set up for addressing bullying issues, (c) the school should provide training for students in problem-solving approaches, which include conflict resolution training, conflict management and quality circles.

Other researchers note that, in order to combat bullying, schools can implement some of the same principles found in youth violence prevention programmes. Schools should focus not only on decreasing aggression and other bullying behaviours, but also strive to create a positive social climate and a context inconsistent with such behaviours. Some additional keys include offering support to targets, setting and enforcing clear rules and consequences for violations, increasing communication among students regarding the problem, and encouraging parents and other community members to participate in the anti-bullying efforts of the school (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

3.7.4 How Can Bullying Be Controlled in Lesotho Secondary schools?

Studies on corporal punishment in Lesotho (De Wet 2007; Lefoka, Nyabanyaba & Sebatane 2008; Setlolela 2009; Vihito 2011, Pokothoane 2011; and Matheolane 2016) affirm that it is the most commonly employed method of controlling unacceptable behaviours such as bullying in secondary schools. Matheolane (2016) argues that the use of corporal punishment still continues in schools despite the fact that the government of Lesotho is signatory to continental and international conventions abolishing it and having enacted Education Act 2010 which outlaws corporal punishment. However, there are studies which were conducted in Lesotho on secondary school level bullying and recommendations were made based on the research findings. Mosia (2015) recommends that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) should assess teachers' skills in dealing with bullying and supporting students' entire psychosocial development. He also recommends that the Ministry of Education and Training, through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), empowers teachers in life skills education and follows up implementation of life skills education in all schools. Mosia challenges the government of Lesotho through MOET to ensure that secondary school teachers be equipped with appropriate skills to control bullying in schools in order to enhance learners' cognitive development.

Lekena (2016) recommends that the curriculum can also play a major role in assisting students to develop their self-concept. She argues that one curricular element that might help to alleviate bullying is the implementation of a social justice curriculum in Lesotho schools. She points out that through looking at issues of power, inequality and injustice, learners will see the impact which their actions, and those of others, have on society. By so doing, students will gain an understanding of what is right through examining what is wrong, and hopefully this will translate to their

treatment of others and how they allow themselves to be treated. Furthermore, Lekena proposes that the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho should provide professional development which focuses on different aspects of bullying that will assist teachers in understanding the nuances of bullying. She contends that professional development can provide teachers with strategies for addressing bullying in their respective classrooms through curriculum. Professional development can also help teachers learn how to get students to assert themselves when confronted by a bully.

On the basis of the findings of their study, Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) recommend that first and foremost the Lesotho government should come up with a clear policy to regulate bullying in schools. Section 8(1) of the 1993 constitution of Lesotho stipulates that "no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment…" Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) therefore, recommend that there should be a clear school policy to advocate for victims, assist with counselling of the perpetrators and victims and make bystanders aware that they will be subjected to punishments given to perpetrators, if they do not take responsibility of reporting bullying activities. Makafane and Khalanyane further suggest that there should be an anonymous suggestion box placed in every secondary school or even an anonymous website where students, especially bystanders, can report bullying to teachers without fear for their lives because victims have secrecy tendency to report bullying. They propose that teachers should visit the suggestion box almost every week, whatever tip they get from the box there should be thorough investigations so that measures can be taken without any favour or prejudice. They also recommend that there should be a policy on the use of social media because nowadays secondary school learners are advised to have a tablet or at least a cellular phone so that they can use them for their schoolwork. The students also use the gadgets for social media where some end up misusing them to commit offences such as cyber bullying.

Moreover, Makafane (2019) recommends that secondary schools should establish programmes which are directed at teaching learners attitudes, knowledge and skills to reduce their involvement in bullying. He observes that the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training has already introduced a subject, Life skills – Based Sexuality Education (LBSE) in secondary schools, that can address this problem. According to the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC, 2020), LBSE is compulsory from Grade 8 in all secondary schools in Lesotho.

The LBSE Grade 8 Syllabus states that the subject aims to "equip learners with skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to enable them to exercise their human rights, adopt healthy lifestyles, make responsible choices and become forces for positive changes" (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020, p.3). Makafane further proposes that the programmes to be established should start as early as in primary so that students have clear understanding on the definition of bullying. Lastly, he suggests that schools should have their own policy on the issue of punishment for the offenders and apply it consistently. However, Mosia (2019, p.32) argues that there should be a national public gathering "pitso" for traditional leaders, politicians and educational leaders to discuss the root-cause of this problem and reflect on where exactly Basotho nation lost their sense of morality. He also recommends that teachers should be retrained on how they could rebuild the Basotho moral fabric within and among learners in their respective schools.

3.8 Summary

It is obvious that bullying is a serious problem in secondary schools; and it negatively affects learners who are either bullies, victims or bystanders. It is therefore highly important for students, teachers, school administrators and the government through MOET to ensure the control of bullying in secondary schools by employing appropriate intervention strategies. This could transform secondary schools into safe and conducive environments for proper teaching and learning process. Finally, bullying-free secondary schools could immensely help students to learn to their optimum potentials without any fear or prejudice.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research paradigm adopted for this study which is: interpretative. It also describes the research approach designs adopted in this study which are qualitative and case-study respectively. In addition, it explains sampling, data collection and data analysis procedures followed in the study. Eventually, it explains processes that were followed to ensure that the study is ethical and trustworthy.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study adopted an interpretative paradigm. According to McQueen (2002, p.16), interpretivists view the world through a "series of individual eyes" and choose participants who "have their own interpretations of reality to encompass the worldview". The meaning is discovered through language (Schwandt, 2007). An interpretive paradigm is underpinned by interpretation. As a researcher, I influence how people view the phenomenon under study given that I have to establish a working relationship with them to generate data. Once participants have expressed their experiences, I draw inferences about their views (Akerlind, 2005). The focus is on "understanding the participants' "voices" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.346).

Similarly, Costly (2010, p.87) states that "the paradigm is used for subjective experience as it provides insights into people's experiences, motivations and actions". Interpretive research focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). Individuals are "thus not passive followers in social, political and historical happenings but possess the inner capacity which allows individual judgement, perceptions and agency" (Coetzee, 2011, p.68). Through using the interpretive paradigm, I took the participants' subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them and likely to influence their daily interaction with other learners. I sought optimal understanding of their perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study adopted a qualitative approach which captures the everyday life experiences of participants. Creswell (2009, p.4) states that "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Denzin

and Lincoln (2005, p.2) describe qualitative research as involving "…an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world". This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Furthermore, Myers (2009) explains qualitative research as an approach to help researchers understand people, and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Such studies allow the complexities and differences of worlds-under-study to be explored and represented (Morgan, 2014).

Merriam (2002, p.178) posits that "in qualitative research the researcher searches for meaning and understanding by using self as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and the end product being richly descriptive". Qualitative data sources include observation, interviews and written descriptions of people, events, opinions, attitudes and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009). As this study explores learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying, a qualitative research approach was deemed particularly suitable because this approach mainly makes sense of or interprets phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I explored in a deep and detailed manner the factors which influence learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled in secondary schools.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design describes "the procedure for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions data was obtained" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.346). This study adopted a case study design which looks at a single unit as a point of interest. Robson

(2002, p.183) defines case study as "the development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a (case), or of a small number of related (cases)". According to Smith (2011, p.14), a case study can be viewed as the "exploration of an individual, group or phenomenon". Smith (2011, p.14) further argues that case studies can provide a kind of deep understanding of "phenomena, events, people, or organisations...". In essence, case studies open the door to the processes created and used by individuals involved in the phenomenon, event, group, or organisation under study (Berg, 2009, p.318). It will be most appropriate for this research as it allows for deep, rich data generation and analysis, within a specific and bounded system (Yin, Merriam & Stake, 2015). It will allow me to explore what learners in one secondary school view as the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled.

Henning (2004, p.40) distinguishes a case study from other types of qualitative research in that "it is an intensive description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system". Merriam (2009, p.46) explains a "bounded system" as a single entity or a unit around which there are boundaries. It is one of the several ways of doing research in order to understand human beings in a social context by interpreting their actions as a single group, community or a single event. Moreover, Yin et al. (2015, p.18) contend that "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially where contextual conditions of the event being studied are critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold". This study set out to explore various views of learners on bullying at their community and school context other than bullying in the community generally (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Therefore, one secondary school in Berea district was used as a case for exploring learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled.

4.5 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

This study adopted two sampling techniques namely, convenience and purposive. The two are non-probability sampling procedures. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) specifically define purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique where researchers rely on their experiences, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to obtain units of analysis. Purposive sampling selects information-rich cases for in-depth study (Creswell, 2008). Creswell (2008,

p.183) states that "the idea behind qualitative research is to purposively select participants who will best help the researcher to understand the research question". Convenience sampling is "a type of non-probability sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study" (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016, p.2). One secondary school was purposefully selected because it is closer to where I live and was convenient. It also admits both girls and boys (co-educational school). Convenience sampling was used for this study as practical criteria to select a school in Berea district that is geographically closer to where I live and is attended by students who were available on the days earmarked for the study and were willing to participate in it (Zhi, 2014).

The selection of one secondary school was purposive in that the study needed views from learners from a combined school as the majority of schools in Lesotho are combined. The Education Act

2010 vividly mandates schools to ensure that all children in Lesotho at both primary and secondary levels access the education they deserve. Oliver (2010, p.110) says "purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher identifies certain participants as being potentially able to provide significant data on the research study". Purposive sampling was used to select a total of 30 research participants from Form C (Grade 10) and Form E (Grade 12) classes respectively. The participants included school prefects, class monitors and monitreses as student leaders. They were chosen for various reasons, including the following: learners in both Form C and Form E are in senior classes and they may not be shy to articulate their perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled. They were also more likely to have experienced bullying in their academic journey because of the number of years in school. In selecting participants, guidance was sought from teachers and learners themselves to include learners who were either victims or perpetrators of bullying. Great care was taken to give detailed descriptions of both the school context and participants' characteristics.

4.6 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

This study used semi-structured interviews to extensively explore participants' views on the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to assess respondents' perceptions, feelings, thoughts and experiences leading to a holistic picture of progress, needs and challenges in their academic journey (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). Open-ended questions were derived from an interview schedule which explored topics such as participants' daily activities at their school and the respective classes in which bullying is experienced, experiences of support given to bully experiences, their perceived causes of bullying and how it can be controlled.

4.6.1 Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews were used with research participants. All interviews were conducted at learners' free time namely, after their school knocked off or during weekends. Hennink (2007, p.6) states that "a focus group interview involves a group of 6-12 people who come from similar cultural backgrounds or have similar experiences or concerns". Focus group interviews were used with ordinary students, school prefects, class monitors and monitresses. Each of the three groups was comprised of ten participants and the discussions took sixty to hundred minutes. Advantages of focus group interviews as described by Nachmais and Nachmais (2008) are that it is a socially-

oriented procedure, it is relatively of low cost, and has high face validity. All focus group discussions were held in the staffroom.

