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A review of a decade's trends in bullying in selected academic and media publications

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Educational Psychology

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May 2014

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted in partial requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Educational Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Tarryn Brown

May 2014

Abstract

Bullying is a worldwide phenomenon that is receiving increasing attention worldwide. Most of the research on bullying has grown from the seminal work by Dan Olweus in the 1970s yet as society and technology has advanced so has bullying. The emergence of cyberbullying in recent literature is one of the trends that has developed in bullying discourse. This research aimed to explore this and other trends in bullying research over a ten year period (2003-2012), comparing South African, British, and international journals as well as South African and British media. Focus was given to the major themes that emerged in the various data sources, and the quantitative trends that developed from these themes. Of particular interest was how bullying is socially constructed through various media. Using a sequential exploratory design of mixed methods where the qualitative phase of analysis preceded the quantitative phase, 1047 articles were gathered and analysed. Of these, 231 articles were collected from the research journals; 431 from the South African media and 385 from the British media. Ten major themes were identified across all data sources, the results tabulated and quantified. The results indicated that research on bullying has followed specific trends over the past ten years which differ between South Africa and Britain. The trends appeared to be independent of media reports, yet research does draw on media for direction occasionally. Bullying has been socially constructed differently in South Africa and Britain, and the research suggested that public understanding may be more strongly linked to media than to journal articles. The findings therefore pointed to the fact that researchers in the field need to work on making their results known in order to shape the public's understanding of a phenomenon affecting many children globally.

Keywords: bullying, trends, media, mixed methods

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Bullying has been observed as a worldwide phenomenon that is receiving a lot of attention in research and the media (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen- Akpaida, 2008; Fraire, Prino & Sclavo, 2008; Powell & Ladd, 2010; Safran, 2007; Smith, 2004; Vlachou, Andreou, Botsoglou & Didaskalou, 2011). Growing concern for human rights has resulted in a collaborative approach to bullying within research and media publications (Smith, 2004). Although research on bullying has increased dramatically in recent years, the first major study in the field was published in 1978 by Dan Olweus, in his book *Aggression in schools: Bullies and Whipping boys.* Since the 1990's research around bullying and victimisation has grown exponentially (Smith, 2004). In South Africa, there is a need for more research on bullying and other discipline/behaviour problems in schools (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011).

This research takes a mixed-methods approach to explore the trends in bullying research over the past decade (from January 2003 to December 2012) in South African, and British psychology journals. Six newspapers will be analysed over the same time period to determine the trends in media articles on bullying. This will allow an exploration of how knowledge and understanding around bullying is constructed in Britain and in South Africa. According to Furedi (2003) bullying has become a significant social problem in Britain due to the fact that as a society, Britain may be described as being "preoccupied" with abuse as a widely occurring problem. Therefore, they support the view that bullying is prevalent and requires anti-bullying campaigns and interventions (Furedi, 2003). This can be compared to the South African society, which has long been exposed to problems of abuse, and where violence is a widespread concern (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Timm and Eskell-Blokland (2011) explored bullying as a social construct, and this framework will be followed in this research, in order to understand what bullying means in specific contexts. This will allow recommendations to be made for future research on the topic, especially in South Africa where more research is needed.

1.1 Aims and Rationale

The aims of the research were to follow the trends in bullying publications and compare South Africa and Britain to understand how bullying is socially constructed within these contexts. As mentioned by Timm and Eskell-Blokland (2011), there is a need for local research that links the theoretical with practical solutions. Due to the long term consequences of bullying it is a social problem that demands attention and well-researched intervention/prevention programs. This research provides an understanding of bullying as a social construct in order to guide the implementation of intervention/prevention programs that can address bullying in a multi-level way.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions are addressed by this research:

- What are the trends in research on bullying – what was investigated and how often, between 2003 and 2012?
- How do the themes identified in bullying research in South Africa and Britain compare?
- Does the media's focus have an impact on research conducted in journal articles?
- How has bullying been socially constructed over the last decade in South Africa and in Britain?

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

2.1 What is bullying?

Olweus's research on bullying is widely citied and his definition has become the most commonly used and accepted (Powell & Ladd, 2010). He defines bullying along three lines: it must be *intentional negative behaviour*, *repeated* over time, and usually occurs where there is a *power imbalance* so that the victim has difficulty defending themselves (Olweus, 2003). Therefore bullying can occur in a variety of environments, such as in workplaces and schools. Research on workplace bullying has also grown in the past 15 years, and similarities with school bullying have been found (Smith, 2004). This research will focus on school bullying only since the consequences of bullying on education cannot be predicted (Aluede et al., 2008).

The three defining characteristics: "premeditated, malicious and continuous" differentiate bullying from other acts such as once-off fighting or teasing (De Wet, 2003, p. 169). Within this definition, it has been added that continuous fighting, teasing, name calling and mocking can be regarded as different forms of bullying (Pillay, 2004). Bullying can involve aggressive behaviour that may escalate into major incidents of violence, yet a single violent incident or aggressive outburst cannot be classified as bullying (De Wet, 2007b). Studies on school violence indicate that although bullying alone does not encompass all acts of violence it contributes to the school climate of fear and vulnerability (De Wet, 2007b). In order to be able to accurately recognize and prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, it is necessary to combine research into a comprehensive agreed upon conventions of psychosocial and behavioural characteristics that can help explain bullying in all contexts (Safran, 2007).

Despite the fact that Olweus's definition is the most commonly cited definition of bullying, Smith (2004) highlights the problems within this definition that should be considered by researchers: *Is the intent just in terms of the act or also the consequences and intent to hurt? Does the 'negativity' of the behaviour depend on an observers' perception, or that of the victim? Does the repetition mean more than once or over a pre-specified length of time?* Differences in the ways researchers view these vital aspects of the definition, could result in different characteristics of bullying being researched. It could also result in different methods

and instruments (such as the Olweus self-report scale, teacher reports, or observations) being used to gather data (Smith, 2004). This will have an impact on the results that are obtained and researchers should therefore use multi-method approaches to try and reduce these differences and have more comparable data sets.

In a research study led by students at a school in England, the definition of bullying developed by the student researchers' and focus group participants focused mainly on the victim and their feelings (Thomson & Gunter, 2008). Therefore, even if an individual faced small behaviours such as name-calling, possessions being taken away, or exclusion from social activities; if they felt intimidated, persecuted, belittled or unsafe through the regular occurrence of these activities then it was seen as bullying (Thomson & Gunter, 2008). This type of bullying could occur even with a lack of a single perpetrator and malicious intent, which is an important view of how students' perceive bullying in relation to the commonly cited definition by researchers. This broad definition is supported in literature which suggests that bullying should be understood in terms of the effects on the victim rather than defining it by the behaviours of the bully (Thomson & Gunter, 2008). This allows more subtle forms of bullying to be recognised and dealt with.

Olweus (2003) also distinguishes between direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying involves physical contact or hurtful words, whereas indirect bullying involves subtler forms of exclusion, spreading rumours and rejection. It can also include alienation, isolation, nonverbal behaviour such as nasty facial expressions, writing notes about someone as part of spreading rumours and gossiping, and withdrawing from friendships (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

The definition of bullying has thus been extended to include indirect, relational, and social aggressions, which are all very similar and related to Olweus's description of indirect bullying (Smith, 2004). Indirect aggression is bullying through a third party, for example spreading a nasty story. Relational aggression involves damaging someone's peer relationships by excluding them, and social aggression does damage to one's self-esteem (Smith, 2004). Indirect or relational bullying is more hidden than direct physical bullying and is therefore often not picked up on by educators, which has allowed it to thrive in schools (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009). This type of bullying aims to damage the victim's reputation

and relationships and can therefore have more harmful consequences that may continue into adulthood (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

A new form of bullying, known as cyberbullying, has also started to emerge as an international problem (Powell & Ladd, 2010; Smith, 2004).

2.2 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as bullying that occurs via electronic modes such as: messages sent via cell phones, emails, chat rooms, and through social networking sites (Olweus, 2012; Powell & Ladd, 2010). Bullies using these forms of broadcasting can remain anonymous and spread hurtful rumours and pictures about the victim to a larger audience. This is what makes cyberbullying potentially devastating for a victim, and it can have detrimental effects on their education - making them more likely to carry a weapon to school, or causing them to skip school altogether (Powell & Ladd, 2010). It has also been shown that cyberbullying messages sent via email or cell-phones are often more cruel than what would be said during face-to-face bullying (De Wet, 2005).

A recent study by Olweus (2012) has challenged the claims that cyberbullying is on the increase, is a frequent occurrence, is difficult to counteract, and that it is creating many more victims and bullies, in addition to those affected by 'traditional' forms of bullying. He conducted two large scale studies of bullying in America and Norway with schools for which longitudinal data existed, using the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and he found that cyberbullying had not increased over time (as the media and some research claims), and that the prevalence of cyberbullying was lower than that for verbal and indirect forms of 'traditional' bullying. Only 10% of participants had experienced cyberbullying (Olweus, 2012). However, Menesini (2012) has countered these claims with the belief that cyberbullying is under-reported due to the lack of clarity on its definition. Possible reasons for Olweus's (2012) contradictory findings are that the questions about cyberbullying were embedded in a broader questionnaire including all forms and definitions of bullying, since he claims that cyberbullying cannot be studied in isolation, yet Menesini (2012) argues that two questions in a general bullying questionnaire does not allow the complexity of cyberbullying to be understood.

Hinduja and Patchin (2010) conducted a study using self-report measures amongst teenagers in the United States of America, and found that cyberbullying affects around 6-18% of students as victims, whilst 9-23% of students state that they have cyber bullied before. They found that the prevalence of cyberbullying was not higher than traditional forms of bullying (11-29% had been the victim of traditional bullying); complementing Olweus' (2012) claims that cyberbullying is not over-taking traditional forms of bullying in schools. However, Menesini (2012) states that cyberbullying needs to be studied as a separate occurrence and given its own forms of measure in order to accurately determine the prevalence.

2.3 Bullies and Victims

A lot of research has been done on the different types of bullies and victims and how they differ across situations. Researchers tend to agree that bullies have more aggressive personality characteristics, such as a hot temperament, and that their home environment may include "less affection, more violence and low parental monitoring" (Smith, 2004, p.3). They may also believe that in order to gain control and influence, bullying and aggression are the only option (Smith, 2004). Aggressive bullies show aggressive behaviour towards everyone, even those in higher positions of authority such as teachers; they have poor impulse control and generally see aggression as a positive characteristic that helps them dominate others. They are also not sensitive to the feelings of others and have a good self-image (De Wet, 2005). Although most bullies may be described as aggressive, there are other types of bullies spoken about in literature. Another type of bully is the anxious bully who is both anxious and aggressive due to a poor self-image. They are often uncertain, emotionally unstable and have few friends (De Wet, 2005). Other bullies may simply have become passively involved in bullying by being a supporter of a main bully who they join in order to protect themselves or obtain status. These passive bullies are easily dominated and not aggressive which means that they may show empathy with others and feel guilty after a bullying incident (De Wet, 2005).

Other factors surrounding the personalities of bullies have been debated in literature, including their levels of self-esteem, social skills, and social intelligence. The view that bullies have less social skills has been disputed by research which showed that indirect forms of bullying require high levels of social intelligence (Smith, 2004).

The research on the characteristics of victims is more consensual and states that victims usually suffer from depression, anxiety and low self-esteem making them insecure, lonely and quiet, as well as having low physical strength and poor social skills (Powell & Ladd, 2010; Smith, 2004). Victims usually do not have any close friends and their timid nature makes them an easy target who gives off the message 'I will not fight back' (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Whilst being a victim of bullying can result in lowered self-esteem and anxiety, studies have also found that insecure and unhappy children were more likely to become victims of bullies than other children (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Along with self-esteem issues, concerns with physical appearance and weight problems have also been correlated to victims of bullying.

The victim described above is known as the *passive victim* in most bullying literature, and is very different to another type of victim known as the *provocative victim* (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Provocative victims are usually more aggressive than passive victims and tend to have difficulties dealing with their extra energy. This makes them irritating in classrooms and they can get bullied due to this, even by the entire class. Due to the aggressive nature of provocative victims, they can also display bullying behaviour and are sometimes known as "bully/victims" since they partake in both sides of bullying (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Bully/victims are more likely to be physical bullies since they act in retaliation and not to seek power; however, they are also more insecure and lonely than those who are only bullies, due to their own lack of close friendships.

Another type of victim which is a relatively uncommon topic in research studies, yet very relevant to the topic of bullying is the educator as a victim of bullying by learners (De Wet, 2006). Educators can also be the bullies in classrooms, as found by De Wet (2006) in her study in Free State secondary schools.

2.4 Educators as victims and/or bullies

Although some research has proposed that bullying of educators and disruptive behaviour in class can be seen as the same thing, educator targeted bullying can be distinguished by some of the following behaviours: persistent and intentional abuse such as threats of or actual

physical and sexual harassment, swearing and mocking verbal abuse, ignoring the educator on purpose, making inappropriate personal comments about the educator, as well as damaging the educator's property (De Wet, 2006). Often, learners will use disruptive behaviour to bully their educators and disruption and insubordination develop into bullying if it continues in an attempt to challenge educators' authority and disempower them (De Wet, 2010). The main aim of bullying an educator is to undermine their confidence and authority.

