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**Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: Narratives of eight
grade 10 learners**

by

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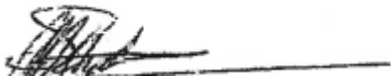
Master of Education (Social Justice Education)

DECLARATION

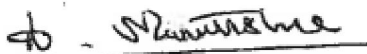
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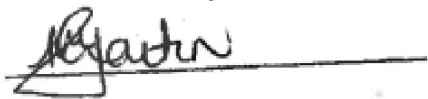
is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



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Professor Anbanithi Muthukrishna (Supervisor)



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ABSTRACT

This study sought to research bullying – a phenomenon which is seen as a major social problem that has a serious impact on the wellbeing of children and youth. The study contributes to the small body of research that has emanated from South Africa in the last decade or so and was conducted at one of the high school situated in Durban, province of KwaZulu-Natal. The study was a narrative inquiry and participants were eight (8) grade 10 learners; four male and four female learners selected through a process of purposive and stratified random sampling. Data generation involved individual and focus group interviews. In addition, a participatory research tool, mapping, was used to explore with the participants the places and spaces of bullying at the school.

The findings of the study showed that bullying was a problem at the school and operates in varied and complex ways. The findings in the study revealed that bullying happens at the school in pervasive and varied ways very much in line with international studies. Overall, participants referred to bullying acts as harassment, teasing, spreading rumours about a learner, name-calling, physical aggression and verbal abuse. Learners were unanimous in their view that bullying is a form of aggression that leads to physical and emotional suffering in victims.

Listening to the voices of the child participants in the study, who are clearly social actors in their own right and who have views on the issue, provided important insights into the phenomenon. Their stories showed that bullying occurs in many power-laden spaces and places of the school and is for most part invisible to school management and teachers. The school as an institution has clearly not engaged with the problem of bullying which often goes unreported by learners. The study suggests that school leadership and teachers

need to understand the complex contextual factors that sustain bullying in the school.

Interventions to address bullying need to involve partnerships between school personnel, parents, community members and most important, learners.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

School bullying in South Africa like many other countries has become a major problem (De Wet, 2005; Swart and Bredekamp, 2009; Tattum, 1997). According to Dracic (2009), bullying is a form of violence aimed at causing harm and results in physical or emotional suffering to other persons. Sullivan (2000) further argues that bullying is an abuse of power and that the act can be intentional or non-intentional and may be perpetrated by individuals or groups. Scholarly research shows that bullying occurs at all ages but the most common period is between late childhood and adolescence (Carney and Merrell, 2001).

My proposed study focuses on bullying – a phenomenon which is seen as a major social problem that has a serious impact on the wellbeing of children and youth. In this study, the aim was to listen to the voices of learners at a high school and how they experienced bullying at their school.

In this chapter, I present the rationale for the study; insight into the study context; a brief account of the methodological approach used; and the structure of this dissertation.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

This study firstly, was motivated by scholarly research that seems to show that there is a limited understanding of bullying in the African context, including South Africa. Much of the literature on bullying is based on experiences from countries of the North (for example Dracic, 2009; Olweus, 1993; Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard and King, 2008). The current study sought to contribute to the small body of research that has emanated from South Africa (for example, De Wet, 2005; Macdonald and Swart, 2004; Swart and Bredenkamp, 2009).

The second motivation was that in the past decade or so, there has been a call by the South African public to address violence in schooling contexts (De Wet, 2005). Ma, Stewin and Mah (2003), stress that the goal of creating safe schools cannot be achieved unless the issue of bullying is adequately addressed. Research has shown that bullying occurs in all schooling contexts and can have serious psychological and emotional impacts (De Wet, 2005; Whitted and Dupper, 2005). It has been argued that schools are powerful agents of change

and can have an important influence in shaping a child's self-esteem and identity (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997; Lee, 2001). Thus, bullying in schools need to be understood in a deep, contextual way and in its complexity.

Dracic (2009) argues that a child's bullying behaviour has been an established behaviour in many schooling contexts and that very often; it is ignored and viewed to be a part of normal behaviour and development. As a teacher, I was interested in examining the phenomenon of bullying in all its contextual complexity. Without a doubt, bullying plays out at my school and in order for me to gain deeper understand of the problem of bullying in schools, I drew from the work of Holloway and Valentine (2000), who argue that children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live. In other words, I wanted to listen to the voices of children.

The present study was located within the debates from a growing body of research referred to as "Children's Geographies" and New Childhood Studies or the sociology of childhood (for example, Holloway and Valentine, 2000; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1996; Van Ingen and Halas 2003). The argument from the field of children's geographies is that children's lives are experienced in unique and multiple ways in different times and places, spaces and situations. Scholars in New Childhood Studies maintain that children are active agents who shape the social structures, events and processes around them, particularly at micro level (Holloway and Valentine, 2000; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1996; Van Ingen and Halas 2003). From this stance, children are seen as competent social actors who have views about their lives and can articulate them in considerable depth.

Drawing on the framework of Children's Geographies, Van Ingen and Halas (2003) explain that schools are spaces where values, ideologies and practices intersect and power relations play out. Weller (2000) states that when examining children's spaces, the researcher is concerned with power relations surrounding the categories 'children' and childhood. My study investigated how institutional spaces in which bullying plays out are experienced and navigated by children. Andrews and Chen (2006) state that the focus of children's geography is about interrogating and deconstructing various spaces and places in schooling contexts.

With this background, my study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge on bullying in schools, and attempted to explore the following research questions:

- How do grade 10 children experience bullying within the school?
- How do children negotiate the spaces and places of bullying?

1.3 Context of the Study

The study was conducted at a high school situated in the KwaMashu Township, Durban. The research site was chosen as I work in the area and I had easy access to the school. This coupled with the fact that since I began working in the area and from personal communication with colleagues, a growing awareness of several cases of bullying at the school motivated me to commence with my study.

The school is located in the heart of the KwaMashu Township. KwaMashu comprises largely formal housing. It is seen as an economic hub as it is located in close proximity to the city, Durban, and its key transportation networks. There is a high level of unemployment, approximately 40%, and a low skills base. There are high levels of poverty, crime and insecurity in the area. There is a lack of social infrastructure and recreation facilities for the community (Economic Development Unit, eThekweni Municipality, 2014).

1.4 Methodological Approach

The study was a narrative inquiry. The aim was to capture the reality of respondents' life experiences of the spaces and places of bullying. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) explain that through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through the narratives of the respondents and that as individuals, we lead storied lives. I was interested in the stories children had to narrate about bullying at their school. I also envisaged that an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study would be possible through a qualitative research methodology.

According to Hancock (2002), qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena that informs our understanding about the world in which people inhabit and why things exist the way they do. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2003), qualitative research is the study of things in their natural settings and of the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Best and Kahn (2003)

further explain qualitative research is about studying real world situations in a natural setting. My aim was to engage the respondents in the sharing of opinions, experiences and their meaning making regarding the bullying. As the data would be subjective in nature, my study was located within the interpretive paradigm.

My sampling was purposive as I wanted to access individuals who have in-depth knowledge about a particular issue, in this case the learners at the school (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). From the pool of learners who agreed to participate, I randomly selected eight (8) learners. The process of respondent selection is explained further in chapter 3. I used individual and focus group interviews as a technique to generate or produce data. Individual interviews are flexible and enable the researcher to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of respondents and gain a deep understanding of social phenomena (Cohen et al., 2007).

Focus group interviews were held with the eight learners as a collective and Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains that in a focus group interview, the group interaction helps to widen the range of responses amongst respondents and it also activates forgotten or neglected details of experiences. According to Maree (2007), in focus group interviews, respondents can extend on each other's ideas and comments to produce an in-depth view not accessible from individual interviews. In this study, learners interacted with each other and from this interaction; data emerged during the focus group interviews. A participatory technique, mapping was used where children were given the opportunity to draw maps of the places and places in which bullying is enacted at the school. Stromquist (2001) explains that mapping is a concrete methodological tool or process that works well in research because it is very visual, participatory and tactile. It allows for reflection and comparison as well as clarifying and negotiating of perspectives.

For both the interview approaches in line with narrative inquiry as a research method, I began with one stimulus question: *Tell me the story of your experience bullying at your school.*

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter one

The first chapter provides the background, my key methodological choices and decisions, the research context and the rationale of the study.

Chapter two

The second chapter provides an in-depth overview of existing empirical literature on the topic of school bullying as it relates to this qualitative study. A further purpose is to highlight the gaps in the literature, and demonstrate how my research seeks to contribute to existing knowledge on bullying in schools.

Chapter three

This chapter describes the research methodology and design of the study, including paradigmatic issues and methods of data generation. It also deals with the issue of trustworthiness in research and ethical considerations.

Chapter four

In chapter 4, I present my research findings. I present the themes and categories that emerged from the data analysis. These findings are discussed in the light of existing literature, my conceptual frameworks, and my research questions.

Chapter 5

This chapter provides concluding remarks and reflections, as well as the recommendations proposed by the respondents. The limitations and strengths of the study are discussed and suggestions are made for future research on school bullying.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I engage with the notion of ‘bullying’ and how various scholars have framed the concept. Secondly, I will review theoretical and empirical studies that have focussed on researching bullying in schools. My review will include international and local research in the South African context.

2.2 Examining the concept of “bullying”

Internationally, bullying has been identified as a social problem in many schooling contexts. Wang, Iannotti and Nansel (2009) frame bullying as a form of aggression, involving a victim and a perpetrator. Varjas, Henrich and Meyers (2009) define bullying as physical aggression that can include hitting, kicking and verbal aggression, such as the use of abusive language and name calling. Dracic (2009), further elaborates that bullying is a kind of violence that involves attacks aimed at causing misery to others. This can be either physical or emotional suffering.

Gini and Pozzoli (2006) concur with the above scholars as they maintain that bullying is a directed kind of aggression that is aimed to hurt others and includes physical assault, verbal assault and other indirect means. Similarly, Townsend et al. (2008) state that bullying involves unprovoked physical or psychological acts which are inflicted repeatedly over time. Kester and Mann (2008) and Olweus (1993) agree that bullying is repeated behaviour and add that the fact that it is a sustained kind of behaviour is what makes it even more cruel and hurtful. Varjas et al. (2009) highlight three important aspects of bullying: it involves an imbalance of power; the intent to cause hurt, and repeated damaging, destructive acts. An interesting point is made by Simpson and Cohen (2004), who maintain that bullying is related to harassment as they both involve inappropriate behaviour and both target individuals. They further argue that perpetrators of bullying target personal characteristics of individuals such as personality traits, position, or level of capability or competency. Simpson and Cohen (2004) explain that when bullying relates to a specific characteristic of the victim, for example, gender, it can be considered sexual harassment.

Another facet of bullying noted in the literature is referred to as relational bullying which includes the circulation of rumours and social exclusion from particular groups. Simpson and Cohen (2004) suggest that this type of bullying may include unjust disapproval, being ignored, or social marginalisation. Wang et al. (2009) further explain that physical and verbal bullying is a direct form of bullying, while relational bullying is an indirect form. These scholars state that studies have consistently shown that boys are more involved in direct bullying and girls in indirect bullying.