4.6.2 Semi – structured Interviews

Harrell and Brandly (2009) argue that individual interview gives an interviewer an opportunity to be one-on-one with the interviewee to gather information on a specific set of topics. Harrell and Brandly (2009, p.119) further affirm that "in-depth interviews are a particular kind of conversation between the researcher and the interviewee that requires active asking and listening". The process is a meaning-making endeavour embarked on as a partnership between the interviewer and his or her respondent (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Therefore, I found semistructured interviews suitable to engage victims and perpetrators of bullying and to give them a conducive environment to express their heart-felt experiences. Babbie and Mouton (2001) posit that in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a general plan of investigation, but allows the conversation to progress in no specific order, although specific areas of interest are raised. Eight participants shared their views in the semi-structured interviews that lasted for 40 to 60 minutes. Participants were given opportunities to use either Sesotho or English as the official languages in Lesotho. Those who opted to use English for the interview were also allowed to code-switch occasionally whenever they could not find the right English words to express themselves. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interviews conducted in Sesotho were transcribed and translated to English Language and, as part of member-check, participants were asked to verify if certain English words captured the meaning they had expressed in Sesotho.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was adopted for data analysis. IPA aims to provide a detailed examination of learners' "lived experiences" as they come across various forms of bullying in their academic journey (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p.9). Interpretative phenomenological analysis is a strategy that "examines participants" narratives or accounts of their experience in their unique contexts" (Smith, 2011, p.9). Data analysis showed patterns of information or ideas derived from how participants understood their world. Passages of text were quoted verbatim along with examples of specific themes or ideas (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) in order to allow data to speak for itself, that is, illustrations such as "pauses, mis-hearings, apparent mistakes, and even speech dynamics" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p.217). Essentially, coding

was used to divide data into themes across all the data. IPA uses an inductive analysis of qualitative data where the main purpose is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in new data, without the restraints imposed by a more structured theoretical orientation (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Merriam, 2002; Terre Blanche et al. 2006). From the themes identified, I used the language that arose from the interviews to label the categories (Terre Blanche et al. 2006). Therefore, IPA helped to illustrate participants' responses and understand their perceptions on the subject matter.

4.7.1 Data Analysis Process

I used coding to establish key findings from the data collected. IPA has eight steps which according to Palmer et al. (2010) are as follows: 1. Finding participants' objects of concern and experiential claims; 2. Identifying the roles played by the researcher and participants in generating data; 3. Finding further roles and relationships, that is, taking note of any role players, besides participants and researchers, mentioned in the texts and their significance; 4. Analysis should also identify any social systems and organisations mentioned by participants as well as the roles they play; 5. It includes examinations of stories participants tell and their purpose, and the extent to which the stories unite or divide group voice; 6. Examining how language is used and if it has any effect on the message participants intend to pass. Finally, steps 7 and 8 focus on organizing and comparing themes in the entire analysis so as to arrange related themes accordingly until a coherent picture is achieved. The eight steps were carefully followed, and they unearthed different layers of meaning in the participants' utterances (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

Analysis in qualitative research is "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (Berg, 2009, p.338). I critically looked at the themes which are directly connected within the experiential material emphasizing convergence, commonality and nuance (Eatough & Smith, 2008), usually first for single cases and then subsequently across multiples. The data that seemed to cluster were written together under super-ordinate concepts, and this helped me draw together a number of the initial categories from which I identified the themes. I re-checked the transcripts to ensure connection between themes and primary data (Smith, 2010, p.223).

I tested and developed the coherence and plausibility of the interpretation to explore reflexivity of learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled (Smith, 2007). Once

I felt that I had captured the essence of the interviews and truly interacted with the data, I began to interpret the findings. The interpretation of the results was the final written account of the research as Smith and Osborn (1999) postulate that the final stage is to translate the analytic themes into a narrative. Therefore, a narrative writing was developed from detailed commentary data, which took me through this interpretation, theme-by-theme (Smith, 2007) and that gave learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho.

4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Rubin and Babbie (2007, p.101) define trustworthiness as "the degree of consistency in measurement" while Shaw (2010, p.182) says it is the "transparency which the researcher shows in the analysis of data". According to Mqulwana (2010, p.61), "to judge qualitative research, it must have the following qualities: transferability, dependability, credibility, and confirmability" and these qualities are described by Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007) as strategies used to establish the trustworthiness of the study. Creswell (2009, p.191) affirms that "trustworthiness in qualitative studies is based on determining whether the findings are accurate". Therefore, the study had to pay attention to how these strategies are upheld.

4.8.1 Credibility

Rubin and Babbie (2007, p.103) define credibility as "the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration". The data collected from individual and group discussion interviews were crystallized as one way of improving the quality of the results. McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p.2) define data crystallization as "an analytical style in which the researcher combines segmenting, categorizing, and pattern seeking into an extensive period of intuition-rich immersion in the data". The researcher ensured credibility and quality in interview data by using a technique called member check (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008) for members to check and certify information before analysis. This is critical to ensure credibility of results. During data analysis, I engaged with recordings, notes and transcripts intensively to demonstrate clear links between the data and interpretations.

Regular discussions were held with participants to member-check data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), member checks entail returning the transcripts to

the participants, allowing them to confirm what has been deduced and written, and present a true and valid reflection of their responses. Therefore, data collected and transcribed were sent back to the participants for "member check, and to verify if they confirm the transcribed data as reflecting their experiences", thus, ensuring that there was no prejudice in transcribing data and time was provided for each participant to read through the transcript of their interview and the coding of the data (Creswell, 2014, p.201). This gave the participants an opportunity to validate the data generated through their interview (Creswell, 2014).

4.8.2 Transferability

The concept of transferability is also known as applicability, which refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004) and is comparable to what quantitative researchers refer to as "external validity" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p.200). This study provides a detailed description that involves elucidating all processes from data collection, context of the study, to production of the final report (Li, 2004) so that any future research can follow the same procedure. It is a matter of judgement of the "context and phenomena" found which will allow others to assess the transferability of the findings to another setting (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.268).

4.8.3 Dependability

According to Van de Riet and Durrheim (2006, p.93-94), dependability can be attained "through rich and detailed descriptions which indicate how certain actions and opinions are rooted in and develop out of contextual interaction". Dependability was achieved by letting data and their context speak for themselves; therefore, actual quotes of participants are used verbatim to express their untainted perception of issues as dependability. This is "analogous to the notion of reliability in quantitative research" (Riege, 2003, p.81). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to describe the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affect the way the researcher approached the study. During the code-recode strategy, I coded the same data twice by giving at least one- or two-weeks' gestation between each coding and results from two codings were compared to verify whether the results were the same or different. This helped me to understand deeply the patterns of the data and also improve the knowledge of participants' narrations (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010).

4.8.4 Confirmability of the Findings

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Bowen, 2009). In quantitative research confirmability is similar to objectivity or neutrality. It follows a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability; the documentation procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study and, as Wilson (2009) explains, for confirmability to be guaranteed, the final reports should be sent to the participants to verify whether the findings mirror what they had offered as information. The steps were taken to stay away from "subjectivity that may include biased analysis, motivation and perception on the part of the researcher" (Bray, 2007, p.539). Consequently, I made a differentiation of actual statements, views of participants and their reflections or likely conclusions.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Jegede (2009) describes ethical consideration as standards that must be upheld when dealing with human participants to ensure no harm. This study ensured compliance with ethical considerations by giving explanation about the study to participants to allow them to make informed choices on whether or not to participate. As Bray (2007, p.44) indicates, "participants need to be guaranteed a clear explanation of the purpose of the research and a clear choice as to whether they want to participate based on a full knowledge and understanding of what is involved". Therefore, ethical measures which were adhered to as guidance throughout are as follows:

4.9.1 Permission

Before the research began, the Faculty of Education through the Head of Educational Foundations gave me an introductory letter which I used to seek permission to conduct this study from the Ministry of Education and Training office in Berea District, Teyateyaneng. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.200) indicate that "the researchers must ask for permission from the authority in order to gain access to information pertaining to them". I then visited the selected secondary school's principal with the letter of approval from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). A formal letter of application was written, and hand delivered to the principal clearly indicating the purpose of this study.

4.9.2 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

According to Creswell (2007), the researchers provide participants with sufficient information on what the study is about; the risks and benefits, and allow them to make a decision if they want to participate. King (2010) contends that the information should be communicated in simple and clear language. Moreover, Springer (2010, p.93) indicates that "participants should be allowed to either give or withhold consent to participate without coercion". Springer (2010, p.95) also states that "participants should be assured that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate or withdraw from the study will not result in any form of penalty." In addition, caring and fairness in the form of open discussions and negotiations with the research participants can promote fairness in the research process. Sufficient information about the purpose of the study was given to allow them to decide for or against participation.

4.9.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality of participants were guaranteed during the interview. Mertens and Ginsberg (2008) reveal that the researcher is unable to connect the participant's responses with his or her identity. Creswell (2007) states that the researcher knows what each participant said; and the participant's identity is kept secret when reporting or writing up the findings. I maintained confidentiality of data by ensuring "the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the code linking to individuals securely" as I know that I was working with human beings (Smyth & Williamson, 2004, p.28). The participants were assured that they would remain "anonymous as to protect their identity" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.67). According to King (2010), participants' anonymity should be maintained throughout the data collection process. Therefore, their names, identity, and the research sites are not revealed in the whole report. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the real names of participants. The pseudonyms were used to make the data lively, but still maintaining that any person reading the research could not be able to identify or link the responses to a particular participant.

4.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study cannot be used to form the whole picture (generalizations) about learners' perceptions on the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. This is because the researcher conducted his study only in one secondary school in the Berea district. McMillan (2008), states that qualitative researchers are not aiming at the

generalization of the results but the extension of understanding. The description enables others to understand similar situations and extend these understandings in subsequent researches.

4.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with the research methods used to provide participants a chance to express their perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. Qualitative approach was adopted while a case study design was used to give an indepth assessment of students' lived experiences of bullying at the selected secondary school.

Focus group and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data on learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying. The researcher observed ethical considerations when collecting data and analysed immediately following the principles of IPA.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of study, the purpose of which was to explore learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying at secondary schools in Lesotho and how it can be controlled. The findings were generated from interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with students of a selected school and are organized into four themes. The four themes which emerged from the data analysis are: (a) forms of bullying experienced by learners; (b) learners' views about the causes of bullying; (c) existing mechanisms to control bullying in their school; and (d) learners' suggestions of the ways in which they think bullying can be effectively managed. The findings describe students' perceptions, views, bullying experiences, knowledge of anti-bullying policy in their school and suggest ways in which bullying can be managed in secondary schools. For purposes of providing authenticity and trustworthiness, participants' words and statements are quoted verbatim to permit readers to make their own interpretations of the data generated from this study.

5.2 FORMS OF BULLYING EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS IN THEIR SCHOOL

The findings indicate that learners experience various forms of bullying either as bystanders, perpetrators and/or victims. The findings reveal that many learners have frequently experienced school bullying in different contexts.

For example, from the first focus group discussion one participant relates:

> *Last year I was beaten by a boy in my class right in front of my classmates. This horribly embarrassing incident happened just immediately after our Business Education teacher left the class and while waiting for our Maths teacher to arrive. With tears welling up in my eyes, I asked myself why Thabo could do such an embarrassing thing to me. What mostly broke my heart was the fact that he seemed to be proud of what he had just done [Kananelo, 17-year-old female in Grade 10].*

She continues:

As if I was not as ashamed as I should be, some girls laughed at me and I felt so humiliated that I wanted to drop out of school. But luckily, my home boys revenged by beating that heartless boy on our way home on that particular day and I felt better and consoled.

