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THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF TEACHERS AS TARGETS OF BULLYING BY THEIR LEARNERS IN A HIGH SCHOOL

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by combination of coursework and research.

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2013

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work presented in this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not, in part or in whole, been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

Signed:

_____

CARON THERESA HOFFMANN

Date:

November 2013

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates and addresses the issue of bullying of teachers by learners, which is also referred to as teacher-targeted bullying (TTB). The purpose of this study is to obtain data relating to the nature and extent of teacher-targeted bullying in a High School in Gauteng West. The setting is a former Model C, co-educational school, consisting of 1 354 learners (Grade 8 to Grade 12). The ethnicity of the School is predominantly Black, with 60% Black learners to 40% Caucasian, and the gender ratio of learners in the school is 706 girls to 648 boys.

The current teacher population consists of a staff quotient of seventy-five teachers (75), twenty (20) male and fifty-five (55) female teachers, who are employed at the school, which will also be known as "the workplace" for the purposes of this research. The procedure for this research entailed using a teacher group of seventy (70) teachers, of whom fifty four (54) volunteered to complete the questionnaire, allowing an in-depth response by establishing factors contributing to the difficulties of learner bullying experienced by teachers; the effect on teacher performance, morale and student learning; and the support needed from education management for teachers experiencing bullying by their learners. From these questionnaires, the process was extended to a semi-structured interview, in order to follow up on the questionnaire. This allowed an understanding of the teacher's life experiences or situations as experienced in their own words, for the twelve (12) volunteer teachers who had experienced bullying by learners. In this mixed method design, quantitative results enhanced generalizability, and qualitative results helped to explain how teachers experienced teacher-targeted bullying by learners in this Gauteng West High School.

The research findings indicated that, prominent in this study, is the stress reported by teachers relating to the disciplining of learners. The level of reported learner-on-teacher-bullying was more evident in the classroom. It was also reported that all Grades were problematic for teachers, but the level of reported stress was more evident with Grade 9 male learners in same-gender classes. Furthermore, difficulties within this school environment, as well as the effect on teachers' performance, morale and support from school management were established.

In an effort to respond to the epidemic of learners who target and bully teachers, a reconceptualisation of the learner-on-teacher-bullying construct in the School under review, as well as other schools in South Africa, is needed. Thus bullying of teachers by learners must be tackled as a whole-school issue, with the focus on positive learner behaviour, good support structures, and active leadership, ensuring that staff are not only supported, but are also seen to be supported, by the various role players.

KEY WORDS

Nature; Extent; Teacher; Workplace Bullying; Disruptive Learner Behaviour / Teacher-Targeted Bullying (TTB); Learner; School; Model C School; Education Management; School Management Team (SMT); School Governing Body (SGB); Parent; Victim; Bully.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

There is a need for greater recognition of teacher-targeted bullying by learners within the school organisation. According to Lang (1998, p.4), "It is also quite possible that teacher- targeted bullying, even if it is recognised at all, is also being underestimated." Most studies have focused almost exclusively on learner-bullying and, consequently, "bullying experienced by teachers is less documented" (Lorion, 1998, p.466). In most studies, teachers are considered as a source of information about student behaviour or as implementers of prevention programmes, but they are seldom considered as victims of school bullying (Nicolaides, Toda, & Smith, 2002). Armario (2012, p.1) reiterates this and states that, "... less attention has been given to equally disturbing behaviour by students who harass instructors, principals and other adults".

Society holds the workplace to be a fundamental proponent of the daily lives of many individuals, yet the school workplace has become the playground for teacher-bullying behaviour (Misawa, 2010). Thus the workplace is central to, and plays a major role in, the elicitation of different behaviours and interactions among the individuals through whom it functions (Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson & Wallace, 2005). Workplace-bullying is on the increase, and more and more people witness it, are subjected to it, and are affected by it (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996).

1.1 Problem Statement

"I am scared to death to go back to work tomorrow," said teacher Sunny Mueller. "We've had teachers assaulted, shoved around, had eggs thrown at them," said Bakersfield Elementary Teachers president, Brad Barnes. "Last week, there was a homemade bomb that went off in the boys' bathroom" said teacher Kate Irwin. This was reported by Dinh (2011, p.1), an East Bakersfield Reporter in an article entitled "Students allegedly swear at, threaten, and physically assault teachers". She highlights the plight of teachers in Bakerfield, Calif (UK) who constantly fear for their safety and are afraid to go to school each day. According to Mandell (2011, p.1) "this is a trend that has been going on for years, but no one wants to talk about it."

In South Africa, a classroom attack reported by Makwabe (2009, p.7) reports that teacher Tania Jacob's life fell apart while she was teaching at Rhodes High School in Mowbray, Cape Town. A 13-year-old pupil hit her on the head with a hammer – in front of his Grade

eight classmates. Interestingly, the defence team painted a different picture in court, saying that Jacobs had brought the attack upon herself as she was unable to control her class, which resented her strict discipline. The school further claimed that she had failed to report taunts by pupils to the proper authorities after the attack.

The most recent school safety report from the National Center for Education Statistics, the data branch of the U.S. Department of Education, found that five percent of public schools reported that students verbally abused teachers on a daily, or weekly, basis and also that eight percent of secondary school teachers (139,400) were being threatened with injury by a student, as were seven percent of elementary teachers (113,700) (Armario, 2012). More importantly, shocking statistics in the U.S.A. further illustrate that each year, 253,000 teachers are threatened with injury and 127,500 teachers are physically attacked by learners. Violence against teachers costs the U.S.A. over two billion dollars a year due to lost wages; lost days of work; retraining and replacement of teachers; medical and psychological care; student disciplinary proceedings; increased workers' compensation claims, and action against perpetrators. Threats against teachers are costly and contribute to teachers leaving their teaching careers because of burn-out, poor work environment and lack of support from administrators (Peytel, 2010). Therefore bullying at work is an extreme form of social stress and is referred to as a more crippling and devastating problem for employees than all other work-related stressors put together (Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004).

Creedero, in her article "Violence against teachers becoming the norm", states that "teaching in America has become the equivalent of a soldier going off to war" (Creedero, n.d.a.). More than ever before, teachers are faced with threatening situations and problems both inside and outside their classrooms, where confrontation takes place on a daily basis. According to Hartjes (2007), "Some Students Bully Teachers too: Teachers at Risk," statistics from the Ontario Secondary School Teacher Federation's Report (UK) (OSSTF), shows that ten percent of teachers who are bullied take time away from work. Fifty-three (53%) of bullied teachers reported that they suffered psychological, health-related or other personal impacts that is irritability, loss of sleep, loss of self-confidence, etc. as well as severe anxiety attacks, loss of appetite, diagnosed depression, or increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances. Furthermore, the OSSTF Report notes that 36% of targeted teachers who reported being bullied allowed the consequential student suspension.

Bullied teachers typically feel vulnerable and overwhelmed in the workplace and, for the past five years, the Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC): Metropole North, has been involved in an intensive training programme for teachers with a view to improving the management of discipline and skill in handling learner behaviour within the school context. According to the Education Management and Development Centre: Metropole North (Western Cape Education Department, 2007, p.3), "Learner behaviour problems have, for years, been a major concern for teachers, administrators and parents in South Africa". Therefore, if significant strides are to be made for safer schools, whether in South Africa or elsewhere in the world, research must continue to investigate this phenomenon of teacher-targeted bullying in the school workplace.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

There are various reasons for choosing this particular topic. Only recently has research contributed to advancement in the understanding of teacher-targeted bullying and its importance in the life of teachers. Within South Africa, there is a dire need to provide more research on teacher-targeted bullying as the available research is limited in terms of the amount of research done. There also seems to be an increasing demand for management formally to acknowledge the complexity, as well as the problem. Moreover, this exploration study may help teachers to feel that their problems are taken seriously, and further school management strategies involving all parties, like teachers, parents and learners, could be examined regarding teacher-targeted bullying. Whether experienced in South Africa or elsewhere in the world, teacher-targeted bullying should no longer be ignored, trivialised or overlooked at the peril of teachers.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

By appreciating that teachers can be bullied, this study aims to identify the nature and extent to which teachers could be subjected to teacher- bullying by learners, also known as teacher-targeted bullying. More specifically, the research will aim to establish factors contributing to difficulties experienced by teacher participants; establish the effect on teacher performance, morale and student learning; and to establish the support needed from education management to assist teachers who experience teacher-targeted bullying by learners.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What is the nature of bullying behaviour that teachers experience from their learners at a High School in Gauteng?

- To what extent, if any, do teachers experience bullying from their learners at a High School in Gauteng?

- What support or assistance do teachers who are bullied by their learners receive from education management?

Therefore one needed to establish both the nature and extent of teacher-targeted bullying at a Gauteng High School as perceived by the teachers themselves, and possible recommendations to address the problem.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

The scope of the research was to investigate the above research questions using structured in-depth questionnaires and interview techniques to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data in establishing the nature and extent of teacher-targeted bullying by learners in a Gauteng High School, and then to analyse the data gathered in order to identify the nature of present bullying behaviours as described in the aims of the research study. The raw data is evaluated for recurring patterns and themes. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 378) state that "pattern seeking demands a thorough search through the data, looking for negative evidence and alternative explanations". Thematic analysis also allows the researcher to learn something about the respondent's psychological world (Smith, Harre & Van Lagenhove, 1996). Follow-up interviews were conducted on a one-on–one basis.

To conclude the study, recommendations were made to address these challenges experienced by teachers within their workplace, being the school environment.

1.5 Key Concepts

The following Glossary defines some of the terms used, according to the scope and purpose of the study:

'Nature' – The term nature includes the "fundamental qualities of a person or thing" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.1102). For the purpose of this report, nature relates to

the kinds or types of teacher-targeted bullying behaviours by learners evidenced by the research.

'Extent' – Refers to "the range over which something extends" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.583). This report uses the word extent to refer to the degree to which teacher-targeted bullying behaviours by learners are present, extended or experienced in the school environment by the participant teachers.

'Teacher' – Refers to "a person whose occupation is teaching others, especially children" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.1676). For the purpose of this report, a teacher is described as any person who is formally employed by the School Governing Body or by the Department of Education to teach at a school.

'Workplace Bullying' – For the purpose of this report, bullying at work is defined as "harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. In order for the label bullying to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process, it has to take place over varying periods of time, for example, once a week, to over a six month period" (Einarsen & Mikkelson, 2003, p.15). Bullying is seen as an escalating process in the course of which the victim becomes the target of systematic social acts and is unable to defend him/herself as a result of the bullying and/or due to the severity of the bullying (Agervold, 2007). Thus, "it is implied that such conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict" (Einarsen & Mikkelson, 2003, p.15).

'Disruptive Learner Behaviour' – For the purpose of this report, disruptive learner behaviour is described as:

- "Talking out of turn;
- Calling out;
- Non-verbal distracting of others from their work;
- Interfering with other learners' equipment or materials;
- Verbal abuse of teachers or peers;
- Physical aggression"

(Houghton, Wheldall & Merrett, 1988, p.297).

'Teacher-Targeted Bullying (TTB)'- Pervin and Turner (1998, p.16), define teacher-targeted bullying behaviour as that "which aims to undermine the confidence of the teacher, and it could include the following behaviour:

- Persistent, intentional, vigorous abuse of the teacher;
- Swearing and/or mocking the teacher, for example by remarks like, 'You cannot do anything' or, 'You cannot control us';
- Knowingly ignoring the teacher;
- Making personal comments about the teacher; and
- Damaging the teacher's property".

Given the definition above, it would seem reasonable to assume that if one or two individuals have the confidence to challenge the teacher with the abovementioned negative behaviours, then disruptive behaviour can develop into teacher-targeted bullying.

'Learner' – A learner can be described as "someone who is learning something, gains knowledge of something or acquires skill in some art or practice" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.940). For the purpose of this report, the term learner will mean a person at a secondary school who is learning or being taught by a teacher or teachers.

'School' – A school can be described as "an institution or building at which children and young people, usually under 19, receive education" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.1466).

The importance and function of school is defined as, "teaching math, reading, social studies and science and the most important thing for students to learn is how to interact effectively and peacefully with each other, and the world at large" (Johnson, as cited in Coloroso, 2005, p.188).

However, for the purpose of this report, the researcher describes a school as an organisation where children are educated in various fields of study, but it is also a formal institution where children are exposed to a value-system where they interpret messages that they receive from the school environment as they begin to interact socially in a place where learners are taught, and teachers teach.

'Model C School' – A Model C School can be described as "a semi-private schooling structure, with decreased funding from the Government, and greatly increased autonomy for schools. These schools can have different budgets, different teacher to student ratios, and varying quality of facilities, all based on the affordability of the parents of that particular school" (Power, 2015, p.1). For the purpose of this report, former Model C schools are those schools that were reserved for white learners under the apartheid educational system. As of 2013, although the former 'Model C' was set aside by the post-apartheid government, the term is still used to describe previous whites-only government schools in South Africa (Power, 2015).

'Education Management' – "Education management at schools is a process whereby education leaders in charge of learning and teaching attempt to utilise, as effectively as possible, the services of educators and learners, as well as other resources, in order to grow a culture of teaching and learning" (Van Deventer, 2000, p.11).

For the purpose of this report, educational management can be described as the joint management efforts / techniques used by the School Management Team (SMT), the School Governing Body (SGB) and other stakeholders, such as circuit managers and the Government as a major partner, to establish a culture of teaching and learning. Educational management unifies and co-ordinates activities such as decision-making, controlling, leading, guiding, organising, supervising, planning, leadership and motivation, into a meaningful and purposeful endeavour.

'School Management Team (SMT)' – "A school management team is a team of professional specialists led by the school principal" (Calitz, 2003, p.77). For the purpose of this report, the school management team can be described as a joint venture driven by a professional management team comprising the principal, the deputy principal, heads of departments and subject heads.

'School Governing Body (SGB)' - A School Governing Body is described as "a statutory body of people who are elected to govern a public school by virtue of an act of Parliament, in particular the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, representing the school community" (Education Law and Policy Handbook, 1999, p.17).

For the purpose of this report, in this particular Gauteng West School, the School Governing Body consists of a membership of teachers, learners and parents.

'Parent' – For the purpose of this report, a parent is described as "a person acting as a father or mother; guardian" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.1201).