In recent years, cyber-bullying has been documented amongst children in international contexts. It is bullying enacted through the medium of electronic communication (Li, 2007). In a study by Patchin and Hinduja (2009), it was found that children who were cyber bullied experienced feelings of misery, anxiety, terror and an inability to focus on their studies. According to Patchin and Hinduja (2009), cyber-bullying entails deliberate and repeated harm. The study showed that adolescents who were bullied online often truanted from school, experienced detention or suspensions or were found to have weapons in their possession at school. Access to internet and other forms of communication technology expose children to the danger of cyber-bullying.

According to Dracic (2009), spaces and places of bullying incidents include the family, school, workplace, sports events and the wider community. Furthermore, Hearn and Parkin (2001); Kerfoot and Whitehead (1998) and Lewis (1999) explain that often factors and influences within an organisation or institutions foster bullying, for example, a culture of competition and uncertainty. Dracic (2009) contends that bullying can result in school absenteeism, poor grades, school dropout and anxiety and trepidation at school and it has a tendency of developing at the adolescent stage, as its frequency decreases at the advanced adolescence stage.

My understanding of bullying in this study was influenced by the above research reviewed.

2.3 Characteristics of perpetrators, victims and bystanders

2.3.1 Perpetrators of bullying

Kester and Mann (2008) argue that bullies are generally aggressive in nature and view violence as a way to engage with other children. Additionally, these scholars have found in their research that bullies aim to hurt others as they see this as a strategy to protect themselves and show their strength. Kester and Mann (2008) further explain that bullies usually imitate the behaviour they are exposed to or experience in their own social settings, such as the home and family. In some cases, researchers have state that bullies are exposed to physical harm and harsh discipline from parents and other family members (Kester and Mann, 2008) i.e. many bullies have parents who are bullies. Most parents and other adults ignore the behaviour, and thus bullies regard aggressiveness towards others as an acceptable behaviour (Kester and Mann, 2008).

Research by Graham (2010) conducted in American schools showed that bullies usually enjoy a high status in their classrooms and in their peer groups. Bullies generally do not show symptoms of social anxiety or experience low self-esteem. Often other children emulate the behaviour of the group leaders who are bullies so as to gain in social standing. Baumeister, Jenniffer, Campbell, Joachim, Kruger and Kathleen (2003) explain that many studies show that bullies view themselves in a positively and have high self-esteem. Furthermore, classmates admire and desire their toughness and may even try to become like them (Baumeister et al., 2003).

In contrast to the above views, Dracic (2009), in an Australian study found that perpetrators of bullying are generally uncertain of themselves and low levels of self-confidence. They therefore find ways to use and show their power to be accepted in their peer groups. Similarly, other studies revealed that bullies have poor management of behaviour, poor communication, and problem solving skills. They show little remorse and fail to take responsibility for their behaviour (Dracic, 2009).

Thus, one can see that the understandings of bullying have progressed over the years due to research undertaken in diverse contexts. Studies over the years point to the fact that bullying is a complex phenomenon.

2.3.2 Victims of bullying

According to Frisen , Holmqvist and Oscarsson (2008) and Varjas et al. (2008), the victim is identified as a person who does not fit into social groups and he or she is seen as different and strange in some way, for example, in physical appearance, behaviour or way of talking. Kester and Mann (2008) found that victims of bullying usually have tendency to be anxious and lack confidence. Similarly, Dracic (2009) contends that victims of bullying often have low self-esteem and are reticent in nature. They are withdrawn and may have speech defects such as a stammer or a disability or they may belong to a marginalised group in society. Other studies have found that in many contexts, victims of bullying are often those who are gay, lesbian or bisexual than heterosexual peers (for example, Dracic, 2009). Furthermore, it has been documented that adolescents who are overweight or obese are targets of bullying (Dracic, 2009; Graham, 2010).

2.3.3 The bystanders

According to Barton (2006) bystanders are mere “passers-by” or “onlookers”. It is also evident in the literature studied, for example, Tsang, Hui and Law (2011), that students who witness bullying experience feelings of powerlessness, anxiety and distress. They also experience guilt for not having assisted the victim. They feel anger towards themselves and the bully and fear that they may targets themselves. Kohut (2007) further argues that most bystanders feel anxious at school and find it difficult to concentrate in class.

Salmivalli (2001) argues that majority of research indicates that bullying involves more than the bully-victim dyad – they point out that bullying is a very public act. According to Graham (2010), in most bullying incidents, there are other peers present as bystanders, instigators or partners to the bully, and enforcers or defenders of victims. Assistants participate in ridiculing or frightening the victim. The enforcers urge the bully, thus showing their consent. The defenders of the victims are very rare. Most bystanders suppose that victims are responsible for the situation in which they find themselves (Graham, 2010).

2.3.3.1 The role of bystanders in reducing bullying in schools

There has been a shift in the thinking regarding how to address bullying; a shift away from a focus on bullying as occurring in dyads towards seeing bullying in terms of the group context in which it happens (Rigby and Johnson, 2006). Thus, the argument has been to examine how bullying in schools can be addressed using bystanders in intervention programmes. Studies conducted by Davis and Davis (2007); Stueve, Dash, O'Donnell, (2006); Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) suggest that peer bystanders can influence bullying if they are trained to take different roles or positions in the bullying process.

Rigby and Johnson (2006) suggested a way of assessing the behaviour of bystanders in schools through a peer-evaluation questionnaire in which students are asked to indicate how their peers respond when they observe bullying situations. It is also noted in a study conducted by Twemlow et al. (2004) that in order for the bystander to stop bullying behaviour, certain factors such as environmental conditions may impact the bystander taking action. Environmental factors include the classroom space and even home proximity to bullies and victims. Social environmental factors include the availability of parents, teachers, peers and other adults for protection. According to Davis and Davis (2007) and Stueve et al. (2006) bystander's physical characteristics and their social and academic status are factors that influence bystanders' actions in preventing bullying behaviour.

It was also evident in the literature studied (for example, Lodge and Frydenberg, 2005), that it is important to enhance the bystander's positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour to enable them to take action against bullying. According to Wong (2004) and Gini and Pozzoli (2006), self-efficacy has been shown to positively affect prosocial behaviours including bullying defending behaviour. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as beliefs in one's capabilities to plan actions that would produce particular outcomes. Students who have high social self-efficacy are likely to assist victims of bullying situations.

Nickerson, Mele and Princiotta (2008) in their research, found that the bystanders' position taking part in bullying is as a result of peer pressure and the need to be accepted by peers. Furthermore, they state that bystanders are more likely to participate in bullying if it is sanctioned by their social network. Davis and Davis (2007) highlight the role of the school culture in respect of the bystanders' stance. In school environments that encourage students

to value the human rights of others, the risk of active bystanders in the bullying act is reduced. However, in many school contexts bullies hold power and this determines acceptance or rejection of bullying acts by bystanders. Tsang et al. (2011) maintain that if students are equipped with self-determination skills, they may not allow peer pressure to influence the positions they take and may act against bullying.

2.4 Studies on bullying in schools: What are the key debates?

In this sub-section, I will discuss the key themes that emerge in the debates on bullying in schools in the last 10 years or so. From my analysis of literature, these are the key issues debates: bullying and health and wellbeing in schools; schools' characteristics and bullying; gender issues in the context of bullying; bullying and the issue of diversity in schools; the complexities of addressing bullying in schools.

2.4.1 Bullying and health and wellbeing in schools

According to Hertz, Donato and Wright (2013), bullying behaviour is a huge public health problem in many countries and it can result in psychopathologic behaviours later on in life. Andrews and Chen (2006) also contend that bullying has many emotional consequences for children and youth. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) highlight that victims experience difficult emotions such as anger, frustration, embarrassment, stress, fear, helplessness and depression.

Studies revealed that bullying has a negative effect on academic achievement, pro-social skills and mental health and well-being of both victims and perpetrators (Wang et al., 2009). Ma, Stewin and Mah (2001) found that victims often show avoidance behaviours, a loss of self-esteem; regress in academic performance; and in extreme cases, bullying can result in suicidal tendencies. Jeffrey, Miller and Linn (2001) argue that the fear and intimidation caused by bullies in the school does not only affect students who are targets of bullying but also the bystanders.

Many scholars state that from a human rights stance, bullying cannot be condoned in schools. Olweus (1993) argues that it violates the rights of certain children to a safe school climate and environment while Burton (2008) warns that children who are exposed to bullying at a young age can be at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviours later in life.

Furthermore, bullies may carry this social problem into adulthood and may engage themselves in crime or abuse their partners and children later in life. It is critical for school leaders and teachers to create a human rights culture in schools that ensures the protection of the dignity, health and wellbeing and safety of all learners (Burton, 2008).

2.4.2 School characteristics and bullying

There is a body of literature that has examined the nature of the school ethos and culture and bullying (for example, Murray-Harvey and Slee, 2006; Konstantina, 2010). These studies have investigated the relationship between bullying and victimisation and the school culture, such as whether the school has policies to promote the health and wellbeing of children i.e. anti-bullying policies (Konstantina, 2010). Furlong, Soliz, Simental and Greif (2004) have argued that bullying increases in schooling contexts where teachers tolerate or ignore bullying incidents.

Olweus (1993) states that levels of bullying can be minimised if teachers, principals and other staff members can actively address incidents. Furlong et al. (2004) suggest that the majority of bystanders should be equipped with skills and strategies to act in the face of bullying. However, the school has to have clear reporting processes, according to Furlong et al. (2004). Burton (2008) argues that in many school contexts the construction of boys' toilets next to girls' toilets provide an opportunity for the boys to harass the girls.

2.4.3 Bullying – a gendered issue

Studies have shown patterns of bullying to be gendered and Crick and Grotpeter (1996) explained that the gender dynamic is evident regarding who is the victim and the perpetrator, the kind of bullying, the places and spaces of bullying and the factors that trigger bullying. Wang et al. (2009) and Natvig, Albrektsen and Ovarnstrom (2001) contend that boys are more likely than girls to engage in direct physical bullying. However, both boys and girls are likely to engage in direct verbal bullying. Olweus (1994) states that scholars and researchers do not agree that there are gender differences with indirect bullying such as social exclusion and negative rumours. Wang et al. (2009) state that studies show that there are gender differences in respect of who bullies whom. For example, boys generally are bullied by other boys, not by girls and girls reported are bullied by both genders equally.

Furthermore, the environment contributes in either maintaining bullying or protecting gender based bullying. A study by Morojele (2011) found that schools can play a role in providing spaces and places for promoting gender based bullying. In his study undertaken in Lesotho, a girl was harassed because she refused to comply with the gender norms of the community. His study further highlighted that teachers encouraged boys to victimise girls who did not yield to accepted construction of femininities. Tokukunaga (2010), in a study conducted in America found gendered bullying more intense and distinct in the context of cyber bullying. On another dimension, Rivers and Noret (2010) argue that girls' involvement in cyber bullying may be exceeding that of the boys just as in relational bullying.

2.4.4 Bullying and diversity in schools

According to Graham (2010), an individual's deviations from the larger peer group is one of the factors that consistently predicts victimisation. Therefore, an individual having a physical or mental disability, being highly gifted in a school context or a member of an ethnic, race, social class, religious or linguistic minority group is often targeted. Suffering from obesity, being gay or lesbian are other possibilities for being bullied. Such individuals are generally seen as different from what is considered the acceptable norm.

Kester and Mann (2008) in a study conducted in Washington found that Black youth were consistently more likely to be affected by bullying as the bully, bully victim or victim than Hispanic students. The bully-victim is the person who may bully others and in turn be bullied themselves. In addition, there was low correlation between the incidence of bullying and school satisfaction for Black youth. On the other hand, bullying did correlate with satisfaction with the school and the school performance for the White and Hispanic students (Kester and Mann, 2008).