Another participant in the same focus group discussion narrates:

When I was in Grade 8, I was very small, skinny and quiet. Our class teacher divided the girls into five groups, and we were allocated to sweep the class every day after school on different days from Monday to Friday. I was allocated to sweep on Thursday with the other four girls. Three girls in our group were repeating Grade 8 and they looked much older than me and the other girl. They bullied us a lot whenever we were supposed to sweep the class. They would simply sit down like supervisors and order us to sweep the whole class alone. They would verbally mock us and tell us that we were very lazy. Sometimes they would slap us accusing us of not sweeping thoroughly. At times they instructed us to sweep the class twice and we went home very late. They threatened to beat us very hard if we ever dared to report them to the class teacher (Liako, an 18-yearold female in Grade 10).

She goes on:

Sir, those girls were very bossy and silly. Other Thursdays they would tell us that they were going to meet their boyfriends and we should remain behind and thoroughly sweep the class. One day we told them that we were going to report them to the class teacher. They got very angry and whipped us as if we were their small children. They insulted us, and mockingly said that they were going to find us boyfriends. One of them said that no boy would like to date us because we were very ugly, shabby and untidy. After that they all broke into a derisive laughter, and I was really hurt and I cried. Even today I still hate those girls.

In the same focus group discussion a participant who is a class monitress in Grade 12 explains:

When I arrived in this school as a confident and highly motivated girl from an English medium primary school, I was booed by my fellow female classmates whenever I spoke English in the class. It happened even in the presence of some teachers whenever I asked or responded to questions. One day I felt so fed-up that I insulted them back and cried

out of the class to the principal's office to report the matter [Tseleng, 18-year-old female in Grade 12].

She went further:

I remember one day when our English Literature teacher instructed me to read one poem from the textbook (In The Kingdom In The Sky). When I was towards the end of the first stanza, the whole group of girls in my class ridiculously booed and shouted that they couldn't hear anything because I was "rolling my tongue". The teacher strongly reprimanded them to keep quiet and ordered me to go on reading. I felt pissed-off and my voice was shaking with anger and embarrassment as I went on reading the poem. Throughout that lesson, I felt absent-minded although the teacher asked me some questions and cracked some jokes to make me laugh.

Though these girls are in different classes, they have been direct victims of physical, verbal and emotional bullying from their fellow schoolmates right in the classroom where teaching and learning should be taking place.

Another participant reveals:

Last year when I was in Form D I fell in love with one beautiful girl in my class. We were madly in love. I was very overprotective of her because we spent a lot of time together during break time, lunch and after school I always accompanied her to her village and then came back to my home. One day during break time three big boys from Form E came straight to the assembly ground where I was sitting with my girlfriend. In the blink of an eye, they hailed insults at me. Many students stared at me as I felt very frightened and ashamed right in front of my girl (Rethabile, a 20-year-old male in Grade 12).

He goes further:

Suddenly, they manhandled me, one of them fisted and throttled me while asking that I should tell the girl that our love is over as she was rightfully his. Like a man, I boldly denied and told them to go to the nearest hell. Sir, in a second they tripped and threw me down and my girlfriend ran away. One of them secretly showed me his knife and seriously warned that if ever they see me with that girl I will curse the day when I was born. Then they clicked

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their tongues and went away. I felt very belittled and embarrassed because many boys were derisively laughing at me. That was how I lost my gorgeous girlfriend, and it took me a long time to mentally and emotionally heal. My friends wanted us to go and fight those silly and heartless boys back; but in fact, I feared them, and I didn't want to die for a girlfriend.

On the same issue of being bullied for a love affair, a female participant recalls:

I really feel pity for him sir because I was once in his shoes when I was at J.C. level. I was in love with a Form E boy who was also the head prefect. Seemingly, one girl in my class had love feelings for the head boy and she was very jealous of me. Whenever I was with my boyfriend either at break or lunch time, that girl and her friends would always pass-by and shout on top of their voices calling me a prostitute who was in love with many boys from other schools and claiming how ugly I was. They even posted and discussed all those lies on Facebook. I got bored and hurt because they were lying. In class when teachers were not around, they always mocked and called me "Jezebel". I reported them to the class teacher, and they were reprimanded but they didn't stop harassing and humiliating me. One day after school they waited for me at Tarabane and severely beat me, demanding that I dump the head boy or otherwise they would seriously injure me. The following day I told him all what happened and luckily, he went to them and sternly reprimanded them. He told them that I was his "queen of beauty" and they should leave me alone (Moleboheng, a 19-year-old female in Grade 12).

It is noted from the above participants' statements that they experienced verbal and physical bullying. Learners bullied them only because they were jealous of those romantic relationships. A participant in the first focus group discussion recalls:

In February this year, as senior boys from Form D and Form E, we got sticks from the near-by bush and whipped Grade 8 boys whenever we were sent to supervise them to clean the toilets on Fridays after school. We also threatened to whip them much harder if they dared to report us to the principal or teachers. We told them that reporting us would be a sign of womanhood (Teboho, a 19-year-old boy in Grade 12).

He went on to emphasise:

At the playgrounds and when teachers were busy training our teams, we gathered Grade 8 boys whipped them and instructed them to sing initiation-school-based songs, "mangae". We used to flog and insult those who were bad singers and called them sissy. We usually reminded them that this is no longer a primary school and they should manup.

In the same token another participant echoes:

As senior boys we usually collect the food for our class from the kitchen during lunch time and eat it without giving the girls. We sternly threaten to beat them if they report us to the class teacher or the principal. This usually happens when it is the day for pap and beans because they are very delicious. One Thursday the three of us slapped our class monitress after reporting us to the class teacher (Katleho, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).

In the first individual interview a female participant discloses:

When we were in Grade 9, I stayed with my grandmother and we frequently ran short of food. It was very heartbreaking because on some days I came to school on an empty stomach and during lunch time our boys would run away with all the food and eat all of it without leaving any for girls. One day I urged my friend to go with me to the staffroom to report them to the class teacher. They were called and lashed, but when they came to class they insulted and kicked us, and called us "dogs". They repeatedly ate all food whenever they liked, and I was afraid to report them again for fear of being publicly embarrassed. I was very heartbroken because I desperately needed that food. Those boys were very cruel sir and I never thought that I would forgive them (Liako, an 18-year-old girl in Grade 10).

In another individual interview the participant remembers:

In 2018 when we were in Grade 8, one boy who was in Form D at that time came to me during break time and asked for my name. After that he gave me M1.00 and instructed me to go to the ladies who were selling food at the school gate to buy him four fat cakes and two fried polonies. I told him that the money he had given me was too little for all those things, but he ordered me to do or else he would cut my "stinking tail". I went to the gate

and bought him only two fat cakes because each was costing fifty cents (David, a 17year-old boy from Grade 10).

The boy explains:

When I gave them to him, he pushed me to the ground and shouted that I lost his M5.00 that's why I bought him only two fat cakes. His friends joined him and booed me. They demanded that I pay that money. I cried, and luckily one senior girl gave him M5.00 and sympathetically urged them to leave me alone. I hated being a small boy, and I desperately missed my former primary school.

He goes further:

On other days during lunch time sir, a group of Form D or Form E boys would come straight to our class and forcibly take away our lunchboxes. If we refused or hid them, they would beat and tell us boys were not supposed to eat lunch. It was very hurting because we would not eat lunch. They threatened to severely beat us if we dared to report them to the school authorities. They mockingly and insultingly said that reporting would make us "sissy".

It appears that Grade 8 boys' ill-treatment is considered as some form of initiation by boys in the senior classes. They threaten junior boys not to report acts of bullying to the school authorities. This is not a male to male behaviour as girls also fall victim to boys and other girls' bullying tactics. This seems prevalent across the school as another focus group discussion shared similar experiences. For example, a participant from the second focus group discussion shares:

In 2017, there was a girl in our class who had some bad smell. My friends and I openly criticized her and said she smelt as such because she had an abortion. She would sometimes cry, but she seemed afraid to report us to the principal and teachers. We used to laugh and mock her. We posted her pictures in our WhatsApp and Facebook groups and badly criticized her. Unfortunately, one day on our way home with my friends, her brother and his friends from another school beat us very severely; and sternly warned us to stop abusing her. We couldn't even tell our parents because we were ashamed of our actions (Pulane, a 19-year-old learner in Grade 12).

In the same focus group discussion, another participant recalls:

What she says saddens me a lot because when I was in Form C, I was mocked, harassed on social media platforms and accused that I was pregnant whereas I was not. I felt so terrible that I reported that group of girls to the principal and my mother. That matter was finally solved after a long period of humiliation, shame and embarrassment on my side. Even today I still hate those girls and I will never forgive them [Pulane, a 19-year-old female in Grade 12].

On the same issue of pregnancy accusations another participant adds:

This issue of accusations about pregnancy is a very serious and the most hurting form of emotional harassment to us girls. Mid-February this year, I was called to the staffroom by my class teacher and she told me that boys from my class said that I'm pregnant and that makes them to feel sleepy in class. She refused to tell me their names fearing that it would be pouring fuel on fire. I couldn't believe my ears; I cried and refuted those ridiculous accusations. Madam consoled me and ordered me to go back to the class and continue to work hard on my studies. I told my friends, and we spent a long time trying to figure out who those boys were and what exactly were they aiming to achieve (Thandiwe, an 18-year-old girl in Grade 12).

She further narrates:

One Tuesday during lunch time a lady from Grade 11 class came to me with her cell phone and surprisingly said that she really felt pity for me, and I asked her why. Without wasting any time, she logged in her Facebook account and showed me a group where my three photos were posted and five boys from my class and many others from the neighbouring school had commented that I was three months pregnant. Sir, I really couldn't believe my eyes and my whole body shook with anger. That girl tried to console me, but all her effort was in vain because I cried bitterly. I rushed straight to my class and found only two of the five boys. I insulted them and threw them with everything in front of my eyes. They tried to fight me back, but my friends protected and took me to the staffroom where I narrated

everything to my class teacher who called them all and flogged them. I was terribly hurt,
and I told my mother.

Bullying at the school, though experienced individually, seems to echo from every corner. One participant in an individual interview narrates:

When I was at Grade 8 level in this school, I was a very soft and gentle boy and I had many
female friends since we were from the same primary school. Those friends and I were quite
inseparable. Many boys in my class publicly accused me of being a gay and they called me
"Nnana". They used to provoke me that they had to find me a boyfriend. It was very hurtful
because some girls had joined by laughing and calling me names. I felt that I didn't belong
to the school, but my friends always stood by my side and supported me (Ntsabane, a 20-
year-old boy in Grade 12).

He also remembers:

One day during break time I went to the toilets and a group of boys booed and shouted at
me asking to go to girls' toilets because I am not a boy. I really felt like the earth could
open up and swallow me. I wanted to cry but I couldn't. Suddenly, one Form D boy tripped
me, and I fell down on my face as the group broke into laughter. The head prefect and other
two Form E boys took me to the principal's office, and I reported the matter. That group
of boys was summoned to the office and they were flogged by all male teachers until they
cried. They were further warned strongly that if they continued calling me a gay their
parents would be called, and they would be all expelled from school.

It seems a common phenomenon for students, particularly girls in the school, to verbally and emotionally bully one another by saying that they are gay, pregnant or they have performed an unsafe abortion. These accusations apparently affect the victims in a very negative manner in their schoolwork and interpersonal relationships.

