The Role of the EAP in Addressing Workplace Bullying in a School System

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study titled:

"The role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system"

has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and in implementation and that all sources of information herein have been duly acknowledged.

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SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying is an increasing concern across various organisations and their employees. When employees are being bullied or even witnessing bullying behaviour, it can be very crippling from an emotional perspective as well as from a productivity perspective.

An organisation who buys into an Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP), goal is to provide a platform for employees who are experiencing personal or work related challenges to get support. One of the work challenges an employee could be experiencing is workplace bullying and the effects of workplace bullying can be devastating. This specific study was based on teachers in a school system and whether workplace bullying exists or not.

The goal of the study was to explore the role of the EAP when addressing workplace bullying in a school. Limited research was found whether teachers use the EAP when they are experiencing workplace bullying. A qualitative approach was followed by the researcher inviting teachers from a school to participate in the research and interviews were set up with the teachers.

The findings of the study indicated that most of the teachers experienced workplace bullying either by them being victims or witnessing bullying in the workplace. Most of the participants didn't know about the existence of the EAP and some were aware. The teachers who indicated that they were victims or that they have witnessed workplace bullying, have not used the EAP to get support or counselling relating to this particular issue despite the negative impact the issue had on them. The findings of the study also indicated that there was not a lot of awareness of the role of the EAP and how EAP works. The research study shows that there is a need for further research studies into the role that an EAP can play when employees and organisations are dealing with workplace issues such as workplace bullying.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Although workplace bullying is rife in many organisations, few incidents are reported that relate to employees stating that they are being bullied. Bullying in the workplace has become more evident and is on the increase due to changes within the workplace. Workplace bullying creates high stress levels amongst employees and its effects and impact are devastating on employees, especially on their well-being and productivity. Workplace bullying is a widespread phenomenon, as seen in the amount of research that has been conducted. It is a phenomenon that is of great concern, not only for the victims of bullying but also for organisations. Kelly (2005:2) says that it is "a deadly combination of economic rationalism, increased competition, 'downsizing', and the current fashion for tough, dynamic, 'macho' management styles. All of which have created a culture in which bullying can thrive, producing 'toxic' workplaces." Workplaces are constantly looking for ways to increase productivity and to implement changes within the workplaces that may lead to better ways to work. The key role-players during these changes are still the employees. The manner in which they accept the changes, their support of fellow colleagues, and the way they execute day-to-day tasks are crucial to business-success.

Within organisations, workplace bullying could either occur among individual employees or it could involve groups against groups. It is important to realise that bullying in the workplace is not only restricted to managers against subordinates, as would traditionally be anticipated, as the bully could also be a customer, a peer or a subordinate towards a manager. It is a problem with widespread effects, and it must be treated as an important organisational and social matter.

A study on workplace bullying that was conducted in terms of occupational well-being has identified teaching as a high risk job. According to De Wet and Jacobs (2013:446), it was reported that 90.8% of those teachers who participated in the study were victims of workplace bullying during the 12-month period they undertook that study. Such high incidence highlights the importance of zooming into an issue

that proves to be larger than a societal and policy issue. It needs to be understood how teachers are coping on a day-to-day basis while being faced with the high possibility of either becoming a victim of bullying or already being exposed to workplace bullying.

Another study conducted in 2012 at the University of the Free State, indicated that teachers who were enrolled for a module on Comparative Education (B.Ed.Hons) were invited to take part in a study on bullying. This module encouraged them to share their experiences as either a victim of bullying or of being an onlooker of bullying. The study-group initially consisted of 205 participants of whom 181 partook, and of these participants it was reported that 67.8% described themselves as victims of workplace bullying, while more than 50% indicated that they had witnessed learner-on-learner bullying, and were therefore onlookers or bystanders of bullying. Cases of teacher-on-teacher bullying were also shared, as well as educated targeted bullying. What was interesting in the demographics of this study was that the participants were from a wide variety of age levels, as well as different occupational levels such as teachers, deputy principals, principals, and HODs, which shows that all the participants shared similar experiences in their daily work lives.

According to previous research documenting the effects of workplace bullying in various books, journals and articles, the general finding was that workplace bullying can be physical, verbal, indirect or emotional. Workplace bullying has negative effects on the psycho-social functioning of employees. In the light of this previous research, it became important to investigate whether workplace bullying does occur among teachers in South Africa and to understand what the impact of this is. The type of bullying that has been investigated is not focussed on teachers versus teachers only but also parents versus teachers, learners versus teachers, as well as managers (grade heads and principles) versus employees. The research has however excluded the administrative workers at the school, as the research is specifically aimed at the experiences of teachers in schools.

Although this study primarily provides knowledge about bullying it has also provided insight into the role of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in addressing workplace bullying. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EWP) are used interchangeably in this document.

1.2 Literature overview

This study has a focus on the experience of teachers in terms of workplace bullying and explores how the EAP can support a teacher that is either a victim or a bystander of workplace bullying as related to workplace bullying in various forms such as teachers-on-teachers, parents-on-teachers, or learners-on-teachers. It looks into the experiences of the teacher and also the specific support system that is in place to assist the teacher, more specifically the support from the EAP.

In 2014, news24.com published an article regarding a study that was conducted by the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education. Researchers identified bullying of teachers by other teachers as a serious problem. As many as 2,700 teachers were approached to partake in the study, and the researchers had a response rate of 1,000 teachers who completed the questionnaire. Ninety percent (90%) of the 1,000 respondents had been victims of workplace bullying by school colleagues and school management.

De Wet (2014:446-464) conducted a study on the understanding teachers have of workplace bullying. In his published research De Wet (2014) explains that there is a lack of research done, in the South African context, on workplace bullying amongst teachers. His study focussed specifically on the understanding of the concept of workplace bullying and the teachers' experiences of workplace bullying in a South African context.

Teacher-on-teacher bullying seems to be highlighted as a phenomenon in various countries. The BBC News published an article on 11 April 2011 in which it is mentioned that bullying is less often learners-on-teachers, but that teachers regularly experience bullying and issues that pertain to their colleagues, heads and senior staff at their schools. It was interesting to note that 50% of the respondents reported that it was another staff member that bullied them, 25% were bullied by learners, and 23% by students. A lot of stress was reported, which in some cases was so intense that it resulted in the victims leaving the school or leaving the profession altogether.

Research compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO) revealed that 78% of employees in South Africa confirmed that they had been bullied or victimised in the workplace at least once in their careers (ILO, 2005). Workplaces are continuously going through change, which has a significant impact on employees. Employees should be aware of what workplace bullying entails. De Wet and Jacobs (2013:446) carried out another study on the topic of South African teachers' exposure to workplace bullying. They mentioned that teaching has been identified as a high-risk occupation, in comparison to many other occupations. Furthermore, they acknowledge that there has been very little research done to explore the phenomenon among teachers. De Wet and Jacobs (2013:446) state:

> … this study exposes the commonness of workplace bullying amongst participating teachers: 90.8% of them were victims of workplace bullying (WPB) during the 12 months that preceded the study and 89.1% of the victims had been exposed to at least two different categories of WPB. The perpetrators tried especially hard to undermine the victim's professional status and to isolate them.

Workplace bullying can contribute significantly to the organisational culture. Employees and managers can spend excessive amounts of time in conflict with one another. Employees who are victims of bullying need to feel that they can trust their workplace systems, policies and procedures of human resources (HR) through which they can disclose if they are being bullied by either their managers or their colleagues. If employees feel that they cannot disclose this to anyone within their workplace, it might have negative effects on the victim and the organisation. Einarsen, Hoel and Nielsen (n.d.:31) researched some explanations of workplace bullying and their findings include the following:

- Both socio-economic changes, working conditions and organisational changes may trigger conflicts and bullying.
- Socio-economic changes resulting in increased competition and restructuring may add fuel to the bullying processes.
- Working environment conditions often constitute an important cause of conflicts and bullying.

However, the most important factor is a lack of or poorly executed conflict management process. This can greatly affect how employees further engage with one another and also the behaviour that is persisted in a negative or a positive way.

Further in their research, Einarsen et al. (n.d.:35) also mention that leadership styles are often associated with workplace bullying. Superiors, who manage by means of provocations, threats or terror, vague or unclear instructions, or superiors who avoid their responsibility on handling conflict and superiors who abuse their power are examples of this.

In the United States, workplace bullying in schools was also reported to be a crisis. This specifically looked into learner-to-teacher bullying. Vrouvas (2018) wrote that 80% of teachers in public schools are victims of workplace bullying. According to her, "obscene remarks, verbal threats, and physical intimidation have become commonplace habits for learner bullies. In extreme cases, teachers have been punched, pushed, kicked, slapped, spat at, had their space invaded or their physical appearances openly mocked, and had even been struck by chairs. Some have had bones broken and weapons pulled on them."

Based on studies by various other researchers, one can note that there was a need to explore the phenomenon of workplace bullying, specifically those experiences by primary school teachers. De Wet and Jacobs (2013) highlight the need for further investigation of the problem as well as what can be done to assist teachers who are victims of bullying. No research could, however, be found proving how an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) can help provide a solution and support to the teachers as well as the other employees at school who are victims, bystanders and perpetrators of workplace bullying specifically in the education sector.

No specific research was found that highlights the number of teachers in South Africa who have access to an EAP on an annual basis. Information is also lacking about the number of teachers who are victims of workplace bullying or bystanders of bullying. The study also focused on how teachers cope and what their coping strategies and support systems are, should they have experienced workplace bullying. As such, the experiences of teachers regarding the EAP has also been explored.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The researcher applied the General Systems Theory because the researcher maintains that a workplace or organisation is a system in which bullying either occurs or does not occur.

The literature states that the systems theory is an interdisciplinary field. It looks into science and aims at understanding the nature of complex systems and society. More specifically, it is a framework according to which one can analyse and describe any group of objects that operate together to produce some results. This could occur in any organisation or society (Hammersley, Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:101).

This theory provided a framework for the researcher's understanding of the experiences of employees who are bullied and result in a better understanding of the role EAPs can play in providing support to employees.

The General Systems Theory covers a broad range of theoretical and methodological practices across many disciplines. It is concerned with the structure of complex systems, with a special emphasis on how employees relate to each other and to the whole system (Breakwell, Hammon, Fife-Schaw & Smith, 2007:55).

This study was conducted among teachers who are regarded as part of a system consisting of different sub-systems, which may be influenced by bullying in the workplace. The researcher aimed to establish the perspectives of teachers experiencing bullying in the workplace. A component of the research focussed on the existence of an EAP, the engagement of the EAP, the type of issues that the EAP is dealing with, as well as the support and role the EAP could offer to victims and bystanders of workplace bullying.

1.4 Rationale and problem statement

Bullying could exist within any organisation and its effects are appalling. When employees experience bullying, it has a tremendous impact on their psycho-social functioning, productivity as well as absenteeism, which in turn impacts negatively on both the organisation as a whole and the employee as an individual human being.

The organisational culture is set by how employees and management engage with one another on a daily basis.

'Stop Bullying in South Australia' (2006):

> … it is in the best interest of employers to take action to minimise bullying in their workplace. Left unmanaged it can severely affect efficiency, productivity and profitability through increased absenteeism, staff turnover and poor morale.

They further explain that "employees may fear retribution from the bully or bullies if they report grievances" (Stop Bullying in South Australia, 2006).

The study was conducted among teachers at a primary school in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Teachers at this school face numerous challenges such as working with learners from very poor backgrounds, parents who are aggressive and verbally abusive, widespread substance abuse in the area where the school is located, personal and work stressors, as well as a lack of resources including equipment and facilities. During the presentation of the proposed research topic, many of the teachers and principal at the school were unaware of any supportive structure in place to help teachers cope better on a daily basis with either work or personal concerns. Most of the teachers and principal were uninformed of an Employee Assistance Programme that the WCED has put in place to support them with both work, legal, financial and personal matters. During the initial meeting with the teachers, some indicated that they have a great need to speak to someone regarding the bullying they are experiencing and therefore have already given verbal agreement to be part of the study.

An expected outcome of the study was the confirmation of the existence of bullying behaviour between teachers and learners or the contrary.

No recorded cases of bullying have been reported to the school principal at the particular school where the empirical study carried out, which may be the result of employees' fear of victimisation, should action be taken by the school management against such bullies. There is currently no formal complaints procedure whereby victims of workplace bullying can report incidents and seek assistance or support.

Very little evidence exists on whether teachers and their managers receive any training, though EAPs may assist and support them by encouraging effective communication with one another, conflict management skills, listening skills, leadership skills, team work, coaching skills, and by building effective professional relationships internally.

Independent Counselling and Advisory Services (ICAS) – a well-established EAP service provider, issues the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) with an EAP. This programme is available to all employees and their family members (anyone living in the same household as them). The scope of this service includes counselling (telephonic and face-to-face), legal, financial, and family care services, as well as secondary services such as training interventions and coaching. The service offering is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which allows the teacher to make contact when it is necessary or convenient for them. The researcher has not found EAP data which speaks directly to workplace bullying within the Education Department's context. According to the external service provider, ICAS, who provides the Employee Health and Wellness programme, the EAP is under-utilised by employees, which has led to a non-functional EWP for this specific issue. Individual utilisation of the EWP is less than 20% per quarter. As part of the study, the aim was also to find out if there is an existence of workplace bullying, and if so, how the teachers deal and cope with being either a victim or a bystander, if they do not use the EWP for support.

If the utilisation of the EWP is larger, it can provide qualitative data to the WCED to make them aware of the overall workplace bullying situation as well as the impact on the teachers and it could provide recommendations and actions to be put in place as it will paint a bigger picture of the problem. The data could also explore areas such as the work impact, in other words, whether the employer is presented with absenteeism issues or whether this does not affect them at all.

If there are no cases reported under the classification of workplace bullying, it might mean that employees and managers regard workplace bullying as the norm under which they have to perform on a daily basis. This in itself creates a concern as to how victims of bullying cope and what the impact of bullying may be on other areas

of their lives. Teachers might not know that they are being bullied or that they are bullying another employee when they encounter or display certain behaviour.

During the initial meeting, the principal disclosed that no exit interviews were conducted with teachers who have left the school. Such interviews would have assisted school management in identifying bullying behaviour and dealing with it if such incidents had existed. There have not been any interview records maintained at the school when an employee returned to work after being absent, which could also have assisted management to identify whether conflict or bullying was a cause of absenteeism. There has never been any research conducted at the school to explore the school's culture and to establish if there is currently a culture of bullying among teachers. There is also no formal means of communicating complaints or a suggestion box on the school premises whereby teachers can say what they are experiencing or make a suggestion for improvement.