'Victim' – For the purpose of this report, a victim is described as "a person that suffers harm from another or from some adverse act, circumstance" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.1183).

Researchers (Aquino, Grover, Bradfield & Allen, 1999; Coyne, Seigne & Randall, 2007; Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2007) have suggested that victims in the workplace are seen as either submissive victims or provocative victims, defined as follows:-

- " 'Submissive Victims' are seen as easy targets because of their dispositional vulnerabilities, that is they are unable to execute effective coping strategies, defend themselves, have reserved behaviour, and lack a peer-support network.

- 'Provocative victims' may incite aggressive behaviour within another person because they are too anxious, or others are envious of them, or they score high on conscientiousness and are highly organised, or adhere rigidly to expected group norms or rules. It is however important to note that personality in particular can act as a catalyst in stimulating bullying behaviour and has been shown to be an increasingly important determinant of chronic victimisation" (Seigne, Coyne, Randall & Parker, 2007, p.118).

'Bully' – A bully is described as "a person who hurts, persecutes, or intimidates weaker people, especially to make them do something" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011, p.227). Wharton (2005, p. 5) states that, "someone who inflicts pain or hurt on another person for their own gratification". For the purpose of this report, the bully is deemed to be a learner who is victimising a party (teacher), who is authorised to have more power than the learner but yet may not have.

1.6 Conclusion

In accordance with Mnyaka (2006), this section serves to indicate what the researcher has discussed in each of the chapters. Therefore chapter one consists of general orientation to the study, problem statement, rationale for the study, research aims and objectives, the scope of the report and the summary. Chapter two provides the literature review. Chapter three

discusses research design and methods. Chapter four covers the analysis of data and the presentation of results. Chapter five focuses on discussion of the results, recommendations and the conclusion of this report.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This review of literature includes an overview of bullying; secular workplace-bullying with related commonalities to a school environment; contextual risk factors pertaining to teacher-targeted bullying; and the effect of teacher-targeted bullying on the teachers (individuals) and the school workplace (organisation).

Within the context of this study, certain research by Salin (2001) shows that bullying in the workplace occurs more frequently due to the levels of job employment. In many instances, bullies are often seen as senior to the bullied person in the workplace, for example a supervisor, manager or principal (Hoel, Cooper & Faragher, 2001), while further studies show that bullying at collegiate level is more prevalent than hierarchical bullying (Ortega, Hogh, Pejtersen & Olsen, 2008).

From the outset, an important distinction in this research must be made, as teachers whilst being employed by the School Governing Body or the Department of Education, are bullied by their learners deemed as subordinate to the teachers. So although the work is conducted in a school environment, the bullying is neither hierarchical or at collegiate level but rather practiced by persons deemed to be subordinate to the recipients. The bullying occurs within the school environment, which is a formal institution and learning organisation where learning is taught and teachers teach (Collins English Dictionary, 2011).

According to Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2003), bullying behaviour in the workplace is not necessarily linked to one sector, or one type of organisation. Even though available research shows "that organisational differences have not emerged" (Hoel, et al., 2001; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001), other evidence has shown higher rates of workplace-bullying in industry (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996), education (Hubert & Veldhoven, 2001) and the health sectors (Ortega et al., 2008), while Leymann and Gustaffson (1996) show that workplace-bullying in organisations within the public sector is more prevalent than in those within the private sector. Therefore, taking the above mentioned research into account, bullying in the workplace, whether in a school organisation or elsewhere, seems to be a world-wide problem. It is evident that research in different countries has also conceptualised and labelled workplace bullying with a variety of interchangeable terminology, which include terms of 'bullying', 'harassment', 'victimisation' or 'mobbing' (Agervold, 2007). For example, the United Kingdom is more likely to use the term 'bullying', while in the USA the terms used include 'workplace

harassment' (Brodsky, 1976), 'victimisation' (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000, Smith, Cowie, Olafson & Liefooghe (2002), 'emotional abuse' (Keashly & Harvey, 2005), 'workplace incivility' (Pearson, Andersson & Porath (2005), and 'social undermining' (Crossley, 2009). 'Mobbing' (bullying in English) has been used widely in Norway and Germanic speaking countries (Zapf & Einarsen, 2001) where research into bullying has its origins (Olweus, 1997). For the purpose of this research, the terminology relating to this school workplace, where teachers are bullied by their learners, will be 'teacher-targeted bullying'.

Extensive literature reviews conducted, revealed little available research pertaining directly to subordinate bullying by learners of their teachers. That which is available pertains to that conducted in the United Kingdom, USA and European research, with very little South African related published material available. Source information for the South African context is collated from a generalised National Schools Based Violence Report conducted by the South African Council for Educators (2011).

2.1 Overview of Bullying and Workplace Bullying with Related Commonalities

Bullying is not a new societal phenomenon (Randall, 2001). It may occur within a variety of social contexts, such as schools, pre-schools, children's homes, manifesting as domestic violence, elder abuse, cyber bullying and sexism in prisons and the workplace. It is a symptom of a dysfunctional social system where hostility is created, deeply permeating many areas of our society, particularly in educational settings and our workplaces (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Namie & Namie, 2000; Randall, 2001; Schat, Frone & Kelloway, 2006; Westhues, 2006).

According to Misawa (2010, p.8), "while some researchers in education identified and reported how frequently bullying occurs in childhood in school, others outside and beyond the formal educational context reported that bullying is not only a children's problem in school, but also a serious issue in adulthood in the workplace and community at large." Therefore, according to Zapf and Einarsen (2001), it is difficult to comprehend that before the late 1980's research on workplace-bullying tended to be anecdotal and there was little awareness of what workplace bullying was or how it could be managed. However, Coyne Clough, Alexander and Clement (2006) identify an awareness and acknowledgement of workplace-bullying over the last twenty-five years, highlighting its rapid increase, interest and growth from its initial focus in Scandinavia (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Leymann, 1996), to Africa (Marais – Steinman, 2003), to Asia (Seo & Leather, 2008),

to Australia (Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir, 2005) to Europe (Hoel, Rayner & Cooper, 2001; Nielsen, Skogstad, Mathiesen, Glaso, Aasland, Notelaers & Einarsen, 2009), to North America (Ferris, 2004; Lutgen–Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007) and to South America (De Souza & De Souza, 2008).

This further reflects an important finding with regard to this review of literature. Research that was conducted in 2007 in the American workplace by the Workplace Bullying Institute, United States, reported that about one in four adults had experienced bullying at work and that workplace-bullying had affected almost half of America's 71.5 million workers, while the research population in this research comprised of about 54 million US workers (Namie & Namie, 2000). From this point of view, bullying is perceived as serious. It has been prevalent for a long time and is a life-long issue, manifesting from the school playground to workplace boardrooms (Lines, 2008).

For the purpose of this research, the workplace is defined as a Gauteng West High School and my research findings pertain to bullying within the social context of the school as a workplace environment.

2.1.1 Defining Bullying within the School and the Workplace Environments

Bullying, whether carried out in a school environment by learner on learner, or by learner to teacher, is a practice that provokes concern. It infringes upon the victim's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security. Therefore a number of definitions have been formulated in attempting to conceptualise bullying behaviour within the school environment. The focus is briefly on learner on learner-bullying which has been extensively studied in the school environment, progressing to pupil-teacher-bullying at school, also being the workplace where teachers are employed.

When taking the traditional definition of school bullying, that is learner on learner, into account, Olweus (2000, p.10) defines a "bully as someone who intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort upon another". This allows some consensus that bullying refers to repeated aggressive acts against someone who cannot easily defend her- or himself. While Rigby (2002, p.38), in a similar definition, although offering a broader explanation, states that bullying is the "systematic abuse of power". This describes both an imbalance of power and repetition in these two widely-used definitions of Olweus (2000) and Rigby (2002).

However, it is important to note that there is a distinct problem in extending these two abovementioned definitions to a new form of bullying, called cyber-bullying that may take place in the school whether by learner on learner, or a teacher-targeted by a learner. According to Shariff (2008), it can be described as a form of bullying where aggression is conveyed through electronic media that is cell-phones, blogs, online chat rooms, multi-user domains and social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter. It can be verbal, for example by the learner using a cell-phone or telephone; or written, for example by the learner making threats or racial, sexual or homophobic harassment where they as perpetrator can remain unknown or anonymous. Cyber-bullying is therefore problematic regarding the aspect of repetition, as a single act by the learner being the perpetrator, such as posting a nasty comment on a website, may be viewed by an extremely wide audience far beyond the school environment and teacher workplace. This is also all done behind a computer screen or cell-phone and the imbalance of power in this context does not refer to traditional elements of bullying, such as physical strength. Therefore, in traditional bullying, aggression may seem to be more widely utilised.

According to Monks and Smith (2006), taking these aspects of 'repetition' and 'imbalance' of power into account within the traditional definitions of Olweus (2000) and Rigby (2002), is likely to lead to outcomes such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or even a fear of exposing the truth due to perceived consequences of such exposure, on the part of the victim.

They further add that, because of the vulnerability of the victim, others have an obligation to intervene (Monks & Smith, 2006). One therefore needs to take the democratic right of others seriously. As much as it is a fundamental democratic right for learners not to be bullied, it is a fundamental right for teachers not to be bullied by their learners. This also increases an awareness of discrimination where bullying devalues the rights and opinions of teachers who are targeted by their learners, relating to their gender, age, race, religion, subject or courses taught, disability, years of service, or sexual orientation, among other factors.

Literature of workplace bullying, by Adams (1992, p.9), describes workplace-bullying "as a malignant cancer. It creeps up on you long before you, or anyone else, is able to appreciate what it is that is making you feel the ill effects." Far from being simplistic,

it is created over a period of time and is not a one-off incident of aggression about a specific issue, nor is it a response to a rebuke. Once terror is created, the bully can act without fear of recrimination or retaliation. Leymann (1990, p.120) defines physical terror or mobbing in the work environment as "hostile or unethical communications which are directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual." This could possibly take place where the perpetrator, being the learner(s), subjects (subject) the victim being the teacher, to repeated stigmatising through, injustices and invasion of their personal rights within the school workplace. This definition of bullying in the workplace, is not only psychologically orientated, but has implications for the teacher who experiences suffering and hostility in their place of work. It is the systematic violence that is used that both intimidates and maintains the learner dominance over the teacher.

A further definition by Namie and Namie (2000, p.3) defined workplace-bullying as "the repeated, malicious, health-endangering mistreatment of an employee (the Target) by one or more bullies. The mistreatment is psychological violence, a mixture of verbal and strategic assaults to prevent the Target (teacher) from performing work well." Einarsen and Mikkelson (2003, p.15) provided an integrated definition of workplace-bullying and defined it as "harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks". In order for the label bullying to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process, it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (for example weekly) and over a period of time (for example about six months). Bullying is usually an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted, be it the teacher, ends up in an inferior position, and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. According to Einarsen and Mikkelson (2003, p.15), "a conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict". While Rayner and Cooper (2006) question the aspect of persistency in this definition, they argue that it could offer a loophole for someone who bullies on a one-off scenario and, because it offers an approach of "regularly" and "repeatedly", it stops investigations into one-off incidents of bullying. Furthermore, there is an ethical aspect of allowing repeated negative behaviour to happen, occurring 'weekly and over a period of time', until the intimidation of the victim is acknowledged as a bullying practice.

Randall (2001, p.4) approached bullying from a perspective of aggression in the workplace and defined bullying as "the aggressive behaviour arising from the deliberate intent to cause physical or psychological distress to others". As with Einarsen et al. (2003, p.15) Randall's definition does not specify a threshold of frequency and duration. He argues that it could be a one-time incident within the workplace that causes significant damage, either physically or psychologically, to the victim (teacher). He further states that "aggressive behaviour does not have to be regular or repeated for it to be bullying behaviour" (Randall, 2001, p.5).

Therefore, the most important ideas which emerge from the literature, and what is clear, is that, although school bullying is defined differently, there are commonalities among these definitions of workplace-bullying that I found useful for my study. However, a key concept, according to Bandura (1999) is that behaviour is the result of an interaction between the person and their environment (reciprocal determinism). Both teachers and learners within the school environment are viewed "as capable of actively directing their own lives and learning complex patterns of behaviour in the absence of reward" (Pervin & John, 2001, p.438). Therefore Bandura (1999), emphasises "the potential for people to be able to influence their destinies and to develop within their biological limits" (Bandura, as cited in Pervin and John, 2001, p.439). Thus, learners are influenced by environmental forces but they also choose how to behave. The research sought to establish if the teachers cognitively acknowledged the prevalence of learner-bullying within their work environment and to establish if there was a willingness on their part to identify and confront the hitherto unacknowledged practice of teacher-targeted bullying once identified, exposed and to allow for open debate within the teacher body and management structure on how to rectify the behaviour and its impact.

The table below analyses the types of bullying behaviours manifesting in the school/work environment and evidenced by the research participants.

2.1.2 Types of Workplace Bullying Behaviours Experienced by Teachers from their Learners in the School Environment

Einarsen (1999) explains these different types of bullying in the School Workplace (as adapted from Einarsen et al., 2003) as follows:

Types of Bullying	Behaviour Experienced By Teachers in the School Workplace by their Learners
Direct Bullying	• Targets the teacher directly • Includes teasing, mocking, rebuking, threatening the teacher or their work. Persistent, intentional, vigorous abuse of the teacher and undermining the teacher's confidence.
Indirect Bullying	• Subtle forms of aggressive behaviour towards the teacher; teacher ostracism, or isolation; withholding important work-related information from the teacher; and slander or vicious rumour-spreading about the teacher.
Work – Related Bullying	• Actions by the learner that render work – related tasks impossible to carry out for the teacher who is targeted, or denying of tasks.
Person – Related Bullying	• Targeting the teacher personally, for example rumours, jokes, slander, unwanted sexual advances, making personal comments about the teacher.
Physical Bullying	• Constitutes explicit acts of violence and harassment, harmful physical non-sexual transgressions or sexual harassment or advancement by the learner towards the teacher, taking or damaging the teacher's belongings.
Verbal Bullying	• Constitutes teacher ridiculing, teacher teasing, teacher taunting, teacher threatening, rumour spreading about the teacher, sexual innuendos towards the teacher, criticism that is unjustified, as well as swearing and/or mocking the teacher, for example by remarks like: "You cannot control us".
Psychological Bullying	• Constitutes intentional use of power, including threat perceived by the teacher as a possible source of harm to

	self, family life, livelihood, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
Cyber	• Using text messages, e-mails, website bullying against the teacher.

