Exploring the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school

by

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Declaration

I, Mbalenhle Marolen, understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard. I declare that this mini dissertation is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Previous national and international studies have shown how prevalent it is for educators to be the targets of bullying by learners. However, there have been only a limited number of studies exploring educators' experiences, from their own perspective, of being bullied by learners. Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to explore educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school within the interpretive phenomenology framework. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with three educators who were teaching learners from grade 8 to grade 10 in a secondary school located in a township in the Gauteng province. The data was analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings of the study demonstrated that the educators' experiences of being bullied by learners showed both differences and similarities. The educators' perspectives revealed that they had experienced different forms of bullying, that their experiences occurred in an unsupportive school system, and that the bullying had affected their well-being and professional lives. Furthermore, the educators showed that they employed various coping mechanisms to deal with being bullied. They also explained the nature of being bullied by learners and the attributions for being bullied. The educators' experiences conveyed the understanding that learner-to-educator bullying is a multifaceted psychological and social phenomenon. The insights provided by this study are important for all members of the school system. Areas for possible future exploration have been suggested.

Key Terms Learner-to-educator bullying, school violence, violent behaviours, aggressive behaviours, bullying behaviours, educator-learner relationship, educators' experiences, interpretive phenomenology, interpretive phenomenological analysis, qualitative research

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Chapter One: Context and Rationale of the Study

1.1. Background to the Study

Educators across South Africa feel increasingly unsafe in their work environment owing to the threat of violent behaviours directed at them by learners in the school setting (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2006; Tintswalo, 2014). The National School Violence Study (NSVS) undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) revealed that educators in South Africa are often victims of verbal, physical and sexual violence perpetrated by learners (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Increasing rates of school violence are typically recognized in what Pahad and Graham (2012) refer to as high-risk schools. These are schools located in low-income and violence-prone communities (Pahad & Graham, 2012). Likewise, further studies (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007) have consistently demonstrated that family, community and societal factors such as easy access to school premises and weapons, drug and alcohol abuse, a lack of recreational facilities and poverty resulting in vandalism and theft (Kruger, 2011, Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013) play a significant role in increasing the likelihood of violence occurring in a school. These factors characterize many economically and socially depressed urban and township communities across South Africa (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Learners growing up in townships are therefore at risk of developing aggressive behaviours as a result of poor socio-economic circumstances and exposure to aggressive models in the family and community (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2002). In effect, educators bear the brunt of violent behaviours by learners (Esteve, 2000). Therefore, in this study, schools in

townships in South Africa became the vantage point from which to understand violence targeted at educators by learners. Violent behaviours manifest in various forms, including but not limited to learners using weapons, engaging in bullying, gang activity, assault and intimidation (van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009). Within the sphere of school violence, the current study focuses on bullying of educators by learners.

Society places an expectation on educators that they should be able to produce responsible citizens and demonstrate to learners that their lives can be different (Taole & Ramorola, 2014). However, the same regard and respect that educators are expected to show to their learners is met with physical and emotional abuse. The ill-treatment educators receive from learners has serious implications, because when educators are bullied by learners they are subjected to physical, emotional and psychological harm (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006). Furthermore, the South African constitution stipulates that an individual (which includes a learner and an educator) has the right to dignity, security and freedom from all forms of violence (South African Government, 2018a). Together with the rights accorded to individuals is the responsibility to recognize and respect the rights of others, to enable engagement in relations of mutual respect (de Klerk & Rens, 2003). Therefore, the physical and psychological harm experienced by educators as a result of being bullied by learners is a violation of their fundamental human rights (Bhatia, 2013). According to reports from the Human Rights Commission's Public Hearings on School Violence and the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), learners in South African schools deliberately disregard their educators (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Educators from schools located in urban areas across South Africa have expressed concern at the development of a culture of disrespect in South Africa

(Hammett & Staeheli, 2011). de Klerk and Rens (2003) refer to a moral crisis in South African schools, which they attribute to learners who lack respect for one another, their educators and property, and they assert that the lack of a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility in both learners and educators, compounded by increasing violence, contributes to this moral crisis. Bullying of educators by learners is undeniably an issue, and more and more educators are being affected by it. Each educator has a unique perspective on and experience of the issue, which warrants immediate attention if society hopes to restore the teaching profession as well as educators' well-being and dignity.

1.2. Brief Description of the Research

In South Africa bullying is regarded as one of the most common forms of school violence (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Tintswalo, 2014). Bullying occurring in the school can involve learner-to-learner bullying, learner-to-educator bullying and educator-to-learner bullying (Laas & Boezaart, 2014). This study focuses specifically on the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying from the perspectives of educators. The purpose of this study was to delve deeply into the thoughts and feelings of educators who have been bullied by learners, to uncover the meanings the educators ascribed to their experiences. The sample consisted of three educators from a single public secondary school located in a township called Etwatwa in the city of Ekurhuleni in the Gauteng province. Phenomenology was used as a qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of the educators. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as the research method where data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and analysed using the six stages of IPA (Smith,

Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Through the analysis I interpreted how the educators made sense of their experiences. In the end, I developed a narrative of how the educators experienced being bullied by learners in a township secondary school.

1.3. Research Problem

Prior to the 1990s, bullying in the school setting had traditionally been associated with and recognized as behaviours occurring between learners (Smith, 2004; Tolentino, 2016). It was only from the late 1990s onwards that studies began to emerge, both nationally (de Wet, 2006; de Wet & Jacobs, 2006) and internationally, in the Philippines (Tolentino, 2016); Taiwan (Chen & Astor, 2008); Estonia (Kõiv, 2011); Turkey (Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012); England (Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998); New Zealand (Benefield, 2004) and Luxembourg (Steffgen & Ewen, 2007), showing that educators could also fall victim to this form of aggressive behaviour at the hands of learners. These studies have provided evidence of the prevalence of the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying within urban and rural educational settings in western, Asian, Middle-Eastern and South African contexts. Most of the international studies I uncovered through my literature search have been conducted through a quantitative methodology, using surveys to obtain the data from the perspectives of educators. A few authors (Chen & Astor, 2008; James et al., 2008) have obtained learners' perspectives on the issue. Furthermore, among the studies I was able to access, only one international study (Tolentino, 2016) and a few national studies (de Wet, 2010a; de Wet, 2012) employed a qualitative methodology. Additional studies (Taole & Ramorola, 2014; Tintswalo, 2014) conducted in South Africa which I extracted from the literature search did not focus exclusively on learner-to-educator bullying but

uncovered the issue within the broader topic of school violence. The national and international qualitative studies I found are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Although in the academic sphere national and international research findings on aggressive behaviours targeted at educators by learners have been demonstrated and emphasize that the problem is serious, the issue had remained under-recognized and underestimated by the general public (Pervin & Turner, 1998; Garrett, 2014). Only in recent years has the public acknowledged the severity of educator victimization due to the media reporting on the subject (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). However, according to Jacobs (2014), the media reports have been one-sided. Jacobs (2014) found that the media tend to focus on physical violence while neglecting the occurrence of emotional and sexual abuse in schools. As a result, this trend reinforces the idea that violence occurring in schools only has a physical component. Similarly, Burton and Leoschut (2013) argue that violence such as bullying is insignificant in the public eye, with under-recognition of its emotional and psychological nature and consequences. O'Moore (2006) suggests that the implication of placing an emphasis on injury as a condition of bullying is that victims of emotional or psychological bullying may not be recognized and opportunities for intervention are lost. Educators may feel that they cannot lodge a complaint unless they can produce clear evidence of physical injury (O'Moore, 2006).

National and international studies have shown that bullying can have an impact on educators' physical, psychological and professional well-being and debilitate their everyday functioning (de Wet, 2010a; James et al., 2008). Moreover, bullying can hinder the educators' self-confidence, preventing them from effectively performing their duties and meeting their responsibilities, leading to frequent absenteeism, late-coming and eventually the decision to leave the teaching profession (Masitsa, 2011;

Tintswalo, 2014). There is hence a need to challenge all forms of aggressive behaviour, both direct and indirect, and to acknowledge the complexities and effects involved. The present study was undertaken for this reason, to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of educators who have been bullied by learners, particularly in a township secondary school.

1.4. Research Question

This study attempted to address the following research question about the experiences of bullied educators:

How do educators experience being bullied by learners in a township secondary school?

1.5. Justification, Aim and Objectives

1.5.1. Justification of the study.

During my first year in the Master's programme, I developed an interest in educators working in schools within townships in South Africa and considered doing my research on a subject concerning this group. This was inspired by my mother, who has been an educator in a township secondary school for over a decade. She had shared some of her experiences with me, and through her accounts I identified some of the challenges that educators in her school face in their daily interactions with learners. One such challenge relevant to this study is the bullying of educators by learners, which I felt was an issue that has been under-appreciated and ignored by society. I therefore

chose a secondary school situated in a township as a study site to explore the bullying of educators by learners.

Through my literature search I found a substantial number of quantitative studies that investigate the phenomenon of bullying of educators by learners, but only a limited number of qualitative studies. Pervin and Turner (1998) suggest that further studies on what they refer to as teacher targeted bullying (TTB) should incorporate interviews with educators and learners in order to deepen an understanding of the experiences of both the learners and the educators. de Wet and Jacobs (2006), researchers from South Africa, concur as they emphasise the need for more qualitative studies surrounding the topic to allow participants to provide personal accounts of their experiences in their own words. The present study therefore adopted a qualitative methodology to address this apparent gap in the literature.

Furthermore, based on media reports and public opinion, the issue of violence in South African schools is predominantly recognized as physical abuse at the expense of under-appreciating its emotional, psychological and sexual components, which include bullying behaviours (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). I assert that this skewed representation of the problem in effect disregards the nature of bullying of educators by learners. Therefore, this study was undertaken so that educators bullied by learners could be recognized and supported, by talking about their experiences and providing a rich understanding of learner-to-educator bullying.

The occurrence of violence in urban and peri-urban areas such as townships (Siatira, Sdrolias, Aspridis, & Papadimopoulos, 2014; van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009) places educators working in these settings at greater risk of becoming vulnerable to harassment and bullying than educators in rural or suburban areas. This

motivated the decision to focus on bullying of educators by learners in a school situated in a township.

The decision to study the bullying of educators by learners in the secondary school phase is supported by evidence that bullying reaches its peak during early adolescence at the beginning of secondary school (Chen & Astor, 2008; Kruger, 2011). The onset of adolescence is characterized by rapid physical development, mood changes and the uncertainty and confusion experienced when attempting to balance the perception of self with how others perceive one (Kruger, 2011). These developmental changes which the adolescent undergoes coincide with the transitional period between primary and secondary school. This transitional period can be problematic for children who do not have the cognitive and/or emotional capabilities or favourable environmental conditions to assist them in dealing with this period of transition. As a result, the adolescent learner may use aggressive behaviours as a means of expressing frustration, anger and alienation (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012) or as an attempt to assert dominance (Pahad & Graham, 2012). Therefore, in this study I focus on educators who teach learners in early adolescence, in grades 8, 9 and 10.

1.5.2. Aim and objectives of the research.

The aim of this research was to explore the lived experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school, while the objectives of the study were to a) obtain subjective accounts from educators of their experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school, b) interpret the findings using interpretive phenomenological analysis and c) provide an in-depth understanding of bullying of educators by learners, using the experiences of educators.

1.6. Defining Relevant Concepts

1.6.1. Township secondary school.

The term 'township' refers to a previously segregated residential peri-urban area which had been established after 1950 by the apartheid government for non-white racial groups, namely Indian, African and Coloured (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Pernegger, 2007). The classification of schools, although no longer based on race, still maintains classification on the basis of location as being urban, peri-urban or rural (Department of Education, 2009). Therefore, in this study the term 'township' has no racial connotation but is rather used to denote the designated area of the participating school, which is a township called Etwatwa in the Gauteng province. The Department of Education (2009) refers to a secondary school as a school type consisting of grades 8 to 12 for learners of ages +/- 13 to 17 years. The term 'secondary school' is used in this study to refer to the learning and teaching institution comprised of grades 8 through to 12.

1.6.2. Educator.

An educator is a person with an appropriate qualification in teaching or training other people, including providing professional therapy and educational psychological services, at any public school, departmental office or adult basic education centre through an appointment under the Employment of Educators Act no. 76 of 1998 (South African Government, 2018b). For the purpose of this study an educator is therefore a person who teaches learners in grade 8, 9 and/or 10 in the selected school. The educator is considered to be the target of bullying whose perspective of being bullied is taken into consideration to meet the objectives of the research.

1.6.3. Learner.

A learner is a person receiving education or obliged to receive education (South African Government, 2018c). For the purpose of this study, 'learner' refers to a person enrolled in grade 8, 9 or 10 and taught by the educator from the selected school. The learner is viewed as the individual engaging in bullying behaviours directed at the educator.

1.6.4. Violence.

Violence is aggressive behaviour which may involve physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse (O'Moore, 2006). Violence may be threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or a group of people, resulting in physical and/or psychological harm, deprivation and/or death (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Bullying and violence are subsets of aggressive behaviour, and it may be difficult to draw a distinction between the two. According to O'Moore (2006), the difficulty in making the distinction occurs when a definition of violence includes emotional abuse, as a definition of bullying does, or when there is a de-emphasis of the criteria of repetitiveness and intentionality of aggressive behaviours in a definition of bullying. In this study the definitions of bullying and violence may overlap, because the criteria of repetition and intentionality are not a prerequisite for a definition of bullying of educators by learners but rather a subjective judgement based on the participants' individual perspectives on their bullying experiences. The educators in this study may hence have understood bullying of educators by learners in the same light as violent behaviours targeted at educators by learners. A definition of bullying of educators by learners is provided in Chapter Two to demonstrate how various authors have defined the concept.

1.7. Chapter Outline

Chapter One serves the purpose of introducing the reader to the topic under exploration and establishing the rationale for the study. The chapter opens with a contextualization of the study within the broader topic of violence in schools located in township areas in South Africa. The aim and objectives which have been informed by the rationale and motivation for the study are also stated in this chapter.

Chapter Two provides an overview of pertinent literature from which to orient and contextualize bullying of educators by learners. Furthermore, interpretivism is introduced as the paradigmatic point of departure to understand subjective lived experiences. The chapter also describes interpretive phenomenology as the theoretical underpinning of the study.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology employed in the study and the rationale behind it. The chapter also explains the method used to recruit participants, collect, analyse and interpret the data. Thereafter the measures undertaken to ensure the quality of the research and the ethical standards maintained throughout the study are described.

Chapter Four presents a profile of each participant, which includes relevant background information and my observations and impressions of the participants at the time of the interviews. The chapter also presents the narratives for each participant developed from an exploration of the superordinate themes that emerged from the data and quotations extracted from the participants' accounts. The reader can therefore understand how the phenomenon under exploration had been experienced by each participant.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the research results, which have been related to existing literature to form an integrated account of the findings. The discussion highlights the differences and similarities between the present study and previous studies investigating bullying of educators by learners. The chapter also provides my reflections, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

1.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the reader was introduced to the research topic addressed, namely the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. The topic was contextualized within the South African context. The research problem was then stated, followed by a brief description of the research question. Thereafter the justification, aim and objectives of the study were provided. This was followed by definitions of the key concepts relevant for this study and an outline of the chapters forming this mini-dissertation. The following chapter, Chapter Two, describes the paradigmatic and theoretical underpinnings of the study. Relevant international and national literature related to the topic of bullying of educators by learners is also presented.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The literature review provides a foundation for the investigation of the problem through a review and analysis of research studies related to the topic under investigation (Merriam, 2009). According to Hofstee (2006), the body of knowledge described in the review serves as a context and a theory base for the work the researcher intends to do. The literature review for this study presents previous findings on, and related to, the topic of bullying of educators by learners, findings which assisted in the formulation of the research problem and with addressing research design questions. Furthermore, I used the literature review to show how the findings from the proposed study confirm, differ from and/or improve what is already known about the topic.

2.1.1. Focus of the topic.

International studies investigating bullying date as far back as the 1970s, where the focus of the topic was on bullying amongst learners in the school context (Kõiv, 2015). In the 1980s and early 1990s, researchers started to investigate bullying between employees across different sectors in the labour force (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). Therefore, from the 1970s until the early 1990s, bullying was conceptualized as occurring between individuals within the same peer group (Kõiv, 2011). It was only in the late 1990s that bullying between individuals from different peer groups was investigated (Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Terry (1998) referred to bullying occurring between individuals from different peer groups as cross-

peer abuse when he investigated bullying of educators by learners. The focus of the present study was to further understand the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying by exploring the phenomenon from the perspectives of bullied educators in a township secondary school.

Over the years the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying has been under-recognized in the academic, political and societal spheres (Allen, 2010; Garrett, 2014; Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012; Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012; Tolentino, 2016). In most countries around the world, including South Africa, a uniform understanding and general acceptance of the phenomenon is absent (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006; Garrett, 2014). According to Bhatia (2013), the under-recognition of learner-to-educator bullying may be linked to victims under-reporting the issue because they fear retribution or further victimization should they disclose their bullying experiences. I therefore acknowledge that bullying is a sensitive issue and in this study the identity of the educators will not be revealed to the reader of the study.

Although it has been shown in previous studies that educators may bully (Whitted & Dupper, 2007) or be bullied by various individuals such as fellow educators, learners, principals or other staff members in the school context (Bhatia, 2013; Kõiv, 2015), this literature review is limited to a discussion of learner-to-educator bullying. The reason for the narrowed focus is that the study followed an interpretive phenomenological method which focuses on the experiences of a particular group (educators) concerning a particular phenomenon (learner-to-educator bullying). The current review therefore provides relevant literature which highlights the experiences of educators who have been bullied by learners.

2.1.2. Overview of chapter.

The current literature review begins with a conceptualization of bullying of educators by learners through a discussion of the educator-learner relationship and how this relationship can develop into one characterized by the bullying of an educator by a learner. I then explore three key components that characterize the traditional definition of bullying to demonstrate how these relate to an exploration of the experiences of educators bullied by learners. These components include power imbalance, repetition and intentionality. Thereafter I review the different forms of bullying, the impact of bullying on educators' psychological and professional well-being, and the support structures available to educators. Furthermore, the qualitative studies on the topic will be reviewed, highlighting the research methods that have been employed in these studies, examining their strengths and weaknesses and the directions suggested for future research. Lastly, this literature review discusses the theoretical framework and paradigm underpinning this study.

2.2. Educator-Learner Relationship within a School Setting

Bullying occurs within an interpersonal relationship (Craig & Pepler, 2007). As such some authors (Swearer & Hymel, 2015) refer to bullying as a form of interpersonal aggression. Therefore, bullying of an educator by a learner is conceptualized within the context of the educator-learner relationship within the school setting (Espelage et al., 2013). Furthermore, interaction between people does not occur in a vacuum (Grimova & Van Scalkwyk, 2016). For that reason, various complex individual and social factors influence the bullying of an educator by a learner. In this section I look specifically at the dynamic role of the educator and how it can contribute to the

emergence of aggressive or assertive behaviours within the educator-learner relationship.

Educators have authority bestowed upon them by the school principals and parents of learners to act as guardians towards the learners within the school setting (Mokhele, 2006). Educators may exercise their authority to carry out their roles and responsibilities. One such role relevant for this discussion is classroom management. Classroom management typically involves disciplining of learners to manage their behaviour (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). The way in which an educator manages student behaviour can depend on the educator's beliefs about children (Allen, 2010). I consider it necessary to mention concepts related to educators' beliefs about children and their behaviour because of my phenomenological stance. My phenomenological stance is based on understanding lived experiences by identifying the participants' beliefs, thoughts and feelings, as these would influence how they experience, talk about and make sense of being bullied by learners.

Educators' beliefs about children fall on a continuum which ranges from a behaviourist view on the one end to a humanistic view on the other end (Allen, 2010). The behaviourist view is based on the assumption that humans are inherently flawed and need to be controlled (Weegar & Pacis, 2012), whereas the humanistic view is based on the assumption that humans are by nature good and need to be guided (Jingna, 2012). Educators who tend more towards the behaviourist end of the spectrum may be described as authoritarian (Bassett, Snyder, Rogers, & Collins, 2013). Authoritarian educators use methods of management that are punitive and enforce rigid rules which the learner is obliged to follow through fear and punishment (Bassett et al., 2013). Educators who hold more humanistic views, on the other hand, may be described as authoritative. Authoritative educators maintain developmentally

appropriate expectations, where the rationale for following rules is explained to the learner. Furthermore, authoritative educators who maintain a humanistic view of learners use democratic strategies, where misbehaviour is viewed as an opportunity to learn, as such learners can ask questions and receive feedback as well as guidance. The educator-learner relationship would then involve active engagement from the learner and educator, allowing them both to demonstrate assertive behaviours culminating in a co-creation of meaning, reason and value (Grimova & van Schalkwyk, 2016). Assertive behaviours are constructive, as they involve an outward expression of an individual's needs or concerns without hurting or denying the needs and concerns of another individual (Venter, Poggenpoel, & Myburgh, 2006).

Significant social changes affect relations between educators and learners (Esteve, 2000). Within the South African context educators have shifted their methods of instruction from authoritarian to authoritative since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1994 (Mokhele, 2006). This shift has led to classrooms becoming democratic in nature where learners' rights have been recognized and placed in the forefront. I assert that, although democratic classrooms where educators are more authoritative seem to be ideal, they can also bring about power struggles between educators and learners. The authority of educators that may be applied in management of the classroom may not readily be accepted by learners whose rights have been championed in society. According to Hayward's study (as cited in de Wet & Jacobs, 2006), instead of submitting to educators' authority learners misbehave, intimidate educators and display aggressive behaviours towards them, then justify their actions by invoking their rights.

Several researchers (Bester & du Plessis, 2010; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2006) who have investigated violence in South African

schools have found that learners' aggressive behaviour is often experienced by educators as a struggle for power, obtainable through physical force, intimidation, threats and violation of rules (Bester & du Plessis 2010). Aggressive behaviour is destructive, as it involves the intention to bring about harm to someone, thus infringing that person's rights (Bhatia, 2013; Venter et al., 2006). Furthermore, increased display of aggression and lowered respect for educators negatively affects discipline in the classroom and the standard of teaching (James et al., 2008). Indiscipline has been found to result in violence occurring in the school which hinders learning and teaching (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Educators can therefore experience being bullied as destructive to their sense of who they are (as human beings) and what they do (as educators).

2.3. Three Components of Bullying

There has been consensus among national (de Wet, 2006; de Wet & Jacobs, 2006) and international researchers (Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012; Terry, 1998) concerning the inclusion of three key components in a definition of bullying of educators by learners. These components include, firstly, power imbalance between the educator and the learner, secondly repetition, which suggests that the bullying occurs over a lengthy period or frequently, and lastly intentionality, which implies the purposeful doing of harm (Kõiv, 2015). However, in terms of my phenomenological stance, a definition of learner-to-educator bullying using the three criteria may pose a challenge, because when the experiences of educators bullied by learners are explored, it may be found that each educator has a unique perspective on what it means to be bullied by learners. In effect these criteria may not be applicable in the strictest sense.

Nonetheless the three criteria are discussed next in relation to the experiences of educators bullied by learners.

2.3.1. Power imbalance.

Definitions of bullying typically characterize it as involving a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim (Lamb, Pepler, & Craig, 2009). Bullying of an educator by a learner has a unique power differential, because in this interaction an adult is overpowered by a child (Garrett, 2014). This is an atypical occurrence because, within the hierarchical structure of the school and based on social norms, the educator is commonly viewed as having a higher social standing or more authority than the learner (Tintswalo, 2014). This is due to the legitimate power and expert power of the educator vested in him or her by the state (Terry, 1998) or, as suggested by Mokhele (2006), the authority given to the educator by parents and the school principal.

However, when a learner bullies an educator the learner (child) has managed to overpower the educator (adult) (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012), thus turning the power dynamic on its head. The learner can acquire power as a result of various individual and social features of both the learner and the educator. The bullying learner may be stronger or be viewed as being stronger by the victim (Smith & Thompson, as cited in Garrett, 2014). Therefore, in this study, the imbalance of power was inferred from the subjective perceptions of the educators.

2.3.2. Repetition.

The criterion of repetition suggests that the negative behaviours associated with bullying occur repeatedly and over time (de Wet, 2010a). Therefore, repetition

encompasses two key factors, namely frequency and duration (Einarsen et al., 2003). Frequency entails how often the bullying has occurred, in other words whether the bullying behaviours are repeated regularly or occasionally, whereas duration involves how long the bullying has been taking place. According to Hansen et al., (2006) the aggressive behaviours should occur over a period of at least six months to qualify for the operational definition of bullying.

However, in recent years the inclusion of the criterion of repetition has been challenged (Garret, 2014). According to Benefield (2004), educators from New Zealand and Australia who were involved in her study maintained that occasional episodes and even a single episode of aggressive behaviours that undermine educators' well-being and professional integrity amount to bullying. Therefore, in this study, the experiences of participants who felt that they were bullied even though the behaviours were not repeated often or over an extended period were considered valid. In that way, the participants' experiences were fully appreciated, thus maintaining the phenomenological nature of this study.

2.3.3. Intentionality.

Intentionality has also been regarded as a feature of bullying, since bullying is associated with the wilful desire to hurt or threaten another (Smit, 2014). However, the perception and reporting of the intentionality of bullying is a subjective judgement and can differ amongst victims and perpetrators (Garret, 2014). Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012) suggest that the victim's experience of being bullied should be acknowledged even though the bully may claim that he or she had not acted with the intent of causing harm. The perception of intent is therefore considered important as to whether an individual labels their experience as bullying or not (Einarsen et al., 2003). The same

principle applied to the criteria of power imbalance and repetition, where the perception of the participant was prioritized, was also applied with the criterion of intentionality.

Now that the key criteria for a definition of bullying have been used to conceptualize the experiences of educators bullied by learners, the next section will focus on how bullying of educators by learners has been defined in the literature using the three criteria.

2.4. Defining Bullying of Educators by Learners

Several authors describe bullying of educators by learners as aggressive behaviour involving an imbalance of power between the aggressor (learner/s) and the educator (de Wet, 2010a; Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012; Terry, 1998). The aggressive acts are deliberate and repeated, intended to bring about physical, emotional, social and/or professional harm to the victim (de Wet, 2010a; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Benefield (2004) not only recognizes repeated aggressive acts, or what she refers to as cumulative bullying, but in her definition bullying of educators also refers to a significant bullying incident, which involves a single incident or occasional aggressive acts which educators experience as detrimental to their personal and professional well-being. Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012) describe bullying of educators by learners as a communication process involving an insulting or damaging interaction. Often the educator is humiliated by the perpetrating learner in the presence of other learners (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006).

Educators experience aggressive behaviours which are classed under various forms of bullying, namely verbal, non-verbal, physical, sexual and racial, as well as

bullying experienced through electronic means (Bhatia, 2013). These forms of bullying are discussed next.

2.5. Different Forms of Bullying

Bullying occurs in different forms, which can broadly be grouped into direct and indirect forms of bullying (Garrett, 2014). In the 1980s the focus on bullying behaviours from an international perspective was restricted to direct forms of aggressive behaviours (Smith, 2004), which included physical and/or verbal aggressive behaviours. However, over the years the analysis in countries around the world, including South Africa, has broadened to incorporate less overt forms of bullying such as those that are emotional and psychological in nature (Carrera, DePalma, & Lameiras, 2011). I assert that it is important to incorporate both direct and indirect forms of bullying in the conceptualization of bullying of educators by learners in order to have a fuller understanding of the phenomenon and to ensure that victims of any form of bullying are recognized, supported and protected.

2.5.1. Direct bullying.

Direct forms of bullying can be physical, verbal or direct non-verbal. Physical bullying involves physical harm through kicking, hitting, pulling of hair, punching and any other form of physical violence (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James et al., 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Venter, 2013). Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying experienced by educators from learners and includes behaviours such as shouting, name-calling, swearing and making racist remarks (de Wet, 2010a; de Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James et al., 2008; Kõiv, 2011; Mncube & Steinmann, 2014; Ozkilic & Kartal,

2012; Pervin & Turner, 1998). Direct non-verbal bullying can include laughing at an educator, having his or her characteristic features mimicked in some way or making rude gestures (Harris & Petrie, 2002; James et al., 2008; Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012).

2.5.2. Indirect bullying.

Indirect forms of bullying are psychological and emotional in nature and are classed under relational bullying (Venter, 2013). Behaviours associated with this form of bullying include spreading false and malicious rumours or knowingly ignoring, humiliating and blackmailing the educator (James et al., 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998). Indirect bullying may also include damaging, destroying or stealing the educator's property (Bhatia, 2013; Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012).

2.5.3. Sexual bullying.

Sexual bullying is a combination of physical and psychological bullying. It includes sexual harassment, sexually suggestive or abusive language and abuse involving physical contact and assault of a sexual nature (de Wet, 2006). In a study conducted by James and colleagues (2008), the learners reported having touched educators in sexually inappropriate ways.

2.5.4. Cyberbullying.

International findings reveal that educators mostly experience cyberbullying perpetrated against them by learners (Kopecky & Szotkowski, 2017). Cyberbullying involves sending hurtful, offensive or cruel messages and/or images using social networking sites (Baldry, Farrington & Sorrentino, 2016). It also includes the use of telephone calls, email and/or instant messaging (Venter, 2013). Cyberbullying has

characteristic features that differ from face-to-face bullying (Smit, 2014). Firstly, unlike face-to-face bullying, anonymity afforded by cyberbullying allows the bully to remain unknown to the victim (Heatherington & Coyne, 2014). The consequence of anonymity is that the victim may be unable to identify the perpetrator, who may end up not being caught and held accountable for their actions. Secondly, Smit (2014) points out that the perpetrator is less inhibited when cyberbullying, as he or she is able to avoid face-to-face contact thus becoming unaware of the impact the bullying has on the target. Lastly, as highlighted by Heatherington and Coyne (2014), the accessibility afforded by cyberbullying means that bullying can occur beyond the school context owing to the boundless technological reach.

2.5.5. Persistent disruptive behaviours.

Persistent disruptive behaviours are unique manifestations of bullying experienced by educators (Garrett, 2014; Taole & Ramorola 2014). Disruptive behaviours are classed under both direct and indirect forms of bullying (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012). Persistent disruptive behaviours may be considered work-related, as these behaviours make it difficult for the targeted individuals to perform their duties (Hansen et al., 2006). Student reports in a previous study indicate that annoying the teachers, giving them a hard time while teaching and not listening to them were some of the ways in which the learners demonstrated disruptive behaviours (James et al., 2008). Some other examples of disruptive behaviours include talking out of turn, disregarding classroom rules, physical aggression and verbal abuse of teachers or peers within the classroom setting (Arbuckle & Little, 2004).

In some instances, the educator can maintain some control and manage disruptive behaviours (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway, 2014). In other cases, the educator

can be physically attacked by a learner that he or she tries to reprimand or discipline (Taole & Ramorola, 2014). Thus, persistent disruptive behaviours disempower educators and render them ineffective in exercising their authority to manage the classroom (de Wet, 2010a).

2.5.6. Insubordination

Associated with persistent disruptive behaviours is learners failing to submit to or opposing the educator's authority, referred to as insubordination (Chen & Astor, 2008). Insubordination involves behaviours such as laughing at the educator, disregarding his or her requests, back-chatting and/or learners turning their backs to the educator (de Wet, 2010a; Mncube & Steinmann, 2014).

The forms of bullying mentioned above can have serious implications. Indirect bullying, which is psychological in nature, is experienced by educators as having more detrimental effects than direct bullying (Kruger, 2011). The impact of bullying of educators by learners is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.6. Impact of Bullying of Educators by Learners

Bullying in the school context threatens the healthy functioning of individuals and the school system (de Wet, 2010a). According to Einarsen and colleagues (2003), bullying in the workplace can ruin an individual's mental health, career, social status and overall way of life. Therefore, bullying of educators by learners can result in an array of outcomes ranging from poor job satisfaction and work performance to psychological and psychosomatic health complaints (de Wet, 2010b; Smit, 2014). The psychological and professional impact bullying has on educators is discussed below.

2.6.1. Psychological impact of learner-to-educator bullying.

One of the main sources of psychological distress experienced by educators is aggressive student behaviours (Terry, 1998). When one becomes a victim of real or perceived emotional and systematic psychological harm, one may develop mental and emotional reactions that include helplessness, increased stress levels, anxiety, shock and depression (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014; Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012; Smit, 2014). Workplace bullying can lead to ostracization and isolation, accompanied by feelings of self-doubt, shame, and humiliation (Fahie & Devine, 2014). Bullying is also associated with psychosomatic stress reactions (Hansen et al., 2006) such as headaches, palpitations and hypertension (Bhatia, 2013). Tolentino (2016) found that bullying as it was experienced by educators in a study conducted in the Philippines manifested as physical health symptoms, which included chest pains, temporary high blood pressure, panic attacks and lower back pains.

The long-term effects of bullying at work may involve victims suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Einarsen et al., 2003). The PTSD diagnosis consists of a group of stress-related symptoms following a traumatic event (Nielsen, Tangen, Idsoe, Matthiesen & Mageroy, 2015). Firstly, the trauma is re-lived through painful memories of the event or external triggers causing psychological discomfort (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Secondly, the sufferer avoids situations related to the trauma and portrays a general sense of numbing responsiveness (Nielsen et al., 2015). Lastly, sufferers of PTSD are also hypersensitive, experiencing concentration problems, irritability and outbursts of anger (Einarsen, 2005).

2.6.2. Professional impact of learner-to-educator bullying.

Researchers have identified that bullying of educators by learners has a negative impact on the learning and teaching environment (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James et al., 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Taole & Ramorola 2014). Bullying involves behaviours that cause disruption to the orderly functioning of classroom activities as well as creating a counterproductive learning and teaching environment through hostility (Laas & Boezaart, 2014). Learners' increased display of aggressive behaviours and decreased respect for educators may substantially impact the level of discipline and subsequently the quality of teaching (James et al., 2008). Valuable classroom time is often lost when educators attempt to deal with bullying learners. As a result, they become ineffective in their teaching and, at the same time, learning is jeopardized (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012).

Bullying may result in educators lowering their expectations of their learners and the teaching profession (Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012). Pervin and Turner (1998) found that educators who were bullied lowered their expectations of learners in terms of behaviour, co-operation and academic performance. This may result in increased absenteeism and the likelihood of educators leaving the profession (Smit, 2014). Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2006) indicate that educators experience irritation and frustration when learners display aggressive behaviours. Consequently, educators tend to lose their temper and retaliate aggressively. The danger of aggressive retaliation is that learners and educators may find themselves in a reciprocal exchange of mutual aggression, thus jeopardizing the professionalism in the educator-learner relationship (Allen, 2010).

Classes containing learners who engage in bullying of educators were unlikely to get exposure to a variety of teaching methods, as teachers felt demotivated and

uninspired. In effect, this spoilt the learning process for the non-perpetrating learners (Pervin & Turner, 1998). Educators experience intense negative responses towards the learners, particularly the perpetrating ones, through ignoring the learners and lacking motivation to assist them in the classroom (Bester & du Plessis, 2010). de Wet (2010b) indicates that victimized educators would often turn a blind eye to misbehaviour. This was attributed to educators experiencing a sense of powerlessness, illustrated in a lack of assertiveness (de Wet, 201b). Similarly, Pervin and Turner (1998) found that educators accepted teacher-targeted bullying as an inescapable part of their profession and therefore did not complain about it. Some educators accept the bullying and are able to continue with their work; however, others are not as resilient and are not able to ignore the negative effects. Passive acceptance of learners bullying educators should be challenged: if not, it will result in educators not receiving the necessary support in dealing with the issue (Pervin & Turner, 1998).

