The management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools

by

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Dr N. Mhlanga

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Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree *Magister Educationis* in Education Management, Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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Prishodhini Chatty

December 2020

Ethical Clearance Certificate

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- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
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- Data storage requirements.

Dedication

I dedicate this research to all teachers, including my participants, in the hope that this research and its findings will be a platform where your voices can be heard and your silent tears can be seen; may this research be a reminder that you are not alone and that together we can overcome learner-to-teacher bullying. Teaching is an ever-challenging profession, to which you have dedicated your life , ensuring that all South African learners receive the necessary and adequate skills to become successful leaders of tomorrow. Your role in education and the development of our future leaders is imperative and your struggles and sacrifices will not go unnoticed.

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Abstract

The management of learner-to-teacher bullying in schools is one among many of the challenges 21st century teachers face. The aim of this study was to investigate how schools manage learner-to-teacher bullying. This study was motivated by recent incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying and the lack of teacher protection against learners in the school and classroom environment. Ten teachers from secondary schools in the Tshwane South District in the Gauteng province were purposively selected to participate in this study. A qualitative research approach and a case study design was used to investigate how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying in schools. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect rich, in-depth data from participants on how they manage learner-to-teacher bullying in their school and classroom environment. Most participants acknowledged being a victim of either physical, emotional or verbal bullying at least once in their career. The findings of this study revealed that teachers believe learner social backgrounds influence their behaviour and, as a strategy for managing learner-to-teacher bullying, most teachers suggested investigating the reason behind the learner's behaviour. Teachers often struggle with managing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying as they believe that they are not as protected as learners are by the school or school policies. Most participants suggested that the most effective procedure in managing learner-to-teacher bullying is to conduct a one on one conversation with the perpetrator after class.

Key words: Learner-to-teacher bullying; Management; Secondary schools

Language editor

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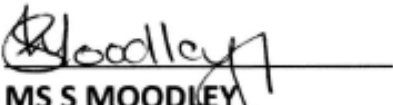
DECLARATION OF EDITING

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This confirms that I have proof-read the dissertation by Ms P Chatty entitled

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List of Abbreviations

SGB	School Governing Body
DBE	Department of Basic Education
SMT	School Management Team
SCLT	Social Cognitive Learning Theory
PE	Physical Education
SACE	South African Council of Educators
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background

Learner-to-teacher bullying has contributed to teachers feeling unappreciated, humiliated and powerless. Some teachers have had to reconsider their decisions to teach. South Africa is considered one of the most violent countries in the world (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke, 2014). According to De Wet and Jacobs (2018), leading researchers in teacher bullying, teachers in South African schools are prone to experience violent behaviours such as bullying from their learners. However, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) believes that teachers are essential stakeholders in combating bullying behaviour (Department of Basic Education, 2012). In spite of this, teachers have not been assisted with specific guidelines or instructions to curb bullying behaviour. Consequently, the effective management of bullying depends largely on the teacher's own abilities and knowledge (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019).

Bullying, a form of violent behaviour, can be defined as the intentional aggressive behaviour by one individual towards another; it is perceived as a power imbalance which is likely to be repeated over time and can affect anyone, anywhere (Menesinia & Salmivalli, 2017; Department of Basic Education, 2012). Bullying in schools is an old and widespread concept that is often neglected, yet its negative impact can be felt in schooling environments worldwide (Hoffmann, 2013). Teachers, principals, school governing bodies (SGBs) and parent bodies all over the world highlight their concerns about bullying and the negative impact it has on teaching and learning (De Wet, 2014).

Learner-to-teacher bullying involves bullying at the workplace (school) which constitutes the abuse of power with the intent to violate the human rights and dignity

of the teacher (De Vos, 2013; De Wet, 2014; Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018). Learner-to-learner bullying is a global phenomenon with damaging effects on the learner's physical and emotional well-being (Hoffmann, 2013; Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018), whereas learner-to-teacher bullying has received less attention as opposed to learner-to-learner bullying, remains an under-researched and under-reported topic but with equally detrimental effects on teachers (Uz & Bayraktar, 2019). Therefore, to bridge the gap in literature, this study investigated the procedures and processes implemented by teachers in an effort to cease learner-to-teacher bullying, as well as the strategies utilised to address the negative implications thereof.

Bullying is understood as intentional or unintentional micro-aggressive behaviour, which includes everyday verbal or non-verbal insults (Miller, 2012; Campbell & Manning, 2014). The term aggression will be used interchangeably with micro-aggression or micro-aggressive behaviour in this study (Campbell & Manning, 2014). Bullying can be classified into two main types, namely verbal and non-verbal (Power, 2017). According to UZ and Bayraktar (2019), verbal bullying intentionally emotionally and psychologically humiliates the victim by ridiculing, teasing, name calling and spreading rumours whilst non-verbal bullying is intentional violent behaviour to physically harm the victim by slapping, kicking, hitting with an object and beating. Both verbal and non-verbal forms of bullying are present across schools globally (Mollema, 2018).

In an international study conducted in Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Turkey, verbal learner-to-teacher bullying was found to be more common than that of physical bullying (Uz & Bayraktar, 2019; Moon, Morash & McCluskey, 2019). Similarly, 48% of teachers in South Africa admitted to being verbally abused by their learners (De Wet, 2012). This is indicative of an increasing trend in verbal learner-to-teacher bullying worldwide. A study conducted by De Wet (2010) revealed that 91% of teachers in a co-educational school in London were victims of learner-to-teacher bullying. In addition, it was found that 74.1% of the time learners in Australian schools bullied their teachers (Lowe, Picknoll, Farringdon, Chivers &

Rycroft, 2020). Over 80% of schools in America also experience learner-to-teacher bullying (McCluskey & Moon, 2016). Therefore, it is evident that learner-to-teacher bullying is a problem experienced by teachers across the world and not a predicament just South African teachers are exposed to. However, in comparison to countries such as Turkey and Taiwan, South African teachers experience a higher rate of learner-to-teacher bullying (Santos & Tin, 2018). South African teachers are three times more likely to experience learner-to-teacher bullying as compared to teachers in other parts of the world (De Wet & Jacobs, 2018). These are amongst the various reasons for this:

– The undermining and devaluing of teachers and their role in communities;
– Learners are exposed to violent behaviour either in their home or community environment and this influences their behaviour towards their peers and teachers.

Hoffmann (2013) found that teachers across various grades and phases in schools experienced micro-aggressive behavioural problems by their learners. Principals from nursery, primary and secondary schools across Ireland admitted that teachers in their schools reported teacher-targeted bullying (Kõiv, 2015). It is evident that teachers are often disrespected, unfairly treated and victimized by learners and, often, by their parents too (Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). One of the key factors underlying the recurrence of learner-to-teacher bullying is the acceptance of the hurtful, aggressive, violent and dehumanising behaviour towards the teacher by the school, the community and parents (Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, 2012).

Whilst learner-to-learner bullying in South African schools often results in either the victim's or the bully's suicide, there is limited research on the effects of learner-to-teacher bullying on teachers (Hesselink, 2017). Incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying results in a negative teaching and learning environment and may subsequently result in poor academic and work performance, teacher depression and high absenteeism. In addition, the quality of education and safety in schools are negatively affected by bullying and violence within schools (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017). Researchers and academics worldwide agree that no form of teaching and

learning can take place if teachers are bullied by their learners (Santos & Tin, 2018). Teachers are at the centre of the education system, thus learner-to-teacher bullying has consequences not only on their personal and professional lives but also on learning outcomes, on learners, on the school environment and on the educational sector (De Wet & Jacobs, 2018).

In an attempt to understand the relationship between school management policies and the incidence of learner-to-teacher bullying, Ngakane, Muthukrishna, and Ngcobo (2012) discovered that schools in African countries such as Lesotho and Botswana exhibited a lower rate of bullying as opposed to schools in South Africa. They conjecture that this could be due to the fact that these countires do not prohibit corporal punishment. The incidence in schools in Lesotho and Botswana may be lower than that of South African schools, but these schools still recorded incidents of bullying. The authors pose the possibility that learners percieve corporal punishment as micro-aggressve behaviour that is a natural part of the schooling process and interpret this as the solution to solving differences that may arise between teachers and learners (Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo, 2012). This indicates that learner-to-teacher bullying might be prevalent in schools because learners may be of the opinion that micro-aggressive behaviour is acceptable to confront their teachers with in the event of differences of opinion or other conflicting situations.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), together with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention in South Africa, compiled a workbook: *The School Safety Framework* to ensure the right to human dignity, freedom and security in the school environment (South Africa, 1996). The purpose of the Framework is to guide principals and SGBs in creating school rules and policies (Department of Basic Education, 2012). This Framework includes an anti-bullying policy which outlines procedures and processes to follow when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occur. It also highlights the consequences of bullying (Department of Basic Education, 2012).

However, these authors (Woudstra, Janse van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018) deny that the anti-bullying policy present in the *School Safety Framework* addresses the management of learner-to-teacher bullying. They contend that learner-to-teacher bullying is increasingly evident in schools around South Africa and that lack of action could lead to the collapse of the educational sector as a result of high teacher turnover, which will obviously have severe repercussions for learners.

1.2 Problem Statement

Teachers in most South African schools, whether experts or novice, find it difficult to manage their classrooms. This is evident from the high rate of ill-discipline constantly experienced by many teachers (Marais & Meier, 2012).

The teacher's classroom management practices contributes to their classroom culture and environment, which can either encourage or discourage bullying. Therefore, it can be said that a direct correlation exists between bullying, classroom management and teacher practices (Allen, 2010). Woudstra, Janse van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) also postulate that challenges bearing upon classroom management are learner behavioural problems, violence among learners and violence towards teachers.

The majority of research on bullying focuses primarily on learner-to-learner bullying with little or no attention given to learner-to-teacher bullying, yet such bullying in schools affects everyone (McMahon, Martinez, Espelage, Rose, Reddy, Lane & Brown, 2014). According to Le Mottee and Kelly (2017), violence against teachers and teacher safety is an under-reported and under-researched phenomenon. Teacher safety is just as important in the school environment as learner safety.

However, teachers may have limited knowledge, skills, resources and support to adequately and efficiently assist them to prevent and address learner-to-teacher bullying in the classroom (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019). In support, a study

conducted in Botswana by Selemogwe, Setlhare-Oagile and Mphele (2014), suggests that there is a gap in the training of teachers to address the prevention of bullying. This study deduced that providing teachers with the necessary training programs, skills and interventions on bullying could probably minimize the occurrence and impact of bullying at schools.

The School Safety Framework (2012) is a workbook set out to equip schools an provide schools with tools and information to address bullying in schools. The School Safety Framework (2012) provides an example/template of an anti-bullying policy which can be adapted by schools. It requires schools to implement an anti-bullying policy to aid teachers, and principals and deputy principals (as members of the SMT) to manage bullying. However, there is minimal evidence of such an anti-bullying policy being implemented in schools.

Yang, Jenkins, Fredrick, Chen, Xie and Nickerson (2019) recommend that teachers need to be adequately trained in school discipline and classroom management to reduce the risk of bullying. The presenting problem is: how is learner-to-teacher bullying being managed in public secondary schools in South Africa in the face of lack of awareness, support, management and an increase in learner-to-teacher bullying.

1.3 Rationale

The researcher witnessed classmates in high school confronting teachers in a challenging, micro-aggressive and disrespectful way, which often resulted in the teacher bursting into tears and walking out of the class in humiliation. Despite this, the teacher would return the next day and continue to teach as if nothing had happened even though the learners would repeat their behaviour. Despite education being cited as the profession with the second highest risk of workplace bullying according to Fahie (2014), these ongoing malicious acts were not highlighted as learner-to-teacher bullying and little effort was made to stop such learners

The researcher is, therefore, motivated to explore the various ways in which learner-to-teacher bullying can be managed in schools. The researcher is a first-year teacher and has also faced challenges in managing disrespectful learners in her class. Consequently, the researcher is interested in exploring potential processes and procedures that can be used in the classroom and school to manage learner-to-teacher bullying.

Learner-to-teacher bullying incidents are increasingly emerging on social media platforms (Smit, 2015). Some of the incidents reported from schools in and around Gauteng include learners assaulting teachers, mishandling teachers, punching teachers and throwing objects at teachers (Kubheka, 2018; Ngobeni, 2015; Pijoos, 2018). Learner violence in South African schools is resulting in unsafe school environments (Shields, Nadasen & Hanneke, 2014). They add that the rapid increase in teacher targeted bullying highlights the need for the effective management of learner-to-teacher bullying to become a vital part of classroom management.

Therefore, this study will address the teacher's management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools.

1.4   Statement of Purpose and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to:

– Examine how secondary schools manage learner-to-teacher bullying and to understand the processes and procedures employed to address the challenges related to bullying.

This study seeks to:

– Explore how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests itself in schools;
– Examine the procedures followed in managing learner-to-teacher bullying; and

– Explore possible strategies for the effective management of learner-to-teacher bullying.

1.5 Research Question and Sub-questions

1.5.1 The main research question:

How do secondary schools manage learner-to-teacher bullying?

1.5.2 Research sub-questions:

– How does learner-to-teacher bullying manifest itself in selected secondary schools?
– What procedures and processes are followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in selected secondary schools?
– What are the strategies used by teachers to manage learner-to-teacher bullying in selected secondary schools?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory was used as the theoretical framework in this study. The Social Learning Theory guided the study of how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools in the Tshwane South district. Bandura's (1977) theory is based on learning by observing the behaviour of others as well as learning from interactions with others in a social context (Smith & Berge, 2009). According to Bandura (1999), individuals have the power to influence their own behaviour to produce certain results. This suggests that learners have full control over their behaviour towards their teachers and peers. Bandura expanded his theory in 1986, as the Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT), in which he defined human behaviour as a triadic, dynamic and reciprocal interaction comprising of three interacting elements: personal (cognitive) factors, behaviour and environmental factors (Nabavi, 2012). Human behaviour is largely motivated and regulated by self-influence (Bandura, 1991).

The SCLT focuses on how children and adults cognitively operate in their social environment and how these cognitions influence their behaviour and development (Nabavi, 2012). This suggests that the environment and social interactions of individuals influence their behaviour. Learner behaviour is determined by their social interactions within their school, home and community environments. Teacher behaviour and how they manage learner-to-teacher bullying are influenced by the school surroundings. The SCLT suggests that what teachers and learners feel, think and believe affects their behaviour which in turn influences their thought patterns and affective reactions (Bandura, 1999).

The SCLT (figure 1) is made up of cognitive or personal factors, behavioural factors and environmental factors (Bandura, 1999). These three elements influence one another and they interact to influence learning and behaviour (Raman, Awee, Mustaffa, & Nazar, 2015). The SCLT will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.

1.7   Research Methodology

An overview of the research methodology used to conduct this research was presented as a detailed version in Chapter 3. The research methodology explained the research paradigm, research design, research approach, data collection and sampling that was used to conduct this research. This study was guided by the interpretivist research paradigm. The researcher used a qualitative research approach together with a case study research design to explore the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon and how it was managed in Tshwane South secondary schools.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the sample involved in this study. The researcher only included teachers from Tshwane South secondary schools who had experienced learner-to-teacher bullying or any form of teacher violence. The schools were identified from a list of schools provided by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the teachers were identified by the school principal.

Interviews were used as the primary data collection instrument. The collection of data was followed by its transcription and analysis. The researcher used coding to categorise the data according to themes and ideas relevant to the study and the research questions.

1.8   Trustworthiness of study

In qualitative studies trustworthiness refers to the confidence in data collection, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of a study is not compromised, it also includes the worthiness of the procedures and protocols followed in conducting the research (Connelly, 2016). Trustworthiness comprises the four elements of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The various components of trustworthiness are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.9   Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures and principles were followed throughout the research process. It was the researcher's responsibility to be honest and respectful to all participants in the study (Hoffmann, 2013). Before fieldwork or data collection took take place, permission to conduct research at the schools was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education and ethical approval was obtained from the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was necessary as data was collected from teachers and principals of public secondary schools in Gauteng and data collection took place on the school premises. Only once permission and ethical approval was granted from these two parties did fieldwork and data collection commence. To ensure ethical procedures and guidelines were abided by, the researcher subscribed to the following principles; voluntary participation, informed consent, safety in participation and privacy (Mollo, 2009). These principles are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

1.10   Concept Clarification

Bullying

The Department of Basic Education (2012) defines bullying as constantly picking on someone with the intention of physically, emotionally and socially hurting or harming them. Bullying includes a variety of behaviours ranging from psychological acts to physical assaults which can be direct, that is physical and verbal micro-aggression or indirect, that is threats, insults and name calling (De Wet, 2014).

School Violence

School violence refers to the behaviour of teachers, learners, school staff or parents which attempts to inflict injury on another individual or damage to school property (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016). While school violence can emerge in different forms and have different sources, bullying is the most common form of violence in schools (Mncube & Netshitangani, 2014).

Classroom Management

Classroom management is the discipline and management of learner behaviour, which includes the process of establishing and maintaining effective learning environments (Allen, 2010).

1.11 Significance of study

The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which South African schools can be safe workspaces for teachers. This study may also contribute to literature by identifying how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying, the effects of learner-to-teacher bullying on teachers and how schools can protect teachers against bullying. This study highlights the increase in learner-to-teacher bullying at schools. It also addresses the need for schools as well as the DBE to consider bullying and violence against teachers as a serious problem and to do more to protect teachers in the classroom.

Through the guidance of the SCLT, this research produced significant findings that were analysed according to cognitive, environmental and behavioural factors and may contribute to the development of anti-bullying policies that embrace the protection of teachers against bullying. This research gave teachers a voice and a platform to share their experiences and opinions on learner-to-teacher bullying as well as to explore the effects, management, strategies, procedures and skills for combating learner-to-teacher bullying.

This research could have far reaching consequences in equipping teachers to manage learner-to-teacher bullying and stimulating further action for teacher protection in the form of anti-bullying policies.

1.12 Break down of the chapters

This dissertation consists of 5 chapters. In order to create a rational framework that aims to answer the research questions, achieve the research aims and discuss the data collected, the 5 chapters were broken down as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

The first chapter is an introduction to the study and an overview of the research. The introduction discusses the research problem, rationale, purpose of the study, research question and sub-questions. A brief overview of the theoretical framework and research methodolgy is presented. The significance of the study is also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Diverse literature related to the management of learner-to-teacher bullying at schools as well as teacher directed violence is covered in this chapter. The review delves into both South African and international literature on learner-to-teacher bullying, the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying, strategies used in managing bullying, and procedures followed when learner-to-teacher bullying

occurs in schools. This chapter also includes an explanation of Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory as the theoretical framework used to guide this study.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, paradigm, design and approach. The methodology includes a discussion on the credibility of the study as well as the sampling and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Research findings and analysis

Chapter 4 records the analysis of the data collected and the findings made. The data collected addressed the research question and sub-questions that were highlighted in the beginning of this paper.

Chapter 5: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter contains a summary of the findings and the recommendations that were deduced from the study. In this chapter, the researcher draws conclusions and explains how answers to the research questions were derived. Limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further studies are also noted in this chapter.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter forms the backbone of this study. The researcher has introduced the fundamental aspects of the study and its background, research problem, rationale, purpose of the study, research question and sub-questions. It also provides a brief overview of the theoretical framework and research methodology.

In the next chapter, the researcher reviews literature on the management of learner-to-teacher bullying in schools as well as teacher directed violence. The review covers both South African and international literature on learner-to-teacher bullying, the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying, strategies used, and procedures followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in schools. An explanation of social cognitive learning theory is provided as it is the theoretical framework used to guide this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In chapter 1, the researcher introduced the study and presented an overview and background including the rationale, research question and sub questions as well as the problem statement. In this chapter, the researcher will appraise and discuss international and South African literature on learner-to-teacher bullying. The researcher will also discuss the theoretical framework which will be the lens through which the study is interpreted.

The review is intended to establish and discuss available literature about the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon in relation to the management skills teachers implement in their classrooms to reduce the risk of learner-to-teacher bullying and violence in schools. The review is also intended to cite the procedures followed by teachers, parents and schools when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs as well as the strategies implemented to address learner-to-teacher bullying in South African schools.

2.2 Bullying in schools

Bullying, as defined by Lestari and Koto (2019), is an imbalance of power, whereby a 'superior' individual uses his/her strength and influence in order to pressure and intimidate others with the intention to harm the victim physically or emotionally. Teacher bullying occurs when a teacher is subjected, by one or more students, to physical, verbal or non-verbal interactions that he/she perceives as insulting, upsetting and intimidating (De Wet, 2019). In De Wet's (2010) view, learner-to-teacher bullying is an attack on an individual who is a guide for learner social, cognitive and emotional development. Furthermore, learner-to-teacher bullying can be described as malevolent and micro-aggressive acts by learners in an attempt to

disempower and degrade teachers as professionals and human beings (Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018). In summary, learner-to-teacher bullying can be defined as unacceptable behaviour which degrades the teaching profession and consequently affects teaching and learning.