Kester and Mann (2008) present another study on bullying and victimisation that was carried out in three high schools and five middle schools with sixth grade students in a large urban district in Texas, USA. The students were mostly Black and came from impoverished backgrounds. Kester and Mann (2008) found that Black students had a higher frequency of being made fun of, and called names. The study showed that Black youth had more than twice the frequency of getting hit or punished compared to Hispanic students. Furthermore, Black students were frequently more bullied than Hispanic students (Kester and Mann, 2008).

2.4.5 Bullying and learning

Kester and Mann (2008) contend that there is no correlation between bullying and academic achievement. However, in contrast Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara and Kernie (2005) argue that there is research to show that victims and bullies do poorly in school. Beran (2008) found that the relationship between being bullied and low academic achievement is higher in homes where there is low parental support and minimal emphasis on education. A study in the U.K. by Mynard and Joseph (1997) conducted with youth aged between 8-13 year's old found a significant negative correlation between self-reported level of victimisation and level of scholastic competence. There was also significant negative relationship between students involved in bullying others and the level of scholastic competence (Mynard and Joseph, 1997).

Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie and Saylor (1998), examined schooling issues such as school adjustment (doing well in schoolwork, following rules, doing homework) and school bonding (desire to do well at school, being happy at school, taking school seriously). The finding was that students who engaged in bullying were significantly less likely to show high levels of school adjustment or bonding. This relationship was strongest for bully-victims, followed by bullies, then by victims. Natvig et al. (2001) found school alienation (opposite of school bonding) related to students who bullied others, but school distress (opposite of school adjustment) was not related. The study further found that bullies were 2.1 times more likely than students not involved in bullying behaviour to feel alienated from school. Student adjustment and bonding were also associated with academic performance (Natvig et al., 2001).

The reason for the contradictory findings reflected in the research above may be that there are other intersecting factors that may influence poor academic performance.

2.5 The complexities of addressing bullying in schools

2.5.1 Introduction

Internationally, there have been various programmes and strategies that have been implemented and researched on how to address bullying amongst children and youth. Graham (2010) states that one misconception is that bullying behaviours are an ordinary part of childhood and that it builds character. He argues that research has clearly demonstrated

that bullying involvement increases the vulnerability of children and youth rather than builds resilience (Graham, 2010).

Many schools internationally adopt a zero tolerance approach to make it clear to learners that bullying is not acceptable (Graham, 2010). These approaches recommend that bullies should be suspended or dismissed. Graham (2010) maintains that school administrators should evaluate the scope of the problem before deciding on a discipline strategy, who will be involved, the legitimacy of the strategy, and what messages are conveyed to students. The danger is that certain strategies may have adverse effects, for example, if a strategy targets a certain racial group, it may promote racism in schools. Graham (2010) contends that school personnel who wish to know the subtleties of school bullying need to understand that the problems of victims and bullies are different and various circumstantial impacts may be at play.

Literature suggests that bullying intermediations and strategies must target everyone such as students, parents, and adults in the school (Graham, 2010). Bullying needs to be seen as a complete problem, and addressing the issue makes it critical for everyone in the school to be involved. Moreover, schools are diverse systems therefore what works in one situation may not be relevant to another context with opposing cultures; organisational structures, student demographics and staff composition (Graham, 2010).

According to Dracic (2009), a bullying prevention programme should begin at an early developmental stage and proceed through the different levels of schooling in a sustained and ongoing way. Programmes should have an extensive approach to this problem, involving family, and should be embedded in school wide-activities. School policies should have tactical objectives such as enhancing safety in the school environment, creating the feelings of trust and support; building communication skills to address silences; creating healthy relationships; engaging in the examination of the “rules of silence” about bullying; the development of relevant services for counselling and support; and to provide a proactive approach to bullying at schools. Further teachers would need training and support to discover and observe early indications of behaviour disorders related to bullying (Dracic, 2009).

Parents should also be trained to take responsibility to detect and observe early signs of conduct disorders in their children (Kester and Mann, 2008). Kester and Mann (2008) explain that there is evidence in schools in Washington State, USA that show that where potential victims are able to find supportive friends, bullying activities occur less frequently.

2.5.2 Family characteristics, social context and bullying

A literature review on family characteristics and bullying was done by Duncan (2011). The findings show that bullies often come from families where there is poor family functioning, no warmth, absent fathers and where aggressive behaviour, physical abuse and authoritarian parenting occurs, where there is domestic violence, difficult and uncaring mothers, mothers with little power and inconsistent discipline (Duncan, 2011). The review also showed that male victims had mothers who were overprotective, controlling and over involved while their fathers were generally absent, uncaring and controlling. On the other hand, female victims had mothers who were antagonistic, threatening, intimidating and controlling, while their fathers were uncaring and controlling (Duncan, 2011). Cook, Williams, Guerra and Kim (2010) and Swearer, Espelage, Koenig, Berry, Collins and Lembeck (2011) found in their studies, that bullies consistently reported family conflict and poor parental monitoring. Additionally, it has been found that parental level of education, socio-economic status and family status (divorce/intact/remarried) was not significantly associated either with bullying or victimisation (Sourander, Helstela, Helenius and Piha, 2000).

Cook et al. (2010) maintain that the nature of neighbourhoods may have an impact on bullying behaviour. They contend that neighbourhoods that are unsafe, violent, and disorganised produce bullying. Swearer et al. (2011) explain that a safe neighbourhood predicted less bullying and victimisation in many studies. It is interesting to note that studies show that exposure to violent video games; television and film are associated with higher levels of aggression which may foster bullying behaviours (e.g. Gentile, 2003; Swearer et al., 2011).

Kester and Mann (2008) argue that responsible adults should act against bullying behaviour so that students who empathise with, and protect the victims will be encouraged to do so. If adults are unable to talk and take action about the situation, students will regard bullying as an acceptable form of behaviour. Kester and Mann (2008) further argue that every

student who witnesses bullying is affected. If responsible adults fail to speak and act, those students will see bullying as acceptable behaviour, and can result in a school culture that normalises bullying, fighting, truancy, and other social problems.

Using parents and significant adults as resources in addressing bullying can be a valuable strategy (Dracic, 2009; Davis and Davis, 2007). Kester and Mann (2008) suggest that since bullies are not disciplined at home they learn that it is appropriate to act aggressively towards others. Schools need to improve and develop partnerships with parents and other key adults, and enhance communication to address the problem of bullying in schools (Kester and Mann, 2008; Stueve et al., 2006). These researchers also emphasise that bullying is an educational issue and that parents need to be provided with strategies to help prevent a culture of bullying both in, and out of school.

2.5.3 The role of the school and its staff

In light of the above review of key issues in the literature, prevention of school bullying needs to become a main concern to promote the mental health and well-being of students. Holt, Keyes and Koenig (2011) contend that when adults in the school system ignore bullying or feel that bullying is just “children being children,” then higher levels of bullying will result. According to Pepler (2006), schools have three key duties: Firstly, the commitment to prohibition - by maintaining systems and policies that send the clear message that bullying acts will not be tolerated. Secondly, to observe and address unacceptable behaviour and create a culture and ethos where students feel safe. Lastly, schools have duty to examine complaints about bullying immediately. Kasen, Johnson, Chen, Crawford and Cohen (2011) argue that when school climate is not supportive then bullying and related problems increase.

It is also important to mention that there are many programmes that exist to combat bullying in schools. The most renowned is the Olweus’ evaluation of the Norwegian “Bullying Prevention Program” (Olweus, 1993). Olweus’ programme was evaluated from 1983 to 1985 with 2 500 students’ aged 11 to 14 years old in 42 schools in Bergen, Norway. The result of this study confirmed a 50% reduction in the number of students being victimised. The programme by Olweus (1993) aimed at increasing awareness of bullying with children and adults in the schooling community, and to build adult involvement bullying prevention. Some of the strategies in the programme included assessing the problem in-depth, setting school

meetings, providing better supervision during school break time, forming a school structure to address bullying, arranging parent-teacher meetings, establishing classroom rules against bullying; arranging lectures and talks about bullying(Olweus, 1993).

Stevens, Bourdeaudhuij and Van Oost (2000) adapted the Norwegian anti-bullying intervention to create a Flemish anti-bullying programme. This programme added other components such as anti-bullying video material, modelling, role playing. An evaluation of the programme showed decreased bullying in primary schools but not in secondary schools (Stevens et al., 2000). The possible reason for this decrease only in primary schools is not explained.

There are other programmes that are not based on the model by Olweus (1993) for example, a study by Twemlow et al. (2001) in the USA focused on examining an elementary school violence prevention programme that had encouraging results. It comprised four components: a zero tolerance policy for bullying behaviour; a discipline plan for modelling acceptable behaviour; a façade aimed at teaching self-regulation; and a mentoring programme where adults and students (Twemlow et al.,2001).

Stevens et al. (2000) initiated a programme that aimed at changing student attitudes toward bullying. It comprised of, amongst other components, video material about bullying; information about roles students can play to prevent bullying and the negative impact of bullying; and strategies and rules to prevent bullying. The study by Stevens et al. (2000) found mixed results. It showed that in primary schools, no significant changes were recorded in anti-bullying attitudes. In secondary schools however, there were changes in students' attitudes in the first post-test but not in the second post-test. This shows the complexity of addressing bullying in schools (Stevens et al., 2000).

Kester and Mann (2008) stress that school intervention programmes need to focus on perpetrators, victims and teachers. All staff must play a role in formulating anti-bullying policies. There should be a school based forum for staff to bring up for discussion their concerns and experiences, positive or negative, as a way to create a safe school environment. Importantly, Kester and Mann (2008) stress that anti-bullying policies must be assessed on a regular basis by school personnel and parents. Boulton and Flemington (1996) stated that short, one off intervention strategies are not very successful preventing bullying.

2.5.4 The role of the peer group

According to Kester and Mann (2008), peer attitudes are critical to whether bullying is condoned, rejected, or silenced. Salmivalli, Huttunen and Lagersperspetz (1997) suggest that when members in a peer group are involved in bullying, other members tend to join in. Cook et al. (2010) found that negative peer influence predicts the perpetuation of bullying and victimisation.

According to Craig and Peplar (2005) adults are often absent in social spaces of children, and bullies use such spaces to harass their victims. Thus, in order for the students to stop bullying behaviour in their schools, several scholars such as Drosopoulos, Zacharia and McCue (2008) have shown that successful programmes focus on educating students about bullying. The key facets of these programmes include activities that define bullying; reflect upon its effects; and have role play activities. Kester and Mann (2008) contend that a successful school-based bullying programme should draw on ideas from students and empower students to play a key role in anti-bullying leadership. Students are most knowledgeable about the places and spaces of bullying, and who bullies and how bullying occurs. The most successful programmes are those that include students themselves, where students take leadership and have a commitment to reducing incidents of bullying in schools (Kester and Mann, 2008).

Graham (2010) maintains that an important aspect of an anti-bullying programme is to instil a tolerance for diversity, for example, in terms of gender, socio-economic status, language, ethnicity, race, religion as often bullying is associated with intolerance for diversity.