The research question for this study is:

What is the role of the EAP offered at a primary school to assist teachers in managing workplace bullying?'

1.5 The goal and objectives of the study

1.5.1 Goal

The goal of this study was to explore the role of the EAP when addressing workplace bullying in a school.

1.5.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study was to:

- conceptualise "workplace bullying" and EAP
- explore and describe the nature of workplace bullying in a school system
- explore and describe the experiences of teachers regarding workplace bullying
- explore the role of the EAP as a support system when addressing workplace bullying

1.6 Research approach

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach to establish the existence and nature of workplace bullying. A structured approach is more appropriate for determining the extent of a problem, issue or phenomenon (Kumar, in de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:64).

According to Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2014:78), qualitative research should in particular involve that:

- the research must be worthwhile and not make unreasonable demands on the participants
- participation should be based on informed consent
- participation should be voluntary and free from coercion or pressure
- adverse consequence of participation should be avoided, and risks of harm known
- Confidentiality and anonymity should be respected

Leedy and Omrod (as cited in de Vos et al., 2011:64) further state that a researcher seeks a better understanding of complex situations. From this researcher's point of view, workplace bullying is a complex and difficult issue to understand and this is where a qualitative approach, through one-on-one interviews, was expected to be useful. By applying the qualitative approach, the researcher was able to understand the phenomenon of workplace bullying and explore the individual experiences of the teachers regarding the role of the EAP in managing workplace bullying.

1.7 Type of research

The study involved applied research because the researcher will focus on a possible solution to an existing problem in practice, which is the suspected existence of workplace bullying. The underlying principle of applied research is that the researcher has identified a problem, while the aim of the research is to strive towards a solution to this problem.

Applied research is a fact-gathering project conducted with the intention of acquiring and applying knowledge that will address a specific problem or meet a specific need

within the scope of the entity (McCotter,2001:69). By exploring the phenomenon of workplace bullying, possible solutions may be developed to address workplace bullying by means of EAPs.

1.8 Research design

The researcher used the collective case study research design. This is a common set of research questions that are designed by the researcher to understand each case. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts. When the approach is applied correctly, it becomes a valuable method for health science research to develop theory, evaluate programmes, and develop interventions.

Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheikh (2011) define a case study as a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. It is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences. A case study can be defined in a variety of ways, the central tenet being the need to explore an event or phenomenon in depth and in its natural context.

The advantage of using this type of research design and an unstructured set of questions is that it allows the employees taking part in the interview to share their own views and experiences more freely.

1.9 Research methods

Each participant will be requested to complete the informed consent form provided to them during the interview.

1.9.1 Study population and sampling

The research population comprised of all teachers working at the specific school, except the principal. Volunteer sampling was applied as the researcher can only use teachers at the selected school who volunteer to take part in the study. De Vos et

al., (2011:294) state that volunteer sampling works well when participants are known to one another or are at least aware of one another and can encourage one another to become involved in the study. The researcher is of the opinion that the teachers who volunteered to be part of the study showed interest in the topic as well as provided more reliable feedback.

1.9.1.1 Research sample

The sample for the research comprised of between 10 and 12 teachers who volunteered to be part of the study at the initial presentation of the proposed research during a staff meeting.

The principal of the school provided written permission to the researcher to carry out the study and has agreed to allow teachers to partake in the study. The researcher also received permission from the WCED to complete the study at a primary school.

1.9.1.2 Sampling method

For the purpose of this research, Volunteer Sampling was conducted as the group who initially volunteered to participate, consisted of between 10 and 12 teachers. Volunteer sampling is a method used by researchers that is less time consuming. Volunteer Sampling allows the members of the sample to self-select themselves for being part of the study.

In other words it is not the researcher who approaches the participants but rather the participants themselves who reach out to the investigator or researcher. When using this method, participants are told about the investigation through announcements and in this research the researcher went to the school to announce it in a meeting. Whoever was interested informed the researcher that he/she is interested in partaking in the research. Should more than 12 participants volunteer to be part of the study, the researcher would work on a basis of selecting those who first confirm their appointments with the researcher. The researcher presented the study to the entire teacher group at the school. They then had an opportunity to indicate if they were interested in being interviewed by signing the consent form. Once that process was done, the interviews were set up.

1.9.2 Data collection

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide the interview and to collect data. The interviews took place in a private room on the school premises.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with about 10 to 12 participants who shared their experiences of workplace bullying. The researcher used a set of semi-structured questions in the interviews. This design has been selected because the researcher wanted to determine whether there is workplace bullying among teachers and to explore their experiences thereof, as well as their experiences and expectations of the role of the EAP.

The researcher made use of a recorder during the interviews. According to de Vos et al., (2011:359), this can only be done if permission is obtained from the participant. The researcher asked the teacher for permission to record while conducting the interview. If the participant did not agree to the recording, the researcher took notes during the interview. The advantage of using a recorder is that the researcher can be fully engaged and attentive to the participant during the interview and can concentrate on what the participant is saying. Another advantage of using a recorder is related to the qualitative nature of the study. Key information could be lost while taking notes, but by recording the participant's responses all the information would be saved. All the participants who took part in the research study was comfortable to be recorded.

1.9.3 Data analysis

According to De Vos (2002:340), there are five steps that need to be followed during the data analysis process. These include:

Step 1: Collecting and recording the data

As stated above, the researcher conducted the interviews according to an interview schedule and the researcher used a digital recorder to capture the data. De Vos (2002:340) states that, "the researcher should practice and cultivate habits for labelling audiotapes, carrying extra batteries for his recorder and finding quiet places for note-taking." The same comment applies to the use of digital recorders.

Step 2: Managing the data

De Vos (2002:343) encourages the researcher to organise the data into file folders. The researcher created and made use of file folders and each respondent will have their own file in which the researcher's notes, recording and the transcript thereof will be kept.

Step 3: Reading and writing memos

Marshal and Rossman (as cited in de Vos, 2002:343) mention that writing memos in the margins of field notes or transcripts or under photographs helps in the initial process of exploring a database. The researcher read through the transcript a few times and make notes to aid in understanding the data better.

Step 4: Describing, classifying and interpreting data

Cresswell (as cited in de Vos, 2002:344) explains that classifying means taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes or dimensions of information. Each interview was analysed and captured under the overall themes identified.

Step 5: Representing and visualising data

De Vos (2002:344) mentions that, "In the final phase of the spiral, researchers present the data, in the form of a package or structure of what was found in the text, tabular or forms." The researcher at this stage made use of overall themes in a presentation format to provide this feedback.

1.9.4 Pilot study

The pilot study is one way in which prospective researchers can orientate themselves to the project they have in mind (de Vos et al., 2011:236). Royse in (de Vos et al., 2011:236) states that "the pilot study is indeed a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project, and attempts to expand our knowledge about the interventions we use and their effects on our clients. With the goal of the pilot study in mind, the researcher selected the first respondent that volunteered to be part of the pilot study. This assisted in ensuring that the

formulated questions were sufficient and appropriate. There was no changes that was made and the researcher included data from the pilot study in the main study.

1.9.5 Validation of data

There are various types of validity involved in the qualitative research process. Brink (1993) states that validity and reliability are key aspects of all research. Meticulous attention to these two aspects can make the difference between good research and poor research and can help to assure that fellow scientists accept findings as credible and trustworthy. This is particularly vital in qualitative work, where the researcher's subjectivity can so readily cloud the interpretation of the data, and where research findings are often questioned or viewed with scepticism by the scientific community.

De Vos (2011:397) says that the purpose of conducting a qualitative study is to produce findings. He further states that it involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. In the context of the study the researcher made sure that the above aspects were taken into consideration when conducting the study. A recorder was used to ensure that all information is valid and trustworthy. The recorder also ensured that none of the information is missed and it allowd the researcher to go back to the information and use the raw data to identify themes and patterns. The voice recordings has been handed in to the supervisor to ensure that the data collected and presented is trustworthy.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Workplace bullying is a widespread phenomenon across the world and the sensitivity around this topic is evident in all previous research studies. Having said that, all participants felt free to participate and also share their experience about this topic.

The researcher is of the opinion that a review of ethical issues is critical while conducting the research. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) state that,

> … within certain disciplines – the social sciences, education, criminology, medicine, and similar areas of study – the use of human subjects in research is, of course, quite common. And whenever human beings are the focus of investigation, we must look closely at the ethical implications of what we are proposing to do.

Ethical guidelines are set to ensure that the research study is conducted in a proper and just manner. Workplace bullying could be regarded as a sensitive topic, also because it seems that the teachers might feel that they should not be reporting it or are unaware of the EAP support they can receive. Ethical concerns will be discussed below.

10.1 Avoidance of harm

De Vos et al., (2011:15) state that "certain subjects can cause harm in a physical or emotional manner". The researcher therefore took all reasonable steps to ensure that the participants was not be harmed in any way, including physically or emotionally, as a result of their participation in the study.

Should the participants have experienced any form of harm during the research process, the researcher would have conducted a debriefing. Should any participant have required counselling due to them either being a victim or a bystander of bullying and have not dealt with the impact of it, the researcher would have referred them to the EAP for support services, which were rendered by ICAS, an external service provider. Such an arrangement was already made. Participants also agreed to be contacted by a clinician for further support.

10.2 Voluntary participation

Participation in this study was voluntary as respondents had the choice to take part in it or not.

The researcher obtained permission from the principal of the particular school and the Education Department of the Western Cape to carry out this study. The matter of authorisation has been communicated to all staff members and a total of 16 individuals have offered to participate in the study.

10.3 Informed consent

The researcher informed all the participants of the purpose, process and procedures of the study. The researcher also pointed out the possible problems and risks which could arise during the process. Only after this information was shared have the participants been requested to complete an informed consent form, giving their agreement to participate in the study. The consent form addressed the issues of guaranteed confidentiality in terms of the names of the participants. This gave the participants a guarantee, that if they were to disclose any personal information or other information regarding colleagues or learners that the information will be dealt with in a highly confidential manner. It also stipulated that all captured data will be stored at the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival purposes and possible future research.

10.4 Violation of privacy, anonymity or confidentiality

Although anonymity couldn't be guaranteed, the researcher ensured the privacy and confidentiality for all the participants as the sensitivity of this topic meant that some participants might have felt uncomfortable. Only the researcher knows the identity of the participants and no names was disclosed anywhere in the study or to any of the other participants or managers when referring to a person or an incident. However, information on the demographics of the participants was used for profiling purposes.

The name of the primary school cannot be disclosed in the study and will remain anonymous.

10.5 Compensation

None of the respondents was compensated and this was made clear to them before the research took place. It was also stated on the consent form so that there were no expectations at the end of the study.

10.6 Debriefing the respondents

During the interview, certain participants may recall hurtful or painful experiences. The researcher took the responsibility for referring participants in need of assistance and support to their EAP. Such an arrangement was made with their EAP service provider and employees consented to be called by a clinician.

10.7 Actions and competence of researchers

The researcher was entirely honest with the respondents about the goal and objectives of this study. She was also constantly aware of the sensitivity of the topic and therefore ensured that all ethical concerns are fulfilled. The research was guided by a study leader to ensure that there is a high level of quality.

1.11 Chapters outline

The research followed the outline and structure as set out below.

Chapter 1: Introduction and research methodology

The first chapter includes an introduction to the research, the problem formulation and research methodology. The researcher sheds light on the topic in general. The problem formulation will describe the current situation. The goal and objectives was described fully to ensure their attainment. The chapter used as a guideline so that the study remained focussed.

The research methodology to be applied will be summarised in Chapter 1, whilst a more detailed discussion on the research methodology will be covered in the chapter on the empirical part of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review relating to workplace bullying

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss existing literature on the phenomenon of workplace bullying. Specific focus will be on definitions of workplace bullying, type of workplace bullying as well as its impact on employees and the organisational culture, from a theoretical point of view.

Chapter 3: Literature review of the EAP and a description of the EAP as implemented by Western Cape Education Department

Literature study on the role of the EAP in combatting workplace bullying will be discussed in this chapter. The researcher will discuss strategies regarding prevention of workplace bullying, which includes the creation of awareness about workplace bullying. It will also focus on secondary and tertiary prevention with regards to the phenomenon.

The EAP as contracted by WCED and implemented by ICAS as a service provider will be described, in terms of historical development, current infra-structure, as well as the operational side.

Chapter 4: Empirical study on workplace bullying as a phenomenon and the EAP as experienced by teachers who are victims of workplace bullying

In this chapter, the researcher will focus on the empirical study of workplace bullying and the teachers' experiences of the current EAP offered by the WCED. The chapter will outline the practical application of the research methodology used for collecting data and the data will be used to answer the research questions on workplace bullying. The researcher will present the data as gathered from the employees sampled as participants to participate in the study.

Chapter 5: Key findings, conclusions and recommendations

In Chapter 5 the researcher will focus on summarising and concluding the research study. Guidelines for the management of workplace bullying will be formulated and provided to the school where the empirical study will be performed.

1.12 Limitations of the study

The following were identified as limitations of the study.

12.1 Lack of prior research on this specific topic

The literature review revealed that there is research done on workplace bullying however there was no research done relating to what the role of EAP is when teachers is experiencing workplace bullying in the South African context. This

limitation was one of the key reasons also why the researcher wanted to do this study.

12.2 Participants at the school

A lot of the admin staff at the school wanted to participate in the study as they felt that despite them not being teachers, they also experience workplace bullying at the school. Further research could be specifically around workplace bullying of school staff and not limited to teachers only.

12.3 Literature outlining the role of the EAP for teachers

The literature review revealed that there wasn't substantial literature specifically focussing on the EAP program that is designed and in place for teachers of the Western Cape Education department and what the various awareness and training is available for these employees.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW ON WORKPLACE BULLYING IN SCHOOL CONTEXT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying has been studied worldwide with the aim of fully understanding the topic, understanding and measuring the impact of workplace bullying and putting measures, structures and plans in place to minimise the risk that workplace bullying has on employees. The theoretical background and empirical data associated with the proposed research study will be discussed in the sections to follow. The researcher would like to present the literature review in two sections. Section one will focus on the various definitions of workplace bullying, the impact of workplace bullying according to the various literature sources and the nature of workplace bullying.