The micro-aggressive behaviour that is exhibited by bullies towards their victims originates as a result of childhood experiences such as rejection and/or insecurities that were not properly addressed. Learners imitate behaviour which they were exposed to or they use learned aggression to express their anger towards teachers, peers and family (Asfaw, 2019). From this perspective, obtaining information about a learner's social background may effectively contribute to managing learner-to-teacher bullying. It could be that learners may have experienced rejection or insecurities that were not addressed and is the source of their bullying behaviour towards their teachers.

2.2.1 Causes of bullying

Fahie and Devine (2014) identify two categories of behaviour, namely derogatory behaviour and exclusion and pressurised and oppressive management regimes. Derogatory and exclusive behaviours incorporate verbal assault, gossiping, spreading rumours, insulting, demeaning of teachers and teachers ignoring students. Pressurised and oppressive management regimes include criticising students, changing deadlines, threatening teachers' professional reputations and unreasonable job demands on teachers by school management. These behaviours, by both learners and teachers, manifest as learner-to-teacher bullying as well as classroom bullying.

Woudstra, Janse van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) found that verbal bullying is the most prominent form of learner-to-teacher bullying in South Africa. The causes of bullying can therefore be described as multidimensional and complex. However, one of the most common denominators for bullying is socio-economic status. Socio-economic status determines one's risk of being bullied, with individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds being at a higher risk (Lestari

& Koto, 2019). Lowe, Picknoll, Farringdon, Chivers and Rycroft (2020) add that communities with a high crime rate are most likely to record a higher rate of learners physically attacking teachers.

Apart from socio-economic status, other causes of learner-to-teacher bullying include: learners regarding the teacher's treatment of them as unfair, unreasonable academic requirements, disagreements with the teacher, being punished or provoked by the teacher, fighting for or 'standing up' for friends, or being reprimanded by the teacher. Most cases of learner-to-teacher bullying occur as a result of learners perceiving their teachers as easy targets for bullying (Montgomery, 2019).

De Wet (2019) suggests that bullying encompasses three fundamental criteria: aggressive behaviour towards a person with the intention of harming the individual, repetitive negative behaviour, and a power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator with the victim not being able to defend him or herself. These criteria are central in defining learner-to-teacher bullying and its negative impact on the lives of perpetrators and victims.

Perpetrators of bullying often experience emotional disturbances and psychological trauma whereas victims of bullying experience psychological, psychosomatic, and social problems which they often find difficult to combat (Waseem, Ryan, Foster & Peterson, 2013).

Learner-to-teacher bullying often manifests in the form of psychological and physical violence (Montgomery, 2019). Emotional and verbal bullying towards teachers are far more prevalent than physical bullying (Moon, Morash, Oh Jang & Jeong, 2015). Learner-to-teacher bullying does not only present negative consequences for victims and their families, it also negatively impacts the teaching profession and therefore the community at large (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017). According to Fahie and Devine (2014), teachers express anger and regret, and are eventually forced to leave the profession due to bullying behaviour as they consider themselves failures.

Teachers affected by learner-to-teacher bullying in South African schools often display symptoms of psychological distress, presenting characteristic responses of humiliation, lacking in assertiveness, feeling guilty, and being unable to control their anger and frustration (De Wet, 2010). Research conducted by Bounds and Jenkins (2016) and Fahie and Devine (2014) found that teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying often seek support from and discuss the incidents with either a colleague or spouse. Learner-to-teacher bullying is under-reported owing to a lack of support from school management and, more often than not, teachers feel ashamed and are perceived as weak if they do come forward (Hoffmann, 2013).

It is evident that these negative attributes of learner-to-teacher bullying and their effect on teachers and the teaching profession is indicative that schools, together with the SMT, should provide teachers with the necessary support. This will enable them to effectively manage and better cope with learner-to-teacher bullying and the detrimental psychosocial effects thereof. Teachers need to feel safe and protected in their working environment. Thus, schools should adopt anti-bullying policies that protect teachers. Whilst learners have a fundamental democratic right not to be bullied, so too, do teachers (Hoffmann, 2013).

Bounds and Jenkins (2016) confirms that teachers who experienced bullying believed that their classroom environment was negatively affected, and valuable teaching time was lost. Thus, it can be deduced that learner-to-teacher bullying hinders teaching and contributes to an unsafe school environment which negatively influences teaching and learning, as well as the physical and psychological well-being of teachers (Singh & Steyn, 2013; De Wet, 2015). Singh and Steyn (2013) are of the opinion that without the necessary support and effective procedures to manage and reduce leaner-to-teacher bullying, schools would become popular hotspots of crime and violence. Bullying inevitably forms the foundation on which violent acts arise and, if unaddressed, could lead to much more violent behaviour later on (Laas, 2012). Learner-to-teacher bullying has negative implications on the ethos and overall climate of the school and the safety of the learners and teachers are compromised (Singh & Steyn, 2013; Bounds & Jenkins, 2016).

2.2.2 Bullying in schools

Whilst bullying is a worldwide phenomenon, learner-to-teacher bullying still remains an under-reported and under-researched topic (Hoffmann, 2013). Teachers in South Africa experience extremely high levels of victimization by their learners as compared to teachers internationally (Jacobs & Teise, 2019). This makes it a fundamental topic of concern as teachers are at the forefront of enlightening young minds, empowering youth, educating a nation and providing the foundation for future leaders, teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers and other integral members of society. Learner-to-teacher bullying is a critical issue, which must be efficiently and effectively dealt with. The researcher has identified learner-to-teacher bullying as a gap in research and, therefore, intends on pursuing it.

South Africa experiences malicious and violent behaviour and is ranked second, after Jamaica, for the most violent incidents occuring within schools with bullying being the most prominent form (Hesselink, 2017). Baruth and Mokoena (2016) found that teacher absenteeism and low morale amongst school staff increases concomitantly with increasing learner-to-teacher bullying, and that there has been an increase in with several teachers resigning from the profession. This alone highlights the extremely negative implications learner-to-teacher bullying has on teachers and the teaching profession.

A study conducted in South Africa by Khanare, Munje and Mbambo (2019) surmise that poor learner behaviour, such as bullying, is a result of poor parenting which invariably exposes learners to bad behaviour. Such behaviour is considered acceptable by their parents, therefore, the learners accustom themselves that this micro-aggressive behaviour is acceptable in society and duplicate it. In addition, Khanare, et al (2019) opine that the lack of alternatives to corporal punishment is directly proportional to bullying. South African teachers are unable to identify alternative disciplinary methods and consequently learners perceive this as a weakness in the teachers' ability to control and manage the class. This drawback perpetuates an increase in bullying behaviour (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019).

Learner-to-teacher bullying is becoming increasingly evident in schools around South Africa and the need for more research on this phenomenon is becoming much more apparent (De Wet & Jacobs, 2013). Viral media reports of learner-to-teacher bullying are stirring up controversy and debate around teachers, learner-to-teacher bullying and the teaching environment as teachers are seen to be no longer safe in their classrooms (Pijoos, 2018). The most recent acts of learner-to-teacher bullying reported include the assault and mishandling of teachers by the learners (Pijoos, 2018).

Khanare, et al (2019) suggest that parent-teacher relationships are essential in combating school bullying as learners imitate negative and aggressive behaviour emanating from the home and the community. It is also proposed that much more needs to be done by the school, SMTs and the Department of Basic Education to protect the teachers, and to prevent teachers potentially taking the law into their own hands or high teacher turnover, both of which may subsequently have dire implications for education in South Africa. Education, as highlighted by one of South Africa's patriarchs, Nelson Mandela, has the potential to change the world. Thus, every effort to curb learner-to-teacher bullying must be encouraged as teachers are at the forefront of the education system.

2.3 The consequences of teacher bullying

Over recent decades, bullying in schools has become an international concern owing to the multitude of negative implications thereof (Pyhältö, Pietarinen & Soini, 2015). The focus, however, has only been on learner-to-learner bullying and its implications for the learner (Moon, Morash, Oh Jang &Jeong, 2015). Learner-to-teacher bullying in the school environment is no unfamiliar practice. On average 80% of teachers are victims of verbal, physical or psychological bullying. Yet, learner-to-teaching bullying and the effects thereof on teachers and the educational sector remains an under-reported but equally important phenomenon (Moon, Morash, Oh Jang & Jeong, 2015).

Gluschkoff, Elovainio, Hintsa, Pentti, Salo, Kivimäki and Vahtera (2017) identified learner-to-teacher bullying as a form of occupational hazard which may have long-term and severe consequences. Learner-to-teacher bullying disturbed lessons and posed disciplinary challenges for the teacher (Singh, 2014). Billet, Fogelgarn and Burns (2019) state that twenty first century teachers are negatively affected by bullying and as a result are often left feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained. Sleeplessness and nightmares were highlighted as some of the negative effects teachers experience as a result of learner-to-teacher bullying (De Wet, 2010; Gluschkoff, et al., 2017). This finding is of great significance as sleep disturbances are closely associated with psychiatric conditions which correlates with depression (Gluschkoff, et al., 2017). Hence, sleeplessness, a by-product of bullying, can potentially pose a risk to a teachers' health and overall well-being.

2.3.1 The impact of bullying on teachers lives

Garrett (2014) describes teachers as prisoners in their own classrooms because teachers are not supposed to walkout of their classroom if they are victimised by their learners. Teachers have a responsibility to remain professional and thus stay in the classroom until the lesson has been concluded. This results in teachers having to work in an environment in which they are often left feeling unsafe, humiliated and helpless.

This predicament contributes to the teacher's lack of confidence and subsequent delay in responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying; thereby creating both an attitude and environment of acceptance for bullying (Bauman & Yoon, 2014). Scholars - such as Le Mottee and Kelly (2017) - say: many teachers, who are victims of bullying incidents, are afraid of reporting the incident or are too embarrassed to admit that they have been bullied by their learners. These teachers believe that there is a stigma attached to being victimized by learners, and thus fail to report the bully (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017).

Learner-to-teacher bullying can be considered detrimental to the life of a teacher, but it also presents a dire consequence to schools and communities at large (Hoffmann, 2013). Teachers leaving the profession may become a country's greatest expense, specifically when there is a lack of support and intervention to protect them (Hoffmann, 2013). South Africa is currently experiencing a shortage of teachers which contributes to overcrowded classrooms. Many teachers face months without an income if they are compelled to leave their current employment due to bullying and the subsequent psychological effects it imposes on their well-being (Orange, 2018). Teachers feel there is no alternative but to leave the profession if they fear for their safety (Santos & Tin, 2016). This underscores that many teachers feel unsafe in their working environment and lack confidence to teach effectively. This, in turn, hinders learners from receiving the best education in the most conducive environment (Santos & Tin, 2016).

The necessary support and protection is necessary to allow victims of learner-to-teacher bullying to feel safe enough to report incidents without fear of further victimization and criticism (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016). Schools, as well as the DBE, need to support teachers and create awareness about learner-to-teacher bullying, so that teachers can gain confidence to address bullying and successfully eliminate it in their classrooms and the school (Migliaccio, 2015).

2.3.2 The effects of learner-to-teacher bullying

The effects of learner-to-teacher bullying can also be observed on a global scale with victims presenting an increase in stress and burnout (Bounds & Jenkins, 2016). A report on an Australian Exploratory Survey (2019) disclosed that people find it hard to believe that teachers can be bullied by learners and parents, based on the assumption that teachers are in a position of power and authority (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019). This makes it difficult for teachers to defend themselves against bullies or seek support as it is unlikely that colleagues, parents, principals or the wider community, would believe them. In many cases teachers are reluctant to address or question bullies and their micro-agressive acts because they feel intimidated and fear further victimization (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016). Teachers play

an integral role in the education of children. However, teachers believe society 'looks down upon' their profession and undermines their authority. This disregard by society contributes to the disrespectful and micro-aggressive attitudes and behaviours displayed by learners and parents towards teachers (Bester, du Plessis, & Treurnich, 2017; De Wet, 2012). Consequently, teachers feel helpless, unsupported and humiliated; as such, learner-to-teacher bullying presents a direct infringement and violation of the teacher's dignity and human rights (De Wet, 2014; Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018).

Further effects of learner-to-teacher bullying include a decrease in teacher self-esteem, inability to concentrate at school, lack of care and patience with learners, decrease in job satisfaction, stress, disempowerment and anxiety (Orange, 2018). Moreover, Moon, Morash, Oh Jang and Jeong (2015) found that teachers affected by bullying often experience emotional distress and require psychological and supportive counselling. Learner-to-teacher bullying incidents do not only physically and emotionally affect teachers, they also directly affect their professional growth and reputation as well as their financial position (De Wet & Jacobs, 2018; Kõiv, 2015). In some incidents, a teacher's private property, such as their motor-vehicles and personal belongings, are vandalized by learners, pushing teachers to resign in fear for their personal safety (Santos & Tin, 2018).

One of the many incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying, in South Africa, dates back to 2014 when a learner physically assaulted a teacher with a broom and a chair (Ngobeni, 2014). In 2017, a learner smashed a packet of mealies in a teacher's face during the lesson (Hlati, 2017). A learner threw her exercise book and papers at her teacher in 2018 (Kubheka, 2018). The most recent incident of learner-to-teacher bullying in 2019 involved a grade four learner throwing his pencil case at his teacher leading to her needing hospitalisation (Masweneng, 2019). Learners were either suspended in most of these incidents or the matter was handed over to the SGB. However, no further details are available on the disciplinary procedures that were followed or whether the teachers were provided with the necessary support after these incidents occurred. Many of these incidents are videotaped and shared on social media platforms (Pijoos, 2018), which contributes to the humiliation teachers

face with little protection received; simultaneously, schools are failing to discipline learners who bully teachers (Espinoza, 2015). Rather, a great deal of emphasis is placed on creating school and classroom environments that are safe for learners and which protect learners' rights whilst the safety and protection of teachers is often neglected and less valued (De Wet, 2012). Besides this lack of support from the school, SGB and the DBE, teachers are also afraid to speak out or report learner bullying in fear of possible intimidation from parents or false allegations against them (Espinoza, 2015).

Learner-to-teacher bullying may be misinterpreted and teachers may be accused of bringing this upon themselves (Espinoza, 2015; Hoffmann, 2013). A typical example of misinterpretation is that of a case reported by Makwabe in 2009. A learner in grade eight at Rhodes High School, Mowbray, Cape Town, hit the teacher on the head with a hammer in front of the class (Hoffmann, 2013). The case was taken to court where the defence team suggested that the teacher was attacked because she was unable to control and discipline her class (Hoffmann, 2013). Furthermore, the school also accused the teacher of not reporting the incident to the correct authorities (Hoffmann, 2013). These incidents portray the unfortunate reality that the learner's rights and protection is prioritized above those of the teacher given that learners always get the benefit of the doubt (Garrett, 2014). The teachers are left feeling helpless and humiliated as they are presumed by outsiders as being incompetent and unable to discipline their learners (Garrett, 2014). Consequently, teachers' rights are disregarded and they are not supported or taken seriously when learner-to-teacher bullying incidents occur. Nevertheless, teachers continue to teach in unsafe and violent environments where they are potentially always subjected to learner-to-teacher bullying.

Research conducted by May and Tenzek (2017) supports that learner-to-teacher bullying does not only occur in schools but also at universities and colleges with professors being victimised by their students. Despite these recent events, learner-to-teacher bullying is still not considered a serious problem or viewed in a serious light by parents, SGBs and the DBE. Therefore, SGBs as well as the DBE need to take the necessary steps to adequately protect teachers from learner-to-teacher

bullying (De Wet & Jacobs, 2018). Several researchers such as Le Mottee and Kelly (2017) and Moon, Morash, Oh Jang, and Jeong (2015) have confirmed the limited reporting of learner-to-teacher bullying at schools. According to the 2012 National School Violence Study, 52.1% of South African teachers were victims of verbal bullying whilst internationally 21% to 68% of teachers felt intimidated or were threatened by their learners (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Garrett, 2014). From the above studies it is evident that the effects of learner-to-teacher bullying are life-long and harmful to the teacher's physical and psychological health. McCluskey and Moon (2016) suggest that further research is necessary to understand the negative effects of micro-aggressive behaviour and bullying against teachers and the negative consequences and implications thereof.

Learner-to-teacher bullying has a negative effect on the educational system as well as on the learner's experience in the classroom. Teacher burnout is the second most common effect of learner-to-teacher bullying (Santos & Tin, 2016). Teacher burnout, as defined by Santos and Tin (2016), is the physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that is a result of long-term involvement in work situations that are emotionally demanding. Teacher burnout, like learner-to-teacher bullying, affects the quality of teaching (Santos & Tin, 2016). Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini (2015) add that learner-to-teacher bullying is likely to occur in stressful and negative classroom environments. Bullying not only causes stress, it also increases the teacher's risk of being bullied; teachers maybe be perceived as weak and dysfunctional which makes them easy targets and more prone to being bullied by their learners (Pyhältö, Pietarinen & Soini, 2015).

2.3.3 The implications of bullying on the classroom environment

Learner-to-teacher bullying has an impact on the teacher's safety and ability to enforce discipline. It also disrupts the safe and caring classroom environment, which the teachers try to create for the benefit of the learners (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). South African teachers are required to act 'in loco parentis,' which is considered as taking on the role of a parent in the classroom. However, when a

teacher is attacked or bullied by the learners, this challenges the concept of 'in loco parentis' (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Many teachers feel powerless in their very own classrooms when faced with harassment and bullying by their learners (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019).

A study conducted in Australia found that there is often a lack of acknowledgement of learner-to-teacher bullying. The twenty first century Australian teachers expressed feeling overwhelmed as a result of stress, burnout and challenging student behaviour, which depletes the teacher's energy and negatively impacts on the teaching environment (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019). Despite the negative effects of teacher bullying, teachers are still under immense pressure to acceptably constrain behaviour underpinned by mutual respect and dignity within the classroom (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). This is a considerably difficult task given that teachers are not treated with respect and are continually challenged by the learners in a disrespectful way (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Moreover, the teachers that participated in the study revealed that the school management ignored or downplayed their reports of being bullied by their learners. This had lasting negative effects on the teachers self-efficacy and well-being; and it also resulted in teachers feeling unsupported and unsafe in their working environment (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019).

Billett, Fogelgarn and Burns (2019) further noted that learner-to-teacher bullying, despite being reported in the media and proving to have a negative impact on teacher-workplace safety, has not been acknowledged. This is because Governments continue to insist on learner rights to emotional and physical well-being at schools whilst ignoring the negative effects of classroom bullying and interactions on teachers. When teachers are left feeling ashamed, disempowered, powerless and isolated, they avoid seeking help because of the stigma attached to being bullied by a learner (Garrett, 2014). A reality for many teachers affected by bullying is that bullies intentionally set out to harm the personal and professional lives of their teachers; making teachers hate and dread every minute that they are expected to be in a classroom (De Wet, 2019). This often leads to high absenteeism

and depression with teachers turning to anti-anxiety medication or sleeping pills (De Wet, 2019).

Learner-to-teacher bullying obviously has extremely negative implications for teachers: on their personal and professional lives, as well as on their health and overall well-being. This demands swift action and stringent measures by all school stakeholders to protect teachers and minimize learner-to-teacher bullying.

2.4 Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in schools

Classroom management is a challenge for both experienced and novice teachers across the globe. Many teachers require classroom management skills to efficiently manage their classrooms (Macías & Sánchez, 2015). Teachers can determine which classroom management approaches they prefer to implement in order to manage and discipline their learners. A learner-centred classroom management approach is one that establishes a positive and caring environment, is flexible and seeks to promote the academic and social well-being of the learner with emphasis on the needs of the learner (Raven & Jurkiewicz, 2014).

2.4.1 Classroom management

Teachers can implement two classroom management strategies: an authoritative or a learner-centred approach (Allen, 2010). An authoritative management approach is one that comprises of strict rules, little or no flexibility and few opportunities. It relies solely on disciplinary methods and consists of an imbalanced relationship between the teacher and learners with teachers having greater dominion (Raven & Jurkiewicz, 2014). This approach, however, fails to embrace student diversity (Raven & Jurkiewicz 2014). According to Moon, Morash, Oh Jang and Jeong, (2015), an authoritative classroom management style distinguishes the teacher as an authoritative figure whom learners are expected to respect and obey.

There is much controversy around which of these classroom management strategies contribute to learner-to-teacher bullying (Allen, 2010). It is Allen's (2010) contention that an authoritative style, as opposed to a learner-centred style, is more likely to encourage learner-to-teacher bullying. However, other studies note that teachers who manage their classrooms using an authoritative style encounter fewer behavioural problems as they create a structured and supportive teaching and learning environment for their learners (Gregory, Cornell & Fan, 2012).

Allen (2010) believes that a safe and organised classroom environment managed with a positive approach is unlikely to experience bullying. Allen (2010) further argues that teachers who fail to use authority in a flexible and unorganised classroom environment which is more conducive to learner-to-teacher bullying are likely to be victims of bullying.