2.6 Studies on Bullying in Schools in South Africa

2.6.1 Introduction

According to Sullivan (2000), bullying has become a major problem in both the developed and developing countries. Egbochuku (2007) conducted a study in the city of Benin, Nigeria and found that 78% of the learners in high schools were victims of bullying and 71% admitted having bullied others. De Wet (2005) laments that in the context of high levels of violence in

South African society, there is little attention given to the victims of bullying. She further argues that despite numerous newspaper articles that have emerged on the issue, a bullying is rife in South African schools and their communities. Ma, Stewin and Mah (2003) stress that the goal of creating safe schools will not be met if the issue of bullying is not addressed. The aim of this sub-section is to explore the extent of bullying in schools in South African context.

2.6.2 What is the extent of bullying in South Africa?

In South Africa, bullying especially in secondary schools has become a major problem. And there is however, there is limited empirical research on the issue. I discuss below studies I have been able to locate. A study by Naser, Ovens, Morodi Van der Merwe and Ludikos (2003) indicated that 61% of high school learners in Tshwane have been the victims of bullying. A national study on bullying in schools by Reddy, Panday, Swart (2003) found that 41% of learners have been affected by the problem of bullying in schools. Kruger (2013) reports on a 2012 study by Youth Research Unit, University of South Africa, on bullying at secondary school level. The findings showed that 34% of 3371 learners surveyed in THE Gauteng Province and 30% of 901 learners surveyed in the Western Cape Province have been victims of bullying between 2010 and 2012.

De Wet (2005) states that numerous newspaper reports in South Africa have highlighted the problem of bullying in schools, for example, the Saturday Star reported that a 16 year old girl was allegedly forced to drink a bottle of Jik (bleach) by school bullies which resulted in her death. De Wet (2005) stated that the girl's father alleged that the girl's cries for help were ignored by the school. She was constructed by staff as a "drama queen". An article by Du Toit (2005) presents a concerning account of a 16 year old boy's fear of attending school after he had been verbally and physically abused by his fellow classmates. His mother's attempt to lay criminal charges against the alleged perpetrators were unsuccessful because a police officer dismissed the charges as "childish."

De Wet (2005) revealed that the Department of Education in Gauteng was named as a respondent in an average of 12 civil cases per month related to physical abuse of learners by other learners within the school environment. De Wet explains that these cases are based on section 60 of the Education Law and Policy Handbook which holds the state liable for

damage due to any acts of omission related to an educational activity and for which a public school would have been liable.

De Wet (2005) found in a study in the Free State Province that most respondents indicated that they were subjected to comments and/or gestures with a sexual meaning and verbal abuse. De Wet (2005) and Collins, McAleavy and Adamson (2004) found that boys made sexual gestures and comments at girls while passing their toilets. These researchers contend that name-calling as well as rude gestures with sexual meaning appear to be an entrenched strategy of harassment in schools (Collins et al., 2004; De Wet, 2005).

Kruger (2013) argues that research into bullying in South African schools indicates that the phenomenon is present in many schooling contexts. She further points out that the negative impacts of bullying are a harsh reality and urgent action is required to build safe schools.

2.6.3 The consequences of bullying

Burton (2008) maintains that violence in schools across South Africa is high and there is little doubt that this negatively impacts children's lives. He stressed exposure to violence at a young age can increase the risk of victimisation and the engagement in anti-social behaviour in later years (Burton, 2008).

Other South African researchers have drawn attention to the negative long and short term impact of bullying on the mental health and well-being of the learners (Burton, 2008; De Wet, 2005). Some of the mental health concerns are depression, anxiety, constant fear and poor self-esteem, which may lead to self-destructive behaviour such as suicide (Holt, Finkelhor and Kantoer, 2007). Macdonald and Swart (2004) stress that the problem, and consequences of bullying cannot be ignored in South Africa. They point that the values laid down in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) need to be taken up seriously so the goal of building a humane and caring society for all South Africans is achieved (Macdonald and Swart, 2004).

In order to eradicate bullying in South African schools it is necessary for researchers to undertake research on bullying analytically and in a constant manner (De Wet, 2004).

Educational institutions should work in partnership with other relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of anti-bullying programmes that can be adapted to the specific needs of individual schools. De Jong (2000) further argued that schools need to build human rights cultures that instil respect and tolerance for all.

2.7 Conceptual and theoretical framing of my study

My study has two conceptual frames: *Children's Geographies* and the concept of *bullying*. The concept of bullying has been discussed at length in the above sections. I used the various conceptualisations of bullying as a phenomenon which served as a lens to make sense of my data.

Moreover, my aim was to examine the places and power-laden spaces of bullying drawing from the conceptual frame, children's geographies. As I have explained in chapter 1, researchers who work within the framework of Children's Geographies have also linked with the field of New Childhood Studies to highlight that "children are not simply passive objects dependent on adults, but are competent social actors that make sense of and actively contribute to their environment" (Barker and Weller, 2003, p. 207). Furthermore, the view is that children dynamically create meanings of their world and should be given the chance to speak for themselves in research about them. That was my intention in this study.

Children's geographers have examined spatial variations in childhoods – in other words the multiple and intersecting places and spaces they engage with and within as they play out their lives. Frones, Jenks and Qvortrup (2000) draw attention to the spatial diversity of children's experiences and the multiple realities of children's lives. I used the framing of children's geographies to scrutinize the places and spaces of bullying with the context of the school – a unique social reality of learners. My aim was to place the learners in my study at the centre of my research. My study created a space for learners, in their own voices, to share and make sense of their experiences of bullying. I believe that it is not possible to understand children as social actors and their agency without examining in depth, their experiences of the relevant places and spaces in their lives. Spaces are often power-laden where various intricate relations of power play out.

2.8 Conclusion

It was evident from the literature reviewed in this chapter that globally, bullying is a critical social issue. Studies conducted over a number of years have indicated that one-in-four learners internationally are affected by the problem of bullying and as many as 8% of the learners miss a day of class per month for fear of being bullied in schools. It was also evident from the literature studied that this behaviour has long-term damaging impact on the bullies, peers and victims (for example, Coggan, Bennett, Hooper and Dickinson, 2003; Craig, Henderson and Murphy, 2000; Smith-Heavenrich, 2001).

Tattum (1997) pointed out that schools are powerful agents in the socialisation of children against bullying. There is a need for schools to develop a inclusive plan involving all key role-players to address bullying and to ensure that schools are safe environments where children's human rights are protected (De Wet, 2005). Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) maintain that school culture is a central factor when considering interventions to address social problems. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) suggest that it is essential for there to be a critical cognizance within the school culture of human rights violation and ways to address them to create a healthy environment. My study was envisaged to be a much needed contribution to the limited literature on bullying in South African schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and design of the study, which includes the context and sampling, data production tools, data analysis, validity and reliability or trustworthiness. It also covers ethical issues and the strengths and limitations of my study.

3.2 Methodological Issues

A research methodology shows the link between a researcher's philosophical stance (ontology and epistemology) and the research design (Cohen et al., 2007). The research methodology of a study reflects the researcher's assumptions about the nature of existence (ontology) and his or her views about the nature of knowledge-building (epistemology) (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010). Cohen et al. (2007) explain that this guides the researcher in his or her goal to produce knowledge. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a research design is the researcher's plan about where, how and through what approaches and methods data will be generated, scrutinised and construed.

In my study, the aim was to produce knowledge about the phenomenon of bullying within a schooling context hence, a qualitative research approach was selected. According to Hancock (2002), the aim of a qualitative study is to try to explain social phenomena in a profound way. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative research is the study of phenomena in their natural settings and to examine the meanings people make of the phenomena. My aim was to obtain better understanding of the grade tens learners' experiences of an interpretations of bullying as it takes place in their places and spaces of schooling contexts.

My study was located within the interpretive paradigm. According to Mason (2010) interpretivists are interested in *understanding* the social world people create and produce. It seeks to make sense of the meanings and interpretations of social actors and actions. Cohen et al. (2007) confirm that the richness of data in such a research provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question.

However, as the study proceeded I realised that it had elements of a critical paradigm as I was interested in examining institutional structures and social arrangements that produce oppression, unequal power relations and social inequalities.

As the study was a narrative inquiry, the aim was to capture the reality of the respondents' life experiences of the spaces and places of bullying. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) explain that through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through the narratives of the respondents and that as individuals, we lead storied lives. I was interested in the stories children had to tell about bullying at their school. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) maintain that in narrative inquiry, the respondent's narratives (stories) need to be seen as both the method and the phenomena of study. The aim was to understand respondents' different social constructions of reality through the stories they tell. It is also important to mention that narratives can be gathered in a variety of ways, for example; verbal interviews, written stories, participatory techniques - the aim is to obtain rich stories (Pinnegar and Danes, 2007).

According to Phillion (2002) narrative research is about life as it is lived and thus other events, actions and happenings are a part of the research and are woven into the stories that are re-told. Every day events and experiences are recalled and stories told about them. In my study, it was important for me to ensure that the interviews flowed naturally and that I gave my respondents space to tell and reflect on their stories. In a narrative approach, a researcher should avoid asking pre-set questions. The aim should be to search for depth through open-ended conversations. It is also important to note that narrative interviews are cooperative and dialogic as the researcher and respondent jointly try to understand and make meanings of lived experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007).

My epistemological stance on children and childhood was influenced by the work of Holloway and Valentine (2000) who state that children and young people are capable individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of social worlds in which they live. Thus, my study was located within the debates from a growing body of research referred to as *Children's Geographies* and *New Childhood Studies (NCS)* or *New Sociology of Childhood* (for example, Holloway and Valentine, 2000; James, Jenkins and Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1996). The argument from the field of children's geographies is that children's lives are experienced in a myriad of ways in different times and places, spaces and differing circumstances.

Van Ingen and Halas (2003) explain that schools are spaces where values, ideologies and practices interconnect and power relations play out. Debates from NCS suggest that children are active agents who shape the structures and processes around them, particularly at a micro level. As a result of studying this literature, I have come to believe that children are competent individuals who can speak for themselves about their experiences of the social worlds in which they live. In exploring children's spaces one is concerned with power relations surrounding the category "children" (Barker and Weller, 2003). Andrews and Chen (2006), state that the focus of children's geography is on deconstructing various spaces and places in schools.

As explained in chapter two, my study was framed by a conceptual framework, the notion of *Children's Geographies*' and theoretical perspectives on children and childhood that emerge from debates in *New Sociology of Childhood*. Furthermore, the concept of bullying engaged with in chapter two framed my study and provided a lens to make sense of my findings.

With this background, my study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of Children's Geographies and NCS. My key research questions were:

- How do grade 10 children experience bullying within the school?
- How do children negotiate the spaces and places of bullying?

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Context of the study

The study was conducted at a high school situated in KwaMashu, Durban. The reason for conducting the study in a school in KwaMashu was that I work in the area. Choosing this school gave me an advantage as I would not have to expend time and money on transport moving to and from the venue of research as I was a teacher at the school. My colleagues and I were concerned about the increasing cases of bullying at the school over the years. Thus, both convenience and purposive sampling was used in the selection of the school.

3.3.2 The research respondents

Sampling processes are used to gain access to appropriate data sources. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a sample is the group of subjects from which data is collected and often represent the populace. Sampling refers to the process used to select a section of population for study (Maree, 2007). Qualitative research usually uses non-probability and purposeful sampling (Maree, 2007). In this study, I used purposive sampling to select my respondents and the context. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), in purposive sampling the context and respondents are selected because they have certain defining characteristics that qualify them to be the key sources or holders of data needed for the study.