2.2   WORKPLACE BULLYING AS A PHENOMENON

The research concentrates specifically on workplace bullying that teachers are experiencing. It is imperative to understand the phenomena in terms of this environment. Olender-Russon (2009:76) defines workplace bullying as "the concept that has evolved over time, from behaviour that included open physical attacks to more subtle, perhaps masked, relationships between individuals whereby one feels targeted as the recipient of persistent negative behaviour from one or more persons over a prolonged period of time. These repeated, long-term behaviours targeting an individual include constant criticism, backbiting, blaming, disparaging and social exclusion by colleagues or from team activities, either in a group setting or one-on-one.

De Wet (2011:67) says that workplace bullying usually includes the following elements: the negative effect of the bullying on the victim; the persistency of the bullying behaviour and the power disparity between the victim and the bully/bullies. This definition coincides with the definition of Olender-Russo (2009:76). Both researchers clearly point out the impact on the victim. Hadikin and O'Driscoll

(2002:16) in de Wet (2011:67) mention that the commonest forms of workplace bullying behaviour are intimidation, undervaluing of skills and humiliation. They also refer to other forms of workplace bullying which include belittling of work, undervaluing effort, questioning of professional competence, threats, blocking development/promotion, overruling decisions, moving goal posts, refusing reasonable requests, social isolation or silent treatment, rumours, attacking the victim's private life or attitudes, excessive criticism or monitoring of work, withholding information or depriving of responsibility and verbal aggression. This research clearly emphasises that workplace bullying is not always visible but that the intent and motive of a perpetrator can be just as clear when it is not visible.

Bradshaw and Figiel (2012:4) say that in order for an interaction or action to be considered as workplace bullying, it must have intensity (perpetrator's actions are perceived by the target as harmful), repetition (occurring at least twice weekly), duration (on-going for a minimum of six months), and power disparity (the target feels that it is difficult or impossible to defend him or herself). The researcher is of the belief that harmful bullying can be described and defined as an act of destructiveness towards a victim. The researcher disagrees that the repetition and duration of an act of workplace bullying, needs to occur regularly or for a minimum length of time before it can be regarded as workplace bullying.

In a study that was done by Glaso, Matthiesen, Nielsen and Einarsen (2007:313), the authors suggested that bullying can be divided into two different kinds, namely predatory and dispute-related bullying. In the predatory type, the victims may be bullied because they are assessed as easily defeated and are therefore easy targets for the predator's aggression. Dispute-related bullying is provoked by work related conflicts which escalate into a bullying situation. The researcher considers all these definitions as more or less the same, based on how workplace bullying is defined. The common keywords 'repeated, persistent or duration' can be grouped together as well as 'intent to cause harm' either by exclusion of the victim or by attacking the individual. One could also include the definition and the impact associated with such actions from bullies towards their victims.

According to the University of the Free State's education faculty, they have found that a huge percentage of teachers have been victims of workplace bullying by co-

workers and managers. This was found in a study that the University undertook and is based on a news article published by News 24. In this article it is states that workplace bullying seems to be a very serious problem in South African schools, compared to Croatia, Lithuania, Turkey, Norway and the UK. The study referred that they have used a sample of 2700 teachers across all levels and discovered that 90% of respondents had been victims of workplace bullying.

Baillen, Neyens, de Witte & Cuyper (2009:2) described workplace bullying to be a persistent (e.g. minimum 6 months) negative behaviour at work. These negative acts are mainly psychological, even though cases of physical or sexual acts have also been reported. They may concern non-work-related issues (e.g. insulting and humiliating acts) as well as work-related issues (e.g. withholding documentation). The victim often experiences difficulties in defending him/herself. Workplace bullying can be broken down further into what can be regarded as general conflict situations or disagreements in the workplace. Unlike general conflicts, workplace bullying requires that the victim is forced into an inferior position and that the perpetrator does not intend to stop the bullying.

Baillen, Neyens, de Witte & Cuyper (2009:207) mention that examples of workplace bullying are dirty looks, spreading rumours or innuendo, belittling a person's opinions or achievements, threatening or intimidating a person, and organising work in such a way that a person is likely to fail (e.g. impossible deadlines, withholding information).

2.3 CAUSES OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

Baillien, Neyens, de Witte and Cuyper (2009:1-16) did a qualitative study on the development of workplace bullying towards a three way model.

The models where described as follow:

- Firstly, bullying may result from inefficient coping with frustration. Such coping mechanisms, according to them, are likely to be active for perpetrators and passive for victims.

- Secondly, bullying may be the consequence of escalated conflicts.

-     Thirdly, bullying may result from destructive teams, organisational cultures and habits.

This study highlights the need for individuals to be aware of where they are, in terms of frustration and anger levels. From a holistic point of view, a level of self-awareness check could be valuable to determine at which level the employee is. Conflict exists in any organisation however the conflict can be unhealthy and toxic if not dealt with in a respectful manner and at an early stage, to prevent it from worsening. Continuous conflict can also create unhealthy team dynamics, which can impact the entire team to not achieve what their desired outcome or potential should be.

Teachers at schools have to function as a team and they are also reliant on each other to achieve shared outcomes, goals and curriculums as set out by the Western Cape Education Department. Those outcomes are monitored by the grade head and the principal as well as other staff members from the department. If a teacher isn't coping well, it will have an effect on the learners and the school's goals.

Based on the above descriptions of workplace bullying, one can thus see the reason why this problem needs urgent research, intervention in schools and support for teachers.

2.4   IMPACT OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

Workplace bullying as defined above can have a negative impact and negative effects on a victim. Various studies show that if an employee is exposed to workplace bullying it may not only impact on their performance within the workplace but it can also have a negative impact on the overall health and wellness of an employee. An example of workplace bullying could be if a supervisor/manager causes stress and strain on a subordinate reporting to them and the employee does not know how to speak up about how they feel. This stress and lack of coping skills might result into the subordinate feeling helpless and may lead to absenteeism.

Glaso et al., (2007:313) state that being exposed to intentional and systematic psychological harm by another person on a regular basis seems to produce severe emotional reactions and health problems such as fear, anxiety, helplessness,

depression and shock in the victim. Glaso et al., (2007:314) observed that victims of workplace bullying showed more anxiety, depression, irritation and psychosomatic complaints than did non-victims. They also state that acts of bullying against a victim can harm the victim's health tremendously and confirm the evidence of the relationship between bullying and several negative organisational effects such as absenteeism, turnover and productivity. The study very clearly highlights that there are clear effects that workplace bullying have on an organisation. The question could possibly be whether one can measure the organisational effects and think of workplace bullying as one underlying cause.

2.4.1 Effects of Workplace Bullying

There are several effects that are experienced by employees when they experience workplace bullying. Some of these effects are emotional while others impact on the health and wellness of the employee. Olender-Russo (2009:76) mentions that for the targeted individual and victim, the effects of workplace bullying range from mild to severe psychological as well as physical reactions, from short term to long term and often include a myriad of maladies. She lists the following examples, to illustrate the impact on victims:

Short term symptoms for the victim:

•   Job-Induced stress

•   Decreasing self-esteem

Long term symptoms for the Victim:

•   Increased risk of coronary artery disease

•   Hypertension

•   Increased risk of depression

•   Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder

Olender-Russo (2009:76) further states the similar effects that workplace bullying has on the organisation but also includes issues such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism and high staff turnover. She further mentions that the impact on the

organisation also includes a decrease in employee morale, organisational apathy, lost employee productivity and decreased employee loyalty which can also lead to grievances.

Privitera and Campbell (2009:395) focussed on researching the impacts of workplace bullying. They found that being a victim of workplace bullying can have a negative effect on the victim's health and emotional well-being. Their research further found that the impact often extends to the victim's social and family relationships. Future career advancements such as job promotion can be threatened or damaged because of the victims taking long term or recurring sick leave as a result of ill health from being bullied at work. In all the research quoted thus far, most of the focus is on the victim and the bully. However, very little research has been done on the other employees who work in an environment where workplace bullying exists. One could call them the by-standers and witnesses of bullying. In the research that was presented by Privitera and Campbell (2009:395) they mentioned that the psychological well-being of employees who witness bullying in the workplace can be compromised. The researcher is of the opinion that the impact of witnessing bullying is an area where more research should be done. The focus can be linked to the effect workplace bullying has on the overall organisation and its employees.

2.4.2 Case Studies Relating to the School Context

A big challenge in this study is that there are not many articles and studies that relate to the South African school context or more specifically to the Western Cape school context. However, de Wet (2011:66-77) did research on workplace bullying specifically between two teachers who had been exposed to bullying in South Africa. This research study focused on how and why they were bullied and also the impact of the bullying on their professional lives. Both of the employees were bullied by their principal. The research results were presented in a narrative format. I would like to quote from the research based on what was said by each of these teachers:

Employee A:

"Currently, every day is a struggle for emotional survival. I have reached saturation point…I am tired of being downed every time; I am tired of it, I am tired of always

being belittled; I simply never get a 'thank you'. When I leave here in the mornings I wonder what I have done wrong again, for what am I now going to be disparaged at school. When he mentions my name, I cringe – what has Margaret done wrong now again?"

Employee B:

"I was in trouble, because I chased two boys out of class. I told them they had to sit outside the classroom, but then they went to the toilet and smoked cannabis. Now I am the villain in the story. I was taken to task." The employee's health gradually deteriorated and he was diagnosed with depression. The principal's unsympathetic attitude during his illness remains with him: "My doctor was furious. I presume I could have taken him to the labour court, but I am not that kind of person. He told me that if I were not yet ready at the beginning of the term and if I could not yet teach fulltime I, as he had stated it, would not be the first person to resign on account of depression, but I had to start thinking of leaving teaching. He said that if I could not cope, I had to go. It was a sword over my head, I had been teaching for 33 years; he could have given me a fair chance to get onto my feet again".

The above case studies refer to the impact of workplace bullying on the victim and organisation. This includes the psycho-social and health issues, mental illness, lower morale, absenteeism and conflict, as well as the lack of providing support to the employees through an EAP. The fact that both these employees were willing to share their stories with the researcher meant that they couldn't receive support at the school where they were working. What was interesting was also that the bullying occurred from the top down and the one employee who shared his/her story, was also a subject head which meant that she had subordinates. If the bullying was so prolonged and evident, one could ask the question how the other employees who were bystanders coped with witnessing the workplace bullying. There may be a need to expand the research in the context of workplace bullying in the school context in South Africa in order to have a better understanding of the issue and impact.

2.5 IMPACT OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON TEACHERS

Bradshaw and Figiel (2012:9) did research on workplace bullying in schools and they found that the impact of workplace bullying on teachers was significant. They stated that the effects on the bullied teachers were as follows:

- missed time from work as a direct result of their experience
- Some experienced physical and emotional consequences including loss of sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Frustration
- Fear
- Stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Troubled sleeping patterns
- Irritability
- Low morale
- Lack of job satisfaction
- Compromised self-confidence
- Increased substance use

According to the above research, thirty-four per cent (34%) of the victims of workplace bullying sought support and treatment for the workplace bullying which they had experienced. What was interesting in the research is that substance abuse featured as one of the impacts of workplace bullying. The research of Bradshaw and Figiel (2012:9) also emphasises how important it is for managers to have the skills to identify a troubled employee. Managers need to have the skills to be pro-active about identifying, at an early stage, when an employee is going through a difficult time either personally or from a work perspective.

Lovell and Lee (2011:344) did research on the impact of workplace bullying. Their research focused on a victim of workplace bullying and another employee who witnessed the bullying taking place and the impact that the bullying had on both of them. According to Lovell and Lee (2011:344), the victim felt targeted because she represented a threat to the bully, with the victim and witness experiencing negative health outcomes such as stress and high blood pressure. The parties also booked off sick frequently. The perpetrator told the victim she was inefficient, talked too much and was disorganised. She also looked the victim up and down and would comment on her clothes, perfume and jewellery. She frequently went behind her back and passed judgement on her work without understanding the job, read her emails and questioned her expenses, and she would file away letters addressed to the victim so that the victim would miss deadlines. The perpetrator was not the manager of the victim but assumed authority over the victim. The researchers suggest that wellness programmes should place greater emphasis on mental health promotion to discourage workplace bullying.

Interestingly, this research highlighted the need for clear policies on workplace bullying and workplace behaviours. This, according to the researcher, would be the role of the Human Resources Department of the organisation. The research also revealed the need for awareness around bullying in any workplace as some employees might not even know how to identify workplace bullying or know what support, such as an EAP, they have access to. Training on life-skills such as communication, building resilience, team work, team cohesion and dealing with conflict are also areas where the EAP can assist.

Hauge, Skogstad and Einarsen (2010:426-433) did a study on the impact of workplace bullying. Their aim was to investigate the claim that bullying is a severe social stressor and a more crippling and devastating problem for affected individuals than the effect of all other work-related stressors put together. Bullying was found to be a potent stressor for anxiety and depression. Haughe, et al., (2010:430) says that being exposed to workplace bullying clearly constitutes a stressful situation. Workplace bullying is characterised as the depletion of both internal and external coping possibilities, leading to stress symptoms of a more severe nature than most other stress situations encountered within organisations. As the intensity and

frequency of the exposure to workplace bullying become more severe, so the impact becomes greater.

Employees who experience long term bullying and severe bullying have been found to portray symptoms resembling those of post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the study of Hauge et al. (2010:430). This study highlights the various impacts and effects of workplace bullying as mentioned in all the other studies, however, this study aims to see which effect was more prominent for the victims of workplace bullying. This could lead to a possible further study on the correlation between employees who are suffering from mental illness and how they cope within a bullying workplace environment. The fact that employees who are victims of bullying often also suffer from mental illness and frequently go unsupported, stresses the importance that organisations promote useful and user-friendly EAPs to employees. Employees need to be exposed to awareness programmes promoting the skills to identify the signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression, also of managing stress as well as receiving one-on-one support. Managers need to receive support in terms of how to identify a troubled employee and how to use the EAP as a means of supporting themselves as well as the employee in crisis.

Saunders, Huynh and Goodman-Delahunty (2007:344) mention that studies measuring workplace bullying in different ways have revealed that many employees who are subjected to frequently occurring and persistent bullying do not label themselves as being bullied. They mention that one explanation why victims may be reluctant to apply the label "bullied" to themselves could be because it has negative connotations of victimisation and failure. According to them, targets might also be hesitant to apply this label to their experiences due to the physical and childish connotations that the label carries through its association with schoolyard bullying which typically entails physical conduct. This is an important factor that the researcher must be aware of when conducting the one-on-one interviews.