In a study of educators in the Free State, South Africa, De Wet (2006) found that more than half of the educators surveyed were verbally abused by learners but it was more common for them to be bullied by colleagues at the school. Another study in 2006 (De Wet, 2010) found that 79.7% of participating educators in the Free State and the Eastern Cape provinces were exposed to bullying during their careers. Despite the fact that educators may be the victim of bullies, most are unlikely to report it resulting in a lowered awareness of the issue. Increasing the awareness may improve educators' morale and reduce the number of incidents (De Wet, 2006). In South Africa, educators also have to deal with disrespectful learners, high levels of community and school violence, economic uncertainty and a general feeling of disempowerment which makes educator targeted bullying more likely and more difficult to deal with (De Wet, 2010).

Victims of educator targeted bullying are affected psychologically and physically. They report feeling shameful, guilty and lowered assertiveness as well as headaches, sleep deprivation, eating difficulties, stress and burnout (De Wet, 2010). The educators also suffer from lowered self-esteem, embarrassment and withdrawal from other teachers

Some educators may bully learners in their class, although this is not generally reported on in literature (De Wet, 2006). Some studies may briefly refer to educators as bullies but do not offer additional information. In South Africa there have been no research studies on educators as bullies, although there is a code of conduct in place which states that educators should refrain from any form of humiliation as well as the more obvious physical and sexual abuse of learners (De Wet, 2006). In her study, De Wet (2006) found that 55.83% and 50.31% of the educators, respectively verbally and physically bullied their learners.

2.5 The prevalence of bullying

Studies have tried to determine the prevalence rates of bullying in various countries and schools and have found that reports of bullying behaviour are increasing (Olweus, 2003). However, the prevalence rates are subject to influence by language differences, and how students understand bullying as a construct, therefore it is difficult to compare across countries and studies. De Wet (2005) acknowledges that parents and educators are often unaware of the levels of bullying that occur in schools due to the fact that victims of bullies may find it difficult to speak about. Comments such as "bullying is just part of growing up" may make children feel unable to admit being bullied, especially if they fear retaliation from the bullies or that their teachers and parents will be unable to do anything to help (De Wet, 2005). Despite this, research has indicated that bullying is a common phenomenon in schools across the world. According to an American website in 2004, 40% of children in the USA were involved in bullying as either victims or bullies (Bully B'ware, 2004; as cited by De Wet, 2005).

A study by Neser et al. (2003) (as cited by De Wet, 2005) found that 60.9% of Gauteng school pupils were bullied during 2002, yet another study during the same year found that 90% of learners at a school in Johannesburg reported being bullied (De Wet, 2005). Another study that looked at learners' experiences in schools in Lenasia, Gauteng found that approximately 50% of the black learners entering the typically Indian secondary schools were often the victims of bullying such as fighting, name calling and exclusion (Pillay, 2004). These contradictory results could be due to different school settings as well as different measures being used. In the rest of South Africa the prevalence of bullying in high schools has been described as 36.3% in Cape Town and Durban schools; 11.8% in rural Mpumalanga schools; 61% in Tshwane schools and 41% nationally (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). The national statistic describes the percentage of high school learners who have been a part of bullying occurrences and does not specify if they are victims or bullies.

In her 2005 study in Free State secondary schools, De Wet (2005) found that direct verbal bullying was more common than indirect verbal bullying with direct physical aggression being the third most common type of bullying. The results indicated that 63.7% of pupils were exposed to direct verbal harassment and 25.1% of pupils were the victims of physical

harassment (De Wet, 2005). In conclusion, 83.8% of pupils thought that bullying was a problem in their school.

The above statistics highlight the fact that the extent of bullying differs from study to study as well as country to country and therefore it is difficult to get an exact picture of the prevalence rates. These differences might be due to the use of different instruments as well as different definitions of bullying used by researchers (De Wet, 2005). The prevalence rate can also depend on who the sample is, as research has shown that educators often report lower prevalence rates of bullying than learners report (De Wet, 2006).

2.6 Gender differences in bullying

According to Olweus (2003), boys bully more often than girls do and girls that do bully are more likely to engage in indirect forms of bullying. Differences in how girls and boys bully are also dependent on age, since there is little difference in 8 to 12 year olds, but a greater distinction in adolescents (Smith, 2004). Due to the subtle nature of indirect bullying by girls, it is often not noticed as much as direct bullying and is therefore under-reported (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

In South Africa, research into the perspectives of girls involved in bullying is lacking therefore Swart and Bredekamp (2009) undertook a qualitative study into the perspectives of Grade 5 girls in a Western Cape school. Part of their findings indicated that the girls experienced indirect and direct verbal bullying, cyberbullying, and social bullying. They rated social bullying as causing the most harm and being feared the most due to the negative effects of social exclusion (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009). Ways of being excluded included being left out of a birthday party, ignored by 'old friends', and excluded from classroom groups for projects. This form of bullying is especially hurtful for girls in Grade 5 due to their need for friendship and belonging to a certain group, which impacts on their sense of self and self-worth (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

De Wet (2003) points out that acts of violence in schools are often boy on boy aggression, yet girls are becoming more aggressive with some even carrying weapons to school.

2.7 Causes of bullying behaviour

The exact causes of bullying have been difficult to determine in empirical research studies, although it is accepted that the causes must be evaluated in a systemic way, looking at individual and environmental aspects. It is believed that certain personality characteristics and temperament combined with physical strength or weakness can result in bullying, especially in boys Olweus (2003). These individual personality characteristics also interact with the environment, which is dependent on teachers and parents, in order to determine the degree to which bullying problems occur (Olweus, 2003). Therefore, some parenting styles are more likely to result in children that bully whilst a general lack of parental supervision has a strong correlation with bullying behaviour (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Other factors that have been linked to bullying in schools are: poverty, below average school results, low social skills, peer pressure and belonging to groups that bully, child abuse and family violence, the effect of some movies and media images, and a deterioration of societal morals in general (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). The context of South Africa brings unique aspects to looking at how society and families impact on bullying behaviour. The high rates of violence and crime highlight how aggression and violence have become part of society's way of dealing with problems (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011).

2.8 Consequences of bullying

Bullying is an infringement on a "child's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security" which has emotional, physical, social and educational consequences (De Wet, 2005, p. 82). It is recognised in literature that bullying can have long-term effects on both the victim and the bully (De Wet, 2006; Powell & Ladd, 2010). Despite the usual emotional responses associated with victims such as embarrassment, fear, tension, shame and insecurity, research has shown that victims of bullying may suffer from psychosomatic problems, depression and anxiety, and are therefore more likely to commit suicide (De Wet, 2005; De Wet, 2007a; Powell & Ladd, 2010; Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). They also suffer psychological problems such as sleep disturbances, irritability, increased frequency of illness and disease and regression to immature comfort behaviours such as nail biting (De Wet, 2007a). Other physical consequences are headaches, bed wetting, loss of appetite, poor posture and stomach problems (De Wet, 2005).

Victims of bullying are also more likely to lose concentration in class, be absent from school, withdraw from social activities and well as extra-murals, and be so afraid of being teased that they cannot ask questions in class or admit when they do not understand work. This has profound implications for their academic performance resulting in under-achievement which may be attributed to a lower potential than what they truly possess (De Wet, 2005).

Long term problems include developing social phobia, which leads to feelings of isolation and loneliness and problems socialising with other children as well as adults (De Wet, 2005; Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Victims have lower self-esteem and clinical depression, posttraumatic stress symptoms or anxiety disorders can develop as a result of being a victim of bullying, as well as possibly committing violent acts themselves. It has been shown that 67% of the perpetrators of the school shootings that took place in America were victims of bullying (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Victims may get so fed up with being bullied that they retaliate in the only way they know how – with aggression and violence.

Negative effects of bullying for the bullies include a lack of long-term close friendships, which could lead to loneliness and feelings of rejection (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Children that bully in school may continue this behaviour into adulthood and it is likely to escalate into criminal activity. Research has also shown that children who bully in younger grades may display more violent behaviour in later grades (De Wet, 2007a). It is also possible that they have diagnosable psychiatric disorders. In order to prevent these negative consequences of bullying, interventions and prevention programs need to be targeted at early ages (Powell & Ladd, 2010). Adults who were bullies as children are more likely to display physical aggression towards their spouses and their own children (De Wet, 2007a).

In South Africa, it is important to note that bullying is not regarded as a violation of the law; however the very nature of bullying makes it easy to escalate into serious crimes such as murder, suicide, assault, theft and/or sexual crimes (De Wet, 2003). Bullies may often be members of gangs which are also committing violent crimes outside of schools (De Wet, 2007a).

Bullying can also have consequences for the schools and Department of Education. A school environment, where bullying is felt to be a common problem that is not dealt with appropriately, results in all learners becoming more aggressive and less tolerant (De Wet,

2007a). Learners may develop distrust towards their educators if they are consistently exposed to an unsafe learning environment with lack of discipline or inconsistent discipline (Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009).

According to Makgalemele (2005; as cited in De Wet, 2007a), the Gauteng provincial Department of Education was named as the respondent in an average of 12 cases a month during 2005, which were due to injuries inflicted by learners on other learners at schools in the province. This is because the State is liable for damage or loss owing to any act of omission at a public school.

2.9 What can be done to reduce/prevent bullying?

The first step in reducing and preventing bullying is recognising that it is a serious problem. According to De Wet (2006), bullying is one of the most under-estimated problems in schools as many people choose to ignore it and regard it as a normal part of children picking on each other. The need for interventions in schools is widely recognised, however the implementation and evaluation of such intervention programs has not been applied adequately. Therefore, the effectiveness of some interventions is unknown (Olweus, 2003). One of the most researched prevention programs is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which has been developed over 20 years (Olweus, 2003). It aims to change the environment in which bullying occurs, by changing the behaviour of teachers, parents and learners. A recent evaluation of the program has shown reductions in bullying by up to 50% (Olweus, 2003). This type of intervention is known as a whole-school approach to bullying which literature calls the most successful type of intervention to bullying (De Wet, 2007a). These interventions aim to change the culture and climate of a school by promoting positive, friendly and pro-social behaviour (De Wet, 2007a). Whilst whole-school approaches are endorsed by most researchers, Swart and Bredekamp (2009) highlight the need for role players within each specific context to be dealt with as individuals and for interventions to be tailored to their personalities and needs. For example, submissive victims may require self-esteem and confidence building whilst provocative victims would benefit more from social-skills training (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

One specific program that has been developed based on Olweus's approach, is called The Whole School Response Program and focuses the intervention at three levels namely, crisis management, intervention strategies and preventative responses (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009). The aim is to create a school culture that values and respects individuals and makes bullying unacceptable. This is important since it has been shown that the school climate plays a crucial role in the attitudes of school members and influences student's behaviour and learning (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

Another intervention that has been implemented with some success is a peer support and mediation program which has shown to improve the overall climate in a school (Smith, 2004). However, more research is needed to evaluate this approach. Literature also suggests that educators need to play a key role in preventing bullying at schools (De Wet, 2006). However, they often lack the proper support and training in how to do this effectively. Educators need to be trained in ways to alter social norms towards bullying, how to intervene successfully and how to work together with school psychologists to identify and help victims of bullying (De Wet, 2006). In their study of Grade 5 girls' perspectives of bullying, Swart and Bredekamp (2009) found that the participants desired support from their teachers but that they did not always understand the type of non-physical bullying they faced. The girls also stated that it would be most helpful if teachers or parents could listen and respond effectively when they discussed their bullying experiences. This highlights the need for teachers to undergo training in anti-bullying programs to understand different forms of bullying as well as to develop active listening skills (Swart & Bredekamp, 2009).

Xaba (2006) argues that South African schools need to take care of their basic safety and security features of the physical environment before they can ensure the safety of their learners. He believes that a safe and secure physical environment would make it easier to address psycho-social issues such as bullying (Xaba, 2006).

The success or failure of any anti-bullying intervention/prevention program depends on the school's willingness to cooperate and implement it properly and persistently, since a longer period of intervention is needed to make an impact on bullying, which is an enduring problem (Smith, 2004). Interventions that target younger ages, especially primary schools have also been shown to be more effective since patterns of behaviour and attitudes are easier to influence (Smith, 2004). De Wet (2007a) found that educators in Free State secondary

schools perceived interventions that involved parents as most effective, including letting parents know if their child is a bully and for parents to maintain strict discipline at home. Educators rated encouraging learners to report acts of bullying as the fourth most important prevention strategy, however they should realise that learners may be unwilling to report bullies if educators are not seen as being able to deal effectively with the problem (De Wet, 2007a). Therefore communication between educators and learners can be seen to be a prerequisite for a successful intervention program, and educators should work on promoting this.

In order for discipline in a school to be implemented and enforced in a democratic manner, governing bodies have the responsibility of creating a code of conduct outlining the disciplinary rules that pupils and teachers must follow that respects the human rights of all the individuals at a school. A school's code of conduct should promote the expected, correct behaviour and give standards for discipline (Bray, 2005). It also outlines ways to handle misconduct and conflict in order to promote and maintain a well-disciplined school environment. A code of conduct lays down the legal aspects of discipline such that unacceptable behaviours are prohibited and punished in ways that encourage more positive behaviour (Bray, 2005). According to Bray (2005) this is one way of restoring a legal equilibrium in schools where bullying and other misbehaviour has caused serious disruption.

Whilst the importance of school interventions has been noted and widely researched, bullying as a wider societal problem also needs to be addressed. As discussed in the causes to bullying, broader factors that influence bullying in schools include, but are not limited to: parenting skills, media's representations of violence and aggression, as well as bullying in homes and offices, and therefore these issues cannot be ignored when looking at bullying interventions (Powell & Ladd, 2010; Smith, 2004; Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). This is especially true in South Africa where the influence of violence is deeply entrenched in society and interventions that address all levels where violence is prominent are needed. Powell and Ladd (2010) suggest family therapy as one possible intervention that addresses bullying from a systemic approach. In cases where family interactions are contributing to the resulting bullying behaviour, family therapy can help reduce the use of aggression in homes, and improve communication techniques. This could be used in isolation or in a broader intervention program which looks at bullying at all systems-levels.