(As Adapted: Einarsen et al., 2003).

- **Negative reactions occur.** This includes harassing, offending, socially excluding the teacher, or negatively affecting the teacher's work tasks.
- **Imbalance of power exists between a bully (bullies) and the teacher.** A conflict cannot be called bullying if two parties of approximately equal 'strength' are in conflict (Einarsen et al., 2003). Therefore the bully is deemed to be a learner victimising or bullying the teacher who is actually authorised to have more power than the learner, but yet may not.
- **Intention of bullies to hurt the teacher.** Once terror is created, the bully can act against the teacher without fear of recrimination or retaliation. Leymann (1990) defines physical terror or mobbing in the work environment as "hostile or unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way i.e. repeated stigmatising through, inter alia, injustices and invasion of the teachers' personal rights" (Leymann, 1990, p.120).
- **Persistence of teacher bullying**. In this research, I will include any one-time, incidents of teacher bullying by a learner within the school workplace that has caused any significant damage either psychologically, emotionally, physically etc. to the teacher (Randall, 2001); as well as any interaction or process that has occurred regularly and over a period of time (Einersen et al., 2003).

2.2 Contextual Risk Factors for Teacher-Targeted Bullying

Burton (2008, p.17) states that "schools are generally seen as mechanisms to develop and reinforce positive citizens with pro-social attitudes and as sites where individuals are prepared for the role they play in society at large". What is becoming evident in South African society is that teacher-targeted bullying by learners does not take place in a vacuum within the school workplace, but is rather influenced and shaped by contextual risk factors such as gender, age, status, organisational climate, school leadership, etc. As Leoschut and Bonoro (2007) points out, what transpires in the context of schools is usually a reflection of what is happening or occurring in the broader social contexts in which schools are found.

2.2.1 Gender - According to Field (2007), some gender differences in school bullying show boys and girls bully equally and both can be targets in the school environment. Therefore boys bully boys and girls, and girls usually bully other girls, but can also bully boys. Boys also tend to be hunters who belong to large, hierarchical tribes where they openly use physical bullying and focus on individual achievement, action and physical prowess, such as being 'macho' or aggressive. On the other hand, girls tend to be gatherers, socialising in smaller groups and using less physical bullying, which includes verbal denigration, malicious gossip and manipulative exclusion of others. Field (2007) further states that bullies (and targets) of both sexes usually have poorly-developed assertive communication skills.

Some gender research in the workplace has found that females are more likely to be targets than males (Tehrani, 2004; Quine, 2004). Yet, in contrast, gender studies have also reported no differences in victim rates between males and females (Hogh & Dofradottir, 2001) and further gender research has even found that males could be exposed to more workplace bullying than females (Olafsson & Jóhannsdóttir, 2004). Whilst males are often reported as the perpetrators (bullies) (Olafsson & Jóhanndóttir, 2004), by contrast, Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir (2004) found no difference in males or females as perpetrators. A finding by Hoel et al. (2001) has also shown that same-gender bullying is more common than mixed-gender bullying. Therefore, in general, there could be a varied outcome regarding gender as a risk factor to teacher bullying in the school workplace.

2.2.2 Status – According to Aquino and Bradfield (2000), workplace bullies are often rated as senior to the target being bullied. However, in this research, this is not the case and the South African Council for Educators in their National Schools Based Violence Study (2011, p.19) highlights this fact in their report with an extremely important finding of the increase of "learners violently attacking teachers." Within this study, principals and teachers reported that up to three in five secondary schools have received reports of learner – to – teacher verbal abuse, while, one in four secondary schools have reported cases of physical violence against teachers and 2.4% of reports included learners sexually assaulting teachers (South African Council for Educators, 2011). Therefore the bullying of teachers by learners suggests that this may be a function of cultural or societal values, rather than status per se (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003).

2.2.3 Age – A further risk factor in the school workplace could include age, although Ortega et al. (2008) points out that this has been less researched. However, Leymann (1996) identifies no difference between various age groups of experienced bullying in the workplace, while other empirical research (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Painter, 1991) revealed a higher vulnerability for victimisation both in the case of older employees and young employees in a position with little or informal power (Einarsen & Raknes, 1997; Paoli, 1997). As this research pertains to the age of teachers who are victims of learner-bullying, it may also be possible that a teacher who is a newcomer to the school could be at risk, as these teachers may be put to the test by learners before becoming accepted within the school environment. Thus, this so-called 'rite de passage' may be conceived as teacher-targeted bullying, involving some kind of mistreatment (Notelaers, Vermunt, Baillien, Einarsen & de Witte, 2011).

2.2.4. Environmental Influences – Parenting Practices

Bonds and Stoker (2000) refer to various environmental influences as having an effect on whether children become teacher bullies or not. According to Bonds and Stoker (2000, p.24), research has shown that certain child-rearing practices and aggression may at times lead to the bullying of others. The types of parenting practices they identify as having detrimental effects are (1) permissive parenting, "the lack of supervision; (2) uninvolved parenting which is a lack of involvement and unavailability in the child's development both physically and psychologically and (3) authoritarian parenting using harsh, inconsistent disciplinary methods". While Smith and Sharp (1994, p.8) further add that "a lack of warmth between parents in the family, the use of physical violence within styles are more likely to produce bullying behaviour, as some parenting styles fail to give children sufficient attention, while others are too overbearing".

2.2.4.1 Permissive Parenting

Shaffer (2002, p.543) defines permissive parenting "as a pattern of parenting in which otherwise accepting adults make few demands of their children and seldom try to control the family environment; as well as no clear guidelines or boundaries for behaviour and monitoring" as also having a detrimental effect. Therefore, "bullying behaviour is learned and parents are often the teachers" (Verial, 2013, p.2). Extremely permissive parents take a hands-off approach to parenting and their main goal is to avoid conflict and keep the peace. Therefore, according to an article

by Hatter (2013, p.2), on the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) website, "Bullying: Facts for Kids and Parents" homes that lack effective and positive parental supervision may create an environment that produces children with bully-like tendencies. Parents may also facilitate the child to become a bully by "enhancing the child's unhealthy processes" (Bonds & Stoker, 2000, p.25). If children are allowed to justify their behaviour when it is incorrect, they may believe they are above both the parent (at home) and the teacher (in the school environment). Under-demanding parents put little constraint on their children and discipline and limits are few and far between, and can be virtually non-existent. This lack of limit setting could therefore result in the child simply not understanding or respecting the autonomy of others or fully comprehending social limits. Such parents could also become the victims of their own child's bullying. If parents do not want to set the stage for future bullying behaviour, limits and boundaries need to be set. For instance, if a two-year-old screams for a biscuit minutes before eating her supper and, in order to avoid a tantrum, the parent gives the child a biscuit, such bad behaviour is validated and the child knows she can get what she wants.

Carpenter (2009) also feels that a permissive parent would allow a two-year-old child's tantrum to continue without taking steps to stop it. The same parent would then attempt to bribe the child. Not comforting a child and making no attempt to stop a tantrum could only make a child feel more out of control, while bribing teaches the child that, if you behave badly enough, you can always get what you want. So, as the child grows older, she will believe that she can do whatever pleases her, whenever she wants. Such a child will constantly push boundaries in an attempt to find any parameters and there will be no willingness to change until a reward or bribe is received. Carpenter (2009) further feels that children will continue to use threats to bully parents, teachers or peers if they are not appropriately disciplined when they are very young. According to Brozak (2013, p.2), such children "never learn to regulate their emotions, including anger or aggression." In other words, the cute little two-year-old who gets away with the biscuit could also morph into an aggressive 17-year-old who bullies teachers or others to get their way, just because the child believes they can get away with such an act. Furthermore, Brozak (2013) reiterates that research shows that children who

are raised in permissive households are more likely to suffer poor self-control and low self-esteem because they are unable to manage their emotions effectively.

Therefore, when a child acts out in an aggressive or hurtful manner towards a teacher or someone else, it is crucial for a parent to correct this misbehaviour and apply consequences to teach the child that aggression is not acceptable or appropriate. If parents do not provide consistent consequences to their child's bullying behaviour, or if they fail to give any negative feedback to this bullying behaviour towards teachers, they end up reinforcing such bullying behaviour (Hatter, 2013, p.2). More importantly, parents need to correct this thinking at an early age as children who bully others may also be difficult for parents to control (Bonds & Stoker, 2000).

2.2.4.2 Uninvolved Parenting

According to Shaffer (2002, p.544), uninvolved parenting is "a pattern of parenting that is both aloof or even hostile and over-permissive, almost as if parents cared neither about their children nor about what they may become". In recent years, some parenting has become extremely lax. Parents take on an undemanding approach and are so overwhelmed with their own stresses and problems that they do not have energy or time to give to childrearing (MacCoby & Martin, 1983). For example, according to Santrock (2005), by the age of three, children of uninvolved parents are already relatively high in aggression, having temper tantrums. Furthermore, such children could also perform poorly academically and show conduct disorders later in their childhood (Eckenrode, Laird & Doris, 1993). These children also are prone to become hostile, selfish and rebellious adolescents who do not have long-term goals and who could commit antisocial and delinquent acts, such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual misconduct, truancy, and other criminal offences (Weiss & Schwarz, 1996). In effect, such children could become teacher-bullies because of their neglectful and detached parents. They may feel that parents don't care about them or about what they do. This message would undoubtedly breed aggression and the motivation to strike back at others, including teachers, who are also seen as authoritarian figures in the school environment.

Furthermore, children who do not have parental emotional rewards to guide their behaviour may also look for external rewards. In such cases, they could do this through teacher bullying, where they think they are gaining peer respect or gaining

material things, including the property of their classmates. In this instance, taking someone else's belongings or demanding respect in a negative way could artificially substitute the warmth of parents, and even negative attention from adult figures, such as the child's teacher, can be rewarding. (Verial, 2013, p.3).

A further problem could be that the lack of attention at home could cause the child to act inappropriately in school as a cry for help. In this context, the child could bully the teacher in order to gain attention. Thus, gaining negative attention from the teacher or their peers for some children is still better than no attention at all. Children need limits and guidance. Parents using under-demanding parenting styles should set clear limits and ensure good boundary-setting as a way of reducing any form of bullying behaviour in their children. Furthermore, children also need responsible parents who are in charge. As Carpenter (2009, p.45) says, "Without a sense of connectedness and belonging, children have nothing to anchor them and no one to keep them in line". Self-parenting could place such children at a distinct social disadvantage as they could also feel that they were undervalued and not properly cared for, and could transfer these negative feelings to teachers in the school workplace.

2.2.4.3 Authoritarian Parenting

A further potentially harmful parenting style is labelled 'authoritarian'. Shaffer 2002, p.543) defines authoritarian parenting as "a restrictive pattern of parenting in which adults set many rules for their children, expect strict obedience, and rely on power rather than reason to elicit compliance". A climate of over-control where parents rule with an iron hand can also contribute to a bullying-situation. Carpenter (2009) points out that these parents are so focused on maintaining control, proper discipline, and laying down unilateral rules and expectations that there are not sufficient accompanying levels of warmth, love, attention or affection. The child then perceives the love as being conditional on its ability to obey. The problem then is that the child becomes very good at obeying authority but fails to develop a strong sense of discipline. Therefore, "without inner discipline, and with the experience that the parents' 'right is right', a child could naturally see the bullying of teachers or others as an acceptable means to an end" (Carpenter, 2009, p. 46).

For instance, an authoritarian will attempt to stop a two-year-olds temper tantrum by giving the child a hiding. Carpenter (2009, p.46) says that, "when children receive harsh punishment from parents for aggressive behaviour, it only teaches them to be more aggressive". As this child reaches 15-years of age, temper tantrums have escalated into full-blown rampages. Such a child could act out physically, destroying school property or the property of others, and projecting her anger and frustration on to innocent victims, such as peers or teachers, by bullying them.

Bonds and Stoker (2000, p.25) further identify that "modelling has an effect on children becoming bullies". Thus parents who fall back on parenting techniques based on aggression may fit the bullying profile and this could include yelling, intimidating, threatening and even inappropriate use of verbal and physical discipline. Hatter (2013, p.2) states that "narcissistic parents also project a different demeanour to the world". Often they appear to be model parents behind closed doors but can be secretly mean, abusive and lacking empathy, with excessive orientation toward achievements. Children, who observe and are exposed to modelled aggressive behaviour, either by adults or by other children, revere power or influence which the bully, or the act of bullying, offers. What research is finding is that, in many cases, learners are the perpetrators, with teachers also becoming the victims (Burton, 2007). Therefore children who are exposed in this context will tend to model this behaviour and continue the pattern.

Many theories have been proposed over the years to explain human behaviour and one possible explanation for this link between the child witnessing and repeating certain behaviours is called the, 'social learning theory' (Peel, 2005, p.22). This theory was originally proposed by Albert Bandura, who was a renowned researcher and staunch proponent of behaviour-modelling and who developed a 'social learning theory' (Peel, 2005, p.22). Social learning theory believes that learners learn by observing or watching and imitating other people. It views learning as a "continuous, dynamic and reciprocal interaction between individuals, which in turn affects their attributes, values and behaviour" (Peel, 2005, p.22). Behaviour, environment and personal factors interact to influence learning (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura (1998, p.432), "the level and accuracy of children's limitations of what they see and hear is partly influenced by how models respond to

their behaviour". Bandura conducted hundreds of studies but one study that stands out in relation to bullying and child modelling is the 'Bobo doll' experiment. A Bobo doll is an inflatable, oval, blown-up clown doll with a weighted bottom that allows it to bob back after you knock it down and is used in play therapy with children experiencing anger issues. Bandura showed a group of children who were in kindergarten a film of a woman hitting and punching the Bobo doll and even using a plastic hammer on the doll. Bandura then placed the Bobo doll in the normal play area of these kindergarten children. When they were let out to play, the children started beating up the Bobo doll. They punched, kicked and used a hammer in exactly the same way as they had seen on film. They even shouted, "Sockeroo!" just like the woman in the film did and essentially imitated the woman in the film. Bandura (1986, p.33) views that a comprehensive theory of modelling "must explain not only how patterned behaviour is acquired observationally, but also how frequently, and when, imitative behaviour will be performed, the persons toward whom it is expressed and the social setting in which it is most likely to be exhibited". This experiment was repeated with many variations, yet always yielded results that were similar. Bandura (1998), eventually called the Bobo doll phenomenon 'observational learning or modelling', and labelled the theory 'social learning'. Thus social learning theory simply means that people learn new information and behaviours by observing others, for example parents. It is a case of 'monkey see, monkey do'. The child who sees his father slapping and shoving his mother around at home will see nothing wrong in shoving and slapping a teacher around at school. Bullying is about feeling power and gaining a sense of control, and teacher bullies "are often seeking that power because they lack it at home" (Verial, 2013, p.2). Although bullying behaviour in a learner does not always indicate bullying behaviour from parents, it is possible that parents are making parenting mistakes involving a lack of nurturing and mutual respect. Therefore children might model such aggressive behaviour.