2.6 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WORKPLACE BULLYING

Organisations have certain factors that contribute to the phenomenon of workplace bullying. Certain conditions, values and undiagnosed situations do impact on the

employees and the bigger organisation. In the section below, the researcher will further elaborate on factors that contribute to workplace bullying.

2.6.1 Psycho-social conditions at work

Balducci, Fraccaroli and Schaufeli (2011:500) mention that poor psycho-social conditions at work (e.g. role ambiguity and role conflict) may trigger interpersonal conflicts, which, if not properly managed may escalate into bullying. The researcher is of the opinion that softer skills are an area whereby the EAP can support the organisation. These researchers further stated that there is a relationship between workplace bullying and certain personality traits. They mention that they found some victims of bullying to be easily upset and to have difficulty in coping with personal criticism, as well as tending to be more anxious, tense and suspicious of others.

2.6.2 Trauma

Balducci et al. (2011:501) further mention that undiagnosed and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms are possible causes of workplace bullying. They acknowledge that a prerequisite condition for the diagnosis of PTSD is a traumatic event, however, a number of studies have found a relationship between PTSD symptoms and workplace bullying. What is interesting is that bullying could also be a very traumatic experience for a victim, either in their workplace or personal life or both. This, however, may differ from victim to victim given that they come from diverse circumstances and support systems outside of the workplace. The coping mechanisms of the victims differ which could also have an impact on the level of trauma that the victim experiences. Therefore, the researcher agrees with Balducci, et al., (2011:500-501) in terms of the relationship that exists between PTSD symptoms and workplace bullying.

2.6.3 Job insecurity

In a study mentioned earlier, Cuyper, Baillien and de Witte (2009:207-208) indicated that there is a relationship between job insecurity and workplace bullying. They stated that they see a number of reasons that hint at a relationship between the two. According to them, job insecurity resides in a climate of gossip or rumours, a climate that is thought to permit or even to stimulate workplace bullying. They affirm that job insecurity creates a climate of rivalry when employees see colleagues as potential

rivals for jobs. This may cause feelings of competition and suspicion, factors that are known to be associated with workplace bullying. Job insecurity may thrive in a climate in which compliance with anti-bullying policies is not the priority, meaning that acts of workplace bullying go unnoticed or are not punished. The researcher is of the opinion that the above research could speak to the South African context where unemployment is on the increase and employees are working under stressful and difficult circumstances, especially in the education environment, which could lead to a climate whereby employees turn on one another in order to survive and secure their jobs.

2.6.4 Disrespect by learners

De Wet (2011:189-190) focussed on victims of educator bullying. This study was a qualitative study and she mentions that the seriousness of the problem was highlighted by the following research results: The majority (91%) of educators from a co-educational London inner-city school indicated that at some time in their teaching careers they had suffered from educator targeted bullying. She further states that the plight of South African victims of educator bullying is exacerbated by learners' disrespect towards them, high levels of community and school violence, continual and rapid change, economic uncertainty, unrealistic expectations and general feelings of disempowerment. De Wet further states that teaching and learning cannot take place in a school milieu where those who are supposed to lead, supervise and act as role models (educators) are targeted by those they are supposed to lead, supervise and protect (learners).

The perpetrators of the above bullying in the research of de Wet, are the learners who bully their teachers. There is a need for further investigation and research across South Africa regarding learners bullying teachers and the impact that this type of bullying within the workplace has on the educators of South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that there could be employees who are educators that experience bullying from learners and also from co-workers or managers. This also leaves one questioning that, should an educator experience workplace bullying and have personal concerns or challenges from time to time, what then is the impact on the employee and what type of impact does the one have on the other?

2.6.5 Stress in the workplace

Randle, Stevenson, Grayling & Walker (2007:51) says that there are organisational explanations for workplace bullying. According to them, work conditions, and specifically the environment, can trigger workplace bullying. High stress levels, conflict and role ambiguity are work pressures that magnify workplace bullying. The researchers looked at what the specific organisational triggers were within the National Health Systems and some of the above were alluded to again, but additionally mentioned were inadequate training, organisational change, uncertainty, pressure from management staff and unrealistic targets.

2.6.6 Organisational culture and workplace ethics

Workplace bullying of employees may be common amongst various types of organisations and workplace cultures. Randle et al., (2007:5) aimed at understanding the concept of bullying, organisational explanations and cultures, as well as, creating an anti-bullying culture within organisations where workplace bullying is not accepted or tolerated. The researcher agrees with these researchers in that workplace bullying might be 'defined' differently in every organisation and this depends largely on the culture of that organisation. In some organisations it might be regarded as 'the way they do things' or 'normal' which might impact on whether bullying gets reported and dealt with or not.

Rhodes, Pullen, Vickers, Clegg and Pitsis (2010: 96-115) discussed in their paper the ethical responsibilities of organisations, which merely adds to the research discussed above, regarding organisational cultures. Rhodes et al., mention that where bullying is tolerated and allowed, a cycle is created that sanctions the demoralisation of employees across the organisation; it affects not only targets but also witnesses or bystanders. This is very similar to other research above which emphasised that workplace bullying does not only affect the victim of such acts but also the bystanders. Rhodes further states that while organisations cannot necessarily be held responsible for individual acts of bullying that occur within them, they are to be held responsible for a form of self-critique that leads to an on-going vigilance in seeking to address and minimize the presence of such acts and the relationships within which they occur.

The researcher agrees with Rhodes that while many organisations know the impacts of workplace bullying, managers should be able to identify and acknowledge the signs and symptoms of victims who are possibly being bullied. From an ethical perspective it should surely be the responsibility of the organisation to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for all their employees. Rhodes further mentions that bullying is always an act of violence, a violation with variations which include hateful, offensive, threatening or malevolent behaviour, as well as the abuse of power and unfair penal sanctions. The researcher is of the opinion that should one ask an organisation whether they condone violence and who is responsible to ensure safety within the workplace, it could possibly be more powerful than using the term workplace bullying which is often confused with physical bullying. Research done by Emdad, Alipour, Hagberg and Jensen (2012: 709–716) focussed on the impact of workplace bullying on bystanders. It was found that depression symptoms were found amongst the bystanders of workplace bullying. Many organisations might regard workplace bullying as a problem, but might reason that employees should take responsibility for the issue. However, it is an organisation's responsibility to ensure that the employees' work environment is safe and conducive for them to perform at an optimal level.

2.7 Conclusion

What is interesting in regard to the above research is the following:

- Workplace bullying has a negative impact for the victim, the bystander and the organization.

- Workplace bullying is generally defined similarly, however, what stands out the most is the fact that if the act is a long-term process i.e. a minimum of six months, then it is regarded as workplace bullying. The impact for all involved could be reduced should it be identified and addressed at an earlier stage.

- Limited research was done at primary schools in South Africa, and then the focus was on the educators and workplace bullying.

- No specific anti-bullying processes amongst employees of schools or teachers in South Africa was found, which leaves a gap for further research to

be done. However, there are anti-bullying campaigns for learners attending schools.

- No correlation in the South African research, especially within the education field, could be traced regarding the role of the Employee Assistance Programmes, specifically around the management of workplace bullying. Such management of workplace bullying could include early awareness, intervention, training of employees in the education field to assist them in conflict management, leadership skills, communication skills and other soft skills training such and support programme.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE EAP AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE EAP AS IMPLEMENTED BY THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the research study was to explore the role of the EAP when addressing workplace bullying in a school.

The study aimed to understand the impact, causes and effects that workplace bullying has on teachers. It allowed the researcher to get an understanding of how the EAP is supporting teachers and ascertains their access to the EAP if they are victims or bystanders of workplace bullying. The researcher looked at previous studies of workplace bullying and although there was not much research that focused specifically on the school environment in the Western Cape, in Chapter 2 she looked at the research studies that were done about the South African school context.

In Chapter 3, the researcher will be discussing the literature review of the EAP in managing workplace bullying, to be followed by a description of the EAP as implemented by the Western Cape Education Department. This chapter will be divided into 3 sections. The first section will discuss issues where the focus is on the role the EAP plays in combating workplace bullying. Secondly, the researcher will discuss strategies regarding prevention of workplace bullying, which will include the creation of awareness about workplace bullying. It will also focus on secondary and tertiary prevention with regards to the phenomenon. Subsequently, the researcher will discuss the EAP as implemented by the WCED which will then be described, in terms of historical development and current infra-structure, as well as the operational side thereof.

3.2 THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN MANAGING WORKPLACE BULLYING

In addition to looking at research on workplace bullying, the researcher also looked at the benefits and role of Employee Assistance Programmes.

More organisations and employers are offering employees EAPs, signalling a growing understanding that workers have personal struggles and that those struggles can spill over into the workplace or visa versa. EAPs have many beneficial applications for both employees and employers, but they can be particularly helpful in high-risk situations. For example, a victim of domestic violence may seek help through an EAP, thereby decreasing the probability of a violent outbreak at the organisation by the hand of the abuser.

An EAP also has a place in assisting Human Resources staff when counselling, as they can refer troubled employees to the programme. Company leadership can also use an EAP as a resource to offer to at-risk employees. An employee can also nudge a colleague to make use of an EAP when concerned about a troubled co-worker.

Among other things, an EAP assists employees who may be struggling with feelings of isolation or depression. This, in turn, helps minimize the risk of those troubles escalating to an episode of workplace violence.

EAPs can also be seen to serve a similar purpose to school programmes specifically targeted to support, encourage, and provide resources to at-risk students. A company's EAP meets similar needs for those in the workforce. It serves to increase job performance and overall functioning at work. Company leaders encouraging the use of EAPs, understand that employees are not robots and may have plenty of non-work-related issues that cannot always be 'turned off' and 'tuned out' during working hours.

The Employee Assistance Trade Association discussed the EAP and best practices responding to workplace violence (EAP Best Practices Responding to Workplace Violence, 2015) and mentioned that the role of the EAP is to develop solutions for organisations and employers to address the problem of workplace bullying.

Furthermore, it was noted that they had seen a reduction in workplace bullying when the organisations had implemented training and policies to prevent and manage workplace violence.

Crawshaw (2016:17) mentions that it is very important to have training on how the employer can manage abrasive behaviour. She believes that this type of training cannot be only a one-hour training session to inform the employer how to develop an anti-bullying policy. Rather, the aim should be that all managers will understand the importance of differentiating performance from conduct and that they should know how to manage both. She further believes they should feel confident in defining unacceptable behaviour. This training can be done by the EAP service provider or the in-house EAP professionals.

The SA Board for People Practices (2018:2) has put together a fact sheet for bullying in the workplace. In this article it was highlighted that support and empowerment for the victim is critical. Below is the outline of what they suggest for EAPs:

•   Offer life skills training for all employees to avoid targeting of victims

•   Relevant life skills include emotional intelligence, assertiveness skills and conflict handling

•   Ensure that the EAP includes counselling and support for victims of bullying

•   Ensure that the grievance process is accessible and credible

An EAP service includes a large focus on emotional support such as counselling services both telephonically and face-to-face counselling. In terms of the life-skills training, all EAP service providers provide training at an extensive level in order to support organisations with regards to issues of workplace bullying. Some of these training/life skills focus on team dynamics, conflict in the workplace, relationship issues, stress, but are not limited to the above. Organisations must be able to provide the service provider with the issue, and in this case it could be workplace bullying, and the EAP service provider can then assist with setting up these life skills interventions to assist both the victims and bystanders of workplace bullying.

The next chapter of the research will provide a more detailed and focused look into the participants' interviews discussing workplace bullying and their experiences or non-experiences in their workplace.

3.3 THE ROLE OF THE EAP IN COMBATTING WORKPLACE BULLYING

Many organisations provide support to their staff by providing an Employee Assistance Programme to the employees. The idea of an EAP is that it is a supportive, non-judgemental support system with ethics based on the principle of confidentiality. One of the most important ethical aspects is that employees are aware that the service is a confidential service as it allows them to use it with confidence and security. From the previous chapter it was evident that workplace bullying has many negative effects and impacts on both the victim and bystander. Some of these effects manifest in either emotional or physical deterioration and have a ripple effect on how the employee performs, absenteeism, presenteeism as well as workplace conflicts. The researcher cannot disagree that having an EAP in place is a phenomenal idea for employees and family members. Bullying, and the associated behaviour previously defined as bullying, is considered harassment under the South African labour law; and harassment is classed as unfair discrimination. The right to be free of harassment in the workplace is protected by law in this country.

EAP services allows employees access to make use of specialists who can, depending on circumstances, act as mediators, executive coaches, and diplomatic advocates for victims, as well as provide clinical support and act as honest brokers. Sometimes the best service rendered, is to provide counselling for victims who need to debrief in a confidential, safe and trusted communication space. The specialist can also help the victim cope by merely listening and advising on coping skills.

In order to offer support to the employee, it is important to ensure that the EAP which is provided to an employee or bystander includes counselling and support for victims of bullying (SA Board for People Practices, Bullying in the Workplace (2018:2).

Matlhape (2003) states that employee assistance programmes have been used as part of the business strategy to enhance employee functioning, loyalty and performance in organisations around the world for a good part of the 20th century. She further states that the role and positioning of the EAP in the 21st century should be part of occupational health and safety, an employee benefit, a caring organisation culture, social responsibility as well as form part of the business strategy. Both of the above articles are based on the South African context and needs. One can clearly see and understand the role that an EAP plays in the lives of the victims as well as towards bystanders of workplace bullying and the organisation as a whole.

Employees are encouraged to call through to the toll free line and to speak to a counselor. They will not be able to act as a witness for you, but talking to a trained counsellor may help you deal with the psychological consequences of the bullying and give you the courage and confidence to tackle it head-on.

Furthermore, to the role of EAP not only can the EAP offer support by providing counselling to the victims and perpetrators, they can also provide guidance in policy development about workplace bullying as well as provide training about discrimination, conflict management, harassment and diversity. Lastly, in terms of the role of the EAP with regards to combating workplace bullying, most EAP service providers offer statistical reports with recommendations regarding presenting issues and case management. They could have a category under the problem cluster which enlightens the organisation as to the number of calls for support relating to workplace bullying they received, thereby raising awareness and highlighting this phenomenon in the organisation. It is clear that the EAP plays a phenomenal role in dealing with workplace bullying.

3.4   STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

Whilst it is important to understand the role of the EAP, it is also of utmost importance that different strategies are explored in order to prevent workplace bullying. Some of these strategies are currently being used to prevent and manage workplace bullying.