I made the decision to target grade 10 learners at the school as bullying was more evident within the higher grades at the school. I addressed all grade 10 classes at the school and invited students to participate in the study after I had explained the study to them. Since bullying has a gendered dimension according to research as discussed above, I decided to use stratified random sampling. Out of the pool of grade 10 students who agreed to participate in the study and for whom I gained consent to participate in the study, I randomly selected eight, stratified by gender. My sample comprised 4 boys and 4 girls.

3.3.4 Data production

The research was conducted using focus group interview as a technique to generate or produce data. Cohen et al. (2007) highlight the importance of understanding knowledge produced by a community of people and in conditions of social interaction and communication.

3.3.4.1 Individual Interviews

I interviewed each of my respondents following a narrative approach. I tried my best to allow for a conversational style and this helped me build rapport with my respondents. My main stimulus question was: *Tell me the story about bullying at your school?* An interview guide (Appendix 6) assisted me, the researcher in assessing whether I had covered all issues I wanted to explore. This guide covered the following issues: What is bullying? Have you ever been bullied? How do learners at the school view? How do learners experience bullying and

what effect does it have on them? How is bullying dealt with at the school? Tell me about three incidents of bullying you witnessed? I explored the experiences of respondents through probing and seeking elaboration to create rich stories. The interviews were conducted in IsiZulu, the language in which the learners were more proficient, thereafter the interviews were translated into English and transcribed.

3.3.4.2 Focus group interviews

I held focus group interviews with the eight learners as a collective. Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains that in a focus group interview, the group interaction helps to widen the range of responses amongst respondents and it also activates forgotten or neglected details of experiences. According to Maree (2007), in focus group interviews respondents can encompass on each other's ideas and comments to produce an in-depth view. Within this interview unexpected comments and new perspectives can be examined. In this interview, respondents interacted with each other and from this interaction the data emerged, as explained by Cohen et al. (2007).

The focus interview process entailed the same format as the individual interview, beginning with the open ended question: *Tell me the story of bullying at your school?* The interview guide (Appendix 6) also guided the interview process. I had three focus group sessions of approximately 45 minutes each. The interviews were conducted in IsiZulu and were then translated into English and transcribed.

3.3.4.2 Participatory research technique

In the study, in line with my aim to give children voice and as I believed that children were active social agents with their own views about events and experiences, a participatory research technique during the focus group interviews. The key concepts in participatory research are: participation, collaboration, engagement, involvement, voice (Stromquist, 2001). One of my aims in using participatory research was to address power relations between me, the researcher and my child respondents.

The participatory technique I used was mapping. Stromquist (2001), states that mapping is a concrete methodological tool and a process that is valuable as it is visual and perceptible. It allows for the reflection, contrast, illumination and negotiation of meanings

and understandings. During the study, the learners (in pairs) were requested to individually draw maps of the places and spaces where incidents of bullying took place. Children were provided with sheets of paper, pencils and erasers. Each pair then presented and discussed the map he or she had drawn. However, learners deviated from my instruction and made the decision to select one of the respondents whom they believed “*to be good in drawing*” to draw the maps. I allowed this as I did want the students to own the research process and to be partners with me in research.

3.3.5 Data analysis

With consent from the respondents, interviews were audio- recorded and translated into English and then later transcribed verbatim. Bless and Higson-Smith (2004) explain that data analysis is the comprehensive examination of data in order to understand more about it. Bless and Higson-Smith (2004) further maintain that once data is gathered and scrutinised, the researcher should begin the process of analysing the data so as to discover consistent categories and patterns.

Through the use of multiple sources (eight learners) and methods of data generation, I was able to ensure a degree of trustworthiness of the data (Merriam, 1998). My data collection methods ensured that I had rich descriptive data and that I also had a trail of evidence of the data gathered. I was able to ensure *dependability* in respect of my processes of data generation, data analysis, and theory generation and *conformability* in respect of how well my data provided evidence for the findings and interpretations I made (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with the assistance of my supervisor and members of the M.Ed. Cohort programme in the School of Education who served as my critical friends in the cross checking of my data analysis and interpretation.

The process of organising data and data reduction was effected my means of identifying topics and categories of meaning across topics. From this process, I was able to identify key themes and patterns. I made sure that I stayed close to my research questions and my analysis was guided by the literature and my conceptual frameworks for this study.

3.4 Ethical issues

Ethical considerations are crucial in any research project as it ensures morality of the research process (Neuman, 1997). These considerations were paramount as I was fully aware that I was researching *with children* and it was my aim to protect the rights of the respondents hence consent was received from all relevant gatekeepers.

Written permission was requested from the schools' principal (Appendix 1), learners (Appendix 2) and their parents/ care givers to inform them about the nature of the research. Letters were written to all parents/caregivers of learners requesting consent (Appendix 3). These letters were written in IsiZulu to make sure that all parents understood the content. Parents/caregivers signed the consent form to show that they approved of the participation of their children in my study.

I made clear to the all respondents, the following issues in the research process:

- They were informed that their names would kept anonymous and pseudonyms names would be used in the dissertation.
- At the first meeting with the respondents, I explained the research to them in a child friendly way to facilitate their understanding.
- They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage in the process.
- The respondents were told that they may refuse to answer specific questions if they may wish.

Bless and Smith (2004) stress that, from a rights perspective, direct consent for participation in the case of children must be obtained from their parents or guardians. Since my study was located within a theoretical perspective that views children as active social agents with independent views (Halloway and Valentine, 2000; James, Jenkns and Prout, 1998; Mayall, 1996), I knew it was important that informed consent was obtained from the child respondents themselves.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the research office of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (refer to appendix 4) and from the Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal through the larger project in which my study was located, titled "*The geographies of children's schooling in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries: Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers*" (refer to appendix 5).

3.5 Strengths, challenges and limitations of the study

As with most studies, my research had particular strengths and weaknesses. The study was conducted in one school with a small sample of eight respondents, which may be argued makes generalisability difficult. However, my intention in this study was to obtain concrete, situated, context dependent knowledge of how my respondents experienced bullying at their school (Flyvbjerg, 2004). My aim was not to make any kind of generalisation regarding my findings.

As a researcher, I found researching *with* children a challenge. At times I concede that I did pose leading questions and had to constantly monitor and resist this temptation during my interview process.

My study without doubt has shown that bullying creates a destructive and toxic culture in a school. Researching children who are vulnerable to bullying and who experience bullying was emotionally very difficult for me. Listening to the respondents tell their stories created in me, mixed emotions including sadness, distress and anger. I empathised with the respondents and was able to understand the hurtful and damaging experiences they have in the school context. Neser et al. (2003) state that bullying evokes feelings of embarrassment, anger, fear, humiliation, self-consciousness, betrayal and sadness.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the research methodology of the study and the various design choices made. I have tried to justify these choices, drawing on relevant literature. The next chapter presents the findings of my study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings from this study. In order to make sense of my data analysis and interpretation process, I think that it is necessary to be reminded of the research questions of this study:

- How do grade 10 learners experience bullying within the school?
- How do children negotiate the spaces and places of bullying?

In this chapter, I firstly present the meanings of bullying that emerged in the narratives. Secondly, I discuss key themes that emerged viz. (1) Making sense of the phenomenon of bullying, (2) Spaces and places of bullying, (3) Making sense of the impact of bullying, (4) Bullying: a gendered space? (5) The bystanders and (6) Learner narratives on spaces for addressing bullying.

4.2 Making meaning of the phenomenon of 'bullying'

Influenced by New Sociology of Childhood and New Childhood Studies, my assumption in this study was that children are active social beings who construct meanings around events, experiences and social relations and exchanges (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). During the interviews, the respondents gave insight into the kinds of bullying they experienced and how they constructed bullying. Through the stories it was evident that learners experienced a range of bullying enactments that align with experiences of learners in various contexts internationally (for example, Belden-Galea, Jurcae and Tigan, 2010; Andrews and Chen, 2006). Learners spoke of experiences of verbal bullying and physical acts such as hitting and beating. It was clear that learners in the study viewed bullying as a form of aggression that lead to physical and emotional suffering in victims. The narratives below are illustrative of their experiences and constructions of bullying. Respondents were aware of the many forms that bullying can take.

I experienced bullying where spreading rumours and lies, saying hurtful things like that is bullying. They said "hey you are thin" and ... they teased and insulted me

and saying this and that. They said I am skinny, I am short, I am a dog and I asked myself why they said all these things to me. They carry on with this and make the person very sad.

(Mfanos¹, male, individual interview)

A Bully is a person that cannot get on with another person...maybe a person is always harassing other learners and cannot get on with anybody. They don't like to see somebody else happy. I was bullied. I am accustomed to being bullied by girls and boys, and when they bully me they are usually joking because they call me names and irritate me. You see in class, they started by calling me and my friends "chiwawas"² because we are short you see and we ended up accepting those names but when they first used those names we did not like it at all.

(Rose, female, individual interview)

Ayee... I have experienced verbal bullying, okay. The learners insult each other but shame....with me they were good. They insult each other; the boys do physical bullying and hit each other. Okay, they hit each other. If a person is bullied and the story is finished...but if you start the bully again they threaten you to bring the bully back for you, it is bad... They can fight because another sat on one's desk. They just fight over something small like that.

(Miss Q, female, individual interviews)

Yes because when you see other learners bully it reaches a stage where you don't like it especially when they bully the same person over and over you eventually decide to join in and tell the bully that what they are doing is not right

(Tsu, male, individual interviews)

Overall, the learners in the study referred to bullying acts as harassment, teasing, spreading rumours about a learner, name-calling, physical aggression and verbal abuse. These kinds of acts have been documented in studies internationally (e.g. Olweus, 1993; Gini and

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of respondents. Respondents selected their names.

² A canine breed – short in stature

Pozzoli, 2006; Kester and Mann, 2008). Much of this literature highlights repeated, negative acts such as hitting, kicking and pushing, verbal abuse, name calling and emotional abuse. Learners in my study also referred to the fact that the repetitive nature of bullying makes it all the more inescapable. Furthermore, learner narratives show that victims are targeted on the basis of physical features, personality characteristics, social status and being new to the school. Graham (2010) explained that any kind of constructed nonconformity or dissimilarity from the larger peer group is one of the factors that predict victimisation in the bullying phenomenon.

In many contexts, studies have shown that the main intention of bullying is to dominate others who are weaker or less powerful (Graham, 2010). This was also found in the present study as reflected in the drawing that emerged in the participatory activity in Figure 1.



FIGURE 1: POWER DYNAMICS IN BULLYING

Learners explained that the drawing depicts the power dynamics in the bullying act. The drawing shows two larger, stronger learners bullying younger learners and physically manhandling them. The learners explained that younger male learner was robbed of his pocket money. The larger girl seems to be humiliating the younger girl by physically pushing her down and forcing her to bow down to her.

Hamarus and Kaikkonen (2008) argue that bullying is a way of creating position within the peer culture. Additionally, the bully is able to identify and define learners who are different or weaker in the school community and engage in ‘othering’, creating an “us” and “them” duality. In the study, two respondents narrated how a new learner to a school can be targeted. Kim and Thom explain their experiences at the school. Kim also felt that her quiet nature made her a target for bullies. Her quiet, introverted personality made peers construct her as ‘being proud’ and having a sense of self-importance.

