

ANTI-BULLYING INTERVENTION PROGRAMME AND GUIDELINES
FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

For several decades, bullying has been highlighted as one of the threats to effective teaching and learning. Many research studies have been conducted in developed countries, especially in Norway and the USA, with the aim of preventing and managing bullying at school level. In Namibia, research conducted by Sam (2011) revealed that the prevalence of bullying in both rural and urban schools was high, but that there was no intervention programme to assist victims and perpetrators, as well as witnesses of bullying. The study found a gap in knowledge regarding a programme that could be utilised for anti-bullying purposes; existing anti-bullying programmes available were not suitable for the Namibian context as they had been developed in the western world where the school set up was different. One of the recommendations suggested in that study was that a programme aiming at combating bullying in Namibian schools should be developed. The present study arose from that recommendation, as well as reports from local media indicating the serious state of bullying in schools. Based on that, the development of an anti-bullying programme employed in this study was given birth. This study zoomed in on the current status of bullying activities with the purpose of creating awareness about bullying, developing resilient skills among bullied learners, as well as finding prevention and management strategies to combat bullying at secondary school level in Namibia.

Employing a mixed methods quasi-experimental design, the researcher conducted the study in four urban/town secondary schools in Namibia. Twenty-six key informants, consisting of Life Skills teachers and Learners' Representative Council members participated in the development of an anti-bullying programme which was later

employed in the Life Skills lessons. Eighty-one learners in Grade 9 participated in the implementation of the programme, and they participated in pre- and post-tests by completing questionnaires. The evaluation on the programme was done by the Life Skills teachers who implemented the intervention programme in their lessons.

The findings of the study revealed that a large number of learners were experiencing bullying every day in Namibian secondary schools. All types of bullying identified were recorded in all the schools where the study was conducted. The reasons for bullying were different from school to school, but the most common ones were identified as poor school rules regarding bullying and a lack of anti-bullying programmes. It was identified that schools had no prevention and intervention mechanisms in place in order to combat bullying, other than their school rules which did not address bullying.

The impact of bullying was felt by the majority of learners. Learners highlighted that bullying did affect teaching and learning, and bullied learners were more likely to drop out of school. Bullying led to poor academic performance, criminal activities and suicidal thoughts for some learners.

After the intervention of the anti-bullying programme, there was a clear decrease in physical bullying activities experienced by victims but other types of bullying perpetrated against victims either increased or remained the same. The findings also indicate that more learners became aware of the different types of bullying and were able to identify them in the post-test as opposed to pre-test findings. Cyber bullying remained a major concern due to internet access by many learners and the many social media sites or platforms which allow bullying to thrive.

Some learners indicated that they were able to deal with bullying after the intervention of the programme as they had learnt new skills and knowledge regarding the ways in which to handle bullying. Despite the new skills learnt, the well-being of learners at schools was still at stake as bullying continued unabated, and it continued causing short and long term social and emotional, as well as academic damage to learners.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LST: Life Skills Teachers

LRC: Learners' Representative Council

MEAC: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

NBPC: PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

NORED: Northern Namibia's Regional Electricity Distributor

NSSF: National Safe Schools Framework

NSBA: National School Bullying Awareness Day

QUAL: Qualitative

QUAN: Quantitative

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TC: Teacher- Counsellors

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

WHO: World Health Organisation

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Maano Ndamononghenda Mukamba ya Neliwa and Gebhard Sam. My late grand-parents (Sam Mandume yaHaludilu, Magdalena Nauwanga Mukwamalanga gwaShilongo, Immanuel Mukamba yaNeliwa and Jacobina Mukwanambwa Mika- Mukamba), thank you for taking care of me, and for the love I have received from you. I will forever be grateful that you were part of my life journey.

DECLARATIONS

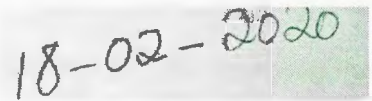
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Date

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Bullying is defined as an activity that occurs where individuals or groups seek to intimidate or persecute others through their actual strength or power (Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2005). It is an emotional and physical issue which affects the entire school community. Previous studies show that many schools are almost impotent in their attempts to stop school bullying (Wong, 2004). Studies carried out in the developed world, such as Norway and Finland, conclude that bullying has short and long term negative effects on the lives of both victims and perpetrators, and such effects need immediate intervention at school level. For example, Rigby and Cox (as cited in Marsh, Parada, Craven & Finger, 2004) state that bullies may be more likely to engage in teenage delinquent behaviour, suffer from depression, have diminished ability to perform at full potential in school and engage in criminal behaviour after leaving school. A study conducted in New York indicates that 160 000 children in the USA miss school every day out of fear of being bullied (Henkin, 2005). It is reported that bullying leads to poor discipline among learners in some schools. A study conducted in Namibia by Zimba, Auala and Scott (1997) reveals that approximately 55% of learners who participated in the research agreed that there was a general breakdown of discipline at schools. In most research findings, the lack of discipline in schools is associated with bullying activities. Bullying in Namibia is not always reported but the reality of the matter is that bullying is happening in schools. This was confirmed by Jason (2015) who

stated that bullying at one of the secondary schools in the Oshana region of Namibia was out of control, as some Grade 11 learners stopped going to school due to the fact that Grade 12 learners beat and forced them to hand over their money. Furthermore, Hochobeb (2008) states that many learners in Namibia wake up being afraid to go to school or institutions of higher learning because of bullying. Nekomba (2015) revealed bullying statistics in Namibia as provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture where 67.5% of pupils interviewed in 51 schools indicated that they did not sleep well because of bullying while 44.6% were bullied on the school grounds. According to the findings in research conducted in the Oshana Education Region (Sam, 2011), there appeared to be many cases of bullying among Grade 8 and 11 learners. These learners had their rights violated at school where they were supposed to feel safe. Olweus (1997) states that it is the fundamental democratic right of a child to feel safe in school and be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied by bullying. Bowland (2011), furthermore, states that bullying carries the potential of a significant impact on a learner's capacity to learn, his or her overall emotional, physical and psychosocial well-being, as well as the broader school climate; consequently, bullying should be eradicated by all means possible.

The above research findings indicate that bullying is common in Namibia, however, what remains unsolved are the ways of combating bullying in schools as there appears to be no existing programme specifically for Namibian schools. It also remains clear that there were still many unanswered questions about bullying itself (Sam, 2011). It seems that educators are not clear regarding where to place this issue and who should be responsible for dealing with it at school level. The question can be posed whether, with

all the cases of bullying reported in Namibia, bullying should be classified as a criminal act, as well as how bullying should be handled at school level. According to Box (as cited in Carrabine, 2009), not all harmful activities are seen as criminal, but the victimisation of the powerless may be understood as a criminal offence. For bullying to occur, there are always victims and offenders involved. The questions remain whether punishing the offenders will assist in dealing with their behaviour, as well as what strategies can be employed in order to fight bullying activities in schools. Based on the findings from a study conducted in Namibia (Sam, 2011), the majority of teachers punished the perpetrator without any other prevention or intervention strategies in place to rehabilitate the behaviour. Bullies were either expelled from school for days or given harsh punishment, and such interventions did not reduce bullying incidents. Repo and Sajaniemi (2013) state that replacing strict disciplinary methods with more sensitive ones had several positive impacts on the child group, including a decrease in bullying behaviour. More children encountered bullying in those groups where strict disciplinary consequences were employed. However, the most important action would be for children to assist in finding alternative ways of behaving in challenging moments.

Schools need to protect learners from bullying; however, the fact that teachers lack skills in handling cases of bullying at school poses a great danger to the safety of learners. According to Beaty and Alexeyer (2008), a school's failure to deal with bullying endangers the safety of all its learners and allows a hostile environment that interferes with learning. School interventions can reduce the incidence of bullying dramatically. This notion is supported by Olweus (1997) who indicates that after the implementation of anti-bullying programmes in 42 schools in Norway, there was a reduction of bullying incidents by 50%. This is a clear indication that children at schools need to be protected

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although bullying in schools is not a topic highly focused on and discussed in the education sector in Namibia, there is a need for educators to pay serious attention to this issue. A study conducted in Namibia (GSHS –World Health Organisation, 2014) indicates that 44.6% of pupils in secondary schools were bullied, with 66% being Grade 8 pupils. Of this 44.6%, 22.2% of pupils who had been bullied, considered suicide while 26% of bullied pupils attempted suicide. In a separate study conducted in Namibia by Sam (2011), the findings revealed that the majority of learners were victims, perpetrators or witnesses of bullying, and this implies that all learners were in one way or another affected by bullying. In the same study, teachers acknowledged the occurrence of bullying activities in their schools but admitted that they did not have strategies in place to combat bullying. Due to the fact that schools did not have designed programmes to support victims, perpetrators and witnesses of bullying in Namibian schools, the majority of the victims of bullying suffered in silence.

Bullying does not create a conducive environment for learning but it disrupts intended learning objectives and goals (Olweus, 2005, Olweus & Limber, 2010). That is why it was essential to conduct this study where the researcher focused on awareness, prevention and management of bullying in schools in Namibia. Hattenstone (2009) states that, “If the problem of bullying is ignored and neglected, bullying in schools is reinforced or at least condoned”. Due to the lack of prevention and management strategies for bullying activities in schools, teachers either ignore bullying or employ a punitive approach. Wong (2010) indicates that school managers tend to rely overly on

harsh punishment in an effort to deter learners from engaging in school violence. The use of heavy punitive measures, as opposed to conflict resolution strategies, may worsen the relationship between bullies and victims. Repo and Sajaniemi (2013) indicate that punishment jeopardises the work on preventing bullying. Less bullying occurs among children who receive intervention than in those groups of children where staff members were incapable of intervening. The plan for preventing and intervening in bullying can act as a consistent tool for preventing bullying. This is a clear indication that children at school need to be protected by anti-bullying policy guidelines and programmes which teachers and learners can utilise. Schools need to protect learners, but the fact that many teachers lack skills in handling cases of bullying at school poses a great danger to the safety of learners. This was the main reason why the researcher carried out a study which focused on developing anti-bullying policy guidelines and programmes in schools. According to Bowland (2011), anti-bullying programmes should be able to address those who are bullied, those who bully and those who are bystanders.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this study was to develop an intervention programme and anti-bullying guidelines for schools in Namibia which focused on creating awareness of bullying, prevention methods, resilience and the support needed by victims, perpetrators and bystanders of bullying. The programme was inclusive of all learners, namely victims, witnesses and perpetrators, who were involved either directly or indirectly in bullying at school.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To explore options for the development of anti-bullying guidelines for schools in Namibia.
- ii. To develop an anti-bullying programme for schools focusing on awareness, resilience, prevention and management strategies.
- iii. To pilot the programme in four secondary schools in the Oshana and Khomas education regions of Namibia.
- iv. To evaluate preliminarily the usefulness of the programme and guidelines for victims, perpetrators, bystanders and Life Skills teachers.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study produced a document with the purpose of combating bullying that can be employed in schools. The programme and guidelines, that had been developed, was provided to Life Skills teachers in order to create awareness and resilience, as well as the prevention and management of bullying activities in schools. The developed programme may, furthermore, be employed in future to prepare learners, teachers and parents to identify bullying and respond at school level. The programme may equip teachers, learners and parents with knowledge and understanding of bullying. The main idea is to enable learners, who identify acts of bullying, to know what to do next and be able to act. With the knowledge gained, teachers may be able to give learners support because they have sufficient information of how to handle bullying at school.

Bullying needs to be fought, either by preventing it before it happens or by acting appropriately when it happens. Mechanisms should thus be in place regarding the way in which to deal with it. The programme designed in this study might just become one of the useful tools to combat bullying.

As indicated earlier, the majority of learners and teachers had no idea of what to do in cases of bullying. At some schools, bullying was accepted and regarded to be part of the system that each learner needed to go through. Learners were often advised to work out bullying issues on their own, but without support in the ways to do it. Bullying is often tacitly accepted by adults and many even say that bullying helps build character (“Raising awareness”, 2012). This is the kind of message this programme is avoiding to send to schools; it rather indicates to the authority that bullying is wrong and should be avoided.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although the study mainly went as planned, there were some limitations; therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The limitations experienced in the research are as follows:

- The limited literature on bullying in Namibian was a barrier in obtaining local information about bullying.
- Learners found the questionnaire too long and time consuming.
- The programme did not cater for the views of learners at different Grades and can thus only be generalised to the population as specified.

- At one school in Oshana, the Life Skills teacher, who was part of the initial developmental stage of the programme left in the third month of the implementation of the programme and another teacher, who was not trained in implementing the programme, had to take over. This may have impacted the implementation of the programme. Despite this setback, the implementation of the programme went ahead as planned with the support of the researcher, and the post-test was conducted.
- Although the programme was covered in the given lessons for one school semester, the allotted time was inadequate because of the number of Life Skills periods per week, and it did not give time to repeat the lesson when it was not clear to the learners. This might have had an impact on the programme evaluation as some teachers might have skipped some lessons.
- “Due to social desirability, there is the possibility that some children, specifically those who bully others, did not respond honestly to all questions” (Solberg & Olweus, 2003).
- There were some learners who did not continue with the post-test phase due to the fact that they had changed schools or classes. According to Maree (2012), attrition is known in research as mortality where participants drop out of the study in the investigation, and this is caused by either withdrawal or life events. However, only those who did participate in both pre- and post-tests were included in the final analyses, but the sample size was smaller than initially intended.
- Due to the duration of the implementation of the programme, learners might have been exposed to external factors other than the programme itself, and this could also have had an impact on the findings.

- The date set for the post-test did not leave enough time for the implementation as a 4 month period was viewed to be too short by teachers in the evaluation period. They also needed more time to reflect after the implementation before the post-test. However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2012) state that the timing for post-testing should be as close as possible to the end of the intervention, as this will reduce the possibility of the influence of confounding effects.

Despite the limitations indicated above, the researcher ensured that learners and teachers rights were put into consideration. Both parties were informed well in advance about the researcher's intention, and were given time to ask where it was not clear. There was no violation of human rights, and the information shared were kept highly confidential. The ethical considerations are further discussed into depth in chapter three.

In the next four chapters, the researcher discussed each chapter separately. In chapter two, the researcher focused on the literature review by looking at existing programmes that are already dealing with bullying in different countries as well the suitable theoretical framework relevant to the study. The literature also included studies already conducted in Namibia and reflect on the prevalence of bullying in Namibian schools. In chapter 3, the researcher looked at the research designs in which the mixed method design was selected. Data was obtained from twenty-six initial participants who were classified as key informants, and it through the data collected from them, the programme was developed. The implementation of the programme was carried out. It is worth taking note that there were pre- and post-tests done in the form

of a questionnaire given to eight-one learners in grade 9. Chapter four and five looked at the presentation of the findings as well the discussion and recommendations given.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher focused on bullying researches conducted in different parts of the world, theoretical framework and how best they could contribute to the study. This was done consciously with references to research objectives in mind. The question of how to deal with bullying in schools should be on the lips of every educator concerned with the safety of learners and their academic performance at school. Ample evidence from different bullying related research studies indicate that bullying contributes negatively to academic performance, discipline in schools and self-esteem. For example, Linares and Morin (2006) reveal that about 40% of school dropouts in Latin American countries are related to bullying, while 30% of poor academic performance is the result of bullying activities. It is also reported that children who are severely bullied in silence, with no support, are capable of committing suicide. Due to the lack of information of how to handle bullying in schools, not all schools treat cases of bullying seriously. According to Wong (2010), some people look at bullying as normal conflicts between peers. Bullying is commonly perceived to be a ritual that everyone has to go through. Some teachers think that, since they had been able to face bullying themselves, their learners should be able too. In some cases, children are told to ignore the bully and they will then see that the bullying will stop. A case study on school bullying by Robinson and Maines (2008) indicates that a boy, they named Andrew, tried to ignore the name calling but it did not go away; it simply became persistent. Andrew

was advised to ignore bullying but still nothing changed despite his silence. Victims receive advice from teachers and parents, but in most cases, that advice only worsens the bullying. According to Killian and Hough (2014), most children internalise the problems caused by bullying. By turning their distress inwards, they become anxious, worried, depressed or even physically sick, while others become angry and revert to bullying themselves. Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) confirm that the most effective means by which teachers can manage the problem of bullying is by developing increased knowledge and awareness of the problem, by ensuring that there are minimal opportunities for acts of bullying to materialise, and by offering learners support, training and education aimed at attacking the root causes of bullying. Sanders and Phye (2004) agree that there is less victimisation in schools where school-counsellors proactively intervene in bullying incidents. Although the causes and effects of bullying are well documented in developed countries because of various research studies carried out, there is still a lack of information regarding prevention and management programmes in Namibian schools.

Because of the paucity of knowledge in the area, this study was specifically focused on the development of anti-bullying policy guidelines and programmes. It is important for schools to have a programme to rely on, and to make the school a better place for everyone. Schools should have an inviting environment where learners can flourish, learn and feel safe (Sanders, 2004 as cited in Shanders & Phye, 2004). This idea is supported by Hinduja and Patchin (2012) who indicate that learners did better in classes, Grades and schools where they felt safe, secure, noticed, supported, cared for, encouraged, caught up in the school spirit and being part of something bigger than

themselves – a community to which they belonged and with which they identified. Schools must be places of safety. Victims can be offered protection, support and security. Safety is necessary to help reduce children's exposure to bullying (Bullock, 2002 as cited in Ma, 2004). According to Olweus et al., (2007), when bullying is perpetrated at school, the entire school climate is affected. The environment can be one of fear and disrespect, hampering the ability of learners to learn. Learners may feel insecure and they tend not to like school very much. When learners do not see the adults at school acting to prevent or intervene in bullying, they may feel that teachers and other school staff members have little control over learners and do not care what happens to them.

The fact that there is a need for a programme does not mean that the implementation of such a programme in the fight against bullying will always yield the expected results. Research conducted in Finland by Repo and Sajaniemi (2013) indicates that the existence of an action plan for intervening in and preventing bullying did not decrease the amount of bullying. However, Olweus (2007) argues that anti-bullying programmes will always have positive results if they are effectively and carefully implemented.

For the purpose of this research, the following terms were used and their meaning were given in the context of this research.

- Bullying is anti-social behaviour, often involving groups or individuals, occurring repeatedly over time (Robinson and Maines ,2008)
- 'Victim' refers to a person who, individually or collectively, has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic

loss or substantial impairment of her or his fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws (Newburn, 2013).