2.2.5 Leadership and the School Organisational Climate as a Contextual Risk Factor

Poor leadership and poor management could also allow workplace-bullying of teachers by their learners. Leatt (2000, p.48) indicates that "effective leaders with effective strategies need to be in place in our schools". Charlton (2000, p.160) finds that, "effective leadership is the scarcest resource of any organisation – in fact in any sphere of human endeavour". Principals (school leaders) are in a particularly

challenging position and will have to implement and manage effective change strategies under difficult circumstances, namely where teachers are targeted by learners who bully. It takes a special kind of person to face these challenges of educating in a democracy with a diverse society. Therefore it is important for teachers who are being bullied to feel safe enough to share their ordeals and experiences. This will only happen if they are secure in the fact that the matter will be taken further and actively dealt with.

An article by Eggington (2013, p.6), reports that six armed Metro Police officers have been deployed to six schools identified by the Western Cape Education Department as being most at risk for incidents of violence and crime. These six schools in the heart of the Cape Flats (Cape Town) have re-opened with a pilot project being run by the city and provincial education and community safety departments. This project is an attempt to build a safer school environment helping to identify and address the underlying problems that may lead to disorder, ill-discipline and crime. While, a further report by Govender (2013, p.10), revealed that about 3 000 delegates who attended the National Teachers' Union's national conference which was held during October 2013, unanimously endorsed a resolution calling on the Department of Education to beef up security at schools following a spate of attacks on teachers. The union's deputy president, Allen Thompson, said it had resolved to ask Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga to urgently deploy armed guards to protect teachers from violent pupils. This implies that "a lack of safety at schools may also serve to perpetuate crime and violence in society at large" (Jefthas & Artz, 2007, p.46). One can therefore argue that "order and safety in the teaching – learning – environment is to be regarded as a sine qua non (an indispensable condition) for effective learning" (Squelch, as cited in Oosthuizen, 2005 p. 1).

Because of the detrimental effects of bullying, improving school safety is a major concern in schools. With this enhanced interest in preventing bullying has also come an increased number of intervention programs designed to reduce bullying in the school environment. According to Beale (2001), the National School Safety Centre (NSSC) in America identified bullying as the most enduring and underrated problem in schools in America. In an effort to respond to this epidemic, Bully Prevention in Positive Behaviour Support (BP – PBS) was designed to fit within a system of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), a prevention-focused alternative to learner support "that

blends socially valuable outcomes, research-based procedures, behavioural science, and a systems approach to reduce problem behaviour and improve the school climate" (Ross, Horner & Stiller, 2013, p.6).

The model of PBS not only decreases incidents of bullying behaviour, but also increases appropriate recipient responses to bullying behaviour and appropriate bystander responses to bullying behaviour, within a larger system of positive behaviour support (Ross et al., 2013). More importantly, this prevention model uses behaviour principles for life improvement of children with severe behaviour problems. It involves the application of behaviour analysis to real world settings, using effective strategies to create environments that support and encourage success for both teacher and learner behaviour.

The conceptual framework underlying the BP – PBS prevention model incorporates a three-tiered model which includes effective strategies to create an environment that supports and encourages success for both teacher and learner behaviours in the school and classroom (Lewis, Sugai & Colvin, 1998). Firstly, the primary tier of PBS attempts to create a safe, positive and predictable school environment for all learners. Teaching encourages the use of empirically-tested instructional methods where learners are taught expected appropriate behaviours, the modelling of which then allows practice of the learnt skills in specific settings, and the testing of such knowledge. Effective reinforcement of expected and appropriate behaviour follows, and is set in place by all teaching staff who have been trained in the programme. According to Sprague and Horner (2006), in addition to the above, reinforcement and discipline is documented to ensure consequences are in line with the behaviour that is problematic.

The secondary tier includes the process as described in the primary tier, with additional support given to those learners who are not coping and who need further intervention and reinforcement. These include learners with risk behaviours. Finally, the tertiary tier is for learners with high risk behaviours who have established negative behaviour patterns and who fail to respond to both primary and secondary levels of intervention. The behaviour support offered to such learners is an individualised intervention, based on assessment of their behaviour and what is needed for their positive and correct functioning. The programme has been shown "to have short and long-term beneficial effects and attachment to school, academic achievement,

aggression, drug use, crime, learner reports of positive reinforcement, positive referrals, decreased discipline referrals, and increased academic learning time" (Ross et al., 2013, p.7).

The consequences of bullying are devastating both in the school and in the workplace. According to Espelage and Swearer (2003), both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at risk for academic and emotional problems, as well as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness and suicide. Berthold and Hoover (2000) report that children who bully, over time are more likely to drop out of school. Aggressive children who bully in the school environment are also likely to carry this behaviour with them through life to become the workplace bully (Branch, Sheenan, Barker & Ramsey, 2004. Thus learners who often show problem behaviour do not take long to learn that they can get away with such behaviour. Through the implementation and correct management of programmes such as PBS, teachers build consistency regarding responses to such problem behaviour patterns, thereby reducing the probability of creating learners who attempt to work the school system and, later in adulthood, their workplace system.

These social intervention programmes allow bullies the acquisition of new skills to reverse negative behaviour. To help this shift take place, there are various role players within the educational environment. Rigby, Smith and Pepler (2004, p.1) define this approach as a 'whole school approach'. Elements and initiatives of programmes are carefully identified and co-ordinated at different levels, such as the school, the classroom, and the learner. However, Mapfumo and Muchena (2013, p.558) in their study of 'school connectedness', felt that it is "commonsensical that families, schools, and communities must all work collaboratively to create healthy development for school-going children". According to Mapfumo and Muchena (2013), the perception of wellbeing of learners in schools has been described by using various terms which include school belonging, school climate, teacher support and student engagement, social membership and 'child friendly' schools, all of which suggest environments in which learners could develop healthy 'connectedness' or levels of bonding. Thus this sense of belonging is called many things but, in order to succeed, learners need to feel they 'belong' in their school (Blum, 2005).

According to Mapfumo and Muchena (2013), the issue of school connectedness came into high profile when a major research study in the United States of America reported

that, by high school, 40 to 60 percent of learners from urban, suburban and rural areas were chronically disengaged from school and felt they were 'in the wrong place' in trying to achieve their goals. Also, higher levels of truancy and dropout rates could be explained by the high levels of learner disengagement among high school learners. Thus there was a need for schools to do what was possible to establish the value of connection that is a belief by learners that adults in the school cared about their learning and about them as individuals.

Learners are more likely to succeed when there are high academic standards coupled with support for learning, and positive and respectful adult-learner relationships, within a context of physical and emotionally safety (Blum, 2005). They need to be connected to a school environment that is healthy, safe, supportive, clean, bully-free and pleasant. These features further enhance meaningful participation by learners, as well as sensitive, well-organised classroom management. In contrast, harsh and punitive environments detracted from the connectedness of well-run schools (Blum (2005); McNeely (2003).

School 'connectedness' sets up a clear gap that has to be filled by re-connecting learners in the schools which they attend and feel that they have no sense of belonging. A big challenge for schools is to establish a sense of 'belonging', where learners receive empathy, and attention and praise so that they feel a sense of belonging and support that leads to healthy growth and development (Whitlock, 2003). Connecting learners is an important task for teachers and it seems more important to connect learners who are going through their adolescent years where engagement in health-compromising behaviours which detract from academic achievement is more prevalent (Mapfumo & Muchena, 2013). Thus, school climate and connectedness are interrelated and affects the learners' sense of safety and risk for delinquency (Blum, 2005). When learners, teachers, staff and parents collectively and consciously improve a school environment, then successful climate change is also possible.

In schools, school administrators, principals and teachers set the tone for a climate of trust or mistrust. Therefore, school management needs to counteract threats to school connectedness "as the establishment and enhancement of school connectedness if often compromised by the way in schools are run and administered" (Mapfumo & Muchena, 2013, p.561). In an attempt to hold learners accountable, school managements mete out punishment such as detention, exclusion, expulsion or

suspension which erodes the spirit of connectedness. Educational progress is often disrupted when these learners develop negative outcomes, such as increases in maladjustment that is withdrawing from, or avoiding interactions with staff members. These impacts on self-respect which is worsened by peer stigma.

Blum (2005, p.561) highlights "that victims of various misbehaviours, such as those that are bullied, may also be disconnected from school because the schools are unsafe and also because the victims lose respect for the school's justice system as such". Thus school leaders can improve the climate, and as in any organisation, there is no substitute for capable, motivational leadership (Blum, 2005). School leaders can be committed to authoritative rather than authoritarian leadership; adopt fair and equitable rules and policies; establish consequences for all that are clear and fair; provide a clear academic mission; and create an orderly school environment. (Blum, 2005). This thus requires a collaborated effort – "learners, educators, principals, school management teams, SGBS's and parents or caregivers" (Burton, 2008, p.77).

2.3 The Effect of Learner Bullying on the Teacher (Individual) and the School Workplace (Organisation)

2.3.1 The Psychological and Physiological effects on the Teacher or Bystanders

Deterline (1968, p.2) defines teaching as the "performance of those activities, and the manipulation of those conditions, that produce learning." The important event in any classroom is "the activity of the student, who either learns or does not learn, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to bring about the occurrence of behaviour which maximises learning" (Deterline, 1968, p.1). Teachers tend to be influential in children's lives, based solely on the amount of time they spend with learners. According to Brown (2000), during a typical school year, teachers could spend approximately1, 281 hours with their learners. Taking into account the large amount of time that teachers and children spend together in the school environment, it is important to foster this relationship in order to maximise the potential impact the teacher / learner relationship offers (Guerney & Flumen, 1970). Therefore, not only is it important to ensure that the learners are benefitting, but it is equally important for teachers to feel calm and in control in their classrooms. Teachers have an inherent need to relate with their learners, causing them to internalise their experiences with learners and react daily from those interactions towards learners (Spilt, Koomen &

Thijs, 2011). Teachers who feel stressed are more likely to use responses that will promote learners' troublesome behaviours, rather than prevent the undesired behaviours (Yost & Mosca, 2002). Therefore, a teacher is only as good as the effect they have on their learners, and the emphasis in the classroom must be on the learner's behaviour and on the various ways in which learning can be produced. Thus, to engage fully, teachers need to function emotionally in a way that testifies to their status as human beings. This is certainly denied when learners intimidate or target teachers, at their place of work.

Teacher-targeted bullying can take many forms; however, the most prominent characteristic is the degradation of the individual and their self-worth. Articles by Davids (2013, p.2) and (2013, p.8). reported that a 26 – year – old Cape Town teacher, Sharidene Meyers, sobbed at her desk as the girls in her class carefully brushed the badly scorched hair from her shoulders and cried with her. She was busy giving a History lesson, when a grade eight learner set her hair alight. She also teaches Geography, History and Afrikaans to thirteen (13) classes, each class having about fifty (50) learners.

The newspaper articles also highlight the disappointing way in which the principal dealt with the situation. After the incident, the teacher cried in the toilets. The principal sent for her and instructed her to carry on with the lesson, but she continued crying in the classroom. Her father, Gerard, however, felt that "that was insensitive, inhuman and unprofessional" (Davids, 2013, p.8).

The learner has since appeared before a disciplinary hearing at Crestway High School in Steenberg, where the school governing body made a recommendation to the department for the learner's expulsion. He has also been suspended, pending the outcome of the department's own hearing. According to Davids (2013, p.8), "support is given to all learners who face expulsion or serious misconduct charges. This could be to address the learner's behavioural issues and assist them in dealing with the situation they now find themselves in".

The department has also provided psychological counselling for the teacher who, after this incident, "was too traumatised to speak, cannot sleep at night because she cannot stop thinking about the assault and is extremely depressed" (Davids, 2013, p.2).

Further incidents of teacher- targeted bullying also occurred when she was physically abused by a grade 9 boy, who grabbed her and twisted her arm on February 13, 2013. On the same day, another grade 9 boy came to her class and remarked: 'Juffrou het lekker tette (Miss has nice breasts)', which amounts to sexual harassment. She often suffered bruises to her legs because learners pushed desks at her. These incidents had been reported to the school management structures, as well as to the police but she chose to remain in the school as it was difficult to find a permanent teaching post. Also, having studied and qualified to teach at the University of Stellenbosch, she chose to serve the community of Steenberg in which she had grown up. As Palmer (1998, p.3) reflects, "teachers make an easy target, for they are such a common species and so powerless to strike back".

A further two articles, Mtshali (2013, p.1) and Gibbs (2013, p.1) revealed that a Grade 8 learner from Glenvista High School, Gauteng, assaulted a teacher in the classroom. The video appeared on You Tube on 19 September, 2013 and was captured on a cell-phone by another pupil. In the background, other learners can be heard laughing throughout the ordeal, and encouraging the boy to attack the teacher, shouting "f ... him up! Go get him, go get him ..." The learner and teacher were wrestling over a school bag. The teenager retaliated by kicking the teacher, hitting him with a broom, and swearing. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has condemned the assault and commended the teacher for not assaulting the learner. The learner has been suspended, pending the outcome of the investigation.

While a newspaper article (Ajam & Bega, 2013, p.5) reports that a Grade 9 learner from Sasolburg High School shot his teacher, Mr Johan Jordaan, in the leg in another school violence incident. The learner was arrested and placed in Police custody. The attack took place on 20 September, 2013 after the teacher approached him as he was following three of his fellow learners. The school was closed, pending further investigation. The motive for the shooting is also under investigation and the boy is expected to appear in the Sasolburg Magistrate Court.