I now turn the discussion to the support mechanisms available to educators in coping with being bullied by learners.

2.7. Support Mechanisms

Kauppi & Pörhölä (2012) suggest that educators disclose their experiences of being bullied in order to receive at least two kinds of emotional support. The first kind is sought by educators in order to improve their self-perception, by feeling accepted when talking to others about being bullied. The second kind of emotional support is sought in order to receive constructive assistance which could end the bullying, hence reducing the stress and uncertainty experienced through the bullying.

Educators, however, do not always receive the necessary support when it is sought. There is consensus among national and international researchers that educators often feel unsupported by the school management in dealing with learners perpetrating violence against educators (Bhatia, 2013; Bester & du Plessis, 2010; de Wet, 2012). The inadequate support and the educators' lack of confidence in the school management's ability to deal with the issue make some educators vulnerable to being bullied by learners (Pervin & Turner, 1998). When learners see that educators are not being protected, and that no action is taken against the bullying, then they take advantage of the situation and victimize educators (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012).

The lack of support may be understood as stemming from the expectation placed on educators that they will be able to deal with the bullying (James et al., 2008). However, James and colleagues (2008) found that, in reality, educators experience difficulty in dealing with the bullying they experience in the classroom. Expecting educators to be able to handle bullying situations may apply pressure on them to be able to live up to such expectations. Thus, educators may feel afraid to admit to being bullied, fearing that they may be seen as a failure, become ostracized and alienated by fellow educators and management who blame, judge and criticize them for not being able to control their classes (Benefield, 2004; Garrett, 2014). Pervin and Turner (1998) discovered that educators in their study had been made to feel ineffectual after asking for assistance to deal with the bullying. Educators may hence develop a negative self-perception and feel unaccepted and unprotected.

In terms of practical ways of assisting educators, international studies have revealed that educators are disappointed in the lack of programmes, professional development and resources afforded to them to be able to deal with student behaviour and violence. Similarly, educators in South Africa feel inadequately equipped to be

able to deal with violent learners (Bester & du Plessis, 2010). Ozkilic and Kartal (2012) suggest that educators should have the provision of in-service training sessions on bullying, with the help of guidance counsellors to develop their bullying intervention skills. Bhatia (2013) also emphasizes the importance of developing policies and specific protocol for dealing with abusive learners.

2.8. Qualitative Research on Educators' Bullying Experiences

In the literature search I undertook, most of the studies exploring learner-to-educator bullying use a quantitative research approach, while the number of studies using a qualitative approach is very limited by comparison. I identified one international study (Tolentino, 2016) that employed a qualitative methodology. I further identified a few qualitative studies exploring learner-to-educator bullying in South Africa. Most of the South African studies have been conducted by Corene de Wet, a prominent researcher of the topic. Further studies (Taole & Ramorola, 2014; Tintswalo, 2014) conducted in South Africa that used a qualitative methodology have examined the phenomenon of bullying of educators by learners within the broad topic of school violence. In the following sections the qualitative international study and South African studies will be discussed in more detail.

The international qualitative study that explores bullying of educators was conducted in the Philippines (Tolentino, 2016). The aim of the study was to describe the experiences of bullied educators in their workplace. Data was collected by means of one-on-one in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion with 20 public and private school educators teaching in primary school, high school and college. The researcher used a descriptive phenomenological approach, which means that the

objective of the study was to uncover a common theme from the participants' experiences, then to use these experiences to describe the universal essence of the phenomenon of bullying of educators in the workplace. The results of this study indicate that educators are victims of multiple perpetrators of bullying in the school context. Learners were amongst the identified perpetrators. Three main themes emerged from the analysis, namely different forms of bullying, consequences of bullying, and various coping mechanisms that the educators employed.

In one of the South African studies, de Wet (2010a) conducted in-depth interviews to gain new insights into what she refers to as educator-targeted bullying (ETB) and to provide descriptions of the educators' experiences of being bullied by learners. The participants were recruited using snowball sampling, where staff members recommended educators who they believed had experienced ETB. The sample consisted of male and female participants from primary and secondary schools in rural and urban locations. de Wet's sampling method raises the ethical issue of confidentiality, as others would know about the participants' involvement in the study. Protecting the identity of educators is an important ethical issue, considering that educators have previously felt ostracized and negatively judged when others knew about their victimization. Qualitative content analysis was the chosen method of data analysis, and the results show that the educators were repeatedly subjected to verbal, non-verbal, physical and cyberbullying. The bullying had an impact on their psychological and professional well-being.

In another study, de Wet (2012) investigated the risk factors for educator-targeted bullying (ETB) from a socio-ecological perspective. She used in-depth interviews with a sample of seven victims of ETB from rural and urban primary and secondary schools. Three themes were identified through the data analysis, namely individual risk factors,

institutional risk factors and broad societal risk factors. Among the individual risk factors, participants regarded the learners who bullied them as unruly and arrogant learners, who took no pride in their school work. With regard to the institutional risk factors contributing to their being bullied, participants considered a lack of classroom management skills as one such factor. For instance, since the abolition of corporal punishment teachers have had limited access to alternative means of punishment. Within the broad societal theme, participants considered a lack of values in the community and learners' disregard of authority as underlying causes of bullying of educators by learners. The strength of de Wet's (2012) study is that it provides a theoretical base for understanding the risk factors associated with bullying of educators by learners.

Taole and Ramorola (2014) conducted a qualitative study using individual and focus group interviews in order to investigate the impact of violence on teacher professionalism and how lack of professionalism is a factor in increasing school violence. The data was collected through one-on-one interviews and focus groups, and the analysis revealed that educators experience disruptive behaviours as a form of bullying. As a result, the educators had become demotivated and stressed, learning and teaching had been negatively affected, and educators had decided to leave the profession. The strength of this study is that the sample was extracted from both rural and urban secondary schools in six provinces in South Africa, in that way increasing the extent to which the results of the study can be generalized.

Tintswalo (2014) investigated how the social context shapes township schools' experiences of violence. Data was collected by means of observations, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with educators, learners, principals, non-teaching staff and members of the School Governing Body (SGB). The findings

demonstrate that the educators were afraid of learners who perpetrated violence against them. This resulted in the educators often being late for or absent from school. The strengths of this study were that data was collected from various groups of people in the school system, using multiple methods of data collection.

With reference to the present study, my interest was to explore the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying from the perspectives of a small group of educators. I found no studies using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore this phenomenon. The present study therefore employed IPA to address this apparent gap and aimed to explore how educators make sense of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school. The following sections discuss the paradigm and theoretical framework which were considered suitable for the exploration of subjective lived experiences.

2.9. Theoretical and Paradigmatic Point of Departure

2.9.1. Research paradigm.

A research paradigm is a system of ideas used to generate knowledge (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). According to Fossey and colleagues (2002) there are three principal paradigms informing research studies, namely the empirico-analytical paradigm, the interpretive paradigm and the critical paradigm. These paradigms each represent different ways of looking at the world and use various strategies to observe and measure phenomena (Creswell, 2014). The present qualitative study is embedded within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research from an interpretive paradigm focuses on exploring the complex nature of social phenomena with the purpose of understanding and interpreting events, experiences

and social structures, as well as the meanings people ascribe to these phenomena (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The focus of the present study is to explore the phenomenon of bullying of educators by learners in a township secondary school by interpreting the lived experiences of bullied educators. Paradigms contain interconnected philosophical assumptions related to the principles of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology (Willig, 2013). Figure 1 below shows a schematic representation of my research framework, highlighting these philosophical assumptions which are discussed in detail in the sections that follow. The methodology, however, is discussed in Chapter Three.
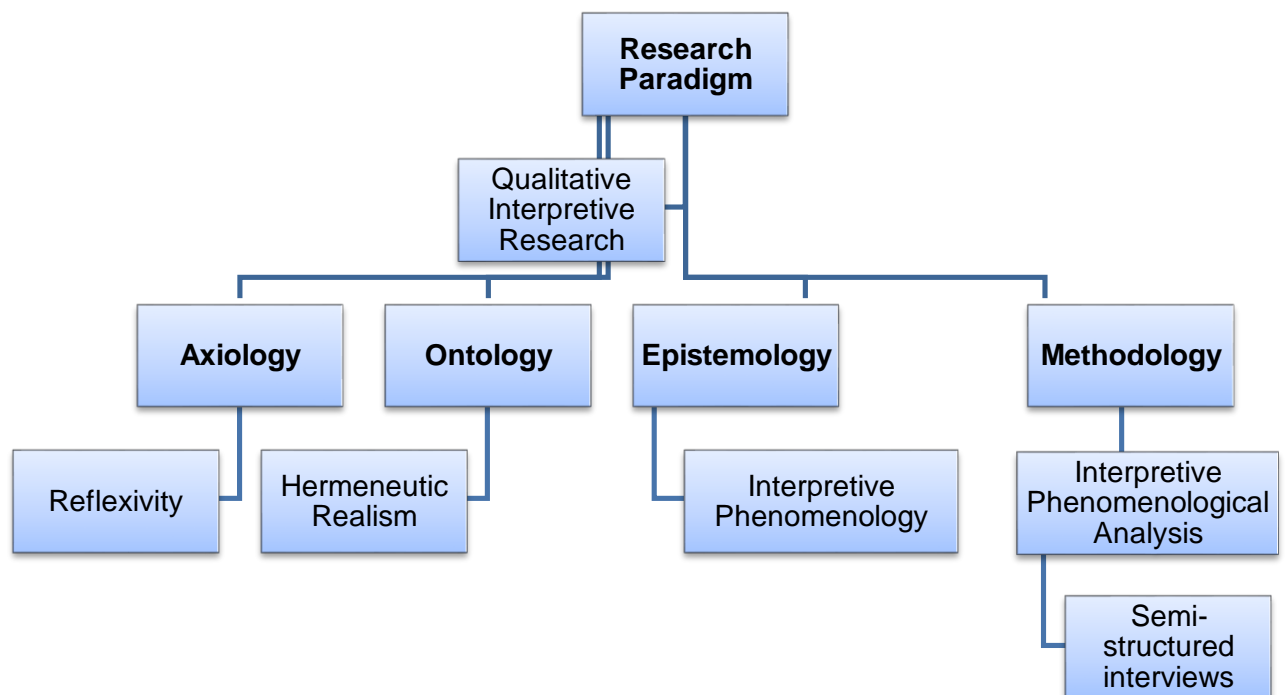
Figure 1: Summary of the research framework

2.9.1.1 Ontology.

Ontology deals with the nature of the social world and what there is to know concerning the world (Willig, 2013). One adopts an ontological position based on the assumptions made about the nature of the world. Ontological positions can be considered on a continuum which describes realist, materialist and relativist ontological positions. The realist ontology is based on the assumption that social reality exists separate from the conceptions and interpretations humans have constructed (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Similarly, to the realist ontology, the materialist ontology is based on the assumption that there is an external world, but that only material features, for instance economic relations or physical features of that world, can be considered reality. Values, beliefs and experiences are considered to be features that arise from but do not influence the material world (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The relativist ontology rests on the assumption that reality can only be known through the human mind and meanings that have been socially constructed (Ritchie, Lewis, Mcnaughton, Nicholls & Ormston, 2014).

Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) postulate that hermeneutic phenomenology reconciles relativism and realism to form an ontological position referred to as hermeneutic realism. 'Hermeneutic' in the phrase 'hermeneutic realism' suggests that psychological subject matter is meaning rather than an object (Slife & Christensen, 2013). The 'realism' part of the phrase suggests that meanings are situated in the reality of the world (Larkin et al., 2006; Slife & Christensen, 2013). Similarly, Yanchar (2015) suggests that reality is not constructed or represented in a private mind, but rather that manifestations of phenomena come into being through interconnected relationships. From a hermeneutic realist ontological position, therefore, the individual is seen as being part of reality or as situated in the world, rather than an entity that is

separate from the world (Larkin et al., 2006). Furthermore, Yanchar (2015) proposes that hermeneutic realism is based on the ontological claim that human beings are participational agents immersed fully in meaningful contexts of historical-cultural practices, engaging purposively in the world.

The present study is embedded within a hermeneutic phenomenological tradition. I therefore adopted a hermeneutic realist ontology from the position that experience is the product of interpretation and is therefore constructed and subject to change. Instead of the participants' subjective world being viewed as primarily hidden in the mental realm, I viewed the participants as thinking about important events in their lives by being immersed in meaningful and dynamic contexts, not as a detached reflection. Therefore, from this ontological position, the main phenomenon that concerns phenomenology is the meaning of 'Being', in other words presence in the world and experience (Dowling, 2007; Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

2.9.1.2. Epistemology.

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that is interested in the theory of knowledge (Willig, 2013). It is concerned with ways of knowing and learning about the world, issues of how we can learn about reality, and what forms the basis of our knowledge (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Willig, 2013). According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), there are three main concerns related to epistemology in social research. These concerns are related, firstly, to the relationship between the researcher and the participants; secondly, to issues concerning theories about truth; and thirdly, to the way in which knowledge is obtained.

The first concern, about the relationship between the researcher and the researched, can be addressed within the interpretive framework in the following way.

People are seen as being impacted by the process of being studied, and there is an interactive relationship between the researcher and the social phenomena (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The researcher can therefore not be objective in their approach to the research. With regard to the second issue, concerning theories about truth, interpretivism maintains a subjectivist epistemology, which holds the view that truth and meaning do not exist in an external world but are constructed by people in different ways as they interact with the world (Scotland, 2012). The final debate, which relates to the way in which knowledge can be acquired, can be understood within interpretivism as an inductive process, where evidence from the data is used to generate conclusions.

This study adopts an interpretive phenomenological epistemological position based on the claim that we learn about phenomena through persons in context (Larkin et al, .2006). In order to explore educators' experiences of being bullied by learners, I made the assumption that each educator had their own valid construction of reality based on how they perceived that reality as they engaged in a meaningful world. Therefore, data was contained in the subjective accounts provided by the educators. I interacted closely with the educators, engaging in a dialogue with them to allow them to talk about their experiences. I then engaged with the data obtained from the interaction and interpreted how the educators made sense of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school.

2.9.1.3. Axiology.

Axiology is concerned with the role of the researcher's values in the research process (Willig, 2013). The interpretivist paradigm maintains that the researcher's values and lived experiences cannot be separated from the research process

(Ponterotto, 2005). Since this study is embedded within the interpretive paradigm, I was involved in the research and its findings because of the personal biases and experiences I brought to the research. I used reflexivity to manage my subjectivity and the process enabled me to keep a self-critical account within the research process as I became aware of the beliefs underlying the decisions made at each step. Reflexivity or self-reflection can be carried out in a number of ways (Morrow, 2005). For this study I made use of a reflective diary throughout the research process. Initially I wrote down my ideas about possible research topics, my thoughts about the knowledge available concerning possible topics and various ways to address the research gaps. Once I had chosen my topic and was able to gain access to the school, I reflected on and documented my observations of the surrounding community, the physical environment of the school and my initial impression of the principal, staff members and learners. The impressions I got allowed me to develop a sense of the context of the research. In addition, reflexivity enabled me to think about how my reactions to the research context and the data led me to possible understandings to enhance the interpretive process of data analysis.

2.9.2. Theoretical framework.

The theoretical framework originates from the orientation or stance that the researcher brings to the study and forms the underlying structure or frame of the research (Merriam, 2009). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the literature review informs the theoretical framework. In addition, the theoretical framework is informed by the disciplinary orientation of the researcher. The disciplinary orientation serves as a lens through which the researcher views the world (Slife & Christen, 2013). The disciplinary orientation from which I viewed the topic is

psychology, and I was hence concerned with people's understanding of their world and how they make sense of their experiences. The theoretical framework guides the research process by identifying relevant concepts, research questions, selection of a research design, sampling methods, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretations of findings (Merriam, 2009).

The theoretical perspective underlying this study is interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology which deals with describing a person's experience within their particular meaningful context (Larkin et al., 2006). In this study, theory was not used to generate hypotheses to be tested. Instead the theoretical perspective shaped my research question and how the data was collected and analysed, thus informing my choice of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a research method (Shinebourne, 2011). I used IPA to explore, describe and interpret how educators made sense of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school. IPA was first utilised as a research method in psychology in the mid-1990s. The pioneer of IPA in psychology, Johnathan Smith (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011), argued for an approach in psychology that would capture the experiential dimension alongside the experimental one found in mainstream psychology. IPA draws not only from hermeneutics but also from the philosophical principles of phenomenology and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). The following sections will discuss these principles in more detail.

2.9.2.1. Phenomenology.

Edmund Husserl's (1970) work (as cited in Lopez & Willis, 2004) gave significance to the value of experience, as perceived by human consciousness, as an object of scientific study. Husserl argued that subjective information should be

important to scientists wanting to gain an understanding of human motivation, because human actions are driven by what people perceive to be real. The term phenomenology is derived from the Greek word *phaenesthai*, which means 'to show itself' or 'to appear' (Dowling, 2007). Therefore, phenomenology as developed by Husserl (1970) (as cited in Lopez & Willis, 2004) is concerned with the unbiased study of phenomena as they appear. Husserl's endeavour to get to the universal essence of things themselves and to understand phenomena expresses the phenomenological intention to describe how the world is formed through consciousness and experience (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Phenomenological intention thus suggests that every mental act, for instance remembering, perceiving or imagining, is related to an object or something in the world (Dowling, 2007).

Phenomenological intention requires individuals to direct their attention inwards, away from their natural attitude of making hasty assumptions or judgements about the world, towards reflecting on what they take for granted concerning their experience of the world (Dowling, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). Focusing on the psychic life allows an individual to develop a phenomenological attitude in order to understand the integral features of a phenomenon by minimizing as much as possible the influence of cultural and personal biases (Dowling, 2007).

Husserl's ideas gave rise to the descriptive phenomenological approach to inquiry. In this approach, researchers must bracket their personal assumptions and preconceptions to be able to distinguish and describe the essential features of lived experience for a given phenomenon, as it presents itself in consciousness (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Husserl (1927) (as cited in Smith et al., 2009) set in motion the course of action for an attentive and

systematic examination of the content that lies in consciousness, what can be referred to as lived experiences.

2.9.2.2. Heidegger's interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology.

Husserl's (1970) ideas were further developed by Martin Heidegger (1962) (as cited in Lopez & Willis, 2004) into hermeneutics. The term hermeneutics comes from the Greek verb *hermēneuein* which means to interpret (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Heidegger (1962) agreed with Husserl (1972) in focusing on human experience as it is lived and in believing that experience should be examined in the manner in which it occurs. However, Heidegger (1962) criticized Husserl's (1970) (as cited in Racher & Robinson, 2003) emphasis on description over understanding. In Heidegger's phenomenology, hermeneutics goes beyond the description of core concepts based on how things appear, to look for the hidden meaning in everyday experiences through an interpretive process (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Therefore, Heidegger proposed the use of hermeneutics as a research method to explore and grasp an understanding of the lived experience (Dowling, 2007).

Unlike Husserl (1927), Heidegger (1962) (as cited in Smith et al., 2009) believed that one's past experiences, assumptions and preconceptions could not be removed from the process of interpreting new information. Indeed, within the hermeneutic tradition the researcher cannot be detached from the inquiry, for it is the researcher's pre-understandings that resulted in the consideration of the topic as being worthy of investigation in the first place (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Slife and Christensen (2013) concur by suggesting that research aimed at uncovering meaning implies that context, together with the values and assumptions the researcher brings to the research context, influences the psychological topic of interest.

Heidegger argued that understanding is a reciprocal activity demonstrated through the hermeneutic circle (Dowling, 2007). The hermeneutic circle involves the examination of the whole in relation to its parts, the parts in relation to the whole and both together in relation to the context in which the whole and the parts are situated (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, the researcher identifies units of meaning contained in the data, then the meanings are compared with each other and in light of the researcher's evolving fore-understandings. This activity illustrates sense-making as a dynamic and iterative process (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Smith and colleagues (2009) emphasize that the preconceptions should not be given more priority than the new information but rather understood in light of it (Smith et al., 2009). One's preconceptions should be made apparent and used accordingly once the interpretation is underway.

2.9.2.3. Idiography.

The third principle on which IPA is based is idiography, which is concerned with an in-depth focus on the particular experiences of an individual in order to grasp the meaning of the phenomenon of interest (Smith et al., 2009). This involves the detailed analysis of a person's account in order to uncover different aspects of experience. The single case provides an opportunity for working from the ground up by drawing together additional cases to move towards more general claims (Shinebourne, 2011). Therefore, generalizations are not completely dismissed, but are seen rather as located in particular cases (Smith et al., 2009).

2.10. Conclusion

Bullying of educators by learners is a relationship problem. For this reason, the educator-learner relationship was discussed in order to understand the emergence of bullying of educators by learners. I further conceptualized learner-to-educator bullying by discussing the three components of bullying. The literature review then showed that educators experience various forms of bullying, which can have adverse effects on their psychological well-being as well as negatively impacting the learning and teaching environment. It also emerged from this review that educators' ability to cope with being bullied by learners is greatly impacted by the level of support they receive. The body of literature provided evidence that bullying of educators by learners is a widespread issue throughout the world. However, like other researchers I also realized that the issue is under-reported, and more qualitative research is warranted to uncover the experiences of bullied educators. I concluded the literature review with a discussion of my paradigmatic point of departure to frame my interest in exploring lived experiences. This was followed by a discussion of interpretive phenomenology, which served as the theoretical framework underpinning this study. In Chapter Three I introduce the qualitative methodology I chose for this study and explain how my philosophical principles informed my choice of IPA as a research method.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The methodology chapter of the dissertation provides an outline of what the researcher intended to do and how she set about doing it (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). This chapter provides a rationale for the chosen research methodology and the methods employed to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. The aim of the current study was to explore the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. The objectives of the study were to obtain subjective accounts from educators about their experiences of being bullied by learners, to interpret the findings using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), and to provide an understanding of bullying of educators by learners in a township secondary school.

In the first section of this chapter a description of the qualitative research approach is provided, to demonstrate its suitability for exploring lived experiences. This is followed by a description of the methodology and method used in this study. Interpretive phenomenology served as the chosen qualitative methodology for this study and IPA was employed to achieve the proposed research aim and objectives. The criteria for participant inclusion and how the participants were sampled are also discussed. This is followed by an explanation of how the necessary data to address the research question was collected and analysed. The procedures and verification strategies used during the research process to enhance the quality of the research are then described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical standards applied throughout the research process.

3.2. Qualitative Research

In this section I discuss what qualitative research entails, in order to explain what motivated me to choose the qualitative approach and its appropriateness in meeting the exploratory objectives of this study. Qualitative research may be defined as a naturalistic and interpretive approach, concerned with understanding and accounting for the meanings which a few individuals, groups or institutions ascribe to phenomena within their social lives (Fossey et al., 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In choosing a qualitative approach my intention was therefore to focus on the process, meaning and understanding of educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school within the South African context.

In order to achieve understanding of the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying I adopted the emic perspective, which means that the research participants were used as a starting point to generate knowledge (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). I focused on each educator's perspectives on the phenomenon and how they made sense of their experience. I also acknowledged that people's understanding of their world is shaped by the interrelatedness of different processes in their lives, such as psychological, social, historical and cultural processes (Ritchie et al., 2014). This makes the phenomenon of bullying of educators a unique experience for educators in a secondary school located in a South African township.

Qualitative researchers use data collection methods that allow flexibility and close contact between the researcher and the people being studied (Fossey et al, 2002). For that reason, data collection methods in qualitative research include, among other methods, focus groups, interviews and participant observation (Lietz & Zayas, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2014). In this study I made use of semi-structured interviews to obtain

the data from the educators. The semi-structured interviews I undertook consisted of a range of open-ended questions used to guide rather than dictate the course of the interview, thus allowing interaction between me and each of the participants. Through a close and engaged interaction I helped the participants to evoke the phenomenon and to talk at length about what had happened to them.

In qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the process of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Subjectivity was hence inevitable in the interpretive endeavour of understanding the experiences of the educators. However, being an integral part of the research process meant that I needed to reflect on my role in the study and identify reflexively my biases and personal experiences. In doing so I noticed how my subjectivities affected the research and ensured that the educator remained the starting point and was prioritized as the source of the interpretive endeavour.

The analytic process in qualitative research is inductive (Merriam, 2009). This means working from the bottom up to generate concepts and abstract units of meaning from the collected data (Morrow & Smith, 2000). As suggested by Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano and Morales (2007), I considered the inductive process by working back and forth between the emerging themes and combining and ordering patterns from the dataset to develop the themes into general ideas. Once I had completed the analytic process, I proceeded to writing up the findings in the form of a narrative account (Creswell, 2014). The narrative account encompasses rich descriptions about bullying of educators by learners to exemplify a holistic understanding of the views and actions of the research participants in the context of their lives. In the next section I discuss in more detail the qualitative methodology I followed in this study.

3.2.1. Research design and methodology.

Within the qualitative approach, I then selected a specific research design. According to Creswell (2014), the research design is a type of inquiry providing specific guidelines for the methods used to address the research question. Phenomenology was selected in order to appropriately direct my interest in exploring the lived experiences of educators bullied by learners, on the basis of the epistemological assumption that each educator had their own construction of reality. Phenomenology, a type of research design within the ambit of qualitative research, is concerned with people's lived experiences based on individuals' perceptions or accounts of what they have experienced (Willig, 2013).

There are two major approaches to phenomenological research when generating knowledge, namely descriptive phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Descriptive phenomenology is concerned with obtaining a concrete description of the phenomenon of interest where the researcher sets aside their expert knowledge and personal biases to grasp the essence of a lived experience (Dowling, 2007). Interpretive phenomenology shares the aim of descriptive phenomenology, which is to obtain a better understanding of a phenomenon as it presents itself. However, in interpretive phenomenology, describing the phenomenon is considered an interpretive process, and the researcher's biases are required in order to make sense of lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, I chose interpretive phenomenology as a research methodology because I considered it important to understand educators' perceptions and interpretations of their bullying experiences in a township secondary school, and the meanings which they gave to this experience. To begin the interpretive process, I first described the content on the basis of what the participants had said. I then

developed possible meanings from the described content. Instead of setting aside my knowledge of psychological concepts and my personal biases and experiences, I used them to make interpretations in order to advance understanding of the phenomenon.

3.2.2. IPA as a method.

I used IPA as a methodology to gain a better understanding of educators' experiences of being bullied by learners. In addition to being an approach to research, IPA also provides specific techniques on how to collect, analyse and interpret the data (Smith & Osborn, 2004). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I used IPA as the method for this study because it corresponded with my epistemological position that the educators had unique perspectives on the phenomenon of bullying of educators by learners. Data was thus contained in the educators' perspectives and IPA allowed me to uncover the data in the educators' accounts. IPA is thorough, systematic and committed to capturing individual experiences through an in-depth case-by-case engagement with the subjective perspectives of research participants, in their unique contexts (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Through a detailed examination of each case, the focus is on the meaning of an experience for a specific participant and then a recognition of its significance for that participant (Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

I collected first-person accounts from educators in order to obtain unique perspectives on each educator's experience of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school. Using semi-structured interviews, I engaged in a dialogue with the educators so that they could talk about their experiences. Through this interaction the educators revealed their own subjective meanings of being bullied by learners within the context of their lives. By listening to the participants' experiential accounts within

their situational, cultural and social context, new insights into the phenomenon were gained from their perspectives (Parsons, 2010).

During the analysis I used IPA to engage in a double hermeneutic process, which means making sense of the participants' understanding of their experiences (Shinebourne, 2011). In this way, intersubjective meaning making was achieved. Intersubjectivity means that the subjective meanings articulated by participants and my own subjectivities were blended to produce various interpretations of the participants' accounts (Lopez & Willis, 2004). I identified and reflected on my biases and preconceptions to engage with them constructively by re-examining them against patterns of meaning emerging from the data in order to enhance understanding of the phenomenon. Although the interpretations reflected my understanding of the participants' experiences, the interpretations I developed were grounded in the participants' accounts. In the following sections I discuss in more detail how I implemented IPA to sample the participants for this study, to collect and to analyse the data.

3.3. Sampling

Because I was interested in how educators experience being bullied by learners in a township secondary school, I used non-probability sampling to identify appropriate participants: individuals who were able to address the research question. Non-probability sampling relies on the subjective judgement of the researcher with the aim of obtaining rich understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspectives of those individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (O'Leary, 2004). Once I had identified a topic of interest, the participants were recruited for this study using a

combination of two methods of non-probability sampling, namely self-selection (volunteer) sampling and purposive sampling.

Volunteer sampling refers to a process of sample selection in which people are asked to volunteer and each of them self-selects themselves for participation in the study (O'Leary, 2004). Selection can take place through an advertisement or going to a local organization to inform people about the study (O'Leary, 2004). For this study I went to a secondary school located in a township called Etwatwa in the Gauteng province to inform the educators about the study and asked them to volunteer. I chose this particular school because it is situated close to where I had been residing and I knew the principal and some of the educators at the school. Thus, the close proximity of the school and the sense of familiarity between some of the staff members and me allowed easy access to the school in order to initiate recruitment of participants.

Purposive sampling is commonly used in IPA to find out how particular experiential phenomena have been understood using the perspectives of particular people in a particular context (Brocki & Wearden, 2010). Once the educators had volunteered to participate in the study, I organized pre-interviews with all the volunteers in order to purposively select educators from whom the greatest amount could be learned about the phenomenon. Furthermore, according to Smith and colleagues (2009), samples in IPA studies are fairly homogenous, meaning that the group of participants is made as uniform as possible on the basis of social factors or theoretical factors in line with the study. The sample in this study is fairly homogenous in that the participants share the experience of being bullied by learners within their profession as educators and they also share the school context in which their experiences occur.

3.3.1. Participant inclusion criteria.

The following criteria were used to guide purposive and volunteer sampling: Firstly, the participants had to have been educators of learners from grade 8 to 10 within the identified township secondary school in the Gauteng province. I chose educators teaching learners from grade 8 to10 on the basis of evidence that bullying reaches its peak during early adolescence at the beginning of secondary school (Chen & Astor, 2008; Kruger, 2011). Therefore, educators teaching in the earlier grades were more likely to be exposed to being bullied by learners than educators teaching higher grades, in effect having more experience to talk in depth about the topic.

The second criterion was that the educators had to have been bullied by a learner or learners at the chosen school. Upon provision of the consent form containing a definition of bullying of educators by learners, the educators were required to use the definition which included examples of bullying behaviours as a guide to determine whether they perceived themselves as having been bullied by at least one learner from their school. For this study, bullying of educators by learners was defined as persistent or else a single episode of aggressive behaviours, directed specifically at an educator by a learner, with the intent to bring about physical, psychological, emotional and/or professional harm. These aggressive behaviours could include physical, verbal and emotional bullying, sexual bullying, cyberbullying and/or persistent disruptive behaviours. The definition used in this study represents a blend of definitions provided by various authors who have previously investigated learner-to-educator bullying. Moreover, the examples of bullying behaviours were extracted from the existing literature pertaining to the topic. However, the examples were by no means an exhaustive list, as the educators would potentially have experienced other behaviours that I was unaware of. Based on my interpretive phenomenological frame, the

definition and examples of bullying behaviours included in this study represented my previous knowledge of the topic which I used against the knowledge derived from the participants' accounts in order to interpret and understand their experiences. The last criterion for participation inclusion was that participants were required to be able to articulate their experiences in English, as the interview was conducted in English. Furthermore, it enabled me to make sense of the educators' experiences using their direct words without altering the intended meaning through translation.

3.3.2. Participant recruitment.

In order to gain access to the school to recruit participants, permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was obtained. To initiate the recruitment process, I made personal contact with the principal and deputy principal of the chosen school. I provided them with information about my study and the GDE's approval letter for the study (Appendix A). I requested written permission from the principal to recruit educators from the school (Appendix B) and permission to attend a personnel meeting where I introduced my study to the educators. The principal agreed to my requests and signed the permission letter on the school's letterhead. Gaining the informed consent of the GDE, the principal and the educators was important for the ethical integrity of the study and developing a trusting relationship with all parties.

The next phase of the recruitment process involved attending a staff meeting at the school where educators were recruited. At the meeting I discussed the nature of the study and its ethical considerations. I emphasized that the educators' names and the name of the school would not be mentioned in the research outcomes, thus ensuring anonymity. After being introduced to my study, each educator was provided with a sealed envelope containing the consent form (Appendix C) and support sheet

(Appendix D). As previously mentioned, the consent form contained a definition of the phenomenon of bullying of educators by learners as well as examples of bullying behaviours. Bullying of educators by learners was defined as persistent or a single episode of aggressive behaviours, directed specifically at an educator by a learner, with the intent to bring about physical, psychological, emotional and/or professional harm. These aggressive behaviours could include physical, verbal and emotional bullying, sexual bullying, cyberbullying and/or persistent disruptive behaviours. The educators were asked to use this definition as a guide to determine if they could identify with an experience of being bullied by learners.

If educators felt that they had experienced being bullied by learners and wanted to participate in the study, they were requested to complete and return the consent forms with their contact numbers in a sealed envelope. The educators were requested to return their envelopes a week later to the secretary's office and insert them in a closed box with an envelope opening only. The deputy principal chose the secretary's office as the location of submission because she suggested that the secretary's office would allow easy access for the educators to submit their envelopes and it ensured that the envelopes were kept safe and secure. The nature of the study was not disclosed to the secretary except that the educators would submit confidential envelopes for research purposes.

The recruiting of participants took place over a period of two weeks. When I returned to the school a week after I had introduced the study to the educators, I discovered that none of the educators had returned their consent forms to show their interest in participating in the study. I then asked the deputy principal to remind the educators about the research at their next staff meeting. I stressed that the deputy principal should ensure that the educators willingly volunteered to participate and were not

coerced in any way. I decided to give the educators another week to submit their consent forms before moving onto another secondary school in the township to recruit participants. When I returned to the school a second time, six educators had submitted their consent forms.

The potential sample consisted of four males and two females. This sample of potential participants had self-selected to participate in the study. However, in keeping with the methodological design of committing to purposive sampling and to ensure that the recruitment of the participants was thorough, I organised pre-interviews with each of the potential participants. I did this to ensure that the self-selected participants were purposively selected and suitable to address the research question. During the pre-interviews I discovered that one of the potential male participants had not been personally bullied by a learner/s in the school and one of the female potential participants was not proficient in the English language. After the pre-interviews only three educators were selected for participation (two males, one female). The selected educators represented a homogeneous sample on the basis that they were able to meet the inclusion criteria for participation.

I then scheduled one-on-one interviews with the recruited educators, outside school hours so as to not interfere with their duties at the school. I booked an office at the public library nearest to the school in order to conduct the interviews. The library was conveniently located for access to the educators and is situated in the same community as the school, thus keeping within the frame of IPA where the exploration of peoples' experiences occurs within the context of their lives. In addition, the office at the library provided a quiet space, free from interruptions and conducive to a clear audio-recording of each interview. The appointment times and venue were convenient for the participants.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

Semi-structured interviews are a suitable data collection method for IPA because they allow participants to provide rich, detailed personal accounts of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Accordingly, the data for this study was the accounts and insights of educators, collected individually using semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This technique of data collection is flexible (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), as it allowed a dialogue to take place between the participants and me in order to explore as far as possible the participants' experiences.