It is two sides, some learners were positive because they are open and they talk to you nicely but there are others like when you come to school - when I came to the new school and I knew nobody, I will get to my class and sit quietly. I will only greet the person next to me and only talk to them and nobody else. I will continue then after a while, they will say I am proud and they must sort me out because I think I am better. This is simply because I am quiet and I don't know anybody to talk to. They then harass me and take my things and do many silly things.

(Kim, female, individual interview)

When I first came they were rough with me because when you are a new learner but now because I am used to it. Also when I first came I was quiet but now I talk for myself. If I don't agree with something I speak out. They do not bother me they are fine. There are a few odd ones that I don't get on with but that is not a problem

(Thom, female, individual interview)

During the focus group interview the varied nature of bullying was also evident and stories of sexual harassment, teasing, name calling, and exclusion came to the fore. The stories alluded to the imbalance of power in bullying acts and the fact that it can result in low self-esteem and fear of, and aversion to school as documented in other studies (for example, Varjas et al., 2009). Learners in the focus group interviews also condemned the heartlessness, cruel, merciless and insidious nature of bullying.

I hate this school ... different places ... especially at the groundthere are many problems we get called names that we don't like. Maybe they touch you. What I

have seen happening it is fondling somebody. It pains you because you don't know how you will defend that person sir.

(TK, male, focus group interview)

A bully is somebody who is heartless who does not care, for example even himself.

(Mr S, male, focus group interview)

He doesn't wash his face so they call him names like Terminator, they say he is a Robot, they say he is Scotani³ and they call him funny names - and he does not like that. He even stayed absent from school for a whole month, and when the teacher asked him what the problem was, he said they are disrespecting him in the class and they are calling him names he does not like.

(Kim, female, individual interview)

4.3 Spaces and places of bullying

In this school context, bullying occurs in many power-laden spaces and places and much of the data reflecting the spaces and places of bullying emerged from the focus group interview and the participatory exercise, mapping. Learners were provided with sheets of plain paper and pencils to draw their maps of places and spaces of bullying. The maps were used to facilitate explanation and discussion on what they had drawn. The process took the form of conversational interviews. As indicated, learners deviated from my instruction that each learner had to complete his or her own drawing. However, learners chose to use a respondent who was good at art to draw each of the maps.

The drawings of the learners during the mapping exercise and their narratives as they explained their drawings in the focus groups, provided interesting insights. Learners' drawings reflected key bullying spaces and places viz. the playground, particularly during break time, in the classroom, the taxi rank outside the school and the toilets.

Figure 2 shows the back windows of the grade 10D classroom. In this class, a great deal of physical and verbal bullying takes place by both genders. Bullying usually takes place during free periods or during breaks. The victims use this window to escape when they are

³ Colloquialism for criminal

physically victimised, according to the respondents in the study. The Grade 10 classes emerged often in the narratives as a problematic level rife with incidents of bullying. One wonders whether the teachers and school management are aware of this. The findings suggest that there is an urgent need for intervention at this school and a particular focus needs to be on the 10D class.

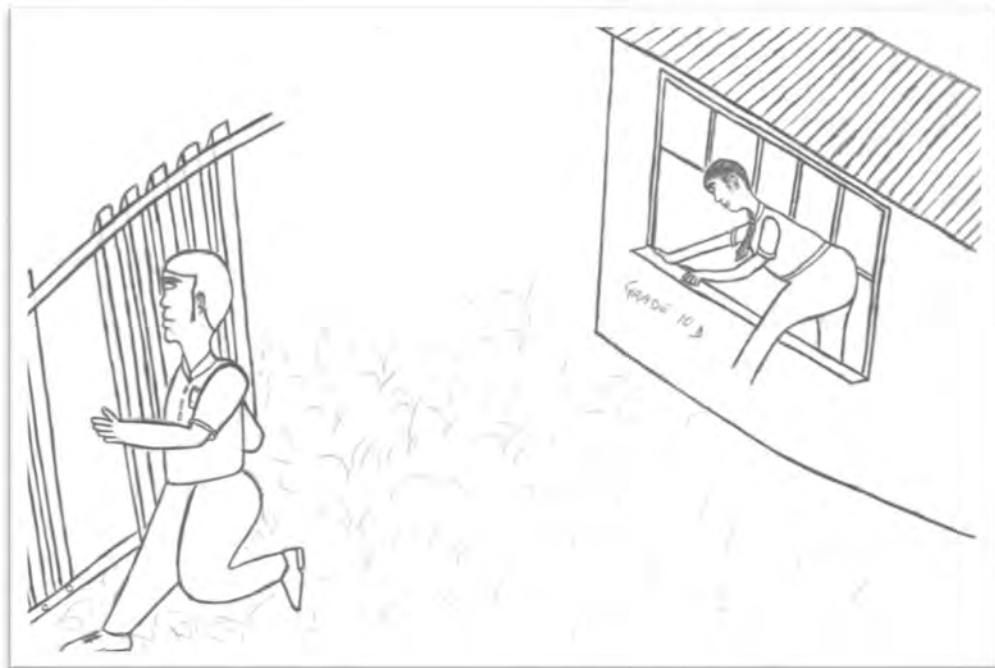


FIGURE 2: SPACES OF FEAR – THE CLASSROOM



FIGURE 3: SPACE OF FEAR: BULLYING IN THE TOILETS

One of the learners, Kim, provides an explanation of figure 3. The setting is outside the toilets for girls and boys.

This is the toilet. Verbal and physical bullying takes place here. There was one boy who was in grade 10 last year; they had an argument in class. One was in class F and the other was in class E. The one stabbed him in the toilet. They come to the toilet and before they enter they pull a number and they make signs. You then have to pay for a cigarette. Here, they really fight. They talk and the story seems as if it is over and then they see you are talking too much then they go and continue at the toilet. They won't tell you but will just wait for you at the toilet and follow you to the toilet then they will sort you out. Last week Rose (a respondent) said there was a stabbing. They gossiped about each other first. They fought and the other girl stabbed another with a piece of mirror sir. It was a girl from grade 10A. They are the class that really likes to fight.



FIGURE 4: BULLYING AT THE “MOUNTAIN”

Thom (below) explains the power dynamics between older and younger learners at the school where younger learners are harassed and robbed of their food and money. It is a concern that this space, constructed by learners as a bullying space, is not monitored by teachers at the school. Holt et al. (2011) argue that when adults in the school system ignore

bullying, allow silences about bullying to breed, or feel that bullying is just kids being kids then higher levels of bullying may be the outcome.

This place we call “the mountain”? Yes, that is behind grade ten. There are grade 8, 9 and 10 learners who eat there. Next to the septic tank. They sit there and eat. Some older ones come and grab the little ones’ vetkoek, ice lollies and money. Others argue and swear at each other. I have not seen them fight, they just swear at each other. But sometimes they encounter one who is as aggressive as them and he refuses to take out the money to hand to them, so they finish the fight outside. Maybe, some take the matter outside because they are afraid of being expelled.

The mapping activity revealed another concerning issue as it became evident that the school context is unsafe for learners as there is easy access to it by criminal elements from the community and learners from the school who engage in crime surreptitiously. Learners’ drawing in Figure 5 shows that the school fence has been cut through to create a space for these criminal elements to enter the school. Crime in the community is spilling over into the school and its immediate surroundings and learners live in constant fear of attack and harm in these unsafe spaces. School grounds and classrooms are clearly not well monitored by staff at the school.

Ja...on a Friday we have a long assembly and prayer, you see so the trouble makers know that on a Friday we do something and we go late to our classes so some bunk school then they creep in through the fence and they go into the classes and steal bags and pick-pocket children. They take other learners bags and other things especially if it is a Friday.

(Mr S, male, focus group interview)

They are woonga⁴ smokers. I can see for myself.

(Ms Q, female, focus group interview)

⁴ A highly addictive street drug, made with heroine and rat poison

What can I say? It is true because as the assembly is long, people see an opportunity even our class mates if we leave our bags and go to assembly they steal our bags while we are away. They are the ones that search our bags.

(Thom, female, individual interview)

Yes sir they wanted to grab my friend's phone next to BP and I joined in because they were two and we were also two. We told them that they would not get the phone and eventually they left us because people were going past and they could not do it in view of people.

(Tsu, male, individual interview)



FIGURE 5: THE “HOLE IN THE FENCE” – SPACES FOR CRIME AT THE SCHOOL

The drawing reflects the concerns of the learners. Kruger (2013) found that in South Africa unique contextual factors such as community violence overflow into the school and impact on the management and prevention of bullying. Exposure to poor role models is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of learners and may fuel bullying behaviours in schools. The need to create safe schools and communities is critical to reducing bullying (Kruger, 2013).

4.4 Making sense of the impact of bullying

The study revealed that learners are made to feel excluded, unimportant, hurt, fear, humiliation, embarrassed and scared. Respondents also alluded to possible long term effects such as depression, unhappiness and poor academic achievement. The narratives to follow revealed how learners construct their complex realities impacted by bullying.

It does disturb me because if somebody calls me names it disturbs me because I keep quiet and wonder why I am like this you see. It is disturbing.

(Thom, female, individual interview)

Ayee, you know it is difficult to see somebody being bullied because you as the spectator feel sorry for the person and you wish you could do something to defend them.

(TK, male, individual interview)

Yes it did happen last year while I was in the class and a girl came to the class and I mean I was at this school. She was new at the school and came to class. Another learner went to the desk where she was sitting and when this one came she swore at her and scolded her. She spoke terrible things and this learner continued and she spoke politely and humbly but there were others encouraging her to confront the girl. I did not feel good because when I got to this school the same thing happened to me. I did not think that it would happen to somebody else and it happened. When I tried to tell her what she was doing was wrong as the new girl did not know she saw an empty desk and she sat. You should understand that she tried to calm herself down because she didn't usually behave in such a manner. She wanted to be seen that she could also be a bully. Yes it happened because I could not concentrate well and I was afraid when I was in the class maybe it will happen again and I was left wondering what the bully would do next. What would I do? Will she hit me today? Maybe tomorrow what will she say to me? I could not focus well at school.

(Kim, female, individual interview)

In the preceding narratives, learners also allude to the emotional impact of bullying on the bystander. Kim voices her constant concern that she may be targeted as a victim in the future.

Findings in this study seem to reflect insights from other international studies for example, Kester and Mann (2008) state that the intent of bullying is to cause harm to the victim by rejecting him/her socially or excluding them from a group. Dracic (2009) further argues that bystanders and witnesses of bullying are also affected by the unpleasant atmosphere of fear and humiliation and that bullying creates a negative impact on their learning. Andrews and Chen (2006) argue that bullying has many emotional dimensions and consequences for individuals both inside, and outside of immediate encounter spaces. They further argue that emotions such as fear and anxiety are part of the tyrannical spaces of bullying and each respondent in encounter space feels different emotions that reflect and affect their actions (Andrews and Chen, 2006).

In contrast to the above narratives, there were a few learners who felt that bullying should not be 'taken seriously'. There were learners in the study who pointed out that bullying may be a form of playfulness and that one should be cautious when labelling behaviour as bullying. For example, teasing may not be seen as behaviour that will cause serious harm by the perpetrator but it may be constructed as harmful by the victim. In the focus group, one of the respondents, Mr S. explains his view:

I would tell the victims not to take it to heart as they will end up going mad. Sometimes they are just playing so one must persevere and focus on why they came to school and not be distracted.