From the third focus group discussion, a participant who is a school prefect posits:

In this school, I have seen on many occasions students especially boys hitting, kicking and
slapping girls or other boys during break and lunch times. I have also seen and heard about
some girls posting bad things about their fellow schoolmates on Facebook and in

WhatsApp groups. This causes a lot of conflicts which result into physical fights within and among students in our school [Lerato, 18-year-old girl in Grade 12].

Another participant who is also a school prefect adds:

A few days before we closed for the corona virus pandemic, two Form D boys were fighting at the toilets during lunch time and one of them got hurt because his nose was bleeding. Boys like to fight for different reasons such as girlfriends, food or somebody calling the other "monna". What is common among Form E girls is bad-mouthing others publicly in the class when the teacher is not there [Thapelo, 19-year-old boy in Grade 12].

Learners experience various forms of bullying committed by peers who lack remorse for their heinous actions. The bullying behaviour seems common across the school so much that some learners perpetuate it in the presence of teachers and after being punished. It is worth noting that for individual victims, acts of bullying inflict great distress and leave huge emotional scars. The findings recount over twenty statements which express grave emotional experiences including learners who were "embarrassed"; "humiliated"; "hurt"; "fed-up", "shaking with anger"; "absent-minded". The experience made some "hate being a small boy"; feel they "will never forgive them" as they felt they "didn't belong to the school".

The effects of these emotions on their academic achievement are bound to be severe. This builds into their psychosocial development of what it means to be a man as some boys avoid being called "sissy" or showing "a sign of womanhood". Learners and teachers' reactions to these bullying incidents may exacerbate more than mend bullying as one learner recalls that her brothers avenged by "beating"; and teachers in dealing with perpetrators spanked perpetrators "until they cried". The findings reflect a thread of emotional destruction succinctly captured in some of the words above. The school seems to have no dialogue except for actions and counteraction which do not seem to develop learners' maturity in thoughts and behaviour or find therapeutic outlets for learners to vent their emotions.

5.3 CAUSES OF BULLYING AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

With bullying behaviour a norm at the school, the study sought learners' views of the root-cause of school bullying. Participants had different views about causes of bullying behaviours. The following are some of their perceptions:

I think that students, especially us boys become bullies because we want to be "masters and bosses" of the school. We want to be famously known for our physical strength in order to be respected by other students particularly girls and junior students. Sir, it really feels good and manly to be feared and respected (Sello, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12). He went on to opine:

The reason why other boys are bullies is that they are from initiation schools, and they want to show everyone that they are now "strong real men". Some of the boys were born and raised in the rural areas where they herd animals. They are used to beating and insulting the animals and they do the same thing to other students thinking that there is nothing bad about it. Many of these boys even smoke dagga at the school toilets and after school. Whenever they have smoked, they provoke other students, insult them and want to fight whoever tries to reprimand or oppose them. I really think that their bullying behaviour is deliberate because they want to be our "bosses".

In one individual interview a participant affirms:

To be frank with you sir, I am fresh from initiation school myself. Initiation schools contribute to our bullying behaviours. Our hearts are being truly hardened. The emotional and physical torture which happens there, and which I can't elaborate really builds excessive pain and anger within us. So, we consider whoever didn't go there as weak and womanish, and that is why we bully them to show that they are not at our level of manhood. Here at school we have no other option but to bully other students so that they can respect us (Soai, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 10).

The participant further expresses:

Sir, the other reason which makes me and my friends to bully other students is that these subjects, especially Maths, Science and English are very difficult and we frequently fail tests, get the oral answers wrong whenever we are asked to speak loudly in the class and

get very low marks or "zero" in assignments. What angers us is that some teachers always punish us, publicly say unpleasant things about us, and some students openly laugh at us and label us as "stupid fellows". So, we retaliate by physically beating and insulting others to try to command respect.

A school prefect in one focus group discussion points out:

I think other boys are bullied by their peers and even by girls just because they are too gentle and soft in character. At high school level softness especially for boys means womanhood. When I was in Form B, I had a friend who was very quiet, shy and softspoken. I remember several cases where he was even slapped by his girlfriend only for speaking or walking with other girls. I felt very sorry for him and advised him to dump that aggressive girl, but he told me that he was afraid that he would be putting himself in more trouble (Stephen, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).

He went on to speculate:

Sometimes, I think that learners become bullies because they grow up in families where domestic violence is a norm. For example, in some families the father is almost every time beating the mother or the parents are almost every time whipping the children. So, sir, children from such families suppose that being violent towards others is smart or cute. In that case I think the bullying behaviour is innate.

In the fifth individual interview the participant postulates:

At home my parents are almost always verbally abusing and physically fighting each other; so, I am used to insults and fights. I'm very sorry to tell you that my father drinks like a fish, and every time when he arrives at home drunk, he loudly insults my mother and beats her. They fight and insult each other in front of my younger sister and myself. Sometimes I feel very painful when my mother cries for help and wish I could help her; but I am afraid that my father would kill me as he always says. I'm always angry and it's really sad that I find my happiness by beating and insulting other students. I wish I could do that to my father (Tumelo a 20-year-old boy in Grade 12).

A school prefect expresses:

> *I think some girls or groups of girls here in my school are usually beaten by boys or other girls because they are naturally talkative, good gossipers and liars. They like to badmouth and mock other students especially those students who are from poor families. They also enjoy laughing and accusing other learners of being too ugly, too short or too fat. These girls are very silly because they even post others' photos on social media and publicly insult or criticise them (Stephen, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).*

In the same focus group discussion, another participant argues:

> *It's not only girls who misuse social media platforms by bullying others. When I was in Form B, there was a boy who was very ugly. We posted his photo on Facebook and made fun of him asking ourselves silly questions such as which girl would dare to date him. One morning a group of girls and I laughed our hearts out when he entered into the classroom remembering what we said about him on Facebook. He suddenly threw his school bag at me and angrily ran towards me. He punched and pushed me towards the wall where he throttled me with my tie. I was only rescued by other boys, but he was still very angry. I couldn't report him because I was the one who provoked him (Kabelo, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).*

In the sixth individual interview, a participant who was openly beaten in the class says:

> *I believe that I was beaten right in front of my classmates because that boy was jealous of me. My parents used to give me a lot of pocket money and during break time I bought whatever I liked such as potato chips, sweets, fat cakes, fried polony, sausages or biscuits. That boy used to ask for money or my snacks and I always refused. So, I think that he got angry and jealous and deliberately decided to punish or embarrass me (Kananelo, a 17-year-old girl in Grade 10).*

On that issue of jealousy, one participant in a focus group discussion alleges:

I strongly believe that some female schoolmates and classmates frequently boo and gossip about me because I am not at their level. I mean, I am more beautiful and intelligent than them so they're trying to discourage me from freely participating in class.

I think that their main intention is to lower my self-esteem. They mostly claim that I am teachers' favourite, and I think that I'm better that them (Tebello, a 17-year-old girl in Grade 10).

Another participant claims:

When I was in Grade 11, some boys used to insult, punch or kick me purposely saying that since my parents are rich I think that I am better than them. It was really hurting me because they were older than me and also looked stronger, so I couldn't fight them back. What broke my heart was that some girls used to laugh at me while some boys called me a "sissy boy" or "mama's baby" (Ret'selisitsoe, a 19-year-old boy in Grade 12).

It is also important to indicate that some learners, particularly girls, suppose that jealousy is the reason why they become victims of bullying from their fellow schoolmates.

From the same second focus group discussions, another participant narrates:

Apparently, some students especially boys become bullies because they have an exaggerated sense of self-importance and superiority. For example, some older boys do not write notes in the class, but when it is time for exams, they force us younger boys to give them our notebooks and if we refuse they threaten to beat us. They think that they have powers to control everything (Tlotliso, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).

A participant in a focus group discussion says:

I think that some students have "internal accumulated anger" and they tend to beat or verbally abuse others in order to feel better. In most cases, these people want to get things done in their own way and if you oppose them, they rudely shout at you, openly criticise you or even physically assault you. Bullying is a result of selfishness because bullies think only about themselves and whatever they want to achieve (Lebohang, an 18year-old boy in Grade 12).

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Another participant discloses:

> *I think that students who bully others are just silly; they intentionally want to gain attention by hurting others. They should be severely punished. I really don't understand why one student feels free to deliberately insult, provoke or physically beat another student. It's a sign of disrespect and lack of morals. (Lindiwe, a 19-year-old girl in Grade 12)*

Participants had divergent perceptions about the causes of bullying. The following are included as causes: violent home environments or domestic violence, initiation schools' influence, use of dagga and beer, being soft and gentle in character, search for being respected (pride) or feared (superiority), jealousy, lack of morals (being silly) and internal accumulated anger. Most of them have pointed out that bullying behaviours are more deliberate than innate. It is important to note that from these senior (Form E) boys' perspectives, the reasons why they bully girls and other boys, particularly those in junior classes, are that they want to be feared and respected. Some claim they are from violent home environments, initiation schools and consequently want to showcase their real manhood. This means real manhood, according to them, is characterised by violence.

5.4 EXISTING MECHANISMS TO CONTROL BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL

As data show bullying to be prevalent in the school and learners speculate on various causal factors, the study also sought to find their views on how it could be controlled. First, learners had no idea of an anti-bullying policy and thought it did not exist. They also reflected on different forms of punishment the school gives to bullies and forms of support given to victims. The following are some of their views:

> *There is no anti-bullying policy in this school, but what is only written in the school prospectus is that "no student is allowed to fight or hurt other students in any way. Any student who does that will be subjected to punishment by the class-teacher, the disciplinary committee or the principal." I have never seen the word "bullying" in the prospectus, and how students will be punished is not mentioned. There are also no specific forms of support given to bullying victims in this school. Victims are sometimes just verbally consoled by their friends or some concerned teachers (Stephen, an 18-yearold prefect in Grade 12).*

In addition, a class monitress posits:

I have never seen or heard of any law which protects bullying victims in this school. The punishment given to bullies and support given to victims depend on individual teachers, because they deal with bullying behaviours differently. Sometimes I feel that their forms of punishment are unfair and full of favouritism because they are never the same. For example, sometimes you are ignored, sometimes you are lashed, and sometimes you are sent home. Last year four Form E boys who smoked dagga and physically assaulted their two fellow classmates during lunch time were suspended for two weeks after the principal's meeting with their parents. Other Form E boys in the same year on a Saturday during sports time at Sefikeng, smoked dagga, drank beer and finally fought among themselves. We all thought that they were going to be suspended but surprisingly the following Monday after assembly they were called into the principal's office where they were only flogged by all male teachers until they cried. (Tseleng, an 18-year-old female in Grade 12)

It is really interesting to note that even student leaders are not aware of an anti-bullying policy or any school regulation governing the bullying behaviours within and among students in their school. It should also be recorded that these student leaders doubt the fairness and consistency of the forms of punishment given to bullies.

Another participant in a focus group discussion affirms:

I think that there are no specific ways in which bullying is controlled in this school. Sometimes teachers just ignore the bullying behaviour if they consider it minor while others simply reprimand the behaviour verbally. In February, I saw a group of Form E boys cleaning around the office and staffroom building for three days as their punishment for beating and denying their girls the food after collecting it from the kitchen. But sometimes they are only lashed for the same mistake (Michael, a 17-year-old boy in Grade 10).

He continues:

Teachers punish bullying behaviours differently in this school sir. Another example is that our Religious Knowledge teacher's home is near our school, and sometimes he punishes us as the boys by taking us to his home after school to work on his garden and clean the surroundings. So, whenever we beat the girls, insult them or deny them the food during

lunch time, he would either flog us or take us to work at his home. That teacher of ours is very funny sir because sometimes he punishes boys by instructing them to make twenty or thirty "push-ups" or to run around the school campus in five minutes.