2.10 Bullying in the media

Through their study on two Italian newspapers portrayal of bullying, Fraire et al. (2008), discuss how the media allows bullying to be constructed socially. As a social representation in the media, bullying can evolve and change over time as the perceptions and emotions around it develop (Fraire et al., 2008). Therefore, the role that media plays in how bullying is understood and researched should be explored.

As already alluded to, in America, little research on bullying was conducted until after the school shootings which occurred in 1993 that received a lot of media attention (Safran, 2007). Most research was being conducted in European countries until the wave of public and media awareness sparked an increase in the research done in America. This has been an international trend as a study of two Italian newspapers from the year 2000 to 2007, concluded that bullying articles increased significantly in the years 2005-2007, making it a very pertinent social issue with a lot of public interest (Fraire et al., 2008). Not only was there an increase in newspaper articles about bullying, but there was also an increase in research on the causes and possible interventions (Fraire et al., 2008). In the South African media, newspaper headlines such as "Teachers can't be expected to deal with problem kids" (Mkhuma, 2006), "Stop the blame game and act now" (2006), "Playground violence a wake-up call to 'deadbeat' absent parents" (Hartle, 2006), and "We all have a duty to make schools safer" (Dugmore, 2006), all appeared in different publications during the same month and therefore indicate how the media can direct the public's focus onto what they feel needs to be done about bullying.

This focus by the media results in public concern which also influences policies surrounding bullying. Fraire et al. (2008) found that after newspapers reported on specific bullying incidents of a highly emotive nature, the increased attention caused the political world to react and create new policies to strengthen bullying interventions in schools. This causes us to question whether the increased relevance and attention to bullying is due to the effect of emotive stories or to the realisation of the importance of preventing bullying to reduce its negative consequences.

The nature of bullying behaviour implies that in order to fully understand it, one must study the broader social context including the role of communities and media (Safran, 2007).

Therefore, the way in which media and research integrate to form public perceptions/understandings around bullying, as well as social and political action, will be explored by this study through a social constructionist approach.

2.11 Bullying as a social construction

Social constructionism believes that knowledge is created through the ways in which language is used to discuss a subject of concern (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Burr (1995) identifies four key assumptions of a social constructionist approach. The first is that one should be critical about knowledge that is taken-for-granted (Burr, 1995). This means that the view of knowledge as impartial and objective should be critically looked at and that our perceptions are not always an accurate reflection of reality. The second assumption is that all ideas are "historically and culturally specific" meaning that how we comprehend the world is dependent on the place and time that we are in (Burr, 1995, p.3). It is also dependent on the social and economic situation in our environment and it should never be accepted that they are better than other points of view. Social constructionism therefore propagates that knowledge is derived from social processes and that people construct it through social interactions (Burr, 1995). The final assumption of a social constructionist approach is that how we view things leads to certain actions being undertaken and others being excluded (Burr, 1995). With these assumptions of social constructionism in mind, bullying is viewed as a subject that is constructed through the ways in which researchers and the media discuss it (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011).

It is also important to consider the socio-historical context of South Africa, since as a society South Africans are exposed to social stress such as high inflation rates, increased divorce rates, rising suicide and mortality rates related to AIDS (Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009). This social context could contribute to the increased aggression observed, not only in society in general but specifically by learners. Children that are exposed to aggression and violence are more likely to demonstrate aggressive behaviour towards their peers, parents and teachers (Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009). In fact a media article published in The Citizen, a South African newspaper after a victim of bullying shot his bully at school and became infamous as the 'Vosloorus case', blamed parents, teachers and society for the incidence (Coetzee, 2012). The author states that most bullies come from a poor family environment with high levels of

conflict and that society chooses instead to blame movies and video games. He believes that if the real causes of bullying "poor standard of education, low wages for teachers, the damaging effects of 'traditional' parenting and corporal punishment" are not addressed, more and more incidents of school violence will occur similar to the school shootings in America (Coetzee, 2012, p. 12). This is an example of how the media can shape public understanding of bullying since although the author makes claims about what causes bullying, it is not backed up by academic research.

In a study in a school in England which is located in a wealthy area and therefore is attended by mostly well-off students, it was found that bullying was a product of social norms and groups. In-groups, out-groups and stereotyping (of class, race and gender) all contributed to subtle bullying practices of name-calling, exclusion and 'hassling'. Therefore bullying at the school could only be understood as an interaction between identities, youth cultures and the wider social and economic relations in the community (Thomson & Gunter, 2008). Therefore, the researchers argued that an anti-bullying program would be ineffective if it did not consider the influence of groups and society expectations. Literature has suggested that bullying in schools can be seen as a failure by the school to teach its students how to be a part of a community and anti-bullying strategies should include a pro-social inclusion aim (Thomson & Gunter, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE: Methods

3.1 Theoretical framework and Paradigm

The paradigmatic approach taken in this research was an interpretive framework, specifically a social constructivist approach. Social constructionism takes a critical approach to knowledge and the ways in which it is created in social interactions. Therefore the focus is on how language and social processes make up our understandings of the world, as described above (Burr, 1995).

This is in line with the research aims as bullying is seen as a socially constructed idea that is understood depending on the ways it is spoken about in media and professional research. In order to understand how bullying has been socially constructed within the last decade, a descriptive, mixed methods research strategy has been used which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Descriptive research is used to measure variables that exist in obtainable data sets without using an experimental technique (Morgan & Sklar, 2012a).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

A review of journal articles published in the following journals, between January 2003 and December 2012 was performed: *The South African Journal of Education (SAJE), The South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP), Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHJ), School Psychology International (SPI),* the *British Journal of Educational Psychology (BJEP),* and the *British Journal of Developmental Psychology (BJDP).* The journal articles were obtained in electronic format through the University of the Witwatersrand library database; they were downloaded and saved for analysis based on their relevance. Databases used were Sabinet (*SAJE, SAJP),* Ebscohost academic search *(CAMHJ, BJEP, BJDP)* and Sage premier *(SPI),* which are all available online. The articles were searched using the search terms "bully*", "school violence", and "aggression". Articles were judged to be relevant if they had a direct or indirect emphasis on bullying, including the terms: victimisation, intimidation, and aggression in schools; school violence; as well as bullying in other contexts such as workplace bullying. However, articles in which the word "bully-" only occurred once or only in the reference list, were considered unrelated and were

excluded. The search resulted in 231 articles being included and analysed. Of these, 2 were in Afrikaans from the SAJE and were therefore not included in the qualitative analysis. The rest of the articles were almost evenly split between a direct relevance (114 articles) and an indirect relevance (115 articles) on bullying.

The journals used in this study were chosen based on their relevance to the field of Educational Psychology. The *SAJE* was included because it is the official journal of the *Education Association of South Africa*. In order to provide a wider review of South African literature, the *SAJP* was also included. Wolhuter (2011) recommends that in order for South African research in the field of education to be more related to international research, it should include comparative studies that show how international education research and South African education research compare in their focus of different topics. It is for this reason that two international journals the *CAMHJ*, and *SPI* were included. Before 2003, the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHJ)* was known as the *Southern African Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. It changed names in order to be positioned as an international journal that aims to advance the discipline of child and adolescent mental health (Flisher, 2003). Therefore, it was seen as a relevant international journal for this research. In order to compare the South African literature with British literature, the *BJEP* and *BJDP* journals were also included in the data set.

In order to determine the impact of the media on the construction of bullying in South Africa and Britain, newspaper articles from all South African newspapers were gathered using the SA Media database, and articles from *The Daily Mail* (UK) were gathered from its online website. The choice of newspapers is based on their ranking as the top selling newspapers in their countries with wide circulation (Most popular UK newspapers, 2009). *The Daily Mail* is one of the biggest selling UK newspapers with a strong reputation for covering a wide range of stories.

The SA newspaper articles were obtained by doing an online keyword search through the database SA Media, which is available through the University of the Witwatersrand online database. Articles were searched using the keywords, "bully*", "school violence", "victimisation in schools", "workplace bullying", and "school fighting", also within the specified timeframe (January 2003 to December 2012). A search for the term 'bully*' resulted in 4 497 hits. The search was then refined to only produce results in the category

'Education and Natural Sciences', which resulted in 681 hits. These articles were then read and only articles meeting the inclusion criteria were downloaded and saved for analysis, resulting in a total of 431 articles. The same search was done on the *Daily Mail (UK)* website (www.dailymail.co.uk) resulting in 2 681 articles. When refined to only include news articles (excluding sports and entertainment) there were 969 articles that were read and their relevance determined. In total, 385 articles were included in the study from the *Daily Mail (UK).*

3.3 Data Analysis

The analysis was done using a mixed methods approach and comprised qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed-methods research allows the strong points of qualitative and quantitative procedures to be utilised in order to gain a deeper understanding of certain research questions (Morgan & Sklar, 2012b). It also allows the research to go beyond simply doing a quantitative and a qualitative analysis by integrating the two into one design (Barnes, 2012). This research was conducted using a *sequential exploratory design* of mixed methods where the qualitative phase of analysis precedes the quantitative phase and guides it by forming the data which will be quantitatively analysed (Barnes, 2012). This allows for a *development* function of using mixed methods since the results of the qualitative analysis develop the quantitative analysis that will follow. The qualitative analysis done was a thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were used as the quantitative approach to summarise the data based on certain classifications outlined below.

The themes of the articles were determined through a thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis fits in with a social constructionist approach as it can be used to examine how varying discourses combine in society to produce knowledge and understandings of experiences. Braun and Clarke (2006) illustrate six steps to doing a thematic analysis, which were followed for this research. The first step was to become immersed in the data to look for patterns, meanings and begin making notes on themes. This occurred during the data collection phase as articles were briefly read to determine relevance, and tabulated with important information such as the year of publication, source, author/s, methods, results, and a brief description. From these descriptions, codes were generated to highlight parts of the data that were relevant to the research questions and which could be

grouped into themes. Once all the data was coded, it was sorted into themes. This occurred by combining codes through the development of two mind-maps, one for the research journals and a separate one for the newspaper articles in order to develop independent themes whilst relating each article to each other and into broader themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that it is important not to discard any information during this phase until everything has been reviewed and possibly changed to fit better. This was done in the next step where common sub-themes were combined and it was decided if the themes as a whole worked together and if the codes within them fit appropriately. The themes were then looked at in relation to the entire data set and it was decided that they reflected the data reliably. The main themes were then named and outlined so that there meaning was clear. This involved changing some themes into sub-themes and combining them under a common heading. The same process was followed for the newspaper articles so that the themes identified could be linked across both data sources; however, source specific themes were also included.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is defined as "the degree to which the results are repeatable" (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006, p.92). Due to the nature of counting the number of articles published in the journals during a specific time frame, this aspect of the research is repeatable and reliable. Reliability during the construction of the themes, for analysing the trends in research and media articles, was maintained through reflexivity of how the themes were conceptualised. In this way the research is transparent and all findings will be explained.

3.5 Reflexivity

In an interpretive framework, validity is achieved by being reflexive about the process of analysis and stating clearly the role of the researcher in the assumptions that are made (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Reflexivity is the act of disclosing assumptions, beliefs and biases that may shape the research process (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011). It is an important tool in gaining insight into the factors that form the research interpretations and therefore Bishop and Shepherd (2011) propose that it is paramount in order to produce honest, transparent, ethical

research. In this research, reflexivity about how the researcher viewed bullying was maintained in a journal in order to understand the influence this had on the themes that were identified.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

There are no ethical concerns with this research since all the data that was collected is in the public domain. The research was cleared by the Human Research Ethics Committee (School of Human and Community Development) and the ethical clearance number is: MEDP/13/004 IH.

CHAPTER FOUR: Results

The complete data set comprising the journals, SA media and UK media (*n=1045)* was analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Since a sequential mixed methods design was used, the qualitative thematic analysis was done first and revealed 10 main themes across all 3 data sources. These themes were derived from grouping together sub-themes that had related patterns of meaning in such a way that best illustrated the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes were then quantified using descriptive statistics in order to show the trends in bullying publications. This formed the first step of the quantitative analysis, which also involved describing each data source (journals, SA media and UK media) statistically and graphically. The results of both analyses are described below in the order in which they occurred.

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

The thematic analysis revealed the following 10 main themes: Bullying as a problem; Consequences of bullying; Predisposing factors of bullying; Addressing bullying; Labelling others as bullies; Cyberbullying; Educator bullying; Understanding bullying; Non-school bullying; Bullying and social norms. The majority of the above themes were found across all three data sources (SA media, UK media, and the journals), however one theme, Labelling others as bullies, was only found in the media articles.

4.1.1 Bullying as a problem

One of the first themes to emerge, especially in the SA media was that of Bullying as a problem. In the research journals bullying was determined to be a problem in studies that looked at the prevalence rates of bullying in specific countries. One article by De Wet (2005) stated that:

> It was clear from the investigation that *bullying is a problem* at most schools in the Free State, to a lesser or greater extent.
>
> (De Wet, The nature and extent of bullying in Free State secondary schools, 2005, p. 82)

She later states that "bullying will only be combated if educators, learners and parents regard *bullying as a problem* that should be addressed" (De Wet, 2005, p. 87) since some respondents denied that bullying occurred in their schools or saw it as a normal part of

growing up. This emphasis on bullying as a problem was also seen in some book reviews (published in journal articles) that indirectly mentioned bullying:

> …identify areas in very broad texts which they think could be expanded. One which I might suggest is bullying and victimization, which barely receive a mention, despite growing awareness of their impact on the lives of many adolescents.
>
> (Sweeting, 2004, p. 154)

In the extract above, Sweeting (2004) is alluding to the fact that bullying is a problem in the lives of many adolescents and therefore deserves mention in the book he was reviewing.