Moon, Morash, Oh Jang, and Jeong (2015) describe Korean teachers as having a highly authoritative teaching style that influences the learner's academic development. However, their authority was tested when they were victimized and violated by their learners. The Moon, et al (2015) study was conducted five years after Allen's (2010) study. This timeframe is sigificant as it seems that an authoritative classroom management approach is no longer successful at preventing or eliminating learner-to-teacher bullying. Moon, et al (2015) contradict Allen's (2010) conclusion that an authoritative classroom management approach has a positive correlation with preventing learner-to-teacher bullying. They highlight that an authoritative classroom management approach may in fact encourage learner-to-teacher bullying if learners no longer accept teachers as authoritative figures in the classroom. This implies that a positive, more flexible classroom management approach is more likely to discourage learner-to-teacher bullying; particularly a classroom management style that is predominantly learner-centred as opposed to teacher-centred. The time lapse between these two studies is also indicative of the need for continuous and further research on the topic as views, opinions, beliefs and facts that were once accepted are influenced by advances in technology, social media, and learner perceptions. Furthermore, due to

advancements and adaptations in teaching and in the management of classrooms over time, these management approaches should be reviewed.

Learner-to-teacher bullying can occur in both well- and poorly-managed classrooms. However, a lack of classroom management skills has a higher risk of inciting learner-to-teacher bullying (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017). Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) have found that a positive classroom environment encourages socially adjusted behaviour, supports learning and contributes to the well-being of both educators and learners. Researchers such as Moon and McCluskey (2016) agree that positive classroom management skills contribute to minimizing teacher victimization.

2.4.2 School management

Singh and Steyn (2013) attest to the concerns raised about school management structures established to address and manage bullying. These support structures are regarded as insufficient and ineffective and even non-existent at some South African schools (Singh & Steyn, 2013). Training teachers in management skills is an integral part of reducing learner-to-teacher bullying as this should enable them to confidently manage their classrooms and allow them to address bullying incidents should they occur during teaching.

Teacher management skills is considered one of the most important anti-bullying mechanisms (Casas, Ortega-Ruiz & Del Rey, 2015). There is an expectation that teachers have to be skilled and knowledgeable to resolve any problem that arises in the classroom. Based on Hall and Chapman's (2018) findings, teachers often disregard learner bullying and view it as part of the classroom disciplinary problems. Lack of training and resources to educate and inform teachers results in their inability to discriminate between learner-to-teacher bullying and day-to-day disciplinary issues (Hall & Chapman, 2018).

Teachers are often criticized by principals and senior staff for failing to address bullying behaviour and lacking classroom management and discipline skills. As a

result, teachers are wrongfully accused of not being able to discipline their learners consequently their reputations are diminished (De Wet, 2010). Classroom management skills are vital in creating a classroom climate that is safe, positive and discourages bullying behaviour (Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018). Uz and Bayraktar (2019) also agree that teachers need to be equipped with the necessary classroom management skills and knowledge that enables them to determine and eliminate undesirable behaviour while improving positive behaviour.

Craig, Bell and Leschied (2011) argue that it is important for teachers to recognize and address bullying behaviour instead of turning a blind eye towards it. These scholars have found that internationally, 25% of teachers preferred to ignore any form of bullying behaviour that occurred in their classroom. It is emphasised that teachers should not ignore bullying incidents but rather acknowledge them and take the necessary steps to combat bullying (Craig, Bell & Leschied, 2011). The development of classroom rules is one way to ensure awareness and discouragement of bullying behaviour by allowing teachers to manage learner behaviour and discourage negative behaviour (Allen, 2010). Hence, teachers should try to establish classroom rules that address behaviour and bullying, as classroom rules form a solid foundation on which learner-teacher relationships are moulded.

Alongside classroom rules, Belt and Belt (2016) believe that teachers' knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes all contribute to successful classroom management. Well-managed classrooms are found to exhibit less negative behaviour as learner levels of responsibility are high (Uz & Bayraktar, 2019). Teachers can also foster positive classroom norms as an alternative to enforcing classroom rules (enforcement could imply bullying behaviour) thereby reducing the risk of learner-to-teacher bullying (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio & Salmivalli, 2014). However, even though teachers may implement classroom rules, they may still be reluctant to confront bullies or their micro-aggressive acts due to feelings of intimidation and fear of victimization (Baruth & Mokoena, 2016).

The research on the teacher's use of classroom management skills to reduce learner-to-teacher bullying is limited with most studies focusing on learner-to-learner bullying rather than learner-to-teacher bullying (Allen, 2010). Learner-to-learner bullying is often researched far more extensively than learner-to-teacher bullying, and more attention is given to learner bullying (Uz & Bayraktar, 2019).

2.4.3 Challenges teachers face in managing bullying

Teachers play a pivotal role in the management of classroom bullying (De Luca, Nocentini & Menesini, 2019). One of the findings of Khanare Munje and Mbambo (2019) is that the teacher's knowledge, skills and attitudes are fundamental in successfully managing and combating bullying within the classroom and the school. Teachers are essential role players in curbing bullying in individual school contexts. Khanare, et al (2019) continue to emphasise that South African teachers are expected to manage bullying within their school context. However, these teachers are not provided with any guidelines to ensure that bullying is curbed within the schools. South African teachers are often the victims of bullying yet they are expected to manage all forms of bullying with no guidelines. This has left teachers largely to their own abilities to identify and manage bullying effectively in their classrooms and the school (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019).

Teachers are expected to attend training, or undergo professional development to understand and implement learner anti-bullying strategies with the expectation of remedying learner bullying situations while they themselves are often victims of bullying (Raven & Jurkiewicz, 2014). Learner-to-teacher bullying is a global phenomenon that has been part and parcel of the plight that teachers face (De Wet, 2019). This has been exacerbated by the rapid advancement of technology and the complexities that confront twenty first century teachers. This situation requires continuous professional development to assist teachers to manage bullying effectively (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019).

The teaching and learning environment play a role in how teachers manage bullying. Indeed, a positive environment contributes towards teachers feeling empowered to utilize their skills, knowledge and potential to manage bullying (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019). Apart from a positive environment and positive attitude in managing bullying, teachers in South African schools are challenged when confronted by bullies (De Wet, 2010). Such challenges include the lack of appropriate skills and guidelines, the fear of being further victimized, humiliated and stigmatized, and the lack of support from the school and the Department of Education (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019).

Another challenge that South African teachers face in managing learner-to-teacher bullying is that they find it difficult to confront bullies for fear of appearing weak and powerless to their learners (Khanare, Munje & Mbambo, 2019). Participants in the Khanare, et al (2019) study also revealed that the SMT often avoided direct involvement in the management of bullying and only provided emotional support after they decided on the seriousness of the incident. SMTs only got involved when parents reported bullying incidents or personally sought assistance at the school. It may not only be skills and knowledge that teachers require in order to ensure effective classroom management, but also support and confidence to establish a relationship with the learners where the teacher is in control and respected.

2.5 Strategies and interventions used to address bullying

Learner-to-teacher bullying is not just a problem in South African schools but prevails in schools internationally with teachers constantly seeking interventions and strategies to combat and curb this phenomenon. Teachers in Dublin follow resistance strategies when they are bullied by the learners. These strategies include legal action against the perpetrators, confronting the bully directly, seeking support from family members and contacting teacher trade unions (Fahie & Devine, 2014). In comparison, teachers in England implement negotiation strategies and conflict resolution when faced with bullying behaviour (Tuckera & Maunderb, 2015). Alternatively, teachers adopt a problem-focused or emotion-focused strategy which enables them to cope with the effects of bullying (Fahie & Devine, 2014). Problem-

focused strategies include direct action against the bully, seeking revenge and support from others whereas emotion-focused strategies include substance abuse, suppressing emotional responses and forgiveness (Fahie & Devine, 2014).

Fahie and Devine (2014), furthermore, found that overt and covert strategies can also be used to overcome learner-to-teacher bullying. Overt strategies include resigning or leaving the profession, confronting the bully, and legal action against the bully. Covert strategies include confiding in family members, approaching a trade union, and recording the incident.

In South African schools, covert strategies may be more effective as they protect the teacher against possible retaliation if the bully is confronted. It may also highlight the seriousness of learner-to-teacher bullying if trade unions are approached by teachers for assistance.

Anti-bullying policies in Irish schools (Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools, 2013) and in a school in the United Kingdom (Anti-bullying Policy, Ranelagh School) focus on learners rather than teachers as victims of bullying. In addition to anti-bullying policies as a strategy to combat bullying, a study conducted in Spain identified physical education as an intervention to reduce bullying in schools because it is considered beneficial in positively encouraging learners to express their emotions and cultivate their social skills (Jiménez-Barbero, Jiménez-Loaisa, González-Cutre, Beltrán-Carrillo, Llor-Zaragoza & Ruiz-Hernández, 2019). Wurf (2012) found that the school curriculum could be used as an anti-bullying intervention especially if it includes activities aimed at educating the learners about bullying and methods of combating bullying behaviour in the school and classroom environments.

Research conducted in the United States revealed that 65% of teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying often seek support as a coping mechanism (Bounds & Jenkins, 2016; Fahie & Devine, 2014). Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini (2015) suggest that social support is likely to decrease teacher vulnerability to workplace bullying. Similarly, Montgomery (2019) believes that learner-to-teacher bullying is most likely to be prevented if teachers are provided with support. Some

of the interventions include training teachers in anti-bullying interventions (Montgomery, 2019). In a survey conducted in Australia, teachers identified support from principals and school management as a necessity in combatting learner-to-teacher bullying (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019). However, 56% of these teachers believed that the current interventions in Australian schools to combat learner-to-teacher bullying were ineffective (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns, 2019).

The South African School Safety Framework (Department of Basic Education, 2012) identifies ten steps to prevent and address bullying in schools, some of which include:

– Establishing rules and policies,

– Publicising and enforcing these rules and policies,

– Providing ongoing training on bullying prevention,

– Dealing appropriately with bullying and focusing class time on bullying prevention, among others.

The School Safety Framework recommends school codes of conduct and anti-bullying policies as information tools to ensure violence free school environments and the protection of learner rights (Department of Basic Education, 2012). The School Safety Framework aims at informing teachers, principals, the SMT and SGBs that bullying is unacceptable and harmful behaviour that needs to be prevented (Department of Basic Education, 2012). However, the Framework fails to outline an anti-bullying policy for teacher protection or procedures to follow when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs.

In South Africa teachers struggle to cope with bullying. Yet, social media platforms and websites such as *The Educator's Room,* which aims to empower teachers, have helped (De Wet, 2019). Experts in education and, especially, teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying, offer comments and often share their experiences on this platform. This approach encourages teachers to speak out and support one another, thus creating a support structure for teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying (De Wet, 2019).

In spite of the strategies and interventions that are avaliable for teachers to adopt in their classrooms to enable them to cope with bullying, more incentives are needed from school management to acknowldge learner-to-teacher bullying and to assist teachers who struggle to manage bullying in their classrooms (Garrett, 2014). Learner-to-teacher bullying does not only affect teachers but it also has a negative impact on teaching, learning and the school as a whole (Garrett, 2014).

Every individual, community, parent, principal, staff member and learner is a role player and directly influences the school environment; therefore, they need to take a stand and pledge to stop learner-to-teacher bullying (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017). This will make learners and teachers aware of unacceptable behaviour which may have dire consequences (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017). If the teacher's right to safety is ignored and nothing is done to ensure teacher protection, learner-to-teacher bullying and micro-aggression will soon become the norm amongst learners, which will continue to make teaching intolerable (Singh & Steyn, 2013).

Chapter 2 of The South African Bill of Rights (1996) clearly states that everyone (including teachers and learners) has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. However, the South African Council of Educators Code of Conduct (SACE, 2017) does not include procedures to protect the teacher against learner bullying or any other forms of bullying. Learner rights are protected under school policies, rules and the school code of conduct. In the same vein, teachers must be protected.

2.6 Procedures followed when bullying occurs in schools

Teachers need to be aware of and follow clear protocols or procedures to curb learner-to-teacher bullying. Procedures followed by teachers in learner-to-learner bullying include disciplinary procedures where school disciplinary committees and parents of both the perpetrators and victims are involved (Garandeau, Vartio, Poskiparta & Salmivalli, 2016). This procedure results in a higher reduction of bullying as both the parents and the schools' disciplinary committees are involved

in addressing bullying incidents that occur in the classroom and on the playground (Garandeau, Vartio, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2016).

Previous studies on learner-to-teacher bullying include procedures that teachers follow when they are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying. However there is no legislation that protects teachers from learner-to-teacher bullying (Alzyoud, Al-Ali & Tareef, 2016). Therefore, this research may bridge the gap in procedures to be followed by teachers when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in classrooms. Anti-bullying interventions and procedures need to be aimed at addressing learner-to-teacher bullying in schools and should not be limited to learner-to-learner bullying only (Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser & Jordaan, 2018).

2.7 Theoretical Framework - Social Cognitive Learning Theory

The theoretical framework chosen to guide this study is called the Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT). It leads us to believe that children and adult behaviour is dependent on and influenced by cognitive and social factors. Bandura (1999) believed that individuals could control their own behaviour through self-regulation. An individual self-observes, makes judgements about their environment and themselves and self-responds (Edinyang, 2016). The SCLT of Bandura (1999) provides a theoretical base that supports the idea that what learners feel, think and believe directly affects their behaviour. Behaviour can be learnt through observation and imitation of individual models (De Vos, 2013). The portrayal of teachers as the authoritative figure in the classroom is disputed when learners believe and think that it is acceptable to bully their teachers whether verbally or physically. Children learn by observing, thus if a child observes violence, he or she is likely assume that it is acceptable to reflect that behaviour towards others.

The SCLT is the most suitable theoretical framework for this study as learner-to-teacher bullying is a form of behaviour that may be influenced by personal, behavioural and environmental factors. Behaviour can influence personal and environmental factors which can have a direct impact on future behaviour (Phipps, Ozanne, Luchs, Subrahmanyan, Kapitan, Catlin & Weaver, 2013). The SCLT has

been used to explain micro-aggressive behaviour. It can be applied to this study as a guide to identify how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying within the influence of environmental, behavioural and personal factors (Swearer, Wang, Berry & Myers, 2014).

Hoffmann (2013), using an example of how children witness domestic violence by one parent towards the other, explained the SCLT as a way in which people learn new information and behaviours by observing others. Children would then assume this behaviour is normal and acceptable and see nothing wrong in replicating such violent behaviour towards teachers or fellow learners (Hoffmann, 2013). Mncube and Netshitangani (2014) add that learners are most likely to replicate behaviour of an individual that holds a powerful or authoritative position such as a parental figure.

The school environment and the learner's community influence the learner's behaviour towards their teachers (Hoffmann, 2013). Cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors influence the school and classroom environment. These factors contribute to and determine the learner's observations, attitudes and behaviour towards teachers, peers and school staff. The SCLT provided a foundation for this study to determine what learner-to-teacher bullying strategies and procedures are followed in schools and whether these strategies are effective in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. This was done as cognitive/personal, behavioural and environmental factors influence the procedures and strategies that teachers and schools implement when managing learner-to-teacher bullying. The three interacting SCLT elements applied to and used in this study are described below:

Cognitive and Personal factors: the impact of one's beliefs or competence on people's behaviour which includes attitudes, motivational skills, knowledge and self-efficacy (Phipps, et al., 2013). It is the attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, self-efficacy and expectations of learners as well as teachers that influence the occurrence of learner-to-teacher bullying at schools and in the classroom. Learner knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about bullying influence their actions. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and

self-efficiency towards bullying may influence the management of learner-to-teacher bullying.

Behavioural factors: are the direct experiences one observes and learns from one's peers, parents, colleagues and media. Behaviour can influence personal and environmental factors which affects future behaviour (Phipps, et al., 2013). Learners observe the behaviour and actions of their teachers, parents and peers as well as in their surroundings. Similarly, teachers observe the behaviour and actions of their learners, principals and school management teams. The behaviour observed by the teachers and learners can influence and be replicated by the teacher or learner in future behaviour.

Environmental factors: these are the situational and social influences such as social norms that affect one's environment (Phipps, et al., 2013). Learners and teachers are often reflections of their communities and the environments they live in. If a learner is brought up in an environment that is conducive to violence and unethical behaviour, they may assume that this behaviour is tolerable by society and imitate it. The school's social norms may encourage or discourage bullying.

Exposure to bullying, attitudes supporting bullying and teachers', parents' and peers' bullying actions are likely to encourage a positive and acceptable attitude towards bullying (Swearer, Wang, Berry & Myers, 2014). Learners may assume that micro-aggressive behaviour is acceptable and can be replicated. To break the cycle of learner-to-teacher bullying, procedures and interventions should focus on cognitive and social functioning as suggested by the SCLT. This suggestion will contribute to determining what procedures and strategies can be followed by schools when addressing and managing learner-to-teacher bullying.
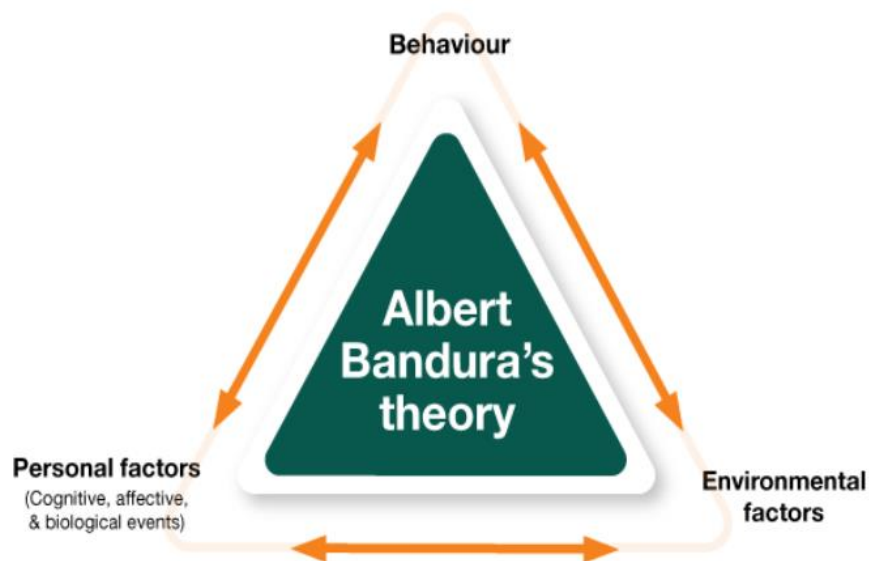
Figure 1: *Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory*

2.8 Summary of the chapter

It is evident from the literature reviewed that learner-to-teacher bullying has been on the rise in the past few years and is becoming a major concern of the education sector, both, internationally and in South Africa. Yet there is still limited African literature available on learner-to-teacher bullying. The SCLT suggests that one's behaviour is influenced by specific cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors which may stimulate bullying behaviour towards the teacher. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology. It also includes a discussion on the credibility of the study as well as the sampling and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, the researcher provided an elaborate literature review related to learner-to-teacher bullying. In addition, the researcher explained how the management of learner-to-teacher bullying in schools around the world presents itself. This chapter describes the parameters for this research project by explaining the research design, research paradigm and the research approach. Moreover, this chapter includes the sample selection and the data collection methods used. The importance of the ethical requirements to this study are built-into this chapter to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

3.2 Qualitative research design

This research employed a qualitative research design aimed at interpreting and understanding experiences of teachers in a school setting. Qualitative research is described by Flick (2018) as intending to individualise the way in which people live in their diverse life worlds. So the epistemological reality is that the teacher's and the learner's life worlds might differ greatly, hence the bullying according to Flick's (2018) interpretation. This study explored those realities while trying to understand the cause of learner-to-teacher bullying.

According to Yin (2011), a research design is a plan, which guides the researcher throughout the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. The researcher planned to collect data from teachers who have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying at secondary schools and who have experience in managing learner-teacher bullying.

In executing the plan, the researcher thematically analysed the data with the intention of understanding the context within which participants found themselves. Thematic analysis has an important role of identifying themes addressing the research while making sense of it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

The case study research design allowed the researcher to investigate the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon within its real-life context using 'how' and 'why' questions based on Yin's (2009) theory that when boundaries - of learner-to-teacher bullying in this case - are not clearly evident, semi-structured interviews can be used as evidence for data collection. The researcher decided on a qualitative investigation using semi-structured interviews in order to determine how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying in Tshwane South secondary schools as there is insufficient research focusing on management strategies or procedures used for managing learner-to-teacher bullying. Using a case study design allowed the researcher to determine what the outcomes for managing learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools are as advised by Modise (2015) in literature.

Qualitative research follows a holistic approach designed to unfold in a 'natural setting' (Williams, 2007), which is one of the most prominent aspects of socialisation in schools as places of learning. An effort is made to understand the perspective of the participant whose viewpoint directs the frame of the research approach (Williams, 2007). The researcher asks participants about their experiences in qualitative research, which enables the researcher to gain insights into the participants' experiences and understanding of the world (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

The researcher opted for the case study design. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discuss, a case study is bounded to a phenomenon, which is, in the case of this study, learner-teacher bullying. The researcher explored this phenomenon to enable her to understand how participants relate to it in the school environment.