- A bully as an individual who finds happiness and joy in the hurtful moments of others (Rose and Monda-Amaya, 2011).
- Cyber bullying is, furthermore, defined as the use of information and communication technology, such as email, cell phones, pagers, text messages, defamatory personal Websites and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group that is intended to harm others (Belsey, as cited in Shariff, 2009).
- Child's resilience can be defined as the child's capacity to cope successfully with everyday challenges, including life transitions, times of cumulative stress and the significant adversity of risk (Furrer 2006).
- Assertiveness is the ability to stand up for and express what you believe in while, at the same time, showing respect for the opinions and beliefs of others (Jordan, 2014).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study was guided by both the ecosystemic theory of Bronfenbrenner and the social learning theory of Bandura. The ecological theory emphasises a whole-school approach in dealing with bullying. According to Hardman (2015) ecosystem is a subpart of ecology. Ecology includes the study of relationship living organisms and their environment, while ecosystem is a community of interacting

organism and their physical environment. Based on the differences indicated, this study used ecosystem model. This theory focuses on how individuals develop in their different levels and groupings of social context as a system. The functioning of one system depends on the interaction with another, where all elements must function. The present study focused on the micro-system level that included the child's interaction with peers, teachers, life at school and attitudes, among others. The focus was mainly on the learners and the immediate factors that had an influence on the child and how the child should be supported within this system (school system). Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011) indicate that, in an ecological system set up, relationships among causes are reciprocal and multifaceted, which makes the person's development a product of interaction networks that involve cultural, social, economic and political factors. Donald, Lazarus and Moolla (2017) argue that the relationship between organisms and their environment is seen holistically, and when there is a major disturbance in one part of the system, the balance of the whole system may be threatened. According to Sujeo (2012), African ecological system believes that the child is a product of the society. Everyone has to discipline the child, and the system is against democracy and other laws brought forward, which can formulate a complete set of ecological model. However, African parents believe what the teachers and pastors teach their children. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005), the ecosystem theory is useful understanding classrooms, schools and families by viewing them as systems themselves that interact with the broader social context. Understanding the origins and maintenance of, as well as the solutions to, barriers to learning cannot be separated from the broader social context or the system within. With regards to bullying, the system includes individuals who can be perpetrators, victims or witnesses of bullying, as well as their parents and

teachers. The Ecological Model states that the environment in which the child grows up is very important because it contributes to the way the child behaves at school, and the behaviour of the child has to do with his or her ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Sutton (2001) as cited in Shanders and Phye (2004) believes that bullying is strongly regulated by social cognition and environmental factors. Burdick-will (2018), supported by Gershoff and Aber (2006), state that exposure to local neighbourhood violence is associated with classroom behaviour and bullying.

Only when you understand learners' background, would you be able to support them positively. The environment is crucial as it influences the child's behaviour, and it needs to be understood in the fight against bullying. The implication of the social-ecological theory for the conceptualisation of bullying and victimisation suggests that bullying perpetration and victimisation are reciprocally influenced by individuals, families, schools, peers (friendship), the community and the society. Evidence shows that a learner's school life is the period of time when the risk of being bullied is higher than at other times (Swearer et al., as cited in Lester, Cross, Dooley, & Shaw, 2013).

According to Lee (2011) the ecological model views the school as a set of nested structures where individual traits, interpersonal and contextual factors on bullying can be observed. In this model, children are viewed as the centre of their world, and they interact with their own ecological environments. This indicates that their behaviour is influenced by not only their own traits, such as age, dominance, impulsivity, aggression and fun-seeking tendencies, but also by the ecological contexts with which they are interacting. The school environment is one of the most important social environments that influence children's behaviour, and it is for this reason that this model is the best

model in combating bullying in schools as it will work with the child and its immediate environmental factors. It is the school's duty to intervene in cases of bullying because such manners are mostly learnt at school and should be stopped at school immediately when picked up.

A study conducted in the United States (Lee, 2011) and based on the ecological systems theory identified significant factors influencing bullying behaviour at different levels of middle and high school. It was stated that factors, such as teachers' attitude towards bullying, the school climate (academic standard, cooperative climate, policies and regulations about bullying), individual traits, family experiences, parental involvement and community characteristics need to be understood when implementing anti-bullying programmes in schools, as they are found to have a significant influence on bullying behaviour, either directly or indirectly.

Repo and Sajaniemi (2013) emphasise that bullying phenomena must be approached on multiple levels: the school, the peer and the individual levels. The whole-school level encompasses all the participants and their environment, the peer level includes the reactions of the peer group, which either contribute to the bullying or help to resolve it, while the individual level can include pro-social behaviour, such as the ability to create and maintain friendships, empathy and moral skills.

The second theory which worked hand in hand with the Ecological Systems Model in order to find strategies for the bullying prevention and management programme is the social learning theory of Bandura. The social learning theory is also referred to as the observational/model or imitation learning. According to Mwamwenda (2004), this

theory is called the social learning theory because it is based on what a child learns in his or her environment as he or she interacts and observes others. Social learning guides a person's behaviour so that it is in accordance with societal norms, values and beliefs. This socialisation, observation and imitation enable the person to adjust successfully to society. The social learning theory may thus also help us to understand how learners' socialisation and observation contribute to bullying behaviour, as well as assist the prevention and management of bullying activities. Bey and Turner (1996) state that aggression and other antisocial behaviour are learned responses to conditions and circumstances in one's socialising environments: home, community and school. Sanders and Phye (2004) state that the social learning theory explains the victim-bully cycle where victims of bullying become bullies. They learn to treat others in the same way they have been treated. Some learners will physically bully those who are weaker than themselves while sexually abused victims will sexually bully others (Ma, 2004). This kind of bullying cycle in school may reflect the ineffectiveness and/or the absence of bullying prevention or intervention programmes (Sanders & Phye, 2004). Walker, Ramsey and Gresham (2004) indicate that this socially destructive pattern of behaviour is usually learned, developing out of long-term exposure to unfortunate social contexts in which violence and coercion are modelled as effective ways of relating to others and achieving social goals. This theory assists in developing anti-bullying activities that learners will engage in with the aim of preventing learners from bullying one another and model good behaviour.

Learners at school need role models, people to whom they can look up. Learners learn from adults' actions as they watch how adults are treating one another with kindness and respect. This demonstrates that there is no place for treating others with disrespect.

Teachers should also be good examples because learners copy their anti-social behaviour. To address bullying behaviour at school, the learners' behaviour must be influenced to respond to bullying situations. The social learning theory was crucial in the development and implementation of the present programme as it assisted in identifying suitable strategies regarding behaviour modification and behaviour modelling.

2.3 PREVALENCE OF BULLYING

A recent study on bullying conducted by Sam (2011) found that there were many incidents of bullying in Namibian schools. It can be assumed that bullying is occurring in all schools because in all the schools where the study was carried out, bullying was prevalent. It was reported by UNICEF (2016) that bullying is the main cause of school dropouts in Namibia. A study conducted in Namibia indicates that 44.6% of pupils in secondary schools were bullied, with 66% being Grade 8 pupils. Of the 44.6% of pupils who had been bullied, 22.2% considered suicide while 26% of them attempted suicide. This is an indication that bullying in Namibian schools is high. In the USA, learners were reported being killed at schools due to bullying. In neighbouring South Africa, there was a reported case of a 22 year old girl who was killed in initiation at school while a 14 year old boy was killed because he refused to give his lunch box to a bully (Ngwenya, 2013).

Shanders and Phye (2004) similarly reported on the Columbine shooting which left 15 people dead; this included the killers who were believed to be victims of bullying themselves. Educators should not wait to hear about the deaths of learners at school for them to act; they need to have an active programme in place to help learners in need.

Despite the common belief that school shooting is influenced by bullying, Langman (2009) states that school shooters are more enraged by teachers who have failed them, administrators who have disciplined them and girls who have rejected them. Not all school shootings are influenced by bullying; hence, there is a need to understand bullying in detail in order for educators to avoid misconceptions of, and myths about, bullying.

2.4 DEFINING BULLYING

Robinson and Maines (2008) define bullying as anti-social behaviour, often involving groups or individuals, occurring repeatedly over time. This behaviour is characterised by an imbalance of power, and it only meets the needs of those holding power by causing harm to those who are powerless and not in a position to stop it. Furthermore, Olweus (2007) indicates that a person is bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions. The person exposed to such actions has difficulty defending him-/herself. Olweus summarises the three main components of bullying in definitions as follows: firstly, it is an aggressive behaviour that involves unwanted negative actions; secondly, bullying typically involves a pattern of behaviour repeated over time; thirdly, it involves an imbalance of power. It is not bullying if there is a conflict between learners who are of equal power, whether that be the same physical strength or social status.

One important point to take note of is that bullying is not an act of violence. Violence is more of a once off event, unlike bullying which is a pattern of behaviour. It does not only occur once but continues over a period of time.

There has been mixed feelings about the difference between bullying and teasing. In the educational context, bullying should also be distinguished from teasing so that proper intervention can be administered. According to Olweus (2007), learners involved in bullying are usually not friends while those teasing one another are connected and know one another as friends. They usually make jokes about one another without hurting one another. In the bullying scenario, the power is unequal where the bully is aggressive and superior, intending to inflict pain; however, in the case of teasing, both learners have equal power and neither is intending to cause pain. At times, people find it difficult to differentiate between bullying and the innocent teasing that learners may be involved in at school as it is not always easy to make a distinction between the two. According to Olweus (2007), teasing usually involves two or more friends who act together in a way that seems fun to all the people involved.

2.5 WHO ARE THE LEARNERS INVOLVED IN BULLYING?

It is very important when helping learners involved in bullying, to know their status in the bullying situation. Learners have different roles to play in any cases of bullying. Such roles are not consistent as they can change from time to time. Bullying occurs as a cycle, and people in the cycle have different roles (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the focus will fall on the three groups, namely: victims, learners who are being bullied, perpetrators learners who bully others and witnesses, learners who witness bullying. Each person's role in the cycle of bullying

needs to be understood in order to apply relevant measures when trying to intervene or prevent bullying. Although roles do change at times, it is important for teachers to understand the cycle of bullying in order to break it and give support to learners who are in need.

2.5.1 Victims of bullying

It is important for educators to be able to identify victims of bullying in order to give proper support. According to Newburn (2013), the term 'victim' refers to a person who, individually or collectively, has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of her or his fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws. Victims are classified as learners who are receiving the maltreatment and who are being bullied by others for various reasons. Vassonyi, Jiskrova, Osdemir and Bell (2017) differentiate two types of bullying victims, namely passive victims, children who are ineffectual in the face of attack. They are mostly fearful, cautious and weaker than their peers while provocative victims intentionally provoke the antagonism of others, tease and taunt but they are quick to complain if others retaliate. It is important to know the types of victims in order to work as a teacher because victims have different needs that need attention and they require a different kind of intervention. Furthermore, Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011) describe two types of victims, where the passive victim is the one victimised without retaliation while the bully-victim is the one who adopts bullying in order to combat victimisation. This is a victim who will bully as a way of retaliation.

According to Olweus (2007), victims can be identified according to the type of bullying perpetrated against them. For instance, if the bullying is physical, victims can have torn,

damaged clothes with unexplained cuts, bruises and scratches. Those bullied emotionally appear to be moody, withdrawn, teary, depressed and anxious. The different reasons that make learners victims of bullying are discussed in detail in the next section.

2.5.2 Perpetrators of bullying

Perpetrators of bullying are those learners who are bullying others. A perpetrator of bullying can be referred to as a bully as well. Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011) define a bully as an individual who finds happiness and joy in the hurtful moments of others. This is an individual who exerts emotional or physical power over the victim. The perpetrators of bullying are classified in three categories: the aggressive bully who instigates the incident, the passive bully who is just a follower of an aggressive bully, and the anxious bully who is also a bully-victim.

The different roles which perpetrators take in acts of bullying are as follows:

- **A learner who bullies (pure perpetrator)** has a leading bullying role.
- **Supporters (passive perpetrators)** actively, openly support but they do not join in.
- **Supporters (active perpetrators)** are active and openly support bullying. They will provide support and encourage bullying to continue. They reinforce perpetrators.
- **Possible perpetrators** like bullying but do not show signs of support.

It is worth taking note that some perpetrators of bullying are at the same time victims due to different circumstances that force them to become bullies. Some perpetrators of bullying are only forced when an opportunity is availed to them, while some are forced to bully because they themselves have been bullied. Perpetrators seek revenge. “I

became a troublemaker and a bully because I was full of rage. I wanted to make their lives a living hell. I wanted them to feel the pain I felt when they were laughing at me” (Makgalemele, 2015). Sharrif (2009) states that perpetrators gain power and perceive their victims as objects who are weak, ugly or dangerous, hence deserving the punishment.

According to Shariff (2009), perpetrators of bullying are generally driven by the need for power and recognition to make up for a lack of confidence and self-assurance as they crave acceptance. They bully to fill an emotional void resulting from a lack of confidence or self-worth. In contrast, Robinson and Maines (2008) state that bullies are ordinarily dominant and often popular people who behave in a way that is intended to cause harm in order to enhance their high status. Although some bullies may want to give up their acts of bullying, they are scared of what will happen to them. The thought of losing well-documented, dominance status at school might just force them to continue bullying when, even deep down, they are crying for change (Richard, Schneider & Mallet, 2012).

According to Olweus (2007), bullies mostly get into frequent fights, as well as steal and vandalise property. In some cases, bullies also report poor grades at school. Perpetrators of bullying should not be labelled as hard core criminals, but seen as learners who find themselves in unfortunate situations and are willing to change, provided that support is given to them. Perpetrators of bullying require support to change their behaviour and address any other challenges that may be influencing their behaviour.

At school level, not only learners bully fellow learners, but teachers can be culprits as well. According to Rantsekeng (2019), many children fall victim to bullying, harassment and abuse at the hands of teachers. Bullying by teachers rarely comes under the

spotlight, and when it does happen, it is often swept under the carpet. Schools are more concerned with their reputation than the learners' welfare. Learners tend to be scared to report bullying by teachers because teachers are influential in their lives and are figures of power. "Being treated in a harsh, humiliating and belittling manner in front of peers can open a child up to emotional and physical bullying on the playground as well, and in this case, children may feel they have nowhere to turn for help" (Rantsekeng, 2019).

If schools have no programme in place of how to deal with perpetrators of bullying, perpetrators' actions are honoured and this encourages them to continue with their acts because they know that nothing will happen to them. Some schools deny that bullying occurs, and they would rather blame the victims of bullying for reporting the cases. Such situations help perpetrators to be free and do anything they want without incurring negative consequences for their actions.

2.5.3 Witnesses of bullying

Witnesses are those learners who are watching acts of bullying; they are neither victims nor perpetrators. Witnesses may take an active or passive role but do not initiate bullying. Witnesses fall in different categories as well. The US Department of Health and Human Services (2001) outlined the different types of witnesses as follows:

- **Possible defenders** dislike bullying and want to help but do nothing.
- **Defenders** dislike bullying, and help bullied learners. They will comfort victims, defend and provide them with support.

- **Disengaged onlookers** do not become involved and do not take a stand. They feel that it is none of their business. They will mostly remain separated from the bullying situation and provide no feedback.

Witnesses experience bullying through watching it happening. It has been argued within a social learning perspective that bullies are reinforced for their actions by the attention and encouragement they receive from onlookers, and peers are more likely to imitate bullies' behaviour because they see the rewards that bullies reap (O'Connell et al., as cited in Richard et al., 2012). Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011) indicate that witnesses are not directly involved in the act itself but can provide either the bully with reinforcement or the victim with support. The fact that bullying is perpetrated in front of other learners at times forces learners to become part of the bullying cycle without leaving them a choice. This makes witnesses important components in the fight against bullying. If a victim is being bullied, the next person will either be cheering for the bullying to continue or intervene or leave without supporting them. Witnesses are the people who will either reinforce or reduce acts of bullying through their reactions when bullying is occurring. The impact of witnesses cannot be negated, as Latane and Darley (2014) indicate, bullies are more likely to stop if the audience shows disapproval

Witnesses (also referred to as bystanders or onlookers) are important components in combating bullying at school level. "Many people suffer from bullying daily and there is always a bystander who chooses not to say a thing. The victim is hurt more not by the bully but by the bystander who cannot help" (NBPC, 2016). Hasler (as cited in Cowie, 2004) suggests that bystanders fail to take action for one of the following reasons: they do not know what to do, they are fearful of becoming the brunt of the bullies' attack and they may do the wrong thing causing even more problems. Even when some kids want

to help, they do not because they are confused or afraid of the bully or what others may think of them if they intervene. When kids do nothing, bullies tend to feel more empowered and will continue to harass other children physically or verbally.

It is very important that the entire school is well informed of what to do when witnessing bullying activities. Only when awareness is created will bystanders support victims and discourage perpetrators from bullying. Not only can bystanders help victims, they themselves are also affected. Shanders (2004) found that peers were present in 85% of bullying situations. These incidences impacted not only the bully and victim but also individuals who witnessed and individuals who heard about it. Since bullying at school does not only affect those who are bullied or bullying others, an anti-bullying programme, which is inclusive, will enable witnesses to gain knowledge of, and the needed skills against, bullying, as well as the way they should approach bullying incidents.

2.6 TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying comes in different forms, of which some are overt while others are covert. Here, the researcher will define the most common types of bullying activities in schools. Olweus (2007) indicates that bullying can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying is a face-to-face confrontation which comes with open attacks, while indirect acts of bullying are more concealed and subtle; therefore, learners may not even know who is responsible for spreading rumours or sending text message or emails. Langman (2014) classifies bullying into two categories of behaviour where one is behaviour that attacks someone's dignity (teasing, taunting, insulting, mocking, and the like), and the other is behaviour

that attacks someone's sense of safety (threats, intimidation, physical assaults, sexual assaults).

2.6.1 Physical bullying

Physical bullying is described as organised acts of aggression, such as hitting directly particular victims and it is more common among boys. Physical bullying involves beating, kicking, punching, scratching or any other form of attack (Hardman, 2015, Lund, 1996). Physical bullying will leave the victim physically hurt. It is more visible than other types of bullying. Perpetrators enjoy causing physical harm to other learners. According to Sam (2011), physical bullying appears to be more common in schools with low academic performing.

2.6.2 Emotional bullying

Hardman (2015) refers to emotional bullying as relational aggression intended to harm someone by damaging their friendships or reputation or deliberately excluding them from the group. Emotional bullying is the consistent use of verbal abuse or withholding warmth and affection (McEachern, Aluede & Kenny, 2008). According to Olweus (2007), emotional bullying leaves no tangible signs. It makes learners insecure, scared and angry as they feel powerless. Olweus (2007) continues that some types of emotional bullying can be when bullies roll their eyes and snicker whenever another learner is trying to speak in class, barring a learner from their lunch table or doing something like drawing her on her locker and writing "ugliest girl". You find situations where nasty messages are written in bathrooms or someone puts taunting notes in the backpack without the owner noticing it.

