

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF
BULLYING IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN THE OSHANA EDUCATION REGION OF NAMIBIA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

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MAY 2011

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Abstract

Bullying is regarded as an emotional issue which affects the entire school community. A lot of studies have been carried out in the developed world where it was concluded that bullying has short and long term negative effects on the lives of both victims and perpetrators. In Namibia, apart from this study, no study was carried out in order to determine the nature of bullying in Namibian schools. This is the main reason why this study was initiated in order to look into the extent to which bullying is happening in schools, the causes and effects of bullying, and the strategies used by teachers in order to combat bullying in schools.

A mixed methods research study was carried out. Purposeful sampling was used to select 7 secondary schools in the Oshana Region and 30 learners per school were used for this study. Fifteen learners per school were selected for focus group discussions. Learners were divided into 3 groups, namely: Group A for learners perceived as perpetrators of bullying, Group B for learners perceived as victims of bullying and Group C for learners who were randomly selected. In addition, 5 teachers per school were interviewed during focus group discussions.

The findings revealed that the majority of teachers and learners were aware that bullying took place in their schools. The most common types were physical and emotional bullying. New types of bullying also emerged through the study. Chi-square analysis indicated that there is a relationship between bullying, and school size, school performance, school setting as well as grade repetition. It was revealed that very big

schools and weak performing schools experienced more bullying activities in comparison to medium sized and excellent performing schools.

The causes of bullying varied from school to school. Poor school rules, school setting, and peer pressure emerged to be some of the most common causes of bullying. Bullying has long term effects on the lives of both victims and perpetrators. Ample evidence from the analyses of data showed that bullying contributes negatively to academic performance, discipline in schools and self-esteem. Although the impact of bullying is huge, the findings revealed that there is no ministerial policy which specifically addresses bullying in schools. Each school tends to deal with bullying the way teachers find it best and it seems teachers lack skills on how to handle bullying cases.

In conclusion, bullying in schools is worse than people outside can imagine. Learners and teachers are living in fear of their lives. There is an urgent need for intervention from the policymakers so that anti-bullying policies are introduced in schools. It is never too late to plan but it will be too late to reverse the situation if there is no action taken against bullying in Namibian schools.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. L. M. Mostert who has been there from the onset of this study and never gave up on me. Without her support and encouragement I am sure that this thesis could not have materialized. Professors Zimba and Kasanda, you changed the negative perception I had about research into one of interest to me. I want to thank learners, teachers and principals of selected schools as well as Ms Helena Perestrelo (Regional School Counsellor) and the Oshana Education Directorate, for their positive contribution during the data collection of this study. I need to thank my parents Maano Neliwa and Gebhard Sam, my sisters (Naomi, Saara) and my cousins (Kelao, Wise, Frieda-Butty, Elise, Ndina, Kaende, Shilunga, Ndeya, Rebeka, Shangelao) as well as the entire Odime clan. Helaria, Vaino and Nanhinda, you made my life easier. Flower Chingy, Ndali, Lameka and Tuhafeni, you are my best nieces and nephews. It is also my pleasure to thank my friends Hilma-Domupolo, Lahya, Tshekupe, Hendrina, Martin, Esther, Jerry and Rita for their undivided attention and unconditional love. You are the best friends ever. When I was down, you were there for me. In all the difficult times I went through, you stood by me. Thanks a lot for your support. I am also grateful to Salom Buty's and Gqwede's Families for their hospitality and words of encouragement. My fellow students; Faustina, Severine and Me Aina as well as my colleagues at Khomas Education Directorate, I salute you all. Maggie Kapiye, thanks for keeping on updating my data on your spare time. Thanks a lot to everyone who contributed positively in my life. Lastly, thanks to God for giving me strength to move on, you healed my pain.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandparents who played a major role in my life. The late: Magdalena Mukwamalanga ya Shilongo, Sem Mandume Haludilu and Immanuel Mukamba Neliwa as well as my late cousin Tusnelde Johannes. May your souls rest in peace!

Declarations

I, Aune Ndeumona Sam, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Aune Ndeumona Sam

Date

List of acronyms

LRC : Learners' Representative Council

DC: Disciplinary Committee

CSG: Counselling Support Group

TC: Teacher- Counsellors

NSBA: National School Bullying Awareness Day

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the problem

Schools have traditionally been regarded as a place of peace, harmony and learning. However, this picture is slowly changing. The bullying of children in schools has become a public issue and there is a widespread belief, sharpened by media coverage of particular outstanding incidents, that schools today are places in which chaos and aggression are increasingly encountered (Frude & Gault, 1984). This view is supported by Fishbaugh, Berkeley and Schroth (2003) who said that, in the past, one did not think of schools to be dangerous places but lately one can expect unrest in most of schools, if not all. Balter and Tamis-LeMonda (2006) indicated that exposure to community violence was first identified as a problem that was affecting children's lives at schools, and the fact that our children are living in violent societies has effects on their well being at their schools. The definition of bullying is that it is an activity that occurs where individuals or groups seek to intimidate or persecute others through their actual strength or power (Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2005). Bullying happens everywhere, and it is not about a certain race or gender but it can be done by anyone or to anyone. It does not discriminate and that is why Byrne (1994) states it clearly that, a bully can be a boy, a girl, a man or a woman who usually picks on people who cannot defend themselves. It can happen in any setting where human beings interact with one another, and Namibian schools are no exception.

A study conducted in New York City, revealed that of the youth aged 12-20, 57% reported instances of seeing someone slapped or punched, at their schools, and 47% of instances of bullying in which they themselves were victims of physical assault (Gershoff & Aber, 2006). In another study done in Washington, D.C, 1993, it was found that although the majority of

witnessed violence (68%) occurs near children's homes, much violence (22%) occurs at schools (Byrne, 1994). A study conducted in Namibia by Zimba, Auala and Scott (1997) revealed that about 55% of students agreed that there was a general breakdown of discipline at their schools. This is supported by a study conducted in South African secondary schools by Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2003) which stated that the biggest problem faced by schools, is discipline, as well as incidents of sexual harassment of female students by older male students, and even by some teachers.

In South Africa, bullying and violence have become everyday occurrences in schools. It was stated in a recent study done by the University of Johannesburg that schools are filled with gangs organized along racial lines, bullying, and gambling. The study indicates that pupils are not afraid to use weapons against each other (Li Sik, 2008). According to Hochobeb (2008), everyday many learners wake up being afraid to go to school or institutions of higher learning because of bullying. This is not a good sign of a conducive environment which is required for learning. It affects performance at school and on top of that, bullying has a negative impact on the wellbeing of learners. A lot of research about bullying was conducted in other countries such as Norway and the United States of America. However; there is no information available about bullying in Namibian schools. Due to lack of sources about bullying in Namibian schools, there is no concrete documentation available to guide educators on how to deal with bullying in schools. There is no clear picture of the nature of bullying in Namibian schools and that is why this study was initiated to look into the matter.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Bullying is a major problem in most schools all over the world and Namibia is no exception. According to Wright and Keetley (2003), bullying cases have plagued schools and the reputation of schools for the past two decades with high numbers of bullying cases reported in schools all over the world. Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) reported that bullying keeps children from perceiving school as a safe environment, and many students are anxious about witnessing bullying and fear that they may become victims of bullying if they have not already been targeted. If learners at school are worried and fearful about their safety, then little learning is taking place. Bullying replaces joyful learning with fear and violence. As a result, it contributes to a fearful and intimidating climate that causes many students to feel unwelcome and unsupported at school (Henkin, 2005; Sanders & Phye, 2004). According to Besag (1989), bullying is a covert problem, buried in the subculture of a school. Even the most violent and consistent bullying can remain undetected, sometimes for years, until the victim finally cracks, yet the effects on the victims can be pervasive and long term. Linares and Morin (2006) indicated that about 40% of school drop outs are related to bullying, while 30% of poor academic performances are a result of bullying activities in schools. According to a study conducted by Sullivan, et al., (2005) bullying is linked with psychoactive symptoms and depression. The study further found that victims of bullying tend to have lower self-esteem, are insecure, anxious, over sensitive, withdrawn and always worried. They are therefore likely to bunk lessons for fear of being bullied, drop out of school and have a higher risk for suicide. This is just to show the seriousness of bullying in schools. Hattenstone (2009) states it clearly that, if the problem of bullying is ignored and neglected, bullying in schools is reinforced, or at least condoned. With bullying taking place in schools, the question remains if schools have strategies to deal with bullying. It was indicated in the study conducted by Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) that many teachers ignore bullying

because they believe that they lack adequate skills and training to intervene. In the same vein, some teachers are less likely to challenge or discipline their students since they also fear to be bullied (Jones, 2001). Based on this background, this study investigated the nature of bullying in Namibian schools, the causes of bullying, their effects on learners and teachers, and lastly, the study investigated how the schools are currently handling bullying activities, and the strategies which can be implemented to help alleviate and/or eliminate bullying in schools.

1.3 Questions of the study

This study concentrated on the following questions:

- What is the nature and types of bullying that occur in Secondary Schools in Namibia?
- Who are the victims and perpetrators of bullying?
- What are the causes of bullying in Secondary Schools?
- What are the effects of bullying on learners as perceived by themselves?
- What strategies are the teachers and School Administrators currently using and can use in future in order to eradicate bullying activities in schools?
- What are the similarities and differences of the types of bullying, victims and perpetrators of bullying, causes and effects of bullying with regard to gender, school size, school performance and school setting (urban/rural)?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study provides useful information on the current state of bullying in our schools as well as suggestions for interventions. In most countries, schools have a bullying policy which is not the case in Namibia, so the study findings may help the policy makers to develop a programme which will combat bullying in schools.

The shortage of Namibian based literature shows that there has been little attention given to the study of bullying in schools. There is no policy in place which helps the schools in dealing with bullying and the need exists for it to be understood in Namibian context, so this study aims to contribute to the little data presently available. Based on the preceding discussion, it seems clear that a need exists for a study to be done in Namibia to determine the prevalence of bullying in schools and its impact on students and teachers.

The suggested strategies towards eradicating bullying in schools which came out of this research study may be of help to school principals and teachers on how to deal with bullying in their schools. All in all, the findings of the study could help schools, when faced with bullying behaviour, to know who should do what, how it should be done and when it should be done. It could therefore help the schools to prepare strategies for dealing with bullying as they arise because if bullying goes unchallenged, it sends a message that the practice is accepted in society (Henkin, 2005).

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations which had faced the researcher during the study were as follow:

- ❖ There was little local based literature with regard to bullying in Namibian schools, which affected the study's literature review.
- ❖ Although English language is a medium of instruction, some learners could not express themselves clearly during the discussions; hence, it was time consuming to explain the questions.
- ❖ Some learners were not willing to discuss bullying experiences, especially if the teachers were involved, for the fear of intimidation.
- ❖ There were very limited rural secondary schools offering grade 9 in the Oshana Region which made it difficult to get varieties of answers regarding the question on how school setting contributes to bullying.
- ❖ Only grade 9 learners were included in the sample. The influence of bullying, based on the views of learners from other grades, was thus excluded.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Internationally, there has been a lot of research conducted in the area of bullying in schools, however, in Namibia a lot of research still needs to be done since there are limited data available on this issue. The first part of this section looks at the theoretical framework of the study which focuses on the ecological model. The second part looks at definitions, the nature and types of bullying in schools, victims and perpetrators of bullying, types of bullying and their causes. The third part studies the effects of bullying on the lives of teachers, learners and the country at large. The final part of this chapter looks at the strategies which selected Namibian schools in Oshana region are currently using in dealing with bullying and the ones which could be used in future in order to eradicate bullying in schools.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The researcher selected Bronfenbrenners' Ecological Model and the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura as the theoretical frameworks for this study. 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/her ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecology refers to the environmental settings which the person or organism is experiencing (Louis, 1997). Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that the child lives through and develops in multiple contexts, each of which has the potential to independently or interactively influence the ways in which this development occurs. Home,

neighborhoods and schools are some of the most important contexts for children (Gershoff & Aber, 2006). The model helps us to understand different contexts that surround the child and that can have an influence on the child. Some researchers call it Onion Theory because of its many layers which are interdependent e.g. if one layer of the onion is rotten over time, this will affect the whole onion. No man is an Island. This is just to say every part of the system is important and can affect others (Rochat, Hough, Mitchell & Jewitt, 2009). This is an indication that the child does not develop and grow in a vacuum but is connected to people in his/her environment and these people have a strong influence on the child's conducts. According to Lawson (1991), the relationship between a school and its wider community is important in the sense that the two institutions influence one another, and children behave the way they do because of the influence of these two institutions. This is supported by Bandura (1989) cited in Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) indicating that the influence of the family, the school, and the community are interrelated, and it is important to be aware of the levels of influence each component of the eco system has on each child's individual characteristics and his or her development. For example, children learn to be aggressive by observing aggressive behaviour in others.

Cavaiola and Colford (2006) explained different systems which influence the coping behaviour of individuals as follows:

The **Microsystem** consists of family members and the individual's immediate social group and it has a direct effect on the child's experiences and development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) a child's ways of living is determined by what she experiences in these settings. The **Mesosystem** includes the relations the child has with other systems while the **Exosystem** is made up of the community at large, including neighborhood, social

networks, work-related structures, and governmental agencies. The exosystem affects the child but in a more indirect way. The last system is called the **Macrosystem** which represents the largest environment that influences and, in turn is influenced by the individual, and include the individual's culture and beliefs.

This model is made up of four systems. However, for the purpose of this study; the focus was more on the Micro system. The study looked at bullying within this specific system where you will find family, school and other immediate structures which have a direct impact on the child's conduct. Nevertheless, it did not ignore the effects that other systems have on the micro system because Bronfenbrenner (1979) states it clearly that the ecological model acknowledges that the number and quality of connections between these settings also have important influences on a child's development, and many researchers have noted the correlation between environmental elements and behaviours.

Hoffman (1996) points out that, the child's home environment has an effect on his/her behaviour at school while the school environment itself has its own impact. For example, overcrowded classrooms could create an environment where learners are likely to be bullied.

The study was grounded on the assumption that parents, school systems, neighbourhoods, friends and anything which is part and parcel of learners' lives affect their behaviour and could contribute to bullying behaviours in schools. Bey and Turner (1996) puts it that aggression and other antisocial behaviours are learned responses to conditions and circumstances in one's socializing environments: home, community, and school.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the researcher also used the Social learning theory in order to help understand bullying behaviour of learners. Social learning theory is also referred to as observational/model or imitation learning. The theory is called social learning because it is based on what a child learns in his environment as he interacts and

observes others. Social learning guides a person's behaviour, so that it is in accordance with societal norms, values, and beliefs. This socialization, observation and imitation enable the person to adjust successfully to society. The social learning theory may thus also help us to understand how the society contributes to the bullying behaviour of learners (Mwamwenda, 2004).

2.3 Defining bullying

According to Byrne (1994), bullying is a long standing violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or group and directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself in the actual situation. Furthermore, Henkin (2005) agrees with the given definition by defining bullying as a willful desire to hurt another or put him/her under stress. It means that the bully knows what he/she is doing when confronting the victim. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the definition by Olweus (1993) which defined bullying as a state when a student intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort on another student. The following discussion focuses on the different types of bullying which can take place in schools.

2.4 The nature and types of bullying in schools

In schools, bullying happens in different ways, caused by different people and to different people. According to Frude and Gault (1984) there are different groups of people who commit bullying acts in schools and these are as follows: teacher to pupil, teacher to teacher, pupil to teacher, and pupil to pupil. This study focuses on pupil to pupil and teacher to pupil bullying only. The groups of perpetrators, teachers and pupils, commit bullying to their

victims in different ways. Although bullying may come in different forms, either visible or non-visible, all forms hurt, and some forms might be difficult to identify.

2.4.1 Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is the most obvious form of bullying found in our schools and is more identifiable than other forms of bullying. It occurs when a person is physically harmed through being beaten, hit, kicked, punched and scratched, or any other form of physical attack (Lund, 1996). Research has found that boys engage in more overt and physical forms of bullying than girls. Data from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention through Youth Risk Behaviours Surveillance Survey indicated that 7.4% of the American youth are reported being treated after injuries with a weapon on school grounds, one or more times in a year, and punching is happening everyday in schools (Futrell, 2003). Other incidents include; damage to property such as ripping of clothes, damaging books, and destroying property.

2.4.2 Emotional Bullying

This type of bullying is different from physical bullying in the sense that it is invisible and it might be difficult to detect. This type of bullying can be done both by teachers and learners. According to McEachern, Aluede, and Kenny (2008) emotional bullying can be a consistent use of verbally abusive language to harshly criticize or to place excessive demands on a child's performance, or withholding warmth and affection causing emotional distress. In the USA, modern technology such as mobile phones and internet are used by adolescents to bully others because it is easier to keep hidden (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). This is supported by UNESCO (1999) who reports that some forms of violence are subtle and not easily identified because there is no physical evidence of harm. Emotional bullying also

includes blaming, disruption, insult and name calling which make the person feel uncomfortable. Van Zyl (2009) states that emotional and verbal bullying can be just as destructive as physical bullying because it breaks down your dignity and self-confidence. This type of bullying is more dangerous than others because it affects the learners and teachers in silence and the victims seldom receive any support.

2.4.3 Sexual bullying

Sexual harassment is defined as unwarranted verbal or physical sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements, or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone in the education environment that are offensive or objectionable to the student, that cause the student discomfort or humiliation, or that interfere with the student's performance (Poland, 2003). Sexual bullying is when a person is singled out because of their gender and demonstrates unwarranted or unwelcome sexual behaviour, such as: sexual comments and unwanted physical contact (McCaffrey, 2004). Beaty and Alexeyer (2008) defined sexual harassment as a form of bullying in which the intent is to demean, embarrass, humiliate, or control another person on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. According to Li Sik (2008) boys sending messages to girls from their mobile phones, pointing to porn images, or drawing these on paper and buildings, pulling down a girl's skirt in front of other students, or calling them slags can be forms of sexual bullying.

2.4.4 Racial or tribal bullying

Racial bullying in schools can range from ill-considered remarks, inappropriate language use, or by the fact that victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their ethnic group, their religious or cultural practices. Adolescents might be bullied because they look different, have different values, different languages, and customs or eat

unfamiliar food (Sullivan, et al., 2005). Namibian schools are made up of learners who come from different parts of the country and with different cultural beliefs. The researcher is of the opinion that secondary schools where this study was conducted were the best place to find out whether racial bullying was taking place.

2.5 Victims and perpetrators of bullying

2.5.1 Victims of bullying

A victim of bullying is a child who does not feel safe at school due to threats or real physical harm by someone at his/her school (Sanders & Phye, 2004). Anyone who is different is susceptible to being bullied, but lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans gendered children are among the most frequent victims, and seven times more likely to be bullied (Henkin, 2005 & Robertson, 2008). Often victims of bullying turn out to become bullies. According to Sanders and Phye (2004) victims of bullying have low self-esteem, personal characteristics which are different from the rest of the peers and their social anxiety is high. Some are those who are physically weak, disabled, overweight, and unattractive and they often exhibit behaviour that invite and reinforce bullying. Academically, victims appear to be less intelligent, have inferior social intelligence and see themselves as dull, stupid and worthless. Sanders and Phye (2004) describes victims of bullying as those who tend to have close relationship with their parents. However, Byrne (1994) disagrees by saying that victims of bullying have poor relationship with their parents.

Both girls and boys are victims of bullying but in different ways. Boys are more likely to be involved in bullying behaviour than girls and physical bullying and extortion are more common among boys than girls (Byrne, 1994). Although overt fighting among girls is

increasing, this still is not the norm, because society expects girls to be nice (Wright & Keetley, 2003). Bor, Ebner-Landy, Gill and Brace (2004) state that the forms of bullying that are common among girls are exclusion, name calling, stories spreading and other emotional bullying. Girls tend to be bullied by either boys or girls, or both, while boys tend to be bullied by boys only.