Bullying was described by one research journal as a form of disruptive behaviour which was seen as a problem in foundation phase schools by teachers.

> Another example of serious disruptive behaviour that negatively affects both the emotional and physical experiences of learners in the school is bullying… According to the respondents, *bullying is a serious problem*, especially on the playground, where it takes the form of name calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidating other learners.
>
> (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 44 & 51)

These extracts point to some of the sub-themes under the heading 'Bullying as a problem', the first is that bullying is of high interest for research due to the fact that it is a problem affecting children and adolescents. This sub-theme was unique to the journal articles as it was seen as the rationale behind the research. A second sub-theme evident from the extracts above is that bullying is a problem in schools, which was also present in both the SA and UK media.

In the SA media this sub-theme was the second highest focus of articles published. This is due to the fact that all articles published about a single incident of bullying in schools were included under this theme as the articles would use the incident as an indication that bullying was a problem. The extract below highlights how one incident at a school in Johannesburg brought bullying into the spotlight of the media, yet the author acknowledges that bullying is a problem faced in all schools:

> St Benedict's is not the only school affected by bullying. We have reported on others this year and undoubtedly will report on more before the year is out, but it is a school where people appear to be determined to deal with this problem.
>
> ("Smiting the enemy within", The Star, 2009, p. 14)

Some of the articles were based on research studies that gave prevalence rates of bullying, for example the extracts below:

> According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, South African children experience bullying more frequently than their international counterparts… Globally there is evidence that bullying in schools is on the rise… three-quarters of South African pupils reported being victims of bullies compared to 41% globally.
>
> (Govender, The Sunday Times, 2012, p. 13)

> Bullying is *the biggest problem* schools face, according to a consumer survey released by research company Pondering Panda yesterday… 'Bullying remains the most significant cause for concern with 28% saying it was one of the biggest problems in their school', Pondering Panda said.
>
> (Sapa, The Citizen, 2012, p. 9)

In the UK media, Bullying as a problem in schools was also a prominent theme and followed similar categories as the SA media, with research results indicating bullying as a problem or describing a single incident that brought bullying to the fore.

> Four out of 10 children say they have been bullied in the past year, figures show today. Despite years of high-profile campaigns by government and children's charities, researchers at Keele University said that one in 25 children reported being bullied every day.
>
> ("Four in 10 children are bullied at school", Daily Mail UK, 2007)

> This is the terrible price 12-year-old Shanni Naylor has paid for trying to stop a vulnerable pupil being bullied. The bully turned her anger on Shanni, pulling out a craft knife and repeatedly slashing her across the face. … Details of the shocking attack came as Education Secretary Ruth Kelly was expected to give backing to new rights for teachers to discipline and restrain unruly pupils. Asked about the Sheffield incident, Schools Minister Jacqui Smith told GMTV: "It's terrible for Shanni and very bad for her family. We're absolutely determined that

> schools should be safe and secure places which are about teaching and learning, where all children can feel confident and teachers are able to teach them."
>
> (Narain, Daily Mail UK, 2005)

Another sub-theme which consisted of a small percentage of articles from the SA and UK media was Bullying as a problem in society. As one article published in the Daily Mail UK shows, bullying is seen to be common not only in schools but on TV and in all aspects of society:

> …launched a blistering attack on "sneering" and "bullying" reality shows. He said: "[Simon Cowell] is an entertainer. But he is also a symptom of today, which is the bully factor.
>
> (Thomas, Daily Mail UK, 2008)

This sentiment is mirrored by an article published in South Africa which states that "we have too many bullies in our society" (Du Preez, 2010, p. 13). The author then goes on to talk about bullies in the traffic, political bullies and how society needs to address the problem.

> Those taxi drivers who do what they want, who aggressively intimidate other motorists and treat their passengers with complete contempt are a metaphor of what is wrong with us South Africans. We allow ourselves to be bullied. … But there has been no shortage of a new brand of political bully since we became a democracy. … we ordinary citizens should do to all bullies what was done to Malema: stand up to them, boo them, unmask them and isolate them from society.
>
> (Du Preez, City Press, 2010, p. 13)

4.1.2 Consequences of bullying

The second theme is made up of all the research and media articles that made reference to one or more consequences of bullying. This theme was equally represented in all data sources but was more common amongst indirectly related journal articles than directly related ones. For example, in some cases research would be done on a psychological state such as anxiety or depression and bullying would be briefly mentioned as a possible cause.

> Social anxiety for clinical pathology at 80% prevalence is not surprising, given the high level of bullying reported in the same schools.
>
> (Ndetei et al., 2008)

There were research studies with a direct focus on bullying that measured the effect of bullying on the victims and/or bullies. One such study by Penning, Bhagwanjee and Govender (2010) showed that bullying could be understood as a traumatic experience which could result in anxiety, depression and anger. Their results indicated that 19.4% of the variation in anxiety could be accounted for by an increase in the frequency of bullying that a victim experienced (Penning et al., 2010).

Other consequences of bullying that were determined through directly related empirical journal articles are: dropping out of school, a low self-worth, poor concentration in class, fear of school, loneliness, future relationship difficulties, poor school achievement and general emotional problems.

> Our results show an overall effect, indicating that being a victim in school negatively affects adults' perception of the self and of relating to others, irrespective of gender, profession and cultural differences. The self-concept was considerably more affected than relationship style and friendship quality. Former victims scored significantly lower on all aspects of current self-esteem (general self-esteem, self-esteem towards same and other sex and emotional loneliness) except social isolation. In contrast to general self-esteem, a higher degree of emotional loneliness was reported by all types of victim compared with non-victims, however significantly differentiating stable victims from those who were victims either in primary or in secondary school. In primary school, victims have reported higher degrees of loneliness and dissatisfaction, even when they were no longer identified as a victim.
>
> (Schäfer et al., 2004, p. 389)

The extract above from a study by Schäfer et al. (2004) highlights various consequences of bullying that are faced by victims including lowered self-esteem and a higher degree of loneliness. An article about the development of loneliness during the early years in school also stated that feelings of loneliness at school could be caused by bullying (Liepins & Cline, 2011).

One of the more serious consequences of bullying as established in the data set, is violence. This sub-theme was categorised based on the mention of victims becoming violent in retaliation to the bullying, or violence being used by others due to high levels of bullying in a school or area. One journal article about school resource officers being used to strengthen student support gave an example of how a school resource officer determined that a 13-year-old boy wanted to purchase a gun in order to shoot students who were bullying him and was

therefore able to prevent the incidence from occuring (James, Logan & Davis, 2011). In the media articles, violent retaliation by victims was reported on once it had happened, as shown in these extracts:

> Now the whole country knows him as the young man from Vosloorus on the East Rand who allegedly shot dead his tormentor in the classroom. Overnight, Mthombeni has come to represent the scourge of bullying in schools after he allegedly killed Nkululeko Ndlovu, 18, at Phineas Xulu Secondary School, using his mother's state-issued police firearm on Tuesday.
>
> (Skiti, Sunday Times, 2012, p. 10)

> In October 2006 a 19-year-old boy was murdered in a brutal stabbing by a fellow pupil at Forest High School. It was reported at the time as another incident of school violence. Court documents revealed that this crime was the result of a complex interplay of a bullying older child on a vulnerable younger one… They knew him [Nkosana] as a bully. Sandile was only 14 and a new pupil. He became an easy target for extortion for Nkosana and his friends… Sandile confessed he would not be able to come up with the money. Nkosana pulled out a knife. Sandile was terrified. He grabbed Nkosana's hand which held the knife – and a struggle ensued.
>
> (Badat, The Star, 2008, p. 19)

> This is the shocking moment a bullied, overweight teenager turned the tables on his tormentor with a stunning wrestling move. The footage, apparently shot on a mobile phone by another child, shows one boy picking on another at a school in New South Wales, Australia. The bully then punches his victim - identified only as Casey - in the face and stomach while a group of pupils laugh and egg him on. The bully continues to torment his victim until something snaps inside him and he lashes out. He grabs his attacker and wrestles with him, before spinning him around 360 degrees and slamming him to the ground in a wrestling move.
>
> (Ashmore, Daily Mail UK, 2011)

The extract above from the Daily Mail UK highlights how a victim used wrestling to stop a bully from tormenting him. In a study on the implications of adolescents' involvement in wrestling, Bernthal and Medway (2005) state that children with emotional difficulties and anxiety may turn to wrestling to "learn moves and language to defend themselves against bullies or simply other more self-assured students" (Bernthal & Medway, 2005, p. 231). However, they see the involvement in wrestling as a concern as it promotes violence and risk taking as well as a negative attitude towards school and teachers. Therefore, the use of

violence in response to and as a consequence of bullying, is seen in both the media and journal articles as a negative thing.

Another consequence of bullying that was seen across all three data sources, is suicide. This was more common amongst the UK media articles, which present a devastating picture of suicide as the last resort for victims of continuous bullying. It appears to be of international concern as Beekrum, Valjee and Collings (2011) highlight in their report on suicidal behaviour that school bullying is one of the interpersonal factors associated with a higher risk of suicidal behaviour. An article published in Time Magazine brings this to life as it describes the suicides of four US teenagers over a four week period due to bullying (Cloud, 2010). In South Africa, one article in the Daily Dispatch indicated that an average of 16 school children committed suicide in the Eastern Cape every month from January to June in 2011 (Mukhuthu, Daily Dispatch, 2011, p. 1). Although bullying is given as one of the possible reasons behind the high suicide rates, poverty and a lack of support from parents and schools is also blamed.

In the Daily Mail UK, suicide as a result of bullying was covered by detailing specific incidences such as the one below:

> A troubled teenager who had been tormented by bullies for more than 10 years committed suicide on the day before receiving his GCSE results. 'Michael had been bullied from about the age of five, just because he didn't like to mix in big groups like everyone else. He liked to keep himself to himself and I think that's why people picked on him - because he was different. He shied away from big gangs of friends.' Sadly his problems only got worse when he went on to secondary school. Mrs Miller said: 'It was so bad for him when he started there that when he was 12 he ran away and went missing for about four hours. When the police found him he told them "if this bullying doesn't stop I'm going to kill myself."
>
> (Brooke, Daily Mail UK, 2009)

Yet, despite the acknowledgement that suicide is a serious consequence of bullying, one Daily Mail UK article titled “Another tormented pupil, another suicide…” highlights how it has become common and trivialised in news:

> In the same edition, a tiny paragraph tucked away on an inside page told how Paul Moran, 13, from Liverpool, had hanged himself with a Liverpool FC scarf because for two years he had been bullied, taunted, spat at, pushed down the bus stairs and had his earring torn out. Five years ago such a tragic story would have made headline news. Last week it was barely

> covered. Have we all become hardened to the terrible, avoidable agony of a child so unable to bear the daily misery and fear that he killed himself?
>
> (Rantzen, Daily Mail UK, 2006)

The theme 'Consequences of bullying' showed that bullying can have long term effects on both victims and bullies.

4.1.3 Predisposing factors of bullying

Predisposing factors are risk factors that increase somebody's vulnerability to something (Anshu, 2008). This was the third theme to emerge in the data set and was more prominent in the journal articles with the majority classified under this theme being indirectly related to the topic of bullying, but focusing on another topic that was seen as a predisposing factor of bullying. Factors that increased someone's vulnerability to being a victim of bullying as well as factors that increased vulnerability to becoming a bully were included. Although a variety of factors were mentioned in the data set, the majority of those that increase a person's vulnerability to becoming a victim can be grouped under the sub-theme of 'being different'. Some of these differences include being gay, being overweight, immigrants, being disabled, having HIV, having a mental illness such as autistic spectrum disorder, having learning difficulties, and language difficulties.

Below are some extracts from journal articles highlighting different predisposing factors of bullying that may cause victimisation:

> Socially, South African adolescents affected by HIV report experiences of stigma and secrecy surrounding AIDS, leading to social isolation, bullying and reduced opportunities to discuss grief. Research appears to suggest that residential care facilities offer both opportunities and challenges for youth. Living in such settings may enhance development and foster a sense of belonging but may result in increased risks, like bullying by peers.
>
> (Van Vilsteren, Haffejee, Patel, & Bowman, 2011, pp. 44-45)

> Research has proven that learners with learning difficulties are at an increased risk of being bullied in school… one such study wherein they investigated whether students with learning difficulties reported more incidents of bullying then their non-learning-difficulty peers. These authors found significant results showing that being a victim of bullying is a problem for learners with learning difficulties.
>
> (Mohamed & Laher, 2012, p. 135)

> As predicted, pupils with ASD were more likely to be rejected and less likely to be accepted by their peers, experienced higher levels of bullying, and reported lower levels of social support from classmates and friends…
>
> (Symes & Humphrey, 2010, p. 488)

While the extracts above discusses the fact that children with learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders are more likely to be the victims of bullying, the following extract shows that this is not only a problem in mainstream schools. Even children attending special needs schools due to their learning difficulties face bullying for their 'differences'.