I found the use of semi-structured interviews effective in obtaining the data, as they allowed the participants to convey their experiences in their own words and to talk about their concerns. In this way, the semi-structured interview effectively addressed the research question. Moreover, the semi-structured interview helped to facilitate empathy, as the experiences brought to light were based on the educators' perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews permit a degree of structure where pre-identified issues can be brought to the participants' attention for further discussion. An interview schedule (Appendix E) was therefore used to serve as a guiding framework during the interview sessions. The schedule consists of open-ended questions which make minimal assumptions about the participants' experiences. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview gave me the freedom to incorporate probes and prompts, which were used to obtain additional information and allowed participants to elaborate on their understandings of their experiences (Merriam, 2009; Smith et al., 2009). As suggested by Eatough and Smith (2008), probing for meaning was used to develop

rich experiential understandings of the phenomenon and to remain close to the participants' sense making. I incorporated probes by repeating a question to get the participant back on track when they started going off on a tangent and by using follow-up questions asking the participant to explain an unclear response. Prompts are used when a participant encounters difficulty in responding, and to provide them with various possible ways to unpack an issue (Shinebourne, 2011). I included prompts with focused questions to allow the participants to talk about specific ideas.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, an acceptable time frame for an IPA interview (Smith et al., 2009). To ensure that rich, detailed information was collected, each educator was encouraged, by means of the interview, to explore incidences of being bullied by learners, allowing them to speak freely and reflectively. I received consent from the educators to audio-record the interviews. The audio-recordings were done to ensure that the educators' responses were available for analysis. After each interview I used my reflective diary to document my impressions and reflections of the interviews. I transcribed each interview verbatim to privilege the participants' voices in the analysis and interpretive process.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The transcripts from this study were analysed using the six stages of analysis in IPA (Smith et., 2009). The aim of the analysis I undertook was to understand the meanings given to a situation from the perspectives of the participants in their cultural and social context. I therefore used interpretation as a tool to arrive at the meanings embedded in the participants' accounts. Furthermore, IPA is an approach to qualitative analysis aimed at providing evidence of a blend of the meanings articulated by both

the participants and the researcher (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). There was therefore an equal relationship between me and the participants, as the analysis demonstrated a collaborative meaning making process. As suggested by Karnieli-Miller, Stier and Pessach (2009), I kept the power relations equal during data analysis by making sure that the meanings articulated by the participants were not distorted. Instead of only representing my own understanding of the educators' experiences in the write-up of the study, my interpretations were coupled with extracts from the interview transcripts to provide evidence that they were grounded in the data and social context of the participants' accounts. During the analysis I provided an in-depth account of each case, attending to each individual ideographically, and then proceeded to look for patterns of convergence and divergence across all the cases (Eatough & Smith, 2008). I then brought together the identified themes into meaningful relation with each other to develop a narrative of the core elements of the experiences described. Figure 2 below illustrates the stages of analysis I undertook, which are then followed by a description of each stage.
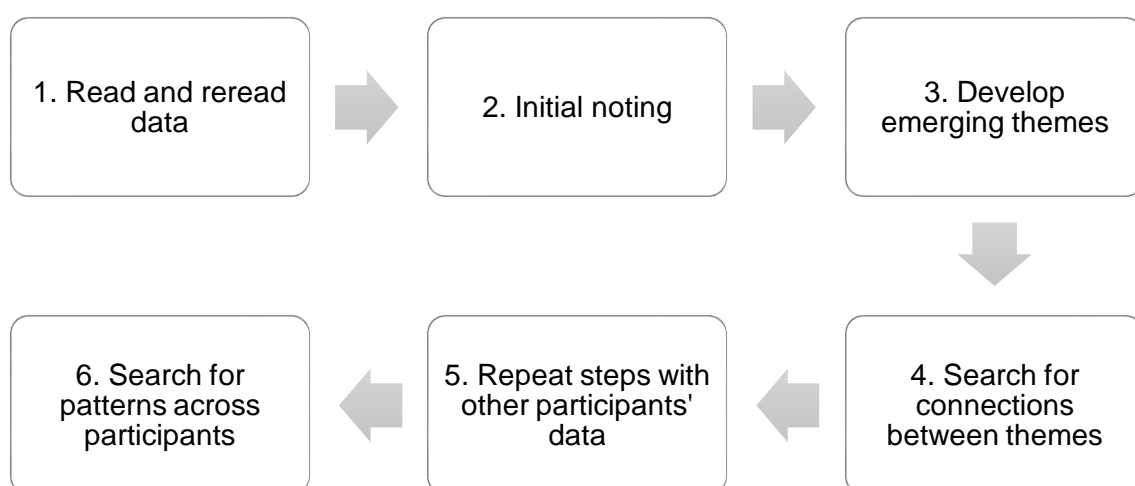
Figure 2: Stages of data analysis

Using Microsoft Word, I constructed a table with three columns to undertake the analysis. I placed the first transcript in the middle column (Appendix F). The first stage involves carefully reading the first transcript several times to get an overall understanding of the data (Smith et al., 2009). I listened to the audio recording three times while reading the transcript. Listening to the audio recording a few times helped me to in immerse myself in the data and recall the atmosphere and setting of the interview. During this first stage I made sure that the participant's account was the starting point of the analysis.

The second stage involves making initial notes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012), which in this study were the comments I made about whatever I first noticed as interesting or significant information in the transcript. The comments include key phrases, explanations and emotional responses that the participant gave. I noted these comments in the right-hand column entitled 'exploratory comments' in Appendix F. Exploratory comments can be grouped into descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments, used as analytical tools to identify specific ways in which the participant talked about, perceived and understood an issue (Shinebourne, 2011). I read through the transcript afresh to make the descriptive comments, noting the content of what the participant had explicitly described. Furthermore, I paid attention to the way in which the transcript reflected how the content and meaning had been presented linguistically. I accordingly noted the linguistic comments which included key words and explanations used by the participant to reveal aspects of their experiences. I also focused on pauses, repetition and the participant's use of metaphors in the transcript. I then moved to a more interpretive analysis to make conceptual comments. This involved moving from the explicit claims made by the participant towards noting the overarching understanding

of the concerns the participants had (Smith & Osborn, 2008). I therefore provided possible interpretations of the meaning the participant had articulated. The interpretations made at this stage consisted of culturally-infused explanations reflecting the educator's understanding of their experience in the context of their cultural and social life.

The third stage was concerned with developing patterns of meaning called emerging themes (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) from the exploratory comments I had made in the previous stage. The main task involved in turning the notes into themes was generating a concise statement or phrase about what was important in the various comments related to portions of the transcript. The emergent themes are a combination of description and interpretation, capturing the participant's words and thoughts as well as my own interpretation, to reflect an understanding of the experience. The interpretations I made at this stage involved a more psychological conceptualization, while still grounding the themes in what the participant had said. I placed the emergent themes in the left-hand column in the table (Appendix F).

The fourth stage involves searching for connections across the emergent themes developed in the previous stage, using a variety of analytical processes in order to cluster themes into subordinate themes (Smith & Eatough, 2012.). Subordinate themes are groups of related themes. To map out how the themes would fit together, I removed them from the chronological order in which they had been presented in the transcript. Not all the emerging themes were included in this stage, as this was dependent upon the research question. I printed out the list of themes and cut each of them from the list, placing the pieces of paper on which they were printed on a large surface so that I could view all of them at once.

The analytical processes I employed to find connections amongst the emergent themes were abstraction, subsumption, polarization, contextualization, numeration and function (Smith et al., 2009). I used abstraction to group similar themes into clusters to develop superordinate themes. Subsumption involved the process of taking an emergent theme to assume a superordinate role, which is that of helping to combine a series of related themes, illuminating them and making sense of them. Polarization entails focusing on differences instead of similarities across the emergent themes. I then used contextualization to gain insight into the context of the experience and to identify where and when the experience took place. I used numeration to search for how often a theme was discussed. Lastly, I used function as an analytical tool to explore what function the emergent themes served for the participant in the context of the interview and the social world (Kruger, 2014). The educators were aware of my role as a researcher who sought to uncover information which would be shared with others. They were also aware that I was coming from a credible academic institution. With this knowledge in mind, the educators may have shared their accounts with the hope of gaining my support and, through the research, that others would hear their stories.

Once I had clustered the themes using the analytical processes mentioned above, each cluster was given a name that captured its main idea. I then typed out a table of subordinate themes containing the clusters of themes as suggested by Smith and Osborn (2008). The table was divided into three columns. In the left- hand column I placed the emerging themes in chronological order. The right-hand column references the quotes from the transcript, which serve as proof to substantiate the inclusion of an emerging theme. The transcript number and the line where the quotes in the right-

hand column can be found are referenced in the middle column. The table of subordinate themes can be found in Appendix G.

The fifth stage involves moving to the next participant's transcript and repeating the abovementioned stages (Smith et al., 2009). Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest that, if the study has a small number of cases, the analysis of each case should be started from scratch. I therefore undertook the six stages of analysis for each of the following cases and treated the analysis of the next transcript on its own terms by setting aside the ideas and assumptions I had formed from the previous case. I took a break of two days after the analysis of each case to assist in analysing each case in isolation without being influenced by the previous analysis.

The sixth stage involves an analysis of the patterns across all the cases (Smith et al., 2009). Subordinate themes or superordinate themes pertaining to individual cases may represent higher-order concepts which all the cases have in common. At this stage I identified individual and shared meanings and ensured that the analysis maintained a strong interpretive focus. I printed out the tables of the subordinate themes constructed from each of the cases and placed the pieces of paper on a large table. I then looked for patterns across the cases and considered the richness of specific passages highlighting the themes and the way in which the theme helped to illuminate other aspects of the account. I used highlighters to colour similar themes in the same colour, and a new heading was created for each new theme to form the superordinate themes. I then proceeded to producing a final table of superordinate themes called the Master table of themes. The Master table of themes can be found in Appendix H.

This committed analytical process uncovers the diversity and variability of human experiences while at the same time demonstrating shared experiences among

participants (Smith & Eatough, 2012). My active role as co-creator of meaning was an integral part of the analysis. In the next section I provide more detail about my role as the researcher within this study.

3.5.1. Role of the researcher.

The aim of IPA is to understand lived experience from the participants' perspectives (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). I acknowledged that such an understanding would also come from my engagement with and interpretation of the accounts provided by the participants. Therefore, the analysis is seen as both phenomenological, in that it represents the participant's perception of the lived experience, and interpretive, in that it is influenced by the researcher's own perspectives and preconceptions (Willig, 2013).

In conducting this study, I adopted a reflexive attitude throughout the research process. I monitored and made explicit my beliefs about the phenomenon being explored. My mother is an educator in a township secondary school. She would often share her own experiences and the experiences of some of her colleagues with regard to being mistreated by learners. I therefore started this research with knowledge of some of the challenges that educators in township schools face with their learners and have had the opportunity to reflect on these challenges. I have also had numerous opportunities to visit township secondary schools and observe how the learners behave towards and interact with their educators. In this way, I had immersed myself in the setting of the research and become sensitive to the context in which the educators' experiences had occurred.

Having acknowledged my personal experiences and preconceptions, instead of attempting to set them aside I used them to listen empathically to the participants

during the interviews and to remain close to the participants' sense-making. This empathic engagement was one of two ways in which I made sense of the participants' interpretations, namely to understand by accepting what the participants had said as valid. The second way in which I made sense of the participants' accounts was by taking a critical stance towards what appeared to be the case. As mentioned earlier, I did this by probing for meaning and questioning what I had initially taken at face value in order to develop multiple layers of meaning. The participants' accounts were always used as the starting point of this twofold interpretive process. My role was therefore not to change but to enhance understanding of the phenomenon.

3.6. Quality Enhancement of Qualitative Research

Numerous writers (Fossey et al., 2002; Shenton, 2004; Yardley, 2000) on research methods have shown how researchers can adopt specific measures to demonstrate the trustworthiness of qualitative research. In qualitative research the researcher's subjectivity contributes to the production of meaning concerning a phenomenon (Young, 2016). Therefore, qualitative research cannot be judged according to the same measures and standards of validity tailored for quantitative research, which is designed to objectively investigate a phenomenon. Of the various evaluative criteria available, I employed Yardley's (2000) broad principles to assess the trustworthiness of the present study. I selected Yardley's criteria because they are comprehensive and are in line with an interpretive phenomenological method and epistemological position. Previous international (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2009) and South African (Clüver, Elkonin & Young, 2013; van Rooyen, le Roux & Kotze, 2008) authors have demonstrated the utility of Yardley's principles in phenomenological approaches.

Yardley's (2000) principles include sensitivity to context, commitment, rigour, transparency and coherency. My choice of IPA showed my awareness of context, as my intention was to offer just one of multiple possible interpretations of a phenomenon which is subject to temporal and contextual change. In IPA, each time an experience is revisited or studied at different points in time, the meaning of that experience may change depending on the mood or disposition of the researcher or participants (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2011).

Commitment, rigour, transparency and coherency relate to the thoroughness of data collection, analysis and reporting of the data obtained from the research (Smith et al, 2009). Thoroughness in this study has been demonstrated through the sustained engagement with the topic, an in-depth analysis of the cases to uncover the complexities embedded in the educators' experiences and the presentation of descriptive interpretations of the phenomenon under exploration. The last principle discussed is importance and impact, which highlights the theoretical and practical relevance of this study. In the following sections I have demonstrated how these principles have been applied in my IPA study.

3.6.1. Sensitivity to context.

According to Yardley (2000), the context of the qualitative study is multi-faceted, and the researcher must acknowledge and demonstrate sensitivity to this context. Sensitivity to context can be demonstrated firstly through the researcher being sensitive to the socio-cultural setting in which the study is situated; secondly, by acknowledging the theoretical and empirical understandings generated by previous researchers who used the same method or explored the same topic; and lastly by

showing sensitivity towards the participants' perspectives during data collection and data analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

As a resident in a township and having close ties to an educator from a secondary school located in a township, I had become familiar with and been immersed in the socio-cultural context in which the study is situated. I was therefore positioned appropriately to better understand bullying of educators by learners in a township secondary school. Furthermore, I was aware that the participants' beliefs and ideas, and the way in which they spoke, would be influenced by normative, historical and socio-economic factors.

I showed sensitivity towards the educators' perspectives during the interview process and data analysis. During the interviews I was empathic towards the participants, putting them at ease and informing them of the negative emotions which might be evoked when talking about a sensitive topic like bullying. The participants were provided with a support sheet containing relevant contact details and resources should they require assistance with bullying. During the analysis I demonstrated idiographic and case-by-case engagement, by reading each case on its own terms while setting aside the ideas formulated from previously read cases. Through a close engagement with the data I was able to develop a greater sense of awareness of and sensitivity to each participant's situation.

The goal of IPA is to understand phenomena from the viewpoint of the participants (Shinebourne, 2011). Sensitivity towards the participants' perspectives was hence in line with the epistemological stance I had taken, and with the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, in that the knowledge generated through this study came from the equally valid subjective accounts of the educators who had experienced bullying by learners. Furthermore, the educators' perspectives were understood in the context

of their lives, a principle emphasized in IPA theory. I also conducted a literature review concerning the topic and identified the need to explore educators' experiences of being bullied.

3.6.2. Commitment.

Commitment involves the level of attentiveness to the participant and the information they give, as well as the care taken during the process of analysing the data (Smith et al., 2009). I demonstrated commitment through close, thorough engagement with the participants, ensuring that they felt I was paying attention and putting them at ease to enable them to give detailed accounts of their experiences. I did not rush the participants while they gave their responses. I gently incorporated probes to allow participants to expand their responses. Furthermore, I immersed myself in the data through transcribing the interviews verbatim to document the participants' subjective accounts. I also spent a considerable amount of time with the topic, as I read the transcripts several times on numerous occasions and attended carefully to the words and phrases the educators used.

3.6.3. Rigour.

Rigour refers to the thoroughness of the methods used to collect and interpret the data (Young, 2016). The sample should be in line with the research question and the quality of the interviews, and data analysis should be able to produce the relevant information concerning the phenomenon under exploration (Yardley, 2000). I demonstrated rigour and strengthened the credibility of this study through the use of purposive sampling to recruit participants. The sample was carefully recruited to ensure that it was appropriate to meet the objectives of the study. Not only were the

participants informed about the study at a staff meeting and given more than a week to decide whether they wanted to volunteer to be part of the study, I also conducted pre-interviews with the educators who had self-selected themselves to participate. During the individual pre-interviews I went through the inclusion criteria with each educator to make sure that the selected sample was appropriate for use in the study. Rigour is also important when considering the ethics of qualitative research (Young, 2016). Accordingly, during the pre-interviews I established whether the participants felt comfortable and were willing to participate in the study. This was important, considering the possibility of the educators feeling coerced into participating in the study. This was an ethical concern pertaining not only to voluntary participation but also to the issue of harm. This study has been contextualized on the understanding that a power differential constitutes bullying. Therefore, being coerced into participation would have contributed to the disempowerment of the educators, which could have been harmful to their sense of autonomy. Additionally, through the pre-interviews the participants and I became familiar with each other on a one-on-one basis, thus initiating the development of rapport necessary for the semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews comprised open-ended questions, which allowed a dialogue between me and each participant as well as the incorporation of probes to explore the phenomenon as far as possible. The findings from this study reflected the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying, which was embedded in the participants' accounts and uncovered through close engagement during the interviews.

Rigour also depends on the thoroughness and richness of the interpretations, which should take into consideration the nuances and complexities observed within the analysis (Yardley, 2000). The use of IPA in this study allowed for thorough

interpretation, and hence the demonstration of rigour, through the use of the six steps of analysis which demonstrated various levels of analysis. Implementation of these steps allowed me to engage in the double hermeneutic process, which involved understanding the participants' interpretations from an empathic stance and a critical stance. Furthermore, by using these steps for each participant I was able to identify similarities and differences within and across cases, going beyond merely providing descriptions of the participants' accounts to interpreting their experiences using their actual words within their socio-cultural context. In the chapter on Findings, each theme is illuminated with extracts from all the participants' interviews. In this way, the participants have been represented in the analysis, and the extracts from the participants demonstrate the density of evidence for each theme. I included interpretive commentaries with the extracts that have been presented, thus demonstrating the double hermeneutic process. I further demonstrated rigour by keeping a reflexive journal throughout the research process to constantly reflect on my subjectivities, to monitor how these influenced the development of the interpretations during the analysis and the decisions I made throughout the research process.

3.6.4. Transparency.

Transparency refers to the disclosure of the pertinent aspects of the research process (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000). With regard to this study, the pertinent aspects of the research were revealed to the participants, the principal of the school, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), the University of Pretoria ethics committee and the reader. The educators received verbal as well as written information about the nature of the study so that they were able to provide informed

consent to participate in the study. Furthermore, I disclosed the pertinent aspects relevant to this study so that the reader can see how the participants were selected and how the data was collected and analysed. According to Smith (2011), an IPA study that is transparent enough for the reader to see what was done in the research meets one of the criteria for an acceptable IPA study. In Chapter Four I have presented extracts from the textual data to allow readers to discern for themselves the patterns that emerged from the analysis and the basis of the interpretations I made, to show that the analysis gives privilege to the participants' knowledge. I have presented a detailed record of the transcripts in Appendix F and the interview schedule in Appendix E, so that the reader can judge the quality of the interview.

In striving for a fair representation of the participants in the research, I sought immediate clarification during the interviews rather than using follow-up interviews or revisiting participants for clarification. By seeking immediate clarification, I was able to fairly represent and capture the participants' experiences at a specific point in time and in a specific context. I therefore incorporated probes, which allowed participants to elaborate and clarify on their responses so as to delve deeply into the meanings of their experiences. I also made use of open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to share their experiences in their own words (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011).

3.6.5. Coherency.

According to Yardley (2000), coherency refers to how well the research question, theoretical assumptions, method of investigation and analysis employed in the study fit together. The present study subscribes to the theoretical principles (phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography) of IPA that were discussed in Chapter

Two. Accordingly, this study is phenomenological in that it focuses on the lived experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. The study is hermeneutic in that the meanings the educators ascribed to their experiences were interpreted using IPA through an in-depth case-by-case analysis of each participant's account, thus achieving an idiographic approach. Furthermore, the write-up of the study presents a coherent argument where the themes are grouped and the contradictions are dealt with in a clear way.

3.6.6. Importance and impact.

The terms importance and impact refer to whether the research tells the reader something important or useful (Smith et al., 2009). According to Yardley (2000), the development of a sensitive, thorough and plausible analysis is insufficient if the ideas and conclusions drawn by the researcher have no influence on the beliefs and actions of other people. The value of research can only be judged according to the objectives of the analysis, the intended applications and the community for whom the findings were considered relevant.

The current study was conducted in order to contribute to the limited knowledge in the literature concerning the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. In doing so the empirical material presented a novel perspective which opens new ways of understanding bullying. From this study, the bullying of educators by learners can be understood more meaningfully, as the research considers the viewpoints of the participants within their context. The information derived from the research may provide evidence to schools, the Department of Education, policy makers and the general public about the issue of learner-to-educator

bullying, so that educators experiencing bullying may be recognized, supported and protected.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are important in all research from the initial design stages right through to the conclusion (Fossey et al., 2002). Researchers have an ethical responsibility to protect their participants from any form of harm or loss. Researchers should not only aim at addressing the research questions but should also strive at preserving the participants' psychological well-being and dignity throughout the research process (Willig, 2013). In the following section, I discuss the ethical measures I took to ensure the safety of the participants.

I completed a Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) request form, attached it with my research proposal and sent the documents to the Research Co-ordination Unit. The Research Co-ordination Unit assessed my proposal for ethical and GDE policy compliance. Upon meeting the ethical standards, I was granted permission to conduct my research at a secondary school in the Gauteng East District. The principal and deputy principal of the identified school received verbal and written information about the nature of the study and the data collection procedures. Thereafter they assented to the study and granted me permission to access educators from their school. Furthermore, the research was conducted in accordance with the protocols and procedures specified by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. In this way, ethical clearance was obtained from the University prior to the commencement of the study. This study was also conducted under supervision. The procedures followed in order to obtain ethical approval from the university as well as on-going supervision

ensure the integrity of the knowledge that is generated from the research and uphold the practice of acting in an ethically responsible manner towards participants (O'Leary, 2000).

Before any research can be undertaken, participants' informed consent must be obtained (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The participants I recruited for this study received information about what the study entailed, and participation signatures of informed consent were obtained prior to the collection of any data. As suggested by Smith et al. (2009), the participants were provided with an explanation on what to expect from the interviews and the outcomes of the data analysis, particularly the fact that verbatim extracts would be included in the mini dissertation and subsequent reports. The participants were informed about the process pertaining to documentation of the data, which would be stored for a minimum of 15 years at a secure location at the University of Pretoria. The participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and that they had the right to withdraw at any point.

Confidentiality should be maintained concerning any information about the participants obtained during the research process (Willig, 2013). The principal and the participants were informed about the confidential nature of the study. The identity of the participants was protected by ensuring that identifying information (names and contact details) were not revealed and pseudonyms were used instead in the presentation and reporting of the research. All data was anonymously coded and no identifiers referring to the teachers or the school were used. The documents pertaining to the study were securely stored in my password-protected computer in order to restrict access to the raw data.

I acknowledge that there were limits to ensuring confidentiality for this study. Although I made use of pseudonyms, it is possible for others to figure out who the

respondents are. O'Leary (2000) highlights that this can occur when the role played by the individuals in the community or organization is made public. Furthermore, should the research uncover any illegal activities, the data and files can be subpoenaed by the courts (O'Leary, 2000). Furthermore, complete anonymity could not be ensured as I was able to identify the data and information with a particular respondent. Furthermore, when the educators submitted their consent forms at the secretary's office, the secretary and anyone else who might have been in the office could have known which of the educators would take part in the study.

Smith et al., (2009) suggest that participants should be provided with access to appropriate support if there is any chance that the interview might be upsetting. In previous studies investigating bullying of educators, researchers have highlighted the fact that bullying is a sensitive issue (de Wet, 2010a; Terry, 1998). For instance, during the interview the participant may feel distressed while giving an account of their bullying experience. Therefore, to address the possibility of harm, certain measures were put in place. The educators were provided with a 'support sheet' containing contact numbers of agencies and helplines as well as a list of websites and books which they could consult if needed. The helplines offer telephonic as well as face-to-face counselling services free of charge. It was my ethical responsibility to ensure that the participants' well-being was maintained throughout the research process, therefore, if necessary I would have contacted Lifeline Ekurhuleni, a non-profit organization, to inform them if an educator had required counselling services and to further assist the educator with scheduling an appointment.

3.8. Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced the research approach of this study and the research design I chose. I then discussed the strategy of inquiry used to generate the data. I also provided an overview of the sampling methods I employed, together with the inclusion criteria used to guide the selection of participants. Thereafter I described the procedures I followed in order to obtain permission to conduct the study. I also described the process I undertook for the recruitment of participants and discussed the data collection procedures and the analytical process. In the section on data analysis I described my role as the researcher in this IPA study. Finally, I provided an overview of the measures I took to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical standards which the research adhered to. The following chapter (Chapter Four) will present the findings of the research.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1. Introduction

The findings derived from the analysis are presented in this chapter as a narrative account of the educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school. The chapter begins with a summary of relevant background information, which includes brief descriptions of each participant and my observations and reflections from the interviews. The summaries of subordinate themes (Tables 1, 2 and 3) for each educator respectively are presented with the background information. The participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity in writing up and presenting the research. In the remaining sections of this chapter I describe each theme from the master table which I developed in the final stage of the analytical process. The themes are exemplified with extracts from the interviews and also with corresponding interpretive comments, which capture a blend of the participants' understanding of their experiences and my interpretations of the meanings the participants had formulated. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), the participants' own words are used to illustrate the themes for two reasons: first, to allow the reader to assess the appropriateness of the interpretations, in the sense that they represent the participants as experts of the knowledge generated from the study; and secondly, to ensure that the voice of the participants' personal experience is retained, thus preserving the emic perspective.

4.2. Background information of the participants

4.2.1. First participant: Joseph.

Joseph is a 43-year-old black South African male. He has taught Business Economics and Life Orientation to learners in grade 10 and grade 11 for the past seven years at the present school. Prior to teaching at the present school, Joseph taught at an adult learning centre for three years. Although Joseph did not make a direct comparison between adolescent learner behaviour and adult learner behaviour, I viewed his prior experience with teaching adults as being significant, because this experience might have informed his perspective of learner behaviour and how learners treat him. Joseph made reference to misbehaviour being a normal part of adolescent learner behaviour that subsides as learners mature in age. Therefore, Joseph may have experienced those learners in the higher grades of secondary school as well-behaved, mature and considerate to others, as he had experienced the adult learners he previously taught. On average his classes at the current school consisted of 40 learners. Joseph was initially reserved and guarded when giving responses. At times I reflected back to him the content of what he described, which helped to develop rapport, and as the interview progressed, he appeared to be more comfortable and became more expressive. He confidently conveyed his understanding of why learners had bullied him and other educators at the school.

Joseph gave the overall impression of being an advocate defending bullied educators. He spoke strongly in support of educators sharing knowledge and ways to deal with being bullied, considering that he seemed to have figured out learners' intentions to bully educators and how to handle the bullying learners. He achieved this by approaching the bullying learners with care, showing them right from wrong.

Furthermore, Joseph demonstrated his reflective ability by making sense not only of his personal experiences but also of learner-to-educator bullying as an outsider looking in. In doing so he eloquently summarized educators' experiences of bullying at the school.

Table 1. Summary of subordinate themes for Joseph

Subordinate themes	Themes within cluster
Theme1: General understanding of bullying	Verbal bullying Provocation Intentional doing of harm Negative impact on emotional well-being
Theme 2: Understanding of learner-to-educator bullying	Self-blame Fear of judgement Bullied educators comparing themselves to non-bullied educators Reduced self-esteem Lack of support from fellow educators Verbal bullying
Theme 3: Experience of different forms of bullying early in teaching career	Provocation Disruptive behaviour Disregarding educator's requests Being tested Physical bullying Bystanders
Theme 4: Escalation of bullying	Confrontation Name-calling Physical violence Challenging the educator

Theme 5: Psychological impact of being bullied	Emotional pain
	Humiliation
	Mood changes directly related to bullying
	Disappointment
Theme 6: Professional impact of being bullied	Job satisfaction
	Loss of respect from learners
	Questioning one's choice of career
	Feeling uncertain about longevity of career
	Unmet expectations from learners
Theme 7: Coping strategies	Acceptance of the bullying
	Learner perceived as intrinsically good
	Authoritative educator role
	Building a trusting relationship with learners
	Concerned family
Theme 8: Urgent need for support	Unsupportive working environment
	Inability to meet expectations
	Lack of support from fellow educators
Theme 9: Attributions for learner-to-educator bullying	Peer influence
	Developmental phase
	Normal learner behaviour
	Lack of management skills
	New and unfamiliar teachers targeted

Reflective box 1:

I understood Joseph as being reserved and guarded at first because of the uncertainty and uneasiness he may have felt concerning the interview process and outcome. Although I had explained the interview process and what the findings would be used for and had reassured him that his identity would not be revealed, I realized that this would not automatically put him at ease and allow him to readily trust me and my intentions. I was of the impression that the open-ended questioning, which is not

interrogative and does not make assumptions, helped to develop rapport. Through the use of open-ended questions Joseph may have felt that he could freely disclose what he wanted to disclose about his experience and judge his experience for himself.

I was intrigued by how Joseph spoke about his successful attempt to avoid being bullied, by changing how he approached the bullying learners. Instead of being punitive and aggressive, Joseph showed care and understanding. As a result, the learner in question realized that Joseph was not a threat but someone he could trust. This experience made me think of the possibility that bullying learners may feel distrustful of people in general and feel the need to protect themselves. A situation where someone shows concern towards them may not be a familiar experience, perhaps one that they do not experience at home.

At other times in the interview I sensed a passive acceptance of being bullied in Joseph. Based on his account, it seemed that being bullied by learners is seen as an inescapable part of being a teacher at this school and an experience that one gets used to. I also thought of the possibility that when dealing with so many learners in a class at the same time, it may be difficult and time-consuming for the educator to deal with every issue that the learners present.

4.2.2. Second participant: Mandla.

Mandla is a 40-year-old black South African male. He has taught Social Sciences and History to learners in grades 8, 9 and 11 for the past three years at the present school. Prior to his employment at the current school, he was a substitute teacher for three months at another secondary school located in a township. I find it relevant to mention that Mandla had previously been a substitute teacher, because this may suggest that he had had limited contact with learners before, and hence little or no

chance of being bullied. In contrast, full-time, permanent employment as an educator might have introduced him to the experience of being bullied by learners. On average, Mandla's classes consisted of 40-50 learners. Mandla was calm and spoke at a comfortable pace during the interview. He gave long and comprehensive responses, engaging deeply with the exploration of his experiences. Furthermore, he used his language effectively to explain his experiences by making use of idioms, comparisons and analogies. Based on the ontological position I took, I viewed Mandla's use of language as a tool to talk about a fully-embodied experience he had had, not one he was detached from or had merely constructed in his mind.

Mandla appeared to be a victim at the hands of bullying learners, as he conveyed a sense of helplessness and powerlessness. Being bullied seemed to be a profoundly overwhelming experience for him. He spoke with great emphasis and detail when he described the psychological impact of being bullied. There was a point during the interview where Mandla seemed uncomfortable saying what a learner had said to him. The learner had used foul language which Mandla was not comfortable repeating during the interview. The possible reasons for this could be that the impersonal nature of our relationship prevented him from easily repeating the words, or perhaps, based on Mandla's personal cultural and social background, the use of foul language, even indirectly when reporting what someone else has said, may be viewed as unacceptable.

Table 2. Summary of subordinate themes for Mandla

Subordinate themes	Themes within the cluster
Theme1: Understanding of learner-to-educator bullying	Learner empowered by rights Feeling defeated

	Verbal bullying
	Indirect bullying
Theme 2: Experience of bullying within the classroom setting	Bullying occurs repeatedly
	Bullying perpetrated by a group
	Bystanders
	Victimization
	Testing the educator
	Disruptive behaviour
	Disregarding requests
	Disregarding rules
Theme 3: Escalation of bullying	Learner threatens educator
	Physical violence
	Offensive language use
	Disciplinary measures
Theme 4: Psychological Impact of being bullied	Negative impact on emotions
	Disappointment
	Negative feelings concerning children
	Compares persistent emotional pain to temporary physical pain
	Loss of appetite
	Comparing self to others
	Being bullied versus being beaten with a cane
Theme 5: Depressive symptoms	Feelings of hopelessness
	Irritability
	Loss of interest in activities
	Reduced energy, or fatigue
Theme 6: Professional impact of being bullied	Feelings of regret concerning chosen career
	Job dissatisfaction
	Negative impact on relationship with learners

	Learner undermines educator's authority
	Expectations placed on teachers exceed their scope of practice
Theme 7: Need for support	Uncertainty about how to deal with the bully
	Helplessness
	Need for parental involvement
	Departmental support
	Enforcement of rules through the code of conduct
	Involvement of other professionals from various fields
Theme 8: Experience of other people's attitudes	Insensitivity from management
	Insensitivity from learners
	Bullying of educators as acceptable
	Lack of concern from parents
	Learners' rights upheld above educator's needs
Theme 9: Attributions for learner-to-educator bullying	Lack of values
	Socialization
	Learner behaviour reflects behaviour in the community

Reflective box 2:

As the interview progressed, I felt that Mandla was delving more deeply into the topic to uncover issues related to the learners' background that contribute to their misbehaviour. This made me understand the complex nature of being an educator at this school. Being an educator does not simply mean teaching content to learners who come to school eager to learn and to co-operate with the educator. The educator is confronted with learners from various backgrounds, often involving unfavourable

conditions which affect the learners and how they interact with educators. As a result, educators have to deal with learners who bully and misbehave without skills or training to equip them to do so. I had feeling of being overwhelmed during and after the interview when processing the complexities of being a teacher at the school and hearing the effects of being bullied as described by Mandla.

4.2.3. Third participant: Joanne.

Joanne is a 46-year-old black South African female. She has been the Life Orientation Head of Department and has taught the subject to grade 10, 11 and 12 learners at the present school. On average her classes have consisted of 45 learners. She has been teaching for 14 years at the present school. The number of years Joanne has been teaching at the school is relatively long, which could suggest experience of a wide range of bullying behaviours from different learners and numerous opportunities to develop ways through trial and error of dealing with being bullied. Joanne has managed to establish what seems to be a solid support network of educators, which may have grown and strengthened over the years.

During her interview Joanne had a strong demeanour and at some points she spoke confidently, specifically about the social support she has from her colleagues. This support network has served as a coping mechanism and a protective factor which may have buffered her against the negative effects of being bullied. Furthermore, through her experience of a strong support system, she spoke of having a collective experience, thus speaking about her individual experience in relation to other bullied educators in her support group. In effect, Joanne gave a simplified account of being bullied even after she was asked to elaborate. This may suggest that her unique experiences may have been overshadowed by the collective experience of being

bullied, in her support group. However, she seemed to be guarded at some points of the interview, particularly when she spoke about the impact that being bullied had on her. She acknowledged that being bullied had a negative emotional impact but, instead of elaborating on the effects it might have had on her, she digressed to explain the effects bullying has on children.