Emotional bullying can be the worst type of bullying as it is always covered up. The perpetrators will literally and figuratively make the victim's life a misery. These are the kinds of people who dig their victims into a deep depression that could, and sometimes do, lead to suicide. These perpetrators will torment their victims by being mean and nasty to them at every opportunity. "They literally get an orgasm when somebody is squirming and feeling uncomfortable. These are people who make themselves feel better by making someone else feel worthless" (The Namibian, 2014, p.12).

A Namibian radio personality revealed how she was physically and emotionally bullied in her high school years. She said, "I received insults of being too fat, having a very dark skin colour and not having a mother. I hated myself. I instead wanted to be another person; someone that school children will love" (Mouton, 2015).

2.6.3 Sexual bullying

Sexual bullying is when a person is singled out because of his or her gender or endures unwelcome sexual behaviour, such as inappropriate touching and unwanted sexual suggestions (McCaffrey, 2004). Some learners are bullied based on their sexual orientation. According to UNICEF (2015), young people across the world are widely affected by homophobic bullying. This issue infringes upon their right to quality education which leads to poor school performance and higher dropout rates. A study conducted in the USA in 2001 (Riese, 2007) indicates that about 93% of teenagers hear derogatory words about their sexual orientation at least once in a while, with more than half of teens hearing such words every day at school and in their community. Negative name-calling about sexual orientation is harmful because those derogatory comments are

often employed to inflict harm in a school and, most importantly, bullied learners have low self-esteem, tend to abuse substances and their thoughts of suicide are three times higher than those of their heterosexual counterparts. In agreement, Riese (2007) indicates that gay learners are more likely to be bullied than heterosexual learners, and this leads to relationship problems.

2.6.4 Cyber bullying

Another common form of bullying that recently took a strong spot in cases of bullying reported in schools, is cyber bullying. Although increased online activities bring benefits to learners, it also places them at risk of online bullying if their activities are not monitored. Barlett et al., (2014) describes cyber bullying as when individuals send unkind text messages and emails, post secrets about others for public viewing and even upload embarrassing photos/videos of others, all with the intent to harm them. Cyber bullying is, furthermore, defined as the use of electronic and online communication technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or socially exclude a targeted person or group of people intentionally (Williams & Guerra, as cited in Ang, Li and Seah, 2017). According to Hinduja and Patchin (2012), over 11 million youth in the USA go online every single day. While some learners use the internet and other means of technology for educational purposes, others use it to bully their peers. Cyber bullying is, furthermore, defined as the use of information and communication technology, such as email, cell phones, pagers, text messages, defamatory personal Websites and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or a group that is intended to harm others (Belsey, as cited in Shariff, 2009). The internet and mobile phones have provided new opportunities for bullying through

emails, online chat lines, text messages and the transmission of images. The unique aspects of cyber-bullying are that it allows perpetrators to remain anonymous; it allows for quick distribution and replication of messages; it can turn masses of children into bystanders as perpetrators who can hide behind their anonymity (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012). According to Wright (2017), the cyber bullying context offers flexibility to cyber bullies, allowing them to harm their potential victims without the constraints and many of the repercussions associated with traditional face-to-face bullying. It is also easy for the bully to involve multiple bystanders in the bullying situation. In short, cyber bullying is bullying by means of electronic media, email, texting, social networks, blogs, websites, digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone or other electronic system (Olweus, 2005; Romera, Herrera-Lopez, Casas, Ortega-Ruiz & Gomes-Ortiz, 2017).

Drum (2015) argues that cyber bullying can be stressful as it harasses the victim via a cell phone, website or, at times, exclude someone from social networks. It is extremely devastating because it creates feelings of loneliness, isolation, sadness, worthlessness and being unloved due to the fact that sometimes it is only the receiver and the bullies who know about the bullying (p.23).

In the current generation, the internet is accessible to many learners, and many of them are social media addicts. Learners are posting pictures which can also lead largely to body shaming on online facilities, such as Facebook and Instagram. A study conducted in the United States and Japan found significant positive correlations between the frequency of cyber bullying, positive attitudes towards cyber bullying, and positive attitudes towards anonymity. Cyber bullying and cyber-victimisation remain relatively stable over time; and positive attitudes towards the reinforcement of cyber bullying and cyberbullying mediate the stability in the frequency of cyber bullying (Barlett, et al.,

2014, Vassonyi, Jiskrova, Osdemir& Bell, 2017). Cyber bullying is likely to become a world-wide problem due to the availability of technology, but cases differ from country to country due to cultural influences.

Magadla (2018) reports that a 16 year old woman who recounted a cyber bullying nightmare where her pictures were posted on Facebook and people wrote nasty things due to the size of her body. “The incident of bullying left me feeling rejected, broken and insecure for most of my adult life. I vividly remember someone saying my boobs looked as if they had been sucked on by pigs. I lost all my friends, self-confidence and self-esteem,” says the victim of cyber bullying.

Social media allows us to know people we have never met physically. We can as well bully them on social network platforms without any direct physical contact. Pictures of people are displayed and circulated on social networks. Captions like “who gave birth to this monkey” are shared on groups. Once shared in one WhatsApp group, it will end up with different people. Due to the lack of confidentiality, some people share even their bedroom affairs on social media and they become victims of bullying.

2.7 CAUSES OF BULLYING

By employing the ecological model as a guide for this study, the researcher was in a position to understand how each system could contribute to bullying. Schools will only be in a better position to deal with bullying if they know its root causes and how each system contributes to bullying at school. Knowing the causes of bullying will assist in designing programmes which respond to the needs of specific schools. The causes of bullying at school X might be different from school Y but, knowing the causes, in

general, increases the possibility to fight bullying effectively. Based on literature, bullying in schools is caused by various factors, such as learner, teacher and school, parent and environmental, as well as curriculum-related factors.

Learners are influenced by different factors which vary from school to school. In a study conducted by Sam (2011) it was reported that some learners were bullied because of their physical appearance, sexual differences, learning disabilities and peer pressure. Children with special needs, such as physical disabilities, are likely to be bullied because they are viewed to be different. In an interview with PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center [NBPC] (2016), Susan (age 65) indicated that she was bullied in high school for being the tallest girl in a school of 3000 plus learners and her height was regarded as a disability. It affected her life forever as there was no one to show her compassion. Teachers did nothing to let other learners understand inclusion and acceptance of the differences of others. Children of different sexual orientation are also likely to be bullied because fellow learners and teachers believe that they have changed themselves. According to the Legal Assistance Centre (2015) in Namibia, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children face a high level of homophobia and transphobia at the hands of their teachers and fellow learners. This form of bullying leads to the drop out of sexually different people in schools before the end of their educational careers and, at times, led to suicide (Russell (2001).

According to Fuller (2006), in Africa, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS may suffer stigma in schools while they are also shielding extra burdens of grief, poverty and the care of siblings. Findings by the Ministry of Education (2008) indicate that there were 142 777 registered orphans in Namibia and these results excluded many orphans in rural

areas who were not registered due to the lack of documents needed for registration. According to UNICEF (2012), their exclusion is often reinforced by discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, race or disability.

Carter and Spencer (as cited in Hartley, Bauman, Nixon & Davis; 2015) state that children who receive special education are twice as likely to be bullied as their peers. These are learners who might be slow in catching up with the lesson or have some special learning needs. According to Sam (2011), children who are slow were bullied by both teachers and learners, especially in high academic performing schools. They had their names displayed on noticeboards, and this bullying continued after school.

Peer pressure cannot be disregarded when it comes to bullying as some children bully just to be part of the group. They do not necessary bully because they want to, but they do it in order not to be left out. Although individual tendency has a direct and strong influence on bullying behaviour, it also influences peer interactions. Children who are abused by their peers feel helpless and, due to the frustration of bullying, they turn their anger into bullying other learners, leading to a cycle of bullying. They seek power in what they see others are doing. According to Olweus (2007), learners bully others because they have strong needs for power and negative dominance. Such learners find satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to others. Their behaviour is often rewarded with material gains, such as receiving money from their victims or psychological rewards like blackmailing their victims. Furthermore, Lee (2011) indicates that children view bullying as a way to obtain higher social status, and they bully the less powerful individuals to maintain dominance. It satisfies their need for power.

At school level, there are many factors that lead or contribute to bullying. Factors are ranging from teachers to the school setup. Life Skills teachers are not qualified to handle bullying at school. There is a mix-match of their skills as some were not trained as Life Skills teachers even though they teach it at school. In the end, it affects the delivery. Lee (2011) states that teachers' lack of moral support due to a lack of skills has been associated with an increase of bullying in the classroom. Teachers who lack skills in handling behavioural issues in their classrooms, create a platform for bullying to flourish. Learners tend to bully more in schools where bullying is not addressed and where learners' safety is not given the highest consideration. According to Burdick-Will (2013), maintaining a safe and supportive environment is essential for learners to trust one another and their teachers. When learners feel safe, they are more likely to concentrate on their studies than on their personal safety and security. Large classrooms also contribute heavily to bullying as teachers are unable to attend to all learners' needs. The concentration of learners on the subject matter is limited.

Parental factors were also pointed out as a contributing factor to bullying in schools. Parents play a role in the lives of their children and this affects their behaviour at school. Ma (2002) indicates that, in schools where parental involvement was strong, learners with weak affective conditions were less likely to be victimised. Parental involvement is, therefore, an indispensable part of any school's effort to combat bullying. Bullying can be discussed in parents' meetings if parents are involved. When parents are involved in the fight against bullying, it sends the message to children that no one is supporting such actions, and to the victims it says that there is someone to support them. Olweus (2007)

indicates that a strong partnership with parents will help if one needs to call them about their own child's involvement in bullying.

Some learners engage in bullying because they have been exposed to violence at home and receive insufficient love and warmth from their parents (Hardman, 2015). We are living in a world where some parents are not playing an active role in their children's education, as well as their lives in general. Parents are busy with work or studies and children are left to be raised by their peers or television. The lack of parental involvement can have a negative influence on the mental status of their children at school. In Namibia, too many parents have no idea of what is happening at school. At times, they are called to meet their children's teachers and discuss issues affecting their children but they just do not bother to turn up at all (Sam, 2011).

The school environment where we operate can influence our behaviour. According to Lester et al., (2013), the quality of the social relationship within the school is crucial. Learners who feel more connected to the school are more considerate and accepting of others, and they are less likely to report peer harassment. There are many schools where learners may not feel part of the community and this leads to frustration. Richard et al., (2012) indicate that a school, characterised by a positive atmosphere with cohesive interpersonal relationships at all levels, where the teaching staff believe in the learners' potential, academics are taken seriously and learners feel a sense of belonging is less prone to bullying. However, if all these factors are missing, bullying is likely to be high.

The school curriculum can influence bullying if it is not tailored towards the needs of the learners. "The curriculum should promote the values of social equality, tolerance toward

diversity and non-violent means of resolving conflicts” (Furrer, 2006). After going through the Life Skills syllabus for Namibian schools (2007), the researcher found that the topic, bullying, was only taught in Grade 10 although Life Skills starts in Grade 5. This implies that, for all the years prior to Grade 10, learners are not made aware of bullying and how it can be handled. The lack of Life Skills teaching, specifically in addressing bullying, can create a lack of knowledge among learners, hence, leading to more bullying activities. The school should be able to address bullying in their curriculum.

2.8 TIMES AND PLACES OF BULLYING

The times and places where bullying is perpetrated should always be considered when implementing anti-bullying programmes. This does not mean that programmes should only be conducted at specific times of the year, but the emphasis should be stronger in the period when bullying is found to be peaking. Ferguson, Miquel, Kilburn, Sanchez and Sanchez (2007) indicate that timing the implementation of the programme is very important because sometimes these programmes are being implemented in a time in which school bullying has already decreased significantly, and children’s violent behaviour has already hit a floor effect. Needs assessment should always be conducted to identify the time and areas that need intervention.

2.9 EFFECTS OF BULLYING

This part of the research discusses the effects of bullying on victims, perpetrators and witnesses. The ecological model assisted the researcher in obtaining a clear picture of

how systems affect one another when bullying is occurring at school, as well as the impact on each system. Although Lester et al., (2013) indicate that schools have become increasingly aware of the prevalence of bullying, as well as the seriousness and negative impacts of bullying, this may not be the case in some schools in Namibia as it seems bullying is not yet being taken seriously. Bullying affects everyone in the bullying cycle. The effects of bullying on victims fall into two categories. The physical effects include headache, stomach ache, backache and dizziness, and the psychological effects include bad temper, nervousness, loneliness and helplessness. The more victims are bullied, the more symptoms of ill-health they have. Research studies report a high prevalence of bullying, both nationally and internationally and resultant increases in somatic complaints, depression, anxiety and refusal to attend school in learners who are bullied (Bowland, 2011; Furrer, 2006). The research indicates that children, who had been bullied by their peers, were five times more likely to suffer from anxiety as teenagers than those who had been maltreated by adults at home. One in three children worldwide reports being bullied, and it is clear that bullied children have worse mental health problems later in life (Wolke, 2015). Shariff (2009) indicates that bullied learners are reduced to thinking that they are useless; consequently, perpetrators gain power by defining their victims as objects who are weak, ugly and who deserve to be punished. One of the victims interviewed by Drum magazine (2018) indicated that bullying made her feel useless and lonely, and some people who bullied her on Facebook did not even know her, but still felt the need to hurt.

According to Olweus, et al., (2007), there are many learners who come to school every day terrified that they will be bullied yet again. Learners who are bullied may become

depressed and develop low self-esteem. Some bullied learners may have suicidal thoughts and may even end their own lives. According to Bezuidenhout (2013), researchers report that adolescents who experienced victimisation at home and at school are likely to report that they had episodes of suicide ideation and thoughts of self-harm. Self-blame increases their depression and suicidal ideation. This is linked to stress-related symptoms, such as headache, depression and school phobia, which victims experience due to bullying. Due to mixed feelings and confusion, victims might end up covering up bullying or blaming themselves. A victim who has been suffering in silence might get depressed and suicidal (Ferguson, et al., 2007, Kopels & Pacey, 2012, Porter, 2006).

Another effect of bullying on victims is that they fail to concentrate in lessons. According to Lee (2011), victims do not concentrate at school, which leads to poor academic performance. Because victims have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, they end up receiving lower grades. According to Hartley, et al. (2015), unless the problem of bullying is addressed, the experience of victimisation may lead to social roles with potential lifelong consequences. Bullying can be extremely stressful, and it can place learners at risk of poor performance and failure. It is not only academic performance, but the victims can leave the school entirely due to the pressure. According to Magadla (2018), victims do drop out of school when they do not receive support from the school authority. "Eventually, when I could not bear the pain of being made fun of and with the teachers not doing anything to help, I decided to drop out of school, said a victim of bullying.

Bullying can change the victim into a nasty person exhibiting his or her natural way of behaving. In an interview conducted with one of the Namibian radio personalities, who was being bullied due to her dark skin colour, she admitted of washing herself with milk hoping that her skin would become lighter; she starved herself because she was bullied for being fat, and this bullying made her a bitter person. “It made me accept pain and keep it to myself. I also started to become a very nasty person, not caring about other people’s feelings; I just wanted to hurt others because of what happened to me” (Mouton, 2015).

As much as victims are affected, their care givers also feel the pain of bullying. According to the report on the case of a bullied learner at the Otjomuise Project School, the mother who removed her son from the school due to the bullying stated that she was very worried about the welfare of her child at that school. “What if something happen to my boy? I took him out of school because I felt that it was the right thing to do for my child. I was worried about the wellbeing of my boy. You have no idea of what will happen next,” said the mother of the victim (Namibian Sun, 2015). From this expression of the mother, it appears that bullying does not only affect victims, but it creates fear in parents.

Learners bullying others are not spared from the effects of bullying. Perpetrators involve themselves in anti-social behaviour, such as breaking rules, shoplifting, vandalising of property, drinking alcohol, carrying weapons and smoking, which lead to the general risk of continuing on an anti-social path in young adulthood. Significant correlations have been noted between an increase in serious, criminal activity in early adulthood and earlier reports of being a bully. The evidence shows that bullies grow up engaging in violent behaviour more often than their less aggressive counterparts (Olweus, Limber,

Flerx, Mullin, Riese, Snyder, & Bowland, 2011). Hence, children who bully are at higher risk of advancing to more serious violent offending in life (Black, Weinles & Washington, 2010; Ferguson, et al., 2007). These facts make it clear that preventing bullying is important also for the sake of learners who bully others, as it has long term consequences for their futures too. For some victims, the effects of bullying do not stop at school but it follows them. “Now, I am at varsity, but I am still struggling to make friends, I cannot even date any guy because I do not know what they will say about my body. I am employed to people bullying me because of my body,” said the victim (Magadla, 2018).

Bystanders who witness bullying are affected as well. They are often afraid to be at school, powerless to change the situation and perhaps feel guilty for not taking action. They may be drawn into bullying themselves and feel bad about it afterwards (Olweus et al., 2007). Bullying produces chronic fear, anger and humiliation among bystanders (Black et al., 2010). Bystanders are equally affected as victims, and their academic performance is compromised. It affects their relationship with other learners due to fear of the unknown and lack of trust. Bullying affects teaching and learning in general. At school level, there are many cases that school management have to attend to and it disrupts teaching (Sam, 2011).

2.10 METHODS AND STRATEGIES TO COMBAT BULLYING

According to Smith, Schneider, Smith and Ananiadou (2004), psychologists who specialise in studying bullying, believe it is not enough to protect the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators, but rather have interventions that change the social climate of the entire school. Teachers, learners and parents should be made aware of what bullying is and how to respond to it. The school should, therefore, determine how and under what conditions such interventions are likely to be successful. Since the ecological model was chosen to guide this study, it also aided the researcher in understanding the roles of each system in the social context and the relationship each system can bring to the fight against bullying. According to the Ministry of Education (2008), teachers are expected to identify children who seem to be vulnerable and bring these children to the attention of the head of counselling services who will facilitate appropriate intervention. The most crucial part of this study was to find ways to deal with bullying in our schools through awareness creation, prevention and management. There must be ways of handling bullying activities in schools rather than ignoring them. In most cases, when people are talking about the fight against bullying, their focus is mainly on helping the victims and punishing the perpetrators. The focus, however, should be on all learners at school because all learners are at the receiving end of bullying, and they are all affected differently if bullying is occurring at school. Repo and Sajaniemi (2013) indicate that it is important to recognise the early signs of bullying in order to prevent its progression. Apart from identifying acts of bullying, it is equally important to pay attention to the root causes of bullying and make an effort to prevent the emergence of extreme actions.