2.5.2 Perpetrators of bullying

Henkin (2005) found that about 160,000 children in the USA miss school every day for fear of being bullied. But who really bully them? Sanders and Phye (2004) define a perpetrator as an individual not following rules, getting into physical fights, and picking on others because they are not liked by the majority of learners in their schools. Pieters (2008) disagrees by saying that perpetrators of bullying are the ones who are consistently among the most liked and respected children in school. They have good self-esteem and are actually privileged by the rewards that come from bullying (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen & Rimpela, 2000). On the other hand research found that bullies are children who are rejected by their peers; they are lonely and have poor relationships with other students (Henkin, 2005). So there is still a gap in knowledge whether bullies are rejected children or the popular ones in schools and this study tried to shed some more light on who the real bullies in Namibian schools are.

Beaty and Alexeyer (2008) state that bullies often come from families where parents use more physical forms of discipline, which may be coupled with parents who are rejecting and hostile or overly permissive. Families of bullies tend to struggle financially, have social problems and lack family structure including parental conflict, and have a cold emotional environment all of which distance bullies from their parents. In addition, parents of bullies

are often authoritarian, hostile and rejecting (Sanders & Phye, 2004). According to Olweus (1993) youngsters who are aggressive are likely to become bullies and might be engaging in other behavioral problems such as criminal activities and alcohol abuse. Bullies tend to have personalities that are authoritarian, combined with a strong need to control or to be dominant. However, bullies can also be quiet and obedient learners, while boiling with resentment. Quiet, reserved children who lack self-confidence may hide their frustration and just one stimulus can unleash violence (Philip, 2009). Philip also added that often bullies act cool to hide any problem or fear they may have. They could perhaps feel that they are not as smart as others, or there could be a problem at home and for them, the only solution is to pick on someone smaller or weaker to make themselves feel better. In schools, it is not only learners who are bullies, but teachers can be bullies to. According to Resenthal and Wilson (2008) some teachers, often unaware of the impact of their behavior on students, psychologically maltreat them and students at all grade levels experience abusive emotional assaults from teachers in the classroom. Excessive screaming at students, subtle remarks, labeling students as dumb, threatening learners and humiliating them are all forms of bullying (McEachern, et al., 2008). Teachers can therefore also be culprits when it comes to bullying in schools.

2.6 Causes of bullying in Schools

The literature mentions several factors that may cause bullying in schools. These contributing factors seem to be related to family, schools and community. Each of these factors will be outlined briefly.

2.6.1 Family and community influence

Many authors (Philip, 2009; Sanders and Phye, 2004; Sullivan et al., 2005; Van Zyl, 2009) believe that an individual exposed to violence at an early age is more likely to become a bully

in comparison with someone who was raised in a non-violent family. Some boys are raised in the family with the idea that violence proves you are a man, and they see their fathers beat up their mothers and think it is normal. Children learn that aggression is the way to achieve status because that has been modeled for them by the parents. These findings are in accordance with Bandura's observational learning theory and the idea that human beings observe, think about, and imitate behaviour which can lead to both acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Lefton, 2003). The combination of lack of parental supervision with the use of power assertive methods of discipline may be especially potent in terms of its contribution to bullying behaviour. Research findings revealed that children who are victims of violence at home tend to be bullies at schools because they are acting out of frustration (Hoffman, 1996). There are less victimization in schools where parents are involved in their children's education, and where school counsellors proactively intervene in bullying incidents, and where there are anti-bullying measures for students and teachers (Fishbaugh et al, 2003; Sanders & Phye, 2004).

UNICEF (2007) indicated that a lot of children in Namibia are growing up in violent environments which have implications in their livelihoods. Balter and Tamis-LeMonda (2006) stated that there is ample evidence that exposure to family or community violence can cause depression, aggression and non-compliance behaviour in children. Children exposed to violence are likely to engage in anti-social or risk behaviour at school, including bullying, (Gershoff & Aber, 2006). Community's beliefs, attitudes, and norms that are held by the majority of individuals can directly affect the child's ways of behaving. Gershoff and Aber (2006) indicated that there are some disadvantaged neighborhoods where children are exposed to repeated violent or even traumatic events which in the end increase the likelihood that the youth will themselves engage in violent acts. Growing up with a violent role model

can make the pattern of violence hard to break, and these children can bully others at school because they think that it is cool to do it (Li Sik, 2008).

2.6.2 School setting, structure and values

According to Gershoff and Aber (2006) the school context such as school size, class size, teacher-learner ratio, location and academic performance can be reasons for bullying to take place. Violence and bullying are more likely to happen in schools that are large, over crowded, poorly organized or have poor resources. Schools with 1000 or more students are more likely to experience violent problems in comparison with schools with less than 300 students (Baldry & Farrington, 1999). According to Byrne (1994) the school playground with a large number of children thrown together, usually in a small area, create an environment conducive for bullying. Some researchers have found that victimization is more likely to happen in large city schools than in small schools (Sanders and Phye, 2004), however, Byrne (1994) indicated that large schools have fewer bullying incidents than small schools because bullying is less likely to happen in large and crowded schools. According to Balter and Tamis LeMonda (2006), if parents' values contrast sharply with those of the schools, these children are likely to be rejected by other learners, and this can cause problems within the school.

2.6.3 Curriculum, lesson content and academic expectation

Schools that have challenging curricula and that have high expectations for their students and limited disruptive and maladaptive behaviour, tend to have fewer bullying incidences than schools where quality of education is poor. Violence is found in schools with high numbers of low achieving students (Ayres & Hedeem, 2003). This is supported by Sanders and Phye (2004) who indicated that high academic expectation discourage bullies from picking on

others for the reason that most students in schools with intense academic pressure are too busy academically to look around for victims. Learners who perform poorly in school tend to become bullies because of frustration caused by poor academic achievement.

2.6.4 Substance abuse and Peer Pressure

A common source of bullying in schools is peer pressure and the formation of gangs. Gangs are more commonly associated with those with lower family incomes and tend to go hand in hand with the availability of drugs in a school (Howell & Lynch, 2000, cited in Gershoff & Aber, 2006). It is estimated that 56% of violence cases reported in schools are related to alcohol (Cauaiola & Colford, 2006). According to Philip (2009) peer pressure plays an important role in antisocial behaviour among teenagers. Due to peer pressure, learners may bully others because it is expected of them to do so. They try to identify themselves with others. According to Mwamwenda (2004) one of the factors facilitating social learning is identification, whereby one person identifies with another person's behaviour, attitudes, system of values and beliefs, and as far as possible behave exactly like the person being imitated.

2.7 Effects of bullying

The impact of bullying in schools is immense, and it affects all those involved in education. It is not only bullying victims who suffer the consequences, learners and teachers as well as the entire school and community suffer as a result of bullying. In an interview conducted by Li Sik (2008) in South Africa, one of the learners stated that:

“School is not always fun, and everyone has something that makes them a little nervous- a strict principal, tests, even orals in front of the class. But the thought of seeing a bully at school really makes you more nervous than a million of spiders chasing you. It affects every nerve in you. You feel bad”.

According to Hoffman (1996) bullying and harassment are issues which can deeply affect the lives of pupils, families and staff which at the end of the day creates an atmosphere of intimidation. This is echoed by Sullivan et al. (2005), who describe bullying as having a negative effect on an individual’s physical and psychological wellbeing both in the short and long term. Bullying can affect learners in different ways, which can either be detected while learners are still in school or in later life.

2.7.1 Effects of bullying on learners and their future

The researcher, being a teacher herself, has witnessed a lot of bullying activities in the schools where she taught, however, much of it was ignored or teachers lack skills on how to handle the cases. Little attention is given to the problem, yet the effects of bullying are immense. According to Jones (2001) fear of bullying also affects the entire school atmosphere and as a result students’ attention decreases and some students become less eager to attend school while on the other side, teachers find it difficult to put all their attention on teaching and learning processes because they are distracted by bullies.

Children who are bullied at school risk continuing misery and loss of self-esteem, with possible long-term effects such as dropping out of school (Smith & Sharp, 1995). Sullivan et al. (2005) states that children who are severely bullied at school are six times more likely to drop out of school, or avoid going to school which may cause decline or failure in academic

performance. Victims of bullying are more anxious, insecure and withdrawn than other students in general. Learners who are picked on, made fun of, ostracized, harassed, and generally humiliated and targeted by fellow learners over a period of years may build up anger and hatred that finally explode into physical violence (De Wet, 2007; Sanders & Phye, 2004). There could also be a ripple effect into adulthood if the bullying problem is not dealt with early. According to Phillip (2009) there are men in their fifties who still have murderous thoughts about the kids who victimized them at school. The effects of bullying on learners mostly have long term effects if not dealt with effectively. According to a study done in South Africa, students who are involved in bullying at school, are also likely to have one or more criminal convictions by the time they reach young adulthood (Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard & King, 2008). According to Futrell (2003) in five to ten years, these young men and women who are currently in schools will become part of the adult population. They are the people who will be expected to safe-guard and enhance all the rights of our citizens. It is the future of this nation and the kind of society we want that is at stake if nothing is done now (Bor, Ebner-Landy, Gill & Brace, 2002).

2.7.2 Effects of bullying on teachers

According to Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) bullying has a direct negative impact on students, teachers, school properties, the community and the educational process. Gershoff and Aber (2006) states that in schools where bullying exist, teachers become discouraged and lose their interest for their students. Teachers feel insecure and less likely to challenge or discipline their learners for the fear of being bullied. If teachers are not free at school, it is hard for them to work towards their goals (Sullivan et al., 2005). Cauaiola and Colford (2006) further state that when teachers get tired of bullying, they can withdraw from the situation by leaving teaching, taking sick leave or opting for early retirement. It is also recorded that

schools with high records of bullying have been struggling to recruit and retain good teachers, and the teachers who remain will be less likely to confront misbehaving students out of fear of their own safety, leading to disruptive classrooms with fewer opportunities for learning (McCaffrey, 2004).

2.8 Strategies on how to help victims and perpetrators in combating bullying in schools

No one is born violent; it's learnt behaviour and a bad habit that anyone can stop if he/she really wants to (Van Zyl, 2009). As Van Zyl puts it, bullying can be managed; however, it needs a lot of input from different stakeholders. It requires understanding of victims and perpetrators and all of them need help. According to Futrell (2003) the responsibility of change in schools rest with every facet of the society. The causes and effects of violence cannot be addressed by schools alone but it involves commitment and allocation of resources at the local, state, and national levels (Poland, 2003). Futrell (2003) supported Poland by saying that preventing bullying in schools requires thinking developmentally, working from a sound knowledge base and making adequate resources available from all stakeholders. It is very important for parents, learners and teachers to know what to do, when to do it and how to do it in case bullying occurs at school. According to Philip (2009) parents and schools need to put systems in place that allow children to come forward without fear of reprisal. Bullying must be explicitly discussed in the classroom and there must be clear guidelines for dealing with incidents.

2.8.1 How can the schools deal with bullying?

According to Beaty and Alexeyer (2008), a school's failure to deal with bullying endangers the safety of all its students by allowing a hostile environment to interfere with learning. School interventions can dramatically reduce the incidence of bullying. According to Poland (2003) school principals and teachers cannot predict when and where bullying may strike but they must be prepared.

In schools, teachers might lack knowledge on how to deal with bullying in their classrooms. According to Newman- Carlson and Horne (2004) 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 materialize, and by offering student support, training, and education aimed at attacking the root causes of the bullying behavior. Due to lack of knowledge on how to handle bullying cases, some teachers are reported punishing learners who don't behave accordingly. However, Lund (1996) is against this idea by saying punishment or expulsion is not necessarily the best response because it can lead to resentment and disaffection on the part of the bullies, and certainly does nothing to develop their positive feelings towards their victims. Children need to be encouraged to be open and be told that they have the right to feel safe. The quality of relationship between the teacher and the child is very important because it will allow the child an opportunity to talk. Frude and Gault (1984) state that the most effective control comes through understanding the child's feelings because by accommodating the child, it produce favourable results of dealing with bullying.

Counselling programmes in schools is another way of helping victims and their perpetrators to cope with their problems. There is less victimization in schools where parents are involved

in their children's education, where school counsellors proactively intervene in bullying incidents, and where there are anti-bullying measures for students and teachers (Sanders and Pbye, 2004; Fishbaugh et al., 2003). Lawson (1991) indicated that it is important to create conversations with groups of bullies and victims, and give them support. In addition to that, counselling services will help victims to speak out and become a better person while the bully will be helped to realize how bad bullying is, and may look at the possibility of changing his/her behaviour (Schroth, Pankake, Fullwood & Gates, 2003). The school curriculum can also be used as a tool to combat bullying in schools. According to Pieters (2008), the school curriculum should include bullying lessons so that learners can be given a chance to develop relevant social skills. However, parents need to stay in touch with teachers because they are their eyes while their children are at school and teachers will be the first to know what happened (Li Sik, 2008). Children should feel that they can talk to their parents about anything, (Philip, 2009).

2.9 Summary

In this part, the researcher looked at the nature and types of bullying in secondary schools by concentrating on school contexts such as urban and rural schools, big and small schools, poor and highly performing schools, as the factors to be considered during the study. The effects of bullying on learners and teachers, and how the schools can deal with bullying were also discussed. This helped to give an insight of what happened in other schools and relate it to schools in the Oshana region. The literature review indicated that bullying is more likely to happen in big schools, urban schools as well as poor performing schools. The Ecological Model as well as Social learning theory forms the theoretical underpinnings of this research and helps us to get a clearer picture on how the behaviour of learners are influenced by the society in which they live. In the next section, the focus will be on the methodology the researcher used in order to collect the data, analyze the data and present the data.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the method which the researcher used in collecting and analysing the data.

3.1. 1 Research design

This research used a mixed method model, involving both quantitative and qualitative research strategies. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) state that the purpose of mixed methods research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods and to understand phenomena more fully than in using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. The QUAN-QUAL Model which is also known as triangulation mixed methods design was singled out as the best method to conduct this study. In this model, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently throughout the study (Gay et al., 2009; Shark, 2002). According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) triangulation explains more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one stand point and by giving a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation. A survey including a questionnaire and focus group discussions was conducted in the Oshana region of Namibia. Data collected from the focus group discussions are qualitative in nature while data collected from the questionnaire are quantitative in nature.

3.1.2 Population

The population was made up of all Secondary School learners and teachers in the Oshana Education Region. Oshana Education Region has a total of 13 Secondary Schools. The researcher chose Oshana Education Region because she is familiar with the region; it is

where she attended her secondary school education and where she taught in various secondary schools. She experienced a lot of bullying in that region. The secondary schools were chosen because the literature reviews revealed that most of the bullying activities do happen in secondary schools.

3.1.3 Sample and sampling procedures

Purposive sampling was used to select seven secondary schools from the Oshana region. The sample included both large and small secondary schools, both high and poor performing schools and both schools in urban and rural areas of Oshana Education Region. The schools were thus reflecting the characteristics such as small/big, rural/urban, high/low performance and all schools were secondary schools. The literature has revealed that better performing schools, small, and rural schools have less bullying. 30 learners in grade 9 were selected from each school (a total of 210 learners) to complete the questionnaires. Grade 9 learners were included because in secondary schools, the majority of learners in grade 9 are not new at school and they would understand bullying better than the grade 8 who are all new learners in the school. They were regarded more comfortable to talk about it and share their experiences of bullying. Some learners were interviewed in focus group discussion, and these learners were selected from the groups who completed questionnaires. There were three focus groups at each school and each group was made up of five learners. The first group (Group A) was for learners who were perceived by teachers as bullies. The second group (Group B) was for learners who were perceived by teachers as victims of bullying and Group C was for learners who were randomly picked. Purposeful sampling was thus also used for the selection of victims and perpetrators of bullying. At each school, the researcher briefed the staff members about bullying. After briefing them, the researcher asked the teachers to identify 5 learners who were perceived to be perpetrators and victims of bullying in their schools. The

researcher then picked 5 (Group C) learners randomly from their admission numbers which were placed in a basket. For the purpose of this study Group A refers to the perpetrators, Group B refers to the victims while Group C refers to the learners who were randomly selected by the researcher (see table 1).

Apart from the learners, there were five teachers per school who took part in the study. Five teachers per school were made up of the principal, two disciplinary committee members, one teacher-counsellor and one ordinary teacher. These teachers are the people who deal with discipline cases and other related issues at schools, so they are valuable sources of information. A total of 35 teachers took part in the study. Each school was represented by 5 teachers. Of these teachers, 19 were female and 15 were male. One teacher did not indicate his/her gender status. Teachers were also asked to indicate the time they had been teaching at their respective schools and the results showed that the majority of teachers (60%) had been at their schools for more than 7 years, 20% had been teaching at their schools for 4 to 7 years, 18% had been at their schools for 1 to 4 years while the rest had been at their current schools for less than a year.

3.1.4 Research instruments

Questionnaires consisting of closed and open-ended questions were used. Different focus group discussions were conducted with both learners and teachers because the researcher believed that the questionnaire could not give all the necessary information. Gay et al. (2009) define a focus group as a group interview where a researcher is trying to collect a shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people. There were four focus groups: Group A, Group B, Group C and a group of five teachers per school.

These groups were aimed at exploring participants' experiences, feelings and views about bullying. This helped the researcher to verify her knowledge with what the teachers said and what the learners said in the questionnaire. A number of follow up questions were posed to participants in order to verify their answers. During the group discussions, the researcher used handwritten notes to record the data. This helped the researcher during the data analysis and presentation stage. Content validity of the questionnaire was considered to be high because the questions covered were based on the existing knowledge about bullying as found in the literature.

3.1.5 Pilot study

The pilot study where conducted in a school where the study was not intended to be done. One school in the Khomas Education Region was selected for the pilot study. The pilot study helped the researcher to see if the research instruments were well designed. The researcher was at the school during the pilot study and executed all the duties which she expected to do during the main research study. After collecting the data, the researcher modified the instruments where it was needed. The researcher also gave the participants a chance to comment on the study and listen to their views. In this way, the researcher attempted to increase the reliability of the study.

3.1.6 Data collection procedures

First and foremost, the researcher wrote a letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, requesting for permission to conduct the research in the schools. The letter stated the purpose of the study and its' significance. Another letter was forwarded to the Director of Education and Inspectors of schools selected for the study. The researcher made follow-ups

to find out whether the letters had reached the intended people and whether a decision was taken. The questionnaire intended for the study was attached to the letters. Perpetrators and victims of bullying were identified through their teachers.

Due to the fact that the grade 10 and 12 learners were busy writing their final examination, a lot of teachers were busy with examination invigilation. The researcher was allocated to a grade 9 class when the teacher, who was supposed to be with that specific group, was busy with invigilation. In this way, the researcher did not interfere with the normal teaching. The learners were introduced to the objectives of the study before the questionnaires were administered to them. The researcher was present during the administration of the questionnaires and gave explanations to learners who had problems in understanding any of the questions. Focus group discussions were conducted in a separate room and only selected learners were called in. All the groups were interviewed at different times. Learners were asked to feel free to participate, and they were assured that the information gathered, would be used for research purposes only.

3.1.7 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in different forms. The open-ended questions were analyzed according to themes. According to De Wet (2007) the identification of the emergent themes and categories allows the information to be related to the literature, as well as to the quantitative data. Quantitative data such as frequencies and percentages were analyzed using SPSS. Graphs and tables, indicating frequencies and percentages were used to present the demographic and other information collected from questionnaires. Score data was done by assigning a numeric score to each response for each question. Chi Square analyses were used

to establish the relation of selected variables, as identified in the literature review, with bullying in schools.

Qualitative data were analyzed by the use of themes, field notes and coding. According to Creswell (2008) coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form description and broad themes in the data. Themes occurring most frequently are put together and discussed.

3.1.8 Ethical considerations

At the beginning of the focus group discussions and the filling in of questionnaires, the researcher briefly explained the aims and objectives of the study to the participants. Participants were allowed to indicate their consent for taking part in the research verbally. The learners and teachers (participants) were told that the study was not compulsory and they were free to withdraw in case they felt uncomfortable. The most important information given to participants was confidentiality: participants were informed that the information would be kept confidential; they were assured that their identity would not be exposed in the report or elsewhere. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004) research participants have the right to remain anonymous in the report or elsewhere, and the identity of participants must be protected at all times. During the focus group discussion, the words victim and perpetrator were avoided so that children would not feel uncomfortable.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted in Oshana Education Region. The results are presented in accordance with the research questions and include information as collected from the questionnaires given to learners as well as focus group discussions conducted with teachers and learners. First of all, the report focuses on general information regarding the schools visited, such as school setting, school size and school performance; then learners and teachers' general information follow. The researcher also reports on the types of bullying, the frequency of bullying as well as the time and place where bullying is likely to occur. A brief description of perpetrators and victims of bullying is also given. After that, the causes of bullying in schools are presented. This is followed by a discussion on the effects of bullying on victims, perpetrators and the entire school. The last part reports on the strategies which schools were using in order to combat bullying and the ones participants thought that they could use in future as a way of reducing bullying in schools. During the presentation of the results, the information collected from the questionnaires is presented first, followed by information collected from the focus group discussions.