I can hear what T is saying. I cannot understand what F is saying - but you see to play and tease each other is normal to us but maybe in this case it went too far until she got annoyed.

(Miss Q, female, focus group interview)

However, Miss Q does point to the danger of teasing escalating to bullying if the behaviour gets out of hand. Mr S. alludes to the need for agency by the victim as key to addressing bullying.

4.5 Bullying: a gendered space?

Within the school context in the present study, it was found that bullying generally involves both sexes, although girls and boys tend to bully differently. Girls do not commonly bully as physically as male learners do. Much of the bullying by girls is associated with verbal abuse which involves spreading malicious rumours and name calling. Gender based bullying involves both boys targeting girls, and girls targeting boys. Mfanos make reference to the fact that boys do not retaliate or report girls who bully others as teachers are biased in favour of girls and generally punish the boys, leaving boys feeling dejected. Rose and Thom share their experiences of sexual harassment and violence perpetrated on girls by boys, which they view as associated with bullying.

She said “you want to get forward, you big head, you just came the other day to this school, and already you are getting out of hand”. Girls like to tease boys but when you hit a girl it will be a big issue at the office. Girls like to tease boys but when you hit a girl my case will be a big issue at the office. Many times you see it is boys because girls taunt boys and when you hit her, the teachers’ side with her and hit the boy. That is why the boy feels bad and he feels as if he has been rejected.

(Mfanos, male, individual interview)

There was a friend from grade 8 but we were not in the same class. They wanted to grab her phone. She brought her phone to school and we all in grade 8 and somebody from grade 11 or 12, the boys grabbed her phone. They took the phone and we wanted to help her and hit this boy but we couldn’t because we were scared of the boys. Yes because we were scared. And we were all girls. Okay in grade 8 you see there were boys who used to come and get forward with you and if you refuse to go out with them they threaten that they will hit you. Okay where I was bullied, they were bullying us because they wanted to force you to love them. But they did not bully me; I put them in their place.

(Thom, female, individual interview)

The stories above reflect learner agency, powerlessness and vulnerability as they negotiate bullying. Thom states she was not a victim of sexual harassment as she has the agency “to put them in their place.”

4.6 The bystanders

All eight learners made mention of the power of the bystander in the bullying act. They shared their experiences of the complex bystander space. They witnessed bystanders supporting and jeering on bullies who wield power over other learners. They also witnessed bystanders trying to intervene to stop bullying. Further, learners also alluded to the potential of bystanders in intervention programmes to address bullying.

The spectators will fold their hands and say' "Hit him, hit him" and you find that the victim is being hit they end up hitting you too sir. Now if a bully is encouraged by others this will be a motivation for them to carry on. So people adding and adding this is the cause of bullying growing in a school and everywhere. We don't see Ubuntu in people anymore and we need Ubuntu. All people as we are here in the world ... a person deserves a better life.

(Mfanos, male, individual interview)

Mfanos argues for the need to reclaim Ubuntu. The philosophy or ethic of Ubuntu is a humanistic worldview that emanates from southern Africa and is the key to being human. A person with Ubuntu has respects one's fellow human beings, has a sense of community, compassion, and values the rights of others. Tutu (1999) explained that to exclude, humiliate, insult, bring others down and destroy their self-esteem is not Ubuntu.

Kim explains what her stand would be if she were a witness to a bullying act.

I think maybe I find them fighting I would separate them and ask them to explain what the problem is and they explain to me I would then tell them that it is not the way to solve it and I would give them options to deal with such a situation. If it was verbal bullying, I would what happened and tell them it is not necessary to shout at each other sit down together and discuss the problem and each would see that they were wrong and the guilty one will accept that they were wrong.

(Kim, female, individual interview)

Those that wish to help are unable to you that are standing go and find somebody who can help you. The supporters must stop it because it is abusing somebody if you encourage it.

(Thom, female, individual interview)

As discussed in chapter 2, Lodge and Frydenberg (2005) stress that it critical to build the bystander's positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour so that they can act against bullying. According to Wong (2004) and Gini and Pozzoli (2006), it is important to build the self-efficacy of children which is the proficiency to plan actions that would produce specific outcomes. Students who have high social self-efficacy would be able to help victims of bullying.

4.7 Negotiating bullying acts

Negotiating bullying acts is a complex issue for learners. Learners deal with bullying in diverse ways and choose strategies that they believe are appropriate. All learners alluded to the fact that there is little support from the home and school. Mfanos states that he did not discuss his experience of bullying with his family – he chooses to maintain a silence.

It affects your education because if you are in the same class as somebody who bullies you I cannot concentrate as I used to before. For instance I came from primary school and now I am at high school and there is somebody who is bullying me. When I get home or I take my bag in the morning, my family will ask what is wrong today. I won't tell them what is bothering me because I am afraid. But I know this even makes me avoid school because you are known to be bunking and you are wondering what the bully will do to you on the day. Will he grab my money or what I don't know?

(Mfanos, male, individual interview)

The narratives of the respondents clearly revealed that they believe that retaliation by the victim through violence is one way to negotiate bullying and is appropriate. This is illustrated in the narratives below.

Just like me when I was in grade 8 another boy made a pass at me and I did not like him. He wanted to hit me because I wouldn't go out with him and he wanted to hit me for that. Another boy from the class went to tell my brother and my brother hit him because this boy wanted to hit me because I didn't like him.

(Rose, female, individual interview)

Rose tells of how another learner came to her rescue by informing her brother who beat up the perpetrator. Thom explains that the girls in her critical incident that she describes were vulnerable and powerless because they were girls. However, learners retaliating with violence are a grave concern. Research has shown that victims of bullying may retaliate with even greater violence than they have experienced. In the USA, it has been found that victims of bullying have committed school shootings to retaliate against their attackers (Zuckerman, Bushman and Pedersen, 2011). Often learners feel that the school failed them by not addressing bullying problem. The findings revealed that there were learners in the group who chose to 'not take bullying seriously' as Rose reflected in her narrative below yet in contradiction she seems to support the strategy of 'beating them up.'

Bullying does not affect me because if a person bullies me I don't take it seriously I let it pass I do not keep it in my mind so it doesn't affect me. You know okay if I see that the person has really made me angry maybe I tell my friends and them that we must beat the person up. I may feel like hitting them. I feel like waiting for them at the gate after school and we can beat them up because they are irritating.

(Rose, female, individual interview)

Other learners stated that they do intervene positively taking on a problem solving approach to destabilise bullying acts and restore peace, for example, Kim and TK below. However, TK's narrative also reflects a contradiction as he seems to support retaliation and retribution for the perpetrator.

I separated them sir and put each on one side and then there was peace - they were fighting about something small, a desk sir so I saw that to solve the problem I should take the desk to the front and there must be a space between them so they can talk. I think what I did was right. I can say it was right because it was an easy

way to restore peace. I at times think ... that bullies should be made to feel how it is to be bullied. Maybe we bring them together and bully them one by one and we will see how they feel.

(TK, male, individual interview)

I said I tried to advise her that what she was doing was wrong this is not the way to do it and if that was her seat she should have introduced herself and said so. That is what she should have done. I believe I was right because when I spoke to her she saw her mistake and she apologized and let it go. I do get angry and if I had a gun I would take it and blast somebody or I wish them ill like they must be hit by a car.

(Kim, female, individual interview).

4.8 Learner narratives on spaces for addressing bullying

During the interview, I did probe learners on what their views were about ways to address bullying in schools. My interactions with learners showed without doubt that they were able to actively construct meanings about bullying and negotiate bullying acts in schools. I came to realise that these learners have definite views and ideas and could be valuable resources in the planning of intervention programmes at their school.

Kester and Mann (2008) asserted that the most successful anti bullying programmes are those that include learners as partners, and where learners are given the space to take leadership in reducing incidents of bullying. Learners' views were that schools need to create that values peace, safety, protection of human rights of all, social, inclusion and respect for all. Further, the learners were of the opinion there was a need for communication and dialogue and the silence around bullying has to end. They also were stressed that both bullies and victims need help and support, and were confident and positive that change was indeed possible.

The narratives below illustrate the issues raised by learners.

I would advise the bullies that to have a difference ...does not mean that you must fight but you just need to sit down with the person and tell them you do

not like what they are doing. You do not know how they will feel when you bully them.

(Miss Q, female, focus group)

To the bullies they should seek help maybe from psychologists because maybe they bring it from home. Maybe they grew up with it because they see their parents being abused and they have grown up with it so they get it out on other people. They must seek help. The victims they must report and not be afraid. They must come out openly maybe the bully has threatened to deal with them if they report

(Rose, female, individual interview)

Okay I think the learners should have their own meeting at school to talk openly about bullying and the victims should speak out. The parents should deal with their children because in some cases the teachers have failed.

(Thom, female, individual interview)

Learners strongly stressed the urgent need for a school bullying policy and reporting process at the school that involves key stakeholders such as parents and teachers in collaboration. In any instances, one can see that learners were critical of the lack of awareness of bullying by parents and teachers, and the fact that there is little commitment to create a safe school. Kim draws attention to the need for bystanders to be part of a programme to address bullying.

So in other words learners should report to their parents and they must take action. Teachers too must take action and you as learners you must advise the bullies that they are wrong and that you must advise the bullies themselves as to what to do if they themselves are being bullied? Like you said they must move away from the scene. The bystanders as they are standing there they are supporting somebody and they will encourage the bully by showing them that what they are doing is right which is wrong. They should tell the wrong person to stop it or they should go and tell the teacher what is happening.

(Kim, female, focus group)

The learners must report to the teachers and if the teachers fail to handle the matter they then should report to their parents and the parents can report to the police

(Thom, female, individual interview)

The parents must appreciate their children while they are alive. For instance I go to school and when I get home my parent doesn't even ask about my day, what I did and what I wrote. Every day is the same but when you fail they react and shout at and hit you. Parents must take the right responsibility and the child too – they must focus on their rights but also on their responsibilities to stop bullying.

(Mfanos, male, individual interviews)

Perhaps we can meet as teenagers to discuss that bullying is bad behaviour because you may think you are playing but you can end up in jail at the end. So we can advise each other about bullying. We can sit and advise each other and we can include adults to advise us. Me when I see a person bully I tell myself that maybe that person perhaps learnt that and learnt that from their friends which they do as friends because we have what they call forums. Maybe they do it near their homes so they end up doing it at school too and they even do it near their parent. Maybe the home can't control them so they end up doing it even to their own parents.

(Rose, female, individual interviews)

Me the victims I will tell them to speak out because to bottle up something inside the chest is not a good thing because it will stress you. If you are not used to speak out you will end up stressed out because of bullying. A person must speak out. If they are afraid you can tell your friend and you can talk about it and then you report to an adult or report it at home. The bullies I would say we should sit down and I would tell them to stop the bullying because it is not right. A person could end up in jail because of bullying while they thought it was a joke but it was serious. Some people take it seriously.

(Rose, female, individual interviews)

I don't think they can do anything other than to advice learners and tell them what is right and what is wrong. Learners are the same they are always misbehaving. You cannot depend on the learners to stop it but at home and school the teachers must teach tolerance because we come from different circumstances and we do not have the same attitudes. They must meet together until they end up seeing that what they are doing is not right.

(Miss Q, female, focus group)

I think the parents and teachers must meet and elect twenty learners from grade 8 to grade 12. This must be done secretly - they should monitor all bullying secretly and report it secretly to the office. The culprits must not be aware that they are being observed and only know when they are called to the office and told about the offence.