Combating bullying is not the responsibility of a school principal alone but it is the joint venture of various stakeholders involved in educating learners. Stakeholders' roles should be part of the prevention and management of the school anti-bullying package. Rowana, Norwood and Whitley (2006) indicate that participation at each level of the programme is important as everyone has a unique role that contributes to the success of the programme. The programme should be inclusive with well-defined roles. As PNBPC (2016) put it, "bullying is a painful experience, but together, we can change something that has happened to so many for so long". The anti-bullying package should involve as many stakeholders as possible but, most importantly, their roles should be clearly defined. The school as institution should also make it clear as to what they will do in the fight against bullying.

This section discusses methods and the roles of a number of stakeholders in the fight against bullying at school level.

2.10.1 Anti-bullying programmes

According to Furrer (2006), school policies on bullying should play an important role in equalising power and eliminating abuses of power, and they should improve the quality of school life. Codes of conduct should be developed and enforced through processes that give a voice to every stakeholder.

Although there is no anti-bullying policy in Namibian public schools where the research was carried out, there are other countries, especially in Europe and the United States, that conducted research on bullying and came up with intervention programmes. Namibia can learn from these and develop its own programme suitable for its own learners. To accomplish this was one of the objectives of this research.

Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011) state that bullying is recognised as a pervasive problem in schools today. In recognition of increases in the pervasiveness of bullying incidents, all fifty states in the United States have passed school anti-bullying legislation, the first being Georgia in 1999. Montana became the most recent and last state to adopt anti-bullying legislation in April, 2015. A watchdog organisation, called Bully Police USA, advocates for and reports on anti-bullying legislation (Hinduja, 2016). Whitted and Dupper (as cited in Bowland, 2011) argue that comprehensive, multi-level strategies must target bullies, victims, bystanders, families and communities to be most effective. They continue that the most effective bullying prevention programmes attempt to change the culture and climate of the school, as well as reach out to individual children. It is for the reasons indicated above that the ecological model was employed in the development and implementation of the programme for this study. The model for the present study was partially based on Olweus's Bullying Prevention Programme (OBPP), which enabled the researcher to make use of the best practices of anti-bullying programmes already in existence. According to Bowland (2011), the OBPP provides intervention at multiple levels, such as the individual, classroom, school-wide and community level. For the purpose of this study, the focus was only at individual and classroom levels because the programme needed to be tested at manageable levels.

There was no need for the researcher to re-invent the wheel, but rather to build on what was already available and adjust it to the Namibian context with consideration of Namibian learners' needs. It cannot be assumed that learners understand the concept, bullying, fully and how to get help when it happens, as learners need that information given to them in a serious, yet educative, way. Teachers need to teach learners what

bullying entails, its causes, the school rules about bullying and the strategies they can utilise in seeking help against bullying (Olweus, et al., 2007).

The famous anti-bullying programme, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), was developed by Dan Olweus in 1983-1985. This programme works towards creating a school environment characterised by warmth, positive interest and the involvement of adults. Its objectives are to increase awareness of, and education about, bullying, to increase adult involvement, both at school and at home, to develop clear rules and consistent sanctions against bullying and to support and protect victims. This whole-school approach programme was implemented in schools in Norway, after which the reduction of bullying incidents was 50% (Olweus, 1997). Olweus, et al. (2007) state that the goal of the OBPP is to change the norms and bullying behaviour and to restructure the school setting itself so that bullying is less likely to occur or be rewarded. The implementation of the OBPP needs to be seen as a long term effort, not something that is completed in a year. According to Olweus (2010), the results of OBPP implementation in schools were, amongst others, that there was a fifty percent reduction of learners being bullied, as well as significant reductions in learners reporting bullying. The programme recorded a significant improvement in the social climate of the classroom, improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, as well as more positive attitudes towards school. Bullied learners were able to receive great support through planned intervention.

According to Bowland (2011), the OBPP strategies are identified to address those who bully, those who are bullied and those who are bystanders. The main goal is to reduce the prevalence of bully/victim problems that exist within the school setting while improving the overall school climate. A further significant objective of the OBPP is to

shift attitudes away from acceptance and/or support of bullying behaviour by bystanders to one of support for defenders of those who are bullied. According to Winslade (2018) restorative justice refers to a process of addressing crime by focusing on addressing the harm done to the victims, holding offenders accountable for their actions and, often, also engaging the community in the resolution of the conflict (Dandurand & Griffiths, 2006). Restorative justice known as RJP can be helpful when dealing with young people. It is defined as a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged through bullying, everyone is involved to find peace and able to heal. The intention is to repair any harm that was a result of the wrong doings.

Lester, et al. (2013) state that a high priority for the prevention and intervention programmes against school bullying is to decrease loneliness and bullying while increasing peer support, school connectedness and school safety. Schools should implement rules that are necessary and fair, which can be utilised as positive reinforcement. Such rules help schools to show care, warmth, respect and trust. Bullying problems can be prevented to a large extent by establishing and maintaining an effective and efficient system of classroom management (Landsberg, et al., 2011).

Implementing any programme comes with challenges, and it does not necessarily mean that any one programme will solve all the existing bullying problems. The effects of a programme are influenced by the context in which the programme has been developed, as well as the geographical area for which it was developed. According to Olweus and Limber (2010), several large-scale studies on the OBPP from Norway that were reviewed, provided compelling evidence of the programme's effectiveness in Norwegian schools. Studies that have evaluated the OBPP in diverse settings in the United States

have not been uniformly consistent but they have shown that the OBPP has had a positive impact on learners' self-reported involvement in bullying and anti-social behaviour. Since the OBPP was initially developed for Scandinavian countries, its effectiveness is recorded to be higher there than in other countries. It is also worth noting that the OBPP was recently recognised by the American Academy of Paediatrics as a successful school-based bullying prevention programme despite conflicting results of the programme's effectiveness (Bowland, 2011).

Bully Proofing Your School is another programme focusing on improving the school climate. According to Samples (2004), the first study reporting results on Bully Proofing Your School was conducted in 2001 by Berkey, Keyes and Longhurst. The programme focuses on the prevention of bullying activities. It includes teaching learners to recognise bullying behaviour, set class rules and respond quickly and effectively. The peer support system focuses on peer support and the involvement of learners (Sanders, 2009). After studying these and several other programmes, the researcher developed a programme which may be suitable for Namibian schools by involving learners and teachers dealing with bullying at school level. The programme should be able to guide the learners on what to do when bullied, as well as when, how and what support to give to them. Prevention of bullying through awareness creation was a crucial part in the programme. Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011) state that it is important to prevent bullying by creating a highly structured classroom environment where there is an increase in social skills through curricular intervention by incorporating social skills throughout the curriculum so that learners have the opportunity to learn, practice and validate their skills in a supportive and comfortable environment.

2.10.2 Teachers' training

Another crucial area that can be employed to fight bullying in schools is through teacher training. When teachers leave tertiary institutions without the basic knowledge of how to handle bullying at school in their classrooms, it is difficult for them to handle cases of bullying at school. Furrer (2006) states that good teacher training and recruitment should be at the very root of any country's long-term and comprehensive strategy to reduce violence, not just in schools, but in the whole society. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (2008) indicates that pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula should periodically be revised to reflect changing circumstances and challenges. When teachers lack training, dealing with bullying will be a nightmare for them. Training should be first given to teachers who will implement the programme. There is no point in telling learners to report bullying to teachers when teachers themselves have no clue what to do after receiving the case. Teachers play an important role in dealing with bullying because they are always in contact with learners in their lesson presentations and are more in touch with learners than anyone else. They need to have a better understanding of bullying to be able to support learners. Teachers' actions regarding bullying will determine the relationship they have with learners and how they feel about bullying. "Victims should realise that immediate measures are being taken to stop bullying in schools, which indicates to victims that teachers are behind them and are always ready to help" (Sanders & Phye, 2004, p. 30).

Life Skills teachers and teacher-counsellors are in a position to help both bullies and victims. They should act as facilitators in order to rehabilitate both bullies and victims (Byrne, 1994). Life Skills teachers can act as focal persons who can assist other teachers

in dealing with bullying. According to Newburn (2013), there is a need to train victims and teachers about human rights. Such teaching can be conducted by teachers at school in Life Skills lessons. Thus, it is encouraged that anti-bullying training should start while teachers are still at institutions of higher learning, because it will cut the cost of training in the implementation of the programme.

2.10.3 Bullying awareness campaigns

When creating bullying awareness, one needs to include all learners. Bullying campaigns should not only focus on victims of bullying but they should be inclusive of all. According to Stevens, Van Oost and De Bourdeaudhuy (2000), bullying prevention activities should focus on peers' awareness of the physical and psychological harm caused by bullies' dominance, resulting in more willingness to react against peer aggression and to support victims of bullying. Olweus (2007) suggests that anti-bullying awareness can be raised through channels, such as anti-bullying singing or song competitions, which can be held among different schools or classes at the same school. Learners should be able to form groups/choirs and compete against one another. Their song content should be about anti-bullying; through the composing of lyrics, learners will be learning as well. It will give them the opportunity to think about details and experience deep learning about bullying. The winner can win a prize. It can be a certificate; it does not need to be money.

Anti-bullying essays or poetry competitions or homework can be another way of making learners think deeper about bullying. It will enable learners to carry out some research on their own about bullying, for example, an essay "Say no to bullying". This will bring

the learners' feelings close to the topic under discussion. They will learn more when doing research or looking for information for their essay writing. In the process, they are learning. School assembly and class meetings are the best platforms to address all school related issues. The school can invite a bullying expert to talk about bullying to the learners. You can invite local celebrities (singers, actors and other famous people in the community) to help learners understand bullying better. Learners do model their idols; hearing anti-bullying statements from a celebrity will arouse their interest in the subject. It is important that there are meetings at school to address such fears so that learners will be able to speak up. According to Olweus (2007), class meetings, discussing bullying, build a sense of class cohesion, help learners understand their role in bullying situations, and it also helps in addressing issues about bullying as they arise.

Learners can pledge against bullying as a way of creating awareness. This can be done through pledge writing where they will state that they will not bully anyone and they will always be there to support any victim of bullying should they come across any bullying event. It is entirely up to the school to see what is best for them to pass anti-bullying messages to the learners. One way of creating awareness will not fit all schools, but teachers and learners should find the best way that suits their setting.

2.10.4 Reporting bullying

According to Black, et al. (2010), three of the most commonly recommended strategies for the youth to stop bullying is to report incidents to an adult. Although important, reporting is not always done, as many learners may not have the capacity to do so. When they are bullied, they often find it difficult to express themselves and, more importantly,

they may not find it easy to approach an adult. But what can schools do to ensure that reporting cases to an adult person becomes the norm? Sanders and Phye (2004) indicate that victimisation continues because bullies have seen that victims are reluctant to report incidents. When cases of bullying are not reported, it gives a clear indication that bullying is not a problem and perpetrators are given a green light to continue with their bullying activities. Channels of communication and reporting at school need to be made clear so that learners are not stranded without knowing where to go and to whom they should report. All reported cases, without looking at how severe it might be, should be investigated immediately and the school policies on cyber bullying should be enforced. Action to be taken after bullying will differ from learner to learner, and it will be determined by the act of bullying perpetrated against that learner. For example, because cyber bullying can range from rude comments to lies, impersonations and threats, the responses may depend on the nature and severity of the cyber bullying (Olweus, 2007). Olweus strongly encourages learners not to respond to cyber bullying but also stresses the importance not to erase the messages or pictures for evidence purpose. If the cyber bullying is coming through email or a cell phone, it may be possible to block future contact from the individual who cyber bullied. Of course, he or she may assume a different identity and continue the bullying but it is always wise to block them. Whatever the case may be, it is important to encourage learners to report any bullying perpetrated against them. With cyber bullying it can be difficult to trace the bullies but learners need to be assured that they will be helped in any way possible.

Olweus (2007) emphasises that immediate action should be taken as soon as bullying is witnessed or reported. The first step is to stop bullying while at the same time, support is

given to the victim. The perpetrator needs to know that what has happened is wrong, by refreshing him or her with anti-bullying rules. Witnesses should be empowered and told what to do when they come across bullying activities. While the perpetrator needs to accept the appropriate consequences for his or her action, it needs to be ensured that the victim is protected from future bullying too.

Sanders and Phye (2004) report that victimisation or any other type of bullying continues because bullies have seen that victims are reluctant to report incidents. Black, et al. (2010) indicate that there are obstacles to reporting, and one of them is that victims fear retaliation by the bully, the adult will not take the report seriously, the adult will side with the bully, of losing face in front of classmates or of discussing the incident in the interview when investigation is being conducted. Some learners have a code of silence in their cliques; hence, reporting will break that code. It is the school's role to ensure that all those codes and other factors that may prevent victims from reporting cases of bullying are dealt with and/or do not exist. Learners should be empowered to report cases of bullying or to stand up against bullying when they witness it. Reporting should not only be left to the learners; teachers should take responsibility as well. When adults mishandle reported bullying incidents, both victims and witnesses begin to question the value of reporting. Best practices for anti-bullying interventions are to accept each and every report as real and respond with care and respect. Both teachers and learners should be familiar with the steps to be taken so that learners will feel more protected after reporting the case. Bullying should never be swept under the carpet. It should be dealt with immediately.

Through reporting, learners are motivated and empowered. "Never again will I let anyone decide who is worthy enough to be happy and have friends, and I want others to

learn from my mistakes. When you see someone down on the ground, have the courage to be the hand that picks them up” (NBPC, 2016).

2.10.5 Developing resilience and assertive skills among learners

According to Furrer (2006), a child’s resilience can be defined as the child’s capacity to cope successfully with everyday challenges, including life transitions, times of cumulative stress and the significant adversity of risk. Typically, resilient children are recognised by their high self-esteem, internal locus of control, optimism, clear aspirations and goal-oriented approaches to life. If you have such learners, they will be able to reflect on bullying and have problem-solving capacity through healthy communication patterns. A solid foundation of emotional resilience is one of the best ways to aid learners to persevere when being bullied or when facing other difficulties. Resilient children have the ability to adapt, as well as handle and overcome difficult situations. Emotional pain is common when learners are being bullied, but it is how they deal with that emotional pain that matters (“Stop bullying”, 2015). Self-resilience should not only focus on the victim, but should put much more emphasis on perpetrators as they need to become well-integrated people. In most cases, learners are told to look the bully in their eyes, but the question remains whether they have the strength to do so. This can be done by a learner who is empowered and can do so without being scared of the bully, otherwise such actions can backfire.

Learners need to be empowered to report cases of bullying through investing resilience and assertive skills in them. Learners should be able to ask themselves what they must do when they witness bullying or are bullied, and they should be able to act.

Empowering can start with discussions about bullying and the advocacy of human rights. Learners should not be told to “stand up to the bully” without having strategies regarding how to do it. Bullying can be curbed once learners have the courage to bounce back and move on; however, this requires that children have assertive skills to deal with the situation at hand. Only when they know what to do, they will be strong enough to move on. According to Jordan (2014), assertiveness is the ability to stand up for and express what you believe in while, at the same time, showing respect for the opinions and beliefs of others. Learners need to be confident and firm in what they are saying. If they say ‘no’, it should mean no. It is important to teach learners not to be aggressive when addressing bullying problems. Jordan states that both the bully and the victim need help to be assertive: the bully needs help with aggression, while the victim needs help to deal with his or her lack of self-confidence. Learners need techniques that provide personal empowerment, demonstrate assertiveness and fulfil emotional needs (Black et al., 2010), so that those skills will empower them. According to Ngwenya (2013), there are many things that learners can do to avoid bullying, and one of them is to stand up for him- or herself and those who are bullied. Learners should be enforced with assertive skills that allow them to say no, and stand up for their rights. Hardman (2012) indicates that assertive and resilience skills are influenced by learners’ cultural learning, socialisation and adaptation.

Learners should know what to do after bullying incidents. This is very important as it will help in combating bullying. Learners’ social relationship skills can help in the way they react to bullying or reduce bullying activities against others. According to Rose and Monda-Amaya (2011), it is important for schools to create opportunities to increase

social competence and positive relations. Learners should identify feelings in themselves and others that can guide their choices and help them interpret situations appropriately. This will recognise and eliminate helplessness in social situations and foster self-determination.

2.10.6 School curriculum and environment

Hinduja and Patchin (2012) indicate that another way of combating bullying is to make it part of the school curriculum, to teach children how to be good to one another, cooperate, defend someone who is being picked on and stand up for what is right. One important curriculum tool that can enhance the implementation of a bullying programme is the school subject, Life Skills. In Namibia, Life Skills is being taught from Grades 5 to 12 but the subject is not effectively taught due to various reasons, such as a lack of qualified teachers and resources. It is a sad fact that the subject, Life Skills, is not effectively implemented in schools, (“Kids health,” 2010). Life Skills, as a subject, should be effectively implemented to enable learners to build good personal skills, which range from the creation of awareness, assertiveness to resilience skills that will enable learners to stand up for themselves. The integration of teaching about bullying in the curriculum will be seen as a way to kick off anti-bullying campaigns. Although the school curriculum is regarded as having a positive impact on the fight against bullying, Bowland (2011) argues that school-based interventions that address specific bullying issues are successful in dealing with bullying as well.

The school environment is one aspect that needs to be considered in the fight against bullying. Learners spend more time at school than at any other place. The environment

should be welcoming and inviting by ensuring that learners feel at home. According to Black et al. (2010), schools can employ posters and verbal prompts to remind learners that bullying is not acceptable and it is the responsibility of every learner to report bullying when she or he sees it. Schools should promote positive strategies, and reduce negative strategies by responding to bullying with fairness. Adults should make efforts to role model a supportive social environment for everyone.

According to Rose et al. (2011), teachers should come up with activities that engage learners meaningfully and contribute to social interaction. Providing learners with explicit group tasks will reinforce appropriate socialising behaviour directly and create opportunities to increase social competence, as well as positive interaction.

Sanders and Phye (2004) state that schools where teachers are more likely to discuss bullying with learners, recognise bullying behaviour, are interested in stopping bullying, and actually intervene in bullying incidents, are less likely to have bullying problems. A lack of teachers' interest in bullying translates into a lack of teachers taking action. Schools where bullying goes unchecked and unchallenged and where bullying policies are inadequate, bullies learn that their anti-social behaviour is accepted or even admired, while bullied learners learn that the adults are too busy or too afraid to help them. According to Olweus (2007), a staff member who does not intervene in a bullying situation communicates to the learners that bullying is in order and will not lead to any firm consequences. However, when supervising adults intervene firmly and consistently, this sends an important signal to the bullying learners and possible bystanders that bullying is unacceptable. It is important for the school to have proper structures in place

where learners can receive help, learn coping strategies, be empowered and feel that the school is the safest place to be.