4.1 Schools characteristics

This study was conducted in 7 senior secondary schools in Oshana Education Region. Schools were classified according to their sizes, academic performance and setting.

4.1.1 Schools' size

The schools' sizes were classified as small, medium, big and very big. Small schools were those with 1 to 300 learners, medium schools represented those schools with 300 to 600 learners, big schools were those schools with 600 to 1000 learners, while the very big schools were schools which catered for more than 1000 learners. Of the seven schools that took part in the study, one was a medium sized school, three were big schools, another three schools were very big schools, but none of the schools was classified as a small school.

4.1.2 Schools' academic performance

Schools' academic performances were determined by the previous three years' examination results obtained from Oshana Regional Education Office. The results were made up of Grade 10 and 12 end of the year examinations from 2006 to 2008. After studying and analyzing the results, schools were then classified into four categories: excellent schools, good schools, average schools, and weak schools. Excellent schools were defined as those schools that maintained passing rates of 80-100%, good schools were those ones 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 seven schools where the study was conducted, two schools were regarded as excellent schools, one school was regarded as good school, two were average schools while the other two were regarded as weak schools.

4.1.3 Schools' setting

All the schools that took part in the study were classified according to their setting. Schools were described either to be urban or rural schools. Urban schools were those ones situated in towns while rural schools were those ones situated in the villages. Out of seven schools, six were situated in urban areas while only one was situated in a village far from towns. The focus was only on grade 9 learners in secondary schools; therefore combined schools were not included. The reason behind this was that the researcher wanted to focus on schools which started with grade 8 and continued up to grade 12, in order to have uniformity.

Table 1: General information regarding the schools.

Schools	Number of learners	Academic performance	Setting
School A	1243	Average	Urban
School B	1131	Average	Urban
School C	967	Excellent	Urban
School D	871	Excellent	Urban
School E	1077	Weak	Rural
School F	971	Good	Urban
School G	561	Weak	Urban

4.1.4 Schools' safety

Both learners and teachers were asked to respond on the level of safety at their schools. Based on the learners' responses from the questionnaires, the results showed that the majority of the participants (54%) were not happy with the level of safety in their schools and indicated that their schools were not safe at all, 24% found their schools to be somewhat safe, 12% indicated that their schools were safe while 10% stated that their schools were very safe. During the focus group discussion, the majority of learners who said they felt safe at school

were those in a rural school but the rest of the learners maintained that schools were either somewhat safe or unsafe.

Contrary to the responses given by the learners during the focus group discussions, the majority of teachers interviewed indicated that their schools were very safe; some said the schools are somewhat safe while only a few indicated that their schools were not safe at all. Some teachers indicated that their schools are safe because they are protected by the security-officers 24 hours a day.

4.2 Biographical information regarding learners

In each school, 15 learners were interviewed during the focus group discussions. These learners were divided in to three groups: 5 learners represented the victims of bullying, 5 other learners represented perpetrators of bullying, while the other 5 learners were neither victims nor perpetrators of bullying, they were just witnesses of bullying, so in total, 105 learners took part in focus group discussions while 210 learners filled the questionnaires. In the questionnaires, learners were asked to indicate their age, gender, and duration at school, level of popularity among their peers, their academic performance and their class sizes. These results are presented below:

4.2.1 Learners' gender and age

Out of 210 learners who participated in the study, 124 of the participants were females while 86 of the participants were male. The majority of participants (80%) were 14 to 16 years old, 15% were 17 to 19 years old, while 5% of the participants were above the age of 19.

4.2.2 Learners' duration at school

Learners were asked to indicate the time or duration they have been at their school. According to the data obtained from the questionnaires, the majority of learners (50.5%) were in their second year at their current schools, followed by 29% of learners who said they were in their first year at their schools. 20% of the learners had been at their current schools for three years and more, 1% did not indicate their duration status at their schools.

4.2.3 Learners' popularity

On the question whether or not learners considered themselves as being popular, the results from the questionnaires indicated that 32.9% of learners were quite popular among their peers, 22.9% rated their popularity at average, 19.5% were very popular, 18.1% stated that they were not so popular, while 4.3% were not popular at all. The last 2.4% did not indicate their level of popularity among their peers. Learners were also asked to indicate the number of friends they have at their schools and the results showed that 40% had several friends at school, 30% stated that they had two to three friends, 25% said they had only one friend while 5% did not have friends at all.

Table 2: Perceived popularity of participants among other learners

Level of popularity	Frequency	Percentage
Very popular	41	19.5
Quite popular	69	32.9
Average	48	22.9
Not so popular	38	18.1
Not popular at all	9	4.3

Missing	5	2.4
Total	210	100

Learners in focus group discussions were a bit shy to indicate whether they are popular but victims stated that they became more known by the teachers when they report their problems but they are not popular among learners. Witnesses struggled to indicate their popularity level as most of them had mixed feelings. They did not know whether they were popular or whether it was their friends, who were perpetrators who made them popular. In contrast to what was said by victims and witnesses, perpetrators indicated that they are known by the majority of learners in schools. According to the participants, some learners are bullied by their own friends, of whom they said outsiders find it hard to see or detect because they are always together. One participant said: “it is more hurtful and evil when you’re bullied by your friends. Other learners see you laughing with your friends all the time, but when you are in that group, they will do a lot of cruel things to you. But because you love your friend you will just decide to keep quiet”. Although learners with many friends can be bullied, the majority of participants felt that bullying does not happen much to learners with many friends, as they are protected by friends when they are in trouble.

4.2.4 Learners’ academic performance

Learners were asked to describe the level of their academic performance. The level of performance was divided into five groups: poor performance, below average, average, above average and good. Poor performance level was used for learners who mostly obtained 0 to 20% in their tests and examinations, below average were those who obtained 20 to 40%, average were those with 40 to 60%, above average level learners were those who obtained 60

to 80%, while those who indicated that their academic performance were good were those who obtained 80 to 100%. With the information collected from the questionnaires, the majority of learners (62.4%) described their academic performance to be good, 16.2% described their academic performance as average, 13.8% as above average, 5.2% as below average while 1.9% described their performance as poor. The information gathered from the questionnaires were a bit different from what emerged from focus group discussions because the majority of learners indicated that their academic performance were regarded to be average but not good as it was indicated in the questionnaires.

On the question whether learners have repeated any grades, 19% of the participants indicated that they repeated their grade once, 6.7% repeated a grade twice, and 1.4% repeated grades more than two times while the majority 71.9% said they never repeated a grade. 1% did not indicate anything about the grade-repetition.

4.2.5 Class size

Learners were asked to describe the size of their classrooms by using the number of learners in the classroom. The class sizes were divided into three groups: small classes, medium classes and large classes. Classes with more than 36 learners were described as large; classes with 26 to 36 learners were described as medium sized classes while classes which had less than 26 learners were described as small classes. When the data were analyzed, it was found that 47% of the learners were in large classes, 46% were in medium classes while 6.7% were in small classes.

Table 3: Number of learners per classroom

Number of learners in the class	Frequency	Percentage	Class size
Less than 26	14	7.0	Small
26 to 35	97	46.0	Medium
36 and more	99	47.0	Large
Total	210	100	

4.3 Biographical information regarding teachers

A total of 35 teachers took part in the study of which 19 were females and 15 were males.

4.4 Research findings on the types of bullying

The results presented under this topic are those obtained from the questionnaires filled by participants and those obtained from the focus group discussion conducted with learners and teachers. The types of bullying revealed through the literature review were given to participants through the questionnaires, and participants were asked to rate how often they were victims of those types of bullying at their schools. They were asked to rate whether the different types of bullying occurred sometimes, often, very often or never. Participants were also asked to indicate how often they were taking part in different types of bullying. The types of bullying were classified under the following headings: physical bullying, emotional bullying, sexual bullying and racial/tribal bullying. Participants were also allowed to add new

types of bullying which happened in their schools but were not listed in the questionnaire. The results on the types of bullying are discussed under the following main themes: victims of bullying, perpetrators of bullying, observers of bullying, teachers' views on bullying, and new types of bullying. In each case, the results of the questionnaires are followed by results obtained from the focus group discussions.

4.4.1 Types of bullying with regard to victims of bullying

The participants were asked to identify the bullying activities they normally suffer from at school. At each type of bullying, the information collected from the questionnaires is presented first (see table 4) followed by the data revealed from the focus group discussions with victims.

4.4.1.1 Emotional bullying

The data gathered from learners' questionnaires indicated that the majority of victims suffer from emotional bullying. Emotional bullying included name calling, insults and teasing, exclusion from the group, blackmailing, and negative text messages. 50% of learners indicated that they were called names sometimes, 11.4% were called names very often while 26.2% stated that they had never been called names. 50% of learners had been insulted sometimes, while 13.3% were insulted often. It is interesting to see that 55% of the learners had never been excluded from groups but it did happen sometimes to 26.7%. 41% indicated that other learners do sometimes say bad things about them, 12.9% said it happened to them often. While 51% of the participants said they had never been teased due to their looks, 13.3% and 7.6% were teased often and very often respectively. Threatening and blackmailing recorded the highest number of learners who said it never happened to them but there were 17.6% who said it happened to them sometimes and it happened to 4.8% of participants very often. 3.8% of the learners received negative text messages, e-mails or letters very often

while it happened to 23.8% of victims sometimes. 10% of learners indicated that they were teased very often because of their disabilities while 26.2% indicated that they were sometimes teased due to their disabilities. Low percentages (1.9%) of victims indicated that they were very often insulted due to their academic performance, while 68.1% said that their academic performance had never contributed to their bullying status (see table 4).

According to learners interviewed during the focus group discussions, girls are the ones who are likely to be bullied by other girls and they mostly prefer to bully them emotionally. Victims said that other learners like to say bad things about them and would sometimes write these things on papers and paste it on the school wall. One victim stated that she was once bullied because her friend spread false stories about her supposedly dating a sugar daddy. She said: “I had an argument with my friend and then we stopped talking for a week. During that time, she told my classmates that I was dating a man who was older than my father. She did it as revenge but later it became a big thing in the school. Everyone was talking about it. People were laughing at me, shouting at me and some even gave me bad names. It was bad. It almost destroyed me”.

Sometimes blackmailing is said to happen when learners want to belong to a certain group but other group members do not really want them to be there, so they keep on blackmailing their victims so that in return, they remain in the group. The focus group discussion also revealed that name calling and threatening are likely to be done towards learners from rural areas. When they move to urban schools, they are called all sorts of names such as newcomers and tails.

Although bullying is more associated with schools, during the focus group discussions, some learners indicated that emotional bullying also happens at home. This was more common

among learners who are staying with their step-parents but biological parents are not excluded. One learner said: “My step mother is always the best parent in the world when my father is around, but once my father is on business trips, she will call me names, insult me, make me to look stupid and do all the bad things you can imagine. She never did the same things to her own children. You will be treated like a maid”.

4.4.1.2 Physical bullying

Information from the learners’ questionnaires indicated that several learners had their possessions damaged or stolen. Whereas 38.1% said it happened to them sometimes, 13% said it happened often, 17% indicated that it happened very often and 30% of the learners indicated that damaging or stealing of possessions never happened to them. While 76.7% of the learners stated that no one has ever threatened or used weapons on them, 14.3% indicated that weapons were used on them sometimes. 10.5% of learners were often hit, punched and kicked, and the same acts also happened sometimes to 23.8% of victims while 57.1% said it never happened to them. The majority of victims (78.6%) indicated that they have never been forced to give their money and belongings to other learners, but it happened to 11.4% of victims sometimes (see table 4).

During the focus group discussions with learners, the majority of learners indicated that physical bullying was more common among the victims and this is in contradiction with what was revealed in the data collected through the questionnaires where emotional bullying emerged to be the most common type of bullying among victims. Victims indicated that perpetrators like to push them around, or pull their chairs away while they are sitting so that they can fall on the floor and other sorts of physical pushing and pulling activities. The uses of weapons were also highlighted during the focus group discussions when learners said some boys like to threaten others with weapons.

4.4.1.3 Racial/tribal bullying

Learners were asked through the questionnaires to indicate whether they have been bullied because of their tribe or race and the results indicated that some learners suffered from bullying based on their tribal background. 14.8% of the learners were sometimes teased because of their tribe or culture, 3.8% said they were often bullied due to their culture while 4.8% said it happened very often. Although some individual learners were bullied because of their culture, the majority (75.2%) said they had never been teased because of their culture or tribe but it seems that learners' skin colour also contributes to bullying as 26.7% of the learners said they were sometimes bullied due to the colour of their skins, 6.2% said it happened often while 6.7% said it happened very often. The majority of learners (71.4%) said they had never been teased because of their language and it sometimes happened to 16.2% of the victims (see table 4).

During the focus group discussions with victims of bullying, some stated that they are likely to be bullied at school due to their cultural or tribal backgrounds. They indicated that other learners find their mother tongues to be funny or have funny tones. In some cases, victims' first languages have a huge influence on the way they pronounce English words, for example, saying "Mbiology" instead of "Biology" while some learners find it hard to pronounce English words which start with the letter R or L. They are given names of the words they mispronounce. This leads to continuous bullying in classes. Some victims also indicated that because of their tribes, they are labelled as witch people and other learners think they do practice witch craft. Learners stated that there were those learners who exclude other learners from their groups because they are not from their tribes.

4.4.1.4 Sexual bullying

According to the information collected through the questionnaires, sexual bullying was not common as 81.4% of learners reported that unwanted suggestions never happened to them. However, there were 11% of learners who said unwanted sexual suggestions were done to them sometimes, while 2.9% said it happened to them very often (see table 4).

Although sexual bullying did not indicate high percentages of occurrence in the information collected through the questionnaires, during the focus group discussions with victims of bullying, the majority of female learners revealed that male learners force them to touch their bodies. Some are threatened into relationships with boys and they just agree to it because of fear. Some indicated that they are being bullied because they refused to have sex with their boyfriends or once they decided to end their love-relationships with their boyfriends. Another interesting finding obtained during the focus group discussion with learners was that some of them are bullied sexually by their own teachers especially the male teachers. Learners said they are told that they will fail certain subjects if they do not want to have a relationship with the teacher. One participant said: "I know one girl in grade 12 who refused to have a relationship with the teacher, and the teacher was threatening the girl. She was punished for nothing, but the girl did not report it to the principal because she was scared". . This type of relationship is always carried out in a confidential and secretive manner between the victim and the perpetrator although there are a few other learners who may know it. "It starts with female learners being invited to the male houses to do their domestic chores; from there bullying is likely to takes place. Learners are always scared to report it to the principal or other teachers because in most cases they are threatened and blackmailed" said one victim. During the focus group discussions, the majority of victims indicated that male learners also have the tendency of touching the girls in inappropriate ways. This is more likely to happen during or after the evening study.

Some teachers will keep on reminding them of how beautiful they look, and how they wish they were not learners so that they could have a meaningful relationship. One learner said: “One male teacher kept on telling my friend how lovely she looks, and he just cannot wait for her to finish grade 12 so that he can own her”. According to the learner, her friend is always scared of that teacher and she consistently lives in fear of what might happen next.

There were only a few victims who indicated that they often received cell phone-messages suggesting sexual activities or receiving messages with sexually abusive comments and explicit pictures demonstrating sex. There were also some victims who said that they had been bullied sexually but during our discussions, they found it difficult to state the forms in which bullying activities happened to them. In general, learners, especially girls, did not want to open up during the discussions because they were embarrassed by the boys’ presence.

It also emerged during the discussions with learners that some victims were also perpetrators at the same time. They had dual responsibilities; they bully other learners who are weaker than them as well as being bullied by strong learners.

Table 4: Types of bullying with regard to victims and based on information from the questionnaires

Types of bullying	Frequency of occurrence							
	Never		Sometimes		Often		Very often	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Emotional bullying								
Learners called you names	55	26.2	105	50.0	21	10.0	24	11.4
Insulted you	58	27.6	105	50.0	28	13.3	15	7.1
Excluded you from the group	120	55.0	54	26.7	19	9.0	9	4.3
Said bad things about you	75	35.7	86	41.0	27	12.9	18	8.6
Teased you about your looks	107	51.0	52	24.8	28	13.3	16	7.6
Threatened and blackmailed you	138	68.7	37	17.6	17	8.1	10	4.8
Got negative text messages,email, etc	132	62.9	50	23.8	15	7.1	7	3.3
Teased you because of your disability	114	54.3	55	26.2	14	6.7	21	10
Insulted you because of your academic performance	143	68.1	58	27.6	2	1.0	4	1.9
Physical Bullying								
Damaged or stole your possessions	62	30.0	80	38.1	28	13.0	36	17
Threatened or used weapons on you	161	76.7	30	14.3	6	2.9	5	2.4
Hit, punched or kicked you	120	57.1	50	23.8	22	10.5	11	5.2
Forced you to give your belongings	165	78.6	24	11.4	7	3.3	8	3.8
Racial and Sexual Bullying								
Teased because of tribe or culture	158	75.2	31	14.8	8	3.8	10	4.8
Laughed at you because of your skin colour	123	58.6	56	26.7	13	6.2	14	6.7
Teased you because of your language	150	71.4	34	16.2	12	5.7	7	3.3
Made unwanted sexual suggestions	171	81.4	23	11.0	4	1.9	6	2.9

4.4.2 Types of bullying with regard to the perpetrators

The participants were asked to identify some of the bullying activities they normally do to their victims. At each type of bullying, the information collected from the questionnaires is presented first (see table 5) followed by the data revealed from the focus group discussions with perpetrators.

4.4.2.1 Emotional bullying

The information collected from the questionnaires indicated that more learners used emotional bullying in comparison with other types of bullying. 41.9% of learners indicated that they called learners' bad names. Another interesting finding was that 27.8% of learners talked badly about other learners, by gossiping and spreading rumours about them. 24.8% said they sometimes teased other learners because of their looks (their physical appearance). According to the findings collected through the questionnaires, 44.9% of the participants sometimes insulted other learners while 49% never did it. 3.8% of learners admitted that they excluded others from the groups often. With regard to threatening and blackmailing, although 84.8% of participants said they had never acted in such a way towards other learners, 9.5% sometimes and 3.4% often or very often did so. 2.4% of participants stated that they very often send negative messages, emails or letters to their victims. 9.5% indicated that they sometimes teased their victims because of their disabilities while 3.3% and 2.4% did it often and very often. On the question whether participants had ever bullied their victims because of their academic performance, 12.4% said they had insulted others due to their academic performances (see table 5). These results are different from the one gained from participants who said only 1.9% were bullied because of their academic performance while in this case (see table 4), there is a high percentages of learners who said they bully others because of their academic performance.

During the focus group discussions, the majority of participants indicated that emotional bullying is likely to happen to girls whereby they are being excluded from the rest of the group or rumours are spread about them. However, it is not only female learners who bully others emotionally as one male participant said: “I enjoy seeing girls crying because I did something bad to them. They will give you all the respect in the world because they are scared of you”.

4.4.2.2 Physical bullying

With the information gathered from the questionnaires, 71.9% of the learners stated that they had never hit, punched and kicked other learners but 23.8% said they did it sometimes. In addition to this 75.7% indicated that they had never damaged or stolen other learners' property, but 18.1% did it sometimes while 1.9% did it often. The use of weapons among learners was recorded to be low as the majority of participants (90%) said they had never used or threatened their victims with weapons. However, this does not mean that the weapons are never used in schools. 2.4% stated that they often used weapons against their victims and 1% indicated that they used weapons very often (see table 5)

During the focus group discussions with perpetrators it was revealed that physical bullying is an everyday activity in schools. Beating can be done by one person or by a group of people. Sometimes victims' possessions' are destroyed. Perpetrators indicated that they like pushing other learners around, and beating is also common, as one perpetrator put it: “Beating is an addiction. It is like something that I have to do everyday”. Learners also indicated that they

stole other learners' possessions and forced them to give their belongings especially at the beginning of the year when there are a lot of new grade 8 and 11 learners.