3.4.1 Primary prevention services

Raising awareness about the phenomenon is of utmost importance. It allows employees insight into what the phenomenon is about. In terms of workplace bullying it can assist employees to identify whether they are victims of workplace bullying. According to an article in Workplace Bullying in South Africa, 77,8% of South Africans have experienced some form of victimisation during their careers (Work Trauma, 2000). However, bullying is persistent, prolonged and happens over a period of time; it is humiliating, damaging, vindictive and cruel and can be overt or covert with a definite impact on the well-being if the victim. Sometimes people confuse conflict and bullying therefore this figure may not be reliable.

Snell (2015), says that employers should have an anti–bullying policy in place which clearly defines what bullying is; provides examples of bullying activities; identifies a clear process to be followed for dealing with bullying; and sets out the necessary sanctions that can be imposed for bullying. In a research study by De Vos (2012) titled "Teachers' experiences about workplace bullying", she states that clear definitions and examples of workplace bullying must be provided. This means that employees need to be reminded constantly of such a policy and procedure but also that it could help if it is visible and clear to all employees.

In addition to this, the researcher believes that making staff aware of the policy at the onset of employment is critical, but there should also be constant reminders of the updates and changes made to the policy. This can be shared in the onboarding process of the organization. De Vos (2012) further states that the employer must regularly monitor bullying as a workplace hazard in terms of health and safety practices. Managers must be capacitated with skills to set up proper job descriptions for staff in performance management and in coaching and mentoring for successful performance. Raising constant awareness regarding the roles of the manager is also critical regarding this phenomenon.

Raising awareness regarding the services offered by the EAP on a constant basis is also of utmost importance. Employees need to know how to access the EAP service, what the contact details of the EAP are, what support services they are able to get as well as how the service offering works and the fact that it is a confidential service.

In terms of addressing workplace bullying, it is evident that many organisations provide soft skills training for their leadership teams as well as general employees. Viljoen mentions that in order to reduce the incidence of bullying, researchers suggest implementing programmes that promote an emotional intelligence leadership capability (South Africa: Do you have a bully at work? 2013). These programmes aim to develop leaders who are empathetic and supportive of the needs of their teams, while also effectively managing their own emotions, and are therefore able to develop effective relationships with others. Training which focusses on leadership is critical as it can assist the manager to deal with employees who are bullies or being bullied. It also needs to give managers a guideline on how to deal with these kind of situations.

Steinman (2013:47) mentions that training in workplace bullying is important. Once staff members have been made aware of workplace bullying, they assert themselves better and are often able to keep the bully's behaviour in check. Management and supervisors should also be trained in leadership and communication skills. He further states that racial harassment remains an issue within the South African context. Racial harassment is based on prejudices, therefore training in cultural diversity could defuse some of the conflicts and painful experiences workers are subjected to. Training in life skills is important and needed on all levels. Similarly, training in ethical behaviour is very important, but is often neglected in the training of health care workers.

De Vos (2013:170) explains that it is important for schools to determine workplace bullying on a continuous basis. If this is done on a continuous basis, it can include doing surveys, interviews and having conversations with employees. These can assist in understanding the culture shifts of the organisation and lead to training and interventions being put in place in order to support employees.

3.4.2 Secondary prevention

The EAP's strategy for supporting victims and bystanders of workplace bullying is to allow employees access to counselling support services. These services are either 24-hour telephonic support or face-to-face counselling at an on-site counselling support service provider. What is evident is that there are emotional affects that

workplace bullying has on victims and bystanders and therefore it is important to seek emotional support through the EAP in order to cope and be able to deal with each incident as it occurs.

According to Gottlieb (https://nottinghilltherapy.co.uk/work-career-issues-therapy/workplace-bullying-harassment-counselling/), who focussed on counselling for victims of workplace bullying and harassment, if an employee becomes the victim of bullying in the workplace, the aim of counselling is to increase their self-confidence and calm, in order for the employee to address problems in the work environment effectively and confidently, whether that means, for example, confronting the bully or reaching out for support, or preparing a legal case.

Learning to take control and dealing with bullies at work.

What is also offered in terms of counselling by some of the EAP service providers is that they can assist in mediating between two employees in order to resolve their issues and find a better way of dealing with them. Managers are also able to use counselling as a means of receiving guidance and support on how to better manage employees and to discuss issues of workplace bullying within a counselling setting.

EAP service providers can also extend counselling support services to the victim or bystanders and/or family members. It often happens that the victim will show what is happening through his/her behaviour and mood or by direct communication to the family, and in order to get their support. To cope better and support a family member who is being bullied, they can access the counselling service as well.

3.4.3   Tertiary prevention

Tertiary prevention focusses on further action and support. The following will be discussed:

3.4.3.1 Disciplinary Action

Steinman (2013:47) explains that workplace violence often continues to happen because people get away with it. Disciplinary actions against perpetrators on any

level in the hierarchy should be a reality and not just a threat. Conflict resolution is sometimes handled by outside consultants with good results as they are deemed to be neutral. The difficulty in getting to the point of disciplinary action is that most organisations don't have clear outlines of what workplace bullying is, the way it needs to be reported and documented as well as how to ensure that it gets to a point of disciplinary action.

Ziv (https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-deal-with-workplace-bullies), says that since bullying is not illegal, many companies do not have a formal policy against it. But, it's worth your time to check your employee handbook or any other document that lays out the organisation's values and expectations. Once this is done, the victim can decide to lay a formal case with HR in order to get support and get the perpetrator to take responsibility.

Heathfield (2019) says that a victim of bullying must go to HR or the manager with evidence, especially the evidence that demonstrates the impact of the bullying on the business, and file a formal complaint. Most employee handbooks describe the HR investigation process that your complaint will set in motion.

According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety(1996) accessed on https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/psychological-health-and-safety/harassment-and-bullying-prevention, in terms of Harassment and Bullying Prevention, when dealing with complaints from employees it is important to make sure employees know:

- Who to talk to if they believe they are being harassed or bullied,

- Specific procedures for reporting an incident when the alleged harasser or bully is a senior leader, supervisor or someone acting on behalf of the employer,

- That, if the organisation chooses, the process allows for the use of a personal advocate. People experiencing mental health issues often don't have the stamina to engage in this process on their own,

- How to initiate a complaint, either formally or informally,

- How they will be protected,

- How vexatious or frivolous complaints with malicious intent will be addressed,

- What will be expected of them during an investigation.

In order for an organisation to take disciplinary steps it does seem that they need to have a code of conduct, and policy and procedures in place in order to support victims and bystanders of bullying. This can be workshopped at induction, and also during training and awareness campaigns about the phenomenon of workplace bullying.

3.5 EAP as implemented by the Western Cape Education Department

The WCED has a long-standing service of offering an EAP to their employees, which is an EAP service with an external service provider. The EAP of the WCED provides employees with the following services:

- A 24-hour toll free line whereby employees have access to support
- Face to face counselling
- Trauma debriefing services post a critical incident
- Training
- Reporting
- Policy development
- Awareness campaigns for both employees and managers

The EAP that is provided by the WCED, provides a level of service offering that can assist employees, victims, bystanders as well as family members with support. Furthermore, it can assist in providing guidance to the organisation with regard to input on policies, based on the EAP stats, but also where development is needed. This means that the support does strive towards assisting managing workplace bullying in its entirety.

Most of the literature that was reviewed on the EAP service offerings and where the EAP can support workplace bullying, focussed on life skills as a means of educating employees about workplace bullying. The list of the life skills product suite as received by ICAS, the WCED had the following training and life-skills topics on:

- Effective Communication
- Conflict
- Synergy in the team
- Team dynamics
- Team Building
- "Me in the team"
- Juicy Parenting
- Relationships
- Stress management
- Leadership Training

All of the above are primary support services in the form of training. They are not limited to those topics only but they have access to customised training that is applicable to the phenomenon that the organisation or team presents.

In terms of reporting of workplace bullying to the EAP, there isn't a specific category that focusses on workplace bullying. Work issues are one of the categories which the service provider reports on but there is nothing specifically relating to workplace bullying.

In terms of policy development and input, the WCED does not have a policy in place that specifically speaks to workplace bullying amongst employees. There is, however, a policy that focusses on bullying amongst learners. According to the policy of the Western Cape Government accessed on www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/bullying-school the main focus is not on workplace bullying. There is a big need to assist the organisation with the development of such a policy and to ensure that the policy is shared with the employees of the WCED. Workplace bullying needs to have a specific focus in terms of how it is reported and how victims are supported.

WCED makes use of awareness in order to educate their staff regarding the EAP. This awareness happens in various forms such as posters, wallet cards, fridge magnets and also face-to-face awareness.

The WCED EAP services extend to the WCED employee's family members. This allows the family members of victims of workplace bullying to call in and get support for themselves and also learn better ways of dealing with and supporting their family member who may be bystanders or victims of workplace bullying.

What would be beneficial in the reporting of cases is that when employees report workplace bullying incidents and get direct support from the EAP, that then the EAP councillor will inform on this as a category on their reporting, to hereby make the organisation aware of how many cases have been reported during a particular period. This will allow them insight into the issue and also assist them in better planning their interventions and training support.

3.6 WCED EAP PROGRAMME & EAPA-SA STANDARDS

EAPs in South Africa are structured, formulated and re-evaluated by the EAPA-SA standards. In the following discussion the researcher will discuss the 27 standards and benchmark them against the WCED EAP Programme's service level agreement with ICAS. (WCED ICAS SLA: 2017- 2020)

3.6.1 STANDARD 1 - Programme design must be based on a formal assessment of organisational and employee needs.

The EAP of the WCED was based on a formal assessment of the organisation and also of its employees' needs. It was on this basis that they decided that they do not have capacity to fully run the programme internally and that an external service provider would work for them, the employees and the employees' family members.

3.6.2 STANDARD 2 - The policy must describe the EAP in its entirety

The WCED does not have an EAP policy in place.

3.6.3 STANDARD 3 - There should be an EAP Advisory Committee at the highest possible level within the organisation involving representatives from all segments of the workforce

The WCED has a team that works in the wellness sector however it does not have an EAP advisory committee that represents all levels from the workforce.

3.6.4 STANDARD 4 - Service delivery and Costing models of an EAP should be based on sound financial principles

The overall contract of the WCG has this standard in place.

3.6.5 STANDARD 5 - Operational guidelines should be developed to operationalise the policy

No policy is in place therefore operational guidelines are not based on an operational policy. They do, however, have a terms of reference with their EHWP service provider on what the requirements are in terms of the contract which focusses on the service offering.

3.6.6 STANDARD 6 - An implementation plan must outline the actions and schedule needed to establish an operationally-effective EAP

This is in place with the service provider.

3.6.7 STANDARD 7 - An appropriate number of suitably qualified EAP professionals must be available to achieve the stated goals and objectives of the programme

This standard is in place with the WCED and also with their service provider. The provider is expected to have qualified and trained clinicians, financial advisors, legal advisors and health professionals in their operation to execute the EAP

3.6.8 STANDARD 8 - Every EAP practitioner/professional who provides services will be subject to on-going consultation and/or supervision

This standard is being met with the service provider and their affiliate network.

3.6.9 *STANDARD 9* **- Every EAP professional who provides services will be subjected to on-going consultation and/or supervision.**

The service provider's employees who provide the services to WCED are being supervised as they provide the service.

3.6.10 *STANDARD 10* **- EAP professionals must engage and participate in professional development activities.**

This standard is being met by the service provider who is providing the EAP services and is monitored by their own employees.

3.6.11 *STANDARD 11* **- Confidentiality is a cornerstone of the profession, consistent with all the professional standards, ethics and legal requirements that regulate the management of information.**

The ethics of the EAP service is promoted and executed as a confidential service. Even when the service provider provides feedback to WCED it is de-identified statistical feedback only, which assists in the confidentiality of the service.

3.6.12 *STANDARD 12* - **The EAP must maintain records.**

The records of the EAP are kept by the service provider, as well as by the department of wellness at the WCED.

3.6.13 *STANDARD 13* **- All EAP professionals must have adequate professional liability insurance.**

This is in place via the service provider who is providing the EAP service.

3.6.14 *STANDARD 14* **- EAP practitioners must maintain the highest level of ethical conduct.**

This standard is being met by the service provider as well as the team/department of wellness at the WCED.

3.6.15 *STANDARD 15* **- The EAP will offer trauma defusing and trauma debriefing services for employees, family members and the organisation in extreme situations.**

This standard is being met via the EAP service provider. Trauma defusing should take place within 4-6 hours and trauma debriefing within 24-48 hours.

3.6.16 *STANDARD 16* **- The EAP will offer intervention services for employees, family members and the organisation in crisis situations.**

This standard is being met by WCED and their service provider. This can be in the form of counselling services or trauma debriefing support.

3.6.17 *STANDARD 17* **- EAP professionals will conduct an assessment to identify employees and/or family members and/or organisational problems and develop a plan of action.**

This is in place by the service provider who does an assessment when the employee accesses the EAP service.

3.6.18 *STANDARD 18* **- Clients should be referred to an appropriate resource according to the unique needs revealed by the assessment.**

This standard is in place as the service provider makes sure to do this when the client initially calls in. It allows for transferring to the correct department for support.

3.6.19 *STANDARD 19* **- EAP professionals will provide short-term intervention services.**

This is in place as the service provider only provides short term interventions to the employees.

3.6.20 *STANDARD 20* **- The therapeutic process will be monitored to ensure progress.**

The therapeutic services are monitored by case managers of the service providers.

3.6.21 *STANDARD 21* **- The EAP will ensure that aftercare and reintegration services are provided for EAP clients.**

This is in place by the service provider of the WCED EAP.

3.6.22 *STANDARD 22* **- The EAP professional will provide advice and consultation to minimise risk and promote organisational effectiveness.**

This standard is in place and being managed by the service provider and the EAP WCED team.

3.6.23 *STANDARD 23* **- The EAP will use training as an intervention strategy.**

This standard is being met whereby the service provider, together with the internal WCED wellness team, provides training on various topics as part of the EAP service.

3.6.24 *STANDARD 24* **- EAP practitioners will develop and implement an appropriate marketing strategy.**

This standard is being met. Employees have access to newsletters, wallet cards, online portals and posters that assist in the marketing strategy.

3.6.25 *STANDARD 25* **- The EAP will develop holistic, proactive interventions.**

This standard is being met by the service provider in conjunction with the internal WCED employee wellness team.