2.10.7 Peer support

According to Lester et al. (2013), having many friends who are willing and able to support and protect them is a crucial way of protecting learners against victimisation. Poor quality friendship is associated with high levels of loneliness which makes learners vulnerable to bullying. Stevens et al. (2010) also assert that victims of peer aggression are particularly at risk of being victimised over time, reducing the probability of supportive friendships. The literature reviewed clearly shows that learners who have poor relationship with their peers are more likely to be bullied (Sam, 2011). Learners should thus be encouraged to look after one another, have friends and join activities that they enjoy most such, as sports and choir groups. Peer support is not only beneficially to victims of bullying, but it will also allow the perpetrator an opportunity to learn better social skills. A victim of bullying indicated how peer support helped her to overcome the impact of bullying. “After meeting two friends who would later encourage me and lead me to religion which has really helped me see myself in a new light, and becoming more confident of myself” (Magadla, 2018).

Black et al. (2010) indicate that sometimes programmes fail because they employ top-down approaches, with little to no input from those who are most affected by the problem, the learners. Developing a grassroots approach, based on the values, attitudes and behaviour of learners, may yield better results since learners have the primary

information of what is happening in the school and they have the best solutions; therefore, if one truly wants to fight bullying, targeting learners in general should be the focus because they are the agents of change. It is their attitudes and behaviour that need to be attended to and they know themselves better than anyone else. They should by all means be the first to be contacted when developing or implementing programmes that aim at benefiting them. They need to spread the message of love and belonging among one another. Black et al. (2010), furthermore, state that people are more likely to follow the recommended actions if they have confidence in their own ability to perform the said actions. Involving children in developing and implementing programmes is important in building personal knowledge, attitudes and skills, by ensuring the relevance and ownership of the programme. This will ultimately improve programme output (Furrer, 2006). Involving children serves as effective intervention in itself as it aids them to heal through the disclosure of experiences and sharing feelings. They are able to suggest their own coping strategies based on their experience.

Peer support should not exclude perpetrators of bullying. According to Olweus et al. (2007), when bullies are involved in programme development, they will have a better understanding of how other learners perceive their behaviour, and this will enable them to see things from another person's perspective. Through this understanding, they will learn to respect others' feelings and reactions and they may find it difficult to continue with their negative activities.

2.10.8 School structures and programmes

According to Richard et al. (2012), the school's role in the fight against bullying is to address climate variables, such as positive learner-teacher relationships, school

connectedness, academic support, order and discipline, as well as academic satisfaction. Schools should, therefore, provide a safe and welcoming environment for girls and boys, free from threats of violence (Furrer, 2006). According to the NBPC (2016), everyone has the right to live in a community where she or he feels included, valued, safe and accepted, regardless of differences. It is the school's role to create such positive change by promoting the appreciation and acceptance of others.

Sanders and Phye (2004) indicate that it is important for the school to have proper structures in place where learners can receive help. Schools should offer learners coping strategies and empower them. Where do learners go when they are bullied? Who is there to support them? Learners should know where to report the cases if they are bullied or have witnessed bullying activities at school.

Less experienced teachers are often unprepared for the challenges of social interactions in the classroom and may not know how to intervene appropriately (Bauman & Del Rio in Black, 2010). Schools should be well prepared with structures in place aiming at fighting bullying.

2.11 SYSTEMATIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

It is crucial for implemented programmes to be evaluated. This will assist in determining the effectiveness of the programme, what should be changed and what should stay. According to Furrer (2006), monitoring and evaluation will help to identify which interventions could be improved.

Not all programmes implemented in the fight against bullying solve the problems and that is why evaluation is always important to determine the success. According to Repo and Sajaniemi (2013), no clear research data exist about whether these action plans for preventing and intervening in bullying actually reduce bullying in schools and whether they help teachers prevent bullying. This was supported by Ferguson et al. (2007) who state that, although a multitude of anti-bullying programmes have been developed and implemented, it is uncertain whether these programmes are successful in achieving their intended outcomes. This uncertainty may be due to the fact that many anti-bullying programmes have not been subjected to systematic and empirical review. However, the findings by Bowland (2011), after the implementation of OBPP for a year in a school, indicated that teachers were in a better position to identify and assist both the bully and victim, while learners were in a better position to report incidents of bullying than before the implementation of the programme.

It is important to know that evaluation outcomes can be biased. According to Stevens et al. (2000), the “file drawer” effects occurs when articles with statistical significance are selected for publication more often than for articles which obtained no significant effects.

There are reasons why some programmes do not work out as planned. According to Stevens et al. (2000), anti-bullying programmes may benefit victims of bullying at the potential expense of the social dominance that bullies enjoy. As bullies see no personal benefit in the programme, they simply reject it. When non-bullying children continue to follow the programme, they become frustrated when bullying children do not participate.

Olweus et al. (2007) state that many schools see significant changes immediately but for some schools significant and lasting changes become visible only after the learners have participated in the programme for eight months or more. The duration of the implementation of the programme matters most when it comes to the effects of it on behavioural change. Limber and Olweus (2013) state that the effects of the programme against bullying are found to be larger the longer the programme was implemented. For the present study, the programme was only implemented for 4 months in the first school semester of the 2016 academic year. The programme was evaluated through pre- and post-test research findings. The duration of the implementation of the programme could have an impact on the programme's effectiveness. For monitoring and evaluation purpose, there was a continuous engagement with Life skills teachers and class captain were given the programme to indicate what was taught.

2.12 SUMMARY

For Chapters 1 and 2, the researcher looked at the prevalence of bullying in the Namibian school context, and statistics obtained from the literature were presented. This was important in order to have a picture of the prevalence of cases of bullying and the way forward in addressing them. This was followed by the theoretical framework employed in the development of the programme. The researcher also looked at the causes of bullying because it was crucial in the development of the programme to understand what caused bullying so that elements of the programme could be developed to fight the root causes of the problem. Understanding the causes also gave a clear overview of the awareness strategies.

The effects of bullying on victims, perpetrators and witnesses were also discussed. This was done with the aim of gaining knowledge of how to increase learners' resilience, as well as assertive skills. Anti-bullying programmes employed in other countries were highlighted, and this information was utilised to develop a Namibian programme based on previous research but contextualised for Namibia. The programme focused on creating awareness, helping the learners to be resilient, as well as giving them assertive skills. Apart from that, prevention and management of acts of bullying were highlighted. In the next chapter, the focus will be on the methodology the researcher employed in order to collect, analyse and present the data.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on the methodology and research procedures the researcher employed to collect and analyse data. The research procedures described below include the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures.

This chapter also discusses in detail how data were collected, instruments utilised to collect data and methods employed to analyse and interpret them. Ethical considerations for the survey are also outlined.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Social science research focuses more on various paradigms such as interpretive, positivism and post-positivism paradigms. Saunder, Lewis & Thornhill (2007, p.605) defined a paradigm as a way of examining social phenomena from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations are attempted. This study followed an interpretive paradigm as the researcher believes that, knowledge is socially constructed and the truth always lies within the human being.

According to Creswell (2009), research designs are plans, strategies and procedures for research comprising decisions from underlying worldviews to the detailed methods of data collection and analysis. Since the research was conducted in five phases (to be

explained later), the researcher employed a mixed method, which was conducted in a cyclical route where the qualitative data were collected first, followed by the collection of quantitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the last phases. Creswell (2014) indicates that a mixed method research design is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to understand a research problem. The research design employed in the mixed method was a quasi-experimental research (pre-test/post-test) where the researcher administered the pre-test, followed by an experiment (programme). Finally, the post-test was administered. According to Boudah (2011), quasi-experimental research attempts to determine if an independent variable has effects on the dependent variables, and this aided the testing of the programme. This study was a complete, pre-test/post-test group design (X1-0-X2) as described by Boudah (2011) who states that this design identify participants, pre-test them, present an intervention and administer a post-test through observation or some other measurement; therefore, the post-test performance can be compared to that measured by the pre-test. The study, being cyclical, was conducted mainly in an embedded design where both parallel and sequential designs were employed. Creswell (2014) indicates that an embedded design, where one form of data collection plays a supportive role to another, is helpful when collecting qualitative data before the experiment in order to assist in designing the intervention tailored to the participants. The quantitative data addressed whether the intervention has had an impact on the identified aspects of bullying (Best & Kahn, 2014). The research was mainly conducted in an embedded design where both parallel and sequential designs were employed. The qualitative data set provided a supportive role in this study and the quantitative data played the primary role.

The research design per phase will be explained.

Phase One: this phase focused on the development of the programme. The researcher focused on exploring options for the development of the anti-bullying programme, consisting of guidelines, by reviewing the existing literature, including Olweus's anti-bullying programme currently employed in other countries. A qualitative desk study design was employed to conduct an extensive literature review on bullying in schools where information collected by other researchers in different countries was utilised in the formulation of the new programme. The desk study also included a review of existing anti-bullying programmes employed around the world. The researcher specifically tapped from those elements that were fulfilling the objectives of this research. After the review of different anti-bullying programmes, the researcher settled for the existing Olweus anti-bullying programme as a foundation for the new anti-bullying policy and guidelines as this programme fitted in well with the study's theoretical framework where the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner was chosen to guide the study and the formulation of the programme. The ecological systems theory emphasises a whole-school approach in dealing with bullying and the Olweus anti-bullying prevention programme, known as OBPP, also puts emphasis on the whole-school approach to bullying. It consists of all the elements identified in the fight against bullying. Based on those reasons, a desk study design was employed to review or conduct analysis of existing documents in order to design the Namibian programme. The information collected at this phase also assisted in designing the questionnaires administered at Phases 3 and 4 of the research.

Phase Two of the study employed the qualitative method where interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key informants (7 Life Skills teachers and 18 LRCs). At this stage, the data were collected through interviews with the aim of contributing to the final programme which was drafted at Phase One. The data collected from key informants assisted in localising the programme and contributed to the formulation of the questionnaire content that was utilised by 81 participants in Phases 3 and 4. To make the programme and anti-bullying guidelines more suitable to the Namibian context, the researcher employed the information as gathered from interviews with key informants. The contributions of key informant assisted in placing the programme within the Namibian context, as well as creating the feeling of ownership by the end users because the involvement of learners and teachers in the development of the programme allowed them to become part of the whole process of awareness creation, decision making, planning, implementation and evaluation. The development of the programme aimed in tackling behaviour that contributed to bullying, as well as give responsive actions to acts of bullying. Creating awareness among learners and ensuring the prevention of bullying, as well as resilience skills for victims when they are bullied would enable them to bounce back again.

Phase Three: This was the pre-test stage which included the implementation of the programme. This phase employed the quantitative method where pre-tests were conducted by administering questionnaires to 81 participants. According to Creswell (2014), a pre-test provides a measure on some attribute that you assess for participants in an experiment before they receive the treatment. The questionnaire employed was developed in the first phase where the desk study design was conducted. Participants who took part at this stage were marked on the class attendance registers in order that

the researcher made use of the same participants in the post-test research for the purpose of data analysis to ensure validity.

In the same phase, the researcher trained Life Skills teachers in the anti-bullying programme to understand it fully before they implemented it in their lessons. The training was meant to ensure accuracy in the implementation of the programme. After the training, Life Skills teachers were allowed to implement the programme in their normal Life Skills lessons for one full semester (4 months). For quality assurance of the implementation of the programme, class captains were tasked to write down the lessons taught in Life Skills in that semester.

Phase Four: A quantitative method was employed at this post-test stage where the same questionnaires administered in the third phase were employed again with the same 81 learners who had participated in the pre-test. According to Creswell (2012), a post-test is a measure of some attribute that is assessed of participants in an experiment after a treatment. Apart from the questionnaires, the researcher also gave the programme evaluation form to Life Skills teachers who were responsible for the implementation of the programme. The evaluation form was needed for feedback, rating of the programme and future recommendations.

Phase Five: Evaluation was based on the data analyses of the pre-test and post-test, including the Life Skills teachers' evaluation form of the implementation of the programme. The data collected from phases three and four were analysed for research findings.

3.3 POPULATION

The population of this study comprised all Grade 9 secondary school learners in the Khomas and Oshana regions, as studies indicated that bullying was more common in secondary schools. Although Black et al. (2010) indicate that in Europe and America, bullying tend to decrease in the higher Grades, Lester et al. (2013) indicate that bullying and victimisation increased for learners following their transition to secondary school. Such victimisation also increases bullying in schools, as stated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009), “there is high social and emotional changes associated with moving into secondary school. This change can usually manifest in frustration and anxiety which has been associated with negative and disruptive social behaviour”.

Furthermore, 102 secondary school Life Skills teachers in the Khomas and Oshana regions formed the population of the study because they were the custodians of the implementation of the programme at schools and perceived to be the core people who dealt with cases of bullying at school level. The number of Life Skills teachers was given to the researcher by the Regional School Counsellors at the regional education offices. Regional School Counsellors are responsible for training Life Skills teachers at regional level. Life Skills teachers were chosen as part of the research because they were in position to identify and share their experiences of best practices in terms of prevention and intervention. All Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) in the two selected regions were included because they represented learners at school level and learners voiced their grievances through them. They were thus in a better position to understand and communicate the needs of fellow learners as they were the first point of contact

when it came to learner-related school problems and could have first-hand information and experience of bullying activities at school.

3.4 SAMPLE

The two regions, Oshana and Khomas where the research was conducted, were purposefully selected because of their diversity. The Khomas region is multi-cultural, with learners from different cultural backgrounds, consequently rich information could be gained. The Oshana region is more homogeneous. Although several other regions are homogeneous, this specific region was also chosen for convenience sake, as the researcher knew the region and it was easier to find schools and accommodation in her research period. The schools selected were urban/town schools with high learner numbers since the reviewed literature shows that urban schools have higher incidents of bullying than rural-based schools. The schools' academic performance was also taken into consideration and determined by the Grade 10 national performance results provided by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. One high performing and one low performing school were selected from each region because high levels of violence in low-achieving schools were likely caused by the concentration of poorly behaved and poorly prepared learners in specific schools (Burdick-Will, 2013 & Hardman, 2015).

Furthermore, 26 key informants were identified from the two selected regions by employing purposive criterion sampling. The key informants included 18 LRCs and 7 Life Skills teachers. Each Life Skills teacher was required to have had at least two years' experience in the specific position. Experience for Life Skills teachers was of

importance as they needed to share what they had encountered at their respective schools when dealing with cases of bullying in the previous years. In each school, one Grade 9 class group was selected randomly for the implementation of the programme and for answering research questionnaires. Although the researcher was well aware that learners in all Grades could be subjected to bullying in some way or the other, this study focused only on Grade 9 learners. The reason for selecting Grade 9 was that the majority of participants were not exactly new at school (unlike Grade 8 and 11 learners), and would be in a better position to talk about and share their experiences of bullying. Their experiences and encounters with cases of bullying would be clearer and they might be open to talk about it without fear of being intimidated, unlike learners who were completely new at school. Nekomba (2015) states that “the First Annual School Health Forum in Namibia which took place in October 2015, revealed that 44.6% of pupils in secondary schools are bullied, with 66% being Grade 8 pupils.” This is the reason why the target was Grade 9 learners who could reflect on what had happened to them in Grade 8, which seemed to be the at-risk Grade when it came to bullying.

In the post-test, the researcher found some learners who did not do the pre-test. For the sake of inclusivity, the researcher allowed all learners present in the post-test to fill the questionnaires but the questionnaires for participants who did not take part in pre-test research were automatically discarded. This implies that, for the research questionnaire to be valid for data analysis, the learner’s name had to be ticked in both the pre- and post-tests register list. In the end, a total number of 81 participants between the ages of 14 to 20 took part in both pre- and post-tests.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

For the development of the anti-bullying programme, the researcher was guided by the existing “Olweus Bullying Prevention Program” (OBPP) as well as key informants. The new researcher-developed programme (Appendix 1), which served as the treatment variable, was implemented in Life Skills lessons in the first school semester (4 months). The programme was developed by adapting similar programmes employed in other countries, as well as utilising information from key participants in the Ministry of Education and Culture in Namibia which assisted in putting the programme in a Namibian context. The newly developed programme served as the treatment variable and was employed in Life Skills lessons. The researcher continued to be in contact with Life Skills teachers through telephone calls, and on-site consultation was conducted at one school in the Khomas region. This aided in minimising the threats and increased the validity of the implementation of the programme. In ensuring that the lessons were delivered, class captains were given a form on which they recorded the lessons from the programme, as well as the date. Teachers were given an evaluation form to rate the effectiveness of the programme based on their experience in the implementation.

Apart from the researcher-developed programme, the following instruments were employed in this research: a consent form (Appendix 2) which was given to participants; the interview questions (Appendix 3) employed in interviews and focus group discussions with the key informants. There was no tape or video recording, but the researcher took notes during the semi-structured interview as well as allowed 7 Life Skills teachers to fill open ended questions in the interview questionnaire. A questionnaire (Appendix 4) was developed by the researcher and employed in both pre-

and post-test interviews. The development of this questionnaire was guided by Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire; however, the content was converted into the Namibian context. The questionnaire of 21 pages and 47 questions was made up of multiple choice questions and a Likert scale was employed for most questions. A few open-ended questions were included. The questionnaire was completed in 45-60 minutes. The researcher guided learners through all questions in order to increase validity and to ensure that learners understood what they were answering.

The questionnaire was comprehensive and, according to Solberg and Olweus (2003), it is normal for any comprehensive questionnaire to have missing data. This was found to be the case with the questionnaire employed. The evaluation form (Appendix 5) was also employed to determine the feelings of key participants on the effectiveness of the programme. Class captains also employed the checklist (Appendix 6) to record the lessons taught in life skills lesson in the first school semester.

It is worth taking note that, after the design of instruments, they had been piloted. The pilot study was conducted in a school where the intended study was not being carried out. This exercise helped the researcher to assess the quality of the research instruments. Comments were made by the participants and observations were made by the researcher, after which some adjustments were made to the instruments. The pilot study informed the researcher to make use of a class register to ensure that the same participants completed the questionnaires in both the pre- and post-tests.

The role of the researcher was to ensure that the data collected were used to develop the programme. After the programme was developed, then the training was conducted for teachers to understand the programme. The researcher was also present in the classroom

when the questionnaires were being completed by the 81 grade 9 learners. The researcher was overseeing the whole process of ensuring that the instruments were used in a manner they were intended to be used. This process helped with validation of the instrument. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), validity in a quantitative research indicates whether you can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments, it also helps the researcher to identify whether an instrument might be a good one to use. The use of pilot study helped to establish the content validity of instrument as changes and corrections were made to the instrument. This process ensured that the instruments were reliable and consistent.