Another participant postulates:

I've seen that in the case of learners fighting or beating one another, the punishment is given on the basis of the damage or the bodily injury caused or sustained. If the damage or the injury is considered minor, the bully is given a "verbal warning" or simply given some "strokes" in the hand or on the buttocks by the class-teacher. If the injury sustained by the victim is considered serious the class teacher takes the bully to the disciplinary committee. The committee calls the parents of the bully and gives him/her a stern "verbal warning" or advise the principal to suspend the bully for a period of not more than 21 days depending on individual cases (Itumeleng, a 20-year-old female in Grade 12).

In a different focus group discussion, one participant asserts:

It is very sad and unfortunate that our teachers do not treat us equally whenever it comes to the punishment of bullying behaviours. I think that is why some Form D and Form E boys sometimes become rebellious and refuse to be punished. As for the bullying victims in our school, there are no counselling services provided to them. I think that is why they sometimes revenge or even drop out of school in severe cases (Ithabeleng, an 18-year-old girl in Grade 12).

She elaborates:

Sir, beating someone is somehow the same as being publicly insulted, booed or mocked. They all cause pain. They also damage relationships because some of your friends look down upon you after such. So, you ask yourself many questions such as: "why me among all the students?"

In the seventh individual interview, one participant recalls:

One day during a Sesotho lesson one boy tried to forcibly snatch my textbook. When I refused to let him take it, he slapped me very hard on my face and the teacher said

"sorry" without punishing the boy. I think it is because that boy was the class monitor. I really felt like crying as my friends were pitifully looking at me while others were laughing their hearts out (Moleboheng, a 19-year-old girl in Grade 12).

A participant from the second focus group discussion concurs:

I am very sorry to say that sometimes even our principal is not fair when it comes to the punishment of brilliant students and prefects. Last year our head prefect physically assaulted his fellow classmate fighting for a girlfriend. That prefect was not suspended from school although the victim was even taken to Maluti Hospital to be bandaged. That prefect was only ordered to collect a few pieces of firewood at the gate and put them near the kitchen (Peter, a 19-year-old boy in Grade 12).

He continues:

I also believe that the forms of punishment given to the bullies are not effective because bullying behaviours are still continuing since I arrived in this school four years ago. Again, I strongly feel that our teachers and the principal don't do enough to support the bullying victims. In most cases the victims are only verbally consoled, encouraged and motivated by their friends or classmates.

It is clear from the foregoing participants' statements that the severity of the damage or injury sustained by the victims of physical bullying and the forms of punishment given to the bullies are largely dependent on teachers' personal judgment or discretion. In this secondary school there are no clearly spelled out policy guidelines on how specific bullying behaviours should be dealt with. Therefore, this lack of anti-bullying policy is most likely to culminate in unfairness, inconsistency and favouritism from teachers while administering punishment to bullying perpetrators.

Participants' responses vividly indicate that there are various forms of punishment offered to the bullies such as getting verbally reprimanded, getting lashed or whipped, getting suspended or expelled from school in severe cases. It is strongly believed that there is no effectiveness in the given methods of punishment, primarily because bullying behaviours still take place in the school. It can also be strongly argued that the school is not doing enough to support the victims mainly

because there is no professional therapy or counselling offered by the school to both bullies and victims resulting in cases of revenge and drop-out by the victims.

5.5 LEARNERS' VIEWS ON HOW BULLYING CAN BE CONTROLLED IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Learners were asked to share their views on the most effective ways of controlling bullying. While most reflected seriously that learners' home background could influence the change, four of them thought there is a method they consider useful if it could be implemented. The following are participants' views:

> *I think that to some extent, the forms of punishment given to the bullies are effective. For example, as Form Es we no longer "treat" the Form As because the principal seriously warned that we will be expelled from school if ever we do it. We know it's true because there were two Form D boys last year whom the principal expelled at the end of the year for disrespecting teachers and more frequently dodging classes even after their parents were called to school on numerous occasions. Sir, according to me expulsion is the most effective form of punishment in order to control bullying behaviours in the school.*
> *Students don't want to stay at home, we enjoy being around our friends and peers in the school system. (Rethabile, a 20-year-old boy in Grade 12)*

Another participant claims:

> *As students we are only afraid of suspension and expulsion from school, as for getting whipped or lashed by the teachers we are used to it. I think that is why bullying behaviours are still continuing in our school. It is only a few students who are really afraid of being given some "strokes" by the teacher or the principal. Suspension is feared because if the bully is suspended, he/she is going to miss classes, assignments and tests for some time. So, as students we really don't like that because we enjoy one another's company. (Merriam a 17-year-old girl in Grade 10)*

An individual interview participant argues:

No, the only way to manage bullying in our school is to suspend the bullies for three months to make sure that when they come back to school, they don't do it again. Being punished by cleaning the school environment, chopping or collecting firewood is not enough. The principal should not be merciful to bullies because they behave like "wild animals" and they really don't belong to our school, but into the jungle where life is survival of the fittest (Moleboheng, a 19-year-old girl in Grade 12).

A participant in the same FGD concurs:

Yes, the only solution to control school bullying is that long time suspension, and if the bully returns to school unchanged, she/he should be expelled from our school for good. That is the only way our school can be safe from these "criminals" called bullies. We want to learn in a free and friendly environment. We're really sick and tired of being beaten and verbally harassed by people who are not our parents or teachers (Mpho, an 18-year-old girl in Grade 10).

Further suggestions were made citing school, community and home factors which can influence change:

Bullying is a violent and bad behaviour. So, I think that it is firstly the responsibility of our parents to make sure that we grow up without bad behaviours. So, sir, I have no doubt that students who are bullies are raised badly by their parents, so to control bullying in our school, the principal should tell the parents to discipline their children who bully others. As a result, very strong and stringent measures should be taken into consideration by both the principal and parents (Thabo who is a 19-year-old boy in Grade 12).

Another participant stresses:

Yes, parents should do their work to discipline their children who misbehave by bullying others, and not only overburden our teachers and principal by expecting them to perform basic parental responsibilities. I think our teachers have more work of teaching (Sello, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).

A school prefect concurs:

I also totally agree with those who are saying parents and teachers should team up to control bullying in our school. The work of our teachers is to teach us, so our parents should help with disciplining those who are bullies in our respective homes. I strongly believe that our parents and the school can control bullying in our school (Stephen, an 18-year-old boy in Grade 12).

A monitress further posits:

When I was in Form B our Literature teacher used to say that education is a three-legged pot consisting of parents, teachers and students as we all know. So, I also agree that in order to control bullying in this school, our parents should work hand in hand with our teachers to make sure in all possible ways that students don't bully one another. We're all here to learn, so these bullies should be seriously dealt with (Tseleng, an 18-year-old girl in Grade 12).

She continues to illustrate:

Whenever a student has bullied another student and he/she is taken to the disciplinary committee; parents of the bully should be invited to that disciplinary hearing so that the punishment decision can be reached together by the parents and teachers. This is because some students bully others while at school and they are punished by either teachers or the principal. But when arriving at home, they tell their parents a different story. So simply conclude that their child is hated by the teacher who punished him/her.

An FGD participant similarly affirms:

Sir, involvement of the bully's parents in the disciplinary process will stop these parents who always "take side of their children" by blaming teachers every time their children are punished here at school. That creates a serious conflict and a lot of misunderstandings between parents and teachers. At school the student who bullies others is considered not good and always gets punished, but at home the same child is considered as good as an "angel" by his or her parents (Ithabeleng, an 18-year-old girl from Grade 12).

The eighth individual interview participant suggests:

I propose that the school should set clear and enforceable rules and regulations on bullying behaviours and strictly stick to them. These rules should be written down and given to students and their parents every year. During parents meeting, the principal and the school board should give all parents hard copies. Parents should be told to talk to their children about those anti-bullying rules. I think that our teachers should also try to encourage all of us to behave in an acceptable manner (Rethabile, a 20-year-old boy in Grade 12).

In the same token, another FGD participant claims:

I think our principal should also hire two or three school counsellors to deal with bullies and help victims as teachers are busy. Counsellors can also immensely help bullies to repent from their violence and like their schoolwork. Motivational speakers could also be invited on a quarterly basis to inspire us so that we can mainly focus on our studies not ill-behaviours such as bullying other students (Peter, a 19-year-old boy from Grade 12).

It can be summed up that some participants believe that parents should work harder at home to ensure that their children are not violent and aggressive as they grow up before and during their schooling process. This clearly means that according to such participants, bullying behaviour management should be a collective responsibility between school principals, teachers and parents. It is also really interesting to note that some participants strongly believe that antibullying school rules and regulations should be established and implemented without any fear or favour. It is again very important to note that participants are in need of motivational speakers and school counsellors to divert their focus to schoolwork rather than bullying behaviours. It has been clearly indicated that many of the participants agreed with the proposition that the disciplinary committee should advise the school board to impose harsh punishment on bullies, or even expel them depending on the severity of their cases. This vividly indicates how irritated these learners are from the bullying behaviours which deny victims their fundamental freedom and basic right to education.

5.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

It has been found out that learners in the selected school have, one way or the other, experienced various forms of bullying either in the class, outside during break or lunch times, during sporting activities or even on their way home. Participants have reported diverse incidences of verbal, physical, emotional and cyber-bullying either as bystanders, perpetrators and/or victims in

different occasions. Verbal and physical bullying were reported to be the most common forms among girls and boys respectively as they occurred more frequently than the other forms. Furthermore, participants purportedly ascribed usage of dagga and beer, search for respect, pride and superiority, initiation schools, internal accumulated anger, rural home background and herding of animals, violent home environments, jealousy or envy; as the possible causes of bullying in their school. It has also been found out that many participants strongly believe that bullying behaviours are more deliberate than innate.

Moreover, it has been reported that verbal reprimanding, corporal punishment, being given physical activities such as collecting firewood or cleaning the school environment, and suspension of not more than 21 days from school, and expulsion in very rare cases are currently the existing mechanisms or forms of punishment to control bullying in the school. Among all these, corporal punishment is reported to be the most common form of punishment administered in the school by both the principal and his teachers. However, it has been noted that many participants complain about and doubt the effectiveness, fairness and consistency of the aforementioned forms of punishment given to bullies in the school. They strongly suspect that there is an element of favouritism from their principal and teachers when it comes to punishment of other bullying perpetrators particularly if those are academically brilliant students or student leaders. It has also been found out that there are no professional psychosocial support services given to both bullies and especially victims in the school. The only form of support given is voluntary and pitiful verbal consolation from some of the teachers, the principal, classmates or friends of the victim. It has been reported that in extreme or severe cases of school bullying, friends of the victim revenge by beating the bully in an attempt to console or support their friend.