4.4.2.3 Sexual bullying

In general, the majority of learners never made unwanted sexual suggestions but 4.8% indicated that they sometimes did so. Some learners (4.8%) indicated that they sometimes bullied other learners sexually while 1.4% did it often. According to the focus group discussion, some participants indicated that sexual bullying did happen in their schools whereby perpetrators forced to touch their victims' breasts or any other part of the body. This happen mostly during or after the evening study. Male perpetrators indicated that sexual bullying is encouraged in their peer groups. One learner said: "a male is regarded as a true male member of the group if he is able to harass many girls; it is another way of boosting their manhood".

4.4.2.4 Racial/ tribal bullying

The information gathered from participants through the questionnaires indicated that racial and tribal bullying is currently happening in schools as 21% of learners said they sometimes teased other learners because of their language, while 3.8% said they very often did so. On the other hand, 14.8% humiliated other learners due to the colour of their skin. 81.9% said they never bullied other learners because of their tribe or culture; however 12.9% did it sometimes (see table 5).

During the focus group discussions, some participants indicated that they do bully other learners just because of the language they speak. Some said they just do not like the language, it irritates them. Some learners said there are just some languages which sound strange, with

funny tones. This is indicated by one participant who said: “there is a learner in my class and every time she speaks, the whole class starts laughing at her. Even when she is speaking in English, she puts English words in her own language. It is just fun”. As it was indicated during the focus group discussions with victims, perpetrators also said they sometimes exclude other learners who do not belong to their tribes from their groups. They choose learners to be their friends based on their tribal background.

Table 5: Types of bullying with regard to perpetrators and based on information from the questionnaires

Types of bullying	Frequency of occurrence							
	Never		Sometimes		Often		Very often	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Emotional bullying								
Called other learners names	89	42.4	88	41.9	20	9.5	10	4.8
Insulted him/her	103	49.0	93	44.9	7	3.3	5	2.4
Excluded him/her from the group	157	74.8	36	17.1	8	3.8	4	1.9
Said bad things about other learners	143	68.1	56	27.6	5	1.0	4	1.9
Teased other learners because of their looks	146	69.5	52	24.8	6	2.9	1	0.5
Threatened and blackmailed them	178	84.8	20	9.5	5	2.4	2	1.0
Sent them negative text messages, email, etc	170	81.0	24	11.4	5	2.4	5	2.4
Teased them because of their disability	172	81.9	20	9.5	7	3.3	5	2.4
Insulted them academic their performance	169	80.5	26	12.4	5	2.4	5	2.4
Physical Bullying								
Damaged or stole their possessions	159	75.7	36	18.1	4	1.9	4	1.9
Threatened or used weapons on them	189	90.0	10	4.8	5	2.4	2	1.0
Hitted, punched or kicked others	151	71.9	50	23.8	4	1.9	0	0.0
Forced them to give their belongings	189	90.0	11	5.2	3	1.4	2	1.0
Racial and Sexual Bullying								
Teased them because of their tribe or culture	172	81.9	27	12.9	4	1.9	4	1.9

Laughed at them because of their skin colour	165	78.6	31	14.8	6	2.9	5	2.4
Teased them because of their language	148	70.5	44	21.0	7	3.3	8	3.8
Made unwanted sexual suggestions to them	191	91.0	10	4.8	3	1.4	2	1.0

4.4.3 Types of bullying with regard to eye witnesses

The study also allowed learners who witnessed bullying activities in their schools to indicate their views. The information is first discussed based on information gathered from the questionnaires (see table 6) followed by information gathered from the focus group discussions.

4.4.3.1 Physical bullying

From the information gathered from the questionnaires, it became clear that participants witnessed a lot of bullying activities taking place in their schools. 40.5% indicated that they had sometimes seen other learners being kicked and punched. Whereas 31% witnessed learners damaging others' possessions sometimes, 26.2% felt it happened very often. While 45% had never seen anyone using weapons on other learners, 34.8% indicated that it did happen sometimes. 28.1% of the participants indicated that learners sometimes forced others to give them their money or belonging while 10.5% said it happened often (see table 6).

In the focus group discussion, witnesses stated that physical bullying is more common than any other type of bullying. According to witnesses, victims are always pushed around, kicked and there are a lot of fighting activities in their schools. One witness said: 'there is one boy in our class, but other boys are always picking on him. Sometimes they are laughing at him, kicking him. They just abuse the boy''. Witnesses indicated that teachers can also bully

learners physically by applying corporal punishment. Young learners especially in grade 8 are forced to give away their belongings to elder learners because they are scared of being beaten.

4.4.3.2 Emotional bullying

While 28.6% of participants pointed it out that they had often seen learners being insulted, 25.7% said it happens very often. Furthermore it was found that 35.5% had never observed victims being excluded from their groups although 15.7% had witness this act often. The results also indicated that the majority of learners (38.6%) heard perpetrators saying bad things about other learners while 26.2 % heard bad stories about them very often. 49.5% of learners said they had never witnessed other learners being threatened or blackmailed but it happened sometimes as 34.4% had indicated.

With regard to academic performance, 34.3% of the participants indicated that learners are sometimes bullied because they did not perform well in their subjects, while 12.9% said it happened very often. In addition to this 27.1% said that learners were sometimes bullied in their schools based on their disability, while 9% said this happened often.

During the focus group discussions with the witnesses, they indicated that although emotional bullying is difficult to pick up and to prove, there are those learners who they have seen crying because they are given funny names or bad things are said about them. Witnesses said this type of bullying really affected a lot of learners in their schools as they are being teased all the time. Overweight and skinny learners were also pointed out as some of the learners who are given bad names because of their weights.

4.4.3.3 Racial/tribal bullying

The majority of learners (39%) indicated that they had witness learners teasing others because of their tribe or culture while 11.4% said it happened often. 43.3% said they had never witnessed learners being laughed at because of their skin colour but 34.8% said it happened sometimes, while 10% indicated that it happened often. Learners' language contributes to bullying as 31.1% said they had witnessed other learners being bullied sometimes because of their languages while 12.9% indicated that it happened often and 7.1% said it happened very often (see table 6).

During the focus group discussions with witnesses, they indicated that tribal bullying is common as they often hear some learners being referred to by their tribes when they are called by others. It is also common for learners who are from the same tribe to form groups which are known for their bullying activities.

4.4.3.4 Sexual bullying

Although the majority of learners (69.5%) indicated that they had never witnessed learners making unwanted sexual suggestions to others, 17.6% said it happened sometimes, 6.2% said it happened often while 3.8% indicated that it happened very often.

Learners interviewed during the focus group discussions stated that it was mainly female learners who were victims of sexual bullying. According to learners, sexual bullying was not as common in grades 8 and 9 as was the case in upper grades such as grades 11 and 12. Learners indicated that they had witnessed some girls being scared of coming to school because there are boys who were threatening and intimidating them because they refused to be their girlfriends.

Table 6: Types of bullying with regard to witnesses and based on information from questionnaires

Types of bullying	Frequency of occurrence							
	Never		Sometimes		Often		Very often	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Emotional bullying								
Learners insulting others	24	11.4	69	32.9	60	28.6	54	25.7
Excluding someone from the group	75	35.5	74	35.2	33	15.7	21	10.0
Saying bad things about other learners	30	14.3	81	38.6	55	26.2	42	26.2
Teasing other learners because of their looks	39	18.6	98	46.7	38	18.1	30	14.3
Calling them names	29	13.8	77	36.7	46	21.9	58	27.6
Threatening and blackmailing others	104	49.5	68	34.4	25	11.9	8	3.8
Sending others negative text message , email or letters	112	53.3	51	24.3	22	10.5	19	9.0
Teasing others because of their disability	118	56.6	57	27.1	19	9.0	9	4.3
Teasing others because of their academic performance	82	39.0	72	34.3	25	11.9	27	12.9
Physical Bullying								
Damaged or stole your property	40	19.0	65	31.0	45	21.4	55	26.2
Threatened or used weapon on others	96	45.0	73	34.8	19	9.0	17	8.1
Forcing learners to give their money or other belongings	111	52.9	59	28.1	22	10.5	15	7.1
Hiting, punching or kicking someone	31	14.8	85	40.5	46	21.9	44	21.0
Racial and Sexual Bullying								
Teasing other because of their tribe or culture	89	42.6	82	39.0	24	11.4	13	6.2
Laughing at other because of their skin colour	91	43.3	73	34.8	21	10.0	20	6.5
Teasing others because of their language	86	41.0	78	31.1	27	12.9	15	7.1
Made unwanted sexual suggestions	146	69.5	37	17.6	13	6.2	8	3.8

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4.4.4 Types of bullying according to the teachers

During the discussions conducted with sampled teachers, they indicated that bullying happened in many ways at their schools. The most common ones were emotional and physical bullying. Teachers also said that the majority of learners who reported cases to them were learners who were threatened by others, or had their property taken away or stolen. Some victims were physically attacked by their perpetrators. Many teachers indicated that the majority of learners who are new at school are subjected to name calling, beating, stealing, threatening or perpetrators pouring cold water on their victims.

Teachers also indicated that the most common type of bullying is when learners frighten others and it forces them to live in fear all the time. Teachers also stated that sexual bullying might be common but in most cases learners are not open to discuss it.

4.4.5 New types of bullying which were revealed in focus group discussions conducted with learners and teachers

Although a lot of bullying activities in schools were revealed in the questionnaires as based on the literature review, the focus group discussions conducted with teachers and learners also revealed that new types of bullying were emerging. The results below explain the types of bullying which were brought to the researcher's attention during the focus group discussions and interviews with participants.

4.4.5.1 Political bullying

According to the focus group discussion among learners, there were some learners in their schools who experienced bullying as a result of political conflicts. Some learners said that

they had seen their classmates being bullied because they came from families which support minority political parties. Victims are labeled, given humiliating names and sometimes being excluded from groups or sport activities by other learners. Some teachers even mentioned bad things about certain political parties in the classes which reinforced bullying. According to participants, in most cases, victims are not politically active but they are being bullied because their parents are active members of certain political parties, which is a clear violation of human's rights. According to teachers interviewed, political bullying was regarded to be on the rise in schools.

4.4.5.2 Bullying based on social class

During the group discussions with learners and interviews with teachers, they indicated that some learners do bully, or are bullied because of their social class in the community. Learners from high classes (rich families) are regarded as perpetrators especially those with poor academic performance records. Some victims indicated that they are bullied by these learners because they find them boring and living a low life. They are bullied based on their dressing code, hair style and the food they carry in their lunch boxes. One victim said: "those rich kids will be there using you as if you are nothing. They will force you to wash their clothes and do everything for them especially in the hostel. Teachers do not say anything or discipline them because they are also scared of them". According to victims, these learners form groups that bully other learners in school. These are also learners who use cell phones to bully others. They call them or send them nasty text messages. Sometimes these perpetrators will be stalking other learners through their cell phones. Bullying via emails was not really common because the majority of learners said they do not have access to internet.

4.4.5.3 Bullying based on urban or rural setting

Information gathered during the focus group discussions with learners and teachers, revealed that bullying occurred based on whether or not a learner was originally from a rural or urban area. The majority of victims interviewed during the focus group discussions indicated that they moved from rural areas to urban areas because they did not have secondary schools within their areas. These victims said they are bullied because other learners from urban areas regard them to be “primitive and living in stone ages”. Participants indicated that learners from rural areas are less likely to bully learners from urban areas; however learners from urban areas do bully every one whether the learner is from rural or urban areas. Some of them are bullied because they cannot speak English well.

4.4.5.4 Bullying based on family history

Some participants indicated that they had become victims of bullying because of their parents’ personal differences. One participant said: “just because my mother does not get along well with her mother, she started to be my enemy in the school. Every time I pass by, her friends will start to shout at me, intimidating me all the time. I am always in fear because of this”. This happens to learners who are neighbours at home and their parents are in conflict. According to some participants, they bully one another at school because their parents are always telling them bad things about other families, so they tend to bully learners from those families. This also happen with teachers who have problems with certain parents. They tend to single out those parents’ children and bully them at school. One learner said: “if a teacher does not like your parents, you will suffer. They will say anything in front of the class; they can even talk badly about your family”.

4.4.5.5 Bullying based on spiritual and religious beliefs

The information revealed during the group discussions indicated that learners who worship in churches which are not followed by the majority of people in the community are sometimes subjected to all sorts of bullying. Those who are “born again” (believe that they should give their entire lives to God) are sometimes given names such as Jesus, Christ, Virgin Mary, Jehova and so on. Some are bullied because other learners feel that their churches are fake and misleading. Those who are bullied are those who are more open to tell other learners about the word of God. This happens mostly in classes when victims are doing their bible studies.

4.4.5.6 Initiation

Both perpetrators and victims of bullying stated that initiations are common in all schools and they are commonly done at the beginning of the year. Learners who are new at school are the ones who are likely to be victims of this type of bullying. They are being bullied by those who had been at the school during the previous years and this is seen as part of the school culture. Victims stated that several forms of bullying are normally used during initiation. Learners are forced to walk like animals, eat fresh chilli, have names pasted on their school uniforms, forced to sing different songs although they are not good singers, and sometimes forced to take part in fake “Miss Beauty Pageant Competitions”. Participants indicated that all those bullying activities are in most cases accepted as they are seen as part of the school culture.

4.5 Research findings on the frequency of bullying activities

Participants were asked to indicate how often bullying was likely to happen to them. The data collected from the questionnaires indicated that, although 38.1% had never been bullied,

23.3% were bullied once or twice a year, 12.4% were bullied every month, 13.8% were bullied every week, 8.6% were bullied more than once a week, and 3.8% were bullied everyday (see table 7).

Table 7: Frequency of bullying acts.

Frequency of bullying	Frequency	Percentages
Never been bullied	80	38.1
Once or twice a year	49	23.3
Once a month	26	12.4
Once a week	29	13.8
More than once a week	18	8.6
Every day	8	3.8
Total	210	100

Although results from the questionnaires indicated that bullying is more likely to happen once or twice a year as well as once a week, during the focus group discussions with learners, the majority of victims stated that bullying is more likely to happen more than once a week while perpetrators indicated that they bully their different victims almost every day.

4.6 Research findings on time of the year bullying occurs

Participants were asked through the questionnaires to indicate the time of the year when bullying is more likely to happen in their schools. 45% of the learners indicated that the majority of bullying activities take place at the beginning of the year, followed by 30% who

said bullying happened at the end of the year, 15% indicated that bullying is likely to happen in the middle of the year while 10% said bullying happened throughout the year.

Teachers interviewed also indicated that the majority of bullying cases reported to their offices happened at the beginning of the year, with some taking place at the end of the year, but few cases of bullying were reported to them in the middle of the year.

During the focus group discussions, some learners indicated that bullying happens throughout the year, but learners get used to it and they stop reporting it to anyone. However, the majority of learners confirmed the results from the questionnaires by saying that bullying is always high at the beginning and end of the year.

4.7 Findings on who the perpetrators of bullying are

With regard to the question of who the perpetrators of bullying are, the following information was revealed from the questionnaires given to the learners, as well as the data collected from learners and teachers during focus group discussion. Participants were asked to identify the perpetrators of bullying by gender. The data from questionnaires revealed that both genders were regarded to be perpetrators in all the schools; however, more respondents regarded females (55%) than males (45%) as perpetrators. The same question was posed to learner-participants during focus group discussions and contradictory to the findings from questionnaires, the majority of learners regarded male learners as perpetrators of bullying.

As it was indicated by the learners, teachers also confirmed that learners' status influence bullying in schools. Learners from rich families were pointed out to be the bullies especially those who have learning difficulties. According to the teachers, these learners believe that they can always get away from problems and when they are in school, they use their status to bully other learners. They blackmail and threaten others in different ways. These learners sometimes belong to gangs, and the gangs bully other learners in school. Pretty and popular girls, also in most cases from rich families, tend to form cliques known for wearing the latest fashions and getting attention from cool boys. They have clear preferences on who could join or be removed from their groups. They bully other girls in the school especially those who do not go along with their behaviours. Their way of bullying is more emotional than physical.

Another group of perpetrators which was pointed out by the participants in focus groups were undisciplined famous soccer players in the schools. Specifically those learners who were good academically strong but excelled in sport activities. These learners used their status to bully the less known and powerless learners in the school because they knew that teachers would not punish them.

Learners with low academic records were also identified as perpetrators of bullying. According to the teachers, in most cases learners who perform well, do not bully others as they are more interested in their school works. Teachers refer to them as role models and they strive to keep their good image, however, poor performing learners tend to be bullies and once they see that they cannot achieve the expected results, they start bullying other learners.

Some learners indicated that Grade 10 and 12 learners are the most common bullies in schools. They are the learners who mostly bully others when they are busy preparing for their final examination. Participants said learners in the above mentioned grades bully others

because they know that they will not come back to the same school the following year. Teachers supported learners' findings when they said Grade 10 and 12 learners like to bully others at the beginning and end of the year. They indicated that the majority of perpetrators were learners in Grade 12 who have been at school for a long period of time. They bully learners who are new at school because they consider themselves as senior learners. Some learners who had been at school for a long period of time but not in Grade 10 and 12 were also counted amongst the perpetrators of bullying. They tend to know the school in and out, they know all the school corners and it is always easy for them to bully the new learners at school without teachers noticing it. This is the same with former learners who are currently out of school but residing in the vicinity of the school. They come into the school grounds to bully either the learners who were there with them or those who just joined the school.

Another finding about perpetrators of bullying was that, some of them were once victims of bullying. They were bullied by those who are stronger than them and then later on they started bullying those that are weaker than them. According to participants, new perpetrators continue to bully the weaker and younger learners they become well known bullies.

Victims of bullying regard learners who grew up in urban areas as their main bullies. These learners look at those who come from rural areas as old fashioned and uninformed. They laugh at them when they speak English during the lessons because of the way they pronounce words in English or laugh at them because their dressing code is outdated. In addition to this they pointed out that learners who come from the same area tend to make up groups which later start to terrorize other learners. They will bully those who are not from their towns or villages. In most cases, these perpetrators attended the same school before they joined the

current one. When they come to one school, they form strong groups which start bullying other learners.

Some learners pointed out that their teachers and other institutional workers are sometimes bullies. Those are the teachers who usually give learners bad names, displaying learners' test marks on the class board and sometimes attacking learners verbally in front of everyone. According to learners these teachers seem to find it fun doing this while it is humiliating to the learners. Participants said some people who are supposed to protect them are the main perpetrators of bullying especially at the hostel where the institutional workers bully learners in front of everyone.

Learners with behavioural problems are also regarded as bullies and typically those learners who are reported to the principals' offices regularly are the ones who take part in bullying activities. Teachers indicated that these learners fail to control their bad manners and they overreact to anything other learners say to them.

Learners indicated that some perpetrators are learners with poor upbringing. They have problems with their parents at home and they carry their burdens with them to school. They are frustrated and they find their peace in bullying other learners.

Learners who have identity crisis can also be bullies. According to the teachers, these learners are said to be having low self esteem and find it difficult to fit in a group at the beginning, but as time goes on, they will start to bully others. They are not sure of their identity, and in some cases other learners call them lesbian or gays which frustrate them and force them to bully others.

4.8 Findings on who the victims of bullying are

With regard to the question of who the victims of bullying are, the first findings to be presented are those obtained from the questionnaires followed by those obtained from focus group discussions conducted with learners and teachers. According to the findings collected from the questionnaires, 65% of victims of bullying are female while 35% are male.