Furthermore, Ajam and Bega (2013, p.5) highlights the plight of teachers being bullied by learners throughout Gauteng Schools. Matakanye Matakanya, the General Secretary of the National Association of School Governing Bodies, said, "These things

have always happened, it's just that we have different kinds of media to expose it" (Matakanya, as cited in Ajam and Bega, 2013, p.5).

Taking the abovementioned reports into consideration, Hargreaves (1994) points out that teacher voices have been widely absent, even neglected, with serious concerns dismissed. Teachers who are victims may experience some negative effects, which include psychological, psychosomatic and physiological effects as a consequence of workplace bullying, that is excessive stress, stress-related illnesses, insomnia and apathy, as well as psychological trauma in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD) (Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004). Victims in the workplace have reported feeling fearful, helpless and anxious, which could lead to depression (Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004). Therefore teacher-targeted bullying not only affects the teacher's health and wellbeing, but can also lower their self-esteem. This in turn affects their mental health and their ability to perform their teaching job optimally in the school workplace.

Table 2.1 - Consequences of Bullying on Teacher Targets

Consequences of Bullying on Teacher Targets	
General effects	**Specific effects**
Psychological	Low self-esteem; Stress; Anxiety; Depression; Fear and Health concerns; Burnout / Fatigue / Vitality; Negative emotions; Irritation; General mental health problems.
Psychosomatic	Physical symptoms; Psychosomatic Pain.
Physiological	Chronic disease; Cardio-vascular problems.
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	PTSD, or severe psychiatric distress where the teacher victim is said to feel depressed and paranoid, as well as experiencing feelings of helplessness, lowered self-esteem, and mood swings.

(As Adapted from Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003).

A further report by Nel, (2013, p.1) revealed that a primary school teacher was hit in the face with a fist by a 14-year-old, Grade 7 male learner. She had given him an instruction to take off a jersey that was not part of the school uniform. The teacher was so distraught after the incident that she attempted suicide. Her husband confirmed that the suicide attempt was directly linked to the assault and stated that, "Sy voel verneder na die voorval. Haar passie vir the onderwys is weg en sy sien nie meer kans om terug te gaan as daardie seun steeds daar is nie". (After the incident, the teacher felt belittled. This has destroyed her passion for teaching and she no longer sees any chance of returning to the school, as long as the boy remains there).

According to Sperry and Duffy (2009), research relating to the impact of workplace bullying has shown important concerns regarding the degree to which experiences of bullying may affect individual teachers exposed to such stressful situations, particularly in instances of prolonged victimisation. Namie (as cited in Sperry and Duffy, 2009) provides a discussion surrounding post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and generalised anxiety disorder present in bullied victims. At its worst, workplace bullying has been linked to suicide. Leymann (as cited in Sperry and Duffy, 2009) shows that fifteen percent of completed suicides were related to workplace bullying in the six months prior to suicide. This suggests that a person's career and social standing are important defining factors that comprise self-identity (Sperry & Duffy, 2009). Therefore physiological and psychological deterioration associated with prolonged workplace bullying stems directly from the impact experienced that the act of bullying itself has on both individual identity and the sense of self, and on interpersonal and social relationships with others (Sperry & Duffy, 2009; Einarsen, 1999).

According to Hoel, Faragher and Cooper (2004), Lutgen–Sandvik, Tracy and Alberts (2007) it is evident that teacher victims are not the only group affected in the school, as witnesses of the bullying, being learners or teachers who are bystanders, may also experience some adverse health effects on the individual's psychological and physiological well-being. Hoel et al. (2004) reports that these effects may be as severe as that of the victim, being the teacher. Bullying behaviour can be highly disadvantageous as it has a ripple effect throughout the school organisation. Thus teacher bullying discolours the school environment because this negative behaviour is

damaging, not only to teachers directly but also to others in the place where it is happening.

Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003) proposed two theoretical models, the Cognitive model and the Social-biological model, both of which account for why bullying relates to severe, negative victim-outcomes. The models have been summarised as follows:

- **The Cognitive model:** Einarsen and Mikkelson (2003) suggest that teacher-targeted bullying in the school workplace would destroy the teacher's basic schemas of the world as meaningful. This would then impact on the bullied teacher's view of seeing him- or herself as a decent and deserving individual. Such schemas relate to our core beliefs, so that teacher-targeted bullying would attack these positive schemas, which then dissolves the core self-beliefs and require the teacher to develop new schemas resulting from the severe negative effects of teacher bullying.

- **The Social-biological model:** Einarsen and Mikkelson (2003) suggest that the individuals, being the teachers, could gradually experience a basic fear of being excluded and ostracised from a group, that is the teacher or the learner group, which threatens their survival in the school workplace. This then creates anxiety, fear and even a feeling that their lives are being threatened within the workplace. This could then explain the severe negative effects mentioned by teachers who have reported being victimised by teacher-targeted bullying.

Although the school organisation suffers from the effects of bullying in the workplace, it is the teacher-employee as victim who seems to endure the most significant degree of damage. The effect on the teacher is serious and prolonged (Steinman, n.d.a; Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Turney, 2003).

2.3.2 The Individual Coping Styles of Bullied Teachers

According to Olofson and Jóhannsdóttir (2004), victims of workplace bullying are more likely to adopt an avoidance strategy, or resign. This approach may enhance the learner bullying, as the bullying is never resolved by the teacher victim ignoring the situation, avoiding the perpetrator, or leaving the school workplace in order to escape it. Santoro (2011, p.1) states that "the condition of teaching changes so dramatically that moral rewards, previously available in ever-challenging work, are now inaccessible." Teachers feel demoralised and feel that they can no longer do good

work to teach 'right' (Santoro, 2011). It is not simply that teacher victims cope poorly with learner bullying, but rather that they have exhausted the avenues available to them, and have arrived at a point in their lives where they accept the situation or leave the school workplace. Niedl (1996) and Zapf and Gross (2001) point out that victims of bullying tend to try more constructive coping styles in the beginning, but revert to more destructive styles as the bullying increases. This could also lead to a greater risk of alcohol or substance abuse.

2.3.3 Related outcomes to the School Organisation

If, as a result of teacher-targeted bullying, a teacher is dissatisfied with his/her environment, being the school workplace, the consequences for the school organisation and the teacher employee may be extremely damaging, for example, reduced job satisfaction, performance and commitment may impact on high staff turnover (Einarsen, 1999; Turney, 2003). Therefore, according to Rayner and McIvor (2008), costs could be direct costs, which include sickness, disruption costs of a teacher leaving and replacement thereof; or indirect costs, being lowered morale; productivity; reputation damage; and negative media coverage, all of which affect the ability of the school to retain high quality teaching staff. In an overview of School-based Violence in South Africa (2011, p.31), researched by the South African Council for Educators (SACE), it was found "that educators may be feeling quite alone in the education system and unsupported by the Department of Education as well as School Management".

It is essential for any organisation to acknowledge the importance of their employees as valuable human resources. Teachers, too, need to be valued and the school as organisation has a significant role to play in preventing teacher-bullying in the workplace. Schools have a responsibility to put policies and procedures in place, to communicate to learners that there is a zero tolerance approach towards teacher-bullying and that, if experienced, the teacher victim has options for seeking help (United States Department of Labour, 2005; Bandow & Hunter, 2008). Thus, "a need for policy must first be identified to motivate participants to change the problem behaviour" (Pellegrini, 2002, p.160).

In addition, the school organisation should also identify which actions are considered acceptable and which are not. Training in classroom management, communication and personal development, such as assertiveness workshops, without the need to

directly change their work environment should also be considered. Personal development will also allow would-be teacher victims to deal with the potential learner-bully which will hopefully prevent negative actions.

In order to better accomplish and facilitate the implementation of solutions in managing workplace aggression, Pietersen (2005) highlights four steps, which include problem awareness; identifying the scope of the problem; identifying actions to solve the problem; and activating solutions to solve organisational behaviour. According to Pietersen (2005, p.1), "workplace aggression is an ever-increasing and multi-faceted phenomenon that managers worldwide will have to address in the twenty-first century". Therefore a greater awareness and an ability to cope with it will become necessary to maintain an effective organisation (Pietersen, 2005). This model suggests that workplace bullying is manageable if management and teacher employees are educated about the occurrence and consequences of bullying in the workplace.

2.4 Conclusion

Many adults are now suffering bullying in the workplace. This includes teachers within the school environment where their rights of human dignity, privacy, freedom and security, are being devalued through systematic negative social acts carried out by learners. Dhai and McQuoid-Mason (2011, p.14) identify the importance of promoting care ethics and state that "everyone is in essence dependent on others". Therefore, as learner, parent, manager or teacher, one needs to ensure that the positive welfare of others is taken into account. In addition, management should assist in the empowerment of teacher employees, by encouraging awareness of policies, procedures and training programmes. In concluding this chapter, Bandura (1999) reiterates that "behaviour is situation – specific and people have distinctive patterns of behaving in situations", and that "there is always a process of interaction between the organism and its environment" (Bandura, as cited in Pervin and John, 2001, p.438).

This study supports the views of Bandura (1999) who recognises that:

> Theories of personality that emphasise internal factors to the exclusion of environmental events are rejected because of their disregard for the individual's responsiveness to varying situations. At the same time, theories that emphasise external factors to the exclusion of internal factors are rejected because of their failure to consider the role of cognitive functioning in behaviour.
>
> (Bandura, as cited in Pervin and John, 2001, p.443).

Thus, Bandura (1999), in understanding cognitive processes is committed to the use of theory and empirical research and “there is a strong concern for concepts that are clear and based on systematic observations” (Pervin & John, 2001, p. 443).

The next Chapter provides the research design and methods relevant to this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

Information regarding the research design and method used in this study will be provided in this section. According to Mouton (2002, p.35), "methodology is a plan to apply a variety of standardised methods and techniques in the systematic pursuit of knowledge." This includes the data collection plan which sets out the strategy for collecting and analysing namely, the where, when, how and from whom.

3.2 Research Design: Research Approaches and Research Methods

According to Thyer (1993, p.94), a research design is "a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted, operationalising variables so they can be measured, selecting a sample of interest to study; collecting data to be used as a basis for testing hypotheses and analysing the results." Mouton (2002, p.107) defines a research design "as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem", and De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005, p.132) define a research design "as a plan or a blueprint of how you intend conducting a research project." It is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data-collection procedures to answer the said research questions and its primary function is to allow the researcher to find the best possible method to obtain rich and dense data. The research design indicates the teacher sample to be studied, and the 'when, where, and under what circumstances' were done. In so doing, I attempted to give valid and accurate answers to the research question; and to show the credibility of this research study which is exploratory-descriptive in nature and employs a mixed method research design consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, the qualitative data was of an explanatory nature, while the quantitative data consisted of statistics obtained from the questionnaires in terms of the prevalence and extent of bullying.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (as cited in McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p.12), "purists suggest that quantitative and qualitative research methods are based on different assumptions about the world, the research purpose, the research methods, prototypical studies, the researcher's role and the importance of context in the study". Although, "a key feature of mixed methods research is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14), both quantitative and qualitative research methods are important and useful. As Sechrest and Sidana (1995, p.78) point out, both methodologies "describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from these data, and speculate about

why the outcomes they observed happened as they did." Two especially relevant definitions of the term 'mixed method' are offered in McMillan and Schumacher (2010), as follows:

> "… research … in which a researcher … combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and collaboration".
>
> (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, as cited in McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p.396).

> "… research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry."
>
> (Tashakkori and Creswell, as cited in McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p.396).

Taking the relevance of these two definitions into account, this study of teachers experiencing bullying from learners stresses a need to have an integrative character of combining qualitative and quantitative paradigms in ways that are meaningful. In so doing, this allowed a unique approach where there is "a convergence of philosophy, viewpoints, traditions, methods, and conclusions" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.396). Furthermore, it could allow me as researcher both clarification and enhancement of these studies by using the mixed methods approach, which includes both questionnaires and interviews, rather than a single method to answer the research questions so that a more comprehensive picture of teacher bullying by learners could be given, emphasising quantitative outcomes as well as the processes that influenced the outcomes of the targeted bullying.

Thus, a sequential explanatory design would allow the primary emphasis to be placed on the quantitative methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). At first, quantitative data would be collected and analysed. The study begins with a survey (questionnaire) in order to generalise results to the teacher population in a Gauteng West High School. In a second phase, this is followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data, which explains the quantitative results in detailed qualitative, open-ended interviews where the views from twelve (12) teacher participants are collected. McMillan & Schumacher (2002, p.401) state that "an explanatory design is generally used when quantitative data collection is clearly warranted by follow-up analysis – specifically using qualitative methods – is necessary to elucidate the quantitative findings". While, Creswell (2003, p.16) reiterates that in sequential procedures

the researcher "seeks to elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another method".

This mixed method approach, implemented in two phases, could possibly allow for a richer data collection and a deeper focus to this study, thus expanding my understanding of what is being researched (Creswell, 2008). Therefore, initial emphasis will be placed on the quantitative method approach before proceeding with the qualitative data collection and analysis of data. This decision is purely a practical constraint as the study begins with a quantitative orientation, focusing on specific research questions as well as a relevant discussion of literature that informs these questions. The focus is on assessing the relationship or association among variables by using the questionnaire as an instrument that yields numerical data, as well as open-ended data collection (Creswell, 2003). The data will be analysed, interpreted and generalised to the teacher population experiencing bullying by learners in this Gauteng West High School. While in the second phase, being qualitative, the enquiry is more exploratory with the strong emphasis on description and with the thematic focus on understanding the teacher-targeted bullying through the interviews.

As researcher, I will analyse and give equal priority to both methods in the interpretation phase, for a rich phenomenon of teacher bullying by learners, as well as themes to identify its complexity, leading to new questions and the personal interpretations made by the teacher participants. Thus, the analysis would proceed independently for both the quantitative and qualitative data, and the information compared in the discussion stage of the research. This approach allows for collection and integration of both the quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to keep the study as open as possible to best learn from the participants. Thus, the sequential exploratory design "offers flexibility and may or may not be guided by a specific theoretical perspective" (Creswell, 2003, p.12).