Finally, participants have suggested several ways in which they suppose that bullying can be effectively managed in their school. Firstly, it has been claimed that education is a three-legged pot consisting of teachers, parents and learners. Consequently, there should be more parental involvement in the punishment of school bullying behaviours as opposed to the current scenario where it is mainly the responsibility of the principal and his teachers. Secondly, an establishment and implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy with clearly spelt-out punishment guidelines has been also suggested. Participants have seriously urged that all students and their parents should be made aware and given copies of the proposed policy at the beginning of every

year. Then the school principal, teachers and disciplinary committee have all been urged to implement the policy guidelines to any bullying perpetrator without any fear or favour. Again, it has been proposed that the principal should employ two school counsellors to provide psychosocial support services to both bullies and victims. On the other hand, many participants have strongly argued that school bullies should be suspended for three months and if they return to school unchanged - by still continuing to bully others; they should be expelled from school. It has been suggested that only long-term suspension and expulsion can help the school to most effectively control the on-going student-to-student bullying behaviours.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter basically presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study. The findings are discussed using the four research questions, previous literature and the theoretical framework as guides to understanding learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. Moreover, the conclusions for the study are drawn to make judgement about the findings and contribution of the study. Then, the study provides recommendations for policy development, change of practice and for further research. Lastly, the limitations of the study are outlined.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study set out to explore learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. It could be learnt that learners have different perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at mainstream secondary schools. The outlined causes of school bullying are violent home environments or domestic violence, initiation schools' influence, use of dagga and beer, being soft and gentle in character, search for pride and superiority, jealousy, lack of morality and internal accumulated anger. Existing punishment mechanisms to control school bullying include corporal punishment, verbal reprimands, manual labour such as collecting firewood or cleaning the school environment, getting suspended for not more than 21 days or being expelled at the end of the year in severe cases. What appears to be a major challenge is that bullying seems to be an on-going problem which threatens the safety, freedom and academic performance of learners. This is mainly because there are no effective methods of punishment for bullies, and appropriate forms of psychosocial support to both victims and perpetrators. There is also no anti-bullying policy with clear guidelines on how and to what extent bullying behaviours should be dealt with in the school setting. All these problems exacerbate the school bullying problem and its undesirable outcomes.

6.3 FORMS OF BULLYING EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS IN THEIR SCHOOL

The findings of the study indicate that learners experience various forms of bullying either as bystanders, perpetrators and/or victims. The findings reveal that many learners have frequently experienced physical, verbal, emotional and cyber-bullying in different contexts. It is worth noting

that for individual victims, acts of bullying inflict great distress and leave huge emotional scars which also severely affect their academic achievement.

The study findings highlight that physical bullying and verbal bullying are the most common forms experienced by learners. These findings resonate with results from Lekena (2016) who reports that learners identified kicking, beating, name-calling, bad treatment of others, forcing others to do what they did not like and forcibly taking other learners' belongings as the most dominant forms of school bullying. The issue of "name-calling" in the participants' responses also seems to resonate with findings by Livesey (2010) that frequently reported behaviour was bullying by which name-calling, hurtful comments or rude gestures are made. Generally, verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying in Lesotho Schools (Isidiho, 2009; Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Nqcobo, 2012; Mosia, 2015) with several aspects of name-calling, insults, teasing and threats.

Lekena (2016) postulates that verbal bullying in Lesotho may be ascribed to the fact that its perpetrators are aware that it might be hard for the victims to report them since there is no evidence of harm. Verbal bullying perpetrators can easily deny if they are reported to the school authorities who may find it hard to believe the victim. Another reason could be that the majority of learners in rural Lesotho come from homes where they herd cattle and the language that is used in that environment is predominantly vulgar, and perhaps they get used to calling animals names to such an extent that it becomes normal language to them. Mosia (2015) indicates that verbal bullying is regarded as the most serious type of bullying which adds up to 73.3% that schools in Lesotho need to address.

The study findings recount over twenty statements which express grave emotional experiences including learners who were "embarrassed", "humiliated", "hurt", "fed-up", "shaking with anger" and "absent-minded." The experience made some "hate being a small boy"; feel they "will never forgive perpetrators" as they felt they "didn't belong to the school". This means that learners go through a vast number of emotional and psychological effects which force them to think of ways of escaping bullying. These findings compare with Lekena (2016) who found out that majority of victims do not feel free at school because of bullying, hence they think dropping out of school is the solution to escape it. In a similar vein, this finding is consistent with what Olweus and Limber

(2010) documented that bullied learners are more likely than non-bullied peers to want to avoid school.

Lekena (2016) found out that the majority of the victims of school bullying were reported to be scared, very unhappy, sad, always annoyed, quiet and skeptical about mixing with other learners, and generally threatened. In addition, Makafane and Khalanyane (2018) found out that bullying contributes to depression and low self-esteem, which can lead to poor school performance and suicidal tendencies amongst the victims. Moreover, one of the effects of bullying which was reported by participants in this study is lack of concentration which ultimately leads to deterioration in their academic performance. Chabalala (2011) explains that learners who are targets of bullying are fearful and spend their energy worrying about when and how they will be bullied again and this has an impact on their studies, because instead of them concentrating on their studies, they concentrate on what they can do to protect themselves against bullies and how the bullying will take place. In the same vein, Livesey (2010) reports that within the school environment, the victim of bullying may have impaired concentration and decreased academic performance.

The findings of this research also highlight the locations where bullying behaviours take place. Isidiho's (2009) study found out that 29.5 % of bullying in Lesotho happens in the classrooms. This finding correlates with what the participants in this study have reported that bullying takes place in the classroom when a teacher is absent or in the presence of some teachers. Similarly, a study by Mosia (2015) affirms that learners reported that bullying happens mostly in the classrooms where teachers are supposed to be in full control (36.7%), followed by sports fields (21.1%) and the school hall (9.5 %). Another worrying finding in this study which requires to be noted is the issue of not reporting bullying incidents because teachers ignore such behaviours or because bullies threatened the victims not to report. A study by Isidiho (2009) concurs that learners in Lesotho hardly report bullying incidents to their teachers. In view of this, Mosia (2015) argues that if teachers ignore incidents of bullying, such behaviours become reinforcement to the bullies. Reluctance to report to teachers is a concern that should be taken seriously by educationists, as teachers should be trusted to nurture all domains of development, including psychosocial development (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2006). However, Beaty and Alexeyev (2008) argue that

novice and incompetent teachers are inefficient in addressing learners' needs through their teaching, and they may not even attend to cases of bullying referred to them.

6.4 CAUSES OF BULLYING AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

With bullying behaviour a norm at the school, the study sought learners' views on the root-cause of school bullying. Participants had various perceptions about the causes of bullying behaviours. They argued that a violent home environment or domestic violence, initiation schools, rural home background and herding of animals, use of dagga and beer, search for pride and superiority, jealousy, lack of morals and internal accumulated anger are some of the causes for learners to be violent to others. On the other hand, victims are usually soft and gentle in character. The findings on victimhood echo Makafane and Khalanyane's (2018) study which concluded that new learners at schools are vulnerable and usually targeted by bullies under the pretext of being taught the culture of the school (initiation rite). Most participants suspect that bullying behaviours are more deliberate than innate.

The study findings concur with those of other studies which employed the Social Learning Theory as a theoretical lens. Studies utilizing the SLT as a foundation for understanding bullying behaviours have examined childhood and adolescent aggression (Bandura, 1971; 1978); family conflict (Low & Eselage, 2012; Wilson, Parry, Nettelbeck & Bell, 2003); drug and alcohol use (Akers, Krohn, Lanzakaduce & Radosevich, 2007; Eiser, 1985; Low & Espelage, 2012); intimate partner violence (Bauer, Hrrenkohl, Lozano, Rivara, Hill & Hawkins, 2006); and other violent and non-violent criminal behaviours (Akers & Matsueda, 1999) as the possible causes of bullying.

The Social Learning Theory was upgraded to the Social Cognitive Theory in the 1960s by Albert Bandura (Low & Espelage, 2012). According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, intrinsic and extrinsic factors contribute to human behaviours. The SCT suggests that human behaviours such as bullying result from "internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events, behaviours, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants which influence one another bidirectionally" (Bandura, 2000, p.329). Bandura (1986) recognized that human behaviours involve more than an individual's reaction to his/her environment and posited that human behaviours are the results of people internalizing their experiences which can help them to adapt to their environments. Thus, human behaviours such as school bullying culminate from a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. This compares with the findings of the current study

because the majority of participants believe that the way bullies are raised in their respective homes directly impacts on their bullying behaviour. The findings compare with

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) which posits that children learn by imitating adults (Observation Learning); when adults are violent children are at the risk of being violent as well (Low & Espelage, 2012).

The study findings also resonate with Lekena's (2016) study which found out that school bullying has been attributed to several causes such as jealousy, family background or treatment from home and biological factors; with body size as the greatest contributor (with older learners bullying the younger ones). Both previous studies and results from the current one align with international trends as James (2010) states that in western societies, bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several persons who are perceived as more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength and, broadly involves older pupils victimizing younger children.

Furthermore, the issue of family background as contributing to incidences of bullying is also reported by Mestry and Khumalo (2012) whose research found out that learners with discipline problems come from a family background where there was physical abuse, conflict and domestic violence. The present study findings reveal that sometimes bullies themselves are either bystanders and/or victims of violence from their homes, and that they are sometimes corporally punished by their parents and consequently they take that pain out on innocent learners through bullying. Protogerour and Flisher (2012) argue that bullying is often attributed to personality and family characteristics reinforced by growing up in families which tolerate aggression and the use of power-assertive discipline, such as corporal punishment.

Moreover, Venter (2013) posits that initiation (lebollo) is a traditional cultural practice involving the process which indicates the transition from boyhood to manhood. Consequently, the study findings reveal that some bullies label initiation schools as their reason for behaving aggressively towards fellow schoolmates because they want to demonstrate their real manhood. In this regard, manhood is demonstrated through aggressive power assertion over others. This finding is against proponents of traditional initiation who believe that it inculcates good moral values in boys and builds society by producing responsible, law-abiding citizens (Ntombana, 2011). However, opponents of initiation schools believe that the behaviour and actions of the initiated boys "does not conform to the expectations which are carried by the ritual; even though they have undergone

the ritual, their lives are the same as when they were boys" (Ntombana, 2011, p.636). The findings also align with Mohlaloka, Jacobs and De Wet's (2016) study which found out that many formal education teachers struggle to deal with the deviant behaviour of boys returning from initiation schools because they act with disdain towards female teachers, uninitiated male teachers, refuse to do certain tasks and engage in gangster activities.

Additionally, the study found that retaliation is the other cause of bullying within and among learners. It is the exercise of power between unequal members of a society. Bullies could be angry at the way in which they are treated by teachers and therefore seek revenge elsewhere as indicated by Marais and Meier's (2010) study where participants believed that learners' disruptive behaviour amounted to retaliation for punishment by teachers. On a different note, the results show jealousy as one of the possible causes of bullying. For example, some participants indicate that they may be bullied because they get higher marks in class work, assignments and tests; they ascribe the fact that they do better academically to being vulnerable to bullying. The findings compare with the studies of Chabalala (2011); Marias and Meier (2010), which found that jealousy is the driving force to bullying because bullies are envious of their performance in schoolwork.

The study also found out that seeking popularity among peers is one of the reasons given for bullying by participants in this study. This need for status by bullies is also documented in the literature. When some learners recognize that putting others down gives them approval from their peers and makes them feel more important, popular and in control, they are likely to do it repeatedly (Chabalala, 2011). Similarly, Kruger (2011) argues that bullying behaviour between peers is a way of gaining social power, status or popularity in the school setting. Conversely, the findings reveal that bullies are also vulnerable individuals who may bully others in order to hide some of their weaknesses such as frequently getting low marks or failing tests. In the same vein, Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, (2003) postulate that people strive for superiority by attracting attention - whether negative or positive - so as to mark their perceived weaknesses.