Table 3. Summary of subordinate themes for Joanne

Subordinate themes	Themes within the cluster
Theme1: General understanding of bullying	Physically aggressive behaviour Verbal bullying Emotional impact
Theme 2: Experience of bullying in the classroom setting	Verbal bullying Humiliation Disruptive behaviour Disrespect Bystanders
Theme 3: Psychological impact of being bullied	Helplessness Questioning abilities as educator and as parent Comparing own children to learners
Theme 4: Professional impact of being bullied	Hindrance of learning and teaching Challenging social norms Undermining educator's authority Communication with learners hindered
Theme 5: Coping mechanisms	Talking about experiences Support from colleagues Suppressing feelings Shared experience of being bullied

	Collaborative efforts in dealing with the issue
Theme 6: Need for additional support	Bullying of educators recognised by principal only as the doing of physical harm
	Limited support from management
	Counselling for educators and learners
	Educator assumes title of parent but rejects parental responsibilities
Theme 7: Attributions for bullying experience	Bully-victims
	Exposure to negative behaviour in environment
	Peer group influence

Reflective box 3:

During the interview Joanne stated that she had to put her feelings aside in order to be tolerant towards the learners. I also found it interesting that, during the interview, she did not address how she felt about being bullied and minimized the negative emotional impact the bullying might have had on her. This made me feel frustrated, because I wanted to get as much information as I could about her experience. However, when I reflected on this, I interpreted it in various ways.

Firstly, I viewed Joanne's guardedness as stemming from a lack of rapport in the participant-researcher relationship, which would have enabled Joanne to open up to me about her feelings. I thus felt that her account might have been superficial. I incorporated probes to get deeper insight; however, I did assess the possibility of harm, as the probing seemed to evoke uncomfortable experiences for Joanne. Thus, the probes I used to get more information were limited and

carefully incorporated. Secondly, I interpreted her guardedness as a coping mechanism to deal with difficulty. Lastly, I realised that I had come into the interview with the assumption that being bullied by learners should have a negative impact on the educator, which is not always the case. So, when Joanne just stated that bullying is hurtful, I expected her to talk at length about this and not change the subject to how bullying affects children. She mentioned that some children may go as far as committing suicide as a result of being bullied. In a similar way, when she confidently spoke about the bullying experiences of her colleagues so as not to make her own experience seem so obvious, Joanne also changed the subject to children being victims and the detrimental effects bullying has on children, perhaps to avoid talking in detail about the personal impact the bullying might have had on her.

4.3. Themes derived from the Analysis

The following section orients the reader to the themes for the group, presented in the master table. These themes were developed from the connections among the subordinate themes across the educators' interviews. The master table consists of six superordinate themes and 26 subordinate themes (Table 4). The superordinate themes and subordinate themes were shaped into an interpretive narrative, using extracts from the participants' interviews. The participants' shared and unique experiences in relation to the themes form the basis of this narrative account.

Table 4. Summary of the master table of themes for the group

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Theme1: Experience of different forms of bullying	Disruptive behaviour
	Disobedience and insubordination
	Verbal bullying
	Humiliation
Theme 2: Unsupportive school system	Lack of support from school management
	Lack of support from fellow educators
	A sense of being burdened with responsibility
	Lack of parental involvement
	Unavailability of counselling services
Theme 3: Impact of being bullied	Emotional well-being
	Interpersonal relationships
	Job performance
	Job satisfaction
Theme 4: Coping mechanisms	Disclosing to others
	Avoidance
	Acceptance
	Proactive behaviour
Theme 5: Nature of being bullied	Challenging authority
	Powerlessness
	Disrespect
	Provocation
Theme 6: Attributions of being bullied	Being new and unfamiliar
	Developmental phase
	Socialization
	Peer influence
	Community violence

4.3.1. Theme 1: Experience of different forms of bullying.

The analysis of the participants' accounts revealed that the educators' experiences of bullying had manifested in various forms. The different forms of bullying are exemplified in the subordinate themes of disruptive behaviour, disobedience and insubordination, verbal bullying and humiliation. The educators in this study had experienced these forms of bullying within the classroom setting, often in the presence of other learners as bystanders. The educators made reference to more than one incident of being bullied, thus various experiences of bullying had repeatedly occurred. Mandla repeated the phrase "*So many times*" when he described bullying situations he had experienced.

4.3.1.1. Disruptive behaviour.

All the educators had experienced disruptive behaviours as a form of bullying by learners. However, the disruptive behaviours occurred in different ways for each educator. For Joseph, disruptive behaviour involved a learner making a noise. The learner deliberately made a noise to upset him. He noted, "*The one incident that I remember, that was the first year I came to this school. There was this learner in class. He really intended to provoke me and then he disclosed to other learners saying, 'This is what I'm going to say to the teacher, I want to see how he's going to react to what I'm going to say.' And then he just made noise intentionally knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry.*" In this account Joseph refers to a time in the past; it was in the first year he started working at the school that he had this experience. The learner announced publicly beforehand that they were going to bully the educator by disrupting the class. The learner may have done so to prove a point.

Mandla provided evidence of disruptive behaviours from more than one learner at a time. He noted, "*Sometimes you are busy teaching and you find that they whistle, not one, not two but a group of certain learners they whistle at the back.*" Mandla gave another example of disruptive behaviour noting, "*This boy was just playing music on his cell phone. I was like, what point is he trying to prove.*" Unlike Joseph, who knew the intention behind a learner disrupting the class, Mandla had tried to figure out the intention behind the learner's behaviour as the bullying occurred.

Joanne referred to a learner who had deliberately disrupted the class to prevent teaching and learning. She noted that the learner made "*funny jokes so that teaching and learning cannot take place.*" The learner involved other learners in Joanne's bullying experience by attempting to make the class laugh at their jokes. Joanne described another experience, noting "*…so cursing [at] me or cursing [at] other learners so that I can say something.*" This also illustrates an experience of disruptive behaviours with the intention of eliciting a response from the educator.

4.3.1.2. Disobedience and insubordination.

Disobedience and insubordination were understood as learners bullying educators by disregarding the rules the educators were trying to enforce, ignoring the instructions the educators gave or not complying with the requests made by the educators. Joseph had experienced disobedience and insubordination involving a learner not doing school work when instructed to do so. He noted, "*A learner did not do my work, and as I was questioning him [then] he became very angry and decided to slap me on the face [and then] thinking maybe I would retaliate but I didn't retaliate.*" It appears the learner did not accept being questioned by the educator and responded to confrontation as a challenge to engage in a physical fight.

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Likewise, Mandla had experienced disobedience and insubordination through a learner not complying with a request to complete schoolwork. He noted, "*Someone comes to school, you gave them homework the previous day and they didn't write it and when you ask them why they didn't write it, they will tell you 'I forgot'. You find that it's a daily excuse that one makes.*" Mandla's account further suggests that disobedience and insubordination as a form of bullying had been experienced regularly, with learners demonstrating a poor attitude towards their work.

Furthermore, Mandla had experienced disobedience and insubordination through learners ignoring the rules of dressing neatly and appropriately in school uniform. Mandla noted, "*Someone just walks into the class with a hat on or with a cap on and they know very well that they are not allowed.*" It appears that the learner is aware of the school rules concerning the dress code yet blatantly disregards these rules and the educator who tries to enforce the rules. Mandla pointed out an additional incident involving a learner doing work they were not permitted to do during his lesson: "*A learner was writing something else during my period.*"

4.3.1.3. Verbal bullying.

Bullying had also manifested as verbal aggressive behaviour in the educators' experiences. Verbal bullying involved learners using foul language and name-calling, and verbally threatening the educators. Joanne had experienced a learner saying foul words to her: "*Being cursed by a learner was one of the first [experiences] of my teaching experience[s]. I was cursed several times.*" Joanne's account also revealed that verbal bullying was one of the first recurrent negative experiences she had when she started working in the profession.

Joseph experienced verbal bullying in the form of name-calling when he perhaps defended his role by attempting to discipline the learner who had disrupted the class. The learner had referred to Joseph as a homosexual. Joseph said that he was disappointed to hear the learner say this. He also expressed this sense of disappointment in how he spoke during the interview. However, he countered this negative experience by immediately talking about two other learners who had approached him after the lesson. The learners seemed to show their support for Joseph by giving him insight into the bully's behaviour. This may have improved the way Joseph had felt following the incident.

And then he just made [a] noise intentionally, knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry. Then when I tried to discipline the learner verbally, he said to me, "I cannot entertain gay teachers in the class." So, I was so disappointed to hear that from that learner because all the learners were laughing at me. But then after the period two learners came to me and said, "The learner did that to provoke you, to see how you were going to react from [sic] being called those names."

Mandla had experienced a verbal threat when he attempted to defend his role by disciplining a learner who had been doing work for another subject in his lesson. He noted, "*I confronted him and asked, 'Why are you writing other subjects in my period?' and I chastised him, and he didn't take it well. So, he said to me (pause) in a rather (pause) crude way saying 'You're gonna sh*t yourself.*" The learner did not accept being reprimanded by the educator and threatened the educator for doing so. Mandla appeared uncomfortable during the interview when repeating what the learner had said to him.

4.3.1.4. Humiliation.

Two of the educators, Joseph and Joanne, had experienced humiliation in front of other learners. Joseph's experience of name-calling was understood not only as verbal bullying but also as humiliation. Joseph had experienced humiliation at the hands of a learner who had referred to him as a homosexual in front of the class. As a result, the other learners had laughed at him. Joseph noted, "*I was so disappointed to hear that from that learner, because all the learners were laughing at me.*" Furthermore, Joseph may have felt disappointed because he did not expect the learner to say such a thing about his sexual orientation, or because the other learners participated in the bullying incident by laughing. A further interpretation was that by being called a homosexual Joseph may have felt insulted, or he may have felt exposed by the learner. Joanne had experienced a learner or learners making a conscious effort to ridicule her in front of others. She noted, "*…trying to make fun of me so that other learners can laugh.*"

4.3.2. Theme 2: Unsupportive school system.

The educators identified their experiences of bullying as occurring in an unsupportive school system. This perspective has been captured in the following subordinate themes: lack of support from management, lack of support from fellow educators, lack of parental involvement, unavailability of counselling services and a sense of being burdened with responsibility. These themes reflect how the educators perceived the attitudes and behaviours of the school's management team, fellow educators and parents concerning their experiences of being bullied by learners. Moreover, the themes make evident the lack of services and resources in the school for the educators to effectively deal with bullying learners and being bullied.

4.3.2.1. Lack of support from school management.

The educators referred to the principal and the Department of Education as the management body of the school. When the educators were being bullied by learners, they sometimes sought assistance from the school's management team. However, all three educators had a general sense of feeling unsupported by this team. Joseph explicitly mentioned the absence of support from the Department of Education, noting, "*We don't get support from the Department. We don't get support from the management.*" Joseph further noted, "*Sometimes we're being told to use our own discretion as teachers. 'Use your own discretion, you're coming from university, you're coming from college, you've been learning about this, how to handle learners in your class.' That's what they always tell you. Sometimes they use these words, 'Use your own discretion.'*" Joseph repeats the phrase "use your discretion" in his account, emphasizing the insistent attitude shown by management towards educators. The lack of support and involvement from the management of the school can therefore be understood as stemming from the expectation that educators should be able to deal with and manage bullying learners by themselves. This expectation was based on the persistent assumption on the part of management that educators are equipped with knowledge and skills, which they have supposedly acquired in their formal training and education as educators, to be able to deal with bullying learners. However, in Joseph's experience, educators do not acquire such knowledge and capabilities and are therefore ill-equipped to deal with such learners.

Mandla indicated that the Department had been unaware of educators being bullied by learners and had also failed to enquire about the possibility of this issue occurring in the school. Furthermore, according to Mandla, if the issue is recognized at all by the Department, it is perceived as "petty" or is trivialized in comparison to the seriousness

of the issue to educators. Mandla continually emphasized that the biggest priority for the Department was syllabus completion, and the Department had tended to focus exclusively on whether the educator completes the curriculum, in so doing failing to acknowledge the complexities of an educator's experiences at work.

Mandla took a strong position in suggesting that the Department should not only focus on monitoring whether educators had completed the syllabus but should also take the initiative to find out how learners are behaving, including whether educators are being bullied by learners. The stance Mandla took was articulated as follows: *"As far as I'm concerned the Department, in order to deal with this problem, should not only focus on syllabus completion but should also focus on learner conduct."* He also suggested: *"The Department should actually listen to the concerns and the grievances of the teachers."* It seemed as though Mandla, like other educators, had been feeling unheard and denied an opportunity to talk about their experiences.

The under-appreciation of the full spectrum of educators' experiences of being bullied by learners is also evident in Joanne's account. She stated that bullying of educators is only addressed by the principal if the educator had been physically harmed and the injury was visible. Joanne commented as follows in this regard: *"At the end of the day the principal cannot do anything about it. The principal will say you were not hurt so therefore you should continue doing your work."* Joanne's comment speaks to the conceptualization of bullying. Within this particular school context, bullying is considered to be physical injury and not emotional or psychological harm, which is significant enough to warrant a call for action. Like Mandla's experience of the Department caring more about the educators fulfilling their duties than how they are being treated by learners, Joanne's account also suggests that, according to the

principal of the school, the educator's call to duty overrides the educator's personal well-being.

4.3.2.2. Lack of support from fellow educators.

Support from fellow educators when facing bullying by learners was experienced differently by the various educators. Joseph felt that educators do not support each other. Instead of providing assistance, some educators in the school stand by, watching an educator suffer and struggle to deal with learners who bully him or her. Joseph noted, *"We find that we, as teachers, we don't help each other. I have the ways in which I can assist this teacher, but I don't want to use them – I just want to expose this teacher to see how things will end up."* This statement further suggests that there are malicious intentions on the part of those educators who choose to withhold knowledge about how to deal with learners who bully.

Furthermore, there appeared to be an unsafe and non-accepting environment in which to talk freely and openly about issues of being bullied by learners. Joseph appeared to be advocating for bullied educators and empathizing with their feelings of not being able to disclose to other educators that they are being bullied. It seemed bullied educators do not speak out about being bullied as they fear that they may be judged on their capabilities as educators by non-bullied educators. Joseph commented, *"If I speak out maybe they'll think I'm not a good teacher."* Furthermore, it seemed that bullied educators also harbour feelings of inadequacy as a result of comparing themselves to their non-bullied counterparts. With regard to comparing oneself to others Joseph noted, "*If these teachers can handle their class properly it means there's something wrong with me*."

Moreover, Joseph seemed rather concerned about the way in which bullied educators are treated by non-bullied educators. He expressed the need for non-bullied educators, those who were able to have positive relationships with learners, to be more empathic and understanding towards bullied educators and to offer assistance. He said: *"Those who can speak can help him or her to say: 'We identify the learners who are bullying you', then give advice on what to do to gain respect."*

In contrast, Joanne seemed to have a strong support network from her colleagues. She felt that she was able to come together with fellow educators to talk about her bullying experiences and receive advice on how to deal with the issue. She noted, "*We talk with our colleagues during break, we discuss [the matter] and we find commonalities, and then we identify such learners and then we find ways to deal with them*."

4.3.2.3. A sense of being burdened with responsibility.

A consistent theme of feeling burdened with responsibility emerged from two of the educators' accounts, those of Mandla and Joanne. This theme had to do with the role of the educator. The role of the educator had been understood in terms of the contrast between the perceptions and expectations of parents and the school managing bodies on the one hand and the educators' experiences and perceptions of their role on the other hand.

Mandla was firm in stating the bounds of his role as an educator, suggesting that certain expectations placed on an educator cannot be met and are in fact beyond the educator's scope of practice. He noted, *"We are not there at school to teach them how to behave, we are not there to do that. So, if they become wayward then we are not [being] trained to deal with such learners."* Furthermore, Mandla's account

encapsulates the discussed subordinate theme through his specific use of the word "*burdened*" in his account, when he describes how learner behaviour indirectly becomes the educator's responsibility. He noted, *"They become a burden to other people, especially teachers, because we deal with them on a daily basis."*

Moreover, Mandla spoke adamantly about the shift of responsibility for managing learner behaviour, from the educators back to the parents where it rightfully belongs. He noted, *"The buck stops with the parents, not teachers. We didn't bring up those kids. Parents know them very well from their humble beginnings when they were infants to where they are now. So, if we are trying to usurp the role of parents it will be not only be naive for us, but it will be wrong because we will be subverting the responsibilities of parents."* As noted in Mandla's statement, he provides reasons why managing learner behaviour is a parental responsibility.

It seemed as though Joanne also rejected taking on parental responsibilities, as she stated, "*Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids.*" However, it appeared that, although she was against assuming parental responsibilities such as being a disciplinarian, she was accepting of the title of "parent", as she referred to the learners as "*my kids*" in her account. Perhaps Joanne did incline towards assuming the role of what she may have perceived as an absent parent in the lives of the learners. With this said, the following subordinate theme delves deeper into the lack of parental involvement in contributing to educators' experiencing bullying in an unsupportive environment.

4.3.2.4. Lack of parental involvement.

Mandla and Joanne pointed to the lack of parental involvement concerning the issue of learner-to-educator bullying. However, the learners contribute to their parents' not getting involved, as indicated by Mandla as follows: "*You give them a letter to go and give their parents, it doesn't reach them. They just tear those letters apart [sic] and then dump them somewhere and the next day they are at school.*" It seems the learners do not care about the seriousness of the issue and go on with their lives as if nothing had happened.

If parents are held accountable for their lack of involvement, their priorities may be brought into question. Mandla described the parents' main concern as follows: *"What most of the parents do, they only come to collect report cards. They don't actually know whether their children write school work, participate in school activities, they don't know those things, they only want to see if their children have passed or not."* It appears there are similarities between the parents' concerns and the concerns of the Department of Education mentioned earlier. Both groups are more concerned about the learners being taught the subjects and the educator producing the results, and less concerned about learner behaviour and how learners treat educators.

Mandla went on to suggest that parents need to become more involved in classroom affairs and be part of the teacher-learner relationship in order to help deal effectively with the issue of learners bullying educators. He suggested, *"So I think also teacher-parent-learner relationship, this triangle should actually exist."* Moreover, he noted, *"So I think parents should come and be part of what is happening with their children at school. They should become pretty much concerned about how their children are doing, because that in a way would ease any problem that the teacher has with those learners."*

4.3.2.5. Unavailability of counselling services.

Mandla and Joanne pointed out that counselling services, which could be beneficial in addressing the psychological impact bullying can have on educators, are not offered in their profession. Throughout his narrative Mandla expressed the need to have counselling services; as he stated, "*We need people who will actually counsel educators to deal with the trauma, to deal with the depression that they go through as a result of these learners.*" Joanne articulated her concern as follows, "*We don't receive counselling, counselling on a daily basis or maybe on a monthly basis. I think therapy. I think talking more, it helps to talk.*" The repetition of the word "talk" in Joanne's account emphasizes her point and it also stresses the role of therapy in assisting educators.

In addition, the educators recognized the need for counselling services to be offered to learners, as they felt that the learners have deep-rooted problems which they need help in dealing with. Joanne identified one such problem that bullying learners could have as she stated, "*I have to take into consideration the background of these learners. Maybe they have been bullied themselves, so they need somebody that they can punch so that they can feel better.*" In this statement Joanne provides a possible explanation for learners engaging in bullying, also suggesting that bullying learners require assistance in dealing with their own victimization. Mandla indicated that counselling services may be provided to learners at the school, but these are limited and ineffective. He noted, "*These learners, they need constant counselling, you can't just come once a year to give them advice, to counsel them and all that.*"

4.3.3. Theme 3: Impact of being bullied.

A sense of various participants' feelings of depression, distress, anger, disappointment, uncertainty, regret, humiliation and being undermined was frequently encountered. When placed in the context of the interviews, these feelings are considered relevant to the experience of being bullied. Through the analysis, different forms of bullying identified from the educators' experiences were found to have distinct or overlapping psychological effects, described in the sub-themes of emotional well-being, job performance, poor job satisfaction and interpersonal relationships. As previously discussed under the section of the experiences of different forms of bullying, the educators seemed to have experienced bullying more frequently at the beginning of their teaching careers. Therefore, the impact of the bullying is understood to have been more significant in the early stages of the educators' teaching careers, when the bullying was happening.

4.3.3.1. Emotional well-being.

The educators had recognized and identified the emotional impact of bullying in their personal and professional lives, describing the experience of being bullied as harmful and often debilitating. However, the educators' emotional well-being had been affected by being bullied to varying degrees at different times. The educators' experience of emotional difficulty was understood according to the number of years each of them had been in the teaching profession. Joanne had been in the teaching profession for 14 years, Joseph for seven years and Mandla for three years. It seemed as though Mandla had been experiencing difficulty leading up to the time of his interview for this study, whereas Joanne and Joseph, while acknowledging the

emotional impact of being bullied, gave the impression that the emotional difficulty had subsided over time.

The negative emotional impact of bullying had been a dominant theme throughout Mandla's narrative. Mandla described in detail the profound psychological difficulty caused by the bullying. He acknowledged that he had experienced depression and reported having had a lack of interest or pleasure in activities, and loss of appetite. He also mentioned that the bullying resulted in feeling irritable, emotionally and physically drained, and inclined to anger outbursts. He commented, "*When you get home you don't want to do anything. You're not only emotionally stressed but also physically stressed. You kind of like even lose appetite for food because of the depression you are going through. And at the same time, you find that you have anger towards everyone. You begin to have mood swings.*" Mandla rephrased the psychological consequences of the bullying by speaking in the first person. He stated, "*So for me when I get home having been bullied, I feel depressed, I don't want to see anything, I don't want to watch anything, I don't want to read anything, I just want to sleep.*"

To illustrate the severity of the psychological impact of being bullied, Mandla compared the emotional harm of bullying to the physical pain incurred when "*beaten with a cane*". He noted, "*It's one thing to be beaten with a cane, because obviously the pain will go away, but when you are emotionally abused, bullied, there is no doctor other than to get someone who will give counselling and all that. You really can't fix something that you can't see with your naked eye. So at least pain, I can see the pain when someone has hit me and then I know it will soon disappear, but with that one it can stay for longer and it will have a negative impact.*"

At the onset of his teaching career Joseph had been sensitive to learners bullying him. He experienced fluctuations in his mood based on whether he was bullied or not

on a particular day. He also indicated that the bullying would occur unexpectedly, so that he could not anticipate what his emotional state would be. He stated, *"And then tomorrow you find that you don't get bullied by anyone, then you start enjoying them, the learners. Sometimes you become happy, other days you're sad."* When he spoke about his experiences of being bullied, he explained the psychological impact the bullying had on him by saying that the bullying caused him to feel anger, disappointment and humiliation. He noted, "*And then he just made noise intentionally, knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry. Then when I tried to discipline the learner verbally, he said to me, "I cannot entertain gay teachers in the class." So, I was so disappointed to hear that from that learner because all the learners were laughing at me.*"

Joanne acknowledged that bullying has a negative emotional impact when she said that "*bullying is hurting.*" However, regarding her personal experience, she portrayed herself as being resilient and able to manage the bullying. She drew a comparison between herself and children who are bullied, saying that the experience of bullying is more hurtful to children than to her. She noted, *"Me personally – I can handle bullying, but kids cannot handle it, because bullying comes in all shapes and sizes. Other learners [sic] can even commit suicide from being bullied. So, with me I can handle it."* This suggests that Joanne believes that as an adult she is better able to deal or cope with being bullied than a child is.

4.3.3.2. Interpersonal relationships.

Bullying had impacted on all the educators' relationships: their relationships with learners, with colleagues and with other people in general. For Joanne and Mandla, the bullying had impacted on their ability to communicate and interact effectively with

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learners. Joanne noted, "*At times I can't communicate effectively with my kids, the learners.*" In Mandla's narrative the negative impact on his interpersonal relationships is evident in his statement, *"It will have a negative impact in one way or the other in the way I interact with learners and other people. It will eventually affect my relationships."* Mandla also explained that being bullied had affected his perception of and behaviour towards children in general. Despite knowing and believing that not all children are bullies, his experience of being bullied had elicited negative feelings towards children, and these had challenged his previous beliefs about children being good. He stated the following in this regard:

> *You begin to paint learners with the same brush, that they are all bullies. And you kind of like don't want to have any association with children because the experience that I had actually makes me [to] think that all children are the same, they are bullies, [and] which is not the case.*

In contrast to Mandla's negative experience, being bullied in Joseph's case initially had a negative impact on his relationships with learners, where he felt he was being disrespected; however, he eventually reaped a positive outcome from the experience. Being bullied had also created an opportunity for positive change to occur in the educator-learner relationship. This is reflected in the following quote:

> *I just confront them saying "What you are doing is wrong, this is the way of life. You are doing this because this is what is pushing you, like other learners, you just want to show them that you can do this, but this is not you. It's just that it's a situation that you're living in." Then you find over time the learner gets used to you and then you find that every time the learner is having a problem, they come to you as an information source to say "This*

is the person who understands me better, therefore this is where I'm going

to get information if something maybe goes wrong."

Through Joseph's fostering of a healthy relationship between him and the learner, the bullying and its negative effects gradually diminished.

4.3.3.3. Job performance.

The analysis revealed that being bullied had negatively impacted on the educators' job performance; disruptive behaviour, in particular, had had a direct impact on their ability to perform their duties within the classroom. In addition, the experience of disobedience and insubordination compromised the educators' roles as leaders and rule enforcers in the classroom and school, thus negatively impacting on their ability to do their job.

As noted earlier, Mandla experienced a group of learners whistling at the back of the classroom while he was teaching. When this happened, he stopped teaching to try and identify the learners who had disrupted the class. Having to stop the class may have wasted valuable teaching and learning time. Mandla may have lost focus and been unable to complete the required work for the class period. The following quote from Mandla's interview reflects this: "*Sometimes you are busy teaching and you find that they whistle, not one, not two, but a group of certain learners, they whistle at the back. And when you try to identify who's doing that, you find that you don't actually know, [can't] pinpoint who has done that.*"

The impact of bullying on job performance was a recurrent theme in Joanne's account. When asked about the effect of the bullying on her daily life she stated, "*Sometimes it makes teaching and learning not effective.*" She also mentioned, "*You want to see yourself happy. You want to see beautiful work that is being done by your*

learners, but sometimes it's difficult for a teacher to mark scripts knowing very well that that particular learner has bullied you." This account demonstrates the conflict between Joanne's positive views and wishes concerning herself and the learners on the one hand, and the reality of bullying and its effects on her feelings on the other. It may be inferred that being bullied may possibly have caused Joanne to harbour feelings of resentment towards the learners.

The analysis further uncovered feelings of inadequacy related to Joanne's feeling ineffectual in her role as an educator. This is evident in her questioning of her capabilities as an educator. She stated, "*So you start to wonder as a teacher where is it that I went wrong."* Engaging in a process of questioning her capabilities may also reflect a tendency towards blaming herself for the bullying and experiencing a lack of confidence.

4.3.3.4. Job satisfaction.

Being bullied had also resulted in two of the educators, Joseph and Mandla, experiencing poor job satisfaction at some point in their teaching career. Job dissatisfaction has been understood in terms of the educators' experiencing its psychological effects, which include feelings of loathing, uncertainty and regret concerning the decision made to become educators. Mandla had experienced his work as unrewarding as a result of being bullied. He pointed out: "*You don't actually enjoy the fruits of your labour.*" Joseph noted that an educator initially hates going to work as a result of being repeatedly bullied, "*When you are being bullied like every day, when you wake up you find that sometimes you hate coming to work.*"

In addition, Mandla expressed feelings of regret as he noted, "*You feel like you should have chosen a different career path.*" Joseph also expressed regret and a

sense of feeling anxious and uncertain about the future as he noted, "*You feel like you got into the wrong career, I must say because you might find yourself asking yourself, am I going to make it really in this field*." This quote suggests that one may undergo a process of questioning one's decision to become an educator and one's longevity in the teaching profession. Joseph further commented, "*At first you regret taking this kind of a career and say how could I choose this career, this is not mine*."

However, according to Joseph, the negative feelings eventually disappear as a result of becoming more familiar with the nature of the work environment. One eventually enjoys being a teacher, which is evident in Joseph's comment: "*But when time goes on you start to enjoy it because you get used to the learners, you get used to the job that you're doing*." Underlying Joseph's account is the implication of using coping strategies to deal with the effects of the bullying. In the following section the coping mechanisms used by the educators are described.

4.3.4. Theme 3: Coping mechanisms.

The participants identified various coping mechanisms which had helped them deal with being bullied by learners. The educators seem to have alternated the use of different coping styles depending on the form of bullying experienced and its severity. The subordinate themes which are discussed in this section include disclosing to others, avoidance, acceptance and proactive behaviours.

4.3.4.1. Disclosing to others.

Joanne and Joseph identified talking to others as a coping mechanism, sharing experiences of being bullied with both fellow educators and family members. Throughout her account Joanne emphasized the importance of talking about one's

experience of being bullied. She had established trusting relationships with her colleagues to talk about bullying experiences. She noted, *"So what we normally do, we sit down as friends, as colleagues just to share our experiences. That is how we manage these types of attacks."*

In contrast to Joanne's positive experience of being able to discuss her experiences with other educators, Joseph had observed a lack of unity and support amongst the educators in the school, as discussed earlier under the subtheme of a lack of support from fellow educators. Joseph had identified the home as being a safer and more comfortable space for disclosing bullying experiences to family members. He perceived family as being warm, concerned and accepting as he noted, *"When you arrive at home family members are happy towards you asking: 'How was it at work?' And then you start recalling the things that happened during the day, then you start to disclose, you're able to explain to them what happened."* Family helps one to create a space to reflect on one's experience of bullying and to put into perspective.

4.3.4.2. Avoidance.

Avoidance had been employed by Mandla and Joanne as a coping mechanism. The use of this coping mechanism had involved ignoring the bullying as it occurred or supressing the negative feelings elicited by recollections of the bullying experience. In Mandla's account he stated, *"Sometimes you try as much as you can to avoid such people or such learners. You kind of like act maturely by ignoring some of their dirty tricks."* Furthermore, the language use of the phrases "such people" and "such learners" was interpreted as distancing language between oneself and the opposing other, which further exemplifies the subtheme of avoidance.

To be able to perform her duties without being negatively impacted by the bullying, Joanne had learnt to suppress her feelings as a way of coping with the experience. She noted, *"Sometimes you want to be lenient as much as you can, but you need to put your feelings aside."* Joanne realized that if her feelings were to take precedence in the situation, this could result in her being strict towards the learners and responding on the basis of negative emotions. She therefore avoided addressing the emotions caused by the experience in order to continue with her job.

4.3.4.3. Acceptance.

Joseph had coped with bullying by accepting that bullying behaviours are a characteristic feature of learners. He noted, *"You tend to get used to the situation and say that this is how learners behave and then I have to get used to it because when time goes on some of them change and realize that this is not a good way to live or to treat teachers and other learners."* The comment also suggests that Joseph believes that over time, through growth and becoming more mature, the learner comes to their own realisation that bullying is wrong.

4.3.4.4. Proactive behaviour.

At times, being bullied had become unavoidable and resulted in the educators' exercising more proactive behaviours to deal with the bullying. Proactive behaviours show attempts by the educators to exercise some control over the situation of being bullied by learners with the aim of taking back into their hands the power that had been compromised because of the bullying.

Mandla had demonstrated a more proactive stance in dealing with the bullying by attempting to involve other parties such as school management and the parents of the

learners. This is reflected in the following comment, "*It comes to a point where they push me to the limit, I would eventually have to take drastic action against those learners where I will take them to the office where they will be issued with letters and an ultimatum will be given to say if you don't bring them, your parents don't come to school.*"

However, it also became evident that Mandla's attempt to involve the learners' parents had been unsuccessful. Mandla described this failed attempt as follows, "*You give them a letter to go and give their parents, it doesn't reach them. They just tear those letters apart [sic] and then dump them somewhere and the next day they are at school.*" Furthermore, Mandla's statement suggests the lack of responsibility displayed by the learners and their lack of appreciation for the seriousness of the issue. The learners continue with their lives as if nothing has happened.

Joanne had been able to cope proactively with being bullied by having constructive conversations with her colleagues, as they would discuss ways in which they could deal with bullying learners and give each other advice. Joanne confidently stated, "*We talk with our colleagues during break, we discuss [the problem] and we find commonalities and then we identify such learners and then we find ways to deal with them.*"

While on one hand passively accepting the bullying, Joseph had also taken a proactive stance by approaching the learner in order to deal with the bullying. Initially he had used an authoritarian style to approach the learner, but it had proved to be ineffective, as the bullying situation would often escalate to physical violence. He then changed to an authoritative style instead, which had fostered an understanding within the educator-learner relationship, thus preventing further victimization. Joseph had established a trusting relationship with the bully by approaching them with care and

caution. The following quote reflects the subtheme: the impact of bullying on interpersonal relationships, which has already been discussed. However, the quote is used again to exemplify the coping strategy employed by Joseph.

"*I make a way to call this learner to come to me so I'm going to put the learner in a corner, but I don't intimidate him or her.*" He then had shown an understanding towards the learner, evident in his words *"What you are doing is wrong, this is the way of life. You are doing this because this is what is pushing you, like other learners, you just want to show them that you can do this, but this is not you. It's just that it's a situation that you're living in."* Once Joseph had managed to gain the learner's trust he discovered that *"Over time the learner gets used to you and then you find that every time the learner is having a problem they come to you as an information source to say 'This is the person who understands me better, therefore this is where I'm going to get information if something maybe goes wrong.'"*

4.3.5. Theme 5: Nature of being bullied.

The nature of being bullied indicates the relationship dynamics between the educators and the learners in bullying situations, and how the educators have understood the processes involved when they are being bullied. The nature of being bullied has been captured in the subthemes of challenging authority, powerlessness, provocation and disrespect.

4.3.5.1. Challenging authority.

Being bullied has been interpreted as learners challenging the educator's authority. Mandla stressed that being bullied meant that he was not recognized by learners as someone in a higher position than them within the hierarchical structure of

the school. Instead, his position had been reduced to that of a learner. This was evident when Mandla noted, *"You feel like you are being undermined by the perpetrators of it. And you kind of like feel you're not part of the staff. The learners perhaps they equate you with other learners, not other teachers."*

Joanne articulated a similar understanding to that of Mandla by saying that being bullied weakens or compromises her authority. She appeared to be puzzled as she stated, *"It doesn't make sense to be bullied by a child, especially in a position of authority like teachers. It means there is something wrong either with our school system, the parents or the community."* The understanding derived from Joanne's statement is that the problem is not with the learners themselves but rather a systemic problem, which involves other members and factors in the environment which affect or influence learner behaviour.

Instead of submission and compliance on the learners' part, physically aggressive behaviours had been demonstrated by the learners in response to two of the educators, Mandla and Joseph, attempting to stop the bullying learner or enquiring about the learners' behaviours respectively. The educators' efforts only aggravated the situation. Bullying learners had become angry and had retaliated with physical violence. In Joseph's narrative the learner slapped him in the face and challenged him to engage in a fight. Joseph noted; *"A learner did not do my work and as I was questioning him then he became very angry and decided to slap me in the face [and then] thinking maybe I would retaliate but I didn't retaliate."* The quote suggests that Joseph did not succumb to the learner's expectation to engage in a fight.