(Mr S, male, focus group)

Almost all learners emphasised the need for a partnership between home and school. Graham (2010) stressed that bullying interventions and strategies must target everyone such as students, parents, and adults in the school. Learners also alluded to the fact that bullies may have poor role models at home and may come from homes in which violence is common practice. Miss Q. above stresses that the home and school should teach tolerance and respect. Mr S. raises an important issue – the need for monitoring mechanisms in the school which is critical in view of the silences around bullying.

Learners constantly raised the issue that the school culture must uphold human rights of all learners. Davis and Davis (2007) stressed the role of the school culture in respect of the bystanders' stance, for example, in school environments that encourage students to value the human rights of others, the risk of active bystanders supporting bullies in the bullying act is reduced.

Olweus (1993) and Burton (2008) stress that school leaders, parents and teachers need to create a human rights culture in schools that ensures of protection and safety of all learners. Olweus (1993) explained that levels of bullying can be minimised if teachers, principals and other staff members can actively address incidents.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the findings of the study, drawing on literature and my conceptual frames to make sense of the data. I have made an attempt to explore my two key research questions, focussing on the respondents experience and make meanings of their experiences of bullying. I also examined how they negotiate the spaces and places of bullying. I have highlighted critical themes that emerged from my analysis.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a summary of the key issues that emerged from the study; the implications of the study for the field of education, and more importantly for the development of schools as institutions that are conducive to creating positive schooling systems.

5.2 The focus of the study and research questions

In the study reported in this dissertation, I sought to examine the phenomenon of bullying at a secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal through the voices of eight grade 10 learners. The key research questions were: How do grade 10 children experience bullying within the school? How do children negotiate the spaces and places of bullying?

The study was a narrative inquiry as the aim was to listen to the voices of child respondents through the stories they had to tell. Further, researchers in the areas of narrative inquiry contend that telling stories is an excellent way for respondents to give meaning to and make explicit their understandings of their experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). In my analysis of the data, I examined the stories respondents told and attempted to deconstruct them, keeping in mind my research questions. On reflection, I believe that stories were an excellent way for me to understand respondents' experiences of bullying. Many critical incidents emerged in the stories that illuminated the spaces and power-laden places of bullying.

5.3 Theoretical framework and research methodology

My study had a conceptual framework – the concept 'bullying' framed my study. My study was also located in the paradigm of New Childhood Studies and Children's Geographies influenced by the paradigm of New Childhood studies, I gave voice to my child respondents as I shifted my thinking to seeing them as social actors in their own right who have a right to be heard and listened to. The notion of 'space' and 'place' from Children's Geographies

proved very useful as it showed that the school and its built environment is not just a physical or material place. It has diverse spaces in which one can observe and experience complex flows of energy – for example the space of gender and bullying or the space where crime overflows into the school and intersects with bullying as a phenomenon.

5.4 Findings of the study

The findings in the study revealed that bullying happens at the school in pervasive and varied ways very much in line with international studies. Overall, respondents referred to bullying acts as harassment, teasing, spreading rumours about a learner, name-calling, physical aggression and verbal abuse. Learners were unanimous in their view that bullying is a form of aggression that leads to physical and emotional suffering in victims. Bullying occurs in complex power laden spaces and places and is for most part invisible to school management and teachers.

The use of a participatory tool, mapping, was valuable in gaining insight into these spaces and places. The study revealed learner agency, powerlessness and vulnerability as they negotiate bullying in the schooling context. A concern at this school revealed by learners is the overflow of crime into the school and the fact that the school is currently not addressing the issue. Such a situation exposes learners to poor role models which can further fuel bullying. The need to create safe schools is critical to reducing bullying.

Learners' voices have important implications for interventions to address bullying at the school. These include:

- The need to address the 'invisibility' of bullying.
- The need for school management and teachers to create spaces for spaces of communication and dialogue
- Addressing bullying has to be a collaborative endeavour and involvement partnerships between parents, teachers, school management, community members and key to the structure is learners themselves.
- Intervention programmes must target victims, perpetrators and bystanders who are actors in bullying.
- The need to create a human rights culture in schools to ensure the protection of the health and wellbeing and safety of all learners.

5.5 Strengths of this study

A strength of my study was researching with children through a narrative approach. My study reflects that children are not passive objects to be researched upon but active and competent agents and social actors who are able to shape their experiences and identities and who have views of their own that need to be listened to, as stressed by researchers such as James, Jenks and Prout (1998) and Mayall (1996).

5.6 Concluding thoughts

In reflecting on the findings of my study, I tend to agree with various international researchers that bullying is a public health issue and a public health approach is required to address the problem in schools (for example, Hertz, Donato & Wright, 2013). Bullying in any form can lead to risk of poor mental and physical health and social and emotional outcomes, and can have a negative effect on the wellbeing of learners. The experience and involvement in bullying can have a long lasting impact on learners. Therefore, intervention programmes must target contexts beyond the school and home focus on building more supportive environments in varied contexts (such as faith organisations; sports organisations), and foster and build the mental health and wellbeing of children. Such programmes need to be proactive and aim at promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors in children's lives.

The study has implications for future research. Internationally research, including the present study, has helped us to understand the complexity of the problem of bullying and the challenges schools face in trying to address it. We need in-depth, contextual research on effective interventions to address bullying in diverse school and community contexts, particularly emanating from the African context. We need research to isolate the critical components of effective bullying prevention programmes, and the gaps in such programmes. There is also need for research on different forms of bullying such as cyber- bullying; bullying related to disability and sexual orientation; and the phenomenon of the 'group' in bullying.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Consent letter to Principal

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education



School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood campus
P. Bag X03
Ashwood 3605
Durban
__/__/2013

The Principal
Secondary School

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at your school

My name is Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane and I am a Masters student at the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I plan to undertake a study titled:

Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: Narratives of eight grade 10 learners

I hereby request your permission to conduct a study Secondary School. The respondents in the study will be learners from your school. They will be required to participate in individual interviews and focus group interviews that are expected to last between 90-120 minutes, in approximately n two sessions.

Please note that

- The school and respondents will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.

- The learners will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect their own personal opinion.
- The school's or the respondent's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All learner responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (real names of the respondents and the institution will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, respondents will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- The respondents will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what they do not want to reveal.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if the permission of the respondent is obtained.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

I thank you.

Yours sincerely

Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself:

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna

Tel: 084 2459096

031 2603499/2494

Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

If permission is granted to conduct the research at your school, please fill in and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research project at Secondary School. I understand that learners are free to withdraw from the project at any time, should they so desire.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 2 – Consent letter to learner

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education



School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood campus

P. Bag X03

Ashwood 3605

Durban

___/___/ 2013

Dear learner

Re: Request your participation in a research project

It was good to meet you in.....

As I told to you in our meeting, I am a Masters student at the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I plan to undertake a study titled:

Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: Narratives of eight grade 10 learners

I kindly ask your permission to participate in the project. The respondents in the study will be learners from the various schools. I value what you think about your schooling and how you are experiencing schooling.

You will be required to allow me to interview you individually and in focus groups. The interviews will be approximately 90-120 minutes. We will meet in two sessions on two different days that is convenient for you. I will be requesting permission from your parents/caregivers to work with you on the project.

Please note that

- The school and learners will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- You will be expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect your own personal opinion.
- The schools or your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance.

- All learner responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used (your real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, you will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to them.
- You will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what you do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if you give us permission.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

Yours sincerely

Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself:

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna
 Tel: 084 2459096
 031 2603499/2494
 Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM:

If you agree to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby agree to take part in the project at my school. I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time I want to.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 3 – Consent letter to parent/caregiver

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education



School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood campus
P. Bag X03
Ashwood 3605
Durban
__/__/2013

Dear parent/caregiver

Re: Request your child's participation in a research project

My name and I am a Masters student at the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I plan to undertake a study titled:

Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: Narratives of eight grade 10 learners

I kindly ask your permission for your child to participate in the project. The respondents in the study will be learners from the various schools. I value what your child thinks about his/her schooling and how he/she is experiencing schooling. We will meet in two sessions on two different days that is convenient for the child. I will be requesting permission from your child to work with him in the project.

Please note that

- The school and learners will not receive material gains for participation in this research project.
- Your child expected to respond to each question in a manner that will reflect his/her own personal opinion.
- The school's or your child's identities will not be divulged under any circumstance.
- All your child's responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

- Pseudonyms will be used (your child's real name and the name of the school will not be used throughout the research process).
- Participation is voluntary; therefore, your child will be free to withdraw at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to him/her.
- Your child will not, under any circumstances, be forced to disclose what he/she do not want to tell us.
- Audio- recording of interviews will only be done if you and your child give us permission.
- Data will be stored in the University locked cupboard for a maximum period of five years thereafter it will be destroyed.

I thank you.

Yours sincerely

Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself:

Professor Nithi Muthukrishna
 Tel: 084 2459096
 031 2603499/2494
 Email: muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to take part in this project, please fill in your full name and sign the form below.

I,, (Full Name), the parent /caregiver of..... (Name of child) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby agree to my child taking part in the project. I understand that he/she can withdraw from the project at any time I want to.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 4 - Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University Of Kwa-Zulu Natal



26 April 2013

Professor A Muthukrishna 845
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0250/013

Project title: The geographies of children's schooling in six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries: Narratives of children, parents/caregivers and teachers

Dear Professor Muthukrishna

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process. **Expedited approval**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Dr P Morojele
cc Academic leader researcher Dr MN Davids
cc School administrator Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Professor S Collings (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X5400, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za /
snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohung@ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



Appendix 5 - Ethical Clearance Certificate from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8

Prof. N Muthukrishna & Dr P Morojele
P O Box X03
ASHWOOD
3605

Dear Prof. Muthukrishna and Dr Morojele

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING IN KWAZULU-NATAL: NARRATIVES OF CHILDREN, PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 May 2013 to 31 March 2014.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

Umlazi District
Sisonke District
Zululand District

Othukela District
Pinetown District
Illembe District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 19 November 2013

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 Fax: 033 392 1203

EMAIL ADDRESS: kehlogile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za; CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363;

*dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty*

WEBSITE: www.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix 6: Bullying Interview Schedule

As you know from our last meeting, I am interested in the topic of bullying in schools. Please tell me the story about your experience of bullying at your school?

Questions that guided researcher probing.

What is bullying?

Have you ever been bullied?

How do you feel about bullying?

How do learners at the school view bullying?

Have you experienced bullying? Tell me about it?

How do other learners experience bullying and what effect does it have on them? What stories have you heard?

Tell me about learners who watch bullying taking place?

How is bullying dealt with at the school?

Tell me about three incidents of bullying you witnessed?

Appendix 7: Turnitin report

- Processed on: 25-May-2015 2:05 PM CAT
- ID: 545084957
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Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: N...By Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane

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Appendix 8: Letter from editor

V Maduray
10 Benevolent Street
Croftdene
Chatsworth
South Africa
4092

yaneshree.maduray@yahoo.com
C: 072 467 2797
H: 031 401 2062

25 May 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to record that I have:

- carried out language editing
- made suggestions for the student to address at his/her discretion on the dissertation:

Bullying at a high school in KwaZulu-Natal: Narratives of eight grade 10 learners

By

Hamilton Ndati Sikhakhane



V Maduray
(Language Editor)