3.6.26 *STANDARD 26* **- The EAP should network with the various internal and external stakeholders**

This standard is being met by the internal wellness team of the WCED and the service provider.

3.6.27 *STANDARD 27* **- The effectiveness of the EAP should be monitored and evaluated continuously.**

The service is being monitored and evaluated by the WCED EAP team. The service provider also supplies them with a ROI in order to assist them to monitor and evaluate it.

As per the above standards it is clear that the WCED EHWP complies with some the standards, while other standards still need to be readdressed. This will assist in enhancing the EHWP of the WCED.

3.7   CONCLUSION

EAPs in South Africa are to a large extent formatted by the EAP Standards by EAPA-SA (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015). The EAP as offered by the WCED based on the contract with one of the leading EAP Service providers in South Africa, is no exception. The quality and impact of the mentioned EAP, however can only be determined, based on the feedback by the clientele, i.e. schools in this case represented by educators and learners, the expected beneficiaries of the programme. Findings are shared in Chapter 4 of this report.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The goal of the study was to explore the contribution the EAP makes when addressing workplace bullying amongst teachers at a primary school in the Western Cape. In order to explore the role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying, it was necessary to explore whether teachers are experiencing workplace bullying, and if so, to explore whether they have accessed the EAP for support, and if not, the reasons for not utilising the EAP. A further objective of the study is to find out from the participants what their suggestions are in terms of improving the EAP that is currently being provided to them by the Western Cape Government Education and contracted to ICAS as their EAP service provider. In this chapter, the researcher will describe the research methodology and the resulting empirical findings.

The researcher would focus on the research objectives of this study which is:

- conceptualise 'workplace bullying' and EAP
- explore and describe the nature of workplace bullying in a school system
- explore and describe the experiences of teachers regarding workplace bullying
- explore the role of the EAP as a support system when addressing workplace bullying

This chapter will be divided into two sections. In the first section, the research methods and the ethical considerations that guided the study will be discussed. Subsequently, the next section will present the biographic information of the participants as well as the empirical findings of the study. The empirical findings will be divided and will be discussed under themes and sub-themes.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research approach, type of research, research design, study population and sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, pilot and ethical considerations that guided the study, as well as the challenges and limitations of the study will be discussed in this section.

4.2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach which was the most suitable for this particular study, taking into consideration the use of the interpretive paradigm (De Vos, Strydom, Sculze & Patel, 2011:7). In the study the researcher aimed to explore the EAP's contribution to workplace bullying amongst teachers at a primary school in the Western Cape. Creswell (2007:37-39) mentions that researchers, making use of the qualitative approach, attempt to develop a complex and holistic view of specific social phenomena. Rubin and Babbie (2013:40) assert that qualitative research methods are more likely to tap into the deeper meanings of specific human experiences, and "generate theoretically richer observations". Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa and Varpio (2015: 669 -670) mention that qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena can include, but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organisations function, and how interactions shape relationships.

The researcher has found that a qualitative research study approach is best suited for this study, as it is about understanding the role the EAP plays in the existence or non-existence of workplace bullying. It allows the researcher a much deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the individual's experiences.

4.2.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH

The researcher used applied research as the researcher was interested in addressing a specific issue and concern and aims to suggest possible solutions to an existing problem which in this case was workplace bullying and the EAP's role therein.

Applied research is a fact-gathering project conducted with the intention of acquiring and applying knowledge that will address a specific problem or meet a specific need within the scope of the entity (McCotter,2001:69). By exploring the phenomenon of workplace bullying, possible solutions may be developed to address workplace bullying by means of EAPs and the role the EAP plays to support teachers who are victims of workplace bullying. Applied research was the most effective, as it allowed the researcher to add knowledge to an area of practice where limited information is available (De Vos et al, 2011:95). Organisations are seen as a system, e.g. in this study the school is regarded as a system. Workplace bullying impacts negatively on this system and the EAP's role is to provide support through means of awareness about the topic, counselling services, managerial support services as well as reporting that can guide the organisation on what to implement. Limited information was available on the role the EAP plays when teachers are dealing with workplace bullying. Applied research aims at finding a solution to an immediate problem. This research allowed the researcher to look at possible solutions that can be implemented around how the role of the EAP can be improved. Workplace bullying is impacting negatively on the workplace and their employees and so it was important to gather data on how the EAP supports and intervenes for teachers who are affected.

4.2.3 STUDY POPULATION & SAMPLING

The research population comprises teachers working at the primary school, but will not include the principal. Volunteer sampling will be applied as the researcher can only use teachers at the selected school who volunteer to take part in the study. De Vos et al., (2011:294) state that volunteer sampling works well when participants are known to one another or are at least aware of one another and can encourage one another to become involved in the study. The researcher is of the opinion that teachers who volunteer to be part of the study will show interest in the topic as well as provide more reliable feedback.

The sample for the research included 14 teachers who volunteered to be part of the study at the initial presentation of the proposed research during a staff meeting.

The principal of the school provided written permission (Annexure A) to the researcher, to carry out the study and agreed to allow teachers to partake in the study. The researcher also received permission (Annexure B) from the Western Cape Education Department to complete the study at a primary school. On the day of the data collection, the teachers had to complete a consent form (Annexure C) to prove that they wanted to take part in the study and also to ensure that they were aware what the study entails and that it is a confidential process.

Data saturation is often used as a criterion to evidence the quality of qualitative research. It is commonly taken to indicate that, on the basis of the data that has been collected or analysed hitherto, further data collection and/or analysis will be unnecessary (Saunders et al, 2017:189). The researcher conducted twelve interviews with the participants that were available at the school. The researcher reached a point of saturation after the 8th interview, as the participants were re-expressing the same experiences regarding workplace bullying and the EAP services. Nonetheless, the present study included twelve participants to ensure data saturation was indeed reached.

4.2.4 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher was of the opinion that semi-structured one-on-one interviews guided by an interview schedule would allow the researcher to gather detailed data and enable her to understand the participants' experiences.

Semi-structured interviews are used by researchers to gain a more detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. By doing semi-structured interviews the researcher also have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will not be dictated by the schedule. The researcher had put together an interview schedule which is a questionnaire written to guide the interview.

4.2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to de Vos (2002:340), there are five steps that need to be followed during the data analysis process. These include:

Step 1: Collecting and recording the data

As stated above, the researcher will conduct the interviews according to an interview schedule and the researcher will be using a digital recorder to capture the data. De Vos (2002:340) states that, "the researcher should practice and cultivate habits for labelling audiotapes, carrying extra batteries for his recorder and finding quiet places for note-taking." The same comment applies to the use of digital recorders. Participants gave permission to be recorded.

Step 2: Managing the data

De Vos (2002:343) encourages the researcher to organise the data into file folders. The researcher will create and make use of file folders and each respondent will have their own file in which the researcher's notes, recordings and the transcript thereof will be kept. Each participant's recording is saved with their details to ensure that they each have their own file.

Step 3: Reading and writing memos

Marshal and Rossman (as cited in de Vos, 2002:343) mention that writing memos in the margins of field notes or transcripts or under photographs helps in the initial process of exploring a database. The researcher will read through the transcript a few times and make notes to aid in understanding the data better.

Step 4: Describing, classifying and interpreting data

Cresswell (as cited in de Vos, 2002:344) explains that classifying means taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes or dimensions of information. Each interview will be analysed and captured under the overall themes identified.

Step 5: Representing and visualising

De Vos (2002:344) mentions that "in the final phase of the spiral, researchers present the data". The researcher will compile a write-up of the overall data that was collected with the themes identified.

4.2.6 PILOT STUDY

The pilot study is one way in which prospective researchers can orientate themselves to the project they have in mind (de Vos et al., 2011:236). Royse (in de Vos et al., 2011:236) states that "the pilot study is indeed a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project, and attempts to expand our knowledge about the interventions we use and their effects on our clients". With the goal of the pilot study in mind, the researcher selected the first respondent who volunteered to be part of the pilot study. No changes to the interview schedule were made. The researcher will include data from the pilot study in the main study.

4.2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical guidelines are set to ensure that the research study is conducted in a proper and just manner. Ethics basically refer to the values and principles that guide the research study, which ensure that the research participants do not suffer any harm (Alastuuri, Bickman & Brennan., 2008:96).

The school principal and the Western Cape Education Department both consented and provided written permission for the study to take place. See annexure 1 attached. The researcher also obtained approval from the ethical committee at the University of Pretoria in order for the study to go ahead. See ANNEXURE 2 attached. The following ethical considerations were taken into account:

<u>Avoidance of harm</u>

De Vos et al., (2011:15) state that certain subjects can cause harm in a physical or emotional manner". The researcher took all reasonable steps to ensure that the participants were not harmed in any way, including physically or emotionally, as a result of their participation in the study.

Participants who participated and who required counselling due to them being either a victim or a bystander of bullying and having not dealt with the impact of it, were offered referrals to the EAP for support services, which are rendered by ICAS, an

external service provider. One such arrangement was made as one employee agreed to be called back for support.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study was voluntary as respondents had the choice to take part or not.

The researcher obtained permission from the principal of the particular school and the Western Cape Education Department to carry out this study. A total of 13 individuals have offered participation in the study on a voluntary basis of which one took part in the pilot study.

Informed consent

The researcher informed all the participants of the purpose, process and procedures of the study. The researcher also pointed out the possible problems and risks which could arise during the process. After this information had been shared, the researcher requested the participants to complete an informed consent form, thereby confirming their agreement to participate in the study. The consent form (see annexure 3 attached) addressed the issues of guaranteed confidentiality in terms of the names of the participants. The consent form gave the participants a guarantee that should they disclose any personal information or other information regarding colleagues or learners that this information would be dealt with in a highly confidential manner. It also stipulated that all captured data will be stored at the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival purposes and possible future research.

Violation of privacy, anonymity or confidentiality

Although anonymity couldn't be guaranteed, the researcher will ensure privacy and confidentiality for all the participants as the sensitivity of this topic means that some participants might feel uncomfortable. Only the researcher knows the identity of the participants and no names will be disclosed anywhere in the study or to any of the

other participants or managers when referring to a person or an incident. However, information on the demographics of the participants will be used for profiling purposes.

The name of the primary school will also not be disclosed and will remain anonymous.

<u>Compensation</u>

None of the respondents were compensated and this was made clear to them before the research took place. This was also stated on the consent form so that there would be no expectations at the end of the study.

<u>Debriefing the respondents</u>

During the interview, certain participants recalled hurtful and painful experiences. The researcher took the responsibility for referring any participant in need of assistance and support to their EAP. Such an arrangement had already been made. One participant was referred to the EAP via a case manager that was assigned to assist should such a need arise.

<u>Actions and competence of researchers</u>

The researcher was honest and transparent with the respondents about the goal and objectives of this study. She was also constantly aware of the sensitivity of the topic and therefore ensured that all ethical concerns were fulfilled. The research was guided by a supervisor to ensure that there was a high level of quality.

4.2.8 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One challenge and limitation that was experienced during the study was that the empirical data was collected on one day and as it was the last day of the school term, the teachers were busy doing report cards. It seemed as if they were distracted as some of their learners' parents were also at the school on that day.

4.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

In this section the researcher will give an overview of the biographic information of the participants, followed by the research findings and interpretation thereof.

4.3.1 BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The researcher collected the biographic information of participants during interviews by means of the interview schedule. Biographic information contains age, gender, language, highest qualification and length of service. Data obtained during the pilot study had been included in the final data set.

Table 1: Demographical details of the participant educators:

Participant	Age	Gender	Language	Highest Qualification	Length of Service
1	47	Female	English	Matric/Diploma Secretarial	20
2	47	Female	English	Matric	15
3	47	Female	English	ECD Practitioner	9
4	54	Female	English/Afrikaans	Gr.10	10
5	45	Female	Xhosa	BA Education	10
6	47	Female	English	BA Primary Education	24
7	52	Female	English	Degree in School Management	29
8	48	Female	Xhosa	Matric + 2 years in Education Studies	15
9	24	Male	English	BA Degree in Education	2
10	36	Male	French & English	Degree in Maths	5
11	53	Male	English	Diploma in Education	32
12	54	Female	Xhosa & English	Higher Diploma in Education	13
13	38	Female	English & Afrikaans	University Degree in Education	7

From the table above it is evident is that most of the participants are female. Also, all the teachers hold various qualifications ranging from a Gr.10 to a Degree. In terms of their ages and languages it is a mixed group with most of them English speaking.

4.3.2 QUALITATIVE DATA AND INTERPRETATION

The data will be presented according to different themes and sub-themes below. The researcher will also include some phrases of the participants to assist in understanding the depth of their experiences.

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Phenomenon of workplace bullying at school	1.1 Teachers as victims of bullying 1.2 Teachers as bystanders of bullying 1.3 Learners as bullies 1.4 Parents of learners as bullies
2. Effect on overall wellness & functioning	2.1 Isolation 2.2 Escape 2.3 Self doubt 2.4 Feel physically sick 2.5 Anger 2.6 Mentally sick
3. Role of EAP	3.1 Offer opportunity for teachers to talk to a counsellor 3.2 Level of reporting of issues to the headmaster, before approaching the EAP 3.3 Lack of knowledge and awareness of the EAP 3.4 Awareness of the EAP, but with no participation
4. Reasons for not using EAP	4.1 Unawareness of the EAP service offering 4.2 Referral to the EAP via the headmaster
5. Suggestions on Improving the EAP services to support teachers dealing with workplace bullying	5.1 Marketing which includes procedural guidelines on the use of the EAP 5.2 Training 5.3 Questionnaires

Theme 1: Phenomenon of Workplace Bullying at the School

The first theme looks at the existence and non-existence of workplace bullying according to the participants. Later, in the sub-themes, the researcher wanted to specify the different types of bullying that were raised by the participants. Participants mentioned that they were either victims or bystanders or even both. All the participants were asked to elaborate on incidents whereby they were either a victim or a bystander of workplace bullying and various incidents came up. Some explained recent incidents, two of them brought up bullying from the learners and also the learners' parents, others explained how they were bystanders of workplace bullying.

Subtheme 1.1 Teachers as Victims of Bullying

This sub-theme highlights that teachers are victims of workplace bullying and that workplace bullying definitely exists. Most of the participants indicated that they were victims of workplace bullying. The participants expressed the following:

Participant 6: "It's quite strange that you guys, that you have actually come to the school because I am experiencing what I would consider bullying by a colleague. It is an SMT member, and I have experienced it for a number of years".