Mandla noted, "*So it came to a point where he had to beat me on my back, punching me. I wanted to take that phone to the office, but he refused and decided to take it*

back from me. Unfortunately, he didn't get it." Mandla had to put his life in potential danger to discipline the learner.

4.3.5.2. Powerlessness.

The analysis showed that when the educators are confronted with a bully, they are often uncertain whether to respond or not, are ineffective when they do respond or do not have the means to respond as thus become defenceless, helpless and vulnerable. This understanding had been derived from the accounts by Mandla and Joanne, who had both perceived themselves as powerless when confronted by a bully while the learners had been perceived as having more power in a bullying situation. The educators had understood the power that the learners have as being related to the learners' awareness of their rights, the protection of learners' rights and the educators' perception that the learners' rights override the educators' rights.

A sense of helplessness had been conveyed in Mandla's experience of bullying when he noted, "*Although the Department will say the learner has the right to learn and to be taught but what do you do when one is confronted with such a situation?* Mandla went on to say, "*You find that there's no solution to that because at the end of the day you can't touch them…So you feel down, down-trodden.*" Likewise, Joanne noted, "*I was cursed several times, but I couldn't fight back you know because according to the policy we are not supposed to curse back [sic] at learners because they are supposed to be our kids.*" Underlying Joanne's and Mandla's accounts is the implication that it is permissible and goes unpunished for learners to abuse educators yet prohibited for educators to do the same. Furthermore, it appears that educators are expected to assume a parental role to demonstrate nurturance and care towards learners despite the learners' ill-treatment.

4.3.5.3. Disrespect.

The issue of disrespect was found to underlie the participants' bullying experiences. Joseph alluded to an underlying disrespect in the nature of learner-to-educator bullying by pointing out how a group of the learners can treat different educators in different ways, where some educators are bullied and others are respected. This was demonstrated when Joseph noted, "*For example the teacher next door is experiencing problems like this one of bullying. And then you find that all these learners coming into my class they respect me, they pay attention and then when my period ends, and they go to the next class, they don't behave the way they behaved in my class.*" As a result, Joseph suggested that non-bullied educators should "*give advice on what to do to gain respect.*"

It can further be understood that new, unfamiliar and young-looking educators, particularly those assigned to grade 10 or 11 classes, could be the ones experiencing the disrespect inherent in being bullied by learners. This understanding is conveyed in Joseph's statement: *"If you get into a school and then you find that they throw you in grade 10 grade 11, they don't know you, maybe let's say you have a young face, they think you are the same age as them, then that's when they are going to treat you badly because they don't know you, they don't know how you behave, how you conduct yourself in a situation where they provoke you."*

In contrast to the above, the learners are respectful towards the educator they encounter when they start grade 8. At this stage the learners are new and are the youngest group in the school and as such may be timid and show respect to the educator. Respect for the familiar educator is maintained by the learners as they progress to the higher grades. This understanding is reflected in Joseph's statement:

"When you go with the grades, let's say you start from grade 8, young learners at grade 8 they respect you because they are still young and then when you go through with them until grade 12. At grade 10, 11 they get used to you, they treat you as an adult."

Joanne articulated the issue of disrespect from learners by comparing her own children to the learners. She noted, "*You find that the very same learners that I am teaching are younger than my kids. My kids at home they respect me more than the learners that I'm teaching,*" Joanne seemed baffled by the apparent disrespect stating, "*So sometimes I ask myself the question as to why are these learners doing this and yet they are way younger than my own kids at home.*" The sense of confusion portrayed in Joanne's statement may be stemming from her belief or expectation that children are supposed to show respect for their elders.

Mandla realized that his experience of being bullied can be understood as learners not being accustomed to respecting others. He noted, "*Sometimes when I do self-introspection and I try to figure out in hindsight I just think that perhaps this whole experience is a result of lack of good habits of respecting other people.*"

4.3.5.4. Provocation.

The educators perceived being bullied as learners intentionally attempting to provoke or test them. The learners bully in order to elicit a negative response from the educators. Mandla understood his experience of learners disregarding the rules as them "*testing your patience, how far you can go with your tolerance.*" Joanne identified her experience of disruptive behaviour and verbal bullying as learners pushing her to say something as she noted, *"So cursing at me or cursing at other learners so that I can say something."*

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Provocation was a dominant theme throughout Joseph's narrative. He said with certainty that a learner had bullied him in order to provoke him. The learner knew that his actions would make Joseph angry but carried them through, nonetheless. Joseph noted, *"There was this learner in class. He really intended to provoke me and then he disclosed [sic] to other learners saying, 'This is what I'm going to say to the teacher, I want to see how he's going to react to what I'm going to say.' And then he just made noise intentionally knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry."* Based on his own experience and his perception of the treatment of new educators at the school, Joseph concluded that learners generally bully the educators to test and provoke them to find out how they respond. He noted, "*It's just that learners test you, especially if you're new at the school, they just want to see how temperamental you are and how you behave when they do this."*

4.3.6. Theme 6: Attributions for being bullied.

The last superordinate theme presented in this chapter is attributions of being bullied, which outlines the contributing factors the educators identified to explain their experiences of being bullied by learners. The related sub-themes are being new and unfamiliar, developmental phase, socialization, peer influences and community factors. Based on the attributions provided by the educators, I inferred that the educators did not have a blaming attitude towards the learners. Instead of suggesting that the learners are fully responsible for perpetrating bullying, there was consensus amongst the educators that the issue of educators being bullied by learners is part of a bigger problem in society.

4.3.6.1. Being new and unfamiliar.

Using the analytical tool referred to as contextualization mentioned in the methodology chapter, the educators' experiences were understood according to the point in the educators' teaching careers at which the bullying had occurred. It appeared that the educators had had more bullying experiences when they were newly appointed at the school. Therefore, attributions pertaining to being bullied when newly appointed to the school and unfamiliar to the learners were inferred from the educators' accounts. Joanne noted that being bullied was "*one of the first experiences*" she had when she started teaching. Mandla referred to a bullying incident he remembered well, which had taken place a year before the time of the interview. He noted, "*I remember the other one quite vividly, I think last year.*"

Joseph highlighted similarities between his being bullied early in his teaching career and other new educators who had been bullied by learners at the school. His comment sums up this experience for the study group and other educators at the school: "*Ya, that was at the beginning of my teaching career. Now the situation has gotten better because the learners have gotten used to me. It's just that learners test you, especially if you're new at the school, they just want to see how temperamental you are and how you behave when they do this. Like we have new teachers now who came last year, they are being treated like that as well. When time goes on, they get used to you.*" Joseph's comment further suggests that the passage of time creates a sense of familiarity between learners and educators. Perhaps when educators are known to learners, they no longer become targets of bullying.

4.3.6.2. Developmental phase.

One of the educators (Joseph) made sense of bullying behaviours as being inevitable and developmentally appropriate behaviours during early adolescence. Joseph highlighted the pervasive nature of the problem of learners' bullying behaviours by indicating that educators are not the only group of people that learners bully. Learners bully other learners and their parents in different settings. He noted, "*They were living like this from their parents' house and treat their parents like this as well. If you call the parents, they will tell you that this is how the learner behaves even at home. So, you find you can't change them.*" Joseph seemed doubtful about the possibility that the bullying learners could change. He seemed to believe that the learners themselves must have an intrinsic desire to change, which is reflected in his words: "*When time goes on some of them, they change and realise that this is not a good way to live or to treat teachers and other learners. So, some of them in time they will change, others they don't change they just live like that, to find out it's the manifestation of where they come from.*" Those learners who do change do so as they mature into late adolescence as noted in Joseph's statement, "*When they grow up they mature and you find out that at around grade 11 grade 12 they are very thoughtful.*"

4.3.6.3. Socialization.

Two of the educators described an inadequate upbringing as their explanation of learner-to-educator bullying by highlighting the absence of parental figures and positive role models in the lives of bullying learners. Mandla stated, "*Some of them they come from different family backgrounds where there are no parents, some of them they come from child-headed families and they have no values, certain values*

that they have been brought up with. So, for them life is all about waking up every day, go to school, come back home, meet friends. They don't have these values that actually give them direction about how they can actually confront the challenges they face in life." According to Mandla, one such value that has been missing in the learners' upbringing is respect. He stated, *"There was no one who has instilled a culture of respect especially for the elders, to these learners."* As previously discussed, the inherent lack of respect underlies one of the processes behind bullying of educators by learners.

In the same way, Joanne identified the problem of learners bullying educators as inadequate parenting, where parents do not play an active role in disciplining their children. As a result, this responsibility falls to the educators. Joanne noted, "*Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids."* Joanne's statement also illuminates the previously discussed subtheme of educators being burdened with responsibility.

Joanne introduced the possibility of learners not only being bullies but also being victims of bullying in their own lives. These learners can be described as bully-victims who displace their aggression onto educators. Joanne articulated the notion of bully-victims as follows, "*I have to take into consideration the background of these learners. Maybe they have been bullied themselves, so they need somebody that they can punch so that they can feel better*."

4.3.6.4. Peer influence.

Joseph and Joanne mentioned the influence of peers in their understanding of being bullied by learners. Joseph noted, "*What I have learnt, learners engage in bullying just to please their class mates. You find that if you stand with that learner one on one, he or she is not that kind of person. You find that he or she is respectful. It's*

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just that he or she is under pressure from peers to show them that they can do this towards the teacher." On a similar note Joanne stated that learners bully educators "*maybe to look cool or to impress their peers.*"

The accounts provided by Joseph and Joanne therefore reveal that they, like other educators, have been bullied in the presence of other learners where the bully has an audience of his peers. This understanding has also been discussed earlier under the theme of experience of different forms of bullying. Indirect bullying in the form of humiliation can be attributed to peer influences, as the bully bullies the educator to make his peers laugh and perhaps to gain the title of being the class joker, unfortunately at the cost of causing psychological harm to the educator.

4.3.6.5. Community violence.

The educators showed a great sense of awareness of the environment in which the school is situated, thus realizing the impact it has on learners developing aggressive behaviours. Mandla expressed the following understanding: "*For me it's also a microcosm of what is actually happening in the community. What they are doing here is a reflection of how and what the community is.*" The understanding derived from Mandla's comment is that aggressive behaviours are exhibited in the community

Joanne also provided an example of behaviours the learners are exposed to in their environment and how these behaviours influence the way learners behave in the school setting. She noted, "*Some behaviours are triggered by what the kids are seeing for example community violence and model that behaviour.*"

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented a narrative account of the findings derived from the process of analysis, using interpretive phenomenological analysis. This was achieved by using the superordinate themes and their related subordinate themes that have been documented in the master table of themes. Six superordinate themes and 26 subordinate themes have been presented to capture the participants' shared and unique experiences of being bullied by learners in a single township secondary school. Chapter Five, which follows, discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature in order to integrate previous knowledge and the knowledge generated from this study concerning the phenomenon of learner-to-educator bullying.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature with a view to developing a rich understanding of the experiences of bullied educators. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study. Thereafter the recommendations for practice and future research are made. Lastly, I provide my personal reflections of the research process, and the chapter ends with the conclusion.

5.2. The Findings and Existing Literature

Interpretive phenomenology served as the underlying theoretical perspective of the present study. As such the aim of the study was to explore how educators experience being bullied by learners in a township secondary school. Through the exploration six superordinate themes were generated: *experience of different forms of bullying, an unsupportive school system, impact of being bullied, coping mechanisms, nature of being bullied* and *attributions for being bullied*. These themes revealed both the shared and the unique experiences of the participants and were noteworthy when considering the aim of the research.

5.2.1. Experience of different forms of bullying.

The findings from the present study revealed that the educators experienced direct bullying, indirect bullying and a combination of the two. The educators were bullied in various ways: by learners disrupting the lesson, learners being disobedient and

refusing to submit to them, and learners verbally bullying and humiliating them. These forms of bullying experienced by the educators in this study corroborate with findings from previous studies (de Wet, 2010a; Tolentino, 2016). Furthermore, most of the educators who were interviewed said that they had been bullied more frequently in the early years of teaching at the school. Mandla (pseudonym), one of the participants, who had taught the smallest number of years at the school, reported that he had been bullied frequently by learners. In contrast, Joseph (pseudonym) and Joanne (pseudonym), who had taught for a longer period at the school, seemed to have had fewer experiences of being bullied. Joseph and Joanne may have experienced being bullied less and less over time due to a combination of factors, which include the use of various coping strategies and the understanding Joseph conveyed that the learners become more familiar with an educator over time, thus making the educator less of a target of bullying.

The subjective perspectives of the educators from this study suggest that they were bullied repeatedly over an extended period. This finding confirms the criterion of repetition, deemed essential by some authors (de Wet, 2010a; Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012) for a definition of learner-to-educator bullying. However, the educators also referred to single or isolated events of being bullied by different learners at different times. This finding therefore confirms that a single episode of an educator experiencing aggressive behaviours directed at them by a learner is significant enough to be considered learner-to-educator bullying (Benefield, 2004). Unlike studies (Kruger, 2011; Pervin & Turner, 1998) that have revealed that educators are bullied by learners in different sites on and outside the school premises, the educators from this study only reported being bullied in the classroom setting. The perpetrating learners blatantly bullied the educators in front of other learners. This suggests that

the bully often had an audience when targeting the educator. As suggested by one of the participants in the present study the learner bullied him to prove a point to other learners.

5.2.1.1. Disruptive behaviour.

Researchers have identified disruptive behaviour or misbehaviour (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012) as a form of bullying unique to educators (Garrett, 2014; Taole & Ramorola 2014). As such, disruptive behaviour has been classed under workplace bullying in the context of the teaching profession (Kruger, 2011). Disruptive behaviour was also evident in the accounts provided by the educators from this study. Moreover, the educators perceived persistent learner misbehaviour, as well as a single episode, as intentional disruptive behaviour significant enough to be considered bullying behaviours targeted at them. In contrast, previous authors (de Wet, 2010a; Garrett, 2014) suggest that disruptive behaviour is considered bullying behaviours targeted at educators only when the behaviours are persistent or on-going.

The disruptive behaviour experienced by the educators in this study directly interfered with their work and their ability to teach effectively. Furthermore, disruptive behaviour hindered the learning process for students who were implicated in the bullying situation, as demonstrated in this study. According to Joanne and Joseph, the learners intentionally made jokes and noises during lessons and swore at the educator or other learners to prevent learning and teaching or to intentionally upset the educator. Mandla referred to learners whistling and playing music while he was teaching. Mandla's example of a learner playing music has been considered by educators interviewed in a previous study as a minor form of indiscipline having a negative impact on learning and teaching (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011).

5.2.1.2. Disobedience and insubordination.

In this study, two of the educators experienced being bullied in the form of disobedience and insubordination. This involved learners not doing their homework when instructed to do so, writing other subjects during the educator's lesson and wearing items of clothing that were not part of the school uniform. The educators in this study felt that the learners who disregarded the school rules and the requests that the educators had made lacked responsibility and did not take pride in their school work or school values. Similar defiant behaviours were identified in other studies (Chen & Astor, 2008, James et al., 2008).

However, some previous findings suggest that disobedience and insubordination develop into learner-to-educator bullying when learners challenge educators in an attempt to disempower them (de Wet, 2010a). The findings from this study show that the educators attempted to confront the learners and question their defiant behaviours, and the learners responded to the educators' confrontation in various ways. When Mandla questioned learners about not doing their homework, the learners would constantly make excuses and show no remorse for not doing the prescribed homework. In Joseph's experience, the learner became angry and slapped Joseph in the face when confronted about not doing his work. The learner may have perceived Joseph's confrontation as a threat and felt obliged to defend himself, hence retaliating and slapping him. Instead of submitting to the educator's authority when disciplined, the bullying learners challenge the educator to engage in a fight.

5.2.1.3. Verbal bullying.

The educators who were interviewed experienced learners using face-to-face language in a hurtful and threatening manner towards them. This finding is consistent

with previous research (de Wet & Jacobs, 2006; Kõiv, 2011) showing educators as targets of verbal bullying by learners. Joanne experienced direct verbal bullying early in her teaching career on more than one occasion, when a learner spoke to her in a foul manner. Joseph experienced name-calling by being referred to as a homosexual, and Mandla experienced indirect verbal bullying involving a learner verbally threatening and intimidating him. Some authors (Taole & Ramorola, 2014) suggest that the relationship between learners and educators has deteriorated to the extent where learners fight physically or verbally with their educators. This was demonstrated in Joseph's and Mandla's experience of verbal bullying which came about as a result of confronting the bullying learners to defend their roles as disciplinarians and rule enforcers. Instead of the learners accepting discipline from the educator or respectfully expressing their disagreement with the educator, they retaliated by saying hurtful words and verbally threatening the educators.

Verbal bullying has been viewed in the literature as causing emotional, social and professional harm (de Wet, 2010a). The bully directly assaults the victim's character with the intention of damaging his or her reputation (Tolentino, 2016). Although the educators from this study did not explicitly report that they were verbally bullied by learners who intended to cause them social and professional harm, such an effect was inferred from their accounts. The interviewed educators were verbally bullied in front of other learners, which may have tarnished their reputation or image as respected members of the school community.

5.2.1.4. Humiliation.

In the existing literature, humiliation is regarded as a form of indirect bullying that is psychological and emotional in nature (Tolentino, 2016; Venter, 2013). In this regard

humiliation can be understood as the act of humiliating connected with the emotional state of feeling humiliated (Bhatia, 2013). Two of the educators in this study spoke about being humiliated by the bullying learners in front of other learners. Joseph's experience of being referred to as a homosexual is not only an experience of verbal bullying but also an experience of being humiliated by the learner. Joseph did not expect the learner to call him a homosexual in front of other learners. The learner could have been acting in an unnecessarily insulting, harmful or offensive manner towards the educator (Bhatia, 2013). Joanne was made fun of in front of the class. Other learners were implicated in the bullying situation as they laughed at the educators, thus causing the educators to feel humiliated.

The social and professional harm experienced through being verbally bullied in front of other learners is also experienced when educators are publicly humiliated (Tolentino, 2016). When educators are humiliated in front of the class it may send a message to the rest of the class that this sort of behaviour is acceptable, thus making it possible for other learners to also bully the educator. Public humiliation may also be viewed in terms of what Mandla perceived as learners reducing the educators' status of an authority figure, because of learners treating educators the same way they would treat their peers. As such the boundaries in the educator-learner relationship may be seen to be compromised.

5.2.2. Unsupportive school system.

As the results of this study have shown, the educators' bullying experiences occurred within the context of a predominantly unsupportive school system. The educators experienced a lack of support from the management of the school, which includes the principal and the Department of Education. They also experienced a lack

of support from other educators and the parents of the learners. There was a sense of the educators feeling isolated and unheard in their struggle of being bullied by learners. In addition, the educators who were interviewed indicated that they did not have resources to be able to deal with learners who bully them and other learners and instead were told to use their own discretion to handle the situation. Similar reports from South African secondary school educators in a previous study revealed that the school did not provide any formal procedures or guidelines to assist educators to deal with bullying (Laas & Boezaart, 2014). As a result, the educators resorted to using their own methods (Kruger, 2011). Furthermore, the educators from this study had a sense of being burdened with responsibility beyond their scope of practice, and they also expressed a lack of and a need for counselling services to deal with being bullied by learners.

The South African Schools Act stipulates that the school governing body must have a code of conduct which sets the standard for behaviour (South African Government. (2018c). As in previous findings (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012), Mandla also indicated that the code of conduct can serve as an effective disciplinary measure if implemented properly. However, the revelation in Mandla's account was that the code of conduct had been inaccessible to the learners. As a result, the learners were unaware of what behaviours were expected of them in the school setting. Mandla therefore suggested that providing learners with the information set out in the code of conduct would show them that bullying behaviours directed at educators are unacceptable. Learners should be given a copy of the code of conduct every year with their end-of-year report cards so that they can see, read and internalize it. Furthermore, if schools are to rely on their code of conduct to deal with the issue of bullying. then bullying should be identified explicitly as a transgression, which is not the case (Laas & Boezaart, 2014). This

implies that there are no specific policies in the form of an action plan that schools can implement to specifically tackle bullying of educators by learners. In effect, the code of conduct may have little to no practical utility, and educators are left to their own devices in dealing with the issue.

5.2.2.1. Lack of support from school management.

Educators who experience bullying seek support from the principal or deputy principal of the school (Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012). Yet, when support is sought, educators tend to feel unsupported by the management of the school (Bhatia, 2013; Bester & du Plessis 2010; de Wet, 2012). The findings from this study are consistent with findings from previous studies in that all the educators felt that the support from management was inadequate. Joanne sought assistance from the principal, whose response was that, unless physical injury had been inflicted by the learner, management could not intervene on the matter. There was a sense of disappointment and desperation in the expressions of the educators in this study as they spoke of the absence of, and consequently the need for, support and resources to be able to deal with being bullied by learners.

The lack of support was also reflected in the attitude and perceptions of the school management. All the educators in this study experienced the principal and Department of Education as insensitive to the issue of educators being bullied by learners, and they felt that what they had experienced as a serious issue was being minimized and overlooked. Mandla spoke extensively about the Department of Education placing too much emphasis on educators' responsibility for ensuring that they complete the syllabus yet failing to acknowledge how educators are being treated by learners.

Based on the narrative accounts of the interviewed educators, the absence of intervention by the management of the school concerning bullying of educators by learners has been understood from two main perspectives. Firstly, the educators are expected to have the knowledge and skills to be able to deal with learners who bully them. However, in the educators' experience, they had not received such training and education. Secondly, the way in which bullying is conceptualized by the management of the school is that bullying entails physical harm. Only when there are physical signs of injury can management intervene. Therefore, indirect bullying that is psychological and emotional in nature is not recognized or dealt with accordingly at the school. The narrow conceptualization of bullying in the school has serious implications, in that the educators may continue to be victims of bullying by learners and remain unsupported and unprotected.

5.2.2.2. Lack of support from fellow educators.

The findings show that the educators had differing ideas about the support they perceived and received from fellow educators at the school. Joanne had a positive experience with her colleagues, as she was able to receive backing and advice on how to deal with the bullying. Joseph on the other hand perceived a lack of unity and care from the teaching staff members. He felt that some educators deliberately did nothing to assist a fellow educator, perhaps to be spiteful. The contrasting views between the educators suggest polarization in the relationships among the teaching staff members.

Furthermore, Joseph's account revealed that some educators experiencing bullying at the school would not disclose their experiences to their colleagues due to the fear of being negatively judged for not being able to manage their classes. The fear of

judgement can be understood as stemming from a sense of inadequacy in their abilities when comparing themselves to their non-bullied counterparts. The bullied educators would blame themselves for not having the skills to manage bullying learners.

5.2.2.3. A sense of being burdened with responsibility.

Society continually expects educators to take on more and more responsibilities in addition to teaching the curriculum, yet the formal pre-service training for educators has not been improved to prepare them to deal with the new demands of the 21st century classroom (Esteve, 2000). All three of the educators expressed a sense of feeling burdened with responsibilities based on unrealistic expectations which the educators perceived as being imposed on them by the system. However, the educators also seemed to have experienced a self-imposed burden by assuming additional responsibilities due to their own concepts of being teachers in a township setting within the broader South African context. This was reflected in Mandla's comment that educators bear the future of the country on their shoulders and Joanne's suggestion that she is not only an educator but a parental figure to the learners. The educators' self-imposed expectations may be rooted in a subconscious need or desire to fulfil the role of what they perceive as absent parents or, through their work as educators, to fill the cracks of missing structures in society intended to promote the healthy development of children. Therefore, there seemed to be a sense of ambivalence among the educators between rejecting and accepting the additional responsibilities.

In terms of rejecting additional responsibilities, Mandla and Joanne opposed the expectation that they should act as parents towards learners, particularly assuming

the parental responsibility of teaching the learners how to behave or disciplining them. Seemingly, the educators' opposing view is not in keeping with one of the standards of professional teaching in South Africa, which indicates that a safe and disciplined learning environment should be maintained by educators (South African Council for Educators, 2017). It is inevitable that learners will misbehave and, as a result, educators find themselves in situations where they would have to discipline misbehaving learners. However, if learners had self-discipline instilled in them by their parents, they would respond accordingly and refrain from misbehaving when disciplined. Yet, when an educator is bullied by a learner the educator's attempts to discipline the learner are not effective. This is evidenced in Joseph's and Mandla's accounts of situations in which they had unsuccessfully confronted the bullying learners in an attempt to discipline them following a bullying incident. Therefore, the educators' opposition to disciplining learners really stems from the issue with caregivers failing to instil positive values and to consistently discipline their children. Consequently, educators struggle to discipline learners who bully them, as they are dealing with the deeply-rooted issue of the absence of a sound value system (de Klerk & Rens, 2003).

The educators' inability to successfully discipline learners can also be seen as additional proof that the skills of how to discipline learners are lacking in the educators' professional skills repertoire. Joanne acknowledged that corporal punishment is no longer permissible when disciplining learners, but she seemed not to know of alternative methods of discipline in place of corporal punishment. Without the skills and knowledge of how to discipline learners, educators cannot assume the responsibility of maintaining discipline in the classroom and be expected to successfully fulfil the role. At the same time, whether educators possess the skills to

discipline learners or not, the learners may still choose to misbehave or not to respond to the educators' attempts to put them in line. This can be attributed to the learners lacking self-discipline, as conveyed by the interviewed educators and reflected in the literature (de Klerk & Rens, 2003).

5.2.2.4. Lack of parental involvement.

According to the South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996, the primary responsibility for the education of children lies with the parents or guardians (South African Government. 2018c). Furthermore, parents should play a central role in the moral and character development of their children (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, a sense of being burdened with responsibility experienced by the interviewed educators has been understood as the burden of parental responsibilities being 'outsourced' to educators. Parents living in townships tend to place parental duties in the hands of educators (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Most of the educators in this study felt that parents are failing to teach their children how to behave. This finding is echoed in the literature, where educators had previously commented that parents and caregivers are not being held accountable for student behaviour (Benefield, 2004). Mandla felt that parents possess more knowledge about their children than educators do and are therefore more qualified to know how to discipline them. With this knowledge, parents can aid in the development of the learners' character and overall well-being, thus fulfilling their legal and ethical duty to have more governance over their children (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018).

However, there are a multitude of reasons for a lack of parental involvement. A lack of involvement may be the result of parents lacking the skills or being disconnected from and uninvolved with the learners' school lives, as suggested by most of the

interviewed educators. According to Mandla, only a few parents would attend meetings at the school to find out what was going on with the learners. The tendency of parents to be uninvolved in the learners' school lives was also reported in previous studies (Venter, 2013; Pervin & Turner, 1998). However, the socio-economic status of parents may influence their ability or lack thereof to be part of school activities (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004). For instance, one of the educators interviewed for the study indicated that some of the learners at the school come from child-headed homes. Moreover, many learners from townships come from low-income or unemployed families. Parents are hence unavailable, or unable to get involved in learners' school activities due to a lack of child-care facilities for younger children in the home and work-related commitments which prevent parents from taking time off from work (Lemmer, 2007).

Therefore, in order to bring what Lemmer (2007) refers to as hard-to-reach parents into a meaningful relationship with the school, it is essential to take into consideration the context and the unique circumstances of each learner in order to find appropriate ways to involve their parents. Mandla suggested that in order to involve parents in the educator-learner relationship, educators should have access to the contact numbers of the parents to communicate with them directly, since correspondence with parents was unreliable as letters did not reach the parents when learners were requested to provide the letters to their parents. The suggested means of communication may ensure that parents are effectively involved in what goes on in the classroom.

5.2.2.5. Unavailability of counselling services.

Two educators in this study identified the lack of counselling services for educators and suggested the inclusion of such professional assistance to help them deal with being bullied by learners. This finding is echoed in the South African and

international literature (Alzyoud, Al-Ali & Tareef, 2016; Benefield, 2004; van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009). Counselling services may address the psychological impact of being bullied and offer educators a platform to talk about their experiences and to learn coping strategies in line with various forms of bullying (Venter, 2013). In addition, psychological services can aid educators who are experiencing stress that hinders the development of good educator-learner relationships.

Interestingly, the educators in this study felt that the learners should also be provided with regular counselling services. This suggests that the learners may be experiencing their own struggles which the educators feel need to be addressed. Joanne introduced the possibility of bully-victims, which she explained as learners bullying educators because they themselves have been bullied. Therefore bully-victims show characteristics of both bullies and victims (Smith, 2004). The understanding of the reason for bullying derived from Joanne is important for educational psychologists so that they can tailor appropriate treatment plans for learners (Venter, 2013). For instance, bully-victims may require assistance in dealing with the pain from their own victimization and in developing healthy ways of expressing their emotions.

However, the need to provide regular on-going counselling services would likely depend on the emotional and psychological component of bullying being recognized first, which had not been the case in the participating school. If the school management fails to recognize the emotional and psychological nature of bullying, then they may not see the need to provide counselling services to those educators affected by being bullied. As interpreted by the educators in this study, the school system expects educators to meet their teaching requirements, yet it fails to acknowledge the complexities of the educator-learner relationship, such as the way learners treat

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educators. Without recognizing the educators' experiences of being bullied by learners, the management of the school cannot resolve the damaging psychological effects such bullying. In effect the educator cannot perform the required duties at their optimal level of functioning.

5.2.3. Impact of being bullied.

The educators spoke about their experience of various effects of being bullied at different points in their teaching careers. These effects were grouped into the emotional, the interpersonal and the professional domains of functioning. Within the professional domain, being bullied had a negative effect on the educators' ability to perform their duties and their job satisfaction. Previous studies (de Wet, 2010a; de Wet & Jacobs, 2006) have consistently demonstrated the manifestations of the effects of bullying at these levels of functioning. Though the bullying negatively affected all the interviewed educators at some point in their teaching career, one of the educators eventually reaped a positive outcome from the experience.

As discussed earlier, the educators experienced a sense of being burdened with responsibility without sufficient support from members of the school system. Furthermore, the educators seemed to convey the message that they were feeling overwhelmed by having to discipline learners in addition to teaching the curriculum. The literature reveals that educators experience stress and burn-out as a result of adverse psychosocial working conditions (Bernotaite & Malinauskiene, 2017). Therefore, the psychological impact of being bullied experienced by the educators may be exacerbated by the stress of being burdened with responsibilities that exceed the scope of being an educator.

5.2.3.1. Emotional well-being.

The educators in this study demonstrated that being bullied had a negative effect on their emotional well-being. Findings on the emotional impact of being bullied generated from this study are supported by numerous studies (de Wet, 2010a; Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012; Tolentino, 2016). Since the bullying experiences of the educators interviewed in this study often occurred in the classroom in the presence of other learners, most of them felt humiliated as a result of being bullied. When Joseph was starting off as a teacher at the school, being bullied caused him to feel anger, disappointment and fluctuations in his emotional state, where some days he was happy and other days he was sad depending on whether he had been bullied or not.

Mandla reported that he had experienced significant emotional difficulty as a result of being bullied. The way Mandla spoke during the interview suggested that he had still been experiencing the negative emotions, unlike Joanne and Joseph. Mandla stated that being bullied is traumatic and causes depression. He noted that he had been experiencing depressive symptoms which included a loss of appetite and a lack of interest in activities, thus impairing healthy functioning at school and at home. He also described feeling irritable at times and having anger outbursts towards others. A unique finding from this study came from the comparison Mandla made between the pain experienced in being bullied and the pain experienced by being beaten with a cane. Being bullied results in emotional pain, which may have a long-lasting negative effect, whereas being beaten with a cane causes physical pain that can quickly fade away. This comparison demonstrates and confirms that bullying is emotional and psychological in nature and also has pervasive and detrimental effects (Bhatia, 2013; Fahie & Devine, 2014).

5.2.3.2. Interpersonal relationships.

The quality of the interviewed educators' professional and personal relationships had been negatively impacted by being bullied. Tolentino (2016) also found that being bullied compromised educators' social health. The educators in this study made particular reference to how being bullied had an effect on the communication processes between them and people with whom they had professional relationships, and also how they started to perceive other people in general. When educators experience bullying in their workplace, they may alter their perception of life and drastically change their attitude as a result of the traumatic experiences (Tolentino, 2016). This was true for Mandla as he began to perceive all learners, even the non-perpetrating ones, as bullies. Mandla was aware of his changing perception as he articulated that his experience of being bullied made him feel that all learners are bullies, even though he knew that this was not true.

In contrast Joseph maintained his positive view of learners, that they are respectful, despite being mistreated by them. His perception of learners and his willingness to give them a chance helped him to eventually reap a positive outcome from his bullying experiences in terms of his relationships with learners. In his experience, the bullying opened an opportunity for a trusting relationship to develop between him and his learners as he demonstrated empathy and understanding towards the bullying learners. Furthermore, Joseph's experience of being bullied revealed what seemed to be supportive learners who approached him following a bullying incident to give him insight into the bully's intentions.

5.2.3.3 Job performance.

The educators in this study showed that being bullied negatively impacted on their ability to perform their job. Consistent with previous findings (Garrett, 2014), the educators experienced disruptive behaviours as having a negative impact on the learning and teaching environment; thus, their ability to effectively teach and to ensure that students learn was compromised by being bullied in this manner. In addition, Joanne found that the effects of being bullied made it difficult for her to be able to continue performing her duties at home, which included marking learners' work. She also experienced a sense of inadequacy and a lack of confidence as she began doubting her professional ability and feeling that she was doing something wrong as an educator. Educators in a previous study had also questioned their own professional abilities as a result of being bullied (de Wet, 2010a).

5.2.3.4 Job satisfaction.

Being bullied proved to have had an impact on the educators' job satisfaction. Mandla had hoped to have a fulfilling teaching experience, however he felt his job was no longer rewarding and regretted choosing teaching as a career. Similarly, educators' reports in a previous study revealed that educators had reduced their expectations for the teaching profession as a result of the bullying (Ozkilic & Kartal, 2012). Initially, Joseph also regretted going into the teaching field; he hated going to work and felt uncertain about his continued work in the field. However, he endured the circumstances and over time the negative feelings related to his job lessened. The negative feelings may have been reduced as a result of a sense of familiarity developing between him and the learners as the relationship between him and the

bullying learners improved or, as Joseph suggested, through becoming accustomed to the nature of his job.

A general sense of dissatisfaction was embedded in the educators' experiences as they experienced bullying in an unsupportive school system. The educators were dissatisfied with the lack of support from the management team, fellow educators and parents. Educators have expressed in a previous study their dissatisfaction and frustration with the overload of teachers, where they felt they took full responsibility for the welfare of learners (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004). Furthermore, the interviewed educators were displeased about how the issue was taken lightly by the various members of the school system and the lack of resources afforded to them to effectively deal with the issue. The teaching profession is one of care and development, yet the teachers themselves are not looked after through the provision of in-service training and psychological services. Educators go into the profession willingly and passionately but once immersed in the profession they experience bullying, and that without feeling supported. As a result, they lose their drive as educators and faith in the profession as a whole.