During the focus group discussions, many participants indicated that physical appearance and certain unique characteristics such as body size plays an important role and contributes to bullying activities. According to them, learners who are overweight are bullied by getting names such as Mafat boom boom, dish-killers, Goliath and so on. They are laughed at and excluded from groups. On the other side, learners who are too small in size or skinny are also laughed at and teased. They are also given names such as skeleton, AIDS, Mosquito, Spaghetti and many others which reflect their body sizes. Learners who are perceived by peers to be ugly also get names such a monkey, cat and all sorts of names which resembles their looks. Similarly girls who have male features or boys who display female characteristics were also regarded to be victims of bullying. They are given names, teased and isolated from groups. Although some gays and lesbians learners are perpetrators of bullying, the majority of them are subjected to bullying activities as they find it difficult to fit into other groups of learners. In most cases, they are lonely and do not socialize with other learners. In the process, perpetrators find ways of bullying them.

According to the teachers, age plays a role in bullying. Learners who are overage are bullied by other learners in schools. They are called names but on the other side, learners who are too young and have few age mates in the school also sometimes become victims of bullying. Other learners will mistreat them, force them to do things which they do not like and blackmail them. In most cases, they are forced to give away their property.

Participants also indicated that learners who are affected or infected by HIV and AIDS are sometimes stigmatized, especially by those who know their HIV status. Learners laugh and make unnecessary comments about their status. Those who are orphaned due to AIDS related diseases are also victimized. It was pointed out that these learners feel uncomfortable with other learners and isolate them from the rest of their peers because some of them are insensitive. Those orphans who become heads of households due to their parents' death must take up parental responsibilities at an early age. Other learners do not understand their circumstances and these learners often become victims of bullying because other learners will isolate them from their groups and give them names such as Mama and Papa. Some teachers indicated that these learners are more vulnerable than others and perpetrators take advantage to bully them because they know that they have no one to report to since there are no parents.

Learners with speech problems, mostly stutterers were also indicated to be victims of bullying. They are laughed at when they try to communicate or if they cannot say certain words. This mostly happens in language subjects where reading and oral presentation are compulsory. Learners with poor English pronunciation are also bullied according to the teachers. They are teased and laughed at and in some cases they are given names after the English words which they have pronounced incorrectly.

Learners from the villages who just came to town for schooling purposes are also one of the groups described by participants during the focus group discussions as victims of bullying. They are victims especially at the beginning of the year and are more likely to be bullied by learners from urban areas.

Learners who fall pregnant while they are still at school fall victim to different types of bullying. The moment other learners notice that one of their classmates is expecting, they will start talking about it, laugh and give them names. One participant said: “one girl in our class fell pregnant last year, and it was a big thing especially with boys. They were ever on her case. Sometimes they draw a pregnant lady on the chalkboard during break time, and when everyone comes into the class, they will find those pictures with insulting words next to them. The poor girl was always crying until she dropped out of school. It was a very bad experience”.

According to the teachers, poor or learners from disadvantage families are being bullied due to their poor style of living. They wear old and dirty school uniforms. They are either bullied because of the way they dress, or anything which other learners regard as low class. In most cases, these learners are isolated and do not take part in extra mural activities at school such as sport and drama clubs.

According to the teachers, learners who are quiet or reserved and feel inferior, easily become targets of bullying. These learners cry easily, get emotionally distressed and cannot stand up for themselves. Teachers stated that they find it difficult to identify these learners as victims because that is the way they normally act. This is the same with learners who are lonely and unpopular. They are living in their own small world, and perpetrators find ways of bullying them.

Learners with learning difficulties, especially those in good performing schools, are being bullied by both teachers and learners. Some teachers make negative remarks about their poor learning abilities while other learners laugh at them. Sometimes they are isolated from groups. It makes them feel anxious and insecure, and they tend to be quiet in the class because they are not sure of how other learners and teachers will react to them.

Teachers pointed out that learners from abusive families tend to withdraw from the rest of the group which make them more vulnerable to bullying. Some of them are always sad, and parents are very unsupportive towards their learning.

4.9 Findings on the places where bullying takes place

Learners were asked to indicate the places where bullying was likely to take place in their schools. When responses of often and very often were added, it became clear that bullying was most likely to happen on the school grounds (36%), in the school corridors (35%), when learners walk home from school (31%), and in the dining hall (29%) (See table 8).

Table 8: Places where bullying takes place.

Places of bullying activities	Frequency of occurrence							
	Never		Sometimes		Often		Very often	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
In the classroom	42	20.0	107	51.0	23	11.0	24	11.4
In the school corridors	40	19.0	80	38.1	41	19.5	32	15.2
In the dining hall	78	37.1	56	26.7	34	16.2	26	12.4
On the playground	40	19.0	76	36.2	40	19.0	36	17.1
In the toilets	99	47.1	57	27.1	24	11.4	12	5.7
On the way to school	83	39.5	65	31.0	27	12.9	19	9.0

On the way home from school	55	26.2	74	35.2	30	14.3	35	16.7
In the school bus	151	71.9	27	12.9	6	2.9	3	1.4
Other, specify.....	17	8.1	17	8.1	8	3.8	15	7.1

The data gathered from the focus group discussions with the participants indicated that bullying is likely to happen at the school hostel, mostly in the bathrooms, bed rooms and dining rooms. One victim who resides in the hostel said: “you are told not to eat meat; you can only eat it if you hide it under your pants. Some boys always grab your food or just push you so that your plate can fall down and then they will start laughing at you. There are times when I just do not go to the dining hall because it is where you get the worst treatment in your life”.

One victim was crying when he was explaining the bullying acts done to him at the school hostel: “You cannot sleep without being pushed around by big boys. Sometimes while you are sleeping, some bullies will just throw a bucket of cold water on your bed, your bed sheets will be wet and you will have no place to sleep that night unless you have a friend to rescue you out”.

Learners who are staying in the school hostel said they have specific days when they are released to go out and do their shopping. The shopping centres are where grabbing and harassing take places. Some perpetrators will be waiting for them at the shopping mall where they will then start bullying them.

The school hall where the morning assembly is conducted can also be one of the places of bullying. Participants indicated that learners are bullied during the assembly when the

principal and teachers stand in front of the gathering. Some victims said they are always scared of attending the assembly because it is where pushing and threatening acts are likely to happen.

Some participants indicated that bullying is likely to happen at the school gate when the school is out and learners are waiting to be picked up by their parents. Bullying was also reported to be common when learners are on their way home from school. These are learners who are not staying in the hostel and they do not use any other form of transport from school but walk home everyday. A lot of learners said they were more likely to be bullied after school when they are walking home rather than being bullied when they are walking to school. The perpetrators would write letters insulting victims and throw the letter on the walking path so that it can be picked up by whoever passes by and spread the rumours in the letter.

Through the discussions the researcher had with learners, some of them indicated that they are being bullied at the school tuck-shop. This is done during break time. They are mostly harassed physically and emotionally. Other learners will be there grabbing their food or threatening them to give money or their food.

Some learners also indicated that they are bullied in the toilets at school. Victims indicated that their names are written in the school toilets and they are insulted by those perpetrators who cannot face them straight. Some victims said perpetrators who are stronger than them will follow them to the toilet and start bullying them there when they see that other learners are not watching them.

During the focus group discussions, some participants also indicated that they are being bullied in the classrooms during the afternoon and evening studies. During the evening studies, the light will be switched off and while it is dark in the classes, the perpetrators will start bullying them. That is the time when sexual bullying is more likely to happen. According to female participants, boys bully them during the evening studies at the classrooms or on their way to the hostel by touching and beating them.

4.10 Findings based on the Chi-Square analyses

Comparisons were made between different variables to see how they influence each other when it comes to bullying activities in schools. Relationships of the variables, as mentioned in the literature review, with the different types of bullying were examined. However, the majority of Chi-Square analyses did not yield statistically significant results. For example, although trends were detected, there were no statistically significant relationships between bullying and gender, popularity, age, and classroom size. Below are the results from those Chi-Square analyses that were found to be statistically significant.

Table 9: Relationship between school size and physical bullying: kicking, punching and hitting.

No

School size	Action 8: physical					Total
	Missing	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	
Medium	3.3%	70.0%	23.3%		3.3%	100.0%
Big	6.6%	64.5%	21.1%	6.6%	1.3%	100.0%
Very big	1.0%	54.8%	20.2%	11.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total	3.3%	60.5%	21.0%	8.1%	7.1%	100.0%

te: Chi-Square = 18.039, df = 8, P<0.021

The data were analyzed in order to see if there was a relationship between the size of school and physical bullying activities. The data clearly indicated that with an increase in school size there was also an increase in the number of learners that reported bullying activities against them. Looking at table 9 it was found that in very big schools a total of 24% learners were bullied often or very often while for big schools this number decreased to 7.9% of learners and in medium schools only 3.3% of learners reported bullying against them. Thus there was more physical bullying in very big schools than in medium and big school (see table 9). These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 10: Relationship between school performance and physical bullying: forced to give money and other belongings.

School performance		Action 9: physical					Total
		Missing	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	
I	Excellent	6.6%	86.9%	3.3%	3.3%		100.0%
	Good	3.4%	82.8%	6.9%	6.9%		100.0%
	Average	1.7%	70.0%	8.3%	8.3%	11.7%	100.0%
	Weak	1.7%	66.7%	23.3%	6.7%	1.7%	100.0%
Total		3.3%	75.7%	11.0%	6.2%	3.8%	100.0%

Note: Chi-Square = 32.696; df =12; P< 0.001

The findings were analysed to find the relationship between school performance and bullying, in the form of learners being forced to give away their money or belongings. As the school become weaker in performance, there were fewer learners who reported that they had never bullied. There were more learners who were never been bullied in excellent and good performing schools than was the case in average and weak schools. The data clearly showed

that the weak and average schools recorded higher percentages of physical bullying acts in comparison to good and excellent schools (see table 10). The differences were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Table 11: Relationship between school setting and physical bullying: forced to give money and other belongings.

Note:

School setting	Action 9: physical					Total
	Missing	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	
Rural		60.0%	33.3%	3.3%	3.3%	100.0%
Urban	3.9%	78.3%	7.2%	6.7%	3.9%	100.0%
Total	3.3%	75.7%	11.0%	6.2%	3.8%	100.0%

Chi-Square=18.798; df=4; P< 0.001

The relationship between school settings and physical bullying (forced to give possessions) was analyzed. Although these findings were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), they were inconclusive. On the one hand 6.6% of the learners in rural schools said they had been threatened to give away their money or belongings often or very often as opposed to 10.6% of learners in urban schools. On the other hand more learners from urban schools reported that they were never forced to give away their possessions in comparison to learners in rural schools (see table 11).

Table 12: Relationship between repetition of grades and physical bullying: forced to give money and other belongings.

Repeated grades	Action 9: Physical					Total
	Missing	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often	
Never	2.6%	82.8%	5.3%	6.6%	2.6%	100%
Once	5.1%	59.0%	23.1%	2.6%	10.3%	100%
Twice	0.0%	57.1%	35.7%	7.1%	0.0%	100%
More than twice	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100%

Note: Chi-Square=38.343; df =16,P<0.001

Chi-Square analysis was done to determine the relationship between grade repetition and bullying. The results indicated that the majority of learners (82.5%) who never repeated any grade were never bullied by fellow learners but for those who repeated grades once and twice only, 59% and 57% respectively were never bullied. Statistics clearly showed that more learners who repeated grades were bullied compared to those that did not repeat grades (see table 12). The differences were found to be statistically significant ($P < 0.01$).

4.11 Findings on the causes of bullying

The participants were asked to point out what they thought were contributing factors of bullying in their schools. The data were collected through the questionnaires as well as focus group discussions.

4.11.1 Causes of bullying according to all learners, victims and teachers

In the questionnaires, there were closed and open ended questions were participants were asked to indicate the causes of bullying in their schools. There were two questions: the first one asked directly “when you bully others, why do you do it?” and the second question was more indirectly “in your opinions, why do you think learners bully others?” The findings from the two above mentioned questions are as follow: 20% of learners bully others in order to teacher them a lesson, another 20% do it because their friends are doing it and encourage them to do so, 14.3% do it out of frustration. Bullying based on retaliation recorded 8% while those who bully because they dislike other learners recorded 4.3%.

On the indirect question on why learners think perpetrators bully other learners, the majority of 37% indicated that learners bully others because of their background and because their parents did the same thing to them. Thirty percent said poor school rules influence bullying in schools, 27.6% said learners bully others because of peer pressure, 6.7% said it is caused by substance abuse, 4.8% felt it was because of poor classroom management while 3.8% said bullying happens because classrooms are overcrowded.

Focus group discussions with learners supported results from the questionnaires, as learners strongly believed that bullying is a result of poor school rules, poor classroom management, and a lack of discipline in schools. Teachers who do not know how to handle learners in their classrooms allow other activities to happen without disciplining learners. Similarly teachers who are not committed to their work and who miss lessons set a bad example and when they see learners misbehaving in their classrooms, they tend to turn a blind eye since they are aware of their own shortcomings. Some learners indicated that bullying has become part of the culture of the schools and since teachers do not discipline the culprits, other learners just follow suit.

Both victims and teachers who participated in focus group discussions strongly believed that bullying is also caused by peer pressure. Learners are under pressure to participate in bullying activities in order to remain in the group. It is also through peer pressure that some learners start abusing alcohol which in turn leads to bullying.

Teachers also indicated that poor upbringing at home is one cause of bullying at schools. Even if teachers call in the parents, the situation never gets better, since learners are not disciplined at home. There are also learners whose parents experience hard times such as financial difficulties or divorce. These factors impact on children and they often display negative behaviour including bullying others at school. The same applies to learners from violent families.

Some learners also indicated that teachers bully learners when they are under stress or are having personal conflicts. Some learners indicated that there are those teachers who just hate certain learners and these learners are always at the receiving end of bullying activities.

Some teachers, specifically those who teach in urban schools, indicated that their schools are located close to places where learners have access to alcohol and drugs. They can get alcohol anytime they feel like having it, and this contributes to bullying in schools.

Teachers also indicated that learners who are academically weak revert to bullying behaviour in an attempt to gain popularity or to attract the attention of teachers and their peers. These

are also the same learners who bully those who are doing well. During the focus group discussion with learners, some indicated that they became victims of bullying because they are performing well at school and teachers are fond of them. This makes other learners jealous and they will start bullying them.

During the focus group discussions with teachers, they indicated that the majority of learners in their schools are overwhelmed by emotional problems, and some of them are frustrated because they have no coping mechanism. They do not know how to handle those problems. The moment they cannot control their emotions, they start bullying others. Teachers stated that lack of counseling programmes and Life Skills teachings in schools are some of the contributing factors to bullying behaviours because learners lack social skills

As was indicated by the questionnaires' findings, group discussions with teachers also indicated that overcrowded classrooms are very difficult to control and may contribute to bullying. One teacher said: "you have learners of different personalities who have different goals in their lives, so if you pack them in the class like a bag of potatoes, then this leads to chaos and poor classroom management".

Another point raised by the teachers about the causes of bullying was the influence of the media. Teachers said that the radio, television and other media play a major role in the way learners at their schools behave. They tend to copy whatever they see on television, including acts of bullying, and apply it to their own situation.

4.11.2 Causes of bullying according to perpetrators

Learners were asked to indicate why they think they bully other learners, and the findings from the questionnaires revealed that 22% of learners bully others in order to teach them a lesson, 16% do it out of frustration, 11% bully others because they are encouraged to do it, 10% do it because their friends are also doing it, 10% bully others in order to show them who is the boss while the last 8% said they do it because they want to retaliate.

During the focus group discussions, this issue was investigated in more depth and the majority of learners said they bully other learners because they want to be popular in school and belong to a certain group. This is in accordance with the information revealed during the victims and teachers' focus group discussions. They want other learners to talk about them and in some cases, teachers and learners are always scared of the bullies, and this situation boosts the perpetrators confidence. One perpetrator said: "I only bully people in order to build up my reputation. It is a way of people to talk about you. It makes you feel good".

Some perpetrators indicated that they bully others because they are frustrated with their own lives. These are children who sometimes have problems with parents at home or they witnessed their parents fighting, and for them to release their stress and frustrations they tend to bully the younger learners or learners who are weaker than them. Some learners are staying with their step-parents who tend to mistreat them and abuse them in different ways.

Some perpetrators also indicated that they get pressure from their parents to perform well academically and it is this pressure that stresses them. Some learners indicated that their parents fail to acknowledge their abilities and to accept that they are not A* learners. They are always comparing them with learners who perform above average and want them to do the same.

Some perpetrators indicated that they were once victims of bullying, and due to harsh treatment they received from their bullies, they also became perpetrators with the aim of defending themselves, for example, one perpetrator said: “in this school, if you do not bully, learners will think you are a coward. I was heavily bullied, I had no one to talk to, and I did not know what to do. In the end, I started bullying younger learners and other learners started to talk about me. From there, I continued bullying them just to avoid bullies”.

Some perpetrators indicated that sometimes they have nothing to do in their classrooms, and they get bored. Bullying becomes a way of entertaining themselves. If there is no teacher in the class and learners are not given activities to do, it leads to different types of bullying. Thus, they find school boring and this leads to bullying.

Peer pressure also played a role. Perpetrators reported that they bully other learners to impress their peers or because their friends are doing it and they want to belong to their groups and keep their membership. “I do bully other learners because our group needs to be strong. Learners need to talk about us and feel scared when we are passing by. This makes us popular, and you get all what you want. You can get a girl you want and teachers are also scared of you” said one perpetrator.

Some perpetrators indicated that they bully others as a way of retaliation because they hold grudges and feel hatred towards their victims. One learner said: “The fact that he hurt me last time, I also have to find a way of doing it, just to hurt him to”. Some learners indicated that they bully because they hate their victims’ physical appearances. One perpetrator said: “I just do not like the way this child looks. I hate the girl, from the first day I saw her. She just irritates me with her look”. They said there are just some learners they hate although these learners did not do anything bad to them.

4.12 Effects of bullying

Participants were asked to indicate what effects bullying have on learners and the school in general. Information on learners' views was gathered via open ended questions in the questionnaires and also via focus group discussions while teachers were interviewed.

4.12.1 Effects of bullying according to all learners and victims.

This section was divided into three parts, they were: perpetrators' and victims feelings when they bully or are being bullied, effects of bullying on school performance, effects of bullying on learners in general. Learners were first asked through the questionnaires to indicate their feelings once they are bullied. 25.2% indicated that after bullying incidents they felt embarrassed, 24% said they felt angry, 19% felt lonely, 8.6% felt hatred, 7.6% felt depressed, 1.4% felt inferior while 14.8% indicated that they were not sure about their feelings. Some learners indicated their feeling after bullying others as follows: 38.6% said they feel bad but they have to do it, 12.4% do not feel anything, 8.6% feel good, 6.7% feel strong, while 4.3% feel popular after bullying other learners.

On the question how bullying affect school performance and learners in general, 46.7% of participants indicated that they find it difficult to concentrate on their school work 39.5% said bullying decreases academic performance, 28.6% said bullying lead to bad discipline in school, 27.6% indicated that bullied learners stay away from school, 21.9% indicated that they are scared to give answers in the class, 19.5% have little confidence in themselves and 14.8% said bullying disrupt teaching and learning.

Through the group discussions, the majority of learners indicated that they feel insecure when they are at school because they are not sure what their perpetrators would do to them next. For them, school is the most unsafe place they can go to. According to victims, it is through that insecurity that they end up developing low self-esteem. Low self esteem leads to other things such as lack of participation in school activities.

Some bullied learners said they became withdrawn from the rest of the group. They feel lonely and they do not want to mingle with other learners because they do not know when their bullies will attack them.

Based on the information collected through the questionnaires and also supported by the focus group discussion with the victims, it became clear that some victims almost dropped out of school while others do not enjoy schools at all just because of bullying. A number of learners indicated that their academic performance was affected. Bullying leads to poor concentration in the classrooms which in turn leads to poor academic performance that again leads to depression and stress. One victim said; “I hate school, every time it is like I am carrying a heavy burden on my shoulders and there is no one to help me out. I hardly listen to the teachers in the classroom. All you think of, who will bully you at break time. I used to perform well at my previous school but now, no no”. They feel helpless and worthless especially if they cannot do anything about their situation.

Some victims said bullying had the effect that they do not trust anyone any more. This is because they are bullied even by their friends and it is always difficult to build a new relationship. In the end, they end up hating people, even those who did not bully them.

Although the majority of learners indicated that bullying has a negative impact in their lives, some indicated that bullying made them who they are; in fact it made them stronger and more in control of their lives. During the focus group discussions, some learners said that through bullying their academic performance improved. The same victims said they do not have friends and they only got comfort in their books. They read all the time so that they can forget their problems and in the end they are performing well.