Participant 11: "Over the years one has seen it in different ways and its very subtle which makes it very difficult which one only realizes it afterwards when it's done in a subtle manner and not upfront. It does leave a long lasting effect upon a person."

Participant 8: "When someone was on top, I can say he was upstairs and I was downstairs. The way he was throwing words to me. I didn't understand what she was talking about and she kept on shouting at me with a thing that I didn't understand at all. And to me it said as if are you taking advantage of me because if it wasn't me, it wouldn't have been someone else she wouldn't have said it like that".

Participant 2: "Yes, here at the moment I don't find much of that, but yes there is the time especially when it comes to end of terms, you know you get that pressure then yes, sometimes you do mistake bullying with just being under pressure".

Participant 7: "So here I come along 6 years ago into this school, I meet the bully and it is head on collision with the bully.

Participant 9: "I had a operation in my eye so I was forced to do work I had to, like I couldn't take any light, I had to do reports, they forced me to do reports and typing and everything so it made my eye worse, it's not healing at all. She just wants work done, we can't say anything"

Subtheme 1.2 Teachers as bystanders of bullying

Participant 3: "It's not that bad here and the previous school that I have attended but I have seen, I've seen a few incidents, and if it wasn't handled the way it was, it could have gotten very ugly, very bad."

Participant 7: "Yes we do have one particular bully by the school and I think everyone has been bitten by the person. And because the person has been doing it ever since ever, nobody has stopped the person.

Participant 9: "Mmmm, it does exist. Staff meetings, there is one teacher that the principal always picks on, then I feel as if she wants to drive her out the school."

Subtheme 1.3 Learners as bullies

In this sub-theme participants highlighted that they often experience being bullied by learners. Two participants said the following:

Participant 3: "About 3 years ago, I think it was 3 years ago, before the building was burnt, I was still grade R teacher at that time, my colleague, a learner was sent to her our classrooms was attached so he came from one classroom to the other classroom because he was disruptive and so when she was reprimanding her, he wanted to stab her with the pencil. And then she shouted for me, as I told you our classrooms were attached just by wall a little divider. I could easily go to her, I had to take the learner and I brought him to the office. I was very stern with him, I think if I wasn't and if I didn't hold him in a certain way, he would have also attacked me but he didn't.

Participant 5: "I have a group of learners who are very challenging, one especially, the way she will address you, the way she makes those funny sounds, show

disrespectful signs, in a way I felt a bit disrespectful. There was one case where there was children fighting, you know you try to separate them. You speak to them in a manner that is conducive but then you can see the child still retaliates."

Subtheme 1.4 Parents of learners as bullies

In this sub-theme it highlights that parents of learners also contribute to teachers feeling that they are being bullied. The participants said the following:

Participant 5: "At times from the parent's side. Because when you try to communicate with the parents but then you find they become so defensive when you try to report what is happening, so at times you can experience it from the parents side.

Participant 13: "I have incidents from parents and stuff, it's unacceptable".

Discussion of Theme 1 and related sub-themes

In the above theme and sub-theme, it was evident that all the participants had experienced some form of workplace bullying as a teacher. Some teachers experienced workplace bullying as victims, others as bystanders, as well as being bullied by either a learner or a learner's parent. This correlates with the literature in Chapter 2 page 6 & 7.

Theme 2: Effect on overall wellness & functioning

In this theme what was evident is that all the participants mentioned that being a victim or a bystander of bullying has an effect on their overall wellness and functioning.

Sub-theme 2.1: Isolation

 Some of the participants said the following:

"Sometimes I don't feel like connecting with other teachers, I just isolate myself." This was shared by Participant 9.

Sub-theme 2.2: Escape

Participant 1 said: "Sometimes I didn't feel like standing up in the morning to come to school. Already at home I have my own issues as well."

Sub-theme 2.3: Self doubt

Participant 2 said: "You go home, you stressed out, you think about why, what did I do to go through that or was it my fault that I went through that or that it occurred to me."

Participant 12 said: "She entered my class and she shouted at me in front of the learners. As a result, I refrain myself from doing anything, because anything that I am doing that word "incompetent" it always appears to me. I feel useless."

Sub-theme 2.4:   Feel physically sick

Participant 6: "I'm not angered by it, I just feel like I am at that point now, I feel I am at the point now to take it further, I am at that point now".

"It makes people sick that they actually sick and absent".

Sub-theme 2.5: Anger

Participant 12: "It affects me a lot, as I am telling you that whatever I do, I feel I don't give enough. It affects me mentally and physically. I am becoming, I have an anger and I am controlling myself not to do anything."

Sub-theme 2.6: Mentally sick

Participant 11: "It demotivates me and depresses me to a certain extent".

Participant 10: "I was mentality traumatised each time somebody approached me in the higher authority."

In this sub-theme, the effects were highlighted and one can see that for different participants, the effects are different, however, all the effects were negative. In some instances the researcher noticed that some effects even spilled over into the participant's personal environment and work environment.

Discussion of Theme 2 and related sub-themes

In the above theme it is evident that workplace bullying has different effects on the participants. All the effects are detrimental to the teacher's functioning. This is discussed in the literature as well in Chapter 2 page 5.

Theme 3: Role of the EAP

In this section the researcher wanted to understand what role the EAP plays in addressing or supporting employees when dealing with workplace bullying. What was evident is that a few of the employees knew about the EAP, while others didn't know anything about the EAP services being offered by the Western Cape Government Education department and contracted with ICAS as an EAP Service Provider.

Sub-theme 3.1: Offer opportunity for teachers to talk to a counsellor

Below are some of the extracts from the actual interviews:

Participant 11: "I have used ICAS, sometimes not even related to school things. Just by talking to the counsellor, you calm down."

Participant 1: "For me it will help because I know I have someone to turn to, not seeing the person but just be able to talk for me that will be a great help yes"

Sub-theme 3.2: Level of reporting of issues to the headmaster, before approaching the EAP

Participant 10: "Nobody has actually approached us, they (WCED) have always told us that you need to go to the principal before approaching anyone else with anything. The principal must know about the bullying first and she must refer you to the EAP, you can't go on your own."

Sub-theme 3.3: Lack of knowledge and awareness of the EAP

Participant 6: "To tell you the truth it, it is the first time I hear of it. I wasn't aware that such a programme existed."

Participant 6: "I don't know anything about the EAP. It didn't come to me for me to know about it".

Participant 9: "I have actually never heard of this programme before"

Sub-theme 3.4:   Awareness of the EAP, but with no participation

Participant 12: "It's because I don't want the things to come from outside and comes in here, do you understand what I mean? To me I need a peaceful place. I don't want to argue a lot here."

Participant 2: "To be honest I have never ever used it, for me I feel like you know when you do go through trauma like that, there is assistance out there but then we all not the same, sometimes we don't want the outside assistance we want to deal with it on our own or maybe like in my case I normally, my husband would be my assistance there".

Participant 1: "I never phoned ICAS hey because I thought I am going to phone. Because I am not sure. I know one of my colleagues always said there is this and you can always speak to them but I thought rather keep it for myself and that for me not speaking out getting all in for me it was eating inside."

Discussion of Theme 3 and related sub-themes

The role of the EAP was not clear so most participants didn't make use of the service. They either didn't know about this service offering or they didn't know how to access the service. The role of the EAP is discussed in Chapter 3.

Theme 4: Reasons for not using the EAP

As stated in Theme 3, the researcher found that some employees knew about the service but most didn't know about the service offering of the EAP. What the researcher wanted to establish in this theme was the reasons for not using the EAP service. The following were some of the reasons:

Sub-theme 4.1 Unawareness of the EAP service offering

In this sub-theme it was evident that participants were either unaware of the service of the EAP or of the process relating to how the EAP works. Participants had the following to say:

Participant 1: "I thought it is not going to be helpful because every time I phone I am going to speak to someone different, whereas I want to speak to someone like the same person".

Participant 8: "No, I never."

Sub-theme 4.2:   Referral to the EAP via the headmaster

Participant 10: "The department made it clear, that no matter what you have, no matter which employee programme and all those things are put in place, everything must past to the principal on how you feeling".

Discussion of Theme 4 and related sub-themes

Various reasons were provided in the theme and sub-themes in terms of why the participants don't use the EAP. It was noted that the EAP can play a role in raising the awareness of employees on how to access the support services. This is also discussed in Chapter 3 in terms of the role of the EAP according to literature.

Theme 5: Suggestions on Improving the EAP services to support teachers in dealing with workplace bullying

In this theme, the researcher wanted to find out from the participants themselves what their suggestions would be in terms of improving the EAP services that are offered to them by the Western Cape Government Health Department.

Below are some of the suggestions that were given by participants.

Sub-theme 5.1: Marketing which includes procedural guidelines on the use of the EAP

Participant 13: "If they can come and workshop us, not even workshop, information sessions about the services and bullying. Awareness about the EAP service offering including the different ways of accessing the programme".

Participant 1: – "if you could have one person to speak to and have one number of that person, like you go to your doctor and when you have a relationship with a doctor"

Participant 10: "make staff aware of the employee assistance programme"

Participant 8: "I think you guys must do some workshops, so that we people who are not familiar, we can be."

Sub-theme 5.2: Training

Participant 11: "Just after there was a fire, ICAS sent a counsellor in, and she did a debriefing of trauma and how it could be affected. So if the department couldn't employ a neutral counsellor come once a term to the school to have a chat on distressing in the workplace or the triggers of stress."

Participant 6: "for example, coming out and do some workshops maybe something like that so that we don't get to this point."

Participant 6 further said: "It needs to be one on one and I don't know if you guys have the type of resources to engage in that but that is a good starting point because from there you can gauge on how to improve the system."

Sub-theme 5.3: Questionnaire

Participant 11: "The department is able to have a questionnaire online and for example one of the questions "is the principal at your school democratic or not democratic because I don't want to say a bully or not a bully, is your deputy, is your HOD, are your colleagues, because in that way the circuit managers could be using something to say that out of 16 teachers, 14 teachers have said you a bully. Can we look at why the staff is saying that? Maybe in that questionnaire they must put in the reason why you put that answer especially if it's a negative answer."

Discussion of Theme 5 and related sub-themes

In the above theme and sub-themes participants had the opportunity to provide input on what they thought can assist in improving the EAP services. Continued training, awareness programmes, as well as questionnaires were suggested. These are the services that the EAP can provide in terms of their scope of services. This is also discussed in the literature in Chapter 3.

4.3 SUMMARY

The study afforded the researcher the opportunity to look into the role the EAP plays when teachers are dealing with workplace bullying at a Western Cape Government School.

The researcher specifically wanted to understand the experiences the teachers go through with regards to either being victims or bystanders, and also what support they access and if the EAP is there to assist them in a challenging situation such as workplace bullying. The effects of workplace bullying were evident in the research above as well as the role of the EAP.

CHAPTER 5:

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher presented the empirical data in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the findings of the study regarding the role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system will be outlined. Evidence related to the goal of the study will be discussed as well as the achievement of the objectives of the study. The researcher will be answering the research question by zooming in on the research key findings, and thereafter the recommendations will be presented followed by the conclusion of the study.

5.2 KEY FINDINGS

The key findings are drawn from literature reviews and empirical studies, and will be divided into two sections:

5.2.1 Key findings of literature reviews regarding workplace bullying in a school system

- Olender-Russon (2009:76) defines workplace bullying as "the concept that has evolved over time, from behaviour that included open physical attacks to more subtle, perhaps masked, relationships between individuals whereby one feels targeted as the recipient of persistent negative behaviour from one or more persons over a prolonged period of time. These repeated, long-term behaviours targeting an individual include constant criticism, backbiting, blaming, disparaging and social exclusion by colleagues or from team activities, either in a group setting or one-on-one.

- Baillen, Neyens and de Witte (2009:2) described workplace bullying to be persistent (e.g. minimum 6 months) negative behaviour at work. These negative acts are mainly psychological, even though cases of physical or sexual acts have also been reported. They may concern non-work-related issues (e.g. insulting and humiliating acts) as well as work-related issues (e.g. withholding

documentation). The victim often experiences difficulties in defending him/herself.

- According to the University of the Free State's education faculty, a huge percentage of teachers have been victims of workplace bullying by co-workers and managers.   Furthermore, Jacobs published an article in (2014) which states that workplace bullying seems to be a very serious problem in South African schools, compared to Croatia, Lithuania, Turkey, Norway and the UK. The study the University of Free State did that was published in News 24, used a sample of 2700 teachers across all levels and discovered that 90% of respondents had been victims of workplace bullying.

- Baillien, Neyens, de Witte and Cuyper (2009:1-16) did a qualitative study on the development of workplace bullying towards a three-way model.
  The models were described as follows:
  •   Firstly, bullying may result from inefficient coping with frustration. According to them, such coping mechanisms are likely to be active for perpetrators and passive for victims.
  •   Secondly, bullying may be the consequence of escalated conflicts.
  •   Thirdly, bullying may result from destructive teams, organisational cultures and habits.

- Privitera and Campbell (2009:395) focussed on researching the impacts of workplace bullying. They found that being a victim of workplace bullying can have a negative effect on the victim's health and emotional well-being. Their research further found that the impact also extends to the victim's social and family relationships.

- Olender-Russo (2009:76) further states the similar effects that workplace bullying has on the organisation, but also includes issues such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism and high staff turnover. She further mentions that the impact on the organisation also includes a decrease in employee morale, organisational apathy, lost employee productivity and decreased employee loyalty which can lead to further grievances.

- The effects on the bullied teachers were as follows:
  ➢ missed time from work as a direct result of their experience

- Some experienced physical and emotional consequences including loss of sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Frustration
- Fear
- Stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Troubled sleeping patterns
- Irritability
- Low morale
- Lack of job satisfaction
- Compromised self-confidence
- Increased substance use

5.2.2 Key findings with regard to the next objective: Explore and describe the experiences of teachers regarding workplace bullying

This objective was achieved in Chapter 4 whereby, as the previous goal, it allowed the participants to describe and go into the depths of their experiences. Teachers discussed various incidents which had occurred during their episodes of being victims or bystanders of workplace bullying. What was very evident is that some participants are still being bullied and have developed their own coping strategies to deal with the emotions and impact of incidents. Some of these experiences, when being described, brought about various emotions like being tearful, while others felt angry, hopeless and frustrated and yet others had already reached a point of calmness as it had become a norm to function midst workplace bullying. None of them had ever called the EAP for support specifically relating to workplace bullying.