5.2.4. Coping mechanisms.

The educators in this study showed that they were subject to victimization and rendered powerless by bullying learners. However, this does not mean that victims of bullying are always and completely powerless and passive when confronted with bullying (Fahie & Devine, 2014). As in previous findings (Tolentino, 2016; Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012), the educators in this study employed various coping mechanisms to deal with being bullied by learners. Of these coping mechanisms, those that were

effective helped the educators to regain control of their feelings, actions and sometimes the bullying situation.

The interviewed educators alternated between what authors have identified as problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies (Fahie & Devine, 2014). The problem-focused strategies involved seeking support from others, talking about one's experience and discussing, with fellow educators, possible solutions to the problem. It also involved taking proactive measures such as reporting the issue to the school head, issuing letters addressed to the parents of the learners in order to get the parents involved to assist the educator. The emotion-focused coping strategies involved avoiding the bullying learners, suppressing the negative feelings associated with the bullying and accepting the bullying as a normal part of learner behaviour.

5.2.4.1. Disclosing to others.

The findings reveal that there was a general sense of a need to talk about one's experiences of being bullied by learners. The educators felt that talking to colleagues, family members or a therapist would be helpful. Educators may also talk to the learners who bully them (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012). This was evident with Joseph, who approached the bullying learners and successfully dealt with the issue. Joanne coped with her experience through group support with her fellow colleagues in order to talk about her experiences and receive emotional support. Although the educators expressed a need to talk to a counsellor about their experiences, it seemed none of them had received such an opportunity either through the school management or by personal means.

As already mentioned, Joseph pointed to the lack of support amongst educators and emphasized the need to have a more unified and supportive network of educators. Although suggesting that educators should come together and offer solace, he also highlighted the fear of being negatively judged should an educator disclose his or her experience of bullying to fellow educators. Therefore, disclosing one's experience of being bullied is difficult when the working environment is unsupportive. Some authors suggest that educators who experience bullying are at times perceived as being a failure and are ostracized and alienated by fellow educators and management who blame and criticize them for failing to control their classes (James et al, 2008; Garrett, 2014). Indeed, educators struggle to regulate learner behaviour, as demonstrated by the educators in this study. The educators are hence at risk of being negatively judged and alienated for not being able to manage their classes. Moreover, educators' experiences of being bullied and their efforts in dealing with learners often go unnoticed, especially when the bullying occurs inside the classroom, behind closed doors. Other educators and school heads fail to see what the educator endures in the classroom, yet they judge the bullied educators and perceive the bullying as a reflection of the educators' competences or lack thereof.

5.2.4.2. Avoidance.

Educators may attempt to cope with bullying through personal struggle by avoiding or ignoring the bullying and attempt to be strong (Tolentino, 2016). Two of the educators in this study used avoidance as a coping mechanism by, respectively, either ignoring the bullying that had taken place or by suppressing the negative feelings associated with the impact of being bullied. Similar results have been shown

in a previous study where educators would sometimes turn a blind eye to misbehaviour (de Wet, 2010a).

Joanne realized that addressing her feelings would negatively affect her ability to do her job. Therefore, she avoided the feelings elicited by being bullied. Joanne has not only been an educator but has also been heading a department at the school. Her role would have implied being a leader, not only to the learners but also to the educators in her department. Therefore, she may have felt that she needed to maintain a positive and strong demeanour as a leader in the school by avoiding the painful and perhaps debilitating feelings of being bullied by learners.

5.2.4.3. Acceptance.

In order to cope with the bullying some educators may accept being bullied as being part and parcel of their profession (Pervin & Turner, 1998). Acceptance as a coping mechanism was employed by Joseph. He accepted bullying behaviour as being developmentally appropriate for learners, especially those in the lower grades of high school. Researchers (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012) have postulated that when educators use student characteristics such as developmentally appropriate behaviours to explain being bullied, they do so as a coping mechanism. It is easier for educators to cope with their experiences of being bullied if they can identify a reason for being bullied that relates to something that they can accept as an unavoidable downside to the teaching profession (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012). Joseph described the bullying as being an inescapable aspect of his work of dealing with children and thus an experience he had to accept and get used to.

Although some educators can accept the bullying and continue functioning in their lives, other educators, as evidenced by the psychological impact the bullying had on

them in this study and in previous studies, are not always able to cope with being bullied. Therefore, a passive acceptance of the bullying should be challenged so that educators can receive the necessary support and assistance (Pervin & Turner, 1998).

5.2.4.4. Proactive behaviour.

The educators demonstrated that they also took an active role to deal with the bullying. Unlike perceiving the learners' developmental stage as an aspect that one cannot change to prevent being bullied, the way individuals communicate and use interactional skills is something that they can control to change a situation (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012) like being bullied. In Joanne's case she approached other educators and used her communication skills to identify common experiences with her colleagues and to advise one another on how to manage the bullying.

In Joseph's case he improved his communication behaviour with the learners by developing a more authoritative interactional style characterized by making reasonable demands on the bullying learners and by being responsive to the learners' emotional needs. His relationship with the learners became one of trust and mutual respect. In effect this made him less vulnerable to bullying by learners. Mandla on the other hand had attempted to get the learners' parents involved by requesting the learners to give letters to their parents. However, this was unsuccessful as the learners would throw the letters away.

5.2.5. The nature of being bullied.

Consistently with previous findings (Craig & Pepler, 2007), this study demonstrated that bullying is a relationship problem. Therefore, the nature of being bullied extrapolated from the findings delineates the interactional processes involved in the

educator-learner relationship. At the same time the educator-learner relationship is subject to influences in the environment. These influences include other members in the school system, societal and cultural norms, and policies. When the interviewed educators experienced being bullied by the learners, they experienced the bullying as a challenge or threat to their authority. They felt a sense of powerlessness and helplessness, and disrespected and provoked by the learners.

5.2.5.1. Challenging authority.

Educators in public secondary schools in South Africa often struggle to exercise authority over learners in an effective way (Mokhele, 2006). This was evident in this study when all the educators spoke about challenging of their authority as being a characteristic feature of their bullying experiences. Mandla and Joanne felt that being bullied meant that learners were undermining their authority. Both Joseph and Mandla experienced being challenged when they attempted to discipline the bullying learners and exercise their authority to enforce the rules. Their attempts proved to be ineffective and the bullying escalated to verbal threats and even physical violence.

The escalation of bullying behaviours into verbal threats and physical violence experienced by the educators in this study illustrates the dangerous situations the educators potentially find themselves in when they are being bullied. As such threats and physical violence towards educators have been viewed as extreme forms of learner indiscipline which compromise educators' sense of safety and security (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011). This supports findings from previous interviews with educators from township schools across South Africa who expressed feeling unsafe in the school environment as a result of learners directing violent behaviours towards them (Tintswalo, 2014).

5.2.5.2. Powerlessness.

The educators in this study identified the presence of a power imbalance between themselves and bullying learners. Reference to a power imbalance in this study confirms the working definition of learner-to-educator bullying highlighted in the literature, where a power differential exists between the bully and the victim (Garrett, 2014). The educators perceived the bullying learners as having more power, useable to their advantage against the educators. The findings reveal that the educators experienced a deep struggle for control within themselves and in the social realm of their experience. They experienced a sense of helplessness and powerlessness, feeling that in various ways they had lost control of their ability to exercise their authority over learners.

The factors which contributed to the educators experiencing a sense of powerlessness against the bullying learners may be the lack of any support, protection or resources afforded to the educators to enable them to manage bullying situations. Furthermore, according to the educators there are laws and school policies supporting and protecting learners against abuse which the educators are expected to uphold. Yet the same support and protection against abuse is not afforded to educators. The educators are repeatedly subjected to bullying by the learners and cannot defend themselves because they do not have the means and also because they possibly fear violating the learners' rights.

5.2.5.3. Disrespect.

It has previously been shown that educators experience aggressive behaviours by learners as disrespect (James et al., 2008). The same finding was revealed in the accounts provided by the educators in this study, where the educators felt that being

bullied meant being disrespected and not valued by the perpetrating learners. Previous findings (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012) suggest that learners disrespect educators as authority figures. This understanding was also derived from the accounts provided by the interviewed educators, as they felt undermined as educators by the bullying learners. Joseph further demonstrated that learners treat their parents in the same disrespectful manner, thus reinforcing the issue that learners tend to disrespect or challenge authority figures in general.

To further understand the occurrence of this disrespect towards authority figures, some researchers have suggested that a lack of disrespect stems from learners not being accustomed to being treated with respect by adults (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2006). This was made apparent in Joseph's experience where the bullying learners would be hostile and aggressive when they perceived the educator as confrontational. However, when Joseph changed his style of approaching the bullying learners by being more understanding and caring towards them, the learners felt less threatened and more respected, thus reciprocating the respect. Respectful interactions would therefore entail reciprocity in that respect is given and received by both the learner and the educator.

Furthermore, educators believe that a culture of disrespect in schools is exacerbated by the unbalanced promotion of human rights, where learners are aware of their rights but fail to acknowledge the responsibility of respecting the rights of educators and fellow learners **(**Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Strikingly similar results emerged from this study as the educators felt disempowered by learners whose rights they felt trumped theirs. This created a sense of helplessness as the educators did not always know how to respond to bullying situations.

5.2.5.4. Provocation.

Researchers have previously suggested that the intention of the bully is to cause harm. However, the construct of intent has been found to evolve over time (Garrett, 2014). In this study the intention of the bullies based on the perspectives of the educators can be understood as the intention to provoke or test the educators and to see how they respond. All the educators in this study felt that the perpetrating learners were antagonizing them just to elicit an emotional and behavioural response from them. Joseph stated that learners specifically test and provoke new educators at the school.

It can further be understood that in a bullying situation the educator would be provoked by the learner to challenge his or her authority which the learner does not readily accept. As evidenced by most of the educators' experiences from this study, the learner and the educator end up engaging in a power struggle which escalates to verbal threats and physical violence.

5.2.6. Attributions of being bullied.

The educators identified various individual, relationship and environmental factors to which they attributed learners' perpetrating bullying towards them. The individual factors were related to the developmental phase of the learners. The educators also described individual factors related to them, such as being a new educator at the school. Furthermore, the educators made attributions related to relationship and environmental conditions such as socialization, peer influences as well as violence in the community. These attributions were explanations provided by the educators to further understand their experiences of being bullied.

5.2.6.1. Being new and unfamiliar.

As revealed in the findings, the experience of bullying occurred more frequently in the early years of teaching at the school, thus suggesting that newly appointed educators are more likely to experience bullying by learners. This finding corroborates findings from a previous study (Pervin & Turner, 1998) where educators reported that newly qualified teachers were more likely to be victims of learner-to-educator bullying than those who had been in the profession for a longer period. Furthermore, Joseph pointed out that newly appointed educators assigned to grades 10 or 11 are bullied by learners in their classes because they are unfamiliar to the learners. The understanding derived from the findings from this study is that new educators are provoked and tested by the learners as a way for learners to get to know what kind of educators they are dealing with, to find out how new educators behave and for the learners to test the boundaries. Bullying of educators by learners can further be interpreted as a form of initiation for new educators. Joseph further elaborated that a sense of familiarity develops over time when the learners have got to know the educator from grade 8 up to the higher grades or when the educators have spent an extended period of time with the learners.

5.2.6.2. Developmental phase.

Joseph is the only educator from this study who attributed bullying directed at him to the developmental phase of the learners. Developmental phase would be what Kauppi & Pörhölä (2012) refer to as student-related reasons for being bullied. Joseph viewed bullying as being a normal part of learner behaviour thus as a problem that cannot be changed unless the learners themselves outgrow it in late adolescence and as the learners progress into later grades. This attribution reflects the previously

discussed coping method of acceptance that Joseph employed when he accepted being bullied as part and parcel of working with adolescents.

5.2.6.3. Socialization.

The educators' accounts revealed that the learners' socialization is important in establishing what conduct is socially acceptable and what is reprehensible. The family climate influences socialization of children (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012). Therefore, the behaviours and attitudes that are modelled by family members in the home environment are likely to be imitated by children (Burton & Leoschut, 2012; van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009). Two of the educators in this study attributed being bullied to a lack of parental involvement that would positively influence learner behaviour. The educators indicated that the parents of the learners at the school are not committed to disciplining their children or getting involved in what their children are doing at school. However, as mentioned earlier, Mandla noted that some of the learners come from child-headed households, where no parental figures are available to instil and model positive values such as respect   Similarly, researchers have identified that a vast majority of South African children living in black townships do not live with their parents but with guardians who lack adequate parenting skills and resources to meet the fundamental needs of children, thereby creating an environment that can foster ill-disciplined children (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012).

5.2.6.4. Peer influence.

During adolescence the peer group becomes increasingly important in shaping learners' attitudes and behaviours (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Therefore, learners may engage in violent behaviours to gain favour with their peers (Bester & du Plessis,

2010). This finding is reflected in the accounts provided by Joseph and Joanne, who suggested that learners bullied them just to please and impress their peers. The interviewed educators were often bullied publicly in the presence of bystanders, who were the peer group of the bullying learners. The peer bystanders responded in a way that encouraged the bullying by laughing when the educators were humiliated by the bullying learners. The peer bystanders are referred to as reinforcers, who do not actively join in the bullying but reinforce the situation in a passive manner by encouraging the bullying, watching and laughing (Smith, 2004).

5.2.6.5. Community violence.

The school system does not operate in isolation but interconnects with other systems in the social environment (Kruger, 2011). The understanding of a synergy between the school and the community was apparent when interviewing the educators. Mandla and Joanne attributed being bullied to community influences such as violence that the learners are exposed to. This finding is supported by evidence in the literature which shows the influence of community violence on learner behaviour (de Wet, 2012; Pahad & Graham, 2012). Furthermore, violence in the school also suggests a lack of positive values in the community at large (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014).

Based on my own experience having been a resident of Etwatwa, the township where the educators in this study work, I can attest to the prevalence of violence in the community, in particular gang violence involving secondary school learners that has grabbed media attention in recent years. The gangs that the learners are involved in may represent a big part of the learners' identity and reflect their way of living (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014). Therefore, that identity and lifestyle is embodied by the learners

everywhere they go, including the school setting. The educators would thus be confronted not just with learners who come to school to be taught but also with learners who have adopted aggressive behaviours and hostile interactional styles.

5.3. Limitations

IPA is based on the hermeneutic tradition. Hermeneutics can be viewed as a European-centred approach to human understanding. Therefore, my use of IPA and its philosophical orientation can be seen as a limitation in this study, as I explored the experiences of an African group. Although my epistemological stance privileged the participants' perspectives in understanding the topic, there may have been certain elements unique to African people that hermeneutics does not acknowledge. An African perspective or what is referred to as Afrocentricity (Mkabela, 2005) may be more suitable in framing the perspective of South African educators' experiences of being bullied by learners.

Due to the phenomenological nature of the study, the focus of the study was limited to a small sample of educators within a single secondary school. Therefore, the findings related to the sample used in this study are not generalizable but rather embody the experiences of a particular group in a particular context and at a particular time. Furthermore, the current study is framed within interpretive phenomenology which implies that my own pre-conceptions and experiences were used to interpret how the participants made sense of their experiences of being bullied by learners. As such the narrative account, which involves a co-construction of meaning between the participants and me, presented in Chapter 4, and the discussion, which integrates the consulted literature presented in this chapter, represents one version of the

experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. It is possible that other researchers might have interpreted the findings differently using the same research method

The provision of a definition of learner-to-educator bullying to the educators during the recruitment phase of the study is a limitation and weakness of the current study that explores the experience of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants. I prematurely imposed my preconceptions concerning educators' experiences by applying the definition before data was obtained. The definition I provided to the educators may have also excluded educators who perceived themselves as having a different understanding of learner-to-educator bullying than the understanding encapsulated in the definition that was provided. Furthermore, the definition may have also limited the responses of the educators who participated in this study.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that the limitations for the present study be taken into consideration and improved on for future research exploring the experiences of bullied educators by learners.

In addition, more qualitative research exploring learner-to-educator bullying in various educational settings (rural, township, urban) is warranted, as studies following a qualitative methodology are limited. The present study could be expanded further by interviewing a greater number of participants from more than one township secondary school. Moreover, it may be beneficial to get the perspectives and experiences of other members of the school community such as management, non-bullied educators,

learners, parents and educational psychologists concerning learner-to-educator bullying. In so doing, various perspectives could be compared to get a fuller and richer view of the issue. It may also be useful to further investigate the quality of the educator-learner relationship in the context of the school in order to understand the processes involved that shape the emergence and maintenance of learner-to-educator bullying.

5.5. Recommendations for Practice

de Wet and Jacobs (2006) point out that trade unions for educators in South Africa acknowledge that learners disregard the rights of educators but are not propelled to take legal recourse. In this regard South African educators' trade unions are lagging behind their British counterparts in fighting for their members' rights to teach in a safe environment (Benefield, 2004; de Wet & Jacobs, 2006). Trade unions should lobby schools, the Department of Education and universities for the adoption of policies and protocol giving specific guidance for dealing with bullying of educators by learners (Bhatia, 2013). Furthermore, it would be recommended that educators be provided with regular in-service training in the implementation of these polices. Providing educators with the knowledge and skills to manage bullying learners as well as support from management, fellow colleagues and parents is necessary to empower educators and restore their position of authority in the school.

The findings from the current study can be used by schools and the Department of Education to identify the direct and indirect ways in which educators are bullied by learners as well as the psychological and professional effects of the various kinds of bullying. In that way, appropriate strategies and remedies could be identified and implemented by the management of the school in order to assist educators with the

issue. One such service is regular on-going counselling services for educators, which is imperative for allowing educators to talk about their bullying experiences and receive help in dealing with the psychological harm incurred from the bullying. In addition, it is recommended that counselling services be provided to learners as well so that they may be assisted with their own difficulties.

In addition, the educators in this study suggested that educators should have discussions about the issue of learner-to-educator bullying and offer one another more support. The educators also suggested increased involvement of parents in the learners' school lives. However, it is important to take into consideration the learners' familial backgrounds and the feasibility of parents getting involved in school matters. The involvement and collaboration of various stakeholders, management, trade unions, educators, counsellors and parents recommended in the present study supports the idea of a whole school approach (Venter, 2013) discussed in the literature as a solution to dealing with the issue of educators being bullied by learners.

5.6. Personal Reflections

The choice of this topic was really inspired by my mother, who is an educator at a secondary school located in a township. Through her personal accounts of some of the challenges she had faced on a daily basis at her school, I identified an experience that she herself had struggled with, that of learners bullying educators. I pondered this issue for some time and, as I read through the literature, I discovered how the victimization of educators had been downplayed and often overlooked. Furthermore, a qualitative approach to the issue, describing the experiences of the educators in their own words through their perceptions, was lacking. I therefore decided that educators'

experiences of being bullied by learners warranted further exploration and needed to be recognized.

Before undertaking the research endeavour, I first needed to reflect on my personal experiences and preconceptions. In addition to knowing someone personally who has had experience of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school, I have lived in a township all my life and I have visited township secondary schools on numerous occasions. Instead of setting my prior experiences and biases aside, I acknowledged them and in accordance with the principles of IPA, I used them to shape the understandings I derived from the educators' accounts. I had the assumption that just because I had come from a township, I was well prepared, and it would be easy for me to make sense of the participants' experiences. This was quite the opposite. Some of my preconceptions and beliefs were challenged and proved otherwise. The educators had truly unique individual experiences amidst a common experience of being bullied by learners.

I acknowledged that bullying could be a sensitive topic and anticipated having problems recruiting participants. In my mind I thought no educator would be willing to admit let alone talk about being bullied by learners. I had to reflect on my belief that bullying of an educator by a learner is an embarrassing experience that educators should feel ashamed of or even afraid to admit and talk about. I have gained more respect for the educators who took part in this study. Not only did they demonstrate and challenge my belief that being bullied is a shameful experience; they were brave enough to own their truth about being bullied and courageous in trusting to join me on a quest of gaining a deeper understanding of their experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school.

The process of data analysis was the most time-consuming and challenging part of the research process. This was mainly because of having to constantly view the emerging themes in light of the participants' own understanding while monitoring my own biases. For that reason, keeping a reflective journal throughout the process was helpful. I am thankful that I transcribed the interviews myself, as this kept me close to the participants' voices and helped me to recall the interview and what the interactions were like between the participants and me. One of the main themes that stood out for me from the findings is the theme *Unsupportive school system*, which highlights how the educators experienced the attitudes and behaviours of members of the school community when it came to the issue of educators being bullied by learners. This theme evoked some emotions in me while writing up the study and thinking back over the interviews. Two of the emotions I experienced were sadness and disappointment when the educators spoke about the blatant disregard of their experiences by the management of the school and even fellow educators. I could feel the sense of loneliness and helplessness, and the heaviness of the burden of being bullied by learners.

Throughout the research process I gained considerable appreciation for the educators and the experiences they had gone through, being bullied by learners. I hope that I have done the educators justice by recounting their experiences and contributing to the literature on bullying of educators by learners in a township secondary school in South Africa. Lastly, I hope others can hear the educators' voices through this study and appreciate their experiences.

5.7. Conclusion

The present study enabled me to explore the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school. This was achieved by collecting data from three educators. Due to my interest in understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences, interpretive phenomenological analysis was deemed an appropriate research methodology and method. I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the selected participants, where they provided accounts of their experiences. The data was analysed using IPA and the analysis generated six superordinate themes namely different forms of bullying, an unsupportive school system, impact of being bullied, coping mechanisms, nature of being bullied and attributions for being bullied. These themes demonstrated the complexities of the experiences that were explored and embody the shared and unique experiences of the participants.

The educators in this study experienced a combination of direct and indirect bullying in the classroom setting. They were publicly challenged, provoked with malicious intent and disrespected by the perpetrating learners. A sense of powerlessness generally characterized the educators' experiences of being bullied. The educators had an overwhelming feeling of not being supported and felt unheard by the school community considering that being bullied had significant effects on their psychological well-being and their ability to effectively perform their duties. The educators characterized the township setting as being violence-prone and lacking positive role models for the learners. In effect these factors contributed to learners adopting negative attitudes and behaviours which they carried into the classroom setting.

I assert that the findings of this study are of interest to all members of the school community, namely the Department of Education, principals, educators, learners and parents. The findings may be useful in increasing awareness of educators' experiences of being bullied by learners. Of particular interest is the possibility of informing ways in which educators can be supported.

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Appendix A: GDE Research Approval Letter

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

| 8/4/4/1/2 |

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	21 August 2017
Validity of Research Approval:	06 February 2017 – 29 September 2017 2017/223
Name of Researcher:	Marolen M.F.M
Address of Researcher:	1508 Khakhu Street
	Daveyton
	1520
Telephone Number:	081 425 1301
Email address:	mballmarolen@yahoo.com
Research Topic:	Exploring educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school
Number and type of schools:	One Secondary School
District/s/HO	Gauteng East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

23/08/2017

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7ᵗʰ Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg 2001
Tel: (011) 365 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

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Appendix B: Permission from the School

CAIPHUS NYOKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Permission to conduct research

I Mr/Mrs _Mokofolo Lh_____, Principal/Deputy Principal at
_CAIPHUS NYOKA_____ Secondary School, received information about the study
titled: Exploring educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary
school. I also received the GDE's approval letter for the study. I understand the nature of the study
and that the participating educators will be involved in individual interviews.

I understand that all information obtained during the research will be treated as confidential where
the names of the participating educators and the school will be kept private.

I am also aware that the participants may refuse to answer any questions during the interview
process and they may withdraw from the study at any point if they choose to do so, with no adverse
consequences.

I hereby consent to the research Mbo enhle Maruen intends to carry out at _CAIPHUS NYOKA_
Secondary School.

Signature: _____

Date: _28 AuGuST 2017_

Appendix C: Consent to Participate in Research

Dear Educator

Nature of the Study

I would like to invite you to participate in my study as part of the requirement for a MA degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding into the experiences of educators that have been subjected to bullying by their learners in a township secondary school. The study is titled: *Exploring educators' experiences of being bullied by learners in a township secondary school.*

Your role in the study

If you agree to participate in this study you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview of approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted at a location of your choice outside school hours. However, please select a quiet location which will not interfere with the audio-recording of the interview session. During the interview you will be asked to describe your experience of being bullied by learners in your school.

Requirements

In order to participate in the study it is required that you be an educator of learners from grade 8 to 10, you must perceive yourself to have been bullied by at least one learner within your school and you must be proficient in English.

Please note that for this study, bullying of an educator by a learner is described as persistent as well as a single episode of aggressive behaviours directed specifically at an educator by a learner with the intent to bring about physical, psychological, emotional and/or professional harm. These aggressive behaviours can manifest in the following ways: physical, verbal and emotional bullying, sexual bullying, cyberbullying and/or persistent disruptive behaviours. These are some of the ways aggressive behaviours can manifest but I am also interested in other behaviours that you experience that I may not be aware of.

Confidentiality

All the information you provide will be treated as confidential. Fictitious names (pseudonyms) will be used and your identity will not be revealed in any dissertation or report pertaining to this study.. Original unedited information obtained during the interview will only be seen and heard by the researcher and supervisor of the study. The audio-recorded data gathered during the study will be transcribed by the researcher. You will have access to the audio-recorded interview so that you may verify or change your responses. If you are satisfied with your responses the data will be included in any dissertation or report pertaining to this study. Should you withdraw from the study, the data pertaining to your information will be destroyed and no longer form part of the study.

Participant's rights

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions during the interview process and you may withdraw from the study at any point without incurring any negative consequences.

Ethical clearance

The study has been reviewed and received ethical clearance through the Ethics Committee by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria as well as by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

Dissemination of results

The data obtained from the study will remain in the secure possession of the University of Pretoria for 15 years and only researchers associated with this study will have access to it. The research will also be published in an article and possibly presented for conference purposes. Furthermore, once the dissertation is completed, an electronic and hard copy version will be submitted to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) Director of Knowledge Management and the Research Co-ordination Unit, where it will be kept at the GDE Head Office Library.

Benefits of the study

The contribution you make in this study will increase awareness of an under-emphasized issue pertaining to educators' experiences of being bullied by learners. Furthermore, the study will assist with bettering our understanding of educators' experiences of being bullied in various ways specifically in a township secondary school setting. In addition, victims of

bullying can be recognised and potentially supported by addressing this issue. There will be no financial gain for the school or educators that participate in the study. However, this opportunity may be beneficial as you may be left with a feeling of being supported and a sense of being heard and empowered.

Potential risks of partaking in this study

Bullying is a sensitive issue and during the interview you might experience some negative emotions as you share your experiences. Should you feel any discomfort during your participation in this study and require some assistance, I will contact lifeline Ekurhuleni, a non-profit organisation, to inform them of your need for counselling services and further assist you with scheduling an appointment. In addition, a "support sheet" containing contact numbers of agencies and helplines as well as a list of websites and books is provided. The counselling services are provided free of charge.

Contact details of the researcher

If you have any questions pertaining to this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please do not hesitate to contact me, Mbalenhle Marolen, at 081 425 130 1 or at mbalimarolen@yahoo.com Alternatively you may contact my supervisor, Ms Neo Pule at neo.pule@up.ac.za

Thank you in advance for your assistance with and contribution to this study.

Kind regards

Mbalenhle Marolen

Informed consent:

I _____ (name and surname) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the study. I have also been informed of my rights and the ethical standards the study adheres to. I thereby agree to voluntarily participate in this study and to the audio-recording of the interview.

Participant's signature: _____

Appendix D: Support Sheet for Educators

BOOKS

- ✓ *Adult Bulling: Perpetrators and Victims* by Peter Ralph Randall (1997)

- ✓ *Bullying in Adulthood: Assessing the Bullies and Their Victims* by Peter Ralph Randall (2002)

- ✓ *Preventing workplace bullying: An evidence –based guide managers and employees* by Carlo Caponecchia and Anne Wyatt (2011)

- ✓ *Promoting Workplace Well-Being* by Neil Thompson & John Bates (Eds.) (2009)

- ✓ *The Anti-Bullying Handbook 2nd edition* by Keith Sullivan (2011)

- ✓ *Using Psychology in the Classroom* by Stephen James Minton (2012)

- ✓ *Workplace bulling: Symptoms and Solutions* by Noreen Tehrani (Ed.) (2012)

- ✓ *Workplace Trauma: Concepts, Assessment and Interventions* by Noreen Tehrani (2004)

PDFs

- ✓ *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace International perspectives in research and practice* by Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. Zapf, D,. & Cooper, C. L

- ✓ *Bullying in Adulthood: Assessing the Bullies and Their Victims* by Peter Ralph Randall (2001) note: document does not contain full version of the book

- ✓ *Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying* by Safe Work Australia (2013)

WEB ADDRESSES

- ✓ Website regarding how to deal with workplace bullying:

http://www.bullyonline.org/action/action.htm

- ✓ Website regarding updated bullying news:

http://theeducatorsroom.com/2013/05/the-bullied-teacher/

✓ Students bullying teachers: A new epidemic

http://nobullying.com

✓ Website regarding adult bullying and mental health:

http://www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk/AdultBullying.html

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

If you feel that you may need to talk to someone regarding your experience of being bullied by learners, you can ask your General Practitioner to provide you with information concerning psychologists practicing in your area. Alternatively you may contact the helplines listed below to schedule an appointment with a mental health professional.

HELPLINES

✓ **Lifeline Ekurhuleni Services:**

Benoni

   o (012) 4224242 or 0861 322 322

Tsakane

   o 011 738 7830

Duduza

   o 011 730 4900

✓ National Lifeline

   o 0861 322322

✓ South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG)

   o 011 234 4837 / Fax number: 011 234 8182 (8am – 8pm, seven days a week)

   o 24hr Helpline 0800 12 13 14

✓ Depression & Anxiety Support Group

   o (011) 783-1474

Appendix E: Interview Schedule: Exploring Educators' Experiences of being bullied by Learners in a Township Secondary School

1. Introduction

My name is Mbalenhle Marolen and I am a Masters student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Pretoria. This interview is conducted for my research to gather information about your experience of being bullied by a learner/s at your school. All the information you share during the interview will be treated as confidential. In other words any identifying information such as your name and the name of your school will not be disclosed. The interview will be audio-recorded and it will last approximately 60 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am interested in your experiences. Do you have any questions before we start the interview? *(Start audio-recording)*

2. Bullying

2.1. Could you describe what bullying is, in your own words?

2.2. What incidences of being bullied by learners have you experienced?

2.3. How does being bullied feel?

2.4. How does the bullying affect your everyday life?

Prompt: work, home, relationships?

2.5. How do you make sense of being bullied by learners?

Prompt: What does it mean to you?

2.6. On a day-to-day basis how do you deal with being bullied?

Prompt: Do you have particular strategies for helping you? Ways of coping, practical, mental

2.7. In your opinion, how could one support and protect victims of bullying?

2.8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience that we have not discussed?

2.9. May I contact you with any follow-up questions I may have about what we have discussed?

Appendix F: Interview Transcripts and Analyses of Three Participants

Transcription Coding

Normal text: Descriptive comments that focussed on describing the content of what the participants said.

Italic text: Linguistic comments that focussed on exploring the specific use of language by the participants.

Underlined text: Conceptual comments that focussed on an overarching understanding of the concerns the participants were discussing as well as possible interpretations.