4.12.2 Effects of bullying according to teachers

Teachers interviewed, indicated different effects that bullying have on victims and the school in general. Teachers stated that bullying does not allow for a conducive learning environment in schools as lessons are often disrupted and they have a lot of bullying cases to attend to. Teachers also noted that bullying leads to absenteeism of both victims and perpetrators. Victims are forced to stay away from school because they are scared to face their bullies while perpetrators might stay away from school because they are suspended as a way of punishing them. Teachers also indicated that the schools spend a lot of time in dealing with unruly learners instead of using that time productively for teaching. Teachers must attend numerous disciplinary meetings and this affects the effective use of time negatively.

Bullying creates a lot of conflicts in schools. This leads to aggressive and violent behaviours among learners which in turn lead to the development of poor social skills. There are times when learners just want to fight with one another or insult one another. Teachers indicated that learners suffer both physically and emotionally. Some are constantly stressed and have

irrational fears which are related to the bullying incidents. Some teachers also stated that the majority of learners who are bullied at school tend to hate school and they are scared to come to school. Some of them complained about nightmares, headache and stomach ache. It affects their academic performance and some learners dropped out of school because of bullying.

Bullying has a long term effects and hatred caused by bullying hardly disappear from the victim's life. This is confirmed by one teacher who said: "Bullying is bad. I still hate one man who was a learner in our class when I was in secondary school. He used to insult me and called me bad names. Imagine that it is now ten years back but every time I meet him now, it brings me those bad memories. I think I will hate him till death".

According to the teachers bullying tarnish the name and image of the school. Parents end up withdrawing their children from that specific school where bullying is likely to happen. The community loses trust in the school and teachers and do not send their children to those schools where bullying is known to take place. Once the number of learners decreases, teachers are also forced to leave the school because of overstaffing norms.

4.12.3 Effects of bullying according to perpetrators

In the questionnaires, learners were asked to indicate the changes they had noticed in their lives after they bullied their victims and here are the results of their responses: 38.6% said they felt bad, 8.6% felt good, 6.7% felt strong, 4.3% felt popular, 2.9% felt liked by other learners while 12.4% said they did not feel anything.

During the focus group discussions, some perpetrators indicated that bullying make them feel powerful. It is as though they are in control of their own lives and that of others. It makes

them feel good and want to come to school every day so that they can continue bullying others.

The majority of learners said they enjoy the attention they get when they bully others, and it is that attention which boasts their popularity. “When I first came to this school, no one really took notice of me. After I joined the group of bullies, everyone was talking about me; even teachers were always calling me to the staffroom. It is cool”. Some perpetrators stated that bullying made them to miss out on school work, since they were suspended from school. This in turn led to low school performance.

Although the majority of learners said that they enjoyed bullying, there were those who said they always felt bad once they bullied others. One perpetrator said: “I do not feel good at all, I always regret it and feel shy to face my victim the next day. I feel sorry for them but I do not apologize to them because I am scared that people will laugh at me and think that I am a coward”.

4.12.4 Effects of bullying according to witnesses

Although some learners indicated that they had never been bullied at their respective schools, bullying activities had a negative impact on their lives as well. According to witnesses, they are constantly living in fear and they feel very uncomfortable in the presences of perpetrators. They have to comply with the bullies demands so that they will not be the next victims. It made their lives difficult because they do not know who to support when both victims and perpetrators are their friends or just classmates. Although witnesses said that bullying is bad, they sometimes find themselves supporting the perpetrators just for them to be on the safe side but it does not mean that they are happy with the actions.

Witnesses stated that they have seen learners fighting, and it destroys relationships between learners and creates more enemies in the school. Learners create enemies rather than focusing on their education.

Some witnesses indicated that some learners are forced to stay away from the school dining hall just because they are scared to be bullied there. It affects their health, and they also prefer to stay away from school. They indicated they know learners who dropped out of school but the reason was not known at that point, however, it became clear when they asked them, that bullying was the cause of school drop out. Witnesses indicated that they feel extremely guilty over their failure to prevent bullying from happening to others.

4.13 Strategies used to combat bullying in schools

4.13.1 Where do victims of bullying receive help?

Learners were asked to indicate the support system available in their schools which ensured that learners report and receive help after bullying incidences. Learners were asked to whom they reported when they were bullied and what happened after they reported the bullying cases. They were allowed to make multiple choices and the information collected from the questionnaires revealed that 30% reported to their teachers, 23.8% reported to their friends, 23.3% reported to their parents, 14.8% kept quiet while 5.7% reported to their siblings. Learners were also asked to indicate what happened after they reported the cases of bullying, and 31% said something was done that stopped bullying, 22.4% said nothing was done and the bullying continued. 19.5% said something was done but it did not stop bullying, 8.1% said something was done but it made the bullying even worse.

During the focus group discussions, some learners also added that after reporting the cases to the teachers, they are always told that something will be done but it never happened. Schools deal with bullying cases in different ways. Some learners said bullies were sent home to bring their parents, while some bullies were expelled from school. The majority of learners also indicated that the bullying cases were referred to the school Disciplinary Committee (DC).

Learners who are staying in hostels report problems to the hostel matron and perpetrators of bullying get their punishment. Orphans and other learners who do not have parents indicated that they hardly get help because there is no one to talk to at home, so they prefer to be quiet and suffer in silence. Those who prefer to be quiet indicated that they are also threatened by bullies who said they will continue harming them once they report them. Some learners did contact Life line/ Child Line where they received counselling.

4.13.2 Strategies currently in place in order to combat bullying in schools

Participants were asked to indicate the measures currently in place at their school to ensure that bullying does not happen to learners. Research from the questionnaires indicated that 41% rely on school rules, 23% depend on Learners Representative Councils ((LRC), 14% have an anti-bullying policy, 12% depends on class reporting systems while 18% said they have nothing in place.

During the focus group discussions with teachers, the majority of teachers indicated that bullies are dealt with by giving them punishments so that they will not repeat their acts. The punishments vary, depending on what the perpetrator did, for example expelling them from

school or cleaning the school yard. The most common solution taken is to suspend the perpetrator from school. In some schools, teachers said they provide learners with the school rules on their first day at school, and all the learners are expected to sign. Anti-bullying is one of the rules. Once they sign the document, it is an indication that they swear to abide to the rules. In other schools, it was reported that there were class reporting systems in place which helped the learners to report their cases to teachers and get help if possible. Some teachers said they are only guided by the school rules and the Disciplinary Committee (DC) is responsible for dealing with bullying cases and to see what action they can take once the matter arises.

Some indicated that both bullies and victims are talked to and given counselling. A few teachers said they have an effective psychological support system in place. There are teacher-counsellors who help learners to deal with their feelings. They also have Life Skills teachers who guide the learners. Some teachers indicated that they invited motivational speakers who motivate the learners and encourage them to stay away from bad things. They speak to them during the morning assembly, and in this way, the spirit of togetherness is encouraged. Some teachers said they call in police officers at the beginning of the year who talk to learners about bullying and its effects.

There were some teachers who said that they do not have strategies in place due to lack of skills on how to handle bullying cases. "Poor training at college made it difficult to handle these cases. I left the college without being taught on how to handle bullies in my class. It undermines my job because instead of helping, I ended up destroying the learners" said one teacher. During the focus group discussions, some teachers said they have register books for

offenders, and learners are awarded points according to their behaviours. The more a learner is involved in bullying, the more his/her points are being deducted.

Some schools call in parents in order to discuss the matter with them. Although the schools try to intervene, the majority of victims interviewed during the focus group discussions said there is no need for them to report bullying cases because there is nothing done to perpetrators. By reporting it, it is like they are inviting more bullies.

4.13.3 Strategies suggested during the study on what can be done to avoid bullying in schools

During the focus group discussions and through an open ended question in the questionnaires, participants were asked to express their opinions on what they think can be done at their schools in order to avoid bullying cases in future. The majority of participants indicated that there is a need to develop a National School Anti-Bullying Awareness Day (NSABAD) and anti-bullying policies which includes bullying awareness day so that the schools can have a document which will guide them. Right now, schools are doing what they feel is best for them; there are no specific officially documented guidelines to be followed.

Learners said they want to see the school rules reinforced and strictly implemented. There is also a need to have effective rules at the hostel so that learners staying in the hostel can be protected. School rules and regulations need to clearly stipulate the impacts of bullying and the action to be taken against offenders.

The majority of learners were in favour of punishment to be given to perpetrators of bullying. They want to see bullies being expelled from school, put in prison, not to be readmitted and given corporal punishment depending on what type of crime they have committed.

Praise giving is also seen by learners as a way of motivating the learners to do well and learners with good behaviour need to be praised so that they can give a good example to others.

Some learners felt that Learners Representative Council (LRC) should be empowered so they can help with the monitoring of learners' behaviours. LRC can help with the implementation of anti-bullying programmes. They can also monitor the class reporting system, and the signing of misconduct reports.

Teachers also suggested for a full time teacher-counsellor to be employed at every school so that she/he can help learners with psychosocial difficulties. The majority of teachers believed that effective counseling programmes as well as the teaching of Life Skills Education in schools will help to change learners' behaviours. Teacher-counsellors should talk to learners about the impact of bullying.

There is also a need for effective teacher-parent communication so that learners can be disciplined from both sides. Parents need to keep in contact with their children's teachers and be informed of what is going on at schools.

Some learners also stated that teachers need to be more serious, and make sure that they maintain discipline in their classes, classroom rules need to be applied to all learners and obeyed. Teachers' code of conduct should be adhered to as some teachers violate learners' rights.

Some learners suggested that the school need to employ more security officers in the school to keep an eye on those learners who are regarded as bullies, and this will also prevent people who are not supposed to enter the school from getting access.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the results presented in the previous chapter. It should be taken into consideration that the discussion is based on the data that emerged from this study, which included selected schools in only the Oshana Education Region of Namibia, and should thus not be seen as a reflection of all schools in Namibia. The discussion is followed by the recommendations and conclusion. In this chapter, the researcher therefore tries to answer the research questions:

- What is the nature and types of bullying that occur in Secondary Schools in Namibia?
- Who are the victims and perpetrators of bullying?
- What are the causes of bullying in Secondary Schools?
- What are the effects of bullying on learners as perceived by themselves?
- What strategies are the teachers and School Administrators currently using and, or can use in future in order to eradicate bullying activities in schools?

- What are the similarities and differences of the types of bullying, victims and perpetrators of bullying, causes and effects of bullying with regard to gender, school size, school performance and school setting (urban/rural)?

5.1 The nature and types of bullying

5.1.1 School characteristics associated with bullying

School size

Schools were rated as small, medium, big and very big. The sample included three very big schools, three big schools and one medium school. According to the literature, bullying is more likely to happen in bigger schools than in smaller schools. The research findings revealed that bullying was experienced in all schools visited irrespective of their size, however, Chi-square analysis indicated that with an increase in school size there was also an increase in the percentage of bullying activities that took place in the school (see table 9). This is supported by Biehler and Snowman (1997) who said the highest levels of violence are found in schools that are located in high-crime areas, which have large student populations and large class sizes. This is also confirming the view of Baldry and Farrington (1999) who stated that bullying is more likely to happen in schools that are large, overcrowded with 1000 or more students.

Schools' academic performance

As far as academic results were concerned, two schools were classified as excellent schools, one was regarded as a good school, two were average while the other two were weak schools. Although bullying was reported in all schools visited during the research, the frequency results and Chi-square analysis indicated that more bullying activities were observed in weak and average performing schools (see table 9). As the school become weaker in performance, there were fewer learners who said that they had never been bullied. These findings are

supported by that of Ayres and Hedeem (2003) which indicated that schools with high expectations from their students are less likely to experience bullying. The results also confirm their finding that the highest levels of violence are found in schools with high numbers of low achieving students.

School setting

Although Chi-square analysis findings were inconclusive with regard to the relationship between school setting and bullying, the focus group discussions revealed that learners from rural areas are often bullied by those from urban areas when they move to urban schools, since they are considered to be “primitive” or because they do not speak English well. Learners from rural areas grow up in a more protective environment. They know each others’ parents, they grew up together, and attend the same church, unlike in urban areas where the majority of learners are from different places and do not have much in common. Urban learners may lack a feeling of belonging. In urban areas learners are surrounded by a lot of influence by the neighbourhoods which contribute to bullying activities. As a result, more bullying activities were recorded in urban schools than rural schools. This is supported by Gershoff and Aber (2006) saying that school context such as location and neighborhood affects whatever is happening in the school.

Lawson (1991) also points out that the relationship between a school and its wider community is important because they influence one another. This is what is also explained in the ecological model when Cavaiola and Colford (2006) explained that the microsystem affects the child’s behaviour of which bullying can also be included.

Location thus influenced bullying. The majority of learners from rural areas, who joined the urban schools, struggled to stand their ground because they were not used to the new style of

living. Their previous living disadvantaged them from having equal opportunity to quality education. According to Biehle and Snowman (1997) educationally disadvantaged children typically have not been exposed to a wide variety of experience and often lack motivation and academic skills which lead to poor self-esteem.

School safety

Ahmed (2006) indicated that the destructive consequences of bullying in schools have sparked concern for students' safety and well being during the past decades. In response to the question whether schools were safe places for learners, there was a contradiction between the findings from teachers and those from learners. Fifty four percent of learners indicated that schools were not safe places for them while the majority of teachers stated that schools were very safe. Some teachers might have said schools were safe because they did not want the researcher to get a bad picture about their schools. However, the contradiction also shows lack of communication between learners and teachers as it was an indication that the majority of teachers have no idea of what their learners were going through.

Although all schools were surrounded by a fence or boundary wall with only one entrance into the school, some learners indicated they were bullied by people from outside the schools, which leave a question on the security of the schools. Despite the effort by the government to provide security guards at all schools, some schools' gates were found wide open and there was no one to control the movement of people coming into the school grounds. However, most of the bullying activities are performed by those who are legitimately in the school, fellow learners and in some cases teachers.

5.1.2 Learner characteristics associated with bullying

Learners' biographical information were collected through closed ended questions in the questionnaires. This discussion is based on those results.

Gender

There were more females (124) than males (86) who took part in this study. This was due to the fact that there were more female than male learners in all the schools where the research was conducted. Although females and males were both identified as victims and perpetrators of bullying, genders performed bullying in different ways. According to the findings from the questionnaires, 65% of victims of bullying are females while 35% are male. The questionnaires' findings also revealed that there were more female perpetrators (55%) than males (45%). In contradiction, focus group findings indicated that there were more male perpetrators than females. As perpetrators, girls were more likely to bully others emotionally while boys preferred physical bullying.

Learners' duration at school

From the information gathered from focus group discussions, it was clear that learners who were in their first year at school were more likely to be victims of bullying. The shorter a learner was at school, the more vulnerable she/he was to become a victim of bullying, while the longer they were in schools; the more likely they were to become perpetrators of bullying. Those who had been at school longer regarded themselves as school veterans and untouchable and they expected new learners to dance to their music.

However, there were also a number of learners who were at their current schools for more than 2 years but they were still bullied.

Learners' popularity

Although the majority of learners indicated that they were quite popular among their peers, there were some learners who indicated that they were not popular at all. It was indicated in group discussions that learners' popularity at school was influenced by the learners' status in the community, sport, academic performance, and by physical appearance. Learners indicated that popularity influence bullying because learners who are famous in school were hardly bullied in comparison to reserved and lonely learners. There were some learners with many friends who still became victims of bullying within their circle of friendship.

Learners' academic performance

Chi-Square analysis (see table 12) results indicated that the majority of learners (82.5%) who never repeated any grade were never bullied by fellow learners. Statistics clearly showed that more learners who repeated grades were bullied in comparison to those who did not repeat grades.

In the focus group discussions the majority of learners and teachers stated that a lot of perpetrators in their schools were learners whose academic performances were below average. Learners who do not perform well lose interest in school related activities and they tend to bully others. Some do this because of the pressure they receive from their parents to perform better, while others bully high performing learners due to jealousy. The results also confirm Sanders and Phye (2004) who indicated that learners who perform poor in school tend to become bullies because of frustration caused by poor academic achievement.

5.1.3 Discussions on the types of bullying with regard to victims, perpetrators and witnesses.

This research gave opportunity to learners to indicate the types of bullying activities they experienced at their schools. They did this by answering open and closed ended questions in their questionnaires as well as through focus group discussions the researcher had with selected learners.

When adding the responses of learners who reported being bullied often and very often, the following types of bullying seemed to be most prevalent: damaging and stealing of property (30%), name calling and saying bad things about victims (21%), insulting and teasing the victim about his or her looks (20% each). It was also disturbing to note that almost 17% of victims were teased due to a disability. Sixteen percent reported that they were hit, kicked or punched and 13% were threatened and blackmailed. These figures clearly show that there are bullying incidents in schools in the Oshana region (see table 4).

In comparison to the number of learners who reported acts of bullying against them, there were very few who reported that they performed bullying acts against others (see table 5). When adding responses under often and very often, the highest percentage of bullying that was admitted to was name calling (14.3%) followed by insulting and exclusion from groups with 5.7% each. This is a clear indication that perpetrators are either not aware of the fact that they are bullying others or they want to keep their acts hidden from the public. Another reason could be that grade 9 learners were bullied by learners in other grades who did not take part in this study. This can also mean that a few learners are responsible for a lot of bullying activities in schools.

Some learners reported that they witnessed acts of bullying in their schools (see table 6). When adding the responses recorded under often and very often, the following picture emerged: more than 50% of learners recorded witnessing name calling, insulting and saying bad things about others. Forty three percent witnessed hitting, kicking and punching while 32% witnessed others being teased about their looks. In addition to this, 20% or more saw other learners being excluded from groups or teased about their academic performance or language. All remaining categories of bullying were witnessed by 10% or more of the learners. When comparing the percentages of learners who reported acts of bullying against them and those who admitted that they bullied other learners, those who witnessed gave the highest percentages. This might be influenced by the fact that they are open and honest to reveal information because bullying did not happen to them. Witnesses' data just confirm that bullying acts take place at high rate in the Oshana region.

Apart from the findings from questionnaires, participants were allowed to discuss the types of bullying acts that happen in their schools. During the focus group discussions, the majority of learners indicated that emotional bullying was more common among girls than boys. Girls preferred hidden bullying acts such as spreading stories about their friends, gossiping and excluding others from their groups. Boys also used emotional bullying by threatening others or telling them that they will teach them a lesson once they report what happened to them. However boys reverted mainly to physical bullying. These findings are in accordance to Bor, et al.,(2004) who states that bullying acts for girls involved name calling, exclusion and other emotional bullying while boys tend to be victims of physical bullying. During the focus group discussions, the majority of learners indicated that they had bullied other learners by

calling them names, gossiping and spreading rumors about them. This is just an indication that name calling, gossiping and spreading of rumours are the common acts among learners. These types of bullying are equally damaging but quite undetectable and teachers can hardly spot them in order to protect victims.

Another way that perpetrators bullied their victims was by sending negative emails and messages via their cell phones to their victims. Sometimes they preferred using a cell phone number which was unknown to their victim. They can even call them but will not say anything until the victim hangs up. Cyber bullying was not really common in schools where the study was conducted. This might be due to the fact that only few learners owned cell phones and schools do not have access to internet facilities. As the use of technology increases, this type of bullying may also increase. It remains difficult to implement measures on the use of cell phones and computers in schools to ensure that these are strictly used for education purposes. Although witnesses indicated that emotional bullying was not easy to detect, participants indicated that emotional bullying was common.

Apart from emotional bullying which recorded the highest percentages among both victims and witnesses of bullying, physical bullying also was recorded to be popular among learners. Physical bullying was more common among boys than girls. In group discussions, learners indicated that physical bullying is considered as a way to define manhood and it is part of their culture. Parents do not like their children to come home crying that they were beaten because it is considered as a way of revealing their weaknesses. In the end, it seems that many victims end up accepting that physical bullying is part of life and their culture.