> These findings need to be interpreted in terms of four relevant factors: (i) that the special school pupils had more significant learning difficulties than their mainstream counterparts, (ii) that these special school pupils experienced more negative devaluation and 'bullying' outside school than their mainstream counterparts for going to a special school (but, similar levels of 'bullying' in school, Kelly & Norwich, 2003)…
>
> (Kelly & Norwich, 2004, p. 426)

The sub-theme of 'being different' as a predisposing factor of bullying culminates with racism making bullying more likely. One journal article which looked at the experiences of learners from informal settlements attending a predominantly Indian school in South Africa, found that the learners felt they were exposed to racial discrimination and bullying (Pillay, 2004). International studies showed similar results, as immigrants were exposed to bullying based on their nationality and language competence (Kowalski, Morgan & Limber, 2012; Von Grunigen, Perren, Nagele & Alsaker, 2010; Von Marées & Petermann, 2010).

Whilst autism and physical differences were seen in the UK media as predisposing factors to bullying, racism was only present in the SA media.

> White zones mean danger to black pupils at the infamously racist Hoër Volkskool in Heidelberg. "Not a month goes by without a fight between a white and black pupil or group of pupils," a Grade 11 pupil said. The school governing body said it would be implementing an anti-racial bullying strategy at the school "in due haste".
>
> (Moeng & Sapa, The Sowetan, 2010, p. 4)

More common in the media articles than in the journal articles were predisposing factors of bullying that increased the vulnerability of a child becoming a bully. One such factor is 'poor

parenting'. There was one journal article which explored bullying and attachments, which found that insecure parental attachments (possibly resulting from poor parenting) was highly associated with aggressive attitudes and peer bullying (Eliot & Cornell, 2009). However, the media articles took a more direct approach and blamed bullying in schools on poor parenting at home.

> Eastern Cape educators and parents are deeply concerned that children as young as four years old are actively bullying their peers. Parents have also revealed that some parents are even encouraging their young children to target and treat weaker boys and girls badly to reinforce their "power" over them. … Another problem is that some parents encourage their kids to be bullies to show who is the more powerful child. They think that they are teaching them to stand up for themselves.
>
> (Harvey, Weekend Post, 2012, p. 1)

> Well, now we know. If children are bossy, foot-stamping, dysfunctional little beasts, there's a fair chance that their mothers have made them so. Research conducted by Oxford University, …, has found that youngsters left in institutional childcare for more than 30 hours a week are more likely to bully other children, prevent them playing and insist on having their own way.
>
> (McDonagh, Saturday Weekend Argus, 2007, p. 23)

> Middle-class parents who spoil their children have created a new breed of playground bullies to inflict misery on other pupils, MPs were warned today. Ms Elliott told the Commons' education select committee: "In addition to children coming from homes where bullying is basically fostered, we found a whole other group of bullies who come from homes where they are so indulged that they go to school and they are little gods. "They think that everything just revolves around them. We call them the 'brat bullies'."
>
> (Warning over school 'brat bullies', Daily Mail UK, 2006)

4.1.4 Addressing bullying

One of the most important themes to emerge in the data set was 'addressing bullying'. In the journal articles this theme includes descriptions of and investigations into interventions as well as those that applied their findings about bullying to give intervention strategies. The media articles that fell under this theme looked at any advice into dealing with bullying or incidences of schools or parents addressing bullying in their own ways. A sub-theme that was unique to the UK media looked at how bullying was being addressed by using the law to convict bullies or lay charges against them.

Interventions that the journal articles investigated included peer interventions, community based interventions and interventions that focused on teachers' role. These interventions were either recommended based on research findings or were implemented and evaluated by researchers. One intervention that was evaluated was a national campaign introduced in the Netherlands (Mooij, 2005). The campaign was initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science from 1995 to 2000 and Mooij (2005) evaluated the effectiveness by measuring bullying and violence prevalence rates in 1993 and 2000. The results indicated that there had been a decrease in pupils' violent behaviour yet more specific support was need for pupils at risk of bullying (Mooij, 2005). This view that one type of intervention may not be sufficient to prevent bullying is supported by Rigby's (2004) review of the theoretical perspectives used to understand bullying and their implications for interventions. He found that no one perspective provides a complete explanation for bullying and therefore a comprehensive approach to the problem and that educators and schools should rather integrate the perspectives by recognising their various strengths and limitations (Rigby, 2004).

In order to gain a deeper perspective into what works when addressing bullying Craig, Pepler and Blais (2007) set up a web-based questionnaire to evaluate the strategies utilised by children and their perceived effectiveness.

> When asked about the strategies that they use to stop bullying, a significant group of youth responded that they did nothing. They were more likely to say they did nothing when they were victimized by a friend compared to a non-friend. Interestingly girls were more likely to use relational strategies (i.e. telling a friend, telling an adult) compared to boys who were more likely to use confrontational strategies such as physical aggression or revenge. Finally, with increasing age, youth were more likely to use avoidance strategies. In addition, the longer the bullying had been ongoing, the less effective students perceived their strategies. Taken together, these results highlight the importance of adults supporting students. The power differential in bullying makes it very challenging and intimidating for children to stand up to their aggressors. Unless adults support children and youth, students are likely to do nothing and gain a sense of helplessness about their bullying experiences over time.
>
> (Craig et al., 2007)

While the journal articles evaluated the effectiveness of interventions, the media articles described specific campaigns that schools had undertaken. Some of these campaigns included

talks by professionals, social skills training for the pupils, training for teachers on how to deal with bullying, or a combination of all three.

> This was during an anti-bullying programme at Risidale Primary School in Randburg, Johannesburg, last week. Risidale's principal, Julius van Zyl, says: "While our school is probably better off than most when it comes to the incidence of bullying, we decided to be proactive and rather err on the over-cautious side." So it has brought on board Gail D'Oré, a seasoned life-skills trainer who has developed an anti-bullying campaign that she has been presenting in schools for three years. … D'Oré held a workshop for teachers to help them deal with bullying incidents. Next up was a series of interactive talks for pupils in the various grades, and addressing parents during parents' evenings.
>
> (Kennedy, Sunday Times, 2010, p. 7)

Sometimes the articles were addressed to parents and give them helpful hints on how to prevent and deal with bullying.

> Parents should be alert to tell-tale signs – victims may show decreased interest in school, with lowered performance, frequent complaints about minor problems such as tummy-aches, regular requests for money, few or no friends, bad dreams, poor sleeping or bedwetting. Parents and caregivers can help the children who are being bullied by: being sensitive with their "emotional antennae", listening to and understanding their child's problem, taking the child's concern seriously (without being overprotective), assuring the child's personal safety (keeping in mind that the child may not be telling the whole story), encouraging the child to be assertive and advising on how to respond in certain situations, ensuring that the child knows how to get help from a significant adult, discussing the problem with the school if necessary.
>
> (Naidoo, Sunday Tribune, 2004, p. 32)

This extract above was from the SA media, and whilst parents were given tips on dealing with bullying it was only in the UK media that articles were published describing parents' involvement to deal with the bullying of their children. However, rather than helping the situation these parents often made it worse or were arrested:

> A mother threatened her son's bullies on a school bus with a baseball bat because she felt his school and the police 'did nothing' to help the youngster. …after informing the school she thought nothing would be done, which is why Ms Hayley says she took matters into her own hands. When arrested, she told police she had got onto the bus to stop the bullies and took the bat in case she was 'rushed', after calls to the school and the police had failed to bring any action. Miss Hayley received a six-month sentence suspended for 12 months and ordered to do 150 hours' unpaid work and was handed a curfew. She said her punishment was 'unfair'.

> 'Not one parent I know would accept [their son being beaten up]. I do not feel like I am wrong because I feel like I had to do something to stop my son being bullied.
>
> (Edwards, Daily Mail UK, 2011)

> A father has been arrested after he allegedly used a website to 'name and shame' 15 village children he claimed were bullies following an apparent attack on his son. He is said to have put up the names and pictures of youngsters aged three to 13 after claiming his son was stabbed and beaten with a piece of wood. The alleged website author, who has not be named, was arrested at his home after complaints by furious parents.
>
> (Daily Mail Reporter, Daily Mail UK, 2009)

The extracts above describe parents who were arrested for intervening incorrectly, yet sometimes the law works in favour of the victims, and bullies were charged and convicted. The extract below highlights this unique sub-theme of addressing bullying from the UK media:

> Police are looking to bring criminal charges against three or more teens following the suicide of a 14-year-old who had been bullied for being gay. Jamey Rodemyer, who had blogged about being suicidal after classmates incessantly taunted him for being gay, was found dead outside his parents home in Williamsville, near Buffalo last weekend. At least three teens are said to be of particular interest to police and may be charged with hate crimes, harassment or cyber-harassment following the tragic death.
>
> (Roberts, Daily Mail UK, 2011)

4.1.5 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying only emerged as a theme in the data set from 2006 onwards, therefore making it less prominent than the other themes. The first journal article to fall under this theme mentions how the introduction of technology into schools was introducing the possibility of cyberbullying (Li, 2006). The author states that teachers are unaware that cyberbullying occurs since it is a new phenomenon and little is known about it. He proposes that more research is needed and conducted a study into the prevalence of cyberbullying in middle schools in Canada. The results suggested that one in four students had been cyberbullied and more than half knew of someone being cyberbullied (Li, 2006). Similar warnings of cyberbullying as a growing problem featured in both the SA and UK media in 2007:

> More than one in every eight children has been bullied by email or text message, psychologists have claimed. The phenomenon - dubbed 'cyber-bullying' - is becoming more common, with girls most likely to be targeted. Psychology lecturer Miss Noret said parents must realise that bullying has evolved. "Most interventions in schools are based on the assumption that bullying is physical or occurs face-to-face," she said. "Teachers and parents need to realise that a child's mobile phone or computer isn't just a communication tool - it's also a way for a bully to reach children in their own homes."
>
> (Hope, Daily Mail UK, 2007)

> While conventional bullying continues to be a problem in South African schools, child organisations are equally concerned about the increase in online and cellphone bullying. School children in the US have already become the victim of this relatively new type of bullying, with a recent study conducted by the University of Wisconsin revealing that many children were now threatening and bullying each other online or through instant messaging instead of on school grounds.
>
> (Kuppan, The Daily News, 2007, p. 5)

Despite these early articles, in the journal and SA media data sources, cyberbullying was not mentioned again until 2010 and featured the most in 2012. Articles appeared more frequently in the Daily Mail UK, which in fact had the highest number of articles falling under this theme. The majority of these Daily Mail UK articles featured stories about specific incidents and the impact cyberbullying had on teachers:

> Mobile phones should be banned from classes because they are "potentially offensive weapons". A union says they are used to bully staff with abusive texts and calls and photos posted on the Internet. ("Ban mobiles from the classroom to protect us from 'cyberbullying', say teachers", Daily Mail UK, 2008)

> A 15-year-old high school student was terrorized and harassed by a former classmate who warned her to 'sleep with her eyes open' and said she dulled her knives 'so when I stab you in the face, gut, and legs, it'll be as painful as possible.' Alexis Henkel, a sophomore at Orono High School in Veazie, Maine, was terrorized by the alleged 16-year-old cyber bully because the teen thought she was flirting with her boyfriend, police said.
>
> (Stebner, Daily Mail UK, 2012)

In the SA media, articles took a more general approach and highlighted cyberbullying as an increasing problem that is often difficult for parents to deal with:

> Cyberbullying among schoolchildren is a major concern, research conducted late last year at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University among nearly 1 600 pupils strongly suggests. … Under most circumstances, parents do not understand their children's internet activities. This leads to additional concerns, because the parents feel that they do not have the education or knowledge to protech their children while they are engaged in cyber-related activities.
>
> (Von Solms & De Lange, Mail and Guardian, 2011, p. 50)

In 2012, School Psychology International published a special edition on Cyberbullying and therefore the majority of the articles falling under this theme from the journals come from this edition. Their focus was on prevelance rates, students' experiences, and possible interventions. One article from this edition gives an overview of the current state of research on cyberbullying and makes suggestions for future research. They conclude that little research has been published on effective interventions for cyberbullying, but that schools can and should take an active approach:

> Parents and teachers need to find adequate ways and means to monitor children's use of information and communication technology, and the impact this has on their lives. As a survey by Jäger, Amado, Matos, and Pessoa (2010) has shown, most experts agree that schools have a crucial role to play in dealing with cyberbullying. Unfortunately, very few schools have incorporated cyberbullying into their school curricula or school policy, or educated their staff and students on ICT and cyberbullying to date. A crucial prerequisite for all preventive and intervention measures is teacher knowledge about the extent and forms of cyberbullying and effective anti-bullying measures.
>
> (Von Marées & Petermann, 2012, pp. 472-473)

The journal articles also draw similarities between cyberbullying and traditional forms of bullying, such as the fact that victims and bullies in traditional bullying are likely to take the same role in cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2012; Von Marées & Petermann, 2012). It has been suggested that this is due to the fact that cyberbullying occurs as an extension of traditional bullying – the problem starts at school but then the victim starts being targeted online by the same bullies (Monks, Robinson & Worlidge, 2012).

4.1.6 Labelling others as bullies

The theme of ‘Labelling others as bullies’ emerged uniquely from the media articles (SA and UK) and highlights the use of the term outside of school-based bullying in society. Articles that were included under this theme were those that referred to individuals, companies, or countries as bullies. Politicians were most likely to be labelled as bullies, either by opposing parties or by the public, and in SA the police were labelled bullies more often than in the UK.