The study findings also expose victims who believe that their bullies use dagga and beer as catalysts of bullying behaviour. It was found that there are boys who frequently smoke dagga at the school toilets during break and lunch time while alcohol is usually consumed during sporting tournaments and competitions. The findings compare with Njeri and Ngesu's (2014) study which indicates that drug abuse causes aggressive behaviour and withdrawal. Additionally, King'endo's

(2015) study found that Kenyan secondary school learners who abused drugs and substances and reacted differently by developing behavioural disorders such as bullying caused problems, and that teachers could not redeem the situation without training on drug abuse problems and they lacked skills and knowledge in dealing with drug-related behaviour disorders among learners.

The study showed physical appearance as another contributing factor to bullying; some participants believe that they are being bullied because they are "too small" or "too ugly". Research which addresses bullying related to body weight is limited. The findings of some studies have shown that those learners who are perceived as weak, less attractive, overweight or small tend to be victimized by being bullied (Frisen, Jonsson & Persson, 2007). In another study, it was found out that "weight-related teasing is prevalent among adolescents and occurs across ethnic groups" and that this kind of teasing has become a greater problem (Benas & Gibb, 2008).

6.5 EXISTING MECHANISMS TO CONTROL BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL

As data from this study show bullying to be prevalent in the school and learners speculate on various causal factors, the study also sought to find out their views on the ways in which bullying is controlled in their school. Existing punishment mechanisms include corporal punishment, verbal reprimands, being given physical work such as collecting firewood or cleaning the school environment, getting suspended for not more than 21 days or being expelled at the end of the year in severe cases. Participants also reflect that there are no counseling services provided to both victims and perpetrators.

The study findings portray corporal punishment as the most common way in which bullying behaviour is punished in the school. Corporal punishment includes slapping, beating, pinching or spanking or any other action that produces physical pain without causing any injuries (Romano, Bell & Norian, 2013). Studies on corporal punishment in Lesotho (De Wet 2007; Lefoka, Nyabanyaba & Sebatane, 2008; Setlolela, 2009; Vihito, 2011, Pokothoane, 2011; and Matheolane, 2016) point out that it is the most common - and frequently used - form of discipline in secondary schools. Matheolane (2016) argues that the use of corporal punishment still continues in schools despite the fact that the government of Lesotho is signatory to continental and international conventions abolishing it and having enacted the Education Act 2010 which outlaws corporal punishment.

Despite the fact that the school mainly employs corporal punishment to control learners' bullying behaviours, the Social Learning Theory suggests that when parents or teachers use aggressive forms of discipline, children learn through modeling to be more aggressive themselves (GamezGuadix, Straus & Hershberger, 2011). Indeed, children who receive physical punishment from their parents or teachers may learn to use similar tactics to control their environment (Graziano, 1994). Corporal punishment may change the way children perceive social information creating a tendency to access aggressive responses as solutions (Weiss, Doge, Bates & Pettit, 1992). This means that according to this study's theoretical lens, corporal punishment is not an effective way to control bullying in secondary schools because it has a very high likelihood of further perpetrating and worsening school bullying behaviours.

Findings of this study also reveal that if a learner has committed a serious act of physical bullying, he/she is suspended for a period of not more than 21 days and eventually expelled from school at the end of the year if he/she continues bullying other learners. Participants indicate that suspension and/or expulsion are only implemented by the school principal with the advice of the school's disciplinary committee which consists of the deputy principal and heads of departments (HODs). The study findings show that the bully's parents are normally called to school to be notified of his/her child's unacceptable behaviour before he/she is suspended or expelled from school. The school seems, similar to schools in the United Kingdom (UK), to show power to impose reasonable sanctions if a pupil misbehaves (Department of Education, 2018). A child who gets into serious trouble at school can be suspended for a fixed period of time if allowing him/her to stay in school would seriously harm their education or welfare, or the education or welfare of other pupils (Department of Education, 2018).

However, a school must expel a learner as the last resort after trying to improve the pupil's behaviour through other means (Department of Education, 2018). However, the Lesotho Education Act (2010) stipulates "a learner, whether enrolled in an independent or public school shall not be suspended or expelled from school without the consent of the school board". The Education Act (2010) further clarifies that if a parent is dissatisfied with the suspension or expulsion of a learner, he/she may appeal to the Minister of Education and Training whose decision shall be final.

The study findings further convey that these given forms of punishment are not effective because bullying remains a constantly on-going problem in the school. Participants also reveal that these

given forms of punishment are unfair and inconsistent because there is no school anti-bullying policy with clear guidelines on how and when learners should be punished. Olafsen and Viemero (2012) affirm that bullying is a constantly growing worldwide problem in schools; and is thus regarded as a form of low-level violence which can escalate and become physical and even lethal.

6.6 WAYS IN WHICH BULLYING CAN BE CONTROLLED AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Participants were asked to share their views on the most effective ways of controlling school bullying. Most participants reflected seriously about learners' home background and supposed that it could influence the change. On the other hand, some participants viewed long-term suspension and expulsion from school as the only effective methods of controlling bullying. They also thought that the school should establish and implement an anti-bullying policy with clear guidelines on how, when and to what extent bullying behaviours should be punished. They further pointed out that the school should hire two or three counsellors to provide psychological support to both bullies and victims.

The study findings show that in order to control bullying, parents should instill good morals to their children by teaching them what is behaviourally acceptable and unacceptable. This finding resonates with Mosia (2019) who calls for moral education as a remedy for school bullying problem. This finding also compares with another key element of the SCT which is the importance ascribed to self-regulatory functions, indicating that individuals' behaviours are encouraged and controlled by their values and morals (Bandura, 1986). With maturation, individuals develop values, standards and goals which become altered through experiences with others (Bandura, 1986). High self-transcendence values promote the welfare of others and have been linked to empathy, self-efficacy and personal responsibility (Scwartz, Caprara, & Vecchione, 2010). Therefore, the perceived efficacy of the group (i.e., peers, teachers) is also important to learners' efforts to curtail bullying.

The study findings reveal that bullying behaviour management should be a collective responsibility between the school, the community and the parents. Participants argue that children's home background plays a major role in their behaviour. This finding resonates well with from Fareo's (2015) study which argued that the community plays a crucial role in modifying the behaviour of the children in compliance with the approved norms or standards of the society. It is the responsibility of the community to provide conducive atmosphere for children to acquire useful

skills necessary for effective living (Fareo, 2015). Moreover, Aluede (2011) affirms that it is also the responsibility of the parents to provide an appropriate climate for the growth and development of their children by first serving as good models who engage in open and sincere communication with their children, attend Parents-Teacher Association meetings, have contact with their children and be watchful on their behaviour. My suspicion is that many children in Lesotho also come from broken family background where there is no parental figure to nurture and raise them properly.

Furthermore, the study findings indicate that the school should have a clear anti-bullying policy and hire two or three counselors to support both bullies and victims. These findings concur with Omoteso (2010) who asserts that schools must develop and review school policy to address bullying, consistently enforce the policy, promote communication and provide educational services, training and favourable school climate. In addition, Fareo (2015) posits that schools should have counsellors to provide all learners with opportunities to develop good interpersonal skills and create a social context, which is supportive and conducive, in which aggressive bullying behaviours are not tolerated by the majority. School counsellors could use peer group support as a strategy to manage bullying, in which members of the group engage in educative and productive social programmes, obey school rules and regulations, participate in conflict mediation, and enforce school policy (Fareo, 2015).

Generally, some learners felt that bullies should be suspended for three months and then be immediately expelled from school if they do not repent as they deny victims their fundamental freedom and basic right to education.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions in this study are drawn in line with the objectives which guided the entire study and discussion of research findings. The four objectives are stated as follows:

6.7.1 First Objective of the Study

The first objective was to explore learners' experiences of bullying in secondary schools. This study concludes that the enactment of the Education Act 2010 and Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018 are not deterrent to bullying behaviour. This is evidenced by learners' experience of various incidences of verbal, physical, emotional and cyber-bullying either as bystanders, perpetrators and/or victims. The behaviour is prevalent everywhere, including the place where they

must be protected by teachers. The experience of bullying results in damage to learners' academic and psychosocial development and denies them a sense of safety, fundamental freedom, basic right to education and academic performance.

6.7.2 The Second objective of the study

The second objective was to describe learners' views about the causes of bullying in secondary schools. This study concludes that violence begets violence. Bullying results mostly from unhealthy living environment at home. Parents' interactions with each other and their children model violence as opposed to creating an environment where open discussions about life problems are promoted. At schools, there is no known life skills training for victims or perpetrators and teachers try to solve bullying through violent means which may pass the message that when in power, you can force your wishes on others. Early exposure of children to drugs and alcohol, poor modeling from traditional institutions such as initiation schools on what it means to be a man, and personal jealousies all create an environment which results in bullying being the norm.

6.7.3 The Third Objective of the study

The third objective was to explain the existing mechanism of controlling bullying in secondary schools. This study concludes that the school currently does not have efficient means of control in place. Corporal punishment, manual labour, verbal warnings and suspension do not seem to act as deterrent for bullying. There is no broad whole-school approach to preventing or managing bullying; teachers act from their own conviction rather than a policy and structured methods of dealing with the problem.

6.7.4 The Fourth Objective of the study

The fourth and last objective was to explore learners' views on how bullying can be effectively controlled in secondary schools. A summary of learners' suggestions covers the need for collaboration between the school and parents as learners' development is anchored to both contexts. The collaboration may be possible through developing and using a clear policy framework. Some suggestions seem to come from a bad space where learners need harsher punishments even if they are not constructive to the bullies' future development as citizens. That is, expulsion creates a situation where, as research states, most bullies may commit crimes as adults. This study concludes that if bullies are not rehabilitated through constructive life skills

programmes and cannot complete school and pursue productive careers, they are most likely to engage in violent crimes as means to their livelihood.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the presented results, discussions and conclusions, several issues need to be addressed in order to improve learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. The following recommendations are among the issues which can be improved so as to address the causes of bullying and how it can be effectively managed at secondary schools.

6.8.1 Recommendations for National Anti-Bullying Policy Development

➢ The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) should establish a National AntiBullying Policy with clearly spelled out guidelines on how individual incidences of bullying should be dealt with in secondary schools. The policy should be disseminated and implemented across all schools in the country to safeguard learners' sense of safety, fundamental freedom and basic right to education.

➢ All secondary school boards, principals and teachers should implement the National AntiBullying Policy under the watchful eye of their respective District Education Offices.

➢ The Ministry of Education and Training should take serious disciplinary measures against any school authorities who fail to implement the policy accordingly.

6.8.2 Recommendations for School Psychologists and Counselors

➢ The Ministry of Education and Training should ensure that every secondary school has access to services of school psychologists to regularly assess and give guidance for individual learners' behavioural health and learning needs in collaboration with teachers and parents. Every secondary school should also have at least one member of staff employed to provide academic guidance and enhance social-emotional competences to all learners through a school counselling programme.

6.8.3 Recommendations for Continuous Professional Development

➢ It is critical for the Ministry of Education and Training to provide an in-service training for secondary school teachers so that they can have appropriate skills and knowledge to

effectively support learners with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD) such as bullying..

➤ Teachers' training institutions must beef up their courses and programmes to equip teachers on behavioural and psycho-social issues.