Based on the frequency results, weapon usage among learners were low. However, during focus group discussions, victims indicated that perpetrators use weapons when there are few people around. In one school, it was clearly indicated that weapons were used because learners stated that there was a time when their cupboards in the hostel were searched by the teachers, and there were a lot of learners found with different types of weapons such as knives and pangas. This is an indication that weapons are in schools and they are there to be used by learners. However, not only perpetrators can use weapons, victims can also use it when confronted by bullies.

Another type of bullying act discussed during the focus groups was racial and tribal bullying. According to questionnaire findings, between 9% and 12% of learners reported that they were subjected to bullying often or very often due their culture, skin colour or language. In focus group discussions, the incorrect pronunciations of words in English were specifically mentioned as a factor that contributed to bullying. English language is a barrier to many learners, especially those who are from rural areas. Once they come to urban areas, they are not protected and end up being bullied by learners from urban areas. Although the sample included only one school in rural areas, many learners in the urban schools are from rural areas.

Findings from the questionnaires showed that the majority of learners (81.4%) were never subjected to unwanted sexual suggestions. In focus group discussions the majority of teachers did not recognize that sexual bullying existed in their schools. However information gathered from learners during focus group discussions indicated that sexual bullying did exist in schools. Learners indicated that sexual bullying was mostly done through text messages

(sms) and emails as well as physical body touching during or after the evening study. Although this is seen as an easy way of bullying, the majority of perpetrators did not prefer this method because it leaves a lot of evidence. Nevertheless intimidating sexual messages and the use of explicit language were recorded during the focus group discussions. Some learners went to the extent of using pornographic magazines when bullying others by showing them nude pictures. This type of bullying is done in the most hidden ways and teachers do not suspect anything. Some victims and witnesses indicated that people who bully learners sexually can also be some of the male teachers. They blackmail them with marks allocation or threaten them that they will fail them if they do not want to be their girlfriends.

During the focus group discussion with perpetrators; there were some boys who openly said that they used sexual bullying to harass girls in their classrooms. This was more common when the boy was attracted to the girl and she did not feel the same. In the end boys ended up bullying the girls who refused to be connected or associated with them. They start stalking them, calling them names, writing insulting letters to them and spreading rumors about them, such as that they slept with them even though it was not true. They will make sure that they inform their groups about that specific girl and later on the girl will be bullied by the entire group. The discussions with learners also indicated that weaker and vulnerable girls who could not stand the bullying would just give up and accept the forced relationship.

Although it seemed that learners had a lot of information about sexual bullying, during focus group discussions, they found it difficult to be open and discuss the topic because their cultures do not allow young children to talk about sexual activities in public. Sexual issues are regarded as taboo and offensive, so that is one reason why the researcher could not explore this type of bullying activity with victims into more details. It was clear, a lot of

learners were embarrassed, uncomfortable and a bit shy every time the topic was being discussed, however a few brave girls came forward and provided information. There was also a fear of intimidation, especially in cases where the teachers were the perpetrators. It seemed that the majority of learners were unaware of their human rights.

5.1.4 Discussions on the types of bullying according to the teachers

During interviews with teachers, they indicated that physical and emotional bullying were more common than other types of bullying. According to teachers, the most common type of bullying is the initiation done to the incoming grade 8 and grade 11 learners. Learners who have been at that school the previous year would take advantage of the new ones. Some of the perpetrators bully the new learners just because they were bullied in their first year at school. This results in a cycle of bullying activities. Teachers did not mention much with regard to racial or sexual bullying but acknowledged the fact that learners might be uncomfortable to report such cases and rather suffer in silence.

5.1.5 Discussions on new types of bullying revealed during the research

Political bullying

As was indicated in the previous chapter, learners said they had seen their classmates being bullied by learners and teachers because their parents support minority political parties in their area. Learners were given political names which made them feel unwelcome or friends did not want them to join their groups because they are seen as outcasts. A lot of political bullying activities were recorded during the focus group discussions with learners. The reason might be that at the time the research was being carried out, people were also

preparing for the presidential and parliament elections in Namibia. Political activities were alive, especially in the northern parts of the country.

Political bullying is a violation of human rights and in this case, learners' freedom of choice is denied. This type of bullying may lead to a society of intolerance and learners produced in such a system will not value other people's opinions.

Bullying based on social class

Bullying based on social class emerged to be high among learners. Biehler and Snowman (1997) defined social class as an indicator of an individual's or a family's relative standing in society which is determined by annual income, place of residence, occupation or manner of dress. This type of bullying was common in almost all schools visited but it was more severe in poor performing schools. Learners are laughed at because of the way they dress, or what they eat and in most cases poor learners were intimidated, blackmailed as well as excluded from peer-groups. If poor learners find themselves in a group of learners from well-off families, they would tolerate bad treatment in order to remain in the group. Rich learners, especially those who are not academically strong were the ones pointed out as being involved in this type of bullying. They are feared by other learners and teachers because of their status in their communities. They would tell other learners to do certain chores for example washing their clothes or ironing. Some learners oblige to their demands without any hesitation because they want to be connected to them. This finding is in contradiction with Sanders and Phye (2004) who said families of bullies tend to struggle financially, have social problems and lack family structure. In these findings, it was the opposite because bullies came from respected families.

Bullying based on family history

This type of bullying happened between learners whose parents had personal conflicts. Parents negatively influenced their children and in the end they will start bullying each other because they heard bad stories about other learners' families. Some learners are bullied because their elder siblings were bullies when they were in school, so it is used as revenge because the victims could not fight back during that time. Learners from certain families are black listed as bullies and might be bullied based on their family history, while they may not be bullies themselves. This implies that some learners in schools were only implicated on bullying activities, not because they were bullies or victims themselves, but it was as a result of their siblings' behaviour.

Bullying based on spiritual and religious beliefs

In the literature review, religious and cultural bullying were all included in the definition of racial bullying, however, during the discussion with participants, it became clear that religious bullying need to be a type of bullying on its own. The majority of learners in schools visited said they belonged to Anglican, ELCIN, and Catholic churches; however, there were new religions which set up their congregations in the North. Learners who joined those new churches were likely to receive bad treatments. They were laughed at and other learners and teachers regarded them to be confused. They were told to quit, and in some cases they were embarrassed in front of other learners. They were told that they are worshipping fake gods. These learners were told to leave their churches or were not allowed to attend their church services. This happened especially to those learners who reside in the school hostel. This finding supports research by Gershoff and Aber (2006) who stated that community beliefs, attitudes and norms that are held by the majority, can put some individuals in danger

of being bullied. The safety of learners from minority groups were thus defined by their tribes and religious beliefs, so learners from these minority groups need protection in schools.

Initiation

This type of bullying was rated to be high or common in all of the schools visited. Initiation happened mostly at the beginning of the year, when the incoming grade 8 and grade 11 learners are admitted. These learners are said to be heavily bullied at the beginning of the year by being given bad names, beaten, humiliated and intimidated by those who had been in the school for a period of time. Most of the new learners said they hate going to the dining hall because it is where bullying also took place. They are not allowed to eat meat because they are newcomers.

In most of the schools, learners and teachers admitted that initiation is likely to happen to learners year after year. It is regarded as a part of the culture. Learners are given names which are bad and destroy their self-esteem. Most of the interviewees thought it was normal for new learners to be bullied via initiation practices. This exercise is passed on from generation to generation. Those learners who were bullied the previous year will make sure that they bully those who come in the following year. They do that because they were bullied, so the cycle of bullying does not stop. The chain of bullying continues year after year.

5.1.6 Discussions on frequency, time and place of bullying activities in schools

Learners were asked to indicate how often bullying activities were likely to happen to them, and the results indicated that the majority of learners were bullied once or twice per year.

This does not mean bullying did not happen to some learners everyday because 3.8% said they were bullied everyday at school, while 13.8% were bullied on a weekly basis. This statistic is very high and raises concern since it is an indication that in every school visited, there was a child bullied everyday. It may differ from school to school but bullying was happening in all schools quite frequently.

On the question about the time of year when bullying was likely to happen in schools, the majority of participants indicated that bullying was more likely to happen at the beginning of the year because this was the time when the schools receive new grade 8 and 11 learners from other schools where those grades are not offered. The new grade 8 and 11 learners are bullied by the learners who had been at the school for a period of time. In the middle of the year, cases of bullying reduced, however, towards the end of the year, bullying increased again. This is because grade 12 learners had the tendency of bullying others because they know that they will not come back the following year. Some of the final year learners believe that they cannot leave a school without bullying others; it is something learners had planned throughout the year.

Participants were asked to indicate the place where bullying was likely to take place in their schools. Very high percentages of learners reported that there were many places where bullying takes place. After adding the responses recorded under often and very often, 36% indicated that bullying happen on the playground, followed by 35% who said bullying happen in the school corridors. Another 31% indicated that bullying acts happen on their way home from school, followed by 29% who said the dining hall is a place where bullying occurs.

On the school ground, bullying occurred at places such as the school tuck shop, toilets, school gate, and school assembly hall. Most of the learners pretend to behave well when

teachers were around but behind closed doors such as the toilets bullying increased because there perpetrators can get away with their acts unnoticed. In some schools, the researcher saw bad pictures drawn in the toilets, as well as swearing words written on the wall. They were all referring to certain learners in those specific schools. With the information collected through group discussion, it showed that the majority of learners were also bullied in the hostel dormitories. This is an indication of poor supervision by supervisory teachers, who are paid extra fees in order to control the learners in hostels.

5.2 Identification of victims and perpetrators

5.2.1 Discussions on who the perpetrators of bullying are

Both genders were recorded to be part of bullying activities. According to the information collected through questionnaires, more respondents regarded females (55%) than males (45%) as perpetrators. In this study there were more reports of emotional bullying acts which are commonly done by female learners and this may have influenced the results.

According to Hefer (2010), bullies are often children who have been bullied or abused themselves, often by their parents. This was supported by the research findings from focus group discussions when teachers indicated that some learners from violent families tend to be violent at school. They look for attention by doing wrong things to other learners. Some perpetrators indicated that they were victims at one point and that they were still bullied by some other more powerful learners so in turn they bully the weaker learners. The only way for them to release their pain is through bullying and in turn this boosts their destroyed self-

esteem. They do not bully because they enjoy it, but just to show their bullies that they are not cowards as their bullies think they are.

In some schools bullying was recorded to be a normal practice for grade 10 and 12 learners, especially when they are busy preparing or writing their final examination. One participant said: *“the reason why our school does not perform well is because at the end of the year when everyone is busy with his/her examination, that’s also the time the grade 10 and 12 learners are bullying others. You hardly study because people are beating one another. You feel like you do not want to wake up the next day because you are scared”*.

As was reported in the results presentation, learners in the focus groups indicated that those from high class families use their parents’ status to bully others from poor families. Blackmail, threats, exclusion and ridiculing of poor dressing style are the methods used to bully those who are seen to be poor. This finding is in contrast with Beaty and Alexeyer’s (2008) findings which indicated that bullies are the learners from families which are struggling financially. Based on the focus group discussions, this study found that the majority of perpetrators were rather from families which are well off financially. Based on focus group discussions it also seemed that pretty girls and famous soccer players were also perpetrators of bullying. Although these learners are likely to be popular and liked by other learners because of their status, these findings do not support findings by Kaltiala-Heino, et al.,(2000) and Henkin (2005) who reported that perpetrators of bullying are children who are rejected by their peers, they are lonely and have poor relationship with other students. This shows that perpetrators are not confined to a specific group. Teachers need to have a wide

understanding of bullying so that they can be in position to help both victims and perpetrators.

In all schools where the research was carried out, teachers were also included by learners as perpetrators of bullying. Teachers mostly bully learners indirectly. They call them names which humiliate learners. They say bad things about learners' parents, which in the end destroy the learner's self-esteem. Poor performing learners are mostly the victims of this type of bullying by teachers. These findings are supported by Resental and Wilson (2008) by saying some teachers, often unaware of the impact of their behaviour on students, psychologically maltreat them. Teachers can thus also cause harm intentionally or unintentionally and that is why they need to understand learners' feelings.

5.2.2 Discussions on who the victims of bullying are

Both girls and boys are victims of bullying but the acts of bullying done to them differ from gender to gender. In group discussions, the majority of participants indicated that female learners are more vulnerable to bullying because they are likely to be bullied by both female and male learners.

Another group identified as victims of bullying were learners who are perceived to be different from the norm. There were a few cases of bullying due to homosexuality; these learners sometimes do not know where they belong in terms of gender. Gays and lesbians are seen as a taboo in the northern part of Namibia. Those learners who are not sure of their identity are more bullied physically or emotionally. Others will laugh at them or give them bad names. They are highly discriminated against. The present data supports the views of Robertson and Monsen (2008) saying that gay and lesbian adolescents are more likely to

experience different types of stressors and difficulties than their heterosexual counterparts. The findings also support Henkin (2005) and Sanders and Phye (2004) who said anyone who is different and have personal characteristics which are different from the rest of the peers is susceptible to being bullied. In almost all the schools where the research was conducted, learners indicated that body size contributes to bullying in schools. Learners who are overweight are bullied more than others. They hardly participate in extra-mural activities at school because they have low self esteem. Not only obese learners get bullied, learners who are too skinny go through the same bullying tactics. They are called names and other learners laugh at them. Physical appearance also contributes to bullying as those who are regarded to be ugly are given names. Similarly learners who are over-aged receive bad treatment from both learners and teachers. They are accused of anything bad which occurs in class. They find it difficult to fit into groups because other learners think they are too old to be their peers. Those with speech problems, such as stuttering, or those that speak English differently from the way the majority did, also became victims of bullying.

In most secondary schools, learners tend to compete by the way they dress, the food they keep in their cupboards, and the friends they hang out with. Learners who cannot afford what their peers expect them to have are subjected to bullying. Poor learners sometimes find it hard to get a sense of belonging because other learners exclude them from their groups, as the well-off ones do not want to associate with them. Other learners who were identified as victims of bullying because of their differences were those who were infected and/ or affected by HIV/AIDS and girls who fell pregnant.

Knox and Conti-Ramsden (2007) indicated that children with learning difficulties are at higher risk of being bullied than children of typical development. These findings are supported by the data collected in this study which revealed that learners who repeated grades were bullied more than those who did not repeat grades. However, the data also revealed that some learners who perform poor academically are also likely to become bullies because of their frustration and lack of support.

The findings also revealed that some learners carry double status when it comes to bullying, they are victims as well as perpetrators. These learners are bullied by powerful learners but in return, they bully the weaker learners. According to Ahmed (2006) bullies/victims are likely to experience mixed messages at school. One moment they are causing harm to others and have power over them, the next minute, they are the ones being hurt, looking for protection and sympathy of others.

5.3. Discussions on the causes of bullying with regard to victims, perpetrators and teachers

The following discussions focus on the main causes of bullying according to victims and perpetrators of bullying as well as teachers. In the questionnaire, learners were asked why they bully others and the main reasons that were selected from the given list was to teach the victim a lesson (22%), because they were encouraged or their friends did it (21%) and because of frustration (16%). On the indirect question as to why they think learners bully others, the main reasons selected were because of poor school rules and classroom

management including the aspect of overcrowded classrooms (39%), the home background and abusive parents (37%) and because of peer pressure.

The findings from the questionnaire were largely supported by the focus group discussions with learners and teachers, and also in accordance to some of the findings revealed in the literature. Focus group discussions indicated that the majority of learners associated poor school rules with bullying. In all the schools visited during the research, there were school rules however, in some schools, rules were not taken seriously and learners do not abide to them. There were no clear consequences for those who break the rules.

In some schools, classrooms were overcrowded and it was hard for the teacher to control the classes. Apart from overcrowded classes, victims indicated that lazy teachers were also the cause of bullying in their classes. Some teachers were absent without any valid reason, and when learners are on their own without any supervision, they bully others. Some teachers might be in the class but there is no teaching taking place, so learners take advantage of the situation and bully the weaker ones. In those schools, bullying is regarded to be part of the school culture as teachers do not have control over learners. These findings are in accordance with other research findings reporting that bullying is common in schools that do not enforce rules fairly or consistently, that use punitive ways of resolving conflicts, and that impose an unimaginative, none meaningful curriculum on students (Biehler & Snowman,1997).

According to Hefer (2010) kids bully others to hide their own problems or because they are copying what they see at home. Bullies are often children who have been bullied or abused themselves by their parents. At school, they will pick on someone who is inferior to them.

One teacher said: “in most cases learners who have poor relationships with their parents are also ill-disciplined at school”. This was confirmed during the discussions with learners as some indicated that they bully others because they have bad relationships with their parents. Teachers linked learners’ upbringing to the way they behave at school. Learners who are not well brought up at home are likely to cause problems at school. Some parents might be violent toward them or in violent relationships which affect the learners’ perception of good relationships, and in the end they end up doing the same thing to other learners at school. They find it normal to bully other learners. These findings support Hoffman (1996) who said that children who are victims of violence at home tend to be bullies at schools because they are acting out of frustration. Learners need to have well planned counselling programmes in school as it can help learners who do not have parents at home who can provide the required support for their psychological development.

Some perpetrators said it is because of the pressure from parents to perform well academically that led them to bully others. If they did not meet the expectations, they were called losers. This is supported by Biehler and Snowman (1997) who say that an adolescent boy whose parents constantly stresses how important it is to do well in school may deliberately flunk or quit school. In the same sentiment, Ahmed (2006) indicated that a negative identity may be confirmed by the treatment the adolescent receives from those in authority. If such an individual is continuously referred to as a failure, he may well put his energy into becoming exactly what the careless community expects him to be.

Apart from parents’ pressure, some learners get pressure from their peers. Philip (2009) indicated that peer pressure plays an important role in anti-social behaviour among teenagers.

Focus group discussions with victims and teachers also supported the view that peer pressure is the major contributing factor in bullying.

Other causes of bullying that were revealed during discussions were attention-seeking, school setting and the media. Teachers indicated that learners who are not popular and want to be known also caused a lot of pain in other innocent learners' lives. In most cases these were learners who did not perform well academically and who had low self-esteem or a poorly developed identity. In order for them to get other learners' and teachers' attention, they would start doing things which are unacceptable so that people would start to take notice of them. According to Beihler and Snowman (1997), identity involves acceptance of one's body, knowing where one is going, and recognition from those who are around, but if identity is not developed, learners will be confused and end up behaving strangely toward others.

In all cases recorded, learners from rural areas were more bullied because their way of living was different from those who are from urban areas. When they joined urban schools, some of them had never had access to some facilities in their lives so those ones from urban areas bully them by embarrassing them and teasing them. That is how bullying starts and it goes on for a long period of time.

Many teachers indicated that the setting or location of the school plays a vital role in bullying. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) a child's way of living is determined by what he/she experiences in his/her setting. Some schools are situated in the areas close to bars, shebeens or other places which negatively influence learners. Once learners get in touch with the wrong people in the location, they bring their behaviours to school. The majority of

teachers interviewed, especially those in urban areas, also blamed the media for violent behaviour of learners. For example, if they watch a violent movie, they will act similarly to other learners in school. They do not differentiate between fiction and reality.

5.4 Discussion on the effects of bullying

5.4.1 Discussions on the effects of bullying according to victims, teachers and eye witnesses

The effects of bullying are discussed under sub –themes. The research focused on the feelings of both victims and perpetrators after bullying incidents and it also focused on the effects of bullying in general. From the research questionnaire it became clear that many learners were negatively affected by bullying both with regard their emotional well-being and with regard to their academic performance. The most common feelings that were felt due to bullying were embarrassment (25%), anger (24%) and loneliness (19%). As many as 47% of learners found it difficult to concentrate on their school work and high percentages also agreed that bullying decreased academic performance, increased school absenteeism and led to bad discipline in schools. These findings were supported in the focus group discussions and are also in accordance with previous research as explained in the discussion below.

In general, bullying effects are immense and have negative effects in the lives of both victims and perpetrators. During the focus group discussions, victims indicated that bullying makes them scared of other learners and the school in general, therefore it forces them to be more withdrawn from the rest of the groups. They are lonely, isolated and they do not socialize with other learners. In some cases, they feel embarrassed when they are bullied and start blaming themselves for whatever happened to them. They think they are bullied because of their own weaknesses, so they will be angry and start hating themselves as they see themselves as stupid and useless people. It reduces their self-esteem and there are always thoughts of committing suicide. This is in support of the findings of Beaty and Alexeyer (2008) who says that children who are bullied have their self-confidence damaged and as a result, they might not fulfill their potential.