> Second, even if the police believed that they had the right to intervene in some way to protect the honour of the president, locking someone up in a cell for almost 24 hours when he or she clearly presents no threat to society is an infringement of civil rights and *suggests a bullying police team* that wishes to teach the suspect a lesson, having already concluded that he or she is guilt before any trial.
>
> (Price, 2010, Cape Argus, p. 10)

The extract above is taken from an article about a man who was arrested by the police driving in a ‘blue light brigade’ with the president. Other articles headlined, “Police officer appears in blue-light bully case”, “DA to push for removal of blue light bully”, “Blue light bullies strike again” and “Police bully motorist” describe similar ‘bullying tactics’ by these police cars in the SA media.

In the UK, individuals were labelled as bullies if they acted aggressively or with malicious intent as shown in the following extract:

> A headmistress who stole £500,000 from her school to fund a champagne lifestyle has been jailed for five years. Judge Christopher Elwen told the former nun she was "self satisfied, manipulative and mendacious". He said she had told a "tissue of lies" and "concocted a web of vicious deceit and falsehoods". "It was put to you in court that you were a thoroughly dishonest woman. You were described by others as arrogant, dogmatic and a bully. Your performance marked you out as self satisfied, manipulative and mendacious."
>
> (“Thieving head jailed for five years”, Daily Mail UK, 2003)

The label of bully was used equally as often in both the SA and UK media with headlines in the Daily Mail UK including: “Bullying MPs warned to stop ‘abusing’ expenses staff or risk legal action”; “Don’t let politicians bully you, Lord Carey warns Christians”; “Bully boss gets her comeuppance as she’s jailed for company theft” and “Like any bully, Russia can be faced down. Let’s do it sooner rather than later.” Although this theme is unrelated to school-

bullying it highlights the social construction of bullying and the use of the term to attribute features one would expect from a school-bully onto others.

4.1.7 Educator bullying

This next theme was not very prominent in the data set, but it brings to the fore an important aspect of bullying in schools, teachers being bullied and/or teachers acting as bullies. In the journals there were only 2 articles with a direct focus on educator bullying, both conducted by the same author in the Free State, South Africa and published in the South African Journal of Education (De Wet, 2006; De Wet, 2010). De Wet concluded that:

> An acknowledgement of the existence of [Educator Targeted Bullying] ETB in schools, a better understanding of what constitutes ETB and an acceptance by all role-players that such abuse is not merely the symptoms of bad teaching and/or the inability to discipline misbehaving learners, but the outcome of individual, institutional and community circumstances, making it necessary to fight ETB. A group, consisting of learners, educators, school management and the school governing body should be set up to investigate ETB. Victims of ETB should be made to feel that their problems are being taken seriously. A whole-school programme that is adapted to the needs of the individual school and involves the entire school community needs to be developed, implemented and monitored.
>
> (De Wet, 2010, p. 200)

De Wet's research was also the focus of nearly half of the SA media articles that fall under this theme. With headlines such as "Bullying in schools everyone's problem", "Bullying common in Free State schools, study finds" and "Bullying at schools reaches epidemic proportions, Free State study finds", De Wet made her research known to the public.

> According to Professor Corene de Wet of the university's department of comparative education, "More than 32% of learners said that another learner had hit them in the past." Most pupils said they were targeted by bullies in taxis on the way to school or in toilets and bathrooms at schools. Others were bullied by teachers. According to De Wet, 55% of the teachers polled in her study admitted to verbally bullying pupils and 50% admitted to physically bullying their charges.
>
> (Rademeyer, Sunday Times, 2006, p. 5)

Those articles that were not based on research, illustrated specific events that had occurred such as the article published in Business Day titled "Pupil alledgedly forced to drink his own urine" from which the following extract is taken:

> A Kwa-Zulu-Natal reception class teacher has been suspended after allegedly forcing a five-year-old boy to drink his own urine. … Earlier this year a report on education in rural communities indicated that humiliation, bullying, sexual abuse and violence were still serious problems.
>
> (Blaine, Business Day, 2005, p. 3)

The Daily Mail UK had the most articles falling under this theme, most of which covered specific incidents of bullying by/against teachers.

> To my everlasting shame, I left a teaching job because I was scared of a child. Although he was only 13, Ralph was a well-built boy who was known for taking an irrational dislike to new teachers. If I told him to be quiet, he spoke louder; if I ignored him, he laughed. I wished I could send him out, but the head had made it clear that once the pupils were in a classroom, we had to do our best to keep them there. … One former colleague had been 'held hostage' in front of his class by two boys from Year 11 — what used to be the fifth form — brandishing a very real-looking fake gun. Another had a door slammed shut in her face so violently that the glass window shattered over her. And I'd been shocked to discover that almost half of all England's newly qualified teachers are now leaving the profession within five years.
>
> (Carroll, Daily Mail UK, 2010)

> A 13-year-old Washington School boy became suicidal according to his parents after his teacher allegedly bullied him and wrestled him to the floor. The incident happened at around 9 a.m. in the morning during a class and Rosi [teacher] is seen to join in with the swinging of the boy by poking him and pretending to sit on him, saying, 'I'm feeling kind of gassy.' The class that is supposed to be in session is a half hour reading and math preparation lesson conducted by Rosi. In one of the videos, a dozen students drag the teenager around the room, swing him like a hammock, rip off his socks, write on his feet, shove a sock down his mouth, hold a pillow over his face and then cover him with chairs. This continues for 15 minutes until Rosi joins in and smiles and at one point, he smiles for the cameras.
>
> (Nye, Daily Mail UK, 2012)

4.1.8 Non-school bullying

Due to the focus of this research on school-bullying and therefore the specific selection criteria of research journals included in the data set, only 2 journal articles fell under this theme. However, it was more prominent in the UK media necessitating a separate theme. Articles that fell under this theme include those that discuss workplace bullying and bullying at home by siblings, parents or spouses. Bullying among siblings was investigated in one of the journal articles by Menesini, Camodeca and Nocentini (2010) who found that an older brother is a risk factor for sibling victimization and sibling bullying is associated with bullying at school. The results of this study featured in the Daily Mail UK in an article titled "Big brothers are 'most likely to bully their siblings'" (Daily Mail Reporter, 2010):

> Big brothers are most to blame for sibling bullying, research has shown. A study of 195 children aged 10 to 12 found that those with older brothers were more likely to be bullied at home. Bullying by older sisters was less common and associated with relationship issues rather than age, according to the study. The findings were published today in the British Journal of Developmental Psychology. Dr Ersilia Menesini, from the University of Florence in Italy, who led the research, said: 'It's likely that older sisters are raised to be responsible and protective towards their younger siblings.
>
> (Daily Mail Reporter, Daily Mail UK, 2010)

Bullying by siblings was not seen in the SA media, which only featured articles about workplace bullying under this theme. Some of these articles were about specific incidences but the majority were about workplace bullying in general, such as the extract below shows:

> Do you dread the thought of missing a meeting because a colleague might just undermine you? Count yourself among the 37% of South African workers who are bullied or victimised at least once in their careers, according to research by the Workplace Dignity Institute. "Often workers are being bullied and they don't even know it," says Dr Susan Steinman, founder and chairperson of the institute.
>
> (Nyathikazi, City Press, 2011, p. 10)

The UK media reported more on specific incidents of workplace bullying.

> A woman police officer in the elite anti-terrorist branch is suing the Met on the grounds that she was bullied because of her sex. … She says she has been told by solicitors dealing with her case that if she pursues it all the way it could be the end of her career. "I find that shocking. I

> have been bullied in the job that I was asked to do. I feel it is grossly unfair that my career should be threatened by standing up to someone."
>
> ("'Bullied' woman officer sues Met", Daily Mail UK, 2006).

Unique to the UK media was also the mention of bullying homes with the recognition in courts that emotional abuse can now count as domestic violence (Slack, Daily Mail UK, 2011). According to the article, this may allow those who "bully or abuse" to be prosecuted despite the fact that they do not commit more traditional forms of physical domestic abuse.

4.1.9 Understanding bullying

This theme emerged mainly in the journal articles and only a couple of media articles fit under its description. This is due to the fact that the main purpose of the journals is to investigate and understand the phenomenon of bullying. Research questions such as 'Why do some children bully at school?' (Rigby, 2005), and 'Who escapes or remains a victim of bullying in primary school?' (Wolke, Woods, & Samara, 2009) resulted in the sub-themes of understanding bullies and understanding victims. Further sub-themes included understanding the definition of bullying and attitudes towards it, understanding individuals who are both victims and bullies, the different roles observers take and gender differences in bullying. A deeper understanding of bullying was also used by the journal articles to make recommendations for interventions.

In his study into why some children bully, Rigby (2005) explored the influence of perceived expectations on children's behaviour:

> In this study analyses were performed to determine the potential influence of student attitudes and the beliefs that children held about the expectations others had of them. These have been interpreted as factors influencing social behaviour (see Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). It does not follow that parents, teachers and peers actually held the expectations attributed to them by students; rather that students' (possibly erroneous) beliefs about their expectations could have made a significant contribution. One cannot dismiss the possibility that the predisposition of some children to bully others may have, in part, determined what they thought was expected of them. Longitudinal studies are needed to resolve this issue. This having been said, the regression analyses suggest that students with relatively positive attitudes towards victims and students whose friends were thought to expect them to be more supportive of victims were less inclined to bully others. Moreover, girls were much less likely to engage in bullying than boys.
>
> (Rigby, 2005, pp. 157-158)

The study above used the findings to make recommendations to prevent children from becoming bullies, whereas studies on understanding victims would give recommendations that support victims:

> To conclude, the current study has shed light upon the stability of direct and relational victimization among primary schoolchildren and the important factors related to remaining involved, or escaping from victimization. Our findings have a number of implications for educational professionals. First, it should be recognised that direct victimization is likely to become a stable behaviour during the primary school years in a substantial number of pupils with girls at particular risk. Secondly, being relationally victimized and socially isolated could be a reason for parents initiating a change of school, and school practitioners should be aware of this. These findings call for the development and implementation of intervention programmes that tackle victimization at an early age in primary school. Personal and social education should ensure that work centred on friendship in terms of making and maintaining friends is preserved. The implementation of peer networks facilitating peer relationships in combating bullying appear useful (Cowie & Olafsson, 2000). The findings also have relevance for school professionals, health practitioners and parents to be aware of children showing signs of both physical and emotional health problems, as these appear to be important risk factors for becoming and remaining a victim.
>
> (Wolke et al., 2009, pp. 847-848)

Research by Baldry (2004) looked at the attitudes towards bullying of students in Italian middle schools while Bauman and Del Rio (2005) studied the knowledge and beliefs about bullying of pre-service teachers in schools in the United States (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005). Both of these articles contribute to our understanding of how bullying is seen by different groups of people, and once again both re-iterated that the results had implications for interventions.

> These results have potential for setting up and developing relevant intervention programmes for middle school students for the prevention and reduction of bullying in school.
>
> (Baldry, 2004, p. 596)

> There are also implications for intervention that follow from this definition. For example, while an appropriate intervention for a single conflict among peers at school might be to mediate the conflict with both parties and even to impose the same consequences on both parties, the power imbalance in bullying implies that the victim is at risk for retaliation and needs reassurance that he/she will be protected from future harm.
>
> (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005, p. 435)

While the theme understanding bullying was strongly represented in the journal articles and mainly made recommendations for interventions based on the new understanding, in the media articles the main focus was on giving the public information about bullying. One such article in the SA media was titled "Bullying should get the boot" – a two page article including myths and facts about bullying for parents to understand it more (Beaver, The Citizen, 2005). In the UK media an article titled "Rise of the bully-girls" details a study about gender differences in bullying, allowing readers to understand the nature of bullying by girls:

> The findings are the result of a study by educational psychologist Dr Valerie Besag, who filmed a group of 11-year-olds in their final year of primary school in the North-East of England over 16 months at a lunchtime club. "Basically, it's all about jealousy," she said. "Female bullying is worse than male bullying because it is more personal, more psychological and much more emotionally destructive.
>
> (Hale, Daily Mail UK, 2006)

4.1.10 Bullying and social norms

The last theme identified in the data set was "Bullying and social norms" which was more prominent in the journal articles and SA media. It is one of the smaller themes but highlights an important feature of bullying, which is the social aspect and group dynamics affecting bullying behaviour. The journal articles looked at factors such as gender norms, pro-social and anti-social behaviours as well as group dynamics that promote or hinder bullying.

> Research on bullying increasingly focuses on social processes, showing that group membership affects children's responses to bullying scenarios. Additionally, correlational research has shown links between norms of cooperation and prosocial behaviour, and between competition and more aggressive forms of behaviour. … Results underscored the role of norms and group processes in responses to bullying. In particular, children exposed to a cooperative norm expressed less pride and more regret and anger about the bullying than those in other conditions.
>
> (Jones, Bombieri, Livingstone & Manstead, 2012, p. 241)

> Whilst the majority of research on school bullying has focused on the psychosocial characteristics of individual bullies, and the consequences for and treatment of victims (e.g. Boulton & Smith, 1994; Craig, 1998; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rigby, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 1993; Smith *et al.*, 2001), very few studies have attempted to investigate the role of groups in

> the bullying process. Given the widespread occurrence of bullying already present at the primary school level, it is reasonable to assume that demographic and personality variables are not the only correlate of bullying. Whilst it is acknowledged that solitary bullies suffering from a variety of psychological disturbances do initiate many instances of bullying, the present study proceeded from the assumption that bullying can, in many instances, be defined as a group process where bullying is directed by members of one group against individuals or the members of another group.
>
> (Ojala & Nesdale, 2004, p. 20)

In the SA media the main type of articles that fell under this theme were those that spoke about bullying and violence in society. These articles saw violence as being a social norm that promotes bullying in schools and in society as a whole.