The researcher was a teacher and school counsellor herself, and this topic is close to her heart. Having seen learners bullied at school, it has always been a topic of discussion she had with Life Skills teachers. The researcher also did a lot of reading on school bullying before embarking on this study.

3.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Creswell (2014) indicates that it is important to respect the site in which the research takes place by gaining permission before entering it. Permission to carry out this research in the different regions was, therefore, first requested from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education. After the permission had been granted, the

regional directors of education and school principals in the respective regions were informed of the project prior to the study, and permission was granted by the two respective regions.

As mentioned earlier, the study had five phases, and the procedures were followed phase by phase until all five phases were completed as explained earlier. The post-test was administered immediately after the completion of the programme. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2012) state that it is good to test the effect of intervention immediately; however, some studies show that the effects of a particular intervention may not reveal themselves immediately, but only much later. Too long a lapse will make it impossible to determine whether it is a particular independent variable that has caused a particular effect or whether other factors have intervened.

For quality assurance, the researcher ensured that she took full responsibility of the research process. The researcher did the training for life Skills teachers and was available for any clarification needed. The implementation was purely done by Life Skills teachers with the assistance of the researcher. Class captains were also given responsibility to record the topics discussed during the lesson.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Maree (2012) indicates that qualitative and quantitative data in a mixed method design are often analysed separately and then integrated at the discussion stage. This research was conducted by employing a mixed method design. The analysis of the findings were, therefore, done at different levels, which will be explained; however, in the final stage of analyses and interpretation, results combined to establish the similarities and differences

in the qualitative and quantitative data. The data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions were extensively recorded through the notes and transcribed. The data were analysed qualitatively where themes and categories were identified and grouped together, and their relevance to the programme was evaluated, together with the information gathered from the desk study. For example, all key participants were asked to explain the concept, bullying, in their personal capacities, and this was given a theme of “defining bullying”. By creating the themes, the researcher was able to employ the thematic approach which enabled the data to be coded according to the theory and themes.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were generated to analyse data from the findings. According to Cohen et al. (2012), descriptive statistics assist to generate frequency measures and percentages from quantitative data and, where comparison is to be made, inferential statistics can be employed. This is supported by Boudah (2011), who also indicates that inferential statistics are employed to make comparisons between conditions in an experimental intervention.

The quantitative data collected were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Programme (SPSS). With the assistance of a qualified statistician, percentages and mean scores were generated from the data. The descriptive data were analysed as such, based on the percentages and mean scores created from the findings. An independent t-test was employed to explore the differences in the mean scores of pre-test and post-test findings. According to Cohen et al. (2012), a t-test is employed to discover whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of two groups. The t-test for the equality of means was employed to determine whether there were any

changes with regards to awareness, resilience and prevention strategies, as well as to evaluate statistically significant findings. The t-test was, therefore, chosen because it assessed whether differences in means obtained for the pre-test and post-test groups were statistically significant, as this enabled examining the effects of the implemented programme. Triangulation was employed where the researcher looked at whether quantitative and qualitative data were complementing or contradicting each other.

The last part of the data analysis of this study was the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme by Life Skills teachers after the implementation stage. Life Skills teachers were asked to indicate how effective they had found the programme in its implementation and indicate the topics that needed future inclusion or removal. The evaluation of the intervention was done through short questions, and comparative analyses was carried out. The information regarding the effectiveness of the programme was analysed by means of percentages which were created through Excel; open-ended questions were analysed by utilising themes.

Reliability and validity of the data were aided by the pilot study which took place before the actual research commenced. Instruments used were initially piloted, and the amendments were done. The triangulation also increased reliability. Class captain involvement in recording of lessons taught. In order to ensure that questionnaires were filled completed by the selected participants, the researcher was present for one hour, and the instruments were handed over to the researcher immediately after completion.

As pointed out in chapter 1, there were some limitations during the data collection as some students in the initial sampled numbers left the schools, and two Life Skills teachers

left their schools. This was a setback as the new teachers had to be trained in order to continue where the other teachers left.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cohen et al. (2007) indicate that ethics in research is about what is right and wrong, good and bad; consequently, procedural ethics are not enough. One has to consider the way in which the research purpose, content, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices. There are many aspects that need to be taken into consideration when conducting research.

According to Maree (2012), researchers should safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally, as well as the participants in the research. The researcher first obtained a clearance letter from the University of Namibia's Postgraduate Studies Committee which allowed her to carry out the research. Participants were briefed about the objectives of the study. The study would form part of the Life Skills programme and permission was sought from the authorities for implementation purposes. It was not easy to indicate the right of withdrawal since the programme was implemented as part and parcel of the teaching and learning; however, participants were informed that withdrawal at any point would bear no consequences.

The researcher took all necessary steps to avoid harm to any of the participants. Brink, Van der Walt and Van Rensburg (2012) indicate that a participant who agrees to participate in research has a right to expect that the information collected from him or her will remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher thus ensured that all

information gathered was treated with great confidentiality. Since the study formed part of the Life Skills lessons, learners were informed that, even by writing their names on the questionnaires, their identities would not be disclosed as it was purely to cross-reference research data. In the second phase of the research when the researcher went to do interviews with the key informants, the learners were given consent forms (Appendix C) to be signed by their parents. The questions in the questionnaire respected cultural and religious considerations by not including any specific culture or religion in the examples given.

The data were safely stored in different places, such as on a laptop and memory sticks, and were sent to the researcher's email for safety reasons. This was necessary in order to ensure that no information was lost. Maree (2012) states that, when a researcher will be in the field for some time, it is important to store collected data in a safe place and make backups immediately. The data will be destroyed based on the university's guidelines.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted in the Khomas and Oshana regions of Namibia. Collected from two schools per region, findings in this chapter are presented under four main themes. Firstly, the biographical information regarding 81 learners is presented. Secondly, findings from interviews with Life Skills teachers (LSTs) and learners who were members of Learners' Representative Councils (LRCs) and implications of these findings to the development and implementation of an intervention programme are presented. Thirdly, the results from the 81 learners' questionnaires focusing on pre- and post-test findings are presented simultaneously for comparison. These findings focus on awareness, resilience, prevention and management strategies before and after the implementation of the intervention programme.

The last part of the findings evaluates the programme as implemented by Life Skills teachers. The analyses of post-test findings were conducted so that a comparison could be drawn between the pre- and post-test findings. This assisted to determine whether the intervention programme implemented had had an impact on the way learners and teachers viewed bullying at schools. The point was to answer the following questions: Did the programme create bullying awareness among learners? Were the learners more empowered to fight bullying than before the intervention programme was implemented? What was their general understanding of bullying before and after the implementation of the programme? How did the learners' resilience levels change after the implementation

of the programme? How well were they coping with bullying at school in comparison to the time before the programme was implemented? How well were the prevention and management strategies working after the implementation of the programme? Did the schools' academic performance have an influence on the implementation of the programme? Overall, the post-test findings communicated the effects that the implementation of the programme had on the participants.

The data for this study were collected based on the following objectives:

- i. To explore options for the development of an anti-bullying programme and guidelines for schools in Namibia.
- ii. To develop anti-bullying policy guidelines and a programme based on options that focused on schools' awareness, resilience, prevention and management strategies of bullying.
- iii. To implement the programme in four secondary schools in the Oshana and Khomas education regions of Namibia.
- iv. To evaluate the usefulness of the policy guidelines and the programme for victims, perpetrators, bystanders and Life Skills teachers.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.2.1 School characteristics

Schools were classified according to their regions, size, academic performance and setting. All schools, where the research was conducted, were based in urban areas of Oshakati, Ongwediva and Windhoek. The size of the school was determined by the number of learners attending full time classes. Very small schools were those classified to have 1 to 300 learners, small schools represented schools with 301 to 600 learners,

medium schools were those schools with 601 to 1000 learners, big schools were schools which catered for 1001 to 1200 learners, while very big schools had more than 1200 learners (see Table 1). Two schools were rated as medium sized, one was big and one was very big. Learner numbers in all schools where the research was conducted changed in the pre- to post-test period where, in some schools the numbers increased and in others decreased although this did not change the classification of the schools. It happened due to the fact that the pre-test was administered in January, the month in which learner numbers fluctuated because of the movement of learners from school to school. Despite the changes in the numbers of learners in the post-test, only learners who took part in both the pre- and post-tests had their findings reported and presented in this chapter.

Based on the results of the national Grade 10 performance ranking for 2014 and 2015, schools were categorised either as excellent, good, average or weak. Excellent schools were defined as those schools that maintained passing rates of 80-100%, good schools those which recorded passing rates of 60-80%, average schools were those that had passing rates of 40-60% while the weak schools were described as schools with passing rates of 0-40%. In the Oshana region, one school was regarded as an excellent performing school because it had had 100% Grade 10 pass rates for the 2014 and 2015 academic years, while the second school's performance was rated average as its pass rate was 50%. For the two schools in the Khomas region, one school's performance was good at 65% pass rate, while the other school which recorded 39% pass rate was classified as a weak performing school.

In this chapter, school A will be referred to as a good academic performing school and school B will be referred to as a weak academic performing school. These schools are from the Khomas region. In the Oshana region, school C represents an excellent academic performing school and school D an average academic performing school (see Table 1).

All schools in this study are offering Grade 8 to 12 full time classes to learners living either in school hostels or commuting to school from home every day.

Table 1: School size and performance level

School	School size	Academic performance
<i>School A</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>School B</i>	<i>Big</i>	<i>Weak</i>
<i>School C</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>School D</i>	<i>Very big</i>	<i>Average</i>

4.2.2 Learner characteristics

The findings below are based on the gender and age of the 81 participants who took part in both pre- and post-tests. Although a total number of 102 participants took part in the pre-test, not all participants went on to take part in the post-test research, consequently, the final number ended up at 81 participants. Only findings of those 81 participants were analysed to ensure that a comparison between pre-and post- tests findings was accurate. The learners who did not complete the pre-test were all allowed to participate in the research so that they would not feel left out but their data were not included in the final analysis. The reduction in participant numbers was due to the migration of learners between different schools and changes of classes. Since the pre-test was administered at

the beginning of the year, some learners who participated were no longer in the same class or same school and some new learners had joined.

Results show that 55 participants (68%) were female while 26 participants (32%) were male. Of the participants, 10% were younger than 15 years, 58% were 15 years, 20% were 16 years, 8% were 17 years and, lastly, 4% were represented by participants who were 18 years and older. The Namibian education system allows learners to start Grade 1 at the age of 7, and if a learner has not failed any Grade, he or she is expected to be in Grade 9 by the age of 15; consequently, the majority of learners fell under the age of 15 years. Learners were asked to indicate the length of time that they had been at the present school. The majority of participants (79.5%) had been at their current schools between 1 and 2 years because they had been there since Grade 8. They were followed by learners who were there less than a year. These were the learners who only joined the school in Grade 9. However, 6.5% of participants were learners who had been at school for 2 to 3 years (see Table 2). These were mostly learners who had repeated one of the Grades (either Grade 8 or 9). Only a few learners had been at their present school for 3 or more years. This is an indication that there were a few learners who had repeated Grades 8 and 9. Learners were also asked to indicate whether they had repeated Grades or not. For all schools, 70% of participants indicated that they had never repeated a Grade.

Table 2: Years at current school

Years at school	F	%
Less than a year	9	10.5
1-2 years	64	79.5
2-3 years	5	6.5
4 years	1	1.0
More than 4 years	2	1.5
Total	81	100

N = 81

Participants were asked to indicate their level of happiness at their schools to determine whether their levels of happiness at school had an influence on bullying. For all schools, the findings revealed that 36% of participants were very happy at their schools, 55.5% were happy, 2% were not happy and 5.5% were not happy at all.

Learners were also asked to indicate the reason why they were at that specific school. This question was to determine whether the choice of school had an influence on bullying or not. The majority of participants (40.5%) were at schools due to their good passing rates, 15.5% had no choice, 29% indicated that their parents had decided what school they could attend and 6% of participants were at their schools because they were close to home, while 6% were sent there by the Education Regional Office in their regions. A small number, 1%, was there because of their friends (see Table 3).

Table 3: Reasons for being at that school

Reasons	F	%
Friends are here	1	1.0
Parents sent me here	23	29.0
Close to home	5	6.0
Regional office sent me here	5	6.0
I had no choice	13	15.5
My good passing rate	32	40.5
My poor passing rate	1	1.5
Total	81	100

N=81

Learners were requested to indicate their academic performance as shown in Table 4. The results indicate that 26.5% performed between 51-60%, another 26.5% of participants performed between 61-70%, 17% performed between 71-80%, and 15.5% performed from 81% and above, whereas 12.5% performed between 40-50%. A small percentage (1%) of participants performed below 40%.

Table 4: Learners' academic performance

Performance	F	%
below 40%	1	1.0
40-50%	10	12.5
51-60%	21	26.5
61-70%	21	26.5
71-80%	13	17.0
81% and above	13	15.5
Missing System	2	2.0
Total	81	100.0

N=81

4.3 FINDINGS BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH LIFE SKILLS TEACHERS AND LEARNERS' REPRESENTATIVES

4.4 COUNCIL MEMBERS

In the first stage of the research, the researcher developed a drafted anti-bullying programme and guidelines by utilising information from anti-bullying programmes as employed in other countries, as well as other information from existing literature. Based on this drafted programme, interviews were conducted with key informants to gain understanding of their pre-existing knowledge of bullying and to obtain their contributions to the finalisation of the programme. Key informants, consisting of Life Skills teachers and LRC members, were interviewed to obtain their views and contributions to the finalising of the developed programme. These participant interviews were crucial at this stage in order to respond to two of the research objectives which

aimed at exploring options for the development of anti-bullying guidelines, as well as the development of the programme itself. Their earlier involvement assisted in making improvements to the draft programme and to contextualise it. Due to the fact that the draft programme was developed before the interviews with LSTs and LRCs, interview questions were drawn from the content of the draft programme and other existing anti-bullying programmes, guided by the research objectives. After the interviews, key informants were also given an opportunity to look at the draft programme and add additional information they thought needed to be part of the programme content, as well as to make some necessary recommendations. The findings from the key informants were employed to make meaningful adjustments to the programme before its implementation.

Life Skills teachers (LSTs) and LRCs were asked in a structured interview to give their opinions and experiences related to bullying at their schools and suggest ways to help improve the drafted anti-bullying programme. The findings from LSTs and LRCs are presented simultaneously since both groups were given almost the same interview questions. It also simplifies comparison of responses from the two groups. The reason for choosing LSTs as key informants was that they were the ones to implement the programme in Life Skills lessons and they were expected to have rich information since they were also responsible for counselling learners at schools. Counselling might have exposed them to cases of bullying and they could employ those real life experiences to aid in the development and implementation of the programme.

4.3.1 Definition of bullying by LSTs and LRCs

In the research interview, LSTs and LRCs were first asked to define bullying. The majority of Life Skills teachers' definition of bullying included the following: bullying as unwanted or bad behaviour or actions towards other people, especially towards other learners, for example, threats, teasing, mistreatment or physical violence in order to control the person. Another interesting definition was that "bullying is a highly contagious disease whereby troubled and sick individuals find power to intimidate others in order to heal their troubled souls." In this case, a bully is classified as a sick member of the school community, suffering from a disease, called bullying, which can easily infect other kids in the environment to become either victims, bullies or witnesses. Another LST concurred with the above definition by saying bullying is a term employed to describe troubled individuals who find power to intimidate others in order to heal their troubled souls.

On the other hand, some LRCs defined bullying as a well prepared act by one person to make another person's life difficult by beating or mocking that person in a forceful way. Another participant defined bullying as emotions of individuals that turn to be aggressive and, in most cases, this individual treats others badly by beating and domineering acts. In the end, both LSTs and LRCs had one common term for bullying which is "making other people's lives miserable". Some participants indicated that the term "bullying" led to some learners being labelled and it carried a stigma; thus, the term should not be employed further and a new term should replace it in future.

4.3.2 Identifying perpetrators of bullying

After the definition of the term, bullying, LSTs and LRCs was asked how they identified perpetrators of bullying at school. Some participants indicated that such learners at times tended to be defensive when approached. Some indicated that perpetrators of bullying showed aggressive behaviour and did not follow school rules which caused other learners to become scared of them because of their controlling personalities. LRCs indicated that the most common signs displayed by the perpetrators of bullying were beating and grabbing other learners, demonstrated through extreme use of force. Some bullies made fun of others and said mean things to them even in the presence of teachers. According to some participants, some perpetrators were popular and commanded respect from fellow learners but they, themselves, had no respect for anyone, not even the school principal. LRCs indicated that some perpetrators engaged in bullying in hiding, while displaying none of the signs indicated above, as they acted innocently when teachers were around. These were mostly perpetrators who only bullied because other learners were also bullying. "Perpetrators are powerless and weak individuals trying to find power in the scariest way," said LSTs.

4.3.3 Identifying victims of bullying

The third question focused on how participants identified victims of bullying in the classrooms in particular and school ground in general. Participants indicated that victims of bullying always looked vulnerable but rebellious at times when you wanted to discuss their behaviour. They appeared to live in fear of the unknown and in most cases were very uncomfortable. Some victims tended to stay away from school for many days with no valid reason. They appeared withdrawn from the rest of the group, and did not mingle

with other learners in sports activities or during break time. “You will find them sitting lonely in the corner, all by themselves. They have few friends or have no friends at all”. At times, victims suffer from unknown sicknesses which are usually caused by fear and anxiety. Some participants identified victims as learners who had told them that they were scared to come to school without giving them a valid reason for their fear and at times cry for no reason. It can be observed in their school attendance, as they are often absent. There were some participants who indicated that it was difficult for them to tell who were victims of bullying since they had no clue of the signs of bullying; hence, identification was a “mission impossible.”

4.3.4 Types of bullying witnessed by participants

Participants were asked about the common types of bullying they had witnessed or that were reported to them. The majority of participants indicated that the most common type of cases of bullying was learners being called names. They were also aware of learners whose money was taken away from them. Victims were forced by senior learners (mostly learners in Grades 11 and 12) to give away all their possessions, be it their lunch boxes, money, clothes or anything that they felt that young learners did not deserve to have. “You cannot say no when senior learners start demanding things from you. You just have to give before they punish you,” said one LRCs member.