Themes and sub-themes were identified during this exploration:

- Phenomenon of workplace bullying at school

It was evident from most of the participants' perspectives that workplace bullying exists. The participants who had initially said that workplace bullying didn't exist, when further discussed, alluded that some sort of bullying actually does exist but that they weren't direct victims of such bullying.

- Teachers as victims of bullying

Most of the participants confirmed that they were, or are still, victims of workplace bullying. While they were expressing and describing their experiences some of these participants became very emotional.

- Teachers as bystanders of bullying

Some of the participants expressed that they were not victims of bullying themselves, however, they were bystanders of bullying. They also indicated that it is very difficult for them to witness either a manager or another colleague doing certain acts in their presence and that it leaves them feeling either helpless or uncomfortable. Some stipulated that it is also about how you approach others and that at certain times of the school year there are added pressures which could mean that some people are more agitated.

- Learners who are bullies

Some of the participants described that they have had incidents of workplace bullying with regards to learners fighting, stabbing or being aggressive. They indicated that they had been hit in the process of stopping the learner from bullying or while escorting the child to the principal's office. Some indicated that they had needed to assist another teacher who was being attacked by a learner in order to get the learner to stop before it became worse.

- Parents of learners who are bullies

A few participants indicated that some of the learners' parents would occasionally come to school and bully them. Some indicated that they are not allowed to do anything to the parents so they feel helpless and just have to accept it.

  - More than 80% of participants indicated that they have either been a victim or bystander of workplace bullying.

- Some of the participants indicated that workplace bullying is still taking place.

- There are emotional and psychological effects from workplace bullying.

- The impact of workplace bullying at the school is that some staff members do not cope as they feel isolated and disengaged.

- The participants also indicated the need for debriefing on a regular basis as they are victims of bullying overall even if it is not by their colleagues or managers, but is by the learners or their parents.

- Participants also highlighted the need for training on various topics.

5.2.3 Key findings from literature reviews in terms of the role of the EAP

- In order to offer support, it is important to ensure that an EAP is provided to an employee or bystander and that it includes counselling and support for victims of bullying (SA Board for People Practices, Bullying in the Workplace (2018:2).

- Raising awareness about the phenomenon is of utmost importance.

- Raising awareness regarding the EAP service offering on a constant basis is also of utmost importance. Employees need to know how to access the EAP service, what the contact details of the EAP are, what support services they are able to get as well as how the service offering works and the fact that it is a confidential service.

- EAP services offered may be either 24-hour telephonic support or face-to-face counselling that employees can utilise or an on-site counselling support service.

- In terms of addressing workplace bullying, one can see that many organisations provide soft skills training for their leadership teams as well as general employees.

- Training provided by the EAP around various topics is critical for teachers and can assist them in dealing with workplace bullying.

- Heathfield (2019) says that a victim of bullying must go to HR or the manager with evidence, especially evidence that demonstrates the impact of the bully on the business, and must also file a formal complaint. Most employee handbooks describe the HR investigation process that your complaint sets in motion. In terms of workplace bullying amongst teachers, nothing specific

was mentioned anywhere other than an anti-bullying protocol aimed at learners only.

Some of the participants didn't know about the existence of the EAP, while others were aware of the EAP services. None of them had used the service in relation to workplace bullying or even tried to get emotional support for themselves while dealing with workplace bullying.

The sub-themes that transpired from data in chapter 4 are:

- **Offer opportunity for teachers to talk to a counsellor**

Teachers felt that they do need to talk to a counsellor, either telephonically or face-to-face. They mentioned that they would prefer counsellors to come to the school on a regular basis for debriefings or training.

- **Level of reporting of issues to the headmaster, before approaching the EAP**

The issues around confidentiality are concerning, especially if participants first need to report their issues to the headmaster, and that might be the reason why many participants are not currently using the EAP even though they are aware of the EAP support service.

- **Lack of knowledge and awareness of the EAP**

In this sub-theme it was clear that many participants lacked knowledge and awareness of the EAP. Some participants had no knowledge of any EAP service offering and others were aware of it but didn't know how the programme works or what the scope of the services is.

The achievement of the goal and objectives ultimately allowed the researcher to look at the role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system. The findings of the study, and in essence the answer to the research question, can be found in the key findings of the study, which will be presented in the following section:

- Most participants were not aware of the EAP service offering or the process of getting support with regards to workplace bullying.

- Some employees indicated that the need to disclose to the principal first in order to get a referral to the EAP was a problem.
- Participants indicated the need for awareness of the EAP programme.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

5.3.1 Conclusions based on literature findings

- Based on the literature findings it was very clear that not enough research focusing on workplace bullying specifically amongst teachers as well as the role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying has been done.
- The literature that was available on workplace bullying assisted the researcher to understand the impact and also the effects of workplace bullying. The literature that was available on the role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying allowed the researcher to develop guidelines on what is available in terms of EAPs and also how the EAP should be structured according the literature.

5.3.2 Conclusions on empirical data

The following conclusions were reached based on the empirical data:

- Greater awareness needs to be raised about workplace bullying amongst teachers.
- Awareness regarding the EAP as well as the ethical components to EAP service offerings is needed.
- Continuous awareness regarding the contact and access details of the EAP must be shared.
- Participants also felt that training as part of the secondary service offering of EAPs needs to be made available to the school and perhaps an EAP annual plan can assist with regards to this.

5.3.3 Conclusions on the study in totality

The **goal** of the research was to explore the role of the EAP when addressing workplace bullying in a school context.

The following **objectives** enabled the researcher to achieve the goal of the research:

- **Conceptualise workplace bullying and the EAP**

The first objective was achieved in Chapter 2 and 3 through both literature review studies that focused on workplace bullying as well as the EAP. The researcher accomplished this by looking at various definitions and descriptions of various researchers in the literature. This led to defining and describing workplace bullying and further defining the EAP's role and aim.

The objective was further achieved in Chapter 4 when the researcher collected the data and was able to understand the participants' views on workplace bullying and the EAP. This allowed the researcher an in-depth understanding on the role of the EAP in a school context.

- **Explore and describe the nature of workplace bullying in a school system**

The second objective was achieved during the study whereby participants could describe and explore the nature of workplace bullying that they are experiencing as teachers. The type of study selected also allowed the participants to go deeper into the phenomenon and allowed them to lead the study by describing what the nature of workplace bullying is at their school as well as to discuss the impact on themselves from an individual perspective.

- **Explore and describe the experiences of teachers regarding workplace bullying**

This objective was achieved in Chapter 4 whereby as with the previous goal, it allowed the participants to describe and go into the depth of their experiences. Teachers discussed various incidents on what occurred during their episodes of being victims or bystanders of workplace bullying. What was very evident is that some participants are still being bullied and have developed their own coping strategies to deal with the emotions and impact of incidents. Some of these experiences, when they were being described, brought about various emotions like tearfulness or anger, or feelings of hopelessness and frustration, while others had

reached a point of calm as it had become the norm to function while experiencing workplace bullying. None of them had ever called the EAP for support specifically relating to workplace bullying.

- **The role of the EAP**

This objective was discussed from a theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 under the literature review study. The researcher looked at the various roles EAP plays and its functions. Furthermore, the objective was also achieved in Chapter 4 by getting an understanding of what the role is of the EAP is when dealing with workplace bullying, according to the participants.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings and recommendations presented in the previous sections, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- The Western Cape Education Department should promote their strategy in terms of workplace bullying and put together a protocol, which can be share with all of their teachers.
- Such a protocol should include the various support offerings to the victim and the bystander of workplace bullying and should have contact details of how to access the support services provided by the EAP service provider.
- Awareness must be enhanced regarding workplace bullying through programmes being rolled out to all schools and may perhaps also include show casing the protocol.
- Awareness regarding the EAP service offering must be done for all employees as well as the managers.
- Send regular updates or reminders to employees that the service offering of the EAP includes and extends to the family members especially since many of the participants indicated that they either go home to share what is happening or that their family members are also going through difficulty.
- Promotional items with the contact details of the EAP must be shared on a regular basis to all potential users. These items may include wallet cards, fridge magnets, a water bottle or even a stress ball.

- Regular newsletters with EAP information must be shared on all their internal social media platforms.

- Training on various EAP-related soft skills must be provided and a list of training options should be distributed to all schools in order to select 4 topics for the year and let the EAP provider deliver such training.

- Regular debriefings must be done at the various schools as some teachers indicated that not only are they victims of workplace bullying but are also victims of incidents that happens at the school that involve the learners and/or their parents.

- Coaching is also recommended for leaders as it is a great tool to deal with issues pertaining to conflict in the workplace, violence, leadership and coping skills.

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ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM HEADMASTER OF SCHOOL

School – Cape Town

& Streets. Cape Town
P.O. Box
Phone: 021
E-mails @gmail.com/ @gmail.com

15 November 2019

MASTERS RESEARCH STUDY OF TAMSYN LESCH

I : . the Principal of Primary School have given permission to the above student to conduct her research study with the teachers of the school focussing on the topic of The Role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system.

Study will be conducted either December 2019 or January 2020.

Kind regards,

Ms N

The principal of . Primary School

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM WCED TO COLLECT EMPIRICAL DATA

Western Cape Government

Education

REFERENCE: 20160224-8108
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Miss Tamsyn Lesch
49 4 th Avenue
Ravensmead
7493

Dear Miss Tamsyn Lesch

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE CONTRIBUTION OF EAP IN ADDRESSING WORKPLACE BULLYING AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 March 2019 till 27 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 06 May 2019

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ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Humanities 100.
— 1919 - 2019 —
Department of Social Work
& Criminology

Ref. Prof L S Terblanche
Email: lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za

Participant's Name: ....
Date: ....

Principal Investigator: Tamsyn Lesch
Institution: University of Pretoria

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. **Title of Study:** 'The Role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system'.
2. **The goal** of this study is to explore the contribution of the EAP when addressing workplace bullying at a primary school in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.
3. **Procedures:** Data collection will be done through personal one-on-one interviews. The interview will take approximately 1 hour. All data collection will be scheduled according to the convenience of the respondent.
4. **Risks and Discomforts:** There are no known emotional risks or discomforts associated with this project, although fatigue may be experienced and/or stress when participating in the project.
5. **Benefits:** There are no known direct benefits for participating in this study. However, the results of the study may help researchers gain a better understanding of the behaviour of other people, it might also assist in awareness of the EAP services and also assist in providing support to those who are experiencing workplace bullying.
6. **Participant's Rights:** Any respondent may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
7. **Financial Compensation:** There will be no financial compensation offered for participating in the research.
8. **Confidentiality:** In order to record exactly what is said, a digital recorder will be used. Permission will be obtained for digital recording beforehand. The records will be listened to only by the Principal Investigator and authorized members of the research team at the University of Pretoria.
9. **The results will be kept confidential and only released if requested by the respondent.** The results of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but no records and/or identity will be revealed unless required by law.
10. Any questions or concerns, can be taken up with Tamsyn Lesch at 0761693606 at any time during the day.

I understand my rights as a researcher subject, and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form. I am also aware that all raw data generated through this study will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival and possible future research.

_____   _____
Subject's Signature   **DATE**

_____
Signature of Investigator

ANNEXURE D: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT (SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE)

Appendix A: Semi structured interview schedule

The contribution of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying at a primary school in the Western Cape.

In order for me to understand the experiences of teachers who experience workplace bullying and the contribution of the Employee Assistance Programme to address the issue of workplace bullying at a primary school in the Western Cape, I will be asking you questions that focus on the following aspects**:**

1. Biographical information
    1.1 Age
    1.2 Gender
    1.3 Language
    1.4 Highest qualification
    1.5 Length of service

2. As a teacher, what is your view of the phenomenon of workplace bullying in your school?
3. If you have experienced workplace bullying, please share about the incident/s whereby you experienced workplace bullying?
4. How did workplace bullying affect your overall wellness and functioning?
5. Share with me your opinion on the role of the Employee Assistance Programme in dealing with workplace bullying at your school? 6. What was your personal experience about the EAP in dealing with workplace bullying at your school?
6. If not, why did you not make use of the Employee Assistance Programme when you were dealing with workplace bullying?
7. Is there anything more you want to share about your overall experience? Or a suggestion that you would like to make that will assist us in perhaps improving on the support we can offer teachers when they deal with workplace bullying?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING YOUR TIME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE STUDY

ANNEXURE E: PERMISSION LETTER FROM ICAS TO PERFORM DEBRIEFING

ICAS•

11 November 2019

To Whom It May Concern

<u>RE: EAP support for research project</u>

This letter serves to confirm that should teachers need debriefing and counselling, that ICAS, the EAP service provider for the Western Cape Education Department, will facilitate that process and counselling referral. This forms part of the study that Tamsyn Lesch is conducting as part of her Masters Dissertation at the University of Pretoria.

The counsellor that we will appoint to support this project will be based on the client's preference, and will be managed within the Case Consultancy department and can be contacted on 011-3806800

Kind regards,

Navlika Ratangee

Clinical Operations Director
ICAS Southern Africa

T   +27 11 380 6806
A   6 North Road; Dunkeld West, Johannesburg,
     2196
W   www.icas.co.za

ICAS•

ANNEXURE F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE BY FACULTY

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Research Ethics Committee

10 December 2019

Dear Miss T Lesch

Project Title:	The Role of the Employee Assistance Programme in addressing workplace bullying in a school system
Researcher:	Miss T Lesch
Supervisor:	Prof LS Terblanche
Department:	Social Work and Criminology
Reference number:	11290448 (HUM029/1119)
Degree:	Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 28 November 2019. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer: Prof E Taliard: Prof V Thebe: Ms B Tsebe: Ms D Mokalapa

ANNEXURE G: FACULTY DATA STORAGE FORM

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Declaration for the storage of research data and/or documents

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I/ We, the principal researcher(s)   Tamsyn Lesch

and supervisor(s)   Prof. Dr. L. S Terblanche

of the following study, titled   The role of the EAP in addressing workplace bullying in a school system

will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above-mentioned study in the following

department: Social Work and Criminology

We understand that the storage of the mentioned data and/or documents must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this study.

Start date of study: 5 February 2017

Anticipated end date of study: 5 December 2020

Year until which data will be stored: 2035

Name of Principal Researcher(s)	Signature	Date
Tamsyn Lesch	T.Lesch	16 November 2020

Name of Supervisor(s)	Signature	Date

Name of Head of Department	Signature	Date