The objective of this mixed method approach would further allow myself as researcher, to draw assumptions from both the quantitative and qualitative data; to determine the choice of methods, techniques and procedures that best meet my needs and purposes; to facilitate the collection of and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data providing for a better understanding of the research topic being the nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners.

Thus, the strength of the sequential explanatory design is that it is not difficult to implement because it occurs in two distinct phases. This would allow a more efficient way of describing and reporting the collected data. A final discussion then brings the results together providing more comprehensive findings. It is also a useful design for conducting a quantitative survey (questionnaires) where factors can be developed, analysed and used to identify themes for the qualitative data collection (interviews). Interviews could then offer additional insights into the phenomenon of teacher-targeted bullying, explaining themes in greater detail, enriching these findings. However, the weakness of this mixed method design is that if these two phases of data collection are given equal priority, it will require more extensive data collection to complete both phases and it is likely to be time consuming. Furthermore, a sequential explanatory design can hold difficulties with collection, analysing, writing reports and forming conclusions if the quantitative and qualitative data is contradictory. In research, I believe that absolute truth can never be found and an attempt will be made to place equal emphasis to both phases by being objective, examining methods and conclusions for bias (Creswell, 2003).

3.2.1 Quantitative Research

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.21), "quantitative research designs emphasise objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena." This maximises objectivity by the utilisation of numbers, statistics, structure and control. The intention is to allow the most valid and credible conclusions from the answers to the questionnaire. In Qualitative and Quantitative modes of Research, Brookfield advocates that, "not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted" (Brookfield, 1990, p.34).

3.2.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is based on the notion of context sensitivity, which is the belief that the physical and social environment is a direct function of human behaviour. Qualitative researchers, "emphasise the human factor and the intimate first-hand knowledge of the research setting and they also avoid distancing themselves from the participants or events which they study" (Neuman, 2000, p.20). In this research, I am interested in how the teachers who experience bullying by learners interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and, more importantly, what meaning they as teachers attribute to their bullying experiences. Therefore, the overall purpose

is to achieve an understanding of how they make sense of this and to interpret what they have experienced. Patton (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p.14) explains:

> Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not necessarily attempting to predict what may happen in the future, but to understand the nature of that setting – what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is happening for them, what their meanings are, and what their world looks like in a particular setting; and, in the analysis, to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. The analysis strives for depth of understanding.

My key concern is to understand teacher-bullying by their learners from the participants' perspectives and not my own as researcher. Therefore, according to Merriam (2009, p.15) a second characteristic of qualitative research is that "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis." As De Vos et al. (2005, p.265) explains, it is important for a qualitative researcher to select a paradigm or a frame of reference that underpins and guides their study. As a qualitative researcher, I was concerned with understanding rather than explanation; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement; and subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of the teacher, as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm. As De Vos et al. (2005, p.74) says, "a qualitative study is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples, often purposely selected."

Exploratory

Purposeful exploratory research, "is to break new ground and orientation towards new discovery" (Mouton, 2002, p.72). Exploratory research refers to cases where limited previous research has been carried out. In this area of research, where teachers are bullied by their learners, not much work has been done in South Africa or elsewhere in the world. As researcher, I typically tried to collect new data and develop new hypotheses to explain such data. This study is specifically aimed at understanding the nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a Gauteng West

High School. This approach allowed one, as researcher, not only to share in their understanding and perceptions of teachers who are bullied by learners, but also to explore how they, as individuals, structure and give answers to a problem occurring in a work place, which could possibly be a daily life occurrence. This may allow oneself as researcher to present solutions to these issues, based on the information received.

Descriptive

A descriptive study, "offers a detailed description of the phenomenon being researched, while descriptive statements make claims about how things are and what the fact of the matter is" (Mouton, 2002, p.102). In this study, teachers could describe their experience and this allows the researcher to develop / formulate a picture of the problem.

3.2.3 Research Design

Table 3.1- Research Design

RESEARCH DESIGN TABLE				
RESEARCH QUESTION	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION	METHOD OF DATA INFORMATION ANALYSIS	SAMPLE SIZE
1. What is the nature of the bullying behaviour that teachers experience from their learners at a High School in Gauteng?	Participants who are Teachers at a High School in Gauteng West during 2012/ 2013	Convenience Sampling • Questionnaires • Interviews	Mixed Methods Quantitative / Qualitative Qualitative	Volunteer Participants = 57 Volunteer Participants = 12
2. To what extent, if any, do teachers experience bullying from their learners at a High School in Gauteng?	Participants who are Teachers at a High School in Gauteng West during 2012/ 2013	Convenience Sampling • Questionnaires • Interviews	Mixed Methods Quantitative / Qualitative Qualitative	Volunteer Participants = 57 Volunteer Participants = 12
3. What support or assistance do teachers who are bullied by their learners receive from education management?	Participants who are Teachers at a High School in Gauteng West during 2012/ 2013	Convenience Sampling • Questionnaires • Interviews	Mixed Methods Quantitative / Qualitative Qualitative	Volunteer Participants = 57 Volunteer Participants = 12

3.2.4 The Sample Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.129) define a sample as "a group of subjects in a research study from whom the data is collected." For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling is selected. According to Merriam (2009, p.79), convenience sampling is just what the term implies that is that "you select a sample based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on." In convenience sampling, the nearest individuals are chosen as respondents. This method is continued until the researcher has the correct sample for the specific needs. In my research survey teacher participants, will serve as respondents for the purpose of this research.

3.2.5 Sample Size

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.132), "there is, of course, no clean – cut answer, for the correct sample size depends upon the purpose of the study as well as the investigator's resources and the nature of the population under scrutiny." Merriam (2009, p.80) posits that "it always depends on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, and the resources you have to support the study." The total sample of this research is seventy (70) teachers. The respondents were drawn from a population of fifty-five (55) female and twenty (20) male staff members from a High School in the Gauteng West area. The sample is heterogeneous in terms of race and social background. The respondents are also not similar in terms of their age and educational level, and their ages vary from twenty (20) to sixty-nine (69) years. The rationale for the sample size is supported by Fraenkel and Wallen (1990, p.79) who state that a sample size is "as large as the researcher can obtain with reasonable expenditure of time and energy." Bell (1993, p.83) supports the acceptability for this theory, "as long as the make-up of the sample is clearly stated and the limitations of such data are realised."

3.2.6 Research Instruments

The research instruments chosen, being the questionnaires and interviews, yield both qualitative and quantitative information, which would, among other things, "reflect" the degree and type of bullying experienced by the teacher respondents. Although certain quantitative data has been gathered, analysed and reported on, the emphasis is on interpretative, rather than the normative approach, as there are too many variables, which would be difficult to measure in a limited study. Although the subject could be

fairly controversial, I agree with Merriam (2009) and Patton (2002), that to qualify as 'scientific', research does not always have to conform to quantitative empirical norms.

3.2.7 Data Gathering Methods, Processing and Organisation

For this study, fifty-seven (57) voluntary participants completed a confidential questionnaire. The objective of the survey was to establish (a) if teacher- bullying by learners was indeed prevalent at the school and to measure the teachers response thereto (b) the perceived effect on teacher performance and morale and student learning and finally (c) to establish if support was needed from education management for those teachers actually experiencing teacher-targeted bullying from their learners.

From these initial questionnaires, the process was then extended to twelve (12) semi-structured interviews in order to follow-up on volunteer teachers who had actually experienced learner-bullying. These twelve (12) teachers then became the qualitative data source group. This number was deemed adequate as a representative percentage of the initial group to allow for data saturation of the results. The qualitative data was collected from the interviewee's responses to three further standard questions posed by the researcher (See Appendix F).

3.2.7.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was chosen as a method of data collection. As Merriam (2009, p.245) suggests, "it is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse." Therefore the exploration of teachers' views on teacher-bullying by their learners is somewhat nebulous, whereas to obtain a detailed description of the nature and extent of teacher bullying by their learners is reasonably specific. There was a possibility that, because of sensitivity, bullied teachers could also not freely and openly share personal details. It is for this reason that I have drawn up a semi-structured questionnaire, where participants marked the appropriate box to indicate their answer, as well as to express their thoughts in open-ended questions. It was self-administered and completed by respondents themselves, allowing freedom to express subjective feelings as chosen, or as they were able to do. The incorporation of this method into a single tool aimed at adding depth and credibility to the answers provided by the teacher respondents.

In this particular Gauteng West High School, the bullying of teachers by learners had not been formally recognised by the management or teaching staff, and was not mentioned in any of the school's anti-bullying or discipline policies. Only learner – on – learner bullying has been formally recognised in the school. (See Appendix I – School Anti-Bullying Policy for Learners). Permission was also obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education.

The principal's permission and approval was also sought prior to issuing the questionnaire and the principal was assured of confidentiality, and that the school would not be identified. A letter was sent to the school outlining the aims and nature of the study (See Appendix A). The principal felt that I should address the staff in an early morning meeting and collect the questionnaires later at break time, due to time constraints and availability of teaching staff. During the morning staff meeting, teachers were given a briefing by the researcher and principal, informing them about the purpose of the study. It was emphasised that it was the teacher's experiences of learner bullying that was being studied. This could lead to more successful strategies to support teachers within this school. The questionnaire was distributed to all staff present which amounted to seventy (70) staff members.

The format of the questionnaire

Initially, respondents were briefed and reminded that they were not obliged to supply any information they were not comfortable in providing, and that the questionnaire would be kept confidential. They were also thanked for taking time to complete it.

Completion of the questionnaire was voluntary, and a total of fifty-seven (57) teacher respondents out of the seventy (70) teachers who were present in the staffroom in the morning meeting returned the completed questionnaires for analysis. The completion of a questionnaire is an imposition on an individual's time and aspects of the questionnaire did demand a certain amount of introspection that might not have been previously cognitively clarified by the teachers themselves, posing tensions in the completion of the document. However, the questionnaire did provide an insight into the composition of the group and their individual learning experiences. Also, one teacher respondent felt relieved that there was a study that was taking place where teacher bullying by learners was identified and could be given a name, thus classifying the problem as teacher-targeted bullying.

Participants were debriefed after participating in the research and, in doing so, the researcher rectified any misconceptions or misunderstandings which might have arisen in their thinking. This allowed teacher respondents an opportunity to work through their feelings as the research topic focuses on a topic which could possibly be emotionally distressing to some teacher participants. Strydom (2005) mention the importance of debriefing where subjects are given the opportunity, after the study, to work through their experience by minimizing harm. The researcher also explained that, should they experience any emotional discomfort due to recall of unpleasant incidences in filling out the questionnaire, they could contact Life-Line on 011 728-1347 for free counselling services.

The first part of the questionnaire was mostly quantitative data, in order to establish the norms of teacher participants. The questionnaire also included questions that dealt with the teacher's experiences, which backed up the assertion that "qualitative researchers want to know what the participants in a study are thinking and why they think what they do" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.196). For this reason, research questions that were included in the questionnaire are outlined in detail below. Questions are substantiated by a rationale.

Introductory Questions

The name of the respondent was optional and was not an introductory question. This was only included in the last question (Question 20) and only if the participant had volunteered to be interviewed. Twelve (12) of the fifty-seven (57) respondents elected to be volunteers for interviews. Due to the nature and sensitivity of the research, participants were given the freedom to make their own decision about whether or not to be interviewed. I did not want any of the respondents to feel intimidated in any way. The questions on age, gender, years of teaching experience, and their years of teaching experience in the present school, are all classification data and necessary for analysis of the teacher respondents' social characteristics. Therefore, in order to achieve this, questions one (1) to four (4) requested the necessary biographical information for classification.

- **Age of participants (Question 1)**

  This question was formulated within various age bands, as I could not assume that all teacher participants were willing to disclose their ages. I felt that the broader

age bands were less threatening and I did not want to create any initial resistance to completing the form. I also wanted to ascertain if there was any predominant age group experiencing learner-bullying within these bands.

- **Gender of participants (Question 2)**

In terms of the gender of the respondents, the research was done in the interests of examining whether their gender played a role with learners who bullied. The respondents were forty-two (42) female respondents and fifteen (15) male respondents. One could surmise that more females would respond as the overall staff quotient is seventy-five (75) teachers; twenty (20) male and fifty-five (55) female teachers who are employed at this Gauteng West High School. Gender ratio of respondents was 26% male to 74% female.

- **Teaching experience / Years of teaching experience in the present school (Questions 3 and 4)**

These questions were introduced as I wished to identify if the amount of teaching experience of teachers had any impact on the learner bullying that they were experiencing in the school workplace. Furthermore, it was important as a researcher that I should identity if there was any correlation to newly qualified teaching staff experiencing learner bullying, or whether the learner- bullying was occurring over a wider spectrum of teaching staff in the school workplace, irrespective of their years of teaching experience.

- **Teachers subjected to being bullied by learner(s) (Question 5)**

Teachers were asked to indicate a 'yes' or 'no' answer as to whether they had been bullied in their teaching career. Due to the nature and sensitivity of the research, participants were given the freedom to make their own decision to report bullying or not. I did not want any of the volunteer respondents to feel intimidated in any way.

- **Form of teacher bullying by the learner (Question 6)**

Teacher-bullying manifests itself in a variety of forms, including verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, cyber bullying, ignoring the teacher, silence and hostility, ridicule, making comments about the teacher to other learners, damage to the classroom, or damage to the teacher's property. This

question was to gain an in-depth understanding of their bullying experiences and to recognise the types of bullying most prevalent in this Gauteng West High School. During the formulation of the questionnaire, the types of bullying that teachers were exposed to were taken and adapted from Coloroso (2005). The researcher added other statements, based on the types of bullying behaviour described in the theoretical material.

- **Perception of learner bullying behaviour targeted against the teacher (Question 7)**

In order to ascertain perceived bullying behaviour, teachers were asked to indicate if there was little cause for concern or whether it was so serious that it became intolerable. This could cause stress- related problems and even lower their expectations of teaching as a career. Teachers needed to be heard and in the bullying process, the overall considerations are the effects on the teacher as an individual. Although organisations suffer from the effects of bullying experienced by their employees, it is the teacher-victims who endure the most significant amount of damage. The effects on bullied victims are serious and prolonged (Mathiesen & Einarsen, 2004; Turney, 2003).