Table F1 Transcript 1 – Joseph

Emergent themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
Verbal bullying Bullying as provocation Bullying as intentional harm doing Bullying as insulting Bullying negatively impacting on emotional well-being	10	**Researcher**: Describe what bullying is in your own words? **Joseph**: Bullying is not like a physical fight the way I understand it. It's like when there are these people who provoke you verbally. They will hurt you emotionally and maybe insult you and then saying things you are not expecting to hear. Ya that's how I understand bullying.	Describes bullying as verbal behaviour. Saying something to provoke another Bullying is intended to inflict emotional harm and to possibly insult. *The language used is specific in terms of what bullying is and isn't.* *The use of the word will suggests certainty that the bully inflicts emotional pain Language use of the word maybe Introduces the possibility of another motive behind the bullying, one of insulting.* <u>Verbal aggressive behaviours intended to elicit a negative response from another</u>
Bullied at the early stages of teaching at the school Bullying is intentional Provocation Public humiliation		**Researcher**: What incidences of being bullied by learners have you experienced in this school? **Joseph**: The one incident that I remember, that was the first year I came to this school. There was	Bullying occurred during the first year of teaching at the school Bullying occurred in classroom

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Bystanders		this learner in class. He really intended to provoke me and then he disclosed to other learners saying 'this is what I'm going to say to the teacher, I want to see how he's going to react to what I'm going to say." And then he just made noise intentionally knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry. Then when I tried to discipline the learner verbally, he said to me "I cannot entertain gay teachers in the class." So I was so disappointed to hear that from that learner because all the learners were laughing at me. But then after the period two learners came to me and said "the learner did that to provoke you to see how you were going to react from being called those names."	Describes being bullied with the intention to be provoked to respond
Bullying is intentional	20		Bullied when he was still new to the school
Disruptive behaviour			Past experience
			Bullied in front of the other learners
			Learner proving a point to other learners
			Testing the educator
Anger			*Uses the word really which stresses or emphasizes the intent.*
Public display of bullying			Describes how the learner intentionally made noise knowing that the educator would get angry
Ineffective verbal discipline	30		Learner elicits anger in educator
			The bully has an audience
			Disruptive behaviour
Name calling			Describes a failed attempt at disciplining the learner What did the educator say?
Loss of respect from learners			Learner retaliated by referring to him as gay (insult) What does this mean for the educator?
Humiliation			Other learners got involved in the incident and responded by laughing at the educator.
Disappointment			Negative response from the rest of the learners
			Public humiliation
Educator has expectations from learners	40		May have felt exposed or embarrassed for being called a homosexual.
			Being called homosexual may have been perceived as offensive name calling, possible form of bullying.
Educator and learners perceive bullying as provocation			Describes feeling disappointed
			May have expected better from the learner, not anticipating that the learner would take it that far
Support from non-bullying learners			Educator has certain expectations from his learners, disappointed when not met

			Use of the word but counters the negative experience described, a turn of events
Disregarding educator's request			The end result was positive
			Describes how a couple of learners gave him insight into the bullies motives
Learner aggressive behaviour			Support from a few learners
Physical violence			The educator and learners perceive bullying of educators as a way to provoke educators.
			Shared understanding
Learner challenges educator			
	50	**Probe:** What other incidences of being bullied have you experienced?	Describes an incident where a learner did not do the work he was given.
Hostile interaction		**Joseph:** A learner did not do my work and as I was questioning him then he became very angry and decided to slap me on the face and then thinking maybe I would retaliate but I didn't retaliate.	Unmet expectations
			Confronted learner about not doing his work. Learner responded angrily and slapped educator on the face
			Use of the word decided suggests that the learner was aware of this or her response and intended to slap the educator
			Physical aggressive behaviour
	60		Learner aggression
Bullying happens early in teaching career			Describes how the incident did not turn into a physical fight between him and the learner
Familiarity with educator allows bullying behaviours to subside			Learner challenges educator, when confronted
			Learner expects educator to fight back (to engage in aggressive behaviour from being provoked
New educators are targets of bullying			
			Incident happened earlier in teaching career
Testing emotional reactivity behavioural response as a way of getting to know what kind of educator one is		**Probe:** Was this also at the beginning of your teaching career?	*Use of the transitional word now to show a turn of events*
		Ya that was at the beginning of my teaching career. Now the situation has gotten better because the learners have gotten used to me.	Describes how the bullying did not worsen over time but instead improved as learners got used to him
Bullying varies according to grades			As learner gets used to educator (In what ways?) the bullying stops

Being targeted based on appearance- appearing young Targeted based on being unfamiliar to the learners	70 80 90	It's just that learners test you especially if you're new at the school, they just want to see how temperamental you are and how you behave when they do this. Like we have new teachers now who came last year, they are being treated like that as well. When time goes on they get used to you. When you go with the grades, let's say you start from grade 8, young learners at grade 8 they respect you because they are still young and then when you go through with them until grade 12. At grade 10, 11 they get used to you, they treat you as an adult but if you get into a school and then you find that they throw you in grade 10 grade 11 they don't know you maybe let's say you have a young face they think you are the same age as them then that's when they are going to treat you badly because they don't know you, they don't know how you behave, how you conduct yourself in a situation where they provoke you.	Learners test educators especially new educators to see how temperamental an educator is and how they respond when learners misbehave *Test similar to provoke* New educators had been experiencing bullying Grade 8 learners respectful because they are still young <u>Grade 8 learners show respect because they are also new at the school?</u> Describes bullying as differing depending on the grade and how well the learners know you Describes bullying towards unfamiliar teachers especially those that look young *Use of the word throw, may suggest being forcefully put into a situation, threatening circumstances* <u>New educators go through some form of initiation, tested.</u> <u>Learners bully new educators as a way of getting to know their character, to see how they are</u> *Repetition of the word provoke*
Questioning choice of career Questioning longevity Uncertainty Regret at first Endurance Familiarity	100	**Researche**r: How does being bullied feel like? **Joseph:** You feel like you got into the wrong career, I must say	Describes how bullying can make one question whether teaching was the right profession to go into <u>Questioning one's career choice and longevity in the field</u> <u>Feelings of uncertainty</u>

Persistent bullying impacts job satisfaction Unpredictable nature of student behaviour Emotional impact Mood changes depending on whether or not bullying occurs	110	because you might find yourself asking yourself, "am I going to make it really in this field." But when time goes on then you start to enjoy it but at first you regret taking this kind of a career and say 'how could I choose this career, this is not mine.' But when time goes on you start to enjoy it because you get used to the learners, you get used to the job that you're doing.	<u>Feelings of regret at the beginning when the bullying takes place</u> Enjoyment comes later in the career. *Repetition of the concept of time improving the situation* *Repetition of familiarity.* Getting used to the learners and the job
Bullying negatively impacts home life A sense of disappointment at school	120	**Researcher**: How does being bullied affect your everyday life? **Joseph** Uhm... When you are being bullied like everyday, when you wake up you find that sometimes you hate coming to work. And then tomorrow you find that you don't get bullied by anyone then you start enjoying them, the learners. After three days same thing, this learner comes in and then treats you in a way you don't like and then you feel that maybe I came to	Being bullied everyday makes one hate going to work <u>Impact of bullying depends on the frequency of the bullying</u> Describes days as being different, some days bullying occurs other days it does not and one experiences positive emotions. <u>Frequency of bullying varies</u> *Repeats the bullying cycle, appearing then disappearing from day to day* <u>The educators' mood is directly influenced by being bullied or not.</u>
Family involvement and support Family perceptions Family expectations	130	the wrong school. Sometimes you become happy others days you're sad. **Prompt:** And what about the impact it has on you at home? **Joseph**: At home it has a little effect because you find that you are disappointed here and then	Sometimes feels happy other days feels sad depending on whether bullied or not <u>Questions whether he chose the right school</u> <u>Educator unable to predict when the bullying will occur; the day's events are unexpected</u> Describes how the negative impact of bullying continues when one is at home. However, impact is to a less degree at home

Bullying attributed to peer pressure	140	when you arrive at home family members are happy towards you asking how was it at work and then you start recalling the things that happened during the day then you start to disclose, you're able to explain to them what happened. If they feel pity for you they would say "you are a certain way how could learners behave like this towards you? And then you find that it affects you in some instances. Others they'll advise you saying "you can study and do something else, teaching is not your profession."	Feeling disappointed when at school Describes a concerned family, one which he can talk to about the bullying Recollection of bullying experiences elicit negative emotions Family support reduces the impact of the bullying Family questions the mismatch between how they view the educator on the one had versus how the educator is being treated on the other hand Expectations from family that learners should not be bullying an educator Realisation results in negative feelings Family offers advice to change career‑Solution from family's perspective
Learners are intrinsically good	150		
Bullying behaviour normal student behaviour Developmental phase		**Researcher:** How do you make sense of being bullied by learners?	
Endurance of the situation	160	**Joseph:** What I have learnt, learners engage in bullying just to please their class mates. You find that if you stand with that learner one on one he or she is not that kind of person. You find that he or she is respectful. It's just that he or she is under pressure from peers to show them that they can do this towards the teacher. But catching him or her one on one,	Learners bully educators to please their peers. Learner is respectful when faced one-on-one with the educator Learners show their peers that they can bully the teacher Attributes bullying to social factors such as the influence of peers. The learner is perceived as intrinsically good. Identifies the need to provide individual attention to each learner in order to see the learner's true self
Attributes bullying to one's upbringing			
Acceptance of the bullying as a coping mechanism			
Over time learner behaviour may change	170	they don't behave that way.	

Learner responsible for their own change		**Researcher**: On a day to day basis how do you deal with being bullied?	Growing accustomed to the situation and accepting learners' bullying behaviours as normal
Learner bullies adults in other settings		**Joseph:** You tend to get used to the situation and say that this is how learners behave and then I have to get used to it because	*Repeats the idea of one getting used to the situation*
Developmental phase, with growth comes maturity			Bullying behaviours is accepted as being part and parcel of learner behaviour
Learners in higher grades considered to be more mature	180	when time goes on some of them change and realise that this is not a good way to live or to treat teachers and other	Describes how learners change by themselves over the years
		learners. So some of them in time they will change others they	Over time learners come to their own realisation that bullying is wrong
		don't change they just live like that, to find out it's the	Attributes bullying as stemming from ones upbringing.
Confronting the bullying learner in a non-threatening manner		manifestation of where they come from. They were living like this from their parents' house	Describes learners as bullying parents therefore one cannot change them
One-on-one communication to facilitate change		and treat their parents like this as well. If you call the parents	Learners bully adults in general
	190	they will tell you that this is how the learner behaves even at	In grade 11 and 12 learners become mature and stop displaying bullying behaviours.
Improving the educator-learner relationship		home. So you find you can't change them but there are	Attributes bullying to development stage
Open communication		situations where some of them change. When they grow up they	
Building a relationship		mature and you find out that at around grade 11 grade 12 they	
Counselling, guiding, parental role		are very thoughtful.	
Establishing trust			
	200	**Probe:** what do you specifically do to cope with the bullying?	One-on-one with the learner to explain to him or her that bullying
		Joseph: With me specifically I call the learner like I find that one learner every time when I come	is wrong. Pointing out to learner that peer pressure influences them and that the bullying is not a reflection of who they truly are.

		to class the one who's always causing problems then I make a way to call this learner to come to me so I'm going to put the learner in a corner but I don't intimidate him or her, I just confront them saying "what you are doing is wrong, this is the way of life. You are doing this because this is what is pushing you, like other learners, you just want to show them that you can do this but this is not you. It's just that it's a situation that you're living in." Then you find over time the learner gets used to you and then you find that every time the learner is having a problem they come to you as an information source to say 'this is the person who understands me better therefore this is where I'm going to get information if something maybe goes wrong' That is the mechanism I use.	Developing a close relationship with the learner The educator assumes a supportive and guiding role in the relationship. _Repeats that learner is intrinsically good, social factors influence his or her behaviour_ Learner goes to the teacher for other concerns as the teacher becomes someone they feel understands them and can offer advice Establishing a trusting relationship between the learner and educator
Fear of disclosure Being bullied internalised as failure at being a good teacher Feelings of inadequacy Comparisons amongst educators Fear of judgement Advocates for bullied teachers Perceived inadequacy impacting self-esteem Self-blame	210 220		
	230	**Researcher**: In your opinion how can one support and protect victims of bullying? **Joseph:** Victims of bullying are not vocal in some cases like we have colleagues who are being bullied and they have a fear thinking "If I speak out maybe they'll think I'm not a good	Bullied educators do not speak out because they feel admitting to bullying reflects poorly on their capacity to be a teacher Fear of disclosure Attributing bullying to being an inadequate educator Self-blame Describes how more confident teachers should help those that are often afraid by offering advice

Unsupportive school system	240	teacher." And then there are those who can speak. Those who can speak can help him or her to say we identify the learners who are bullying you then give advice on what to do to gain respect. But others it's very difficult because they cannot speak about the problem. They just think that if these teachers are good in class and that they can handle their class properly it means there's something wrong with them. Sometimes teachers they tend to blame themselves saying, "I don't have these management skills in the class."	<u>Idealistic views: educators helping and supporting one another</u> <u>Advocating for other educators</u> Bullied educators compare themselves with no-bullied educators that are better able at managing their learners and feel that something is wrong with them <u>Comparisons amongst teachers</u> Educators blame themselves for not having any management skills <u>Poor self-esteem</u>
Unrealistic expectations placed on educators	250		
Lack of support from fellow educators	260	**Prompt:** What support is there from management here at school or maybe the department? **Joseph:** We don't get support from the department. We don't get support from the management. Sometimes we're being told to use our own discretion as teachers. "Use your own discretion, you're coming from university, you're coming from college you've been learning about this how to handle learners in your class. That's what they always tell you. Sometimes they use these words 'use your own discretion.	No support from management is afforded to educators Describes how teachers are expected to deal with learners that bully without any assistance from the Department of education and school management Educators are told to use their own discretion to deal with being bullied <u>Teachers feel isolated from the rest of the school system.</u> <u>Teachers are expected to use resources they don't have to be able to deal with the bullying.</u> <u>Feelings of helplessness</u>
	270		

		Researcher: Is there anything else that you would like to tell me that I haven't asked concerning your experience?	
		Joseph: The issue of teachers' interpersonal skills like working relationship. We find that we as teachers, we don't help each	Poor working relationships amongst educators
	280		Educators don't help each other to deal with bullying
		other. For example the teacher next door is experiencing problems like this one of bullying. And then you find that	*Speaking out of concern for relationships amongst educators*
			Emphasis on teachers not helping one another.
		all these learners coming into my class they respect me, they pay attention and then when my period ends and they go to the	Educators refusing to help one another knowing that his or her colleague is in need of some assistance
		next class they don't behave the way they behaved in my class.	Malicious tendencies from some educators
	290	And then I have the ways in which I can assist this teacher	Some educators intentionally with-hold information that could be helpful
		but I don't want to use them I just want to expose this teacher to	Proving a point
		see how things will end up. But I have ways in which I can help him or her to manage his or her class but you find that I can't do	
		that, actually I don't want to but I	
	300	have ways in which I can assist. That's why in most cases we are lacking.	

Table F2 Transcript 2 – Mandla

Emergent Themes	Line	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
Coercion Learner-to-learner bullying Power imbalance Vulnerability Learner-to-educator bullying Defencelessness Verbal bullying Humiliation Emotional impact Seeking assistance Coping strategies	10 20 30	**Researcher**: Describe what bullying is in your own words. **Mandla**: Well bullying comes in different ways. Uhm.. Among other ways in which it manifests is when learners demand money from fellow learners. The way they are being treated with all sorts of emotional and physical attack. And uh bullying also includes uhm to be in a position where you don't feel comfortable to be in. For instance you find that you are.. I don't know whether you are asking me to actually explain this in the context of learners or in the context of teachers. **Probe**: I'm asking for a general understanding, it could be between anyone. **Mandla**: As far as teachers are concerned It can be manifested when learners uhm because they know they have rights, you can't actually touch them. They can spew verbal expletives to the teachers, ridiculing him. Also	There are different forms of bullying A learner demanding money from another learner <u>Bullying involves forcefully making someone do something</u> <u>Demanding money as a form of bullying</u> <u>Initial understanding is to view bullying as behaviours occurring between learners</u> Describes bullying as emotional and physical attacking Victim is put in an uncomfortable position <u>Victim feels vulnerable</u> <u>Bullying occurs in different age groups</u> Learners know that they have rights which prevent educators from retaliating <u>Abuse of rights-use of rights to assume power</u> <u>Learners' rights prevent educators from responding to the bullying- Educator is defenceless</u> <u>What does can't touch them mean? Physically, through enforcing of rules?</u> Describes bullying involving a learner spewing expletives at the educator *Use of the word spew suggests saying something with anger or disgust* <u>Learner aggressive behaviour directed at an educator</u> <u>Saying expletives (swearing) as a form of bullying</u> Ridiculing the educator

Use of the idiom "rears its ugly head" meaning that bullying is a difficult problem which occurs and forces people to deal with it		doing things that will emotionally drain the teacher to a point where he's left with no option but to escalate such problem to the management. So that's bullying. So it actually happens in many ways. There's no particular single way in which it actually rears its ugly head.	Ridiculing/humiliating as a form of bullying To feel ridiculed/humiliated, psychological impact Learner does things that emotionally drain the teacher- What kinds of things? Depletion of emotional resources Emotionally draining as an impact of the bullying The educator eventually resorts to reporting the problem to management Pushing the educators beyond what they can handle External assistance beyond the context of the classroom. Ways of managing the situation
	40		
Bullying occurs repeatedly Bullying occurs in the classroom setting Bullying perpetrated by a group of learners Disruptive behaviour Wasting teaching and learning time Disobedience/Insubordination Disregarding educator's requests Confronts the bully with no success	50	**Researcher:** What incidences of being bullied by learners have you experienced? **Mandla**: So many times uh so many times. Sometimes you are busy teaching and you find that they whistle, not one, not two but a group of certain learners they whistle at the back. And when you try to identify who's doing that you find that you don't actually know, pinpoint who has done that. So also you find that someone comes to school, you gave them homework the previous the	Describes being bullied repeatedly *Repetition of the phrase "so many times" which emphasises the point* During lessons a group of learners whistle Bullying occurs repeatedly in the classroom setting Whistling a form of bullying Interferes with the educator's job Multiple bullies at once Another example involving a learner not doing homework as requested by the teacher Disobedience as a form of bullying Disregarding educator's requests Asks the learner why homework was not done Enquires about the problem Way in which he deals with the problem Not following requests happens repeatedly
	60		

		day and they didn't write it and when you ask them why they didn't write it, they will tell you "I forgot." You find that it's a daily excuse that one makes.	*Use of the transitional word "so" to introduce a new idea.* Emotionally affected by the problem
Negative impact on emotional well-being			Emotional impact Recollections of the incidences
Uncertainty on how to deal with the bully		So it affects me personally, emotionally as well because I can actually recall all those things but at the end of the	Psychological impact Negative memories *Use of the word "but" introduces new idea*
Disregarding rules		day other learners they feel like why the teacher doesn't take action against these	Other learners expect the educator to take action against those learners not doing their school work.
Expectations from other learners	70	particular learners who are not doing schoolwork. So it kind of like puts me in a hot	Zero tolerance from other learners for not doing schoolwork Bullying is not perpetrated by all the learners
Testing the educator's patience		spot because I don't know whether I should punish that person or that learner, what	*Use of the phrase "puts me in a hot spot" may imply being placed in an uneasy position*
	80	action should I take because the action that I take will also rub onto the other learners in the fact that they will also see	Uncertain about the course of action to take to deal with learners not doing their school work. Feels pressured to take action
		that there are consequences for not doing class work and homework. So I've	Taking action serves a bigger purpose in proving a point Expresses a need to take action?
		experienced such kind of bullying in my classes. Some of them I forgot but there are	What he chooses to do to one learner will in effect apply to other learners Has had experience of multiple bullying incidences
	90	too many, there are too many.	too many to remember all of them *Repeats that there are many incidences of bullying he experienced*
		Uhm you find that someone just walks into the class with a hat on or with a cap on and they know very well that they	Bullying occurs repeatedly Learner wears cap in the class knowing it's not allowed only to test the educator Disregarding of rules form of bullying

		are not allowed but they would just want to test your patience, how far you can go with your tolerance. So it	Motive behind the bullying-Learner wants to test the educator's patience
			Behaviour intended to elicit a response from the educator
Depressive feelings	100	does affect me emotionally. So bullying is broad-based.	
		There's no single ways in	*Repeats the emotional impact of bullying*
Learners' rights protect them		which one can actually	Feeling depressed when leaving school as a result of the bullying
		contextualise it.	Depressive feelings
Helplessness in dealing with situation		**Probe**: So you have actually experienced various kinds of	Thinking of ways he could have handled the situation only to realise there is no solution
		bullying…	*Repeats that the educator cannot touch the learner*
Unsuccessful parental involvement		**Mandla**: Ya of bullying because you leave school	Helplessness when he finds there are no solutions
		being emotionally depressed	Taking the matter up to management may have also been ineffective
Indirect bullying-not doing the expected work	110	by what happened and you try to figure out what you	Has tried different ways to deal with the problem
		could have done differently and you find that there's no	Sending letter to the learners' parents has been attempted but it failed
Disciplining learner is ineffective		solution to that because at the end of the day you can't	Attempts to involve parents in the issue
		touch them. You give them a	Learners do not appreciate the seriousness of the issue
Retaliation-Learner threatens educator		letter to go and give their parents, it doesn't reach	Another incident involving a learner writing another subject in his class
		them. They just tear those	
Offensive language use	120	letters apart and then dump	Not doing the expected work as a form of bullying
		them somewhere and the next day they are at school.	Attempted to discipline the learner for doing another subject in his class
Disruptive behaviour		I remember the other one, we were in class and I gave	Verbal discipline used to deal with the problem
Vivid recollections of the event		them work to do. A learner was writing something else	Verbal discipline is ineffective
		during my period imagine	Learner responded negatively to discipline
Learner responds aggressively to discipline		and I confronted him and	May have elicited fear?
		asked "why are you writing	*Language use of the rhetorical question, Just imagine*
Physical violence	130		

		other subjects in my period?" and I chastised him and he didn't take it well. So he said to me…. (pause) in a rather ….(pause) crude way saying 'You're gonna shit yourself" just imagine learners telling the teacher such a thing. I don't know what you call it when someone tells you, "you're gonna shit yourself". It is a threat for me. There are many incidences that took place. I remember the other one quite vividly I think last year. This boy was just playing music on his cell phone. I was like "what point is he trying to prove" and then out of desperation I went straight to him and confiscated that phone. And he demanded it back. So it came to a point where he had to beat me on my back, punching me. I wanted to take that phone to the office but he refused and he decided to take it back from me. Unfortunately he didn't get it. So these are the things that actually somehow bullied me.	Disbelief of what the learner said
			Language use of the phrase "you're gonna shit yourself
			Learner speaks to the educator in a crude way
			Learner speaks in a rude or vulgar way to the educator
	140		Learner threatens educator
			Repeats many incidences of bullying
			Another incident remembered vividly
			Use of the word vividly suggests the event had a lasting impression
			Last year a learner was playing music on his phone during class-Form of bullying, disruptive behaviour
			Makes the assumption that the learner was trying to prove a point
	150		*Use of the phrase "out of desperation"* This may suggest that the educator had tried other ways to get the learner to stop playing music but had failed
			Confiscated the phone but learner demanded it back responding negatively.
			Learner punches educator on the back
mpact on emotional well-being			Punching (Physical violence)
			Learner responds negatively to discipline
			Learner did not get his way
Questioning career choice	160		
Regret			Describes bullying as distressful
			Repeats and emphasises the emotional impact of bullying
Job dissatisfaction			*Repetition of the word "so"*
			Negative impact on emotions

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			The experience makes one feel as if teaching was the wrong career path to follow
Undermining educator authority		**Researcher**: How does being bullied feel like?	Feelings of uncertainty
			Questioning career choice
Diminished status		**Mandla**: It is so so distressful. You feel like you should have chosen a different career path. You don't actually enjoy the fruits of your labour. You feel like you are being undermined by the perpetrators of it. And you kind of like feel you're not part of the staff. The learners perhaps they equate you with other learners not other teachers. So you feel down, down-trodden. So it is quite painful I must say especially when you have to be subjected to it by learners. It is very sad	Not enjoying fruits of one's labour
Feeling oppressed			*Use of the idiom "fruits of you labour"-rewards*
			The job does is no longer rewarding
Disappointment	170		Feeling undermined by the bullies
			Professionalism taken for granted by learners where learners do not recognise position as educator
			Learners treat the educator like a learner not a teacher
			Comparing educator status with learner status
			Learners perceive egalitarian relationship between themselves and educators-possible explanation for being bullied
	180		Feeling down-trodden
			Feeling oppressed by learners that have assumed power
			Learner assumes power useable to their favour
			Feels painful
			Experience is sad considering that the educator is subjected to the bullying by learners
			Repeats emotional impact
			May suggest disappointment that learners bully educators
			May be perceived as a disgrace to be bullied by learners
Negative impact on well-being			
Bullying impedes healthy functioning at home			Bullying is one of the biggest challenges faced in the profession among other things as it causes emotional and physical stress
Loss of interest			
Loss of appetite			Impacts emotional and physical well-being

Irritability			
			Bullying impacts educator at home
			Bullying results in not wanting to do anything.
Negative impact on perception of children		**Researcher**: How does bullying affect your everyday life?	Lack of interest
			One loses their appetite
			Loss of appetite
Traumatic experience Depression		**Mandla**: It is one of the biggest challenges in our sector because when you get	Depressive symptoms
			Anger towards others
		home you don't want to do	Experience of mood changes
Counselling to assist educators	190	anything. You're not only emotionally stressed but also	Irritability
		physically stressed. You kind	All learners perceived as bullies as a result
Attributes bullying to Lack of values		of like even lose appetite for food because of the	*Language use of an idiom "paint with the same brush"*
		depression you are going	Feels like not associating with children as a result. Feels all children are bullies although he knows this is not the case
Attributes bullying to poor socialisation		through And at the same time you find that you have anger	
		towards everyone. You begin	Impacts on relationship with children and perception of children
Burdened with responsibility		to have mood swings. You begin to paint learners with	
		the same brush that they are	*Use of the transitional word "so" to introduce a new idea*
Negative perception of assuming a parental role	200	all bullies. And you kind of like don't want to have any	Suggests counselling for educators to deal with the trauma and depression
		association with children	
Depressive symptoms Withdrawn		because the experience that I had actually makes me to	Offers a solution, way in which to deal with the issue
		think that all children are the	Bullying results in depression and trauma
Sleep as a coping mechanism		same, they are bullies, and which is not the case.	Describes the kinds of learners one encounters:
		So perhaps we need people	Describes learners as being different and coming from different backgrounds
Physical pain vs. emotional pain		who will actually counsel educators to deal with the	For example there are learners from child-headed household who did not have values instilled in them lack the skills to tackle the issues they have
Emotional pain from the bullying is pervasive	210	trauma, to deal with the	
			Exploring the learners' social backgrounds
Emotional pain not visible to others			Possible explanations for the bullying
			Socialisation

		depression that they go through as a result of these learners. You must remember that these learners they are different characters in the classrooms. Some of them they come from different family backgrounds where there are no parents, some of them they come from child-headed families and they have no values, certain values that they have been brought up with So for them life is all about waking up everyday, go to school, come back home, meet friends. They don't have these values that actually give them direction about how they can actually confront the challenges they face in life and because of that they become a burden to other people especially teachers because we deal with them on a daily basis. So I think that is something that is a problem. So for me when I get home having being bullied I feel depressed, I don't want to see anything, I don't want to watch anything, I don't want to read anything I just want to	Learners become a burden to educators
			Educator sees this as negative
			Educator feels they are assuming a parental role
	220		*Transitions again to the negative impact bullying has on his well-being*
			Repeats feeling depressed
			Bullying causes educator to not want to do anything except to sleep
			Withdrawn
			Lack of interest
			Sleeping as a solution, escape, coping mechanism
	230		*Emphasis on emotional impact*
			Makes an analogy between physical and emotional pain. Physical pain (being beaten with a cane) unlike emotional pain is visible and therefore treatable
			Counselling may help but counters this by *emphasising on not being able to fix emotional pain as it is not visible with the naked eye*
			The emotional pain is internal, others do not see it
	240		Emotional pain seen as long lasting
			Impacts relationship with other people including learners
			Interpersonal relationships are negatively impacted
			The emotional impact is inescapable
			Overall impact on one's life

	250	sleep. Make no mistake, you become so emotionally stressed. It's one thing to be beaten with a cane because obviously the pain will go away but when you are emotionally abused, bullied, there is no doctor other than to get someone who will give counselling and all that. You
Learners lack of respect	260	really can't fix something that you can't see with your naked eye. So at least pain, I can see the pain when someone has hit me and then I know it will soon disappear but with that one it can stay for longer and it will have a negative impact in one way or the other in the
Poor socialisation		
Absence of role models		
Counsellors to assist learners		
Feeling undermined		
Malicious intent	270	way I interact with learners and other people. It will eventually affect my relationships and my way of life.
Attribution, Community factors impact learner behaviour		
Role of educator		**Researcher**: How do you make sense of being bullied by learners?
Expectations placed on teachers exceed their scope of practice		**Mandla**: Sometimes when I do self-introspection and I try
	280	to figure out in hindsight. I just think that perhaps this whole experience is a result of lack of good…(pause)

Attempts to understand why learners perpetrate bullying through reflection after the events
Engages in a process of reflection
Suggests that bullying occurs because learners are not used to practising how to respect others
Attributes bullying to learners not being accustomed to respect others
No one has taught the learners to show respect
Does not blame the learners
Absence of positive role models
Poor socialisation
Values mentioned earlier could be that of respect
Suggests having counsellors to offer learners advice and to teach life skills to help them become better people

		habits of respecting other people. There was no one who has instilled a culture of respect especially for the elders, to these learners. So I kind of like think perhaps they need people like counsellors who can actually give them that advise, teach them life skills so that they can be better people in their lives. So for me being bullied it means that yes I feel undermined, I feel those kids are mean to me but at the same time there is a broader problem that exists behind their misconduct and its hard really to detect and identify why they are doing that. But for me it's also a microcosm of what is actually happening in the community. What they are doing here is a reflection of how and what the community is. Because really we are not there at school to teach them how to behave, we are not there to do that. We are there to teach them the content of the curriculum. So if they become wayward then we are not being trained to deal with such learners. Unfortunately there are no	<u>Counsellors for both educators and learners as possible solution to the problem</u>
			<u>External assistance</u>
	290		*Shifts the discussion back to the impact of the bullying*
			Bullying means educator is made to feel undermined
			<u>Repeats that bullying makes him feel undermined-Impact</u>
			Bullies are mean towards educator however does not blame the learners. Instead acknowledges that there is a bigger problem behind their misconduct
			Learner behaviour reflects what is already going on in the community
	300		*Language use of microcosm suggesting that learner behaviour encapsulates in miniature the characteristics of the community*
			<u>Attributes bullying to social factors in the community influencing learner behaviour</u>
			<u>The issue is systemic</u>
Dealing with the issue by getting management and fellow teachers involved			Educators' responsibilities do not include teaching learners how to behave
			<u>Role of educator is to teach the curriculum</u>
	310		<u>Implies that it is the community or family's responsibility to teach learners how to behave</u>
Feeling overwhelmed			Teaching training does not include dealing with bullies
			<u>Expecting more from teachers something beyond their scope of practice</u>
			No immediate remedies for the problem therefore problem persists

	320	remedies in place that can actually address those kinds of challenges instantly. So that's why you find that it becomes a recurring problem in our school.	Highlights that the bullying does not happen on a daily basis. *Provides a hypothetical description in the case of daily repetitive bullying* *Use of the word obviously suggests that situation is a known fact.* Daily occurring bullying needs to be reported to the management <u>Reporting to management even though they are not helpful.</u> *Use of the word bombarded* <u>Feeling overwhelmed</u> If he were to experience bullying on a daily basis he would report the cases or address the problem at a staff meeting <u>Involving his colleagues</u>
Avoidance as a coping mechanism Proactive coping strategy Involvement of parents	330 340	**Researcher**: On a day to day basis how do you deal with being bullied? **Mandla**: Sometimes it does not take place on a daily basis, that's number one. And number two If it does happen every day then it's a serious problem but anyway. If for argument sake it happens every day obviously you can't keep it unto yourself, I really can't keep it unto myself. I really have to escalate such bullying to the management to say I'm being bombarded with this kind of problem on a daily basis and I need your help. So if it really it does happen I don't think it will be advisable for me to keep it unto myself. I will have to escalate it or conduct a staff meeting with my colleagues about those	Avoiding the bullies and ignoring their dirty tricks <u>Avoidance and turning a blind eye to the behaviours as a coping mechanism</u> *Distancing language :such people," "such learners"* *Language use of the phrase dirty tricks implies malicious intent*

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	350	particular bullies who are perpetrating such.	When educator feels pushed to the limit they take action against bullies
Rights of the learner are to learn and to be taught		**Probe**: It seems as if that's what you would do if it were happening on a day-to-today basis. But whenever it does happen in your case how do you go about dealing with it?	Educator responds once the bullying has escalated Writing a letter to the parents requesting a meeting to address the problem
Going against the system to solve the problem	360	**Mandla**: Number one sometimes you try as much as you can to avoid such people or such learners. You kind of like act maturely by ignoring some of their dirty tricks but if it comes to a point where they push me to the limit, I would eventually have to take drastic action against those learners where I would have to write a letter, I would call upon their parents for a one-on-one meeting where the problem with those learners will be addressed. Until such time those learners bring their parents to school they will not be allowed to come to any classroom.	Proactive means of handling the issue Involvement of parents Educator expects learner to bring parent if learner fails to do so the learner will be prohibited from being in class-negative punishment
Learners' rights outweigh educator's rights			
Unsupportive Department of Education			
Lack of concern from parents			
Need for educator-learner-parent relationship	370		*Repeats that learners do not give the letters to their parents* According to the Department the learner has the right to learn and to be taught
Communication			*Rhetorical question: what do you do when one is confronted with such a situation? Do you wait for that parent*
Need for accessibility to parents vs. struggle to obtain direct access			Punishment goes against learners' rights Department of education protects the learner but does not provide solutions for the educator
Enforcing stringent rules on learners			
Parents should be responsible in managing behaviour	380	**Prompt:** Have you had to do this in the past? Sometimes we have to resort to it because you give them letters they don't reach their	Educator feels he has no choice but to punish the learner in that way even though it goes against the learners' rights to learn

Learners treat bullying as normal and acceptable Pervasive effect of bullying		parents. Although the department will say the learner has the right to learn and to be taught but what do you do when one is confronted with such a situation? Do you wait for that parent because what most of the parents do, they only come to collect report cards. They don't actually know whether their children write school work, participate in school activities, they don't know those things, they only want to see if their children have passed or not. So I think also teacher-parent-learner relationship, this triangle should actually exist and one thing that is also critically important is that each and every educator needs to have the contact details of the parents so that in the event that these learners bully the teachers or bully other learners, then we are in a position to directly communicate with the parents. Now you have to find those telephone numbers in a difficult way. So I think parents should come and be part of what is	Parents only come to fetch reports not aware of their children's' level of classroom engagement _Lack of involvement from the parents_ Suggests the introduction of a parent-learner-teacher relationship *Use of the word "triangle" to symbolise the relationship* _Solution to the problem_ Describes the importance of educators being able to access the parent's contact details. _Direct communication not through the learners_ _Way of dealing with the issue_ Struggles to obtain parents' contact details Parents should become involved with school activates to reduce problems educator has with leaners _Parental support_ Learners should be forced to bring their *parents Language use of the phrase by hooks or crooks* _Obligation upon learners_ _There's only so much the teacher can do additional assistance from parents is necessary in curbing the issue._ *Emphasis that parents should take responsibility-educators cannot fulfil the role of being parents* Parents possess more knowledge than educators about their children therefore in a better position to teach their children how to behave _Educator renounces responsibility of parenting to give it back to its rightful owners, the parents_
	390		
	400		
	410		

	420	happening with their children at school. They should become pretty much concerned about how their children are doing because that in a way would ease any problem that the teacher has with those learners. So I would think that for me those learners need to be forced to bring their parents by hooks	Parents should follow-up on the children <u>Highlights parental responsibilities</u> *Reiterates that learners should be obligated to bring their parents if failing to do so negative consequences will ensue* Learners do not appreciate the seriousness of their actions
	430	or crooks. If they don't bring them then they will not be allowed.. Because we as teachers we can actually talk to them the way we like tell them how wrong it is to do what they are doing but the buck stops with the parents not teachers. We didn't bring	*Repeats emotional impact Language use of the phrase think that's how the cookie crumble" suggests that learners think that bullying of teachers is acceptable* Learners treating educators in an inhumane way <u>Learners perceive educators as being less than them</u> <u>Mishandling of educators by learners results in emotional scars</u>
	440	up those kids. Parents know them very well from their humble beginnings when they were infants to where they are now. So if we are trying to usurp the role of parents it will be not only naive for us but it will be wrong because we will be subverting the responsibilities
Function of a school Role of educators Lack of concern Expectations	450	of parents. So they are the ones who are supposed to make sure that their kids do their school work and all that. That's how I will deal with

	460	learners who are bullies. I will take them to the office where they will be issued with letters and an ultimatum will be given to say if you don't bring them don't come to school. That's the only way because some of them they are so playful, they don't recognise the emotional harm that they are incurring on us. They think that this is how the cookie crumbles, this is how school is. You know oblivious to the fact that we are also human beings; we have emotions you know we have feelings and if we are touched in a wrong way we will be emotionally scarred.	A school is described as an academy of learning and teaching. This does not involve teaching learners how to behave
	470		Cleary defines the function of a school
			Clearly distinguishes the role of educators
			Educators are responsible for teaching the content not to teach learners how to behave.
			Reiterates the role of the teacher to teach the content as prescribed
Counselling services for learners	480	**Researcher**: How can one support and protect educators that are being bullied? **Mandla**: A school is an academy of learning and teaching and we are not paid to teach learners how to behave, how to conduct themselves, we're not paid to do that. Of course we discourage ill-discipline, we discourage wayward behaviour but at the same	The department focuses solely on the completion of the syllabus not on other issues such as bullying
			Department may be perceived as insensitive or dismissive to the real concerns of educators
Code of conduct poorly recognised vs. need to emphasise it			Expects more from the Department
			Department sees bullying as petty whereas it's a serious issue for educators
			Restates that bullying is a big problem faced by educators
Ineffective classroom rules			Expresses the need to focus more on the issue