3.3 Research paradigm

The research paradigm is a set of beliefs or world views that guides the researcher in the choice of research methods. It includes the application of epistemology, ontology and methodology to the study as fundamental aspects which guides the actions of the researcher (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). The researcher applied epistemology in this study to explore how participants managed learner-to-teacher bullying. In order to investigate this relationship, the researcher explored the experiences of participants based on the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon (Lincoln & Lynham, 2011).

The researcher believes that teachers are victims of learner bullying and that learner-to-teacher bullying is on the rise with limited anti-bullying policies and codes of conduct to protect the teacher (Shannon-Baker, 2016). The researcher believes that secondary school teachers use different strategies in managing learner-to-teacher bullying in their classrooms.

The interpretivist paradigm played a major role in guiding this study to its natural conclusion. An interpretivist paradigm is alternatively known as the constructivist paradigm, which supposes that individuals have different views and understandings of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). The views on learner-to-teacher bullying and how secondary school teachers manage it are presented in this study. These teachers unravelled their experiences of managing learner-to-teacher bullying in a school and classroom setting. They form part of the school environment; working to guide the school towards producing a sustainable quality of teaching and a learning environment. This study allowed participants to express their different views on managing learner-to-teacher bullying occurrences. The interpretivist paradigm is applicable to this study as the researcher interacted socially with the participants to capture their understanding, experiences, views and opinions on the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon. This is in accordance with Creswell's (2016) explanation of the aim of the interpretivist researcher: to uncover participants' understanding and their different views through social interactions with them.

The interpretivist paradigm uses inductive research analysis as it is based on deep understanding, narrative description and explanations rather than predictions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research used participants' views on learner-to-teacher bullying to classify themes and patterns relating to learner-to-teacher bullying which explain and describe the phenomenon rather than predicting. The researcher chose the interpretivist paradigm to enable interaction with participants that would lead to uncovering a variety of views but, also, to remain objective and eliminate personal biases and motivations by focusing entirely on the participants' views as urged by Treurnich (2014).

3.4 Research Methodology

3.4.1 Research Site

Research sites are considered as the geographical area or location in which specific events take place (Tracy, 2013). This research took place in two public secondary schools in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng. The two secondary schools ranged from quintile 2-5 schools.

South African schools are categorised into quintiles which are determined by the socio-economic status (average income of parents, unemployment rates and literacy level) of the school's geographical area (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). The most disadvantaged schools fall in quintile 1 with the wealthiest schools in quintile 5 (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). Schools in quintile 1-3 are considered non-fee-paying schools whereas schools in quintile 4-5 are fee-paying schools. The two schools that were selected to participate in this research were situated in the Centurion suburb and in the Mamelodi Township. The Tshwane South District has approximately 200 public schools of which 57 are secondary schools and one is a combined school (that is it has primary and secondary phases). 30 of the 57 public secondary schools are non-fee-paying schools (quintile 1-3) while 27 are fee-paying schools (quintile 4-5).

Furthermore, these schools are situated within diverse communities with teachers of different genders, ages and races. The participants also varied in the number of years of teaching experience acquired, the subjects that they teach and in the challenges that they were presented with in the classroom. The researcher chose these two schools using purposive sampling based on the list of schools in the Tshwane South District and a further list of schools that experienced high rates of school and teacher violence provided by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). However, not all the schools on the list were willing to participate in this research, thus the researcher had to approach other schools along the list within the same suburb and township.

3.4.2 Sampling

This study is based on purposive sampling, which, as the name denotes, carries a specific purpose. A sample of 10 teachers was selected from two public secondary schools in Gauteng's Tshwane South District that experienced high rates of teacher violence.

Purposive sampling is considered a non-random sampling technique incorporating the researcher's ability to select a specific sample that has the potential to produce information relevant to the research phenomenon and aids in answering the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher is optimistic that the 10 teachers selected have assisted in identifying themes and adding to the understanding of the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting a sample from a known population with a specific purpose in mind (Yin, 2011). According to Creswell (2014), purposive sampling is used to select individuals who have experienced the central phenomenon.

3.4.3. The selection procedure

The researcher contacted two secondary schools from the list of schools provided by the GDE to confirm whether they had experienced learner-to-teacher bullying. If the response was negative, the researcher continued to contact schools in the list until two schools were identified. Participants were selected with a specific purpose in mind such as those who could help inform and answer research questions based on the research phenomenon as per Creswell (2016), that is learner-to-teacher bullying and how it is managed The principals of the selected schools chose the teachers who experienced bullying and who volunteered to take part in this research to be part of the sample. Purposive sampling is used when a diverse sample is necessary for data collection or when the topic of interest requires experts in a particular field (Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo & Bastos, 2016). This study used the purposive sampling strategy with the aim of exploring how schools manage learner-to-teacher bullying.

The sample will be described as an inclusion criterion was specified for this research. An inclusion criterion stipulates attributes that cases possess to qualify for the study (Robinson, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the inclusion criterion specified that participants must be teachers, as they are most eligible to answer questions based on the management of learner-to-teacher bullying. Furthermore, these participants are viewed as figures of authority on managing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying in the classroom and serve as credible sources in obtaining relevant and essential information. Therefore, the sample of this study included ten teachers, as essential role players in the school environment and in interactions with learners, who were most likely to have experience in managing bullying.

3.4.4 Research Methods

The researcher used semi-structured interviews as the data collection method in this study. The data collection instrument allowed the researcher to identify patterns

and themes, draw conclusions and answer the research questions based on the learner-to-teacher bullying phenomenon as suggested by Creswell (2014).

3.4.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are aimed at understanding participants and their experiences (Yin, 2011). The researcher used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with teachers from secondary schools who experienced learner-to-teacher bullying. Semi-structured interviews were used to ask participants probing questions for in-depth explanations and clarification on the management of learner-to-teacher bullying in the school as recommended by Creswell (2012).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to interpret the views and opinions of teachers based on the management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools according to Creswell's (2014) expertise. The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to build a trust relationship with participants and make participants feel comfortable by encouraging open exchange of perspectives and experiences of learner-to-teacher bullying as per Creswell (2016). Creswell (2016) recommends the use of semi-structured interviews to understand and interpret the views of the participants by listening intently and observing the participants responses which the researcher found very helpful.

However, the disadvantage and limitation of a semi-structured interview is that the presence of the researcher contributes to biased responses from participants (Creswell, 2016). In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher concentrated on listening to participants elaborate on their experiences with minimal interruption. This helped to create an atmosphere of genuine empathy and concern that allowed participants to express themselves advocated by Botha (2019). Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to answer the research questions in detail based on their experiences and to highlight what was important to them in managing and combating learner-to-teacher bullying in the classroom as endorsed by Olatunji (2017).

3.4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an inductive process used to organise data into categories and to identify patterns or themes among the different categories (Mollo, 2009). The researcher transcribed the interview responses and field notes captured for each participant and then interpreted this data using Clarke and Braun's six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

The researcher thematically analysed, transcribed and coded the data. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found in the data collected (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). The researcher identified themes and sub-themes from the transcribed interviews using the six-phase framework. Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework includes becoming familiar with the data, generating codes, constructing themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017).

The first phase of Braun and Clarke's (2017) six-phase thematic analysis framework is familiarising oneself with the data. The researcher reads and re-reads through all the transcribed interviews as well as intently listens and re-listens to the interviews during this phase and becomes familiar with the data collected by noting significant points (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This phase allows the researcher to engage with and gain an understanding of the data collected. The researcher deeply engages with the dataset by asking questions about the participants' assumptions and worldviews while observing emerging patterns. The first phase forms the basis of a thematic analysis and if not done correctly it may negatively affect the rest of the analysis (Terry, et al, 2017).

The second phase is generating codes where the researcher organises the data by reducing large sets of data into smaller datasets systematically and meaningfully. The researcher tagged the data with more than one code. The codes generated captured the researcher's interpretations of the data in alignment with the research

question and sub-questions. Each code contained sufficient information about the content of the data to ensure accurate and good coding. The researcher refined and revised the codes and then complied a list of diverse codes, which identifies the patterns from the dataset as proposed by Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun (2017).

The third phase is constructing themes. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) say that the researcher develops themes that are significant to the phenomenon in this phase. The research adhered to this in this study by developing themes aligning research question and sub-questions with the phenomenon of learner-to-teacher bullying. Themes categorise emerging patterns from the dataset relevant to the study (Terry, et al, 2017).The researcher constructed the themes using the research questions to ascertain what was relevant to the study.

The fourth phase is reviewing themes. The researcher modifies, reviews and develops the themes constructed in phase three. During this phase the researcher reads the data assigned to each theme and evaluates whether or not the data supports the constructed themes. The researcher must also consider whether the constructed themes fit in with the context of the entire dataset (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). The reviewing phase allows the researcher to ensure that the themes constructed work well in relation to the coded data and answer the research question and sub-questions (Terry, et al, 2017).

The fifth phase is defining and naming themes. The researcher captures the essence of each theme by defining them and deriving sub-themes that interact or relate to the main theme during this phase (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher clarifies each theme in writing out the analysis. Theme definitions include a short summary of the central idea and the meaning of each theme. As the researcher defines the themes, sub-themes may emerge, which focus on a distinct aspect of the central theme. The researcher must ensure that the selected theme name is a clear indication of the content within the theme (Terry, et al, 2017).

The sixth and final phase is producing the report. The researcher writes up the findings and compares them to existing literature. Extracts and quotations from the dataset are included in the write up. The report includes a discussion of the findings in relation to the themes as well as the research question and sub-questions (Terry, et al, 2017).

Thematic analyses provides trustworthy and insightful findings based on rich, detailed data (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017) urge the use of thematic analysis to summarize key features of the study if a large group of participants are sampled. Reflexivity was considered as this is a qualitative study, and the researcher was mindful of her background, values and experiences that could have influenced or shaped the interpretations of the interviews. The researcher paid careful attention when analysing the data to ensure that her experiences and views did not compromise the data provided by the participants as exhorted by Tumwine (2014).

3.5 Trustworthiness of the study

To ensure trustworthiness in this qualitative study, the research procedure was transparent, the research findings, evidence, support and conclusions were open to inspection by participants, readers or colleague's (Yin, 2011). Creswell (2016) made reference to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation criteria for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which was followed throughout this study:

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility includes triangulation, which is the process of examining evidence from different data sources in this study and the use of rich, thick descriptions to convey findings and clarifying of the researchers bias to ensure the findings, evidence and conclusions are valid (Creswell, 2014). In this study triangulation was assessed

through the presentation of evidence collected using semi-structured interviews (Howell, 2015).

3.5.2 Transferability

Strategies such as interviews used in this study enabled judgements to be made about the transferability of the findings to similar contexts (Zúñiga, O'Donoghue, & Clarke, 2015) . With the use of thick descriptions from data collection transferability was enhanced and judgments could be made about the data and the possibility to transfer data to other situations (Zúñiga, O'Donoghue, & Clarke, 2015). An advantage of transferability is that it enables the researcher or reviewers to carry comparative knowledge from one context to inform another or various contexts, thus the researcher could transfer the findings of this study to similar or contradicting studies based on teacher bullying in order to inform new or existing studies (Lincoln & Lynham, 2011). Transferability involves the transferring/application of findings to similar settings or situations with the use of in-depth interpretations of the findings (Howell, 2015). The interviews conducted were transferred to help the researcher gain an understanding of similar learner-to-teacher bullying situations.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability is the auditing of all parts of the research process as trust in the research process will emerge, it includes the assessing and reviewing of data collection, analysis and transcripts by colleagues (Howell, 2015). It ensures that if the same research was conducted using similar participants, methods and in the same context then similar results would be obtained (Hoffmann, 2013). Once the interviews were transcribed, themes and parts of the transcriptions was sent back to the participants to be checked for accuracy, this is known as member checking (Creswell, 2014).

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the investigation into the researcher's biases that influences the research setting and participants (Howell, 2015). It ensures that the evidence and findings obtained from interviews are that of only the participants experiences and opinions and not that of the researcher's experiences nor opinions (Hoffmann, 2013). The researcher remained subjective and did not share her opinions, experiences or views on learner-to-teacher bullying with participants as this would have influenced the responses given by the participants. It was important for the researcher to acknowledge biases such as human emotions and to remember that the essence of qualitative research was to make sense of and recognise meaningful patterns from data without compromising the richness of data (Leung, 2015).

3.6 Ethical Issues

The researcher accessed the schools and engaged in data collection once ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria and the GDE was obtained and permission was granted by the principals of the schools. Interview questions were prepared to ensure that the researcher captured sufficient and accurate data to answer the research question and sub-questions. The theoretical framework played an important role in enabling the researcher to formulate the research questions. The researcher abided by the ethical procedures and stipulated guidelines to ensure a successful data collection process. The researcher ensured anonymity and confidentiality by subscribing to the following principles: voluntary participation, informed consent, safety in participation and maintenance of privacy and confidentiality throughout the research espoused by Tracy (2013).

The researcher explained the process of the study to the participants and clarified the purpose of their participation in detail. Once their consent was obtained, the researcher commenced with the one-on-one interviews. In compliance with the ethical provisions, participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time. This is a significant issue noted by many authors - among them Creswell and Creswell (2018). Participants were requested to give written

consent before the interviews took place. They were not placed at risk or harmed in any way during data collection and the research process championed by Tracy (2013). Olatunji (2017) upholds the concept of confidentiality which the reseacher adhered to by not publicly distributing participants responses, opinions and experiences recorded during the interviews. These were only accessible to the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. Excerpts from the interviews are directly quoted in the write up of the research, but identifying details of the participants and the participating schools are not mentioned. These identifying details were kept anonymous throughout the research by the use of codes following Daniel (2017). De Wet (2013) approves of pseudonyms, which the researcher adopted to refer to the schools and participants, for example school A *(teachers – T1, T2, T3)*

Olatunji (2017) stands behind the use of protecting data with passwords. Strict confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process by ensuring that participants' responses, the interview transcripts and the recordings were password protected and were only accessed by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor.

3.7 Summary of the chapter

The researcher discussed the research design and the methodology. The credibility of the study as well as the sampling and ethical considerations that were abided by throughout the research is outlined in this chapter. The six-phase data analysis framework was also examined.

Chapter 4, which follows, presents the analysis of the data collected and findings made. The chapter offers the themes and sub-themes, analysed and discussed in relation to the research question, sub-questions and aims of this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, the researcher discussed the research design, paradigm, methodology and research approach. This chapter will consist of the analysis and discussion of the data collected. The researcher formulated three themes: factors contributing to learner-to-teacher bullying, procedures followed by teachers in managing learner-to-teacher bullying and the strategies used to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. These themes were analysed and discussed in the context of the research questions and supported with relevant literature. Direct quotations from participants are used to support and discuss the findings.

4.2 Biographical information of participants

Table 4.1: **Biographical information of participants from different schools**

School	Participants	Gender	Subjects taught	Grades	Teaching experience
A	Teacher (T1)	Male	Life sciences and Natural sciences.	8-11	4 years
	Teacher (T2)	Female	Life Sciences and mathematics	10-11	2½ years
B	Teacher (T3)	Female	Mathematics and mathematics literacy.	8-12	9 years
	Teacher (T4)	Female	Afrikaans and mathematics.	8-12	30 years
	Teacher (T5)	Female	English Home Language and Business studies.	8-10	1½ years
	Teacher (T6)	Female	IsiZulu.	8-12	10 years
	Teacher (T7)	Female	English Home Language and Life Orientation.	11-12	32 years

Teacher (T8)	Female	Tourism and Business studies.	10-12	2 years
Teacher (T9)	Female	Mathematics and Physical science.	8-12	5 years
Teacher (T10)	Female	Life Orientation and IsiZulu.	8-12	4 years

The table above provides demographic information on the participants in this study. Males and females were invited to participate in the interviews and the data above indicates that females were a preponderance of the participants (8 of the 10 participants). This may be evidence that female teachers are at a greater risk of being bullied by learners in secondary schools or struggle to manage incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, teachers with less experience (10 years and less as per the table) appear to be the most likely victims of learner-to-teacher bullying. Only two participants had vast teaching experience of approximately 30 years each. It thus appears that secondary school teachers experience challenges in managing learner-to-teacher bullying during their first few years of teaching.

4.3 Research questions and themes

Table 4.2: **Themes and sub-themes aligned with the research question and sub-questions**

Research Question	Themes/Sub-Themes
Sub-question 1: *How does learner-to-teacher bullying manifest itself in schools?*	**Theme 1:** Factors contributing to learner-to-teacher bullying **Sub-Themes:** − Insufficient teacher protection; − Classroom setting; − Teachers subject knowledge; − Inconsistent discipline; − Classroom rules; − Teaching style; − Learner behaviour; − Teacher behaviour

Sub-question 2: *What procedures and processes are followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in schools?*	Theme 2: Procedures followed by teachers to manage learner-to-teacher bullying **Sub-Themes:** − Reporting incidents; − Teachers dismiss classes; − Teachers ignore learners; − Learner one-on-one discussions; − Involvement of parents and the school management team; − Disciplinary hearing; − Teachers avoid retaliation
Sub-question 3: *What strategies are used by secondary schools to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying?*	Theme 3: Strategies to manage learner-to-teacher bullying **Sub-Themes:** − Educating learners about teacher bullying; − Investigating learners' social backgrounds; − Addressing learner behaviour; − Enforcing school rules/policies

4.4 Research findings

The researcher used face-to-face interviews to gather invaluable information on how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying. The researcher's aim was to explore and examine how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests itself, the procedures followed in managing learner-to-teacher bullying and possible strategies for the effective management of learner-to-teacher bullying in the school and the classroom environment. The researcher obtained insight into how teachers manage learner-to-teacher bullying employing themes and sub-themes from the data collected. These themes are discussed below.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Factors contributing to learner-to-teacher bullying

In order to understand how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests in schools, the root causes need to be identified. Learner-to-teacher bullying is an imbalance of power between the learner and the teacher. It manifests when learners behave aggressively towards teachers to intentionally hurt and humiliate them. Learner-to-teacher bullying can be verbal or non-verbal. Participants were requested to describe factors within the school and classroom environment that triggered learners to display bullying behaviour toward teachers. It is necessary to identify the

causes of learner-to-teacher bullying for effective combating strategies. These teachers are at the forefront of the education system, directly affected by learner-to-teacher bullying and therefore the most relevant persons to pinpoint gaps within the school and classroom setup which foster learner bullying behaviour. The researcher was able to select the school and classroom factors which have a direct link to the causes of learner-to-teacher bullying from the participants' responses. These factors emerged as sub-themes, within this theme, namely:

- Insufficient teacher protection,
- Classroom setting,
- Teachers subject knowledge,
- Inconsistent discipline,
- Classroom rules,
- Teaching style,
- Learner behaviour, and
- Teacher behaviour.

These sub-themes are discussed below.

4.4.1.1 Sub-Theme 1: Insufficient teacher protection

Participants revealed that there were no formal documentation or rules that protected them from learner-to-teacher bullying. This lack of teacher protection created an environment where the teacher feared for their lives as they had no support or protection from the school. The following quotations are participants' responses to insufficient teacher protection as a trigger of learner-to-teacher bullying in schools:

I've never seen a policy that protects teachers; if a learner slaps you, you have to move away from the situation but still come back and teach **(T1).**

It's becoming quite scary because as a teacher I feel that more emphasis needs to be placed on protecting teachers because it's like going to teach in a prison **(T2).**

There aren't policies against learner-to-teacher bullying. Teachers are not protected equally as learners are **(T3).**

The lack of school policies or codes of conduct to protect teachers made the participants easy victims of their learners as the learners were aware that there would be no consequences for their actions and that the teachers were not formally protected. It appears that participants would feel safer if there was an anti-bullying policy that protected them from learner bullying. It seems that there is a lack of learner-to-teacher anti-bullying policies and school codes of conduct in secondary schools as participants indicated that emphasis is solely on learner protection. Insufficient teacher protection seems a likely cause of learner-to-teacher bullying in South African secondary schools as well as in schools worldwide. These findings are in agreement with a study conducted by Hoffman (2013), which explains the lack of teacher protection as it discloses that learner-to-teacher bullying is not formally recognised by secondary schools in the west of Gauteng and the protection of teachers against learners is not stipulated in any school anti-bullying or discipline policies. Rigby (2011) agrees that with the introduction of anti-bullying programmes, which include preventative measures and consequential measures when bullying does occur, there is likely to be a reduction in the number of incidents reported. Similarly, Montgomery (2019) says that there are only a few interventions and policies which protect teachers from learner bullying . These interventions must aim to educate as well as protect teachers from bullying or any form of violence in schools.

In view of the above findings, the researcher agrees with Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) that anti-bullying policies and the protection against bullying in schools should not be limited to learner-to-learner bullying but should also include learner-to-teacher bullying as teacher protection is just as important as learner protection in secondary schools.