6.8.4 Recommendations for further Research

The following is a recommendation for future research:

➤ This study has only explored learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at one secondary school in Mapoteng Berea Lesotho. Therefore, a much larger study involving various stakeholders from a range of secondary schools from other contexts such as urban and rural areas is required to inform policy directions and practice.

6.9 LIMITATIONS

The current study used one secondary school at Mapoteng in Berea district as a case study out of many secondary schools in Lesotho, and its findings may not be generalized beyond the selected school. In addition, this study adopted a qualitative approach and consequently its findings may not be generalized to reflect perceptions of all learners in the selected secondary school.

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APPENDICES

THE INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your experiences of bullying in this school?

(a) Which form(s) of bullying have you experienced?

(b) In that experience/ those experiences were you the bully, the victim or the bystander?

(c) In which context did you experience that/those forms of bullying?

(d) How often did you experience that/those forms of bullying?

2. What are your views about the causes of bullying?

(a) (i) If you were the victim, why do you think you were targeted?

(ii) If you were the bully, why did you target that person or those people?

(iii) If you were the bystander, why do you think that person/ those people were targeted?

(b) What do you think are the factors/reasons why your schoolmates bully one another?

(c) Do you think bullying behaviours are innate or deliberate?

3. What are existing mechanisms for controlling bullying at your school?

(a)   Does your school have any anti-bullying policy? If yes, what does that policy say?

(b)   Do teachers in your school punish learners who bully others?

(c)   Can you mention any form(s) of punishment given to such bullies?

(d)   Which forms of support does your school give to the bullying victims?

(e)   To what extent are those forms of punishment to bullies and forms of support to victims effective?

4. What are ways in which bullying can be controlled in your school?

<div align="right">

Popopo
P. O. Box 21
Mapoteng 250

18 March 2020

</div>

The Principal

…………………………

Mapoteng 250

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I, Ramonki Egnetus Seisa, am doing research with Dr. Paseka Andrew Mosia, a Senior Lecturer in the Educational Foundations Department at the National University of Lesotho, towards a Master of Education degree in Educational Psychology. We therefore request participation of your Form D and Form E students in the study entitled: Learners' Perceptions about the Causes of Bullying and how it can be Controlled at Secondary Schools in Lesotho.

The aim of the study is to explore learners' perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at schools in Lesotho. Therefore, your school has been selected because it is strongly believed that your students can contribute immensely towards the subject matter of the study. The study requests participation of thirty (30 in total) Form C (Grade 10) and Form E (Grade 12) students. There is no gender preference in this selection, therefore, both males and females are encouraged to participate in this study. Leaners' participation will be in group discussions of (six

or more) lasting for about 60 – 100 minutes while individual interviews will last for about 50 minutes for each participant.

The study will help the Ministry of Education and Training to assess its efforts towards accommodating bullying victims and perpetrators in the education system; and come up with an appropriate Anti-Bullying Policy to supplement Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy 2018. The study will also help mainstream education teachers to reflect on their practices and identify challenges which they face while dealing with bullying victims and perpetrators; and seek additional help on how they could effectively support such learners in order to maximise their individual academic potential. The study may facilitate the development of proper anti-bullying strategies by both secondary school administrators and teachers on how they could work together to combat bullying practices within and among students in their respective schools. This study will also serve as base for further research on school bullying in Lesotho. The researcher will inform you once the study has been completed and, if you wish, we could have a seminar on the findings.

Yours sincerely

…………………………
Ramonki Egnetus Seisa

(Master of Education student at NUL)

THE INFORMATION NOTE FOR LEARNERS

Dear Learner

In this study I want to find out your perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho. I sincerely believe that your participation in this study will be very helpful. This research will involve your participation in a focus group discussions and individual interview that will last for approximately 50 minutes. You are being invited to take part in this research because I strongly feel that your experiences as a student can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled in your school.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier. If you accept, you will be asked to take part in focus group discussions or individual interviews which involve questions that relate to your experiences of bullying behaviours. The interviews will be tape-recorded to enable me to capture your views, but the audio will not be shared with anyone and will be used solely for the study. The information recorded is confidential and will be kept safely to be destroyed after five years. You are also free not to take part in the discussions if you feel the questions are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Your participation will be beneficial to you, other students and teachers in Lesotho because school administrators will learn from your experiences and perceptions in order to create bullying-free and child-friendly learning environment. The knowledge gained from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results and then the results will be published so that other interested people may learn from the research.

Thank you very much in advance for your immense contribution.

Kind Regards

Ramonki Seisa

(Master of Education Student at NUL)

<div align="center">LENGOLO HO MOTSOALI/MOHOLISI/MOIKARABELLI</div>

'M'e/Ntate

Lebitso laka ke Ramonki Egnetus Seisa. Ke moithuti oa botichere sekolong se seholo sa sechaba (NUL). E le karolo ea mosebetsi oa ka oa sekolo lefapheng lena, ke etsa lipatlisiso tse amanang le boithuto ba mokhoa oo motho a nahanang ka oona (Educational Psychology). Sehlooho sa tokomane ea lipatlisiso tsena ke: TSELA EO BARUTOANA BA SHEBANG SESOSA SA BONKOAPO/ BOMPOLI LE TSELA EO BO KA LAOLOANG KA EONA LIKOLONG TSE MAHARENG, LESOTHO.
Lingoloa tse fapaneng li supa hore liketsahalo tsa bompoli li bonahala li eketseha likolong 'me li etsa t'susumetso e mpe t'sebetsong ea barutoana le boiketlong ba polokeho ea bona likolong. Ka hona, ke na le thahasello ea ho fumana tsela eo barutoana ba bonang sesosa sa bompoli

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likolong tse mahareng. Ka lebaka lena, ke kopa tumello ea hau ho lokolla ngoana oa hau ho nka karolo lipatlisisong tsena.

Ka tumello ea hau, ngoana oa hau o tla memeloa ho nka karolo lipotsong tse etselitsoeng motho ka bomong le lipuisanong tsa lihlopha tse tla nka bonyane metsotso e mashome a mahlano (50) le e mashome a t'seletseng (60) ho isa ho e lekholo (100) ka tatellano. Ka tumello ea hau, likarabo litla hatisoa (audio-recorded) e le ho etsa bonnete ba ho etsa pokello e nepahetseng ea maikutlo a barutoana. Lipotso litla t'soareloa mapatleng a sekolo ka nako e ke keng ea kena-kenana le lithuto tsa barutoana. Ho nka karolo lipatlisisong tsena ke boithaopo ka hohle-hohle 'me ha hona litlamorao tse bosula tseo ngoana oa hau a ka li fumanang ha u ka oa khetha hore a se nke karolo. Ha u lamella ngoana oa hau ho nka karolo; u hlokomele hore ha hona lit'senyehelo tseo u tla kena ho tsona, ebile ngoana oa hau a ke ke a ba tlokotsing ka tsela efe kapa efe. Ha re hatela pele, ngoana oa hau a ke ke a ba tlasa khatello ea ho araba lipotso tseo a tla beng a sa ikemisetsa ho li araba. Le ha ho le joalo, ho nka karolo hoa ngoana oa hau ho tla ba bohlokoa haholo ho eena, barutoana ba bang le matichere hobane ka maikutlo a hae; batsamaisi ba likolo le Lekala La Thuto le Koetliso batla sebetsa ka thata ho laola bonkoapo/bompoli likolong e le hore barutoana ba lule ba sireletsehile kamehla ha ba le sekolong.

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, a kenyeletsang liphutheho (conference proceedings) le liphatlalatso (publications). Lebitso la ngoana oa hau le la sekolo sa hae le ke ke la hlahisoa kae kapa kae ka hara lipatlisiso tsena kapa tokomaneng efe kapa efe ea phatlalatso. Ho tiisa lekunutu lena, mabitso a boiqapelo kapa linomoro (pseudonyms) litla sebelisoa ho ngoloeng hoa lipatlisiso tsena. Pokello ea maikutlo a barutoana e tla bolokoa ka hloko sekolong se seholo sa sechaba (NUL) 'me e tla senngoa ka mora lilemo tse tharo ho isa ho tse hlano kamorao ho hore lipatlisiso tsena li phetheloe. Haeba u ka lakatsa ho fumana kopi ea lipotso tseo ke li botsitseng barutoana, ka kopo se ke oa ba leqe ho ntetsetsa kapa hona ho ikopanya le nna.

Ke lebeletse ka t'sepo karabo ea hau motsoali/moholisi/moikarabelli ea khabane.

Ka boikokobetso

…………………………………………………..

Ramonki Seisa

(Moithuti Sekolong Se Seholo Sa Sechaba, NUL)

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. Kea utloisisa 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. Kea tseba hore pokello ea maikutlo a barutoana e tla bolokoa ka hloko sekolong se seholo sa sechaba (NUL) 'me e tla senngoa ka mora lilemo tse tharo ho isa ho tse hlano kamorao ho hore lipatlisiso tsena li phetheloe.

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

LEARNER CONSENT FORM

Dear Researcher

My name is…………………………………………………….and I agree to participate in this study. I would like to take part in both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. I agree to be audio-recorded during interviews. I know that the audiotapes will be used for this research only. I understand that my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that the name of my school will not be revealed. I also understand that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. I know that data collected during this study will be destroyed within 5 years after completion of this research project.

Signed:……………………………………….Date:………………………………………..

INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY

National University of Lesotho

Educational Foundations Department

P.O. Roma 180

17th March 2020

The District Education Manager

Ministry of Education and Training

Berea 200

RE: Seisa Egnetus Ramonki (200900197)

This letter introduces Seisa Ramonki as a student registered in the Faculty of Education for M.Ed. in Psychology of Education. He is in the final stages of his study and has to collect data. His topic is: "Learners' Perceptions about the Causes of Bullying and How It Can Be Controlled at Secondary Schools in Lesotho", and wishes to interview learners at one school in Berea District. He will share with you the following, information letter for learners, a letter of introduction to the school principal and a letter to parents asking permission for their child to participate in the study as well as consent forms for both parents and learners.

I will be glad if your good office gives him a letter of introduction to that selected school so that he gets the support he needs in order to complete the study.

Yours Sincerely

Paseka A. Mosia (D.Ed.)
Senior Lecturer & HOD
Educational Foundations Department
National University of Lesotho

P.O. Roma 180
Lesotho
Cell: +26658969867
Email: pa.mosia@nul.ls / mosia296@gmail.com

THE KINGDOM OFLESOTHO

Ministry of Education and Training – Berea

17/03/2020

The Principal

Mapoteng

Dear Sir/Madam

This serves to justify and confirm that Ramonki Seisa is a student teacher registered with National University of Lesotho to further his studies in the Faculty of Education for M. Ed.

Kindly allow him to conduct a research at your school. His topic has been stated in his application letter.

Hoping his application will be considered.

Thanking you

MAFAKAZILE MNTAMBO (INSPECTOR – BEREA)

1ST June 2020

Mr. Ramonki E. Seisa
Popopo
P.O Box 21
Mapoteng 250

Dear Mr. Seisa

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A REASERCH AT OUR SCHOOL

Our school is in receipt of your application letter to conduct a research on "learner's perceptions about the causes of bullying and how it can be controlled at secondary schools in Lesotho."

After going through your request, the school has decided to give you a go ahead with your research. We sincerely believe that your research project will be beneficial to our school, the Ministry of Education and Training and the country at large.

We wish you all the best in your endeavors.

Yours faithfully