Learner responsibilty	490	time it is not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to teach the content, regarding the mandate that the department has given to us. The department is more concerned about whether we have finished the syllabus or not, whether a teacher is being bullied they don't know. Even when they visit us they don't ask us whether how have the learners treated you. They only want to find out how far are you with the syllabus. So that's what they are concerned about. So all those other petty things like bullying, for them it's petty but for us it is an enormous problem that needs to be attended to. **Probe:** What can the department do to address this problem? These learners they need constant counselling, you can't just come once a year to give them advice, to counsel them and all that. Because what I do know each and every school has a code of conduct and I don't think most learners are	
Concerns about the future			
Lack of intrinsic motivation			
Educators as the building blocks of learners			
Link between supporting educators and a better future			*Reiterates the need for learners to receive constant counselling* <u>Ways of dealing with the issue</u> Schools have a code of conduct which learners are unaware of <u>Code of conduct would help learners identify how they should behave at school</u> Possible solution Learners do not know how they are expected to behave in the school Teacher sets classroom rules which learners ignore <u>Ineffective classroom management</u> When learners start grade 8 they should receive the code of conduct and also at the end of each year Learner should go over the code of conduct to know what is expected from him or her <u>Learners should take responsibility</u> *Repeats learners ideas of what school is "to have fun"* Only a few learners are serious about school <u>Questions factors which can be influencing learners to not take school seriously</u> <u>Environment vs. individual factors</u>
Life orientation taken for granted	500		
Need for a paradigm shift			
More expected from the Department			
Feeling unheard			
Holistic approach to addressing learner conduct	510		
Various professionals to assist learners			
Compares personal childhood experiences with current situation of learners			
Regular assembly reinforces rules and encourages discipline	520		

		aware of this code of conduct because they are being admitted to schools but they are not given the code of conduct. A code of conduct could perhaps be a document that is kept at school not for distribution. They are not aware how they should conduct themselves. As educators yes you can set your own classroom rules, they are there of course but they don't bother to even read those and you kind of like ask yourself what more can you do then you have to actually sometimes reprimand them to stop them from doing something that is not right whilst there is a code of conduct at school. I think the moment they reach grade 8, they should be issued with a code of conduct and each and every year end they should be given those code of conduct with their report cards so that they can be able to read them, they can be able to internalise them and understand what is expected of them as learners. So most of them as far as I'm concerned they	Learners not showing commitment Concerned about the future *Repetition of the word "serious"* Learners are not motivated to do their work, do it because the teacher requires them to do it Lack of intrinsic motivation The lack of commitment from learners poses a threat to a prosperous future Teachers seen as the building blocks of learners *Language use of "building blocks" suggesting that teachers are the basic unit from which learners can grow from* Educator support is imperative for a successful future Warning tone *Reiterates that government should expand their focus to not only be subject matter but also teacher-learner relationships* Content and process Life orientation teaches learners life skills yet learners do not appreciate or realise this. *Language use of the phrase "we need a paradigm shift| suggests a major change in reality concerning how the issue of learner conduct is dealt with* Suggesting new ways of thinking about and dealing with the issue Some parents show concern which is appreciated but much more needs to happen in order to curb the problem Parents are unaware of learner misconduct

Lines shown: 530, 540, 550

		don't actually know what is expected of them. For them they are just there to have fun. You can count those that are serious about school but majority I'm afraid our future looks bleak. I don't know whether it's because of where we are or the kind of learners that we have, I have no idea but you kind of like think that we are actually facing a serious serious problem when it comes to our future because we have learners who are not committed. For them writing school work or doing school work, they are just doing it to fulfil what the teacher has told them to do. It's not something that they want to do, it's like they are being forced to do it. We can't have this kind of a situation if want to see a prosperous nation. Teachers are the building blocks of these learners. The future of this country hangs on the shoulders of the teachers. So if the teachers are not given enough support systems to deal with such kinds of problems then there's indeed a gleam of	Greater responsibility lies with the department, they poses a greater power in facilitating change The Department should expand their approach when dealing with schools Holistic approach to learner conduct to get to the root of the problem A focus on syllabus completion puts educators at risk of being blamed for learners failing- Learner conduct impacts school performance Department trivialises the issue, not a priority *Similar to the use of "petty"* Need for department to listen to the concerns of educators A sense of being unheard Holistic approach Sending pastors, psychologist, social working to assist in combating the problem Attributes problem to spiritual, psychological and social factors Assembly only taking place once a week- Insufficient Compares current practices with those of the past Assembly reinforces the rules and encourages discipline
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		hope looming for our future. So the department should not actually focus on the curriculum itself. Yes there is this subject called life orientation but for them Life Orientation is just a subject.	
	600	They don't realise that those things they are learning there are lifelong skills. These are the things they will use when they are adults. They just think that no as long as I know that there are three religions, I know that there is the biggest union, I know that the responsibility of a family	
	610	is one two three. They just know it but they don't actually actualise them in practical terms. So it becomes a problem. So we need a paradigm shift in the way in which we deal with these problems of learners. Yes I appreciate the participation and concern that some	
	620	parents show in their children. They make time when they are called for a meeting to come and hear what's going on and you'll be surprised to find that most them they don't know that their children are	

	630	misbehaving. It becomes a shock to them. So we appreciate those kinds of parents but as far as I'm concerned the department in order to deal with this problem should not only focus on syllabus completion but should also focus on learner conduct. That in a way will enable them to address learner problems
	640	holistically not just looking on one side, whether how many learners have passed, how many learners have failed, but looking at the problem holistically so that we don't just scratch the surface but we also dig deep to find out why the learners are failing, why they are actually
	650	misbehaving, why they are actually so ill-disciplined. So you can't just put the blame on teachers you need to actually look at this whole idea of why learners have failed in a much broader sense. So the department should in a way become concerned not only about
	660	curriculum completion and the percentage of learners who fail and pass but they

		should also look at.. Yes you have the code of conduct, the problem is that they trivialise this issue of learner behaviour oblivious to the fact that it does have an impact on the way they perform in their school work. So if they don't actually address that then we will still have a problem where you hear people say the standard of education has dropped, the standard of education is no longer the same as the previous years. You'll continue to hear such kinds of narratives playing out. The department should actually listen to the concerns and the grievances of the teachers by sending also pastors. You know those people yes you can take them for granted but they play an important role in dealing with our spiritual well-being because they address the core problem of ours. Because some of the things that happen they happen spiritually. Yes there is this assembly taking place once a week but you know back then we used to have an assembly on a daily basis on	
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	700	a daily basis we used to have assembly where children will be taught. If they say for instance school time starts at 7:45 we must be there at least at 7:35, ten minutes allocated for that assembly so we can actually be able to address those kinds.. Because after all we are all spiritual beings and if you can be able to address their spiritual problems by calling upon pastors, psychologists, social workers then we are in a position to half the problem. **Researcher:** Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience that I didn't ask? **Mandla:** No	
	710		

Table F3 Transcript 3 – Joanne

Emergent Themes	Line	Original transcript	Exploratory Comments
Physical bullying Verbal bullying Emotional impact		**Researcher**: In your own words describe what bullying is. **Joanne**: Bullying can be described as both physical and mental. Physical bullying is when somebody physically attacks you and then emotionally, when somebody curses you. So that is how I can describe bullying.	Describes bullying as having physical and mental components Bullying involves a person physically attacking you Bullying described as being emotional for example when someone curses you <u>Physical bullying</u> <u>Cursing- verbal bullying</u> <u>Impacts on ones emotions</u>
Experience of verbal bullying Repeated occurrence Early in teaching career Defencelessness and powerlessness Expectations Parental role	10 20	**Researcher:** What incidences of being bullied by learners have you experienced? **Joanne**: Being cursed by a learner was one of the first experiences of my teaching experience. I was cursed several times but I couldn't fight back you know because according to the policy we are not supposed to curse back at learners because they are supposed to be our kids.	Describes being cursed at several times by a learner early in teaching career <u>Verbal bullying</u> <u>Bullying occurred repeatedly early in career</u> Was not able to retaliate due to the policy preventing educators from cursing at learners Educators are expected to treat learners like their children <u>Defenceless due to policy restrictions</u> <u>Expectation placed on educators to not respond aggressively towards learners but rather with care and nurturance</u> *Expresses that "they are supposed to be our kids"-<u>This may suggest that the educator is like a parent to the learners</u>*
Verbal bullying Indirect bullying Humiliation Disruptive behaviour		**Prompt:** Please elaborate on what you mean by curse? **Joanne:** Curse uh.. saying foul language. Trying to make fun of me so that other learners can laugh. Make funny jokes so that teaching	Describes cursing as the use of foul language <u>Verbal bullying</u> Describes being made fun of so other learners can laugh <u>Indirect bullying</u> <u>Humiliation</u> Learner makes jokes to prevent teaching and learning

Intentionality Other learners as bystanders Provocation	30	and learning cannot take place. So that effective teaching and learning cannot take place So cursing at me or cursing at other learners so that I can say something. Yes	Disruptive behaviour Intention to prevent learning and teaching from taking place *Use of the adjective "effective" when rephrasing her sentence* Learner violates the educator's right to teach and the learners' rights to learn Bully bystanders Learner curses at other learners so the educator responds Provoking the educator Multiple victims
Emotional harm Bullying experienced as manageable issue Compares self to other Displaced aggression Bully-victims	40	**Researcher**: How does being bullied feel like? **Joanne**: Bullying is hurting because.. Me personally I can handle bullying but kids cannot handle it because bullying comes in all shapes and sizes. Other learners can even commit suicide from being bullied. So with me I can handle it, I know what to do in such situations. Because I have to take into consideration the background of these learners. Maybe they have been bullied themselves so they need somebody that they can punch so that they can feel better.	Bullying described as hurtful Emotional impact Different forms of bullying, different effects Educator is able to handle the bullying Compares herself to children suggesting that she is better able to handle bullying than children Describes that bullying can result in some learners committing suicide-Impact *Restates that she can handle being bullied* Suggests that learners bully others due to being bullied therefore they react by "punching" others *Use of the word "punch" may suggest releasing one's aggression* Displacement of one's anger Attempts to understand why learners bully others Attributes bullying to bullies who are themselves victims-bully-victims
Negative impact on learning and teaching Professional impact	50	**Researcher**: How does the bullying affect your everyday life? **Joanne**: Sometimes it makes teaching and learning not effective	At times bullying results in ineffective teaching and learning *Repeats that ineffective learning and teaching ensues from the bullying*

Lack of support from principal		because at the end of the day the principal cannot do anything about it. The principal will say you were not hurt so therefore you should continue doing your work. And another thing is that we don't receive counselling, counselling on a daily basis or maybe on a monthly basis, to say "this is the person we have organised for you, please do counselling for teachers" So what we normally do, we sit down as friends, as colleagues just to share our experiences. That is how we manage these types of attacks.	<u>Bullying impacts both the learners being able to learn and the educator being able to teach</u> <u>Infringement of rights</u>
Bullying of educators dealt with only when presenting as physical harm			Describes the principal as unable to do anything about the bullying, claiming that the educator did not get hurt and should continue as usual
Conceptualisation of bullying	60		The principle does not see visible signs of the educator being hurt by the learner <u>Bullying may be acknowledged only if the effect is visible</u> <u>Emotional impact may be dismissed</u>
Lack of regular counselling services			<u>Conceptualisation of bullying based on the context</u>
Need to receive counselling for bullied educators			Educators do not regular receive counselling <u>Expresses a need for additional support</u>
Support from colleagues			*Repetition of the word "talk"* Educators come together and talk about their experiences
Talking about experiences as a coping mechanism			<u>Support from colleagues-coping strategy</u> *Use of the word "attacks" suggests that bullying can be described as an attack*
Impact at home		**Probe:** Does it affect you at home? If so in what way?	Bullying impacts the educator at home
	70	**Joanne:** It does, it does because at the end of the day you want to see your learners happy. You want to see yourself happy. You want to see beautiful work that is being done by your learners but sometimes it's difficult for a teacher to mark scripts knowing very well that that particular learner has bullied you and at the same time you have to take into consideration	<u>Impact in another setting</u>
Conflict between ideals and reality			Describes the difficulty experienced when marking the script of a learner that has bullied her
Job performance			Educator wanting the best for her students and herself
Suppression of negative feelings			<u>Conflict between the educator's ideal perception of the learner vs. the negative feelings associated with the learner as someone that bullies her</u>
Being objective, maintaining professionalism	80		Describes having to consider that she is a teacher who is dealing with a learner

Impact on relationship with learners Parental role Comparing own children's (older) behaviour to learners' (younger) behaviour Bullying experienced as disrespect Expectation that children should treat their elders with respect Questioning abilities as educator and as parent Parental role Self-blame	90 100	that you are a teacher and he's a learner. It becomes difficult. You can't, uh what is this word.. sometimes you want to be lenient as much as you can but you need to put your feelings aside. At times I can't communicate effectively with my kids, the learners. You find that the very same learners that I am teaching are younger than my kids. And my kids at home they respect me more than the learners that I'm teaching. So sometimes I ask myself the question as to why are these learners doing this and yet they are way younger than my own kids at home. So you start to wander as a teacher "where is it that I went wrong" or as a parent because I'm also their parent.	<u>Educator reminding herself of her professional role and having to be objective when viewing the learner</u> <u>Setting aside the feelings associated with the bullying in order to maintain the professional educator-learner relationship</u> *The educator may be dealing with the situation the same way in which the principal deals with it.* Describes wanting to be lenient towards the learner however this would require her to put her feelings aside <u>Dismissal of one's feelings in order to show sympathy towards another</u> <u>Separating professional role and one's feelings</u> Describes not being able to sometimes communicate effectively with her "kids" the learners <u>Impact on relationship with learners</u> *Refers to learners as her "kids" this may suggest assuming a parental role* Describes the learners that bully her as being younger than her own children yet her own children respect her more than the learners <u>Compares her own children with the learners</u> <u>Bullying experienced as disrespect</u> <u>Expectation that young people should respect their elders</u> Questioning the reason behind the learners bullying her/being disrespectful considering that they are much younger than her own children

			Repeats the comparison between learners and own children <u>May have expectation that younger children should treat adults in a respectful manner</u> Questions what she may have done as an educator and as a parent to contribute to learners bullying <u>Blames herself</u> Describes herself as being a parent to the learners <u>Parental role</u>
Expectations Attributes bullying to environmental factors		**Researcher:** How do you make sense of being bullied by learners? **Joanne:** It doesn't make sense to be bullied by a child, especially in a position of authority like teachers. It means there is something wrong either with our school system, the parents or the community.	Describes that bullying of an educator (someone who has authority) by a child does not make sense <u>Occurrence goes against conventional norms</u> <u>Expectation of a child to submit to authority</u> <u>A sense of confusion</u> Suggests that there may be a problem with the school, system the parents or the community in order for learners to bully educators
Parental expectations Educators assumes parental role but denounces parental responsibilities Attributes behaviours modelled in the environment influence learners Attributes bullying to peer pressure	110	**Probe:** What do you think could be wrong with those examples that you gave? **Joanne:** Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids. Some behaviours are triggered by what the kids are seeing and model that behaviour, maybe to look cool or to impress their peers.	<u>Attributes bullying to factors in the environment</u> Describes parents as believing that educators should discipline their children <u>Parents placing expectations on the educator</u> <u>Educator may be contradicting herself in the sense that she had mentioned that educators are also parents to the learners yet she feels that disciplining learners is not her responsibility, based on the assumption that discipline of a child is a parental responsibility.</u> Describes how learners become bullies through what they are

			exposed to and mimic the behaviour
			Attributes bullying to what learners see being modelled in their environment
			Exposure to aggressive behaviour
			Describes how learners bully educators to look cool and to impress their peers
			Attributes bullying to peer pressure- wanting to impress peers
Support from colleagues	120	**Researcher**: On a day-to-day basis how do you deal with being bullied? **Joanne**: We talk with our colleagues during break, we discuss and we find commonalities and then we identify such learners and then we find ways to deal with them because you find that it's not only one learner who bullies all the teachers, the majority of the teachers. We identify them and then we check whether it's Mam X who is being bullied by the same learner or Mam Y is being bullied by the same learner or whoever. And then we find ways but corporal punishment is unacceptable, it's illegal so we can't administer corporal punishment, we can't.	Describes talking to colleagues during break time about bullying experiences
Talking as a coping mechanism			Discovers that other educators are being bullied and have common experiences
			Support from colleagues
			Communicating with other teachers as a coping mechanism
Collective bullying experience	130		Through discussing with other educators they are able to identify the bullies and come up with ways in which to deal with them
Collaborative efforts in dealing with the issue			_Collaborative efforts_
			Describes the use of corporal punishment as unacceptable and illegal
Limitations to dealing with the issue			_Corporal punishment not an option as way of dealing with the issue_
			"Repeats the phrase "we can't"
		Researcher: In your opinion how can one support and protect victims of bullying.	
	140		
Therapeutic services		**Joanne**: I think therapy. I think talking more, it helps to talk, it helps to talk because if we talk we find solutions. There are people who have went through the same	Describes therapy as a way in which bullied educators can be supported
Talking as en effective coping mechanism			_External support_
			Describes how talking can be helpful for bullied educators

	150	experiences but then when we talk it becomes better. **Researcher**: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience that I didn't ask? **Joanne**: No	*Repeats the word "talk" which could imply emphasis of importance* Through talking the situation becomes better <u>Associates talking with improvement of the issue</u> Through talking one can discover that there are others that have gone through similar experiences

Appendix G: Tables of Subordinate Themes

Table G1 Table of subordinate themes – Joseph

Themes	Transcript line	Key words
Understanding of bullying		
Verbal bullying	1/9	saying things
Provocation	1/6	people who provoke you
Intentional harm doing	1/7	They will hurt you
Negative impact on emotional well-being	1/7	hurt you emotionally
Understanding of experiences of bullied educators		
Self-blame	1/234	teachers tend to blame themselves
Fear of judgement	1/218	have a fear thinking "If I speak out maybe they'll think I'm not a good teacher."
Bullied educators compare themselves to non-bullied educators thus impacting self-esteem	1/229	if these teachers can handle their class properly it means there's something wrong with them."

Lack of support from fellow educators	1/261	We find that we as teachers, we don't help each other.
Verbal bullying	1/7	It's like when there are these provoke you verbally and maybe insult you and then saying things you are not expecting to hear
Psychological impact of bullying		
Emotional pain	1/118	Other days sad
Humiliation	1/34	Learners were laughing at me
Mood changes directly related to bullying	1/117	Sometimes you become happy others days you're sad.
Experience of different forms of bullying early in teaching career		
Provocation	1/17; 1/25	There was this learner in class. He really intended to provoke me; knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it I'm going to get angry
Disruptive behaviour	1/24	he just made noise intentionally
Disregarding educator's requests	1/43	A learner did not do my work
Being tested	1/58	learners test you especially if you're new at the school, they just want to see how temperamental you are and how you behave when they do this
Physical bullying	1/46	and decided to slap me on the face
Escalation of bullying		
Confrontation	1/44	as I was questioning him then he became very angry when I tried to discipline the learner, he said to me "I cannot entertain gay teachers in the class."
Name calling	1/28	
Physical violence	1/44	as I was questioning him then he became very angry and decided to slap me on the face
Challenging the educator	1/47	thinking maybe I would retaliate but I didn't retaliate.
Coping strategies		

Acceptance of the bullying	1/158	You tend to get used to the situation and say that this is how learners behave
Learner perceived as intrinsically good	1/199	this is not you. It's just that it's a situation that you're living in."
Authoritative educator role	1/191	I don't intimidate him or her, I just confront them saying "what you are doing is wrong, this is the way of life. You are doing this because this is what is pushing you
Building a trusting relationship	1/202	over time the learner gets used to you and every time the learner is having a problem they come to you as an information source
Concerned family	1/124	family asking how was it at work
Professional Impact		
Job satisfaction	1/107	sometimes you hate coming to work
Loss of respect from learners	1/226	advice on what to do to gain respect
Questioning one's choice of career	1/89	You feel like you got into the wrong career
Feeling uncertain about longevity of career	1/92	am I going to make it really in this field?
Unmet expectations from learners	1/32	I was so disappointed
Urgent need for support		
Unsupportive working environment	1/241	We don't get support from the department. We don't get support from the management
Inability to meet expectations	1/245	told to use our own discretion as teachers. "you're coming from university, from college you've been learning about this how to handle learners in your class"
Moral support	1/131	they (family) would say "you are a certain way how could learners behave like this towards you? Others they'll advise
Attributions of learner-on-educator bullying		
Peer influence	1/144	learners engage in bullying just to please their class mates

Developmental phase	1/179	When they grow up they mature and you find out that at around grade 11 grade 12 they are very thoughtful.
Normal learner behaviour	1/159	this is how learners behave
Lack of management skills	1/234	teachers tend to blame themselves saying "I don't have these management skills in the class"
New and unfamiliar teachers targeted	1/82	they don't know you, they don't know how you behave, how you conduct yourself in a situation where they provoke you.
Young looking educators	1/79	have a young face they think you are the same age as them then that's when they are going to treat you badly

Table G2 Table of subordinate themes – Mandla

Themes	Transcript line	Key words
Understanding of bullying as it concerns educators		
Learner empowered by rights	2/23	They know they have rights,
Feeling defeated	2/28	doing things that will emotionally drain the teacher
Verbal bullying	2/25	They can spew verbal expletives to the teachers
Indirect bullying	2/27	ridiculing him
Psychological Impact		
Negative impact on emotions	2/57; 2/83, 2/142	So it does affect me emotionally, distressing
Disappointment	2/153	So it is quite painful I must say especially when you have to be subjected to it by learners. It is very sad

Negative feelings concerning children	2/175	the experience that I had actually makes me to think that all children are the same, they are bullies,
Compares persistent emotional pain to temporary physical pain	2/222	I can see the pain when someone has hit me and then I know it will soon disappear but with that one it can stay for longer and it will have a negative impact
Loss of appetite	2/165	lose appetite for food
Comparing self to other	2/586	back then we used to have an assembly on a daily basis where children will be taught
Depressive symptoms		
Feelings of hopelessness	2/97	You find that there is no solution
Irritability	2/168	you find that you have anger towards everyone. You begin to have mood swings
Loss of interest in activities	2/209	I don't want to watch anything, I don't want to read anything
Decreased energy or fatigue	2/163; 2/211	also physically stressed; I just want to sleep
Need for support		
Uncertainty on how to deal with the bully	2/66	I don't know whether I should punish that person or that learner, what action should I take
Helplessness	2/97	You find that there's no solution to that because at the end of the day you can't touch them
Need for parental involvement	2/35	They should become pretty much concerned about how their children are doing because that in a way would ease any problem that the teacher has with those learners
Departmental support	2/543	looking at the problem holistically
Enforcement of rules	2/386;2/468;	

		issued with letters and an ultimatum will be given to say if you don't bring them don't come to school; issued with code of conduct so learners know what is expected
Involvement of other professionals from various fields	2/179; 2/600	we need people who will actually counsel educators; calling upon pastors, psychologists, social workers then we are in a position to half the problem.
Experience of other people's attitudes		
Insensitivity from management	2/429	things like bullying, for them it's petty
Insensitivity from learners	2/391	some of them they are so playful, they don't recognise the emotional harm that they are incurring on us
Bullying of educators as acceptable	2/395	They think that this is how the cookie crumbles, this is how school is
Lack of concern from parents	2/333	They (parents) only come to collect report cards. They don't actually know whether their children write school work, participate in school activities,
Learners' rights upheld above educator's needs	2/327	Although the department will say the learner has the right to learn and to be taught but what do you do when one is confronted with such a situation
Attributions of bullying of educators by learners		
Lack of values	2/191	they have no values
Socialisation	2/239	lack of good habits of respecting other people. There was no one who has instilled a culture of respect
Learner behaviour reflects behaviour in the community	2/259	What they are doing here is a reflection of how and what the community is

Experience of bullying within the classroom context		
Bullying occurs repeatedly	2/41	So many times uh so many times
Bullying perpetrated by a group	2/44	a group of certain learners they whistle at the back
Bystanders	2/60	other learners they feel like why the teacher doesn't take action against these particular learners
Victimisation	2/152	feel down, down-trodden
Testing the educator	2/82	just want to test your patience, how far you can go with your tolerance
Disruptive behaviour	2/125; 2/43	playing music on his cell phone; whistling
Disregarding requests	2/50	you gave them homework the previous the day and they didn't write it
Disregarding rules	2/78	walks into the class with a hat on or with a cap on and they know very well that they are not allowed
Physical bullying	2/132	beat me on my back, punching me
Escalation of bullying		
Learner threatens educator	2/114; 2/121	So he said to me, 'you're gonna shit yourself"; it's a threat to me
Offensive language use	2/114	"you're gonna shit yourself";
Disciplinary measures	2/313	.write a letter, I would call upon their parents for a one-on-one meeting where the problem will be addressed
Professional impact		
Feelings of regret	2/142	You feel like you should have chosen a different career path
Job dissatisfaction	2/144	You don't actually enjoy the fruits of your labour

	2/146; 2/149	You begin to paint learners with the same brush that they are all bullies.
Negative impact on relationship with learners		
Undermining authority		Feel like you are being undermined; The learners perhaps they equate you with other learners not other teachers
Expectations placed on teachers exceed their scope of practice	2/407	We are not paid to teach learners how to behave, how to conduct themselves,

Table G3 Table of Subordinate Themes – Joanne

Themes	Transcript line	Key words
Bullying experienced as		
Verbal bullying	3/24	saying foul language
Humiliation	3/25	Trying to make fun of me so that other learners can laugh
Disruptive behaviour	3/27	Make funny jokes so that teaching and learning cannot take place
Disrespect	3/91	my kids at home they respect me more than the learners that I'm teaching
Bystanders	3/29	so that other learners can laugh
Professional impact		
Hindrance of learning and teaching	3/28; 3/51	it makes teaching and learning not effective
Challenging social norms	3/103	It doesn't make sense to be bullied by a child
Undermining authority	3/103	doesn't make sense to be bullied by a child, especially in a position of authority like teachers
Communication with learners	3/87	At times I can't communicate effectively with my kids
Understanding of bullying		
Physical aggressive behaviour	3/5	when somebody physically attacks
Verbal bullying	3/7	when somebody curses you

Emotional impact	3/7	bullying described as emotional
Psychological impact		
Helplessness	3/16	but I couldn't fight back
Questioning abilities as educator and as parent	3/97	So you start to wander as a teacher "where is it that I went wrong" or as a parent
Comparing own children to learners	3/91	my kids at home they respect me more than the learners
Attributions made to bullying		
Bully-victims	3/45	Maybe they have been bullied themselves so they need somebody that they can punch so that they can feel better
Exposure to negative behaviour	3/114	behaviours are triggered by what the kids are seeing and model that behaviour
peer group influence	3/116	to look cool or to impress their peers
Need for additional support		
Bullying of educators recognised only as physical harm doing	3/155	principal will say you were not hurt so therefore you should continue
Limited support from management	3/53	the principal cannot do anything about it
Counselling	3/58	we don't receive counselling, counselling on a daily basis or maybe on a monthly basis
Educator assumes parental role but denounces parental responsibilities	3/112	Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids
Coping mechanisms		
Talking about experiences	3/145	when we talk it becomes better
Support from colleagues	3/64	we sit down as friends, as colleagues just to
Suppressing feelings to maintain professional role	3/85	share our experiences. That is how we manage these types of attacks
		but you need to put your feelings aside
Shared experience of being bullied	3/143	There are people who have went through the same experiences

Collaborative efforts in dealing with the issue	3/121; 3/123	Discuss; we identify such learners and then we find ways to deal with them

Appendix H: Master Table of Themes for the Group

Table H 1 Master table of themes for the group

Themes	Transcript line
Experience of different forms of bullying	
Disruptive behaviour	
P1 He just made noise intentionally	1/24
P2. Sometimes you are busy teaching and you find that they whistle	2/43
P2 Playing music on his cell phone	2/125
P3 Make funny jokes so that teaching and learning cannot take place	3/27
Disobedience	
P1 A learner did not do my work	1/43
P2 You gave them homework the previous the day and they didn't write it	2/55
P2 Walks into the class with a hat on or with a cap on	2/79
P2 A learner was writing something else during my period	2/108
Verbal bullying	
P1 He said to me "I cannot entertain gay teachers in the class."	1/29
P1 Learners were laughing at me	1/34
P2 They can spew verbal expletives to the teachers, ridiculing him	2/125
P2 So he said to me…. (pause) in a rather ….(pause) crude way saying 'You're gonna shit yourself"	2/114
P3 Emotionally, when somebody curses you	3/27

P3 Being cursed by a learner was one of the first experiences of my teaching experience	3/13
Humiliation	
P1 I was so disappointed to hear that from that learner because all the learners were laughing at me	1/31
P3 Trying to make fun of me so that other learners can laugh	3/25
Experience of bullying in an unsupportive school system	
Lack of support from management	
P1 We don't get support from the Department. We don't get support from the management	1/241
P2 The department in order to deal with this problem should not only focus on syllabus completion but should also focus on learner conduct	2/531
P2 The department should actually listen to the concerns and the grievances of the teachers	2/571
P3 The principal will say you were not hurt so therefore you should continue	3/55
Lack of support from fellow educators	
P1 We find that we as teachers, we don't help each other	1/261
P1 Those who can speak can help him or her to say we identify the learners who are bullying you then give advice on what to do to gain respect	1/223
Unavailability of counselling services	
P2 When you are emotionally abused, bullied, there is no doctor other than to get	2/178

someone who will give counselling and all that	
P2 We need people who will actually counsel educators to deal with the trauma, to deal with the depression that they go through as a result of these learners	2/215
P3 We don't receive counselling, counselling on a daily basis or maybe on a monthly basis	3/57
P3 I think therapy. I think talking more, it helps to talk	3/141
Lack of parental involvement	
P2 So I think parents should come and be part of what is happening with their children at school.	2/417
P2 What most of the parents do, they only come to collect report cards. They don't actually know whether their children write school work, participate in school activities, they don't know those things, they only want to see if their children have passed or not	2/331
P2 They should become pretty much concerned about how their children are doing because that in a way would ease any problem that the teacher has with those learners	2/353
P2 So I think also teacher-parent- learner relationship, this triangle should actually exist	2/339
Burdened with responsibility	
P1 Told to use our own discretion as teachers. "you're coming from university, from college you've been learning about this how to handle learners in your class"	1/244

P2 They become a burden to other people especially teachers because we deal with them on a daily basis	2/200
P2 So if they become wayward then we are not being trained to deal with such learners	2/265
P2 we are not paid to teach learners how to behave, how to conduct themselves	2/406
P2 The buck stops with the parents not teachers	2/421
P3 Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids	3/113
Impact of being bullied	
Emotional wellbeing	
P1 Sometimes you become happy other days you're sad	1/117
P2 So it affects me personally, emotionally as well because I can actually recall all those things	2/57
P2 It is so so distressful	2/142
P2 You begin to have mood swings	2/214
P2 So for me when I get home having being bullied I feel depressed	2/205
P2 I can see the pain when someone has hit me and then I know it will soon disappear but with that one it can stay for longer and it will have a negative impact	2/222
P3 Bullying is hurting	3/35
Impact on job performance	
P3 Sometimes it makes teaching and learning not effective	3/51
P3 it's difficult for a teacher to mark scripts knowing very well that that particular learner has bullied you	3/77
P3 So you start to wander as a teacher where is it that I went wrong	3/98

Impact on job satisfaction	
P1 Sometimes you hate coming to work	1/121
P1 You feel like you got into the wrong career	1/100
P1 Am I going to make it really in this field?	1/103
P2 You feel like you should have chosen a different career path	2/179
P2 You don't actually enjoy the fruits of your labour	2/181
Impact on relationships	
P1 Then you find over time the learner gets used to you and then you find that every time the learner is having a problem they come to you as an information source	1/225
P2 it will have a negative impact in one way or the other in the way I interact with learners and other people. It will eventually affect my relationships	2/286
P3 At times I can't communicate effectively with my kids	3/87
Coping mechanisms	
P1 You tend to get used to the situation and say that this is how learners behave and then I have to get used to it	1/177
P2 You try as much as you can to avoid such people or such learners	2/386
P3 We sit down as friends, as colleagues just to share our experiences. That is how we manage these types of attacks	3/64
The nature of being bullied	
Challenging of authority	
P1 As I was questioning him then he became very angry and decided to slap me on the face and then thinking maybe I would retaliate but I didn't retaliate	1/44

P2 So for me being bullied it means that yes I feel undermined	2.248
P2 Feel like you are being undermined by the perpetrators	2/145
P3 It doesn't make sense to be bullied by a child, especially in a position of authority like teachers	3/104
P2 So it came to a point where he had to beat me on my back, punching me. I wanted to take that phone to the office but he refused and he decided to take it back from me. Unfortunately he didn't get it.	2/131
P2 I chastised him and he didn't take it well. So he said to me, 'You're gonna shit yourself"	2/116
Powerlessness	
P2 You find that there's no solution to that because at the end of the day you can't touch them	2/122
P2 So you feel down, down-trodden	2/192
P3 But I couldn't fight back you know because according to the policy we are not supposed to curse back at learners	3/16
Provocation	
P1 It's like when there are these people who provoke you verbally	1/5
P1 There was this learner in class. He really intended to provoke me	1/17
P1 he disclosed to other learners saying 'this is what I'm going to say to the teacher, I want to see how he's going to react to what I'm going to say."	1/20
P1 knowing very well that I'm going to get cross with it, I'm going to get angry	1/25

P1 learners test you especially if you're new at the school, they just want to see how temperamental you are and how you behave when they do this	1/66
P2 they would just want to test your patience, how far you can go with your tolerance.	2/82
Disrespect	
P1 For example the teacher next door is experiencing problems like this one of bullying. And then you find that all these learners coming into my class they respect me, they pay attention and then when my period ends and they go to the next class they don't behave the way they behaved in my class	1/263
P1 advice on what to do to gain respect	1/226
P2 lack of good habits of respecting other people. There was no one who has instilled a culture of respect	2/237
P3 my kids at home they respect me more than the learners that I'm teaching	3/87
Attributions for being bullied	
New and unfamiliar	
P1 Ya that was at the beginning of my teaching career	1/ 53
P1 Like we have new teachers now who came last year, they are being treated like that as well	1/ 58
P2 I remember the other one quite vividly I think last year	2/135
P3 Being cursed by a learner was one of the first experiences of my teaching experience	3/13
Developmental phase	

P1 They were living like this from their parents' house and treat their parents like this as well. If you call the parents they will tell you that this is how the learner behaves even at home. So you find you can't change them	1/170
P1 When time goes on some of them they change and realise that this is not a good way to live or to treat teachers and other learners. So some of them in time they will change others they don't change they just live like that, to find out it's the manifestation of where they come from	1/169
P1 When they grow up they mature and you find out that at around grade 11 grade 12 they are very thoughtful	1/179
Socialisation	
P2 Some of them they come from different family backgrounds where there are no parents, some of them they come from child-headed families and they have no values, certain values that they have been brought up with	2/180
P2 There was no one who has instilled a culture of respect	2/240
P3 Some parents think it's our job to discipline their kids	3/113
Peer influences	
P1 learners engage in bullying just to please their class mates	1/114
P1 It's just that he or she is under pressure from peers to show them that they can do this towards the teacher	1/149
P3 to look cool or to impress their peers	3/116

P3 Trying to make fun of me so that other learners can laugh	3/25
Community violence	
P1 it's the manifestation of where they come from	1/169
P2 What they are doing here is a reflection of how and what the community is	2/259
P2 a microcosm of what is actually happening in the community	2/256
P3 It means there is something wrong either with our school system, the parents or the community	3/106
P3 Some behaviours are triggered by what the kids are seeing for example community violence and model that behaviour	3/114

Appendix I: Declaration by Language Editor

I, **Glenda Holcroft, (ID 5103060026082)**, a professional language practitioner, declare that I conducted the language editing (excluding the references and appendices) of this dissertation, *Exploring the experiences of educators bullied by learners in a township secondary school*, submitted by Mbalenhle Marolen.

Signature