The findings of this study make it apparent that one of the causes of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools is insufficient teacher protection. Teachers

are left vulnerable and are easily targeted by their learners who are fully aware that nothing will be done if they bully their teachers.

4.4.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Classroom setting

Participants noted the classroom setting as a key factor in the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying. Participants said that:

Even sitting with friends can encourage learners' bad behaviour; in a classroom setup where friends choose where to sit, they can sit at the back and make noise and encourage each other to behave badly **(T1).**

I would say sometimes it will be learners sitting with friends - so the moment they are sitting with friends they will feel comfortable to talk with each other and cause trouble. Also, the classroom setting can lead to bullying because learners have power when they are together as a group. But once you pick up or move certain individuals all of a sudden things start to settle down **(T3).**

In an open and less strict classroom setup where learners try to have things happen their way and try to somewhat manipulate me into agreeing to what they want me to do - for instance giving homework or not or the kids are not happy with the instructions I give them so they try to twist my words **(T8).**

It appears that a classroom setting which groups learners with their friends or peers is one of the triggers that encourages learner-to-teacher bullying. It seems that learners felt more powerful or motivated to *'take on'* their teacher in front of their class as their peers or friends egged them on. This creates an imbalance of power between the teacher and the learners. The findings are similar to Asfaw's (2019) who perceived the perpetrator's seeking of power and dominance as one of the motives behind bullying. Participants reported that setting up the classroom with single desks was less likely to promote bullying, whereas learners grouped with friends were more likely to disrupt the lesson and challenge their teacher. Espelage

(2018) agrees that separating learners and changing seating arrangements prevents learner aggression and breaks the cycle of bullying. Participants stated that sometimes learners resisted the change in the classroom setting by continuing to misbehave or even increased their aggression towards the teacher. These findings are supported by McCluskey and Moon (2016) who observed that learners in conflict with teachers are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour towards their teachers.

Participants indicated that when they changed seating arrangements, due to disruptive behaviour, learners were more likely to *'settle down'*. However, learners may be motivated to bully or intimidate their teachers if they are against these changes. This promotes an imbalance of power between learners and the teacher. The researcher agrees with Garrett (2014) that a power imbalance between the teacher and learners is a central component in bullying behaviour. If learners believe that they hold more control in the form of *'power'* than the teacher within the classroom, then learner-to-teacher bullying is more likely to manifest and thrive within the classroom setting.

4.4.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Teachers subject knowledge

Participants believed that learner-to-teacher bullying could be a result of insufficient subject knowledge. Learners challenge their teachers to guage their competence in the content of the subject and in answering questions. If learners discover that their teacher is not sufficiently knowledgeable in the subject content, they may become disrespectful towards their teacher. The responses below indicate how a teacher's subject knowledge contributes to learner-to-teacher bullying:

One thing that can also lead to bullying is if you don't know the content that you are teaching or what you doing in the classroom because once the learners pick up that you have no idea what you doing then there will be two or three learners that do the work well in advance and they will tell you the answers and correct you in front of the class and then they as well as the class will lose respect for you **(T3).**

It can be the teacher's behavior and the way she addresses her class, the structure of her lessons, her organizational skills and her knowledge base as well the way she introduces specific topics or lessons with the learners and the overall general knowledge of the topic itself **(T5).**

Learners may not like or accept the way in which you explain subject content. They might think that you are not as knowledgeable as their previous teacher and they might also try to test you by asking questions about the topic, it is important that you as a teacher are knowledgeable in your subject so that learners don't see you as incompetent or weak **(T8).**

These findings demonstrate that participants need to be knowledgeable in their subject to have control over their classroom. Participants revealed that learners manipulated and intimidated them if they were unable to confidently teach their subject content. Learners lost respect for their teachers when they thought that the teacher had minimal or no subject knowledge. This created discipline problems for participants and led to a disruptive classroom environment. Allen (2010) agrees that teachers need to engage in life-long learning and make every effort to know their subject in depth and acquire the skills and knowledge of their subject content. This will ensure that teachers engage effectively with learners in classroom activities, thereby promoting a safe learning environment. It seems that learners compare their teachers and may dislike or disagree with the way in which the "new" teacher presents his or her lessons or conveys the subject knowledge. Mahabeer (2020) also recognises that teachers need to come to the classroom with knowledge and skills, which allow them to create a proactive environment aimed at minimising bullying behaviour. To ensure qualitative teaching and learning, teachers need to feel confident, at peace and not fear being bullied by their learners because of a lack of subject knowledge. Teachers need to also have sufficient subject knowledge which translates to classroom management in order to discourage undesirable behaviour such as learner-to-teacher bullying (Uz & Bayraktar, 2019).

Participants responses highlight the contribution of content knowledge and excellent teaching skills to an environment which promotes classroom safety and manages

learner-to-teacher bullying. Teachers have full control over their subject knowledge and can eliminate this as a contributing factor to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying. Participants suggested that learners are conscious, observe their teacher's behaviour and can single out an uncertain teacher lacking knowledge in his or her subject: *"they can pick up that you have no idea what you are doing"*.

4.4.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Inconsistent discipline

Participants suggested that divergent and inconsistent discipline methods may result in learner-to-teacher bullying. Learners copy and project their teacher's behaviour. If teachers allow learners to get away with bullying behaviour, then learners will assume that bullying, disrespectful, negative or aggressive behaviour is acceptable. Learners sometimes disregarded the teacher's discipline methods as they believed that the teacher was being unfair towards them. If the teacher is inconsistent with their disciplinary measures, then challenges may arise. The following responses from participants describe a lack of consistent discipline as a possible cause for encouraging learner-to-teacher bullying in schools:

It is important to set the level of discipline in your classroom, otherwise learners see you as an easy target and someone who won't manage or control the class when they are disruptive **(T6).**

The way the teacher disciplines her class will set the tone for how learners behave. We must remember that learners copy what their teachers do so if we accept bad or harmful behaviour like bullying and if we allow it then learners will think it's okay if they bully their teachers **(T7).**

Teachers not taking discipline seriously and being relaxed about learners behaviour - this shows learners that the teacher lacks discipline or won't discipline them, so they continue to behave badly **(T9).**

The above responses show that discipline within the school and classroom environment are essential in decreasing learner-to-teacher bullying. It seems that a positive and well-disciplined school and classroom environment requires all teachers, learners and school management to play a role in reducing bullying. Participants are unanimous that they need to be consistent when disciplining learners as they noticed when their peers were treated differently or favoured by the teacher. Learners were provoked and lost respect for their teachers. It appears that learners retaliated towards their teacher and rejected their disciplinary attempts when they witnessed inconsistent discipline towards their peers. Learners look up to their teachers as role models. This implies that teachers need to apply discipline fairly not only towards misbehaving learners, but to all learners. Al-Raqqad, Al-Bourini, Al Talahin and Aranki (2017) acknowledge that aggressive behaviour and bullying of teachers can be a result of harsh forms of discipline teachers inflict on learners. It appears that participants felt intimidated when learners voiced their concerns in a disrespectful way and instead of discussing disagreements or reasons behind unfair discipline methods, learners blamed the teacher for class disruptions. Santos and Tin (2018) are of the same view that when learners disrupt lessons and talk out of turn disrespectfully, it leads to learner-to-teacher bullying as learners challenge their teachers in a negative way.

It looks like teachers view the use of discipline as a way to create and ensure a safe learning environment for learners, which is based on mutual respect, fair punishment and acceptable behaviour. Apparently, teachers were provoked by learner rejection of instructions or discipline. As a result, there was an element of retaliation. This could encourage aggressive behaviour amongst learners as they may assume that if their teacher can retaliate aggressively, then they too can do so and there will be no consequences. Participants believed that discipline was a contributing factor to teacher bullying; that to ensure learners are aware of their behaviour, teachers must immediately put a stop to bullying behaviour. Segalo and Rambuda (2018) recognise that learner-to-teacher bullying has an impact on the safety of teachers and their ability to enforce discipline in the classroom. This study found that teachers avoided reporting incidents of bullying as they feared being labelled as incompetent and unable to discipline or control their learners. Discipline

is the foundation of ensuring well behaved learners and promotes a positive teaching and learning environment. Participants suggested that a lack of classroom discipline encouraged learner-to-teacher bullying as learners lack self-control, thus becoming disrespectful towards their teachers.

4.4.1.5 Sub-theme 5: Classroom rules

Classroom rules are necessary to guide learner behaviour and teach them to differentiate between right and wrong. The findings below validate the need for teachers to establish classroom ground rules and make learners aware of these rules from the beginning. Classroom rules must be implemented and adhered to by both learners and teachers. The participants responses below suggest that learner-to-teacher bullying is likely to occur where there are no classroom rules present as learners would have no boundaries for their behaviour:

Learners need school or classroom rules to guide their behavior as they might not know how they should treat/respect their teachers. We need to educate kids on what is improper or proper **(T4).**

Lay down ground rules in your classroom to ensure teacher bullying and even learner bullying does not take place and there is mutual respect. Classroom rules help in preventing learners from assuming aggressive behaviour is okay and it also protects the teacher **(T7).**

You as a teacher also needs to adhere to your classroom rules and schools need to have a written rule about learner to teacher bullying specifically because when an incident or something happens it's always a thing of the teacher did something to the kid but they never look at it from the teachers side and what the learner could have done to provoke the teacher or why the learner behaved in such a way **(T10).**

It appears that learners need rules and boundaries as they constantly challenge and try to manipulate their teachers. The above responses show that classroom rules

are created for the safety of both learners and teachers and it controls what behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable within the classroom environment. Participants suggested that classroom rules assisted them in controlling and disciplining learners. Classroom rules gave teachers control and emphasised their role as a figure of authority in the classroom. Participants agreed that classroom rules are necessary in preventing learner-to-teacher bullying,but that these rules must be implemented and not just be present in theory. In that regard, rules need to be established and implemented in the classroom to prevent bullying. Findings by Adachukwu, Akaneme and Ngwoke (2017) prove the necessity for teachers to respect the classroom rules as learners expect teachers to intervene and stop bullying when it occurs - be it learner or teacher bullying. However, if classroom rules are neglected or not clear, learners feel free to behave in any manner without consideration of their peers and teacher. Participants suggested that to create a school and classroom environment to prevent bullying, teachers need to set rules and boundaries in their classrooms and educate learners on respect and what is right and wrong.

The above findings confirm the importance of and adherence to classroom rules by, both, learner and teacher if learner-to-teacher bullying is to be eradicated. Classroom rules set boundaries for acceptable behaviour, teacher tolerance levels and outlines consequences for unacceptable behaviour. Classroom rules and regulations contribute to controlling learner behaviour and bullying. Teachers must enforce good behaviour by setting rules and boundaries for the learners. De Luca, Nocentini and Menesini (2019) authenticate the notion that classroom rules form part of teacher interventions to prevent bullying and a lack of classroom rules can contribute to an increase in aggressive behaviour.

From the findings above, it shows that inconsistent application of classroom rules by the teacher leaves room for the manifestation of bullying. In establishing classroom rules, it is important that both the teacher and the learners respect them and to ensure this, teachers should include learners in drawing up classroom rules. Participants called for these rules to be implemented and practiced in the classroom.

Effective implementation and practice of classroom rules depends on a clear explanation of what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. One participant suggested that schools need to have formal rules addressing learner-to-teacher bullying: "*schools need to have a written rule about learner to teacher bullying*". This will not only protect teachers, but also support them as learners are always considered "right" in a bullying scenario and teachers are left defenseless.

4.4.1.6 Sub-theme 6: Teaching style

Participants thought that disagreements between teachers and learners over different teaching styles resulted in an imbalance of power. Learners compared participants to their previous teachers as they disagreed with or were unable to adapt to the new teaching style. The findings evinced that learners often judge and manipulate teachers based on their teaching styles if it is not in line with how they were previously taught. Participants responses to how their different teaching styles influence learner-to-teacher bullying:

The learner was new so she had a negative attitude towards me as her new teacher and she found it difficult to adapt to my teaching style; constantly comparing me to her previous teachers and making me feel as if I wasn't good enough to be her teacher **(T4).**

The way we teach, how we teach; sometimes we assume learners know certain concepts and we also judge our learners based on their knowledge and we overlook weaker learners when we teach **(T6).**

Teaching styles may contribute to the way in which we facilitate teaching. As teachers we are not the same. Teachers are different - their teaching styles and personalities are different. The way in which I do things or the way in which you do things are very different compared to the teacher next door or the teacher who's been at the school previously **(T8).**

The inference can be made that teachers have different teaching styles and learners find it difficult to adapt to a new teaching style or a different teaching style. This has an impact on the relationship between learners and teachers and may lead to learner-to-teacher bullying in a classroom. Participants confessed that learners compared them to previous teachers and bullied or manipulated them to change their teaching style. This can be tagged as emotional bullying as teachers felt as if they were not good enough or that they were the reason their learners were not passing. Parents also blamed teachers sometimes when their children performed badly or failed the subject. It can be deduced from the findings that learners comparing teachers can provide a platform for learner-to-teacher bullying.

Participants found themselves manipulated by learners to do what was done by the previous teacher or what the learners preferred. The researcher has gleaned that teachers use various methods, approaches, or styles to teach and create a classroom environment that is inclusive, interactive and promotes learning but personalities clashed or learners found it difficult to adapt to new teaching styles and came to dislike the teachers thus setting up a scene viable for bullying. In De Wet's (2012) assessment, teaching styles and personalities are risk factors for learner-to-teacher bullying. One participant admitted that while teaching styles contributed to learner-to-teacher bullying, the participant could not accept that this should be the case. The participant believes that individual teachers develop their own style which they are comfortable with and this creates their own personal, unique teaching environment.

Teachers ensure that learning takes place. If they are uncomfortable teaching in a certain way or are manipulated into using a specific style, they may neglect their responsibility with a consequent negative effect on learners. Allen (2010) suggests that an authoritative style is more likely to encourage learner-to-teacher bullying whilst a learner-centred style is less likely to encourage learner-to-teacher bullying. However, other studies such as that by Gregory, Cornell and Fan (2012) propose that teachers who manage their classrooms using an authoritative teaching style encounter fewer behavioural problems as they create a structured and supportive

teaching and learning environment for their learners. Bauman and Yoon (2014) promote the use of authoritarian teaching styles and approaches as they are more likely to promote relationships between teachers and learners with learners then refraining from aggressive behaviour. The above findings clarify that learners and teachers may clash as a result of discrepancies or disagreements in how content or skills should be taught, but that mutual respect is necessary to deal with differences. It appears that manipulating teachers into changing their teaching style is a clear indication of a power imbalance between the teacher and the learner and can result in learner-to-teacher bullying.

4.4.1.7 Sub-theme 7: Learner behaviour

The participants propose that learners seeking attention or approval from their peers is the most common trait of learner-to-teacher bullying. Participants suggested that learners act out, retaliate or challenge the teacher in presence of the class to gain approval of or prove their self-worth to their fellow classmates. Participants describe how learner self-esteem, poor academic performance and attitude towards their teachers and education influenced their behaviour. The responses below reflect learner behaviour as a cause of learner-to-teacher bullying:

It also depends on the environment - a lot of our learners come from a home environment or community where there is a lot of violence, use of drugs or gang violence that has a negative impact on their behaviour. Learners peers and their classmates influence their behaviour and how they react **(T2).**

I think it's often the kids who feel insecure about other things in their life including themselves. It can be anything - anything negative in their lives or they want to take something out on you because they want to hurt somebody else but they end up taking it out on the teacher - even the insecurities a child feels are what causes their reaction or their bullying **(T4).**

Learners have a feeling of being untouchable and they are constantly reminded that if a kid provokes you (the teacher) they know their teacher will get fired and not the

kid because you're an adult and you should have reasoning. Another cause could be that learners feel powerful and entitled and they know that teachers can't do anything to them so they can get away with whatever they want - the value of teachers is decreased **(T9).**

Many participants described learner behaviour as a contributing factor to learner-to-teacher bullying. Learner behaviour, which is directed towards the teacher, is often encouraged by classmates and friends. One participant revealed that secondary school learners are very emotional and often do not know how to express themselves; they sometimes resort to aggressive behaviour or bullying. There are various behavioural causes of learner-to-teacher bullying; this study confirms that learner behaviour is a contributing factor. Learner emotional stability played a role in their behaviour. This research corroborates findings that learners are still overcoming emotional insecurities and are not sure how to manage their emotions. Often teachers are at the receiving end of learner emotional expressions, which may be expressed by negative or bullying behaviour. Participants postulate that the learner's home environment dictated their behaviour in class. Learners seek attention from their teachers and peers by resorting to aggressive behaviour. The findings show that learners feel entitled to the education they receive, and they are fully aware of their behaviour and the lack of consequences for them if they bully or attack their teachers. May and Tenzek (2017) agree that learners may engage in bullying to express their entitlement towards their teacher or intimidate their teacher by spawning class disruptions. Learner academic performance was noted as an influence on their behaviour: in subjects where they were not excelling, they disliked the teacher or had a negative attitude towards the subject. They then bullied or manipulated the teacher into passing them if they feared they would fail the subject or the year. This finding is supported by research undertaken by Mucherah, Finch, White and Thomas (2018): learners with insufficient academic achievement and learners who face academic challenges were likely to demonstrate bullying behaviour towards teachers and their peers.

It seems that learners often tried to impress their peers by challenging their teachers in the presence of the class. The support of their peers encouraged them to engage

in intimidating or aggressive behaviour towards the teacher. Learners with behavioural problems are able to incite their classmates. Learners who observe their peers bullying the teacher believe this is acceptable behaviour which will have no consequences and therefore replicate it (Wienen, Batstra, Thoutenhoofd, Bos & de Jonge, 2019). Participants noted that parents played a role in shaping learner behaviour. If parents spoke negatively about teachers in presence of their children, they were likely to replicate that ideology and undervalue their teachers and their role in education. Behaviour that undermined the professional status of the victim (teachers) magnified the learner-to-teacher bullying experience. The data collected suggests that negative learner behaviour such as teacher manipulation and disparaging the value of teachers, as well as academic performance and learner entitlement contributed to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying at secondary schools.

4.4.1.8 Sub-theme 8: Teacher behaviour

Participants acknowledged that they themselves and their behaviour can lead to learner-to-teacher bullying. The teacher's reaction towards the learner can influence the learner's behaviour and how they act out towards the teacher. Participants mooted that comparing learners and reprimanding learners harshly in front of their peers can result in learners feeling attacked or even insulted and come to despise their teacher. The following responses show that how teachers behave can create a classroom environment which encourages learner-to-teacher bullying:

Even us as teachers can cause learner-to-teacher bullying as we sometimes just call out learners marks in front of the class and we reprimand learners who get lower marks without even knowing the level of the child and whether he or she has all the resources at home to study **(T6).**

Derogatory comments towards pupils by the teacher, teachers picking on certain individuals in the class, pupils perceiving being treated differently and underachievers believe it's the teacher's fault **(T7).**

We set the tone for what behaviour is portrayed in the classroom. If we as teachers discipline learners in a negative or aggressive way they will consider this behaviour as acceptable and replicate it towards us and their classmates **(T8).**

It seems that participants' behaviour, actions and responses which learners disagreed with or disliked led to bullying. Participants revealed that they themselves and their colleagues may demonstrate certain actions and responses which provoke learners and create a classroom environment which may lead to learner-to-teacher bullying. Teachers treating learners unfairly can lead to learners retaliating aggressively towards their teachers. The findings endorse that teacher behaviour and actions towards learners encouraged learner-to-teacher bullying in the classroom. Banzon-Librojo, Garabiles and Alampay (2017) agree that teacher behaviour is crucial as it influences the social dynamics in the classroom - harsh discipline and hostile behaviour by the teacher can create a classroom environment in which bullying is likely to occur. Participants concluded that teachers reprimanding learners in front of their peers can have damaging effects on a learner. One participant suggested that teachers need to take into consideration learners' intelligent quotient levels and refrain from comparing learners. Actions such as calling out learner marks, treating learners unequally, discriminating against learners, picking on learners and making derogatory comments about learners in front of their peers can result in learner-to-teacher bullying. This is because learners may dislike the teacher and have a negative attitude towards that specific subject and in turn act aggressively towards the teacher. Kgopyana (2019) and Montgomery (2019) agree that unfair and unequal treatment towards learners is a direct cause of bullying, that teachers need to consider differences amongst learners and create an inclusive environment that discourages bullying behaviour.

The data shows that teachers set the tone within their classrooms. Therefore, they determined what behaviour was acceptable within the classroom. However, the way in which teachers discipline their learners and their words and actions played a role in how learners behaved. It appears that teachers play a critical role in the school ecology and they act as role models for learners. If teachers use aggressive discipline methods they in turn model aggressive behaviour as acceptable

behaviour. It seems that the way in which participants responded to bullying behaviour in the classroom sent an important message to learners on what behaviour was acceptable. If participants merely ignored incidents of bullying, they ran the risk of encouraging bullying as an acceptable behaviour within the classroom. If participants did not intervene or stop bullying, learners perceived participants as tolerating bullying behaviour. The above findings suggest that teachers need to be conscious of what they say and how they respond to learners. Some participants believed it was better to maintain a strictly professional relationship with learners to ensure disagreements could be resolved professionally. Learners can be provoked as a result of disagreements with the teacher or being punished by the teacher.