Some victims indicated that they really developed hatred and bitter feelings toward their perpetrators. Ahmed (2006) stated that victims may need assistance in disengaging from those bitter feelings so that they can view their lives from a fresh perspective. These research findings found that schools lack support for the victims. Because of poor support, learners would carry weapons to schools just in case they need to defend themselves from bullies. One study conducted by Pieters (2010) found that not only perpetrators display violent behavior but victims are at greater risk for committing violent behaviours, and they often carry weapons in order to defend themselves.

Victims agreed that bullying has a negative impact on teaching and learning activities at school. Classrooms are disrupted by bullies, and learners do not concentrate. Victims said they are daydreaming about what might happen to them after school or when the teachers are not around. Bullied learners tend to hate school and will find any excuse to stay away from school, for example they will claim to have stomach-ache or headache. This increases absenteeism and leads to poor academic performance. Similar to the views of victims, teachers also stressed the point that bullying does not allow a conducive environment in schools as teaching and learning is distracted in various ways. Teachers often have to stop in the middle of lessons so that they can discipline bullies or teachers who are serving in Disciplinary Committees (DC) have to be called out in order to attend to bullying cases, leaving their classes unattended. Learners can perform well when they are happy in their environment; however, if the school is regarded to be a place of harm, learners' concentration is affected. This is supported by Beaty and Alexeyer (2008) who states that children who experience bullying have their education disrupted because they may be unable to concentrate on lessons due to fear or anger caused by bullying. Similarly Knox and Conti-Ramsden (2007) indicated that victims of persistent bullying have been found to have significantly lower levels of educational achievement and employment. The findings are also supported by Jones (2001) who reported that about 40% of school drop outs and 30% of poor academic performances are linked to bullying activities.

Wright and Keetley (2003) stated that bullying have plagued reputations of schools. This is confirmed by the majority of teachers interviewed when they said bullying also tarnish the school image. A lot of parents lose trust in the school and withdraw their children from schools where bullying is the order of the day. There are also cases of good teachers who left

schools and the teaching profession in general because they could not cope with unruly behaviours.

Witnesses of bullying stated that bullying affects good relationship among peers. The majority of learners stopped talking to one another due to problems caused by bullying. Sometimes, witnesses do not know whom to side with and in the end they are torn between victims and perpetrators. They might blame themselves for not giving the needed support. Those who are not bullied often find it hard to comprehend the suffering and humiliation that bullying imposes on the fellow learners. It causes a lot of fear among learners because they do not know what will happen to them. These findings are supported by Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) who said bullying keeps children from perceiving school as a safe environment, and many students are anxious about witnessing bullying and fear that they may become victims of bullying if they have not already been targeted. This can easily affect their concentration during lessons.

Although there was no literature which indicated that bullying has a positive impact on victims' lives, during the discussion with learners, a few victims indicated that bullying had a positive impact in their lives. They indicated that bullying helped them to be stronger and independent. Instead of going out and avoiding bullies, they chose books to be their friends. They read in most of their leisure time and this improved their performance at school. Instead of feeling pity for themselves, they opted for something which will make them happy at the end of the day. It is another way of showing to their bullies that they are better than them when it comes to academic performance at school.

5.4.2 Effects of bullying according to the perpetrators

In the questionnaires, participants indicated their feeling once they had bullied other learners. The majority (38.6%) said that they feel bad but have to bully other learners, 12.4% do not feel anything, 11% indicated that bullying make them feel popular and strong while 8.6% said bullying make them feel good. Although the majority of learners said that they feel bad when they bully others, these learners opted to continue with their acts because their friends might be doing it, or because of other reasons known to them. It was also disturbing to see a number of learners (12.4%) who bully others but they do not feel anything about it. If learners who are bullying others also reported that they felt bad about their actions, it is an indication that bullying is done because there is a force behind it and this can only be known if teachers are paying attention to the learners and listen to their needs.

During the discussion with the perpetrators, some learners indicated that they always feel bad after bullying other learners. The most difficult part is when their behavior caused negative effects on other learners, for example, when a learner dropped out of school because of bullying. Although perpetrators said they do not show emotions to their victims when they are bullying them, some of them indicated that they regret their actions later.

Some perpetrators indicated that through bullying they became strong and popular among their peers. It makes them feel good, and they like it when everyone is talking about them. They feel empowered which encourage them to continue doing bullying in order to upgrade their status. Perpetrators indicated that the reason why they do not stop bullying others is because if they stop, they will become victims and that may ruin their reputation. Although the majority of perpetrators indicated that learners get scared of them, there were also strong

feelings of hatred toward them. Bullying increased hatred and infighting behaviours among learners. Socialization among learners are negatively affected and lack of social skills can affect both victims and perpetrators in the long run.

Bullying negatively affects perpetrators' school results, since there are times when they are expelled from school for weeks which make them to miss a lot of lessons. Their academic performance is affected and this is supported by the findings by Ayres and Hedeem (2003) which shows that the majority of perpetrators do not perform well academically and they are in schools where academic expectations are not high. The most common type of punishment given to perpetrators is suspension and it negatively affects their school results. In general, it is not only victims of bullying who suffer the consequences of bullying; perpetrators are also affected - although in other ways.

5.5 Discussions on the strategies used to combat bullying

A lot has been said about bullying and in this section the focus will be on how teachers and learners are combating bullying in their schools.

5.5.1 To whom do victims of bullying report?

The school supporting system is very important and learners need to know where to go and to whom to talk to in case they need emotional and psychosocial support. A large percentage of learners (30%) indicated that they reported bullying acts to teachers, however it seemed that

although this reporting sometimes led to improvement, it often did not stop the bullying and in some cases made it even worse. Some of learners (23.8%) indicated that they prefer talking to their friends. Learners are more open to discuss their ordeal with friends because they believe that friends will be there to comfort them because in some cases they also went through the same pain. Twenty three percent also indicated that they reported the cases to their parents while 14.8% prefer to keep quiet. The number of learners who prefer to keep quiet without help is high and this can be caused by the fact that learners do not trust the authority in dealing with bullying, as 22.4% said they reported bullying acts and there was nothing done while 8.1% said reporting made bullying even worse. This is an indication that school authorities do not act on reported cases, and learners do not receive the needed support. It also encourages perpetrators of bullying to continue with their acts because they know that no action will be taken against them. According to Bandura's theory of social learning, if a model is rewarded for a particular behaviour, the chances of this behaviour being modeled are higher, since the observer shares the model's reward vicariously. On the other hand, if the model is punished for a particular behaviour, the observer is likely to avoid such behavior to evade similar punishment (Mwamwenda, 2004). In this case, if no action is taken against perpetrators, bullying is likely to be modeled by other learners.

During the focus group discussion, some learners indicated that they prefer reporting the cases to parents but due to the fact that they are staying in school hostels, it is always difficult to get in contact with their parents. However not all of the learners were willing to report to their parents. This might be due to lack of understanding on the side of parents or cultural influences. Because of culture, some parents might be angry with their children if they hear that they had been bullied. For them, children are supposed to defend themselves', especially boys. Some parents prefer their children to fight back when they are being confronted but not to run to them for support; it is not a good indication of a strong man. This is supported by

Sanders and Phye (2004) who said victims usually do not report bullying incidents for the fear of retaliation and because of inadequate support from teachers and parents.

There were those learners who said they reported their cases to the teachers but some prefer not to go to them because they feel that teachers do not understand their pain. There are teachers who negatively criticize or judge the victims when learners report bullying to them. According to Mwamwenda (1996) teachers who have a good understanding of their learners are more likely to help them by providing the necessary support to them or by eliminating other factors that may affect learners' wellbeing at school.

Learners who are residing in school hostels reported bullying to the hostel matrons. Learners are more close to their matrons because they act on behalf of their parents. As was reported in the findings, the majority of bullying cases are happening in the school dormitories and that is why some learners report to the hostel matrons. Very few learners indicated that they reported bullying to their school principals. They indicated that they are not close to the school principals and only serious cases in the school are reported directly to the principal's office and bullying is not regarded to be serious. No matter how much they want to see the principal, the secretary always refer them back to their classes.

Some learners prefer to call the anonymous number at Lifeline /Child line so that they can receive free counselling. They think this is a good way of getting over their grievances because they are not known by the person on the other side, so they are free to speak their mind.

Although findings from the questionnaires indicated that there were learners who reported to their parents, teachers and friends, during group discussion the majority of them said they prefer to keep quiet when they are bullied because they do not want perpetrators to retaliate. In some cases, they are already warned in advance by perpetrators not to report anything. Perpetrators might have told them that once they report them, they will double whatever they have done to them, or worsen the situation. In the end victims just keep quiet thinking that bullying will stop but in reality, they are inviting more bullying activities because bullies know that they will not be reported. The majority of learners therefore suffer in silence, and their cases are only known to themselves. They are not supported in any way either by teachers or friends.

5.5.2 Strategies used by schools to combat bullying

Schools are currently using different strategies to combat bullying. The questionnaires findings revealed that the majority of schools (41%) rely on schools rules to help them in avoiding bullying, 22.9% use Learners Representative Council (LRC), 13.8% depends on Anti-bullying policy, 11.9% use a class reporting system but there were 10.5% who indicated that there was nothing in place to avoid bullying. These figures showed that schools rely on school rules to combat bullying but, although the majority of schools have schools rules in place, not all the rules explicitly address bullying and it seems rules are not strictly implemented.

During the group discussion, some teachers indicated that they do not address bullying activities because it is not part of their job descriptions or sometimes they are unaware of its

existence. Although Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) indicated in their findings that many teachers ignore bullying because they believe that they lack adequate skills to intervene, the findings in this research indicate that some teachers ignore bullying because they think it is not their job to solve learners bullying problems but rather that of the principal and Disciplinary Committee (DC). When it comes to strategies used by teachers in order to combat bullying in schools, some learners in focus groups indicated that there were class reporting systems whereby learners were given opportunities to write their grievances and give them to their class teachers. The teachers then decide which cases are worth attending to. Learners also indicated that there were a lot of cases reported but that no action was taken against the bullies therefore reporting to the teachers just made bullying worse.

The majority of learners indicated that they are being guided by the school rules. In some schools, learners are given the school rules at the beginning of the year and they are required to sign them once they read through them. After signing, learners are expected to abide to those rules. There was no indication of anti-bullying rules in the majority of schools' rules the researcher read. The Disciplinary Committee (DC) in the school then takes the responsibility of disciplining all the learners who did not respect the school rules. The most common way of disciplining the offenders is to suspend or expel them from school. In some cases, corporal punishment is applied to the perpetrators.

All the schools visited have Learners Representative Council (LRC), and these are the learners who are chosen by their peers with the recommendation of teachers to represent other learners. They help teachers to maintain discipline in schools. Bullying cases are reported to them and they make sure that they report it to the relevant authorities. LRC can be

used as role models in schools. According to the social learning theory, people of high status, such as student leaders, are modeled more frequently than ordinary students (Mwamwenda, 2004). Sadly, not all LRC are fully functioning in all schools which make it difficult for learners to have good models.

Although the Ministry of Education spent a lot of money on training teachers with counselling skills to become teacher-counsellors at their respective schools, counselling services were not popular among learners and some learners did not even know that there were teacher-counsellors at their schools. Fishbaugh, et al., (2003) stated that there is less victimization in schools where schools proactively intervene in bullying incidents. In some schools, teachers indicated that they make use of Life Skills lessons to educate learners about good behaviours, morals, values and discipline. However, not all the schools teach Life Skills.

There were a few cases of schools where teachers said that they do invite motivational speakers to schools in order to motivate learners on how to become successful in their lives. Those types of talks are done by successful people and are aimed at inspiring learners. In some schools, they call in police officers to talk to the learners about violence and how it can affect their future.

5.5.3 Strategies suggested by participants which can help combat bullying in schools

Participants were given the chance to indicate what they think can make their school free from bullying and below is the discussion on some of the suggested strategies:

Through the group discussions with learners and open-ended question in the questionnaire, the majority of participants were of the opinion that there is a need to create a National School Bullying Awareness Day which will put emphases on anti-bullying, human rights and responsibilities. Participants believed that such a day will help to create awareness among learners and teachers on the dangers of bullying and what learners can do once they are bullied. It will be a platform of ensuring the effective implementation of anti-bullying policies which is currently missing in schools. Anti-bullying policies are long overdue in Namibia. Almost two decades ago Lawson (1991) already alerted that there were no legally defined rules in most countries to ensure consistency as to how pupils, who seriously misbehave, might be dealt with at school level.

The majority of the participants were worried about the fact that the school rules serve little purpose in some schools because they are not effectively implemented. School rules are there in black and white, but learners do not adhere to them. There is a need for a re-enforcement of rules so that bullying cases can be reduced. In the same vain, the majority of learners thought that different types of punishments should be given to perpetrators. Punishments should depend on what learners did or what type of bullying activity was committed. Donald et.al (2002) indicated that giving up on punishment does not mean giving up on discipline, but measure should be put in place on how to discipline learners. Learners who grabbed others' food need less punishment compared to those who bodily harm others. Suspension or expulsion of learners from school as a punishment was regarded not to be the best option because it only enforce bad behaviours and increase failure rates. Instead, schools were advised to come up with positive and effective punishments which will not interfere in the learning process of the learners.

Learners indicated that the LRC need to be empowered and be involved in decision makings so that perpetrators can be deterred from bullying others in their presence. They should also help in implementing the school rules and protect the helpless learners from bullying.

Some teachers stated that Life Skills is regarded to be one of the most important subjects when it comes to the shaping of learners behavior. However, due to poor administration and lack of understanding about the importance of the subject, Life Skills is currently being given little or no attention in the schools visited and this need to be reviewed by implementing a more effective programme, which will help Life Skills teachers to teach the subject as it is prescribed by the syllabus. According to Donald et.al (2002), Life Skills play a critical role in school in order to promote the healthy social development of all children. Without addressing this role, we cannot hope to deal effectively with the social and interpersonal problems that confront us. Teachers suggested that schools need to have fully trained teacher-counsellors who can be available at all times so that learners with problems have someone to talk to. They can help both victims and perpetrators through counselling programmes.

Evening study is regarded as the time when most bullying is likely to happen. Evening study is supposed to be supervised by teachers, however many a time learners are left on their own with no supervision. Learners suggested that teachers should be more responsible since their presence will prevent bullying to a large extent.

Some schools are very big, and one security guard does not monitor the movement of people coming into the school. Most of the learners felt that if there were at least three security guards per school, learners would be better protected from being bullied by outsiders.

Some schools are situated in areas where learners have easy access to alcohol from the nearby shebeens. They can leave school either with or without permission and visit these shebeens to consume alcohol. Shebeens and bars close to schools need to be closed and owners should be punished once they are found to be selling alcohol to school going children.

5.6 Implications

The implications, recommendations and conclusion drawn from the findings of this study will be discussed bellow.

The findings of this study highlight the following points:

- Legally binding anti-bullying policies protecting the rights of learners are not in place in schools in Oshana Education Region. This may also be the case with other regions in the country.
- Bullying is happening in all schools visited and it affects learners academically, socially as well as psychologically. Academic performance of learners is greatly affected by bullying, leading to poor school results. Schools drop out and absenteeism are partly caused by bullying.
- Learners and teachers' safety in schools is of a great concern because the data revealed that there are a lot of bullying activities taking place in schools.
- Learners in schools are classified in terms of their social classes, and this creates problems among learners. Learners from rich families often bully learners from poor families.

- Teachers indicated that they were not trained on how to deal with bullying during their training period at institutions of high learning and they find it difficult to deal with bullying in schools.
- Poor parental support especially in poor performing schools was highlighted.
- It was noted that not only learners who commit bullying activities but also teachers were referred to as perpetrators of bullying in some schools. Some parents especially step parents were also highlighted as perpetrators of bullying.
- School setting, school performance, school size and grade repetition emerged as some of the variables which influenced bullying in schools.
- Bullying has long term effects on the lives of both victims and perpetrators.
- Schools do not have common mechanism on how to deal with bullying in their schools.
- Almost all new learners are bullied at their respective schools.
- Based on focus group discussions, some of the bullying victims are suffering in silence and there is no support for them.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made that may be implemented to alleviate the problem of bullying.

- The Ministry of Education should implement Anti-bullying policies which need to be effectively used in all schools.

- Each school should have an orientation programme at the beginning of the year so that all the new learners at school will be welcomed and topics such as bullying need to be discussed for them to know where they can get help.
- Counselling Support Groups in schools need to be effective so that victims and perpetrators can be helped by means of counselling.
- Learners Representative Councils should consist of learners who are exemplary and they need to be empowered. This will help these learners to advocate for their rights and speak on behalf of the victims.
- Parental involvement need to be strengthened in all schools.
- The practice of some teachers dodging lessons without any valid reason and leaving learners alone in classes, is very risky and it must be discouraged at all costs, as it leaves learners unattended to, unsupervised and in the process they get the chance to bully others. Teachers must be encouraged to take their profession seriously by giving them prizes and motivational talks which will help to motivate them. Similarly effective supervision during the evening study and lunch time at the dining hall needs to be encouraged.
- Currently Life Skills subject is not fully implemented in most schools. Life Skills as a subject needs to be fully implemented in all schools so that learners can be taught good moral practices and learners should be taught about their rights and responsibilities.
- The security system in schools needs to be upgraded to ensure that outsiders will not be allowed to enter the school without a valid reason.

- At parents meetings, the topic of bullying and its causes, effects and strategies should be discussed, so that parents can get an insight on how to support their children should they become victims or perpetrators of bullying.
- Reporting cases in an anonymous way can help learners to forward their grievances therefore all schools should have an easy and accessible way which will allow learners to report bullying cases without any intimidation.
- Teachers should act as guardians to all learners irrespective of their cultural, religious and social background.
- Bullying courses should be integrated in the training programme of student teachers at all institutions of higher learning.
- Positive punishment and appraisals for good behaviours must be used as way of motivating children to strive for the best manners.
- Although there was a few findings regarding perpetrators using cell phones and internet to bully others, further research need to be conducted on cyber bullying as the use of technology is increasing.
- Further research is necessary and should include more qualitative methods because a lot of valuable information came out through group discussions and interviews. The research can specifically focus on the strategies used in schools in order to combat bullying. Another area of interest for future research can focus on cyber bullying. The research can include more regions, schools in rural areas, and also different grades.
- Based on the data some learners, especially girls, were not free to discuss sexual bullying activities in the presence of boys. For future research, it will be best if

learners are interviewed in groups according to their gender so that they can be free to express their feelings without being intimidated by the presence of learners of the opposite sex.

5.8 Conclusion

Once again it should be noted that the statistical findings of this study can only be generalized to the region investigated and not to Namibian schools in general. It might also be wise to caution against this, since the sample of the schools was purposively selected and not drawn as a random stratified sample.

In all schools where the study was carried out, it was clear that bullying exists and learners do suffer in silence. The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia provides that “no person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” but that is not the case in schools. Schools are supposed to be places of peace and harmony, but what is happening in schools is the opposite. Bullying is happening in all schools.

The fight against bullying remains a daily struggle for numerous learners. Although the learners have the right to be free from harm, bullying undermines this right, as children in schools are being hurt by their teachers and fellow learners. Bullying is a more subtle and hidden act, which makes it hard to detect. Some teachers did not even want learners to mention it because they did not want to be seen as belonging to bad schools.

The effects of bullying cannot be ignored, as it affects the victims, perpetrators as well as the society at large. There is a need for the Ministry of Education to introduce anti-bullying

policies in schools so that it can guide teachers and learners on how to handle bullying in schools. The fight against bullying should involve all stakeholders, since the Ministry of Education alone will not win the fight without the support of individual people and organizations. There is a need for information to be disseminated so that people can understand the causes and impacts of bullying. The ecological model can be used to make stakeholders understand how different systems in the society affect learners and the way forward on the implementation of anti-bullying policies. Although schools still have a long way to go in addressing bullying activities, the effective implementation of Life Skills teaching as well as teacher-counsellors can be used as a first step in helping to create awareness about the dangers of bullying.

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APPENDIX A: LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B: TEACHERS' QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

APPENDIX D: APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH STUDY