- **Duration of learner bullying (Question 8)**

The duration of the bullying, be it for weeks; months; years; until teachers left the school; or until the learner left the school; was important to determine the severity of the problem, as well as the frequency of bullying suffered by teachers. In addition, this would allow the researcher to see if the on-going stress forced teachers to leave their teaching posts in order to escape the teacher-bullying.

- **Grade in which teacher bullying was most problematic (Question 9)**

All the High School year groups were included in the question, which is Grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Teachers were requested to indicate which year groups were the worst perpetrators of teacher bullying. This was especially relevant to their personal experiences.

- **Gender of learners who carried out the bullying (Question 10)**

This question examined whether the gender of learners played a role in the bullying of teachers and, if so, who the worst offenders were, either males or females, or both male and female learners within this Gauteng West High School.

- **Place of bullying (Question 11)**

Bullied teachers were asked to identify the places in which they were bullied, for example the classroom, corridors, playground, sports field, hall, social media, or other places. This was to determine where learner bullying took place in this school environment and where the teachers' authority was most undermined.

- **Characteristics of learners who carried out bullying (Question 12)**

In an attempt to identify the characteristics of learners who perpetrated teacher-targeted bullying, this question could assist other teachers who are victims in the workplace with the complexity of this bullying problem by identifying the trend of such learners.

- **Has bullying affected the teacher's ability to teach? (Question 13)**

This question was introduced to ascertain whether victims of teacher-targeted bullying lowered their expectations (in terms of behaviour, co-operation and academic output) of the learners who bully them. This lowered expectation could possibly transfer to other non-bullying learners, even though they may not be actively involved themselves.

- **Has bullying devalued the teacher's rights and opinions? (Question 14)**

With regard to the teachers' gender, age, race, years of service, subjects or courses they taught, it was important to examine if there was a correlation between the levels of teacher-targeted bullying that teachers experienced in the school, and these contextual risk factors.

- **Teachers reporting bullying (Questions 15, 16, 17 and 18)**

Questions 15, 16, 17, and 18 referred to reporting learner bullying by teachers. I wanted to ascertain if they reported the abuse they had suffered; to whom it was reported; and the consequence of reporting it. Help and support is essential and it was necessary to see if bullied teachers just accepted this experience as part of their jobs.

- **Is the problem of teachers being bullied by learners understood by school management? (Question 19)**

Respondents were asked this question as it is important for management to listen, and to take appropriate action. Poor leadership and poor management could dismiss a teacher-targeted bullying situation, which would result in staff dissatisfaction. Furthermore, this could condone the anti-social behaviour of learners. Moreover, this question allows principals, if necessary, to implement and manage effective change strategies for the school workplace in collaboration with learners, teachers, school management teams, School Governing Body, parents or caregivers.

3.2.7.2 The Interview

As Merriam (2009, p.88) posits, "The purpose of interviewing, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective". Therefore from the questionnaires, I, as researcher, extended the process to a semi-structured interview for those teachers who had experienced bullying and wished to follow up with an interview. De Vos et al. (2005, p.295) states that "phenomenological research focuses on describing and understanding the meaning given to participants to their daily lives. The purpose was to understand the interviewees' (teachers') lived experience or situation as expressed in their own words, gaining an 'inside view' of their lives and exploring any issue of bullying that surfaced during this interview. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.356), "in-depth interviews use open response questions to obtain data or participants' meanings and how they as individuals conceive their world and make sense of the important events in their lives". Thus, it is a face-to-face interaction between interviewer and interviewee to understand a situation as expressed in their own words.

According to Cohen and Manion (2000, p.271), "a research interview is initiated by the researcher with the purpose of obtaining research-relevant information with four possible types, namely structured, unstructured, non-directed and focused". Selection of the interview strategy depends on the context and purpose and the choice of an informal, semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to obtain the present perceptions of activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns, and thoughts of teachers who were bullied by learners. It allowed subjects to converse on a number of key concerns with occasional probing or suggestions. These

prompts served the dual purpose of 'breaking the ice' and encouraging comment on contextual issues of teacher-bullying within the school environment.

In the study, twelve (12) individuals participated in the interviews. The lengths of the interviews were 16 minutes to 40 minutes, depending on the amount of data and the length of time for which the participants were prepared to talk. The interview questions included the teachers' experiences of being bullied; the impact on the morale and performance of the teacher; and the resolution of the bullying problem. Most of the interviews took place in the school boardroom which allowed privacy, although some teachers requested that they would prefer to be interviewed in their classrooms when there were no learners present. However, one interviewee requested that the interview be done in her office. The interviewees were treated as "partners, rather than objects of research" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.10).

In conducting the interviews, the interviewer established trust by being genuine, maintaining eye contact, and conveying meaning through judicious and appropriate phrasing, cadence, and voice tone, in accordance with the requirements for good listening skills. This allowed good rapport and elicited valid data. This approach allowed one, as researcher, easily to adjust the interview to each individual. When the interviewee deviated from the topic, the interviewer tactfully steered them back, allowing the interviewer to access the social phenomenon of what was being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviewer could also clarify questions which the respondent did not understand. Furthermore, it also allowed observation of non-verbal communication.

The first teacher interview was crucial for analysing and setting the scene for the eleven (11) interviews that followed, allowing the researcher to identify and change what was necessary. These interviews took place on subsequent days and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts of the teacher interviews yielded a large amount of data, which had to be reduced to categories that could be managed. As Merriam (2009, p.81) states: "the challenge is to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across your data". Merriam (2009) further explains that categories should be responsive to the purpose of the research; be exhaustive; be mutually exclusive; be sensitive; and conceptually congruent in order to help the researcher to determine whether or not a set of categories is

complete. Data processing must be systematic and include synthesising and interpreting so that explanations of the phenomenon could be provided.

- **Data Processing and Organisation**

  The objective of the process and ordering of collected data is to prevent and limit precipitous conclusions on the part of the researcher. According to Mouton (2002, p.67), "data processing involves at least two kinds of operations, namely data reduction and data analysis". Using an adaptation of the data analysis strategy of McMillan and Schumacher (2010), I adopted an inductive – deductive approach (for example Varjas, Nastasi, Moore & Jayasena, 2005) to analyse data captured from questionnaires and individual interviews.

  The data reduction process allows both quantitative and qualitative data to be summarised and condensed, whilst data analysis includes qualitative analysis which explores emergent themes and patterns in the analysis of the content and statistical data obtained. The systematic evaluation process whereby data is selected, categorised, compared, synthesised and interpreted aims to provide explanations of the phenomenon at issue, namely bullying of teachers by their learners (Merriam, 2009).

  The initial stages in qualitative data analysis, entails an inductive process, often called open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As researcher, I carefully read through raw data obtained from the questionnaires and individual interviews. The content of both the interviews and questionnaires were separately analysed for patterns of meaning. This process centred on communication, especially the frequency and variety of messages, allowing for the emergence of data patterns and themes. The aim of the thematic approach is to evaluate emergent 'themes' to ensure they represent the whole of the text (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is an important step as it allowed me to examine and appreciate the data, identify significant meaning, and make connections between the thoughts and ideas of the participants.

  Thereafter, all data that relates to each question is organised and co-ordinated into categories that captures relevant characteristics of the data. This phase involves high-lighting the sentences from each participant that would be used, for example,

to answer the teacher-targeted bullying study's questions by taking excerpts from the participant's full text and preparing for the next phase of data reduction.

However, the later stages of coding are primarily deductive and include confirming codes developed during the inductive stages (Patton, 2002). This allows "a process of formulating a hypothesis about the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p.205).

This presentation of the data allowed conclusions to be drawn which included the notation of patterns and themes whether similar or contrasting; grouping and placing of similar information into categories; identifying interrelated factors as well as variables; and building coherence and consistency from emergent findings relevant to the framework of the study.

By objectifying the data, the emergent themes resulted in groups of comparison whilst analysis of the quantitative data revealed the relationships evidencing from the qualitative data. Thus, the qualitative data identified themes, scales, trends, practices and other variables that could be captured in quantitative measures.

The methodology for the formatting of data captured from the research questionnaires pertaining to teacher-bullying by learners and resultant interviews on this theme, employed various techniques to display data which included figure tables, charts and graphs, to provide clarification and objective evaluation of the data.

It is acknowledged that the research was a mixed method study to increase the validity of the results with the way the participants rather than the researcher conceptualised and responded to the phenomenon being studied. A quantitative method could have resulted in data being open to interpretation whilst qualitative data can be misconstrued without the support of quantitative data. McMillan and Schumacher, (2010, p.407) state that "standards of adequacy for mixed method studies rely on quantitative and qualitative standards as well as the justification for and effectiveness of mixing methods and providing the best understanding of the research problem".

3.2.8 Pilot Study

Oppenheim (1976, p.26) state that "pilot work can be of the greatest help in devising the working of questions, and it operates as a healthy check, since fatal ambiguities may lurk in the most unexpected quarters". This view is reiterated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), who are of the opinion that it is essential to run a pilot test on both the instructions and the survey, prior to handing it out to an identified sample of teachers in a Gauteng West High School. The researcher used a pilot study with two teacher-respondents similar to those in the sample, age bands twenty-five to thirty years (female) and forty-five and over. They were also from a former Model C, co-educational school in Gauteng West. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.205) state that "it is best to locate a sample of subjects with characteristics similar to those that will be used in the study". This allowed changes to be identified and made where necessary, to improve both the clarity and the format of the questions. It further afforded myself as researcher an understanding of the time-frame needed for completion of the survey, as well as the pattern of responses that could come from this survey, enabling further revision where required.

Questionnaire feedback that was given and included was as follows:

There was a suggestion that the introductory instruction to the questionnaire that requested participants to be 'honest' when completing the questionnaire be removed. This adjustment was done. I believe this allowed a correct and professional relationship with volunteer participants at the onset of the process. In ethics, the focus is on the researcher's ethical intuitions, feelings and reflective skills, including one's sensitivities in undertaking dialogue and negotiation with the various parties involved in the research.

- There were some repeated questions which the researcher had not picked up, and the repeats were taken out.

- An average questionnaire took volunteer teacher-participants 15 minutes to fill in. This was important information because volunteer teacher-participants only had thirty minutes during their break-time in which to complete the questionnaire.

- One of the participants recommended that the research should include some space to explain briefly, or justify a response. The researcher made the necessary adjustments to the final questionnaire.

3.2.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics refers to discussions around what is considered acceptable or justifiable behaviour in the practice of social research. Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozensky (2005, p.61) states that "ethics is typically associated with morality, and both deal with matters of right and wrong", while for Gravetter and Forzano (2003, p.59) research ethics can be defined "as the responsibility of researchers to be honest and respectful to all individuals who are participating in the study". Thus the researcher undertakes to ensure that, throughout the study, there are guidelines that include policies regarding informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and caring where necessary (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This assurance also includes a guarantee of the researcher's competency, which naturally includes maintaining a positive, correct and professional relationship with participants, which in turn means gaining their informed consent and briefing if necessary (De Vos et al., 2005).

When dealing with social research, there are many ethical issues which must be considered as this type of research usually involves individuals as participants, and these participants need to be protected throughout the study from harm, whether emotional or physical. As Babbie et al. (2005, p.63) points out "social research should never injure those being studied". To ensure that participants were not exposed to any danger, they were informed about the purposes and procedures of the investigation of teachers as targets of bullying by learners. This further included ensuring that teacher respondents were kept up to date on information relating to the research, and that there was no deception about the goal of study and no violation of their privacy.

The questionnaire and interview schedule were voluntary and there was no obligation to complete either. From these questionnaires, volunteer candidates for the interviews were required to present their names in order to facilitate follow-up interviews. As Gravetter and Forzano (2003, p.115) state, "each individual can make a rational and informed decision as to whether they would like to participate or not". All information received was strictly private and confidential.

In conducting the interviews, the researcher once again had an obligation to establish trust, be genuine, maintain eye contact, and convey meaning effectively, thus developing a positive and confident rapport with teacher participants. This was important to elicit valid data more effectively; in order to reach a satisfactory and appropriate solution for teacher victims experiencing bullying by learners, which is also of a sensitive nature. The names of the volunteer participants in the final interviews were kept confidential. Each name was replaced with a number. Participant information collected during the research was locked away and would not be shared with anyone, other than the research supervisors. All research data would be destroyed three years after completion of the project. When completed, the final research report would be made available to the school if requested. Furthermore, I undertook to ensure, as researcher, that the requirements to ensure reliability were met throughout the study. Schulze (2002) points out that trustworthiness must be guaranteed at all costs to ensure reliability, consistency and applicability.

3.2.10 Measures to Ensure Trustworthiness

The researcher was obligated to maintain trustworthiness throughout the study. In so doing, trustworthiness of the findings were addressed and an endeavour to incorporate strategies to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of both the research methods and resultant findings (Shenton, 2004). Thus, these four criteria underpin the validity of my research findings.

- **Credibility** should be demonstrated by conducting the research so that the "phenomenon at issue is accurately described and a true picture is being presented" (Shenton, 2003, p.63). Therefore, it deals with the question of whether the research has established confidence in the truth of the findings derived from the information given by the participants in describing their personal experiences and perceptions (Shenton, 2004). That is, as researcher, ensuring that the study measures what was actually intended. Thus, the credibility strategy adhered to, recorded the following phenomena under investigation:

(a) The adoption of correct operational methods in data gathering sessions

Credibility was derived by utilising the same line of questioning to the initial volunteer group and resultant qualitative source group to ensure objectivity of the data collection and consequent validity of the findings. All initial participants

received the same questions on the quantitative questionnaire schedule followed by three open-ended questions presented to the resultant interviewee group who described in detail a particular situation or experience within the framework of these three questions. Credibility was vouchsafed by utilising the initial group of respondents as the source group for the qualitative interviews. This served to eliminate potential bias, skewed findings and to obtain a greater understanding of the teacher body on the part of the researcher. The sampling was dependent on teacher availability.

(b) Engagement with the culture of the participating organisation

In an attempt to establish positive rapport, the researcher ensured a preliminary visit to the Gauteng West High School, "to gain an understanding of the organisation and to establish a relationship of trust between the parties" (Shenton, 2004, p.65). In this case, the researcher spent a number of days at the school where both questionnaires and interviews were concluded. Questionnaires were also collated on the same day, while interviews were completed on the availability of participants at the school. This ensured data collection from participants who were genuinely willing to contribute and offer data freely, allowing the researcher to report the realities and perspectives of participants as clearly as possible. Approval to conduct the research was also obtained from the principal.