While teacher behaviour may be a contributing factor to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools, they do have control over their behaviour and the ability to change. Participants agreed that the teacher sets the tone of the class and plays a role in how learners behave in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to consider their actions and display of emotions. They need to understand that learners are different, and they face different challenges. Teachers can support learners in this manner without creating a classroom environment that is negative or encourages learners to resort to aggressive or violent behaviour to be heard or understood by the teacher.

4.4.1.9 Summary of Theme 1

Theme 1 ratifies that the perceptions of teachers on learner-to-teacher bullying are influenced by both learners and teachers. The classroom and school environment plays a role in encouraging the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying. The following key factors have been identified as causes of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools: lack of policies or codes of conduct that protect teachers from learner-to-teacher bullying; classroom setting; teachers subject knowledge and skills; inconsistent discipline by teachers; teachers not setting ground rules for learners; learners comparing teaching styles; learner behaviour and teacher actions. The findings uphold that the causes of learner-to-teacher bullying lie within

classroom management and the school environment, which can encourage or discourage the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Procedures followed by the teachers

The researcher investigated procedures and processes that teachers implement when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occurred in the classroom and school enviroment. Teachers, parents and school management all have a role to play in creating a school environment which is safe for both teachers and learners and promotes teaching and learning. Participants identified popular procedures that they adopted when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occurred. These procedures include the involvement of learners, parents and school management. The researcher was able to identify recurring procedures teachers followed when they experienced learner-to-teacher bullying from the participants responses. These procedures emerged as sub-themes within this theme, namely:

- Reporting incidents;
- Teachers dismissing classes;
- Teachers ignore learners;
- Learner one-on-one discussions;
- Involvement of parents and school management;
- Disciplinary hearing; and
- Teachers avoiding retaliation.

These sub-themes will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

4.4.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Reporting incidents

Participants reported incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to avoid being accused of instigating the bullying incident. Most participants reported their experiences to either their Heads of Department (HODs) or their grade tutor. Teachers assumed that reporting incidents would lead to action to protect teachers and consequences for learners. However, participants were not informed of the procedures followed

after reporting their incidents. Participants said that reporting incidents was a common procedure followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred:

I reported the incident to my HOD and even to the school discipline officer. It also helps to find the root of the problem through investigation, using the learner's friends, classmates and also parents **(T1).**

I reported my experience because there was one child who was giving me a lot of attitude. I wouldn't say I dealt with it in my own way because what happened was the HOD came to sit in one of my lessons and fortunately I was checking homework and this learner did the same things that she use to do to me to the HOD **(T3).**

I decided to call the grade tutor to come assist me because at that time I had the entire class to deal with and manage and the other kids were encouraging what the learner said but after class I went to the office and reported the incident **(T10).**

The findings convey that participants preferred and felt comfortable in reporting incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to their HOD, grade tutors or the discipline officer at the school. They believed that reporting incidents would lead to punishment of the perpetrators and cessation of the bullying behaviour. Fahie and Devine (2014) call recording incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying a covert strategy to combat learner-to-teacher bullying. Reporting incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying can be an effective procedure as teachers create an evidence trail that they did not initiate the bullying. However, it can be difficult for the teacher to prove verbal bullying especially if the learner denies the bullying. Schools need to act against perpetrators to manage learner-to-teacher bullying and to protect teachers from learners. School management teams, together with teachers, should design procedures to follow when teachers report incidents to manage learner-to-teacher bullying and to prevent it reccurring. This will enhance teacher protection and make learners aware that such bullying behaviour is just as serious and punishable as learner-to-learner bullying. Orange (2018) concurs that when unacceptable behaviour is reported, a process or plan should be designed and implemented to correct the behaviour.

It appears that reporting incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying may resolve differences and prevent further bullying. This is evident from one participant's revelation that after she had reported her incident of learner-to-teacher bullying, her HOD visited her class and experienced the same behaviour from the learner. The HOD, then, removed the learner to a different classroom thus removing the problem for the participant. Whether this stopped the learner from bullying other teachers is not clear, but it affirmed to other learners that learner-to-teacher bullying does have harsh consequences. Participants also reported incidents immediately after the incident and requested assistance in managing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying from the grade tutor. Participants were uncertain whether the incidents were further investigated and if preventative action was taken. This placed participants in a quandary as there was only so much that they could do to protect themselves. Participants felt *"afraid"* as they believed learners who bullied them were not disciplined.

Participants support reporting incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to senior teachers, principals, HODs, grade tutors or the school discipline officer to ensure that the school is aware that teachers are at risk of being verbally, emotionally and even physically bullied by the learners. Campaert, Nocentini and Menesini (2017) assert that many teachers respond to learner bullying by reporting incidents to a higher authority within the school setting. This may have encouraged schools to take action against learners and create a zero-tolerance environment that will not allow learner-to-teacher bullying to manifest. Reports of bullying incidents should be heeded to send the message that learners cannot expect to get away with this behaviour or continue to bully their teachers

4.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Teachers dismiss classes

Participants revealed that walking out of the class and discontinuing teaching was a common practice because it prevented the teacher from retaliating. It also allowed the learner to calm down and refrain from further bullying as a result of anger or the inability to control behaviour and emotions. The responses below hints that teachers

dismiss lessons and leave the teaching environment as a procedure to manage learner-to-teacher bullying:

I left the class to avoid escalation of the problem - I felt very angry and I was afraid I would retaliate towards the learners, so to prevent further harm or embarrassment I walked out of the class **(T1).**

I decided not to reprimand him in front of the class as he did not want to calm down and I was afraid that he could physically attack me so I thought it would be best if I left the classroom as I didn't feel that I could continue teaching **(T2).**

The learner retaliated and hit the teacher and the teacher ignored the learner and she just walked out of the classroom **(T9).**

From the above findings, it seems that participants left classes by leaving the classroom when they were faced with an incident of learner-to-teacher bullying. The reasons were to avoid intensifying the learners actions and for teachers to avoid retaliating out of anger. This can be considered as one of the procedures used in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. However, learners may also see this as a weakness or believe that they have "won" or "defeated" their teacher because the teacher did not react or retaliate. It seems that learners could also continue bullying not only to hurt or humiliate the teacher but to spur the teacher to action and then blame the teacher for aggressive behaviour or bullying. Participants considered leaving the classroom as an effective procedure to avoid the escalation of teacher bullying incidents.

Participants found it challenging to calm the class or settle learners down after the learner-to-teacher bullying incident had occurred. The respect for the teacher and the status of the teacher as a figure of authority diminishes because one of their peers was successful in overpowering or humiliating the teacher in front of the class. The teacher might feel a mixture of emotions and may be unable to control not only the bully but the entire class, especially when learners are waiting to see how the

teacher will react. This is potentially a crucial moment as it sets the tone or creates the classroom environment for a way forward. If the teacher does not regain his or her authority, learners will no longer respect the teacher and this may even increase incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying. Tuckera and Maunderb's (2015) study confirms these findings that how teachers respond to incidents of bullying sends an important message to learners and determines their future behaviour.

The above responses indicated that leaving the classroom could be considered as a procedure to avoid further problems or incidents of teacher bullying. However, if it does not stop the learner's behaviour and the teacher has to return the next day to teach the same learner and peers and possibly face the same type of behaviour, it casts doubt on the validity of the strategy. Participants acknowledged that walking away from a learner bully protected them from acting unprofessionally with possible negative implications for their career. It seems that teachers try to remain professional and take action in the best interest of their learners, even the perpetrators, and themselves. Sometimes, it may not be easy for the teacher to merely leave a class or walk away from a learner who physically attacks them, and so the teacher may retaliate to protect themselves. This could be used against the teacher in a disciplinary hearing, especially if the learner or the entire class accuses the teacher of attacking the perpetrator or initiating the bullying. It appears that choosing to leave the classroom when bullied by learners is both positive and negative. If teachers simply walk out of the classroom, their learners may no longer view them as a figure of authority and come to disrespect them. Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio and Salmivalli (2014) agree that teachers need to take a stand and demonstrate anti-bullying behaviour - not simply walk away. However, this study is exhibiting that teachers react in the way they think is best to manage learner-to-teacher bullying and avoid being further victimized by their learners.

4.4.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Teachers ignore learners

Participants preferred to ignore learner bullying behaviour despite feeling humiliated and embarrassed in front of the class. Participants ignored learner-to-teacher bullying and continued teaching thus preventing the loss of teaching and learning

time. Participants thought that ignoring learner-to-teacher bullying indirectly discouraged learners from copying or replicating such behaviour. The excerpts below identify participants' attitudes towards ignoring learner-to-teacher bullying as a procedure in effectively managing learner-to-teacher bullying:

After the incident I ignored the learner and I didn't really check up on their homework and I wasn't as involved as I would have been previously. I kept it strictly professional without being emotional towards that learner or that class as a whole **(T2).**

Learners will say certain things that make you feel hurt or humiliated, but you try to ignore it by all means but it does get to you **(T3).**

I ignored the bullying incident and I continued teaching as normal as I didn't want to encourage the learners or entertain their behaviour **(T4).**

Participants at times chose to ignore learner-to-teacher bullying, when it occurred in the classroom, had both negative and positive outcomes. The positive outcome was a classroom environment discouraging learner-to-teacher bullying by eliminating victimization and re-enforcing authority by not entertaining, reprimanding or even retaliating when learners tried to bully them. A negative outcome occurred when participants ignored incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying as this gave learners a reason to continue their behaviour. They assumed that the teacher allowed this behaviour or did not put a stop to it. Garandeau, Vartio, Poskiparta and Salmivalli (2016) agree that bullying is likely to increase when teachers ignore incidents of bullying in the classroom. In ignoring learner bullies teachers change their attitude towards the entire class. One participant mentioned that she did not check homework or interact with learners socially or emotionally. This might have created a strict professional environment, but to the detriment of learners being themselves and teachers creating an interactive environment.

Although participants tried to ignore learner-to-teacher bullying, they were still negatively and psychologically affected by the comments, remarks and even

physical behaviour from the learners. This behaviour could be detrimental to the participants' careers and self-esteem, which may cause them to leave the profession. Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) agree that teachers consider leaving the profession for their own safety after experiencing bullying. Participants seemed to remain professional despite being disrespected and bullied as an effective way to prevent incidents turning more serious or uncontrollable. Participants who ignored the learner misbehaviour discouraged learners from bullying them, consequently compelling them to refrain from retaliation or causing a scene that could have spiraled out of control. It also ensured that teachers remained professional and alert during lessons thus increasing the propensity to timeously identify learner behaviour that could escalate into bullying.

The findings of this study show that teachers are aware of their actions and emotions as well as their learners' behaviour. It is encouraging to realise that they behave professionally to avoid deep conflict. By ignoring learner bullying behaviour, participants sidestepped becoming victims while remaining professional and displaying authority within their classrooms. This created a stable environment for learners and gave them an indication of acceptable behaviour while minimizing disruptions which contributed to learner-to-teacher bullying.

4.4.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Learner one-on-one discussions

A suggestion was made by some of the participants that having one-on-one discussions and talks with the perpetrators was an effective procedure in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. In this way, participants were able to confront learners and reprimand them for verbal bullying without targeting or calling them out in front of their peers. This strategy appears to have created a collaborative understanding resulting in cooperation between the learners and the teacher. The findings below illustrate that having one-on-one talks or discussions with individual learners after incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying is an effective procedure in managing teacher directed bullying:

I would speak to the learner outside and have a one-on-one and I would ask if there is anything that I said or did that's a problem, but I will deal with that on a one-to-one basis not in a group or in front of the class **(T4).**

I would take the learner outside of the classroom environment, take them one side, away from everybody else and have a one-on-one discussion with the learner to understand what the problem is **(T5).**

At the end of the lesson I will call the child and talk to him or her one-on-one and I would want to know what the problem was, then I can take it from there. I can't just shout him or her in front of other learners because that might also cause more damage to that child **(T6).**

It seems that participants preferred to speak to the learners outside the classroom environment about what they had said or done in the classroom. This allowed the participants to identify why the learner chose to bully them and in so doing resolve the issue, often without having to involve the principal or head of discipline. It seems that this can improve the relationship between learner bullies and teachers as it demonstrates that their teacher is not against them but rather on their side and willing to resolve conflict without causing further harm or embarrassment. Most participants used one-on-one discussions to try and prevent further incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying. Addressing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying individually with the learner prevents bullies from being encouraged by their peers to take on the teacher and to see who will win. Removing the learner from their peers and the classroom environment allowed the learner to express themselves without fear of being judged or rejected in front of their peers. In a few instances, the learner acted aggressively or said things to the teacher to seek approval from their peers, but when the teacher confronted them alone, they revealed why they acted out in that particular manner and even apologised for disrespecting their teacher.

Retaliation and confronting the learner bully in front of peers may lead the learner to assume that they are being attacked thereby provoking them to persist and

continue bullying their teacher to prove their strength or power over their teacher. This kind of behaviour causes class disruptions and encourages retaliation. Findings from scholars such as Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) confirm that in a classroom setting, bystanders, instigators and supporters of the bully encourage the bully to intimidate the teacher as a means to demonstrate power over or impress their peers. Participants suggested that reprimanding learners in front of their classmates can be harmful as the teacher may humiliate them or accuse them of being rude or disrespectful only to find out that the learner was acting out because of issues in the home environment. It seems that confronting learners about their behaviour in front of their peers resulted in further learner-to-teacher bullying.

It seems that when participants did not confront the learner immediately or in front of the class, it allowed both the teacher and learner to calm down. This may prevent the teacher from acting impulsively and emotionally. Learners may discontinue their behaviour when they realize that the teacher is not entertaining or reacting to their comments or behaviour. This allows the teacher to continue teaching, which may distract other learners from what was said or done. The teacher can ask the bully to join him or her outside for a one-on-one discussion once learners are busy working. Nevertheless, this can be complicated as other learners are still present and could listen in on the conversation, thus judging the learner or further encouraging the learner to behave in a bullying manner. Holding a one-on-one discussion with the learner after class should be in the vicinity of another teacher in the event the learner becomes aggressive or accuses the teacher of instigating bullying. It is important for the teacher to address the situation professionally and appropriately despite feeling humiliated, embarrassed or hurt by the learner's behaviour without causing more damage or further implicating themselves. It seems that teachers should refrain from immediate retaliation and follow the procedure of conducting a one-on-one discussion with the perpetrators to resolve conflict between themselves. This strategy allows the teacher to identify underlying problems that could be contributing to the learner's bullying behaviour.

4.4.2.5 Sub-theme 5: Involvement of parents and the school management team

Participants opted for a process to follow in learner-to-teacher bullying incidents that includes parents and the school management team. This ensured that parents were aware of their child's behaviour, and it allowed the school management team to intervene and prevent further trauma caused by bullying behaviour. When the SMT involved parents in managing learner-to-teacher bullying, it resolved incidents between the teacher and the learner. The responses below indicate the procedures to be followed when parents and the school management team intervenes:

At first I was afraid of that learner and I felt intimidated by the learner but after the issue was resolved and the parents were involved the learner apologised and my relationship with the learner improved after that **(T1).**

I will call the parent or send an email to the parent. If the parents don't respond, then I'd go to the grade tutor or coordinator then we can take it from there **(T6).**

I have taken it to management. It's always safe to take it to your head of academics if it's an academic issue or report it to management or to my line manager who would assist me with dealing with the situation and how to handle it and what to do **(T8).**

Parental engagement not only resolved learner-to-teacher bullying but also restored the relationship between the learner and the teacher. Participants suggested that talking to learners was an effective process in managing learner-to-teacher bullying and involving parents and making them aware of their child's behaviour assisted in preventing further incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying. It seems that if parents are involved, learners are more likely to listen to them and realize that their actions are causing harm and are inappropriate. The findings are supported by a study conducted by Segalo and Rambunda (2018), which emphasises that parents need to take responsibility for their children's behaviour and support teachers and the school in creating an environment that is safe and discourages any form of bullying. In many schools, parents are the first line of contact when a learner misbehaves or violates school rules or the code of conduct. They need to be held accountable for

their child's actions. It seems that parents should set boundaries for learner behaviour as they dictate and model behaviour. Children replicate their parents behaviour and if parents are disrespectful towards each other or to their child's teacher then learners will emulate such behaviour. Parents assist teachers and the school to identify the root causes of learner bullying, enable rehabilitation of the learner and resolution of problems that may have provoked the learner to verbally or physically attack their teacher.

Participants advocated that seeking guidance and advice from the SMT assisted them in the future management of incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying. Even though principals, deputy principals or academic heads are involved in managing learner-to-teacher bullying, the important thing is that protecting teachers and prevent occurrences of learner-to-teacher bullying receives attention. Incidents should not only be reported and recorded as a means of protocol, but action should be taken in the interest of both the teacher and the learner. Teachers are often left to manage learner-to-teacher bullying alone, particularly when they feel embarrassed or ashamed to tell anyone. There are times when they may not feel supported by the SMT especially when there is minimal action against the bully. De Wet (2012) agrees that many teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying perceive a lack of support from the SMT and parents of the bully. Many participants agreed that notifying the SMT and reporting incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying was effective when they were unsure of how to handle the incident. However, participants did not indicate whether or not incidents were resolved, or learners were punished for their behaviour. Teachers left the incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to be resolved by school management.

Parental involvement and the SMT intervention are a strategy which contributes to resolving incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying as parents are held responsible for their child's actions. It may also allow the SMT to establish rules or policies which protect teachers from learners and educate the school community on learner-to-teacher bullying. This portrays the school as supporting teachers and creating a safer school and classroom environment that does not encourage learner-to-

teacher bullying. In that way learners and parents will be aware that disciplinary action will be taken against them and their children if they bully teachers.

4.4.2.6 Sub-Theme 6: Disciplinary hearing

Participants reported incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to the school disciplinary committee and the process that followed thereafter was a disciplinary hearing. This made learners and parents aware that learner-to-teacher bullying will not be tolerated at the school. The responses below propose disciplinary hearings as a process to be followed by schools when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occur:

If we as the teachers do something towards the learners then there is a disciplinary hearing or a warning, but nothing is done when teachers are bullied by learners. A disciplinary hearing can prevent learners from attacking me or stop them from bullying teachers **(T2).**

A disciplinary hearing followed which included the principal, a member of the school governing body, the child and the child's parents. This process made the learner aware of how badly they behaved but the disciplinary process followed in a public school is a long process as compared to a private school **(T7).**

I also want the parents to be held accountable not just the kid. A disciplinary hearing will help the teacher get justice for what the learner has done. After the disciplinary hearing I would tell them to get rid of the kid from my class because it's not going to be a good environment and I wouldn't want the kid in my class because the respect is gone **(T9).**

Disciplinary hearings are not particularly intended to assist and manage incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying – they are a generic approach to address learner behaviour; as one participant said - she was unaware of any disciplinary procedures followed when a teacher is bullied by a learner. However, other participants

speaking from positive experiences, backed the process as effective in tackling incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying. It seems that not all teachers are informed of disciplinary hearings as a process to follow when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs. This may suggest that some incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying have by-passed the disciplinary committees implying that schools do not take all incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying seriously. This could have an impact on how learners view their actions. It appears that disciplinary hearings aided and supported teachers in overcoming the after effects of learner-to-teacher bullying. Segalo and Rambuda (2018) advocate that without the support and aid of disciplinary hearings, teachers may fear the repercussions of their stance towards learners. Participants appear to be informed that disciplinary hearings include the SMT, the teacher, the learner and the learner's parents. The process of conducting a disciplinary hearing includes all stakeholders; a positive indicator of the serious view that schools take about learner-to-teacher bullying. It seems that for punishment to be apt, the disciplinary committee must determine the consequences of the learner's behaviour, thereby eliminating any parental prejudice or a jaundiced view by the school principal. If the learner's behaviour has no consequences such as suspension or expulsion, then the learner could become blasé about the incident and repeat the bullying behaviour.

One participant made it clear that she did not want the learner back in her class after the disciplinary hearing as she believed that all respect was lost. It seems that not only is the teacher triggered by the perpetrator, but other teachers may be intimidated by that learner and refuse to teach them. Other learners may also fear having the bully in their class. Marais and Meier (2012) acquiesce that learners are intimidated by their peers who are bullies. The view is that parents also need to be held accountable for their child's behaviour as they are responsible for discipline in the home environment. If there is no stable discipline within the home environment, learners may find it difficult to comply with the school's discipline. The impression gained from the findings intimate that it is important for parents to take responsibility for their child's behaviour and to work with the school in preventing and managing their child's behaviour. Netshitangani (2019) approves that parents should actively discuss their child's behaviour with the school before the learner is allowed back to

school. This could ensure that the learner knows the negative effects of his or her behaviour on the teacher and peers. The outcome is that disciplinary hearings would only be effective if learners acknowledge their unacceptable behaviour upon return to school, and work towards rehabilitating their bullying behaviour. This would need to be the responsibility of the learner because only they can rectify their behaviour.