Participants said that, of late, bullying had become common among school going children that are on Facebook, as well as WhatsApp. Learners had WhatsApp groups, and sometimes those groups were formed purely to bully other learners and discuss them on that platform. In most cases, bullying on these platforms were about physical looks. Body shaming, as a form of bullying, was identified as very common among learners.

Some participants indicated that learners who had different physical appearances, such as being albinos or those with disabilities, were more at risk of being bullied. It was always: “pick anyone out that is different and deal with his/her differences,” according to one participant. Those with big foreheads were called “solar panels” or “NORED”, an electricity company operating in the North of Namibia.”

Furthermore, name calling was also associated with the names of the learners. According to the LST, it is a common practice in the north that children are likely to be named after an event that happened during their birth. Sometimes those names can be offending or shameful, but parents would still name their children in that way to send the message to the neighbour or their enemies. Names such as Mwalengwa, Ingavalyedu, Ndayolanombwa, and many more, are likely to put the child at risk of bullying. The LST, furthermore, indicated that sometimes learners did not even mention their real names for the fear of bullying.

It was clear that many learners were bullied on social media on a daily basis. According to participants, one common form of bullying was that of spreading fake stories about others. The stories were shared on Facebook through the posting of pictures or videos. The pictures and videos were often about shaming some learners. Blackmailing also led to media bullying. Some participants indicated that bullying also occurred in their inboxes, especially on Facebook and WhatsApp, where bullies sent private messages. Some participants indicated that learners’ physical appearance could be the basis of bullying. For instance, shy learners, obese learners and learners with physical disabilities could be vulnerable to bullying. “Fat children are told not to eat their lunch boxes because their bodies do not need food. You will find other learners grabbing their food and make fun of them because of their bodies,” said one participant.

There were cases of learners with the skin problem, “vitiligo”, which causes white patches of skin on various parts of the body. These learners were bullied and called names such as “cow, zebra or black and white cow”. Some participants indicated that girls with pimples all over their faces due to puberty were bullied as well. To illustrate this, one participant who experienced bullying due to her looks, indicated that, “the most difficult period of my life was having pimples last year. You want to remove the top skin so that learners will not see your pimples. Pimples destroyed my confidence and led to more bullying as I was trying to hide myself. I was called names due to pimples. Some learners will ask if I slept with someone (had sex with a man); some will say I was sick, some will say I was pregnant. There was always a reason and I was very stressed by their comments. I am happy now my mum took me to the skin doctor and I am okay. No one is bullying me anymore.”

There were learners who identified teachers as the bullies. LRCs indicated that teachers did bully learners who were not performing well at school, or sometimes they just did not like the learners. “There is a teacher at our school who is the best bully. She will call learners names and shame them in front of other learners. Sometimes, learners will just dodge her lessons because of the way she treats them. She is more on shaming learners”. “Every learner is scared of her. You should never get on the wrong side of that teacher, you will regret,” said one LRCs.

Regarding which cases of bullying could be seen as more severe than others and be dealt with first, the majority of participants indicated that cases of beating were more severe than name calling because the victim suffered physical pain. However, there were some participants who said, “All cases of bullying are equally bad”. Another participant said,

“Those who are beaten should be given the first treatment rather than those who are only called names. Physical bullying should be dealt with first before other cases because the learner might be injured.”

Some participants regarded all cases to be severe because all of them affected learners in different ways. It depended on who was being affected and how the person bullied handled the case. Many participants felt that bullying on social networks could be worse because many people were witnessing and contributing to it. It can destroy someone’s self-esteem. “All cases of bullying should be attended to equally,” said one participant.

4.3.5 Causes of bullying

Both groups of key informants were asked to identify the root causes of bullying at their schools. Responses to the question were for the purpose of obtaining anti-bullying guidelines needed in the fight against bullying.

4.3.5.1 *Alcohol abuse and environmental issues*

Despite the Namibian law stating that alcohol should not be consumed by people under the age of 18, it was not the case in most schools as alcohol and drug abuse was identified as the root cause of bullying by both LSTs and LRCs. “Children who drink alcohol were identified to be trouble makers in schools and were likely to turn out as perpetrators of bullying because they make uninformed decisions once drunk. Children as young as 15 years are coming to school drunk,” said one participant. “Children are even drinking alcohol with parents; it is a major concern in our school. Even if you call the parents in, they see nothing wrong with their children’s actions because they drink together,” said another LST. Those children were likely to cause chaos in school.

4.3.5.2 *Culture*

Culture was identified as another cause of bullying. LSTs indicated that culture could influence either the victim to be bullied or the perpetrator to bully others. “Some cultures encourage children, especially girls to be submissive and this leads them to become victims of bullying. Other cultures encourage boys to show their manhood through the use of physical force, and this can lead to those children becoming bullies,” said another participant. It is not only culture in general, but school culture can also play a role in bullying. “At my school, initiation is allowed. It is part of our school culture to bully new learners. All Grade 8 learners are expected to be bullied. At times, teachers are the ones telling you what to do with the new learners. They will initiate the bullying activities. Bullying is promoted at my school and as a learner; you cannot run away from your school culture. You are forced to participant,” said a member of the LRC.

4.3.5.3 *Lack of love*

Another cause of bullying identified by LSTs was learners who tended to bully others for attention-seeking purposes as they found courage and strength in bullying. Bullying validated their existence. They tended to bully others in search of the attention which they did not receive from either their friends or parents. “Bullying is like a drug which makes them feel good, high and powerful,” said one participant. These were learners who had poor relationships with their parents or come from abusive family backgrounds. In most cases, they have no relationship with other learners as well,” said one LST. LSTs indicated that not only perpetrators of bullying were suffering from low self-esteem but low-self-esteem could be part of a victim as well. Some learners were bullied because of the low self-esteem they displayed, as they could not stand up for themselves.

Those who were bullying others because of their low self-esteem were broken from inside and wanted to validate their lives by bullying others, said LSTs.

4.3.5.4 Social status

Some participants said that learners from well-off families always wanted to act superior towards others and they tended to bully learners who were regarded as coming from poor families. They had a show-off syndrome that affected children from marginalised and poor families. According to LSTs and LRCs, perpetrators were likely to target those learners because of the way they dressed or the food they brought to class. “It is hard to have parents who cannot afford cool stuff (such as the latest cell phones, iPhone, iPad, designer clothes, etc.) at our school, it is not easy. People laugh at the food you bring to school, you end up not bringing any because you are embarrassed to take out your lunch box and eat. Bullies can even throw your food away saying it is food for dogs,” said one LRC who identified herself as a victim of bullying. In the school hostel, the learners from a higher social class could even force other learners to iron their clothes and, when they did not want to, they would threaten them or beat them up. Children from orphanages or children’s centres of safety were also likely to be bullied because of their social status in society. They were called derogatory names that were considered suitable for their real life circumstances.

It was also indicated that children from vulnerable families find it difficult especially girls when they are on their menstrual cycle as they are unable to buy sanitary pads. “Some girls will be sitting in the class for the whole day, because they are scared that

they will mess up with their school uniform and being bullied by the boys” said Life Skill teacher.

4.3.5.5 No bullying topics discussed at school

At all four schools, LRCs indicated that bullying was not a priority topic of discussion at their schools, and this led to bullying because learners thought that no one cared. Learners did not have a clear understanding of bullying because it was not discussed. “We hardly talk about bullying at this school. Even if the teachers see that it is happening, everyone is quiet about it. We do not talk about it. It is a taboo perhaps and this might have led to more bullying,” one LRCs member indicated. “Even in Life Skills classes, no bullying topic is being discussed. As a teacher, I cannot divert from the syllabus just to incorporate bullying topics because I have a syllabus to cover and the time allocated to it is very important. Otherwise, if I change the topics, I will not finish, and it will call for your disciplinary hearing,” said the LST

4.3.5.6 Poor anti-bullying school rules

A lack of proper anti-bullying school rules was another cause of bullying highlighted in the interviews. Participants believed that there were no rules that were meant to fight directly against bullying. “School rules are there, but there is no single rule talking about bullying, it is not a priority and is not talked about when rules are presented to the learners and parents at the beginning of the year,” said LRCs. “You cannot even see the notice on the noticeboard talking about bullying. It is like, bullying does not exist, and what we do is to pretend that our schools are heaven on earth,” said a LST. Another LST went to add on to the lack of the implementation of school rules by saying, “Schools

failed to implement rules aimed at fighting bullying. There is no rules at all, hence learners are bullying without any care”.

4.3.5.7 Teachers' attitudes

Some LRCs members indicated that teachers who were biased and tended not to treat learners equally were also a major cause of bullying in their school because they frustrated learners who were discriminated against. These learners ended up bullying those learners who were favoured and treated as special by teachers. They would call them names, such as “Teacher X’s handbag, teacher Y’s pet, etc.” Some teachers also favoured learners from well off families, as well as learners who performed well, either in sports or academically. “Some teachers treat learners with no respect at all. They are the culprits of bullying. Teachers are no longer role models. They bully and insult without any care,” said some LRC members

4.3.5.8 Family set-up

In the interview, some factors associated with bullying, common in two schools in the Oshana region, were highlighted. These were related to household problems, lack of parental involvement, as well as the lack of a father figure in the family. Domestic violence was also linked to bullying. “Violent families are likely to produce bullies, because even their parents bully each other at home as well as bullying teachers when they are invited to school meetings or disciplinary hearings. They will ask teachers, do you know who I am?” stated one participant. Some participants linked bullying to family background. The way children were brought up would determine their behaviour at school. For example, children who were brought up in homes where parents were always fighting might display aggressive behaviour at school.

4.3.5.9 Academic performance

According to LRC members, bullying at schools was also influenced by individual's academic performance. Learners with poor academic performing at high performing schools were bullied by learners who did well at school. "I was called names just because I do not know Mathematics. The boy in my class started calling me 'Algebra-enemy'. I took it as a joke at first, but later on, it did not stop. All learners started calling me Algebra," said one participant. Interestingly, this did not only happen to learners performing poorly because excellent performing learners at poor performing schools were equally bullied. "If a teacher asked a question and I know the answer, I always pretend not to know. Learners in my class think I know too much and they call me names such as witch, computer, and other bad names for knowing too much. This was not the case at my previous school," said another participant.

4.3.5.10 Learners' HIV status and relationships

Children who were known to be HIV positive were also at the receiving end of school bullying. "When I go outside to take my medication, some learners will make funny comments and telling you that you are a dead man walking," said one victim. Some participants indicated that these learners were bullied and questioned why they were at school if they knew that they would die soon. Not only that, they were also discriminated against as some learners did not want to be seen with them or did not want to work in groups with them. "It was important for parents to inform the school about their children's HIV-status, but in return, some learners were treated badly because teachers revealed the information to their fellow learners and they ended up bullying them," said one LST.

Some girls bullied each other over boyfriends. “It is funny, but true. Girls only bully each other when there is a boy involved, they will fight for that handsome boy,” said one LRC member. Some acts of bullying were only caused by girls who thought that the boy belonged to them and not to their peer. A group of girls could team up against a girl who was dating the boy and they would continue bullying her until they broke up. Bullying based on relationships could also be spread on social media. Girls often tried to tarnish the names of those whom they did not like with the aim that they should be dumped.

4.3.5.11 Social media

The social media was also singled out as a major contributing factor to bullying as many learners ended up joining or commenting on fellow learners who were being bullied on Facebook or WhatsApp’s groups. In this way, some learners become indirect perpetrators of bullying. When learners started commenting on posts put on social media without defending the victim, they were accelerating bullying. Some groups created on social media were purely done with the intention of bullying other learners. “Sometimes, such groups are even created with the name and picture of the person being bullied. This allows everyone who has access to the group to read the comments and add what they think about the person being bullied. It is bad,” said an LRC participant.

LSTs indicated that learners who were bullied on social media were more exposed than those bullied physically because social platforms were connected to many learners. This led to victims feeling sad and staying away from school, which in the end affected their academic performance.

4.3.5.12 *Revenge and frustration*

Some LST participants indicated that some perpetrators bullied others because they were either bullied themselves or just frustrated by life itself because not all perpetrators initially planned to bully other learners; some did it because they were also hurt and wanted other learners to pay for the pain caused.

4.3.5.13 *Sexual orientation*

Some learners were bullied due to their different sexual orientation. According to one LST participant, gays and lesbians were likely to receive the heat of bullying. "Some learners are bullied because learners believe that they are different from others. They are bullied in school break, where other learners will make fun of them especially those who are men but act like ladies. They will be bullied in shower time and when they use the toilets. They will be questioned about their sexual status," said one LST.

4.3.6 Effects of bullying

In the interviews, participants were asked to indicate the effects of bullying that they had observed at their schools. Below are some of the findings identified by participants in the interview.

4.3.6.1 *Academic failure*

The majority of participants indicated that bullying led to academic failure and lack of concentration because victims missed, or dropped out of, classes due to fear of the bullies. According to LST participants, bullying created a lack of interest in school among learners. As indicated above, bullying did not only affect poor performing

learners, but all learners of different abilities were affected. All categories of performers can be at risk of academic failure due to bullying.

4.3.6.2 Revenge

Participants indicated that bullied learners might take revenge on innocent learners and make them their victims. “The problem of bullying is the cycle that it creates at school. You see an innocent soul being bullied, you help him/her today, the next thing you see tomorrow the same person you helped is bullying others. You get shocked on how all that happens. What turned that innocent person into a bully? But you understand that, it is the only way they can be feared by others and it gives them some muscle,” said one LST participant. “Bullying is a contagious disease that if not cured earlier, it will spread to all corners of school. It needs to be treated fast when detected,” said another teacher. Until action is taken, revenge bullying can create further bullying at school and the chain of bullying expands.

4.3.6.3 Stress, self-blame and suicidal thoughts

Although there were no cases of death related to bullying recorded in all schools where the research was carried out, Life Skills teachers revealed that in counselling with victims of bullying they indicated that they wished “they can just die and leave all the bullying problems. What is the use of living if school is a hell for them? School is supposed to be a place of harmony. These children are here to realise their dreams, and if schools do not allow them to do that, then learners find no purpose of living,” said one LST.

4.3.6.4 Corruption

According to some LSTs, another interesting finding about the effects of bullying was the connection between bullying and corruption. Some teachers indicated that bullying and corruption had something in common: both actions could easily corrupt the mind and a person could not do without it until an intervention was undertaken. Bullying was perpetrated through the chains of various people just like corruption, and it could be turned into a form of corrupt practice as well. It is done through bribery as depicted in the following phrase: “If you do not report me to the teachers, I will not bully you or give me money so that I will not bully your sister”. Such acts of bribery could easily cause witnesses to turn a blind eye to acts of bullying.

4.3.6.5 Shame

Participants indicated that victims of bullying felt ashamed and powerless which led to the development of low self-esteem. Some participants associated bullying with the shame it caused. Victims felt ashamed of the acts done to them. They blamed themselves and this led to self-inflicted pain. In the process, they often stayed away from school, and it affected their academic performance at school. “There is a girl in my class who is bullied. She sometimes missed classes, hiding in the school toilet just to avoid the bullies. She cannot handle bullying, and she feels that people are laughing at her all the times”. Shame leads to stress and lack of concentration in the lessons.

4.3.6.6 Positive learning competition

Despite the negative effects identified, some participants felt that bullying was necessary and made a positive contribution to learning. There were participants who felt that bullying contributed positively to school performance and good behaviour. “Learners,

who are bullied because of their poor academic performance, are motivated to do more because they would not want to be bullied all the time. So, nothing is serious about it; it is in a way encouraging. Some will end up being top performers just because they were bullied based on their poor academic performances,” said one LRC participant. “Learners, who are bullied because they are pregnant, also help to discourage other learners from getting pregnant because they do not want to be bullied. As bad as bullying sound, there are good bullying activities which try to educate learners not to do negative things,” said one LST participant.

To concur with the positive results of bullying indicated above, one LST participant indicated that bullying had no negative effects, but people took it out of context: “bullying has been there for years. I do not understand why everyone is so serious about it. It does not deserve all the attentions given because it is just a normal action between innocent learners. Sometimes we just have cry-babies at school who get offended by everything. They must deal with their lives and be strong. It is unfortunate that some things do not die and bullying is one of those things that will be there in many years to come. Bullying will not kill learners, but instead, it just let them grow some thick skin”.

4.3.7 Anti-bullying systems in place

Participants were asked to indicate methods or systems to deal with bullying that were in place at their schools.

4.3.7.1 No anti-bullying guidelines

Both LRCs and LSTs agreed that there were no proper or clear channels of handling bullying at school but, in most cases, LSTs did call the perpetrators and talked to them. Schools had no clear guidelines of how to handle cases of bullying.

Both groups of participants also indicated that the only document available at school was the school rules and punishment given to learners once they had bullied others. The learners involved were only sent to disciplinary hearings and bullies were suspended from school for a week or two.

4.3.7.2 Counselling programmes

Despite the agreement from participants that there were no procedures to deal with bullying, there were, however, some LSTs who indicated that they had counselling programmes in place which were only given to victims by teacher counsellors. However, some LRCs disagreed by saying that counselling was not effective because they never heard about it as perpetrators of bullying were not counselled but rather suspended from school or just punished. In serious cases, counselling was offered by the regional school counsellors at the regional education office. Although no positive intervention strategies were in place for perpetrators of bullying except disciplinary hearings, as indicated earlier, school principals did invite the perpetrator's parents to discuss the case and a decision could be made by both parties. At one school, participants indicated that they had a bullying recovering room where they sent victims and perpetrators of bullying at different time intervals. This gave them an opportunity to reflect on what had happened. It is a meditation kind of intervention. Learners involved in bullying were given an

opportunity to write about the event and indicate things they would do in future in order to avoid the same occurrences.

4.3.8 Suggested anti-bullying strategies by participants

Participants were asked what they thought should be done or put in place at school and what type of action should be taken in order to fight bullying. Their suggestions were grouped according to the solutions given by victims, perpetrators and witnesses’.

4.3.8.1 Victims’ prevention and intervention strategies

4.3.8.1.1 Individual intervention programme

The majority of Life Skills teachers indicated that victims should be given individual, specialised intervention since their cases differed from person to person. Each case should be treated differently and in a unique way. Cases should be handled based on the type of bullying that was perpetrated against the victim. However, all participants suggested that all victims should receive counselling. “Give them counselling so that they can deal with the reality of what happened to them. It will give them peace and closure,” said one LST.

In addition to counselling, teachers should be there to give day-to-day support to victims and show that they cared about them and felt their pain with them. “Write a small note of encouragement, tell them to be strong and that you are there for them in case they need your support. Assure them of protection and love. Assure the victim that you will not judge them, and they should feel free to talk to you. As long as you are not forcing them to speak, just assure them that you are available for them any time they feel like they need someone to talk to,” a participant indicated.