> Violence breaks out at the slightest provocation, says Theys. A pupil steals another's pen or refuses to share his chips and a fight breaks out. A boy bumps into someone else and fists fly. For these young pupils violence is the only way they know of resolving conflict.
>
> (Yutar, Cape Argus, 2004, p. 24)

The UK media also had articles about violence in society promoting bullying. However there were also articles about bullying becoming acceptable behaviour due to social norms and the portrayal of bullying in society.

> Speaking at the union's conference on bullying in London, Ms Keates said: "Tackling bullying is made even more difficult by its seeming legitimisation through particular television programmes. "How do you discourage bullying and demonstrate it is wrong when youngsters see celebrity status and money can be acquired on the basis of shouting at and swearing at and humiliating others, and when there is a clear implication that to be successful in business goes hand-in-hand with rude and aggressive and humiliating treatment of others?"
>
> ("Teachers leader accuses Gordon Ramsay of glamorising bullying", Daily Mail UK, 2006)

The extracts above show how bullying behaviour goes beyond individual characteristics, and that the causes and sustaining factors are also a result of society and social norms. Therefore to fully understand bullying, it needs to be recognised as the social process that it is.

The ten themes described above are quantified below using descriptive statistics, which makes up the quantitative analysis.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis

Following the thematic analysis, a quantitative analysis was conducted in order to show the percentage of articles that fell under each theme, as well as the trends within journal and media articles in the SA and the UK.

The table which follows on the next page (Table I) shows the number of articles published in each data source as well as the total percentage of each theme. From this we can see that the theme "Labelling others as bullies" made up the majority of the articles (33.21%), despite the fact that it was only present in the media. The next highest theme was "Bullying as a problem" (20.10%) which was strongly visible in the SA media. The themes "Consequences of bullying" (9.57%) and "Addressing bullying" (9.47%) were very closely represented, showing the importance given to the possible concerns around bullying and putting an end to it. The next two themes were "Predisposing factors of bullying" (7.37%) and "Cyberbullying" (6.41%). It is interesting to note that "Cyberbullying" was most present in the UK media and not present in the SA journals at all. "Understanding bullying" (4.50%) was most prominent in the journal articles specifically the International and UK journals, with a very low presence in the SA journals.

The third least frequent theme was "Non-school bullying" (3.64%) which was mainly present in the UK media. This could be explained by the fact that the journals represented above are mainly school and child based. In contrast, the next theme "Bullying and social norms" (3.16%) was more strongly represented in the UK journals and SA media, despite being largely absent from the SA journals. In fact, the SA journals had the least amount of articles in nearly every theme. The only theme it represented more than the other journals was "Educator bullying" (2.58%) and only by a small margin. The UK media reported somewhat frequently on educator bullying, although only one article in the UK journals focused on it.

Table I. The number of articles published in each data source under each theme

Themes	Journals (n=229)			SA Media (n=431)	UK Media (n=385)	Total (n=1,045)	%
	UK* (n=74)	SA** (n=43)	International*** (n=112)				
Predisposing factors of bullying	14	14	21	17	11	77	7.37
Consequences of bullying	10	10	12	34	34	100	9.57
Bullying as a problem	6	10	20	119	55	210	20.10
Cyberbullying	1	0	13	13	40	67	6.41
Non-school bullying	1	1	0	7	29	38	3.64
Labelling others as bullies	0	0	0	173	174	347	33.21
Addressing bullying	10	3	17	45	24	99	9.47
Educator bullying	1	3	2	9	12	27	2.58
Understanding bullying	16	1	25	3	2	47	4.50
Bullying and social norms	15	1	2	11	4	33	3.16

*UK journals - BJEP and BJDP
**SA journals - SAJE and SAJP
***International journals - SIP and CAMHJ

The table above can also be displayed visually in a pie graph (Figure 1). This allows the distribution of articles amongst the themes to be clearer and the trends discussed above are noted once again.

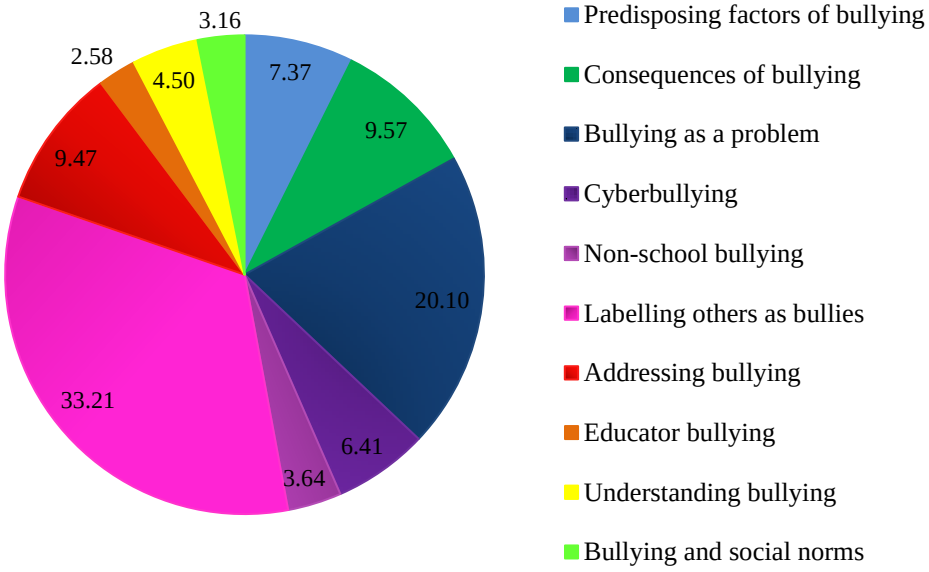


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the % articles that fall under each theme

Whilst Table I and Figure 1 give an indication of the total % of articles published under each theme across the ten year period, the trends in research are easier identified looking at the themes only from the journals. This is shown in Figure 2 below. The number of articles published in each theme throughout the ten year period allows the trends in research to become more visible. However, the numbers should be interpreted with caution as the total number of articles increased each year, the number in each theme would be affected too. Of particular interest from the figure is that 'Addressing bullying' only appeared in 2004, and was only slightly present in 2006. In 2008 this theme was not represented in the research. 'Cyberbullying' was a small percentage of articles published in 2006, before appearing again in 2009 and peaking in 2012.

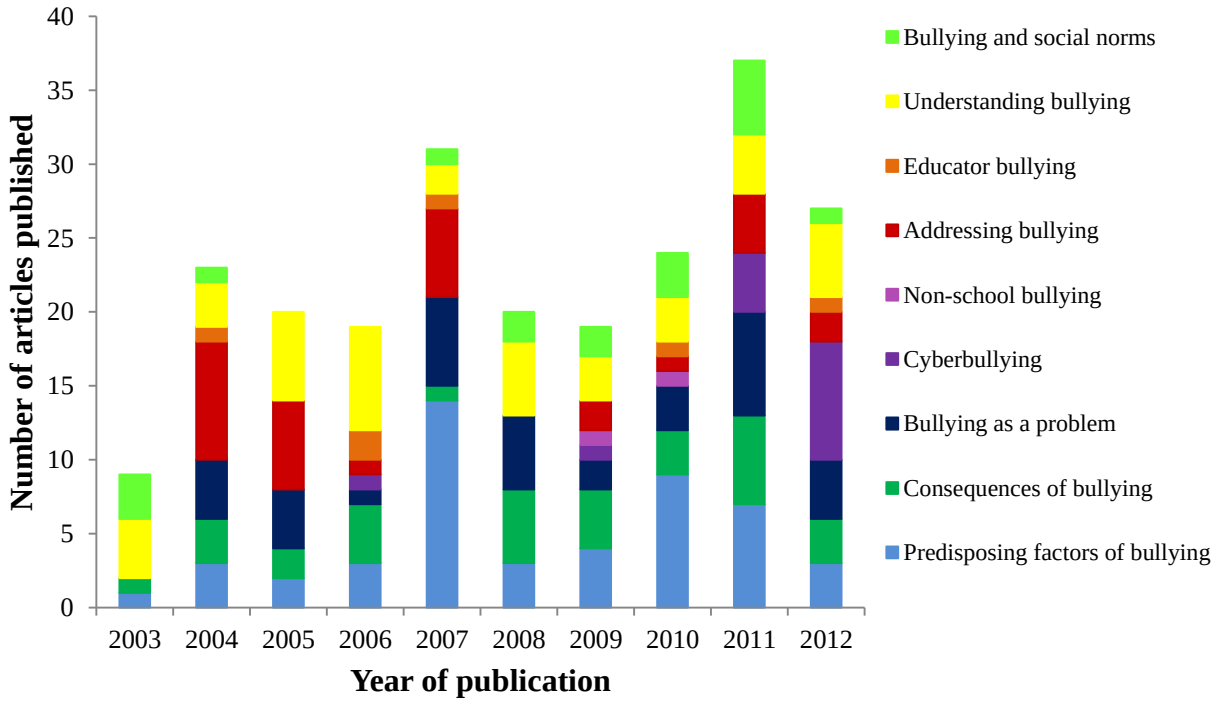


Figure 2: Stacked bar graph indicating the representation of themes in the research journals between 2003 and 2012

In total, 231 journal articles were published on the topic of bullying (indirect and direct), however only 229 were included in the thematic analysis as 2 articles were in Afrikaans in the South African Journal of Education (SAJE). These articles were included in the count of

articles in the figures below. Of the 229 articles published, 114 were directly related to bullying in schools while 115 were indirectly related. A breakdown of the 114 directly related articles is shown in Table II.

Table II. Directly related journal articles published from 2003 to 2012 *(n=114)*

Type of article	Number of articles
Book Review	3
Reviews	3
Empirical	108

The empirical research articles can be further broken down into what methods were used. Only 3 of the empirical articles utilised mixed methods, 14 made use of qualitative methods such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The majority of the empirical articles were conducted using quantitative methods such as surveys and self-report scales.

The bar graph below (Figure 3) shows the number of articles both directly and indirectly related to bullying, that were published in each research journal over the ten year period as a percentage of the total number of articles published by that journal in the same period. This allows for a more accurate comparison to be made since some journals published 30-50 articles a year and others only 10-20 articles. The graph shows that the South African journals (SAJP and SAJE) published the lowest number of articles on bullying (3.54% and 6.81% respectively), whilst the international journals (SPI and CAMHJ) were among the highest. The British Journal of Educational Psychology (BJEP) published the second highest number of articles on bullying (10.82%) making it internationally equivalent.

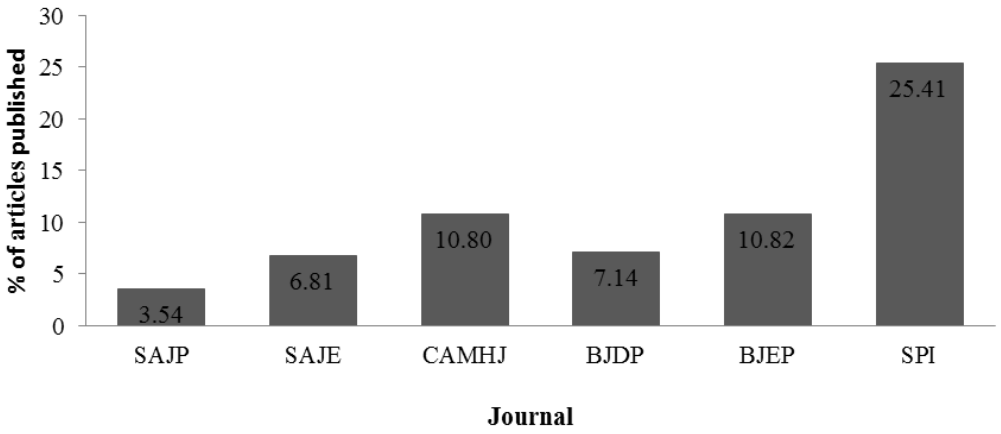


Figure 3: Bar graph showing the number of articles published in each journal between 2003 and 2012 as a percentage of the total number published

The bar graph below (Figure 4) shows the number of articles in all research journals that were published within the ten year period. It shows that in 2007 and 2011 there were peaks in the number of bullying articles published, with a slight drop in 2012. Standard deviation bars are included which show the deviation from the average.

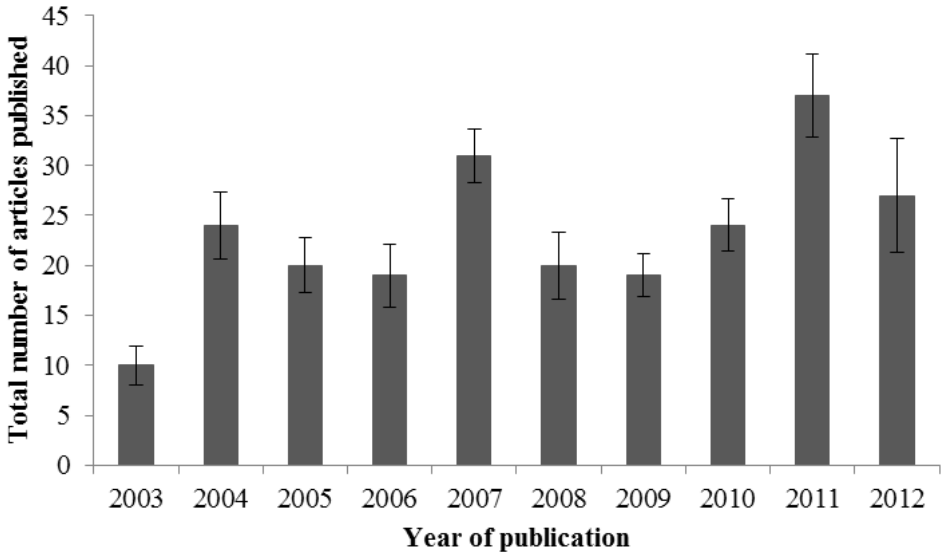


Figure 4: The total number of articles on 'Bullying' published each year from 2003 to 2012 in all six research journals (SAJP, SAJE, CAMHJ, BJDP, BJEP, SIP)

Figure 5 below shows the number of articles published in the SA media database each year within the ten year period. It is evident that between the years 2006 and 2010 there is a

gradual increase in the number of articles published, with a drop in 2011 and a peak in 2012. This shows an increasing interest in bullying.