Disciplinary hearings may be an effective and contributing process to overcoming learner-to-teacher bullying. However, it seems that in some public schools, disciplinary hearings are not as effective and can turn out to be a lengthy and time-consuming process. One participant suggested that even though a disciplinary hearing was held after the incident, it was time consuming and the issue was not fully resolved. The possibility exists that this might be more common in public schools than is currently know. Learner-to-teacher bullying should not be taken lightly as the effects and consequences are damaging to the teaching profession. Schools should consider harsh disciplinary measures to protect teachers from feeling vulnerable in the school environment.

4.4.2.7 Sub-theme 7: Teachers avoid retaliation

Teachers avoided retaliation towards the bully as a strategy to protect themselves as well as the learner. Participants were concerned with what might happen if they retaliated in a similar way as the learner. Participants stopped themselves from retaliating as they were aware that the consequences of their actions could be worse in comparison to the learner's actions. Teachers acknowledged that their behaviour affected learner behaviour and therefore they were mindful of their actions. The findings below suggest that teachers avoid retaliation as a procedure when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occur:

I tried to remain calm and not to counterattack or retaliate towards the learner because other learners are present and we need to react in a manner that is responsible and does not escalate - which is difficult especially when you are being

humiliated or attacked by a learner. The more experience you have, the more you are able to deal with bullying in your classroom **(T3).**

I didn't retaliate, I think I was just shocked. By not retaliating I saved myself from getting into trouble. I could have lost my job if I had retaliated in the same aggressive way as the learner **(T7).**

Try to discipline the child without being rude or retaliating but showing the next other learners that you in charge, this is your classroom and as the teacher your behaviour can control how learners behave in the classroom **(T8).**

Teachers attempted to avoid retaliation towards learners who bullied them as a procedure in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. They remained calm and tried not to counterattack learners despite being victimized and humiliated in front of other learners. It is evident that teachers consider the consequences of their actions because they know that learners are often construed to be the victims of bullying and parents are likely to believe their child's version of the teacher displaying verbal or physical aggression. Although teachers may choose not to retaliate to avoid further implications, participants reluctantly accepted that teachers are expected to do nothing and 'allow' learners to attack them physically or verbally. They would be happy if schools recognized that learner-to-teacher bullying is just as prevalent as learner-to-learner bullying and formally generate rules and anti-bullying policies to protect the teacher. Participants declared that remaining professional and reacting in a responsible manner was difficult as they became emotional and felt humiliated. Teachers could retaliate out of anger or the need to protect themselves. Marais and Meier (2012) agree that teachers retaliate in order to punish learners for disruptive behaviour. The above responses advance the thought that as teachers gain more experience in their careers, they can manage incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying better especially if they adopt the procedure of not retaliating. One participant, who was assaulted by a learner, explained how shocked she was when the learner hit her and how not retaliating saved her from getting further embroiled in the matter. It can be reasoned that when the teacher retaliates, accusations of provocation based on the perception of the teachers competence as a disciplinarian is possible. De

Wet (2020) defends this reasoning: teachers are often blamed for learner-to-teacher bullying as they are accused of not being able to discipline their learners, which in turn leads to teachers becoming the victims of bullying.

It seems that participants remained professional, separated their feelings from the scene and tried to understand the learner's actions. However, participants also believe that they needed to remain firm and address the incident in a way that other learners or bystanders would perceive the teacher as intolerant of such behaviour. It seems that the way in which teachers reacted to incidents of bullying demonstrates to learners whether the teacher discourages bullying or lacks skills to address such behaviour. Campaert, Nocentini and Menesini (2017) argue that when learners observe their teacher's reactions to bullying as unacceptable and harmful behaviour, they are less prone to justify this behaviour. If learners notice that their teacher accepts such behaviour from one of their peers and allows it to manifest, they will assume that they can behave similarly. Alternatively, if teachers respond to incidents of bullying by verbally or physically attacking a learner, learners could then replicate such behaviour towards the teacher and classmates. The sequitur is that teachers have some control over how learners react and behave in the classroom.

Avoiding retaliation may be one of the most effective procedures in curbing learner-to-teacher bullying. However, this does not mean that the teacher should remain a quiescent party in their own humiliation or trauma. While not retaliating towards learner bullies may be commendable, it does not stop learners from continuing to bully their teachers. Learners should be aware that there are consequences for their actions and that they cannot disrespect their teacher or classmates or behave aggressively. Avoiding retaliation prevents further damage or harm to both the victim and perpetrator of learner-to-teacher bullying. It should, however, not be used in fear by the teacher or to prevent loss of one's job or getting into trouble, especially when the teacher has done nothing wrong.

4.4.2.8 Summary of Theme 2

The findings from theme 2 convey that teachers, parents, and SMTs all contribute to managing learner-to-teacher bullying. Processes and procedures identified by participants allude that teachers as well as schools are in control of eliminating learner-to-teacher bullying from the school and classroom environment. Teachers identified various procedures and processes which they followed when incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying occurred, namely reporting incidents, teachers dismissing lessons, teachers ignoring learners, one-on-one discussions with learners, involvement of parents and SMTs, disciplinary hearings and teachers avoiding retaliation. The findings from the above sub-themes direct attention to procedures and processes that may be effective in preventing further incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying in the classroom. However, it does not comfort teachers nor does it reassure them that learner-to-teacher bullying may not recur. These findings signal that these procedures and processes can be effective in managing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying if the consequences of their actions are brought to the learner's attention, teachers are supported and protected by the school, parents play a role in shaping learners behaviour and SMTs place equal emphasis on teacher protection and the implications for teachers as they do for learners.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Strategies to manage learner-to-teacher bullying

Schools and teachers need to focus on developing and implementing long term prevention and management strategies to successfully address learner-to-teacher bullying and improve the safety of school environments for teachers. It is imperative that such strategies involve teachers and learners as both are directly impacted by bullying whether they are victims, perpetrators or even bystanders. Even if such strategies are part of school codes of conduct or policies, they are seldomly implemented. Participants proposed strategies that should be developed and implemented in secondary schools to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. These strategies include the following:

− Educating learners about teacher bullying;

- Investigating learner social backgrounds;
- Addressing learner behaviour; and
- Enforcing school rules and policies.

These sub-themes will be discussed in the paragraphs below:

4.4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Educating learners about teacher bullying

Educating learners about teacher bullying and its effects on teachers is regarded as a strategy both teachers and the school management teams should adopt to enable schools to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. Participants encouraged educating learners as a means of drawing attention to the phenomenon. Parents should also play a role in educating their children on acceptable behaviour, especially respect and attitude to teachers. The findings below indicate that educating learners could be a strategy to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying:

If we don't educate learners they will continue to harm us and assume it's okay. Incorporating learner-to-teacher bullying education into lessons will have a big impact on the way learners treat teachers **(T3).**

We need to educate kids on what is improper or proper behaviour and teach kids what bullying does to teachers and that even though we don't retaliate we still get hurt. It will also show awareness of the consequences teacher bullying has on teaching and learning **(T4).**

Parents need to be educated about how to talk about teachers in front of their kids because they can't be a generalization that teachers are below everybody else. Parents and learners need to understand that it's very deep, it's a painful thing that they are doing **(T9).**

Teachers believed that if learners are educated on the topic of learner-to-teacher bullying they are likely to understand what it entails and how it affects teachers. Educating learners was identified as a strategy for managing learner-to-teacher

bullying. Learners need to be aware that bullying does not only take place between learners, but teachers are also victims of learner bullying. Findings of this nature suggest that if schools fail to educate learners on learner-to-teacher bullying, then they will continue to bully their teachers because they see nothing wrong with their behaviour and actions. Schools should include lessons on learner-to-teacher bullying similarly to teaching them life skills. Educating learners on learner-to-teacher bullying is a strategy that should be implemented by school management in the event that teachers feel too emotional or even embarrassed to tell learners that they have been victims of learner-to-teacher bullying. On the other hand, as part of educating learners, if teachers share their experiences they provide first hand experience of what learner-to-teacher bullying is and the impact on teachers and the school culture.

If learners continue to bully and behave badly towards their teachers, learning and teaching is negatively impacted, and the school environment contributes to a breeding ground for learner violence. Learner behaviour and actions are shaped during their school years and responsibility is placed on teachers as role models of good acceptable behaviour. If teachers are unable to rectify learner bullying behaviour towards them, it is quite conceivable that learners will come to believe that they can bully anyone - not just their teachers. Parents play a default role in enforcing and modeling good behaviour but if parents are unable to distinguish between good and bad behaviour themselves or are the instigators of teacher bullying, then it is up to the schools to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. Undoubtedly, parents need to change their behaviour towards teachers and refrain from demoralizing teachers in front of their children. If learners witness their parents bullying their teachers, then they too will assume that this behaviour is acceptable and are likely to replicate it. De Wet (2020) backs this with the assertion that parents' aggressive attitudes towards teachers may be a contributing factor to learner-to-teacher bullying.

If learners fail to obey their teachers, then the school management team should step in to educate learners on teacher bullying and address behaviour that causes

learner-to-teacher bullying. However, strategies implemented to manage learner-to-teacher bullying should include teachers, learners, parents and the school management. Teachers are at the center of education and should not have to solely defend themselves against learner bullying. Instead, if teachers are supported by parents and the SMT, they will be more confident in disciplining the learners and educating them on learner-to-teacher bullying. As participants recounted, learner-to-teacher bullying is a *"painful"* experience and teachers should be supported and not made to feel as if they are the reason for the learner's behavioiur. Teachers affirmed that learners need to be mindful about the impact of their behaviour and actions on their teachers, especially negative bullying behaviour. Participants declared that they need to speak out as teachers so that learners can become cognisant of the effect of their actions, understand what is *"proper and improper"* behaviour and thus contribute to moulding a generation of respectful non-aggressive children.

Some learners don't always know how to express their emotions and often use aggression to display feelings. Therefore, schools need to consider educating learners on teacher bullying to highlight communication messages that verify how to act and react towards someone and in this manner contribute to a population of less violent and aggressive young adults. If learners are knowledgeable about learner-to-teacher bullying, they may not allow their peers or classmates to bully teachers. The knowledge and understanding gained could contribute to preventing and stopping bullying behaviour as they should no longer be bystanders or encourage learner-to-teacher bullying. Midgett and Doumas (2016) observed that if teachers include bullying interventions in their lessons then learners may be motivated to intervene when they witness bullying behaviour in the class rather than be bystanders who allow the bullying to proceed. Educating learners on learner-to-teacher bullying is a strategy to manage learner-to-teacher bullying that should be implemented as a holistic school approach as it is the responsibility of all stakeholders within the school and the school community.

4.4.3.2 Sub-Theme 2: Investigating learner social backgrounds

Participants named investigating learner social backgrounds as a strategy to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. The participants recognized factors such as home environment, relationships with parents and family members, and economic status as comprising learner social backgrounds. Schools can determine why learners resort to teacher bullying by investigating their social background. The responses below accentuate the importance of investigating learner social background as a strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying:

She told me her background and I understood why she did what she did and why she behaved in an aggressive or defensive way. She was being abused by her stepfather and she didn't have any relationship with her mother or sister **(T4).**

I think it's very important for teachers to develop a relationship with learners. To not see the learners as just a pupil that they're teaching in a job context. But they also need to look at learners as people with issues and try and find out more about the learners and their backgrounds and their families and what they're experiencing at home **(T5).**

I think there's more to it, particularly family background, as to why a child would react the way they do in front of their peers or towards a teacher. The background of the child plays a role - how learners behavior in class and their academic performance influences their actions **(T6).**

Learners face many emotional and psychological challenges emanating from their social backgrounds, which influences their behaviour at school. Learners spend most of their time in the school environment and often project their emotions and stress caused by their home environments on their teachers and classmates. It was noted from the findings above that once teachers spoke to the bully and understood their background, they could appreciate the learner's aggressive reaction towards them. This creates an opportunity for teachers and learners to build positive relationships that go beyond the classroom environment. The findings mesh with a

study conducted by Qiao (2018), which suggests that to effectively prevent learner-to-teacher bullying, teachers need to develop positive and respectful relationships with their learners, which enable them to communicate and understand learners' backgrounds. Participants contemplated that the learners also face challenges and have issues that they do not know how to overcome or manage because they are still children. Teachers can build positive relationships with learners and by getting to know learners backgrounds and experiences that negatively influence their behaviour. This leads to a safer school and classroom environment where learners consider teachers as understanding adults who genuinely care. Such understanding guides teachers to react to learner behaviour in a positive way, since they now know that learners are facing social challenges at home and their behaviour may not be a true reflection of how they view their teacher. However, learners should not perceive this as licence to treat teachers how they please, but as a platform where they can feel understood and free to express themselves as they receive the emotional or psychological support that they need. One participant disclosed that her relationship with the learner who bullied her improved once she made the effort to understand the learner and what she was experiencing in her home environment which triggered her bullying behaviour.

Teaching should not merely revolve around subject knowledge. Time should be spent on building relationships with learners to relieve them of emotional or psychological pressures that emanate from the home environment. Participants suggest that if learners view the school and classroom environment as a safe space for more than just learning that encourages them to express themselves, then they are more likely to approach their teachers for guidance on social challenges they face. Teachers agree that learner family background is one of the key factors which contributes to their behaviour. If learners experience or witness violence in their home environment or within their communities, they may replicate that behaviour in the school environment. Lowe, Picknoll, Farringdon, Chivers and Rycroft (2020) infer that communities with a high crime rate are most likely to record a higher rate of learners physically attacking teachers. Schools are made up of diverse learners from different backgrounds and include learners from communities that adopt violence as a way of resolving problems. Sikhakhane, Muthukrishna and Martin

(2018) concur that bullying at school is often a reflection of the level of violence to which learners are exposed in their communities. If teachers can establish the learner's experience of violence in their home environment as their trigger for similar behaviour at shcool, they are able to provide learners with the necessary help, which can alter the aggressive behaviour that learners assume is correct. Learners are also affected by financial instability. Participants noticed that learners may be treated differently by the school or even bullied by their classmates if parents are unable to pay school fees. This could be a stimulant for learners expressing their feelings negatively towards the teacher.

Another potential cause for learner-to-teacher bullying gleaned from this study is that learners may blame teachers for their unsatisfactory academic performance. If learners are failing a subject or get low marks, they can bully the teacher into passing them or giving them higher marks. Learners may even aggressively attack teachers as a result of undesirable or poor academic performance. Learner academic performance may also be influenced by their social background. Many learners come from home environments or communities that neglect education and learning. As a result, learners face academic challenges on their own without the support of family and friends. If teachers and schools are able to investigate learner backgrounds or gain more knowledge about the environment from which they come, then perhaps learners can be assisted with the necessary educational, emotional, psychological and even financial support. The strategy of investigating learner backgrounds to manage learner-to-teacher bullying may help schools to determine the causes of learners bullying their teachers. This will enable schools to focus on providing learners with the necessary support to overcome their socio-economic challenges that influence their behaviour towards teachers.

4.4.3.3 Sub-Theme 3: Addressing learner behaviour

An immediate response to teacher bullying is an effective strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. Teachers must address the bully and the entire class so that everyone is made aware of the seriousness of what has happened. Teachers advocated that the impact of acting immediately on learner-to-teacher bullying is far

greater than waiting till the next day to lecture learners on their behaviour. The responses below bolster the notion that addressing an incident of teacher bullying immediately will be an effective strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying:

When a learner says something – when I first started teaching I would just ignore it and get scared but now with experience you learn that the next day there will be two or three learners that do the same thing - you say I think you need to be excused for a few seconds outside. It's a technique because you are dealing with that specific individual immediately **(T3).**

Learners must be reprimanded and told that what they just did is wrong. I would stop it immediately, address it and identify it as bullying so that the rest of the class or the learner knows that this is what they are doing and it is wrong **(T5).**

React immediately so that you take control of the class, address what has happened with the whole class and tell them it's wrong. Stopping learner-to-teacher bullying immediately is more effective than waiting till the next day **(T10).**

By immediately addressing incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying, learners were reprimanded and made aware that their behaviour was unacceptable. It seems that teachers need to halt learner behaviour before it manifests into more overpowering behaviour. This strategy of reprimanding the learners immediately seems to be more effective than the strategies of leaving the classroom or ignoring learner behaviour. Participants also added that if the teacher is unable to reprimand the learners, a senior teacher should be called in to assist immediately. It seems that some teachers may lack confidence or the skills to address learner-to-teacher bullying without losing control of their class. Hlophe, Morojele and Motsa (2017) reinforce the opinion that teachers need to have the necessary skills to immediately respond to and recognize bullying in the school context. Once the learners leave the classroom they probably forget or no longer view what their peers have done as a serious problem as there were no immediate consequences for the bullying behaviour. If teachers do nothing, learners will continue their behaviour and this can intensify from one learner to more over time. The teacher will eventually lose all

control and no longer be the figure of authority in the classroom environment. Learners may lose respect for the teacher and become unruly. However, if the teacher immediately addresses incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying, then the perpetrators' classmates will witness the teacher's policy of non-tolerance of bullying behaviour in the classroom. This may rectify the learner's behaviour and discourage further incidents.

Teachers believed that by identifying and addressing learner-to-teacher bullying, learners became aware of what learner-to-teacher bullying was which prevented further incidents. Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) uphold that belief: interventions should aim to address learner-to-teacher bullying and draw attention to the seriousness of it. Participants opined that addressing the entire class on learner-to-teacher bullying is more effective as other learners have witnessed the incident and understand that this bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the classroom environment. Teachers contribute to the reduction of learner-to-teacher bullying incidents by addressing them. The effectiveness of this strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying is based on teachers following the process of identifying, recognizing and reprimanding learners immediately when an incident occurs. This will enable learners to recognize their behaviour as teacher bullying and understand that it is a serious offence with consequences.

4.4.3.4 Sub-Theme 4: Enforcing school rules and policies

School rules and policies must be enforced by all teachers and the school management team to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. Participants pinpointed enforcing school rules and policies as a strategy to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying. The findings below button down the connotation that implementing school rules and policies in the classroom and the school environment manage learner-to-teacher bullying. Teachers need to be consistent in enforcing their classroom rules. Participants responses to enforcing school rules and policies as a strategy for managing learner-to-teacher bullying:

The reality is that the theory and practical side of school policies and school rules are not at the same level. We have bullying policies in theory, but they are not practiced and sometimes we as teachers don't enforce school rules or abide by them. This confuses learners **(T6).**

The availability and the implementation of these policies would assist greatly in decreasing the occurrence of bullying because if kids know that there are consequences for their actions they would know not to bullying teachers and it will have a greater impact than just having rules on paper. Rules must be enforced by the whole school **(T8).**

As a teacher you also need to adhere to your classroom rules so that the learners don't cross those lines and they are aware of the rules and they follow and stick to that. If rules are not applied in the class learners will behave however they like and do whatever they want **(T10).**

Teachers were able to create a safer environment with consistent discipline by enforcing classroom rules, which enabled them to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying. Consistent enforcement of the classroom rules encourage learners to remember and be conscious of their actions as they know that bad behaviour will result in consequences - they will not easily get away with their behaviour. School rules should be enforced inside and outside the classroom. If learners are aware that some teachers do not enforce rules or are more lenient compared to other teachers, then they may be less likely to abide by the rules or take the teachers who do enforce the rules seriously. Learners may even retaliate towards teachers who are stricter or enforce the rules as they might assume that these teachers dislike them or are against them rather than that the teachers are essentially doing their job. Consistent enforcment of school rules prevents learners from questioning school discipline or retaliating. Samson (2015) agrees that classroom rules should be enforced in order to prevent bullying. Participants suggested that school policies, and rules are not on the *'same level'.* This means that policies and rules are available in theory but are not enforced or implemented in the classroom and school environment. This supposes that there might be specific policies or school rules on

learner-to-teacher bullying but teachers and learners are not aware of these rules and their consequences because they are not implemented.

Teachers thought that they themselves change or alter rules at times, which may confuse learners and encourage bad behaviour. Learners may view their teacher as being easy to manipulate and may bully their teacher into dismissing bad behaviour or disregarding classroom rules if teachers change or bend the rules for certain learners. This could create a classroom environment which may lead to learner-to-teacher bullying if teachers lose control over their classroom; and when they try to enforce school or classroom rules, learners could retaliate or even disregard their authority in the classroom. Participants insisted that consistency in enforcing classroom rules and school policies will make this an effective strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. Mitchell (2016) also pegged clear rules and well-designed policies that included implementation and sanctions as effective strategies in combating bullying in the school environment. The inference drawn is that school management and teachers are responsible for implementing rules and policies in the school environment, and not only enforcing but abiding by these rules.