4.3.8.1.2 Peer support

Another suggested way of helping victims was a peer support system. “Peer support systems and peer counselling should be in place. This is important because peers will know how to support each other and sometimes they do not need to involve teachers in their affairs. A topic on peer support will be useful to give learners skills on how to be there for each other”. LRC participants felt that it would be good if the school created a buddy system where each learner was attached to a friend who would always be there to support him or her. Buddies should be trained in how to handle bullying victims and how to give them support. No victim should be allowed to suffer in silence without support. “Grade 8 learners are the ones in trouble when it comes to bullying because they are new at school. The school should be able to find ways of allocating them with senior learners to assist and protect them from bullying,” said one LRC member.

4.3.8.1.3 Identification of the signs of bullying and teachers’ training

Some participants indicated that it would be great for teachers to check for warning signs constantly to identify victims and help well in advance. “Warning signs are always there but as teachers, we tend to ignore them or we just do not know at all. Sometimes we are scared to approach the learner because we have no clue of what to do next even if there is evidence of bullying. The moment we know what to do, we will be able and be comfortable to assist once we see the signs,” said one participant.

Teachers needed training in the identification of bullying to gauge symptoms accurately in order to apply the right intervention strategies. This would enable teachers to detect signs displayed by victims of bullying without even waiting for learners to report the

cases to them. “Basic training on bullying is very crucial for all teachers,” suggested a Life Skill teacher.

“The battle of bullying must be won in the classroom before it goes to the school playground. Life skills teachers are the soldiers on the ground. They must defend the rights of children in their classrooms. But this comes with proper training. Only when they know what they are doing that they can effectively fight bullying,” said one Life Skills teacher.

4.3.8.1.4 Protection order

One of the participants suggested that victims should be given a protection order against their perpetrators. Both victim and perpetrator should only be in one area if there was no a teacher around. The protection order should be signed by both, the victim and perpetrator, where they would declare a harm-free environment. This would definitely encourage victims to report cases of bullying, knowing that they are protected.

4.3.8.1.5 Children’s rights advocacy

Some participants indicated that victims needed to be taught about their rights which would help them develop self-awareness and self-respect. They would know that whatever was happening to them was not right and that they were not responsible for other people’s actions. Knowing their rights would be another way of helping them understand that bullying was harmful and should be condemned.

4.3.8.1.6 Bullying responses

“Teachers should teach victims assertive skills rather than aggressive skills. Help them so that they can help themselves, they do not need to run to you every day when they

have a problem,” said one LST participant. Most importantly, learners must avoid a victim mentality. They should be trained to understand that they were not victims but survivors of action done to them; therefore, they should not feel guilty. Victims should never react in a vulnerable way when being bullied because such reaction just worsened the situation. Skills in what to do after bullying had been perpetrated were very important. Victims needed to bounce back; they needed to be resilient. All those skills needed to be instilled in them by Life Skills teachers.

Pre-bullying skills were equally important. Victims did not only need skills after bullying had happened, but they needed skills in how to prevent bullying from happening. It was important to assist learners identified to be at risk of bullying find help and rehabilitate their behaviour.

“Learners must be taught how to deal with bullying as well as how to be strong after bullying happened to them,” said one participant. It was important for victims to know how to respond to bullying when it happened to them. Victims should be advised not to retaliate by using weapons or any other harmful ways of hurting others. Victims should know about the services available to them and be assured of their safety. When learners knew better, it was healthy for them and they acted better.

“They should be helped with problem solving skills as well,” said one participant. There were mixed feelings on whether learners should fight back when bullied or keep quiet. Some participants indicated that victims should fight back. “Victims should stand their ground and fight back. Only when you fight back that you scare the bully”. On the other hand, some participants felt that victims should not fight back. It would be better for them to be silent and not react to bullying. “The more you fight with a bully, the more

you are inviting future fights. It is better if you just keep quiet and pretend that nothing happened. It is better if you just ignore the bully, they will naturally stay away,” said one participant.

“My teacher said bullies are cowards and cowards need to be dealt with when they bully others. I am told not to run away from the bully, but face them. I am not allowing bullies to ruin my day, I will deal with them myself,” said another participant.

4.3.8.1.7 Safe reporting channels

Some participants indicated that schools should be safe for victims to report the cases because if they were not protected, it would be a waste of time to report cases of bullying. Some participants suggested that schools should have reporting boxes or land lines where learners could report freely, without being scared that they would be identified. As long as they indicated the name of the bully and name of the Grade, that would be the only information needed to start working on the matter.

“Victims must know where they should report bullying in an event it happened to them. There should be no confusion of where to go. At some schools, victims are not sure whether they should first report to their class teachers, school principal or Life Skills teacher. There must be clear channels emphasised in the school rules, however, the channels of reporting should not prevent victims from reporting if the appointed person is not in school or not accessible by learners. Learners should be comfortable with the person they are reporting bullying to, and in most cases, Life Skills teacher is the right person,” said one LST.

4.3.8.1.8 *Day off for victims*

Some participants suggested that victims should be given a day off from school to recover because bullying was a sickness on its own. “When you are bullied, your mind is not functioning well. Your whole body feels like it is paining everywhere. It will be good if you just stay away from school for a few days, far away from people who were causing your sickness. Your leave should be your medication, because you just need to be alone and far from bullies,” said one LRC member. Bullying should be regarded as a sickness that not only affected the victims but the entire school population. Schools should have safe places for victims, like a cooling off room. “This would help victims calm down and come back to their senses,” said one LST.

4.3.8.1.9 *Victims’ voices*

Teachers should allow victims to express themselves, but most importantly, they should as well allow them to give suggestions on how they should be treated and the help they needed. “Sometimes teachers will just tell you that you need to be sent for counselling at some centres, but they did not discuss it with you; if that is what you need. They should allow victims to be involved in the decisions they are making. What if I do not like counselling?” said one LRC participant.

4.3.8.1.10 *Social media management*

Since there were many social platforms where bullying could be perpetrated, participants suggested that victims who were bullied on Facebook or other social networks should be advised to block the bullies or deactivate their accounts because sometimes bullies would create additional anonymous accounts to continue bullying them. Parents should also know and control what their children were doing online in

order to avoid risky behaviour because bullying was likely to be perpetrated there, said one LST.

4.3.8.2 Perpetrators' prevention and intervention strategies

4.3.8.2.1 Punish the perpetrators

The majority of participants emphasised the need for perpetrators to be punished heavily and expelled from school so that the rest of the learners could learn a lesson. Punishing the perpetrator was regarded by the majority of participants as the best way of creating awareness and prevention. Although punishment was suggested by both groups of participants, some LSTs felt that it should not be done in a way that harmed the perpetrator. It should be employed as an intervention measure. "When perpetrators are expelled from school, it does not do much help, but instead, cause so much harm to the learner's progress at school. They are sent in the street just to hang around with bad people, and when they return back to school, their behaviour are worse than before," indicated one LST.

4.3.8.2.2 Implementation of strict school rules

The majority of participants indicated that school rules had to be strict and all learners should adhere to them. "It is better to have strict rules, and nothing will happen, rather than having no rules, and things are happening, and you end up suspending learners, which in the end, does not solve the root cause of the problem," said one LST. Another LST indicated that "school rules are too lenient and learners do not follow them because there is no respect for them. Rules are just in black and white, but they are not implemented. In fact, there are no specific rules talking about bullying. Bullying rules should be enforced if we need to see change".

Although the majority of participants indicated that bullying should be addressed through school rules and be dealt with as a matter of urgency, some participants thought school rules should not be there to address bullying as bullying was not a serious problem that needed special attention. Some learners indicated that they had no suggestion to whether the school rules should be enforced in order to address bullying related problems at schools. “I have no suggestion because I do not care what will happen. Whether bullied or not, I do not care about bullying as I will deal with it on my own; there is no one to deal with your problem if you cannot do it yourself. I will deal with bullies on my own but this will depend on who bullied me. Each bully will be handled according to his power. If the bully is small, I will fight back,” said one participant.

Some participants were condoning bullying and saw nothing wrong with it. They thought that rules should not be applied. “Bullying is part and parcel of development. Learners should expect to be bullied. Only the lucky ones survive from it. There is no need to bring new rules because bullying is happening in all schools. Why should people stress about it, learners must just be strong. It will disappear with time,” said one LRC member.

4.3.8.2.3 Educating perpetrators about bullying

According to LSTs, the most important thing is to teach perpetrators what bullying was all about and how it affected other learners and themselves personally. That should be followed by a counselling and rehabilitation programme which aimed at helping them deal with the root cause of the problem. “Teach bullies on ways to keep and maintain healthy relationships with other learners. They should know that they are part of the

community and they are loved. Teach them how to be tolerant with one another and accept differences without hurting others,” said the participant.

Perpetrators should be made to understand that victims were not the problem, but their bullying behaviour was the problem, and that was why the target of fighting bullying should focus on them rather than on victims. When they changed their behaviour, there would be no victims. They should be forced or encouraged to meditate, as it helps people understand their situations and circumstances. “We do meditation at home once we misbehave or do something wrong. Mum will keep you in your room corner for an hour without talking or doing anything. After one hour, you should report to her of what you will do better in future. I think this will help them instead of punishing them. Let them work on their inner soul. That is what my father says. Deal with your inner soul and clean the bad parts before they come out,” said a participant.

4.3.8.2.4 Shame the perpetrators

There were contradicting views of how to handle perpetrators, as some participants felt that they should be named and shamed while others strongly believed that shaming would make things worse. “The golden rule is never to criticise a bully in front of other learners. Criticising a bully in front of others does not help, it just makes a bully more rebellious, bitter and he or she would not want to co-operate,” said one of the Life Skills teachers. But LRCs believed that shaming a bully in front of other learners was the best way to deal with perpetrators of bullying. “Call the bully in front of the school assembly. Tell them that their actions are bad and they must apologise and promise that they would not do it again. No one likes to be humiliated, so, this will teach them a lesson and no one will try it again,” said one LST.

4.3.8.2.5 Teach bible studies

From a Christianity point of view, LRCs indicated that perpetrators needed prayers and God in their lives. “Invite pastors of different religions to schools so that they can pray for the bullies to repent. Christians believe that bullies need deliverance. They should be taught about the bible, how God love his people. They must love one another. They can only love other people and themselves if they believe in God,” said one LRC member.

4.3.8.3 Witnesses’ prevention and intervention strategies

Participants also indicated the support that should be given to witnesses of bullying. Witnesses of bullying are a key component in the fight against bullying on the school grounds; hence, it is equally important that they know their prevention and intervention strategies.

4.3.8.3.1 Reporting and protection order

Teachers should be able to listen to witnesses without judging them. “Witnesses will only be able to report if they know that teachers will not say that they are lying. In some cases, teachers do not want to listen to learners who are reporting bullying to them. They are already having their minds made up. It is discouraging when you are reporting to the teacher, just to be told that you are lying, or you just want to create stories,” said one LRC member.

Schools should ensure that witnesses reporting cases of bullying were protected and that they had no reason to be scared. “Sometimes witnesses will think that bullies will come after them if they report bullying to the teachers. They need to be assured of their safety at school. As LRCs, we have seen witnesses who are scared of going to sport activities

because they saw bullying happening there,” said LRC member. Participants also emphasised the “let them feel free to report bullying” strategy. Participants felt that it would be good if witnesses were made to feel free to report without any fear of retaliation. Teachers should be able to keep the identity of witnesses unknown. Teachers should practise a high level of confidentiality if they wanted learners to trust them. Trust was crucial when it came to the reporting of bullying. “There should be a protection order to help witnesses not to become victims of bullying after reporting the cases because bullies can take revenge,” said one LST.

Participants stated that witnesses of bullying should be taught the importance of reporting acts of bullying immediately, and this commitment could be made when all learners sign anti-bullying contracts. When learners pledged against bullying, it clearly gave them the responsibility to report cases of bullying perpetrated against other learners, even if they were not directly affected. “It is important to teach them what to do when they see bullying happening and as a school unit, reporting channels should be made open, without experiencing long bureaucracy which can prevent learners from reporting,” said a LST.

Some participants felt that witnesses should not report bullying. There were participants who felt that reporting bullying was not the witnesses’ business. They should remain silent if they did not want retaliation from bullies. “They do not need to do anything because they are just witnesses. They were not bullied, what is their problem? Reporting must be done by people who were bullied,” said another participant.

4.3.8.3.2 Counselling for witnesses

Participants indicated that witnesses of bullying needed emotional support. “They also need support such as counselling so that witnessing bullying does not affect them,” said

one participant. As was reported in the case of victims and perpetrators, some participants indicated that witnesses needed counselling because bullying might force them to fear school and think they would be bullied as well. Counselling was also necessary so that witnesses could find closure to what they had experienced.

4.3.8.3.3 Empowerment

Witnesses should be taught about actions that could be taken when helping the victims. They should never become involved in bullying apart from helping the victims. Assertive and resilient skills were both needed by witnesses as that would prevent them from falling into the trap of the bullying cycle. Dealing with both perpetrators and victims might require the witness to have skills needed to handle different situations that might occur. “Sometimes, the perpetrator is the witness’s friend, so, it is difficult for the witness to report his/her friend to the teachers. This requires skills on handling such cases without jeopardising their existing friendship,” said a LST. Empowering witnesses would also help them with skills to assist both perpetrators and victims of bullying.

4.3.8.3.4 Deed of surety for witnesses

In addition, “the most important thing that witnesses can have is assurance that bullying will be dealt with. This is done by supporting them, by showing them that teachers do care and bullying is wrong. Always answer to their fears about what will happen to them. When they report bullying to you, act immediately. This will show them that you care and will always be there for them,” said one of the LSTs. There was no point in reporting bullying while learners knew that there would be no action taken. “It demoralise learners when they are sure that teachers will not do anything about the cases of bullying reported to them,” said one LRC member.

4.3.9 Topics suggested for an anti-bullying programme

LSTs and LRC members were also asked their opinions on topics that could be included in the programme. This was necessary for the researcher to cover the gaps noted in the content of the programme. Below are the topics suggested by participants that they strongly felt needed to be added to the programme.

4.3.9.1 *Causes of bullying*

Participants wished to know the root causes of bullying as they believed that only through knowledge of what exactly caused bullying they would understand how to prevent it and intervene in case it happened. “You can only fight a problem when you know the root cause. You should dig out the root cause. If you treat the signs, that is not going to help,” said one LST.

4.3.9.2 *Roles of witnesses, victims and perpetrators*

Participants wanted to know what should be done by witnesses when they observed bullying. It was not only the roles of witnesses that were highlighted, but also the roles of victims and perpetrators in the bullying cycle. “We want to know what we must do with all the learners involved in bullying. What must we tell them/ who should do what? The roles must be clearly defined in the programme,” said one LST.

4.3.9.3 *Conflict management skills*

LST participants believed that learners should be able to resolve conflicts amicably but they needed to be taught the skills to do that, and such skills could be built into the programme content. “They need to be taught how to solve conflict without hurting each other. We can teach them those skills when we are addressing bullying topics in the

lessons. Those skills must be part of the programme, so that they can be directly included in the lesson,” said one LST.

4.3.9.4 Signs and identification of bullying

The majority of participants indicated that the topic, “Signs and identification of bullying” needed to be a priority because it would help teachers to identify the signs of victims and perpetrators of bullying. The topic regarding what to do next after identification should be discussed in detail so that teachers knew how to assist victims, witnesses and perpetrators.

The programme should be a full package of what to look out for (red signs) and what to do after identification. The whole process from identification until referral should be clearly stipulated in the programme. This was one of the suggested topics by a LST.

4.3.9.5 Reporting procedures

As was indicated regarding the support needed for victims, participants wanted to know the procedures involved in reporting the cases. Reporting bullying to teachers was regarded as the most difficult action as witnesses did not want to be involved for fear of revenge while victims felt that they would rather keep quiet because even if they reported it, nothing happened. LRCs wanted to know the steps they should take when reporting bullying and to whom exactly cases of bullying had to be reported. “When bullying is reported to me, what must I do next? Where must I go? I do not want reporting bullying to me while I know that I cannot take action. The bullying programme must guide us on steps to be taken when it is reported to us, instead of figuring out what to do next,” indicated one LST.

LRCs wanted the programme to have a list of the people at school and beyond who could give support when learners were bullied. The list of people to support the learners should clearly indicate their roles, their contact details and where they could be found.

4.3.9.6 Classroom activities

The majority of participants indicated that there were no activities aiming at reducing bullying, except Life Skills lessons which, in most cases, skipped the bullying lesson as it was seen not as relevant. LRCs, therefore, highlighted some activities which they thought could improve bullying-awareness and prevention at school. There were also suggestions of academic activities that were likely to increase bullying awareness, such as poetry and essay writing competitions about bullying, dramas and role play. At all schools where the research was conducted, learners met for assembly twice or three times per week, and participants believed that talking about bullying at morning assembly would lead to the message reaching all learners at the same time.

Some participants, furthermore, indicated that the programme should include many different activities that could help both learners and teachers in creating bullying prevention and management strategies. Such activities should be manageable and be able to be completed within the allocated classroom lesson timeframe. Activities and language employed should be local and offered in a way that learners could understand. Classroom activities should be able to engage learners and create a full understanding of bullying, its causes and effects, as well as bullying prevention strategies that could be employed. "Learners should not just complete classroom activities for the sake of marks, but the activities should be able to create awareness on school bullying. The activities

should be done in such a way that learners interact with each other and solve problems on their own, through group works,” said one LST.

4.3.9.7 Implementation of an anti-bullying policy

The majority of participants indicated that an anti-bullying policy was needed at school. Schools should be responsible for implementing the policies. The anti-bullying policy should be made compulsory for all schools and its implementation had to be monitored. There was no need to have a policy at school which was not being employed. “Regional school counsellors should ensure that such policy was implemented in schools,” said one LST. “It is the Ministry of Education and Culture’s responsibility in ensuring that learners are safe at all schools across the country. They have a legal responsibility of making sure that an anti-bullying policy is formulated and rolled-out to schools,” said another LST.

4.3.9.8 Media and bullying

Due to the impact of social media in the 21st century, some participants felt that cyber bullying should be a topic of discussion in the fight against bullying because many learners were bullied through that platform. With the high number of learners using technology, such as cell phones for Facebook and WhatsApp, there was a need to put emphasis on cyber bullying which had been neglected for long. “There is too much freedom of speech in Namibia. It is exaggerated. Learners must be taught on how to use media platforms. They need to be taught on what to do and what not to do when on social platforms. Cyber bullying is currently the trend, and it needs to be tackled at school through Life Skills lessons. At times, people are bullying others on Facebook