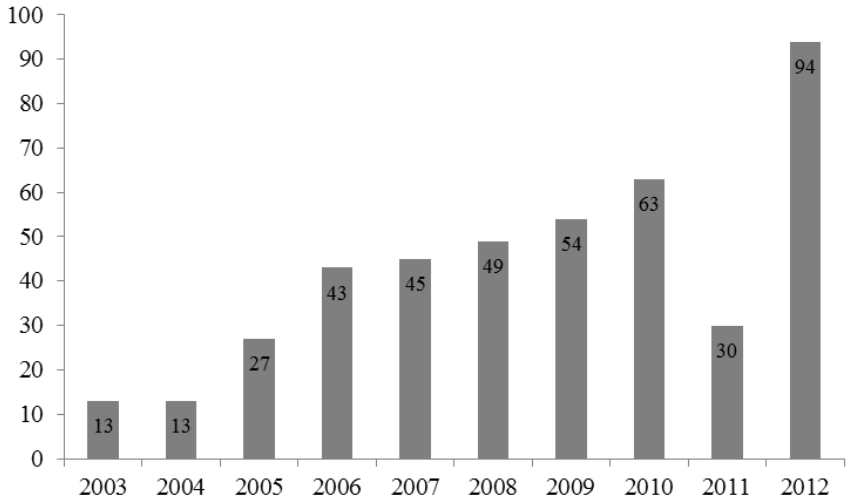


Figure 5: The number of articles on 'Bullying' published each year between 2003 and 2012 in the SA Media database

Compared to the SA media, the UK media did not show an obvious increasing trend (Figure 6). However, in 2011 and 2012 there was a drastic increase in bullying articles published compared to previous years. The low number of articles from 2003-2005 could be due to the fact that the Daily Mail UK was not online yet during those years, and it is possible that not all articles were converted to their online database.

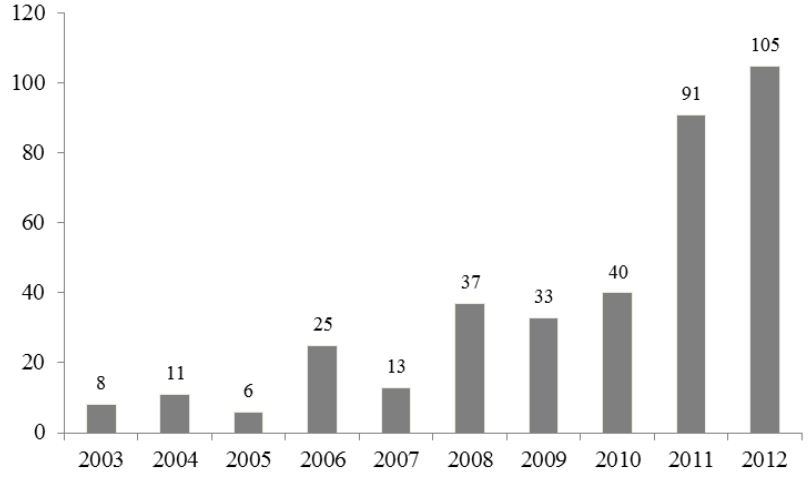


Figure 6: The number of articles on 'Bullying' published each year between 2003 and 2012 in The Daily Mail UK newspaper

CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion

Bullying has become an issue of increasing concern that has also been discussed more frequently in the media, creating a dynamic interplay between public media and academic research (Smith, 2004). The thematic analysis of the full data set *(n=1045)* gives insight into this phenomenon of bullying, not only in research journals but also in public media. This research allows connections to be drawn between academic literature and public understandings of a phenomenon that has been described as a global problem (Powell & Ladd, 2010).

The five research questions will be discussed in the sections below. Using the thematic analysis as well as the quantitative analysis, the trends of bullying literature will be looked into. The themes in the British and South African research and media articles will also be compared in order to determine similarities and differences. Finally, the social construction of bullying throughout the data set is explained. The key findings, limitations and strengths of the study are discussed as well as recommendations for future research given.

5.1 What are the trends in research on bullying – what was investigated and how often, between 2003 and 2012?

In order to determine the trends in research on bullying, the results have shown what was investigated and how often between 2003 and 2012. From Figure 4 (page 56) it is clear that bullying research increased by two-fold between 2003 and 2004, after which the high number was maintained until 2006. In 2007 another 50% increase in articles published occurred. This is similar to international results, as a study of two Italian newspapers from the year 2000 to 2007, concluded that bullying articles increased significantly in the years 2005-2007 (Fraire et al., 2008).

A gradual increase occurred again until a peak in 2011. These numbers show that bullying research peaked in numbers every 3-4 years, and although these peaks were not maintained the level would not drop below the numbers before the peak. This increase in bullying research is supported by other reviews, which state that interest in bullying has been on the rise since Olweus's book on 'Aggression in the schools' (1978) (Smith, Cowie, Olafsson & Liefooghe, 2002). However, this research shows in detail how the trends increase over time.

The trends in the themes are less clearly defined, what is clear however is that the theme 'Understanding bullying' was more prominent between 2003 and 2006, when 'Bullying as a problem' was less represented. 'Cyberbullying' only really featured in 2011 and 2012, which follows trends in the usage of social media and online use by school children. The number of articles focused on 'Addressing bullying' declined after 2007, which is interesting since 'Consequences of bullying' increased around the same time. Perhaps this could indicate a move in research articles towards understanding the long term effects and consequences of bullying. It should be noted that the cyclical nature of predisposing factors contributing to bullying, and the consequences of bullying on the victim sometimes made it difficult to isolate the themes and the consequences of bullying theme could have been inflated due to this. However, this does have implications for intervention as policy makers will have to address one particular aspect of the cycle.

5.2 How do the themes identified in bullying research in South Africa and Britain compare?

The first main comparison that can be made between the research trends in South Africa and Britain is in terms of the number of articles that were published within the ten year period. It is clear from Table I (page 53) that the British journals (*BJEP, BJDP*) published more articles related to bullying than the South African journals (*SAJP, SAJE*). Of all the articles published in the journals over the ten year period, 3.5% and 6.8% in *SAJP* and *SAJE* respectively were related to bullying, while 7.1% and 10.8% were related to bullying in the *BJEP* and *BJDP* respectively. The output is almost double in Britain, which illustrates the fact that South African research in the field of bullying is behind international countries (De Wet, 2006; Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011). Even looking at the international journal *CAMHJ* which is based in Southern Africa, 10.8% of its articles were related to bullying, while 25.4% of articles published in *SPI* were related to bullying.

To compare the trends in research in South African and British journals we need to look at the number of articles published under each theme. Since the British journals published more articles related to bullying in general, each theme can be expected to be slightly higher than the South African numbers. However, the large differences in the themes 'Addressing

bullying', 'Understanding bullying', and 'Bullying and social norms' show that South African research is behind in these areas. It would appear that South African articles focus more on the 'Predisposing factors of bullying', 'Consequences of bullying', and 'Bullying as a problem'. This finding is similar to the point made by Timm and Eskell-Blokland (2011) who state that South African psychologists are working towards producing locally relevant information instead of working with international mainstream theories. This could explain why South African articles published on bullying are focused more on it as a problem and the causes and consequences, more than addressing it. It is interesting to note that 'Cyberbullying' was not present at all in the South African journals, which could be due to the fact that it is still emerging as a new trend in bullying. In South Africa, access to computers and internet is also more limited than internationally. In fact 'Cyberbullying' was mostly present in the international journal *SPI,* highlighting its recent emergence as an international problem that perhaps has not yet been explored thoroughly by South African psychologists. The one theme that the South African journals did publish more on than the British journals was 'Educator bullying'. This is linked to De Wet's (2010) findings that educator targeted bullying may be more likely and more difficult to deal with in South Africa due to high levels of community and school violence amongst other reasons.

5.3 Bullying in the media compared to research journals - Does the media's focus have an impact on research conducted in journal articles?

As discussed above, the theme 'Educator bullying' was most prominent in the South African research journals, however most of the articles were published by one author (De Wet, 2006; 2010) who states that research is lacking in this field. This theme was much more present in the media articles, with more being published in the *Daily UK* than the South African newspapers. It is also interesting to note that De Wet (2006) stated that no research studies were conducted on educators perpetrating bullying, yet articles describing incidences of educators bullying students were prominent in both the British and South African media. This is an example of where every-day experiences can shape the direction that research takes, as has been seen with De Wet (2006; 2010) studying this form of bullying in schools due to observing it in South African schools.

A theme that featured more in the research journals than in the media articles was 'Understanding bullying'. This is not surprising given that the purpose of research journals is to investigate and understand phenomenon. This is in comparison to the theme 'Labelling others as bullies' which only appeared in the media articles and not in the research journals. This suggests that bullying has become a term used in society to attribute certain characteristics to others, whether fitting or not. The use of the term bullying by both the South African and British media seems to also be common to describe single violent incidents however, research indicates that while bullying can escalate into major incidents of violence, a single incident cannot be classified as bullying (De Wet, 2007b).

Another theme more prominent in the media was 'Bullying as a problem', especially in the South African newspapers. This could be due to the fact that South Africa is still highlighting bullying in schools and society and since violence is a problem it has been linked to bullying given it more relevance in newspapers. It is interesting to note that both research articles and media report on prevalence rates of bullying, yet very different rates are reported. This is especially true in the *Daily Mail UK* which reported much higher prevalence rates than the British academic journals (*BJDP, BJEP*). In South Africa, the results of one research article from *SAJE* were published in a few newspapers which could be an attempt by the author to make the results more relevant to society. However, most of the prevalence rates were from studies conducted by Pondering Panda and other survey companies (Sapa, 2012). Therefore the ability to compare them and the accuracy can be questioned.

The research question 'Does the media's focus have an impact on research conducted in journal articles?' is more difficult to answer than anticipated. Since the themes present in the media and research varied in terms of content and quantity, it would appear that the two are independent. However, the fact that some research articles refer to bullying being more prominent in the media would suggest that authors are acknowledging the role of media in contributing to society's understanding of the phenomenon. In fact, one article published in the *SAJE* aimed to determine the safety of South African schools due to the high incidence of murder, violence, rape, sexual abuse and assault in schools reported by the media (Prinsloo, 2005).

5.4 How has bullying been socially constructed over the last decade in South Africa and in Britain?

Since the media plays a large role in the social construction of bullying, we can look at the prominence of the theme 'Labelling others as bullies' as an indication of how bullying is understood by society. A 'bully' has become a term used by the media to represent any person or organisation that abuses their power over somebody else. Unfortunately this representation might be seen as proof that in order to be seen as powerful and to get your way, you need to bully others. This may promote bullying in school as the media has a strong influence on the continuation of bullying or violent behaviours (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011).

The fact that bullying is seen as a problem by the media also constructs it as something that only 'bad' people or children do, and as something that requires intervention. It is interesting to note that bullying is seen more as a problem in the South African media, than in the *Daily Mail UK*.

The small theme of 'Bullying and social norms' highlighted the South African media's use of violence in society as a way to explain or understand bullying. This finding is consistent with research which states that according to media reports, violence is to be expected in South African schools, which they pertain to being a reflection of society (De Wet, 2003). Since social construction promotes the understanding that how we see things depends on the place and time we are in (Burr, 1995); we can acknowledge that the high rate of violence reported on in the media has been linked to the construction of bullying in South Africa.

5.5 Key findings

One of the key findings from this research was that the numbers of bullying articles appearing in research journals and newspapers have shown an increase between 2003 and 2012. These trends followed those found in other research reports. The differences in the trends found in South Africa, Britain and internationally highlight the role of social constructionism in the production of knowledge. Specific times and contexts allow for the same phenomenon, bullying, to be focused on in different ways. South African research focused on 'Predisposing factors of bullying', 'Consequences of bullying', and 'Bullying as a

problem' whilst British journals had more articles in the themes 'Understanding bullying', 'Addressing bullying' and 'Cyberbullying'. The media's focus also differed from that of research journals as 'Labelling others as bullies' became a prominent theme.

5.6 Limitations to the study

One of the limitations to this study was the fact that only one British newspaper, *The Daily Mail UK*, was used in the data collection process. This was due to the fact that there was no access to an online database for British newspapers, such as SA Media which made the collection of South African newspapers simpler. The large number of articles found in *The Daily Mail UK*, also made it impractical to include additional sources within the limited time frame of this research study.

5.7 Strengths of the study

The fact that the total data set was quite large (*n=1045*) is one of the strengths of this research. It allowed a comprehensive analysis of the major journals in South Africa, Britain and internationally. The use of a mixed methods approach also adds a different perspective to trends research on bullying.

5.8 Recommendations for future research

Whilst the large data set allowed for trends to be observed, it is felt that future research could benefit from focusing on one particular theme and doing a more in-depth analysis. Of particular interest would be a discourse analysis on the media's portrayal of certain bullying incidents. It was observed that one incident would be reported on in multiple newspapers and the focus and language used constructed very different perspectives and social understandings of bullying.

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