School rules and policies will remind the learners about keeping the school environment safe, thereby possibly reducing learner-to-teacher bullying. Moon, Morash and McCluskey (2019) support the idea of the application of fairness in discipline. Such schools are less likely to experience violence such as physical assaults and other forms of bullying against the teachers. It seems that learners will also be aware of the consequences that they will face if they fail to abide by anti-learner-to-teacher bullying rules and policies. Rules and policies should not only be theorised but should be applied to the school environment, especially in the classroom. If rules and policies are put into practice and incorporated into lessons, then learners will be consistently aware of the consequences of their actions. However, rules and policies must be implemented equally by all teachers. Teachers also need to adhere to the classroom rules created. Best practice evidence shows that classroom rules are developed by the learners with the help of the teachers. This contributes to ensuring that the learners follow these rules. Teachers set the

tone and determine the behaviour of learners. Scholars such as Hoffmann (2013) write that teachers need to be firm and enforce discipline when faced with bullying. Teachers set an example for learners and if the teacher is not going to follow the rules or be consistent in enforcing them, then managing learner-to-teacher bullying or any misbehaviour will be a difficult task for the teacher. Ideally, learners should be aware of how the different consequences for different behaviours, especially when it comes to discipline or enforcing rules. Teachers tend to bend the rules for certain learners. If a learner breaks one of the classroom rules, the teacher must reprimand the learner in the same way that he or she would do if it were a different learner. Consistency in enforcing classroom rules and policies is another of the effective ways of maintaining discipline in schools.

4.4.4 Summary of Theme 3

Theme 3 brought to light that effective strategies in managing learner-to-teacher bullying are based on educating learners, investigating learner social backgrounds, addressing learner behaviour and enforcing school rules and policies. However, these strategies can only be effective if they are implemented fairly and consistently by the teachers and the school management teams (Hoffmann, 2013). Learner-to-teacher bullying is influenced by harsh factors which manifest in the school, home and community environments of the learners. Schools need to educate learners on teacher bullying and the impact of this on the school culture and the lives of the teachers. Teachers should also turn a bullying incident into a learning experience, in this way educating learners on learner-to-teacher bullying and encouraging the prevention of it (Gleason, 2011). Schools are able to identify underlying factors which cause learner-to-teacher bullying by investigating learner backgrounds, and, in so doing, provide learners with the necessary support to overcome behavioural challenges stemming from the learners socio-economic background. When the challenges related to teacher bullying are immediately addressed and bullies are confronted, teachers are enabled to prevent and stop further bullying behaviour. Learners need to be aware of the negative impact of their actions on their teachers and that learner-to-teacher bullying affects not only teachers but also the learning culture. The enforcement of rules and policies creates a school environment which

discourages learner-to-teacher bullying and protects teachers from victimization. These strategies as advanced by the participants may be effective in managing learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools.

4.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the research findings and analysis in relation to the research questions and literature reviewed. The themes formulated in this chapter were aligned with the research questions. The chapter also provided a detailed overview of the biographical information of the participants and the research site. The next chapter concludes the research report by providing a summary of the research findings, the recommendations and limitations that were deduced from this study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 4, the researcher analysed and discussed the data collected. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from teachers in public secondary school of the Tshwane South District. Participants' responses were transcribed and then coded to identify themes and sub-themes aligned to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Each theme was analysed and discussed with reference to reviewed literature. Direct quotations from the participants, reviewed literature and the Social Cognitive Learning Theory underpinned discussion of each theme. This chapter will provide a summary of the research findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations. The researcher will also discuss the limitations and delimitations of the study in this chapter.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Three main findings informed by the research questions emerged from the study and is outlined below.

5.2.1 The manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools.

It was found that a variety of school and classroom factors contributed to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools. Learner-to-teacher bullying manifests in schools as a result of insufficient teacher protection. The research findings show a dearth of school policies or codes of conduct that protect the teacher. There is a direct correlation between lack of protection of the teacher , learner misbehaviour and lack of consequences for bullying behaviour. The classroom setting was another contributing factor to the manifestation of

learner-to-teacher bullying. Seating arrangements where learners were seated with friends or peers and, therefore, could support each other, encouraged this phenomenon. Consequently, learner-to-teacher bullying created a power imbalance between the teacher and the learners. Another important finding is the teachers' competence and confidence in their subject knowledge as a contributor to them being easy targets and victims of learner-to-teacher bullying. Such situations ultimately led to learners being disrespectful towards their teachers.

A significant finding is that schools that do not have or implement discipline and classroom rules facilitate learner-to-teacher bullying and learners display of arrogance towards their teachers. This study found that discipline needs to be fairly and consistently applied to eliminate learner aggressive behaviour towards teachers. The lack of classroom rules results in ill-disciplined learners. Learner-to-teacher bullying was also caused by different teaching styles as learners compared teachers to each other and disliked new teachers or rejected a different teaching style.

In addition to teaching capability, learner behaviour was found to be one of the main causes of learner-to-teacher bullying. Learner behaviour is shaped by teachers as well as parents, and learners often replicated behaviour which they witnessed either in the home or school environment. In the same vein, the teacher's behaviour was also a precipitating factor in learner-to-teacher bullying. The teachers' behaviour was an impetus for how learners behaved or retaliated towards their teacher. Harsh reprimands by the teachers often spark learner aggression, hence they resort to defence mechanisms. In summary, this study has demonstrated that the following factors contribute to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools:

- Insufficient teacher protection;
- Classroom setting;
- Teachers subject knowledge;
- Discipline;
- Classroom rules;

- Teaching style;
- Learner behaviour; and
- Teacher behaviour

5.2.2 Procedures and processes followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in secondary schools.

This study determined that there are no set procedures or processes stipulated by schools on what should be done when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred. Most participants reported incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying to HODs, principals and grade tutors. This compelled the school to acknowledge that such behaviour does occur, and that action needs to be taken to protect the teachers. Teachers also used the procedure of dismissing lessons when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred to prevent the incident from escalating into further bullying or retaliation. This tactic prevented the entire class from getting into an uproar and teachers were able to have a bit more control of the situation without resorting to unprofessional action which could potentially jeopardize their careers. Learners are thus discouraged from bullying teachers. Often times, teachers did not retaliate, which is exemplary to other learners that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and should not be used as a means to resolve disputes. It was found that if teachers ignored learner bullies, who often expected a reaction from them, a teaching and learning environment that rejected learner-to-teacher bullying was established.

Participants also testified that the process of having a one-on-one conversation or discussion with the learner following an incident of learner-to-teacher bullying was effective as teachers were able to reprimand and confront the learners without involving their peers. This process also enabled teachers to identify underlying causes for learners bullying them in several cases. A safe non-judgemental space is created for free expression when teachers conduct one-on-one discussions with perpetrators. Aggrieved teachers also followed processes that involved the intervention of parents and school management teams rather than reliance on their own processes. Such intervention strategies made it clear to the learners that their

actions and behaviour were unacceptable and constituted a serious offence. Sometimes learners had replicated their parent's behaviour and assumed that it was acceptable to behave aggressively towards their teachers.

Some of the processes followed by schools included disciplinary hearings. Disciplinary hearings were often one of the consequence management strategies used to minimise learner-to-teacher bullying. Strategies like these are lengthy and often did not deter learner-to-teacher bullying. Suspension or expulsion was rarely the outcome of disciplinary hearings. Hence, learners did not regard this strategy as punitive or coercive to cease their behaviour and continued to bully their teachers upon return to school. Participants adopted a process of avoiding retaliation when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred to avert negative implications for their careers. Teachers shunned retaliation despite feeling angry and humiliated as this protected them from being implicated as the instigators of learner-to-teacher bullying. In brief, the following processes and procedures were followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred in public secondary schools:

- Reporting incidents;
- Teachers dismissing classes;
- Teachers ignore learners;
- Learner one-on-one discussions;
- Involving parents and school management;
- Disciplinary hearings; and
- Teachers avoiding retaliation

5.2.3 Strategies employed in secondary schools to effectively manage learner to-teacher bullying.

This study identified several strategies that teachers implement to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying. One of the strategies is to educate the learners on teacher bullying and the effect it has on the teachers. One of the effects of this strategy is to discourage learner-to-teacher bullying. This strategy is based on the

assumption that learners were unaware that their behaviour and actions constituted teacher bullying. Participants recognised investigating learner social backgrounds as a strategy to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. It has been established in literature and by this study that learner social backgrounds influence their behaviour, and in many cases they replicated that behaviour towards their teachers - where the home or community environment exposed them to violence. Unstable social backgrounds was a determining factor for learner aggression. Participants were convinced that learner bullying behaviour was a result of underlying problems or issues in their social backgrounds.

The urgency with which learner behaviour was addressed was found to be effective. This strategy discouraged further incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying and allowed the teacher to take control of the situation without it escalating. Often, teacher responses to bullying demonstrated how learners would subsequently behave. The findings push for teachers and the school management team to implement school rules and policies as a strategy in managing learner-to-teacher bullying. The implementation of school rules and policies that ensure consistent and fair discipline is a strong factor in eradicating teacher bullying from the school environment. School rules and policies need to be respected and adhered to as a means of creating a safe learning and teaching environment for both teachers and learners. It was found that school policies and rules were available in theory but not necessarily implemented. This study identified strategies were implemented to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying as:

- Educating learners;
- Investigating learners' social backgrounds;
- Addressing learner behaviour; and
- Implementation of the school rules and policies

These strategies must be implemented consistently and fairly by both teachers and the school management team in order to combat and manage learner-to-teacher bullying.

5.3 Delimitations of the study

The delimitations are the boundaries set by the researcher. One such delimitation is the inclusion of only public secondary schools in the Tshwane South District as these schools were located at a proximity accessible to the researcher. This delimitation was inevitable as secondary schools were under pressure to complete the curriculum as a result of the loss of valuable teaching and learning time due to the lockdown restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The process of data collection during the restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic was a further delimitation as the researcher found it extremely difficult and challenging to access schools and conduct interviews. Schools and participants were reluctant to participate as they were occupied with their own challenges in trying to adapt to teaching during a pandemic. The researcher had to opt for virtual interviews with participants as schools did not allow visitors onto the school property.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study became evident during data collection. Schools and participants were hesitant to participate as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The researcher had to engage in multiple follow-ups and rescheduling of interviews before any data collection took place. As discussed in the delimitations, the researcher improvised with virtual interviews to encourage and accommodate participants to participate in this study as the usual practice of face-to-face interviews could not be conducted. Furthermore, the results of the study will not be generalised to other schools with similar challenges, but they could guide. It is hoped that such schools will find it helpful to draft their policies based on the findings of this study.

5.5 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to determine how teachers in public secondary schools managed learner-to-teacher bullying by exploring how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests itself in schools, the procedures followed in managing learner-to-teacher bullying and possible strategies for the effective management of learner-to-teacher bullying. This study concludes that the root causes of learner-to-teacher bullying must be identified in order to effectively manage this behaviour. Various social, environmental and personal factors contribute to the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools. This study can conclusively state that teachers use a variety of procedures, processes and strategies to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. If these procedures, processes and strategies are consistently and fairly implemented by all the school stakeholders, most forms of teacher bullying could be eliminated. Literature has elaborated that many South African schools face learner-to-teacher bullying of colossal proportions. This is increasingly becoming a challenge for both novice and experienced teachers.

One of the most telling conclusions is that teachers require protection from their schools and the Department of Basic Education to manage learner-to-teacher bullying. The teaching profession is already undermined and undervalued by communities. Teacher attrition will be the outcome if nothing is done to protect them. Scarce skills will be lost to industry and to other countries.

5.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in relation to the management of learner-to-teacher bullying of secondary school teachers:

5.6.1 Recommendations to address the manifestation of learner-to-teacher bullying in secondary schools

The researcher recommends that:

- Learners should be included in the formulation of school and classroom rules which should incorporate learner-to-teacher bullying and its consequences to increase learner awareness.
- Committees should be established and include community structures to holistically involve all stakeholders in the prevention and management of learner-to-teacher bullying.
- The Department of Basic Education, together with schools, should formulate a anti-bullying policy that protects teachers from learner-to-teacher bullying.

5.6.2 Recommendations for procedures and processes to be followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in the secondary schools

The researcher recommends that

- Schools develop clear and specific procedures and processes for teachers to follow to prevent uncertainty when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs.
- Schools need to educate and train teachers on procedures and processes to follow when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs.
- The school management team should include consequences of learner-to-teacher bullying in the school code of conduct so that learners and parents are informed of the consequences bullying teachers.
- School Governing Bodies should be de-facto members of disciplinary committees to ensure that teachers are protected, and an environment favourable to teaching and learning is created.

5.6.3 Recommendations on strategies to be implemented to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying

The researcher recommends that

- Schools should have campaigns to create awareness of the challenges faced by teachers when bullying occurs.

- Schools should provide psychological support for teachers who are victims of learner-to-teacher bullying.

- Incidents of learner-to-teacher bullying should be dealt with harshly as the implications of learner-to-teacher bullying are harmful to teachers.

- The GDE should formulate strategies that protect the dignity and rights of teachers in the profession.

- Learners need to be educated on the impact teacher bullying has on the teachers and how their actions are a direct infringement on teacher rights.

- Schools should implement learner friendly programs which aim to rectify learner aggressive and bullying behaviour and provide learners with the necessary psychological and emotional support.

5.6.4 Recommendations for further research

It is recommended that research should be conducted on:

- The effective contribution of strategies such as anti-bullying policies and codes of conduct towards teacher protection.

- The stakeholders' participation in collaborative activities as a means of creating an enabling teaching and learning environment

- The socio-economic factors that inhibit and influence appropriate learner behaviour.

- Resources and/or training programs that would develop effective ways to educate learners about learner-to-teacher bullying and the impact it has on teaching and learning.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Permission letter from GDE
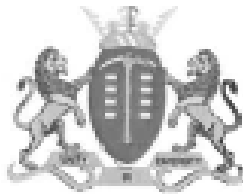
GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	18 November 2019
Validity of Research Approval:	10 February 2020 – 30 September 2020 2018/469A
Name of Researcher:	Chatty P
Address of Researcher:	198 15ᵗʰ Avenue
	Laudium
	Pretoria, 0037
Telephone Number:	076 846 4542
Email address:	prishodhinichatty@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools.
Type of qualification	BEd Masters
Number and type of schools:	Four Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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

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

18/11/2019

Making education a societal priority

1

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7ᵗʰ Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Mrs Faith Tshabalala
Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 18/11/2019

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355-0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

ANNEXURE B: Participants permission and consent letters

Letter to schools' principals:

Letter to the Principal requesting permission to collect data

Dear Principal

I am a master's student at the University of Pretoria. My research topic is **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to interview teachers at your school that have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying. I request you to assist me in identifying those teachers. I also request permission to have access to a copy of the school code of conduct and anti-bullying policy.

Learner-to-teacher bullying involves bullying in the workplace. The purpose of my study is to explore how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests in schools, the procedures followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in schools and the strategies put into place to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying.

With your permission to conduct my research, data collection will take place on the school premises after school hours through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the sampled teachers. I also request permission to record the interviews. Recordings will under no circumstances be shared with the public. The teachers as well as the schools identified will be protected. The teachers will be allowed to discontinue participation at any time during the interviews. The findings of my study may provide insight on how learner-to-teacher bullying is managed at schools and how the school's code of conduct and anti-bullying policies protect teachers against learner bullying or not.

If you grant me access to your school and permit me to interview your teachers that have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying and are aware that the interview will be recorded for the purpose of my research only, please fill in the consent form below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me via email or at the contact numbers provided below.

Yours sincerely.

Name of Student: Ms. Prishodhini Chatty

Signature of student: _____

Contact student: 076 846 4542

Email: prishodhinichatty@gmail.com

Name of Supervisor: Mrs. N. Mhlanga

Signature of Supervisor: _____

Contact supervisor: 072 259 4865

Email: nontuthuzelo.mhlanga@up.ac.za

Consent letters from schools' principals:

Principal's Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent ̶I ̶d̶o̶ ̶n̶o̶t̶ ̶g̶i̶v̶e̶ ̶c̶o̶n̶s̶e̶n̶t̶ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me as well as teachers that have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying at my school for the purpose of her research, titled **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that the identity of the school, its documents and participants will be kept confidential and teachers from my school and I can discontinue participation at any time during the interviews. I grant permission for the researcher to have full access to the school code of conduct and anti-bullying policy and to record the interviews with each participant. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____2020/03/02_____

Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Principal's Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / do
not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me as
well as teachers that have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying at my school for the
purpose of her research, titled **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public
secondary schools**. I am fully aware that the identity of the school, its documents
and participants will be kept confidential and teachers from my school and I can
discontinue participation at any time during the interviews. I grant permission for the
researcher to have full access to the school code of conduct and anti-bullying policy
and to record the interviews with each participant. No tuition time will be lost, no
incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments
during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 20 / 07 / 2020

Letter to participants:

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Letter to participate in research

Dear Teacher

Title of the Research Project

Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools.

I am a master's student at the University of Pretoria. My research title is **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to interview you as part of my research in exploring how teachers and the SMT manage learner-to-teacher bullying.

The aim of my research is to explore how learner-to-teacher bullying is managed in public secondary schools. Learner-to-teacher bullying involves bullying in the workplace. The purpose of my study is to explore how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests in schools, the procedures followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurs in schools and the strategies put into place to effectively manage learner-to-teacher bullying. The reason for interviewing you is to gain an understanding of your experience with learner-to-teacher bullying as well as to capture your opinion on learner-to-teacher bullying. Your contribution will allow me to share your views anonymously through my research with teachers who have similar experiences of learner-to-teacher bullying.

With your permission granted to interview you, data collection will take place on the school premises after school hours through semi-structured one-on-one interviews with you. I also request permission to record the interviews. Under no circumstances

will information be shared with the public. As a participant, your identity will be protected, and you will be allowed to discontinue participation at any time during the interview.
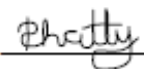
The findings of my study may provide insight on how learner-to-teacher bullying is managed at schools, the procedures followed in managing learner-to-teacher bullying and how learner-to-teacher bullying manifests in schools. The findings will also provide an analysis of the school's code of conduct as well as anti-bullying policies and whether they protect teachers against learners or not. The findings of my study may also contribute to raising awareness of learner-to-teacher bullying and to support the need for teacher protection in schools.

If you permit me to interview you and are aware that the interview will be recorded for the purpose of my research only, please fill in the participant consent form below.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me via email or at the contact numbers provided below.

Thank you.

Name of Student: Ms. Prishodhini Chatty

Signature of student: _Chatty_

Contact student: 076 846 4542

Email: prishodhinichatty@gmail.com

Name of Supervisor: Mrs. N. Mhlanga

Signature of Supervisor: _____

Contact supervisor: 072 259 4865

Email: nontuthuzelo.mhlanga@up.ac.za

Consent letters from participants:

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / do not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _02_ / _03_ / _2020_

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / do not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___5/08/2020___

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / do not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _24 July 2020_____

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ _____ (name), hereby give consent ~~I do not give consent~~ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _tNei_. _____

Date: ___29|7|2020·_____

Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ _____ (name), hereby give consent ~~I do not give consent~~ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I _____ (name), hereby give consent / do not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 31 July 2020

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ _____ (name), hereby give consent /~~do not give consent~~ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I ~~do not~~ grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 31 - 08 - 2020

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / do not give consent (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 03/08/2020 _____

Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde

Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / ~~do not give consent~~ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 07 AUGUST 2020

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Teacher Consent Form

I, _____ (name), hereby give consent / ~~do not give consent~~ (delete what is not applicable) for the researcher to interview me for the purpose of her research, titled: **Management of learner-to-teacher bullying in public secondary schools**. I am fully aware that my identity will be kept confidential and that I can discontinue participation at any time during the interview. I grant permission for the researcher to record the interview and I am fully aware that the recording will only be analysed by the researcher and her supervisor and not publicly shared. No tuition time will be lost, no incentives will be given and there will be no implications for academic assessments during the interview process.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 06-08-2020

ANNEXURE C: Interview Protocol

Interview schedule

For Teachers who have experienced learner-to-teacher bullying.

1. Please tell me how long have you been a teacher?
2. Which grades and subjects do you teach?
3. What do you understand by bullying/learner-to-teacher bullying in general?
4. Have you ever been bullied by a learner?
5. How did you know you were being bullied, i.e. which behaviour provoked/led to bullying?
6. How was your personal relationship with the learner/s who bullied you?
7. How did you deal with bullying/how did you manage your experience? Please explain.
8. Are there any policies/codes of conduct document that contains bullying at this school, with special reference to learner-to-teacher bullying?
9. What do you think are the causes of bullying behaviour against teachers in the classroom?
10. What classroom factors contribute to bullying behaviour?
11. What processes have you followed when learner-to-teacher bullying occurred in your classroom?
12. Do you think the availability and implementation of anti-bullying rules/policies decreases the occurrence of bullying? Please explain.
13. Is there anything that you want to add or say regarding learner-to-teacher bullying?