(c) Checks relating to the accuracy of data

To corroborate information garnered from interviews, a tape recorder was used to verify data collection dialogues eliminating perceptions, possible bias and misinterpretation. Standardised probing questions were recorded when clarifying the responses of qualitative interviewees. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim into a written format and summarised for presentation and review by future readers (See Appendix H). Discrepancies could be avoided by ensuring the data was accurate and checked immediately to ensure clarification of the actual situation being investigated. As Shenton (2004, p.68) reiterates, that "if a tape recorder has been used, the articulations themselves should at least have been accurately captured".

- **Dependability and Transferability**

  According to Shenton (2004, p.71), in addressing the issue of reliability, dependability refers to "employing techniques to show that, if the work was repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained". Thus, the study endeavoured to ascertain if teacher-targeted bullying by learners was indeed prevalent in this Gauteng West High School. Findings and conclusions from other related research projects were scarce, thus cross correlation and verification of my findings was limited by the lack of available research material. However, this research could be used as a yardstick to determine the dependability and reliability of future investigations determining if teacher-targeted bullying was prevalent in other schools. However, the same research design, data gathering methods and process of inquiry would need to be utilised (Shenton, 2004). Whilst, transferability refers to "the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or to other groups" (Shenton, 2004, p.63), this research proves only relevant to this particular Gauteng West High School and is not evidence of prevailing bully trends of teachers in other schools. Thus, there is a need to understand the phenomenon of teacher bullying by learners, also known as teacher-targeted bullying, through several studies rather than a study conducted in isolation (Shenton, 2004).

- **Confirmability**

  Confirmability of the findings of this study will be evidenced by the collated and analysed data and there is a need to ensure as far as possible that the resultant findings are based on the experiences of the participants only, rather than evidencing the characteristics and preferences of me as researcher (Shenton, 2004). In order to ensure objective findings, a mixed method approach was used. However, these findings cannot be extrapolated to other schools and are limited to the scope of this report. Confirmability is thus limited to the experiences of these participants at this school only and could be considered as a future research investigation to verify possible teacher bullying trends by learners in other schools.

3.3 Conclusion

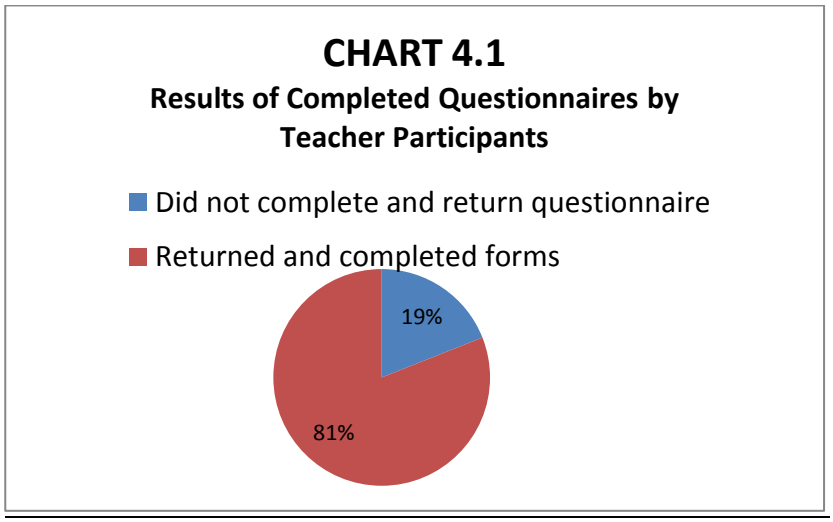
This chapter presented the research design and methodology used in gathering data on the nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a High School in Gauteng West. The aims of this research, the research design and the research methods have been given previously. Ethical considerations were also observed and strategies for ensuring trustworthiness addressed.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings of the data collected in the study are presented and discussed. A mixed method design was used to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. In the discussion of the data analysis that follows, data generated from the fifty-seven (57) completed questionnaires and the twelve (12) interviews were used in a complementary manner and discussed together, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of this study.

4.1 Results and Findings of the Questionnaires and Interviews

Chart 4.1 - Results of Completed Questionnaires by Teacher Participants



In order to ascertain the nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a Gauteng West High School, a questionnaire was distributed to seventy (70) teaching staff. Fifty seven (57) teachers returned the questionnaires. The response rate was 81% (15 male teachers and 42 female teachers). From these interviews, twelve (12) participants elected to be interviewed. (Chart 4.1 – summarises the response rate of completed questionnaires by respondents).

4.2 Demographic Details of Teacher Participants who Experienced Learner Bullying in the Gauteng West High School

Thirty nine (39) staff members (68%) indicated that, at some time in their teaching careers, they had suffered bullying by a learner in the Gauteng West School while eighteen (18) staff members (32%) indicated that they had not themselves experienced learner bullying in this teaching environment. According to O'Moore (1997, p.5), "there is no typical profile of the victims of bullying, and anyone can be bullied". Therefore, bullying knows no boundaries and the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) survey

(1996, p.14) reported that "victims were mostly female, in their forties and were standard-scale teachers". While, Mncube and Harber (2013, p.56) confirm that "it is apparent that teachers are also victims of bullying".

4.3 The Questionnaires

Table 4.2 - Distribution of Demographic Details of Questionnaire Participants

QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS	NO OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
GENDER:: Male	15	26%
Female	42	74%
	57	100%
AGE BAND: 20 – 24 Years	7	12%
25 – 30 Years	12	21%
31 – 35 Years	3	5%
36 – 40 Years	6	11%
41 – 45 Years	8	14%
45 + Years	21	37%
	57	100%
OVERALL TEACHING EXPERIENCE:		
1 – 5 Years	19	33%
6 – 10 Years	8	14%
11 – 15 Years	9	16%
16 – 20 Years	4	7%
21 – 25 Years	7	12%
26 + Years	10	18%
	57	100%
TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN PRESENT SCHOOL:		
Less than 1 year	16	28%
1 – 5 Years	15	26%
6 – 10 Years	20	35%
11 15 Years	4	7%
16 – 20 Years	2	4%
21 – 25 Years	0	0%
26 + Years	0	0%
	57	100%

Based on the demographical information obtained from questionnaires, the **gender** of the 57 respondents indicated that 26% were male and 74% were female, clearly showing that female teachers dominated the questionnaire sample.

The **ages** of teachers who responded to the questionnaire included age bands of 45+ years (21 participants) (37%), 25-30 years (12 participants) (21%), 41–45 years (8 participants) (14%), 20–24 years (7 participants) (12%), 31–35 years (3 participants) (5%), and 36-40 years (6 participants) (11%).

The **teaching experience** of teachers who responded to the questionnaire included the age bands 1–5 years (19 participants) (33%), 26 years + (10 participants) (18%), 11-15 years (9 participants) (16%), 6–10 years (8 participants) (14%), 21–25 years (7 participants) (12%), and 16–20 years (4 participants) (7%). The most prominent age band was teachers who had 1 – 5 years teaching experience (19) (33%).

Furthermore, the **teaching experience of teachers currently teaching at the Gauteng West High School** who completed the questionnaire ranged from 1 to 20 years. The majority had 10 or less years of experience. (See Table 4.2 - Demographic Details of Questionnaire Participants).

4.4 The Interviews

4.4.1 Demographic Details of Interview Participants

A total of twelve (12) participants volunteered for interviews and the first part of the semi-structured interview provided biographical details of the participants, after which interview questions ascertained the learner bullying experienced by these teacher participants. This information has been used to complement the questionnaires.

Table 4.3 outlines the gender of interview participants as ten (10) (83%) female teachers and two (2) (17%) male teachers. The most predominant age band of teachers who were interviewed was 45+ years (5 participants) (43%), with 25 years – 30 years (4 participants) (33%), and 31 – 35 years (8%), 36 – 40 years (8%), and 41 – 45 years (8%) each having one interview respondent respectively. One third of the participants (4) (33%) had 26 or more years overall teaching experience with the majority of five (5) participants having 1 – 5 years teaching experience at their present school. These teachers were generally not new to the teaching profession but were relatively new to their present teaching environment at the Gauteng West High School where they were victims of bullying by learners. The table also outlines the subjects taught by the participants who were interviewed and this shows that all

teachers, irrespective of the subject being taught, were vulnerable to learner bullying. (See Table 4.3 - Distribution of Demographic Details of Interview Participants).

Table 4.3 - Distribution of Demographic Details of Interview Participants

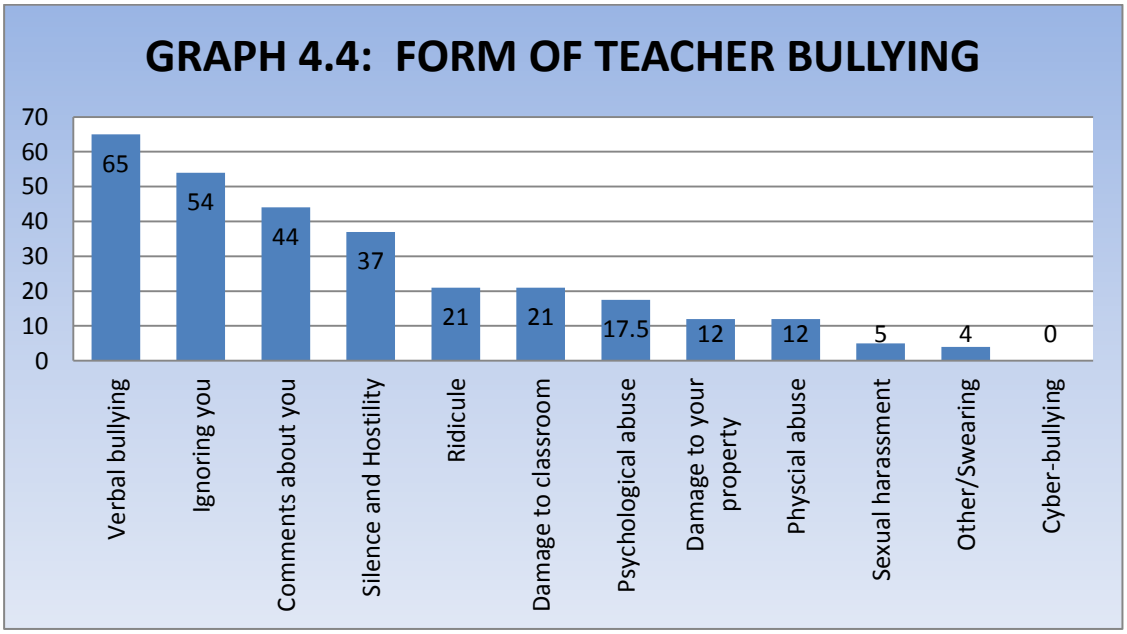
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS	**NO. OF PARTICIPANTS**	**PERCENTAGE**
GENDER: Male	2	17%
Female	10	83%
	12	100%
AGE BAND: 20 – 24 Years	0	0%
25 – 30 Years	4	33%
31 – 35 Years	1	8%
36 – 40 Years	1	8%
41 45 Years	1	8%
45 + Years	5	43%
	12	100%
OVERALL TEACHING EXPERIENCE:		
1 – 5 Years	2	17%
6 – 10 Years	2	17%
11 – 15 Years	1	8%
16 – 20 Years	1	8%
21 – 25 Years	2	17%
26 + Years	4	33%
	12	100%
TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN PRESENT SCHOOL:		
Less than 1 year	1	8%
1 – 5 Years	5	42%
6 – 10 Years	3	25%
11 – 15 Years	3	25%
16 – 20 Years	0	0%
21 – 25 Years	0	0%
26 + Years	0	0%
	12	100%
SUBJECTS TAUGHT:		
Geography	1	
Civil Technology	1	
Consumer Studies	1	
English	2	

Life Orientation	1	
Physical Science	2	
Mathematics	2	
Design	1	
Afrikaans	1	
	12	100%

Taking into account the demographic details of both the questionnaires and the interviews, it was interesting to identify that the most predominant age group of participants in both the questionnaires (37%) and interviews (43%) was teachers in the age band of 45+. As Knowles, (2000, p.52) states, "one of the development tasks of middle-age (30 – 55) is achieving adult civic and social responsibility". One can see that the age trend within the group would support this theory of social responsibility, providing evidence and comment of teacher- bullying by learners. The questionnaires showed that the predominant overall teaching experience of participants was 1 – 5 years (33%), with interviewees having 26+ years (33%) overall teaching experience. Furthermore, questionnaires showed that the majority of participants had 6 – 10 years teaching experience (35%) in the Gauteng West High School, with the majority of interviewees having 1 – 5 years teaching experience (42%). This then showed that teachers who have 1 – 10 years teaching experience in the Gauteng West High school were more likely to experience bullying by learners, irrespective of their overall teaching experience.

4.5 Nature of Teacher Bullying Experienced by Teachers at a Gauteng West High School

Graph 4.4 – Form of Teacher Bullying



The questionnaires and interviews focussed on forms of bullying that were inappropriate and likely to occur in a school situation (see Graph 4.4 and Table 4.5). In the analysis of the responses, the bullying experienced by teachers from learners had manifested itself in a variety of forms. Thirty-seven (37) teachers claimed that they had mainly suffered from verbal abuse. This is consistent with research conducted by Coloroso (2005, p.18) who states that "verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying used by both males and females and can account for 70 percent of reported bullying". Learners are responsible for this form of behaviour which contains the most frequently experienced difficulties for teachers in this Gauteng West High School. Analysis of the frequency of verbal bullying incidents that occurred accounted for 65% of the reported incidents, "which can have an immediate impact on the teachers who are experiencing the bullying" (Lee, 2004, p.10).

In addition, thirty-one (31) teachers (54%) indicated that their requests and instructions were frequently ignored by learners, while twenty five (25) teachers (44%) experienced learners making comments about them to other learners. Twenty-one (21) teachers (37%) experienced silence and hostility from learners, and one teacher felt hostility was more prevalent from female learners where they would not listen and carry on with what they were doing. Twelve (12) teachers (21%) were victims of ridicule and twelve (12) teachers (21%) experienced damage to their classrooms. In addition, eight (8) teachers (17.5%) had been subjected to psychological abuse, while seven (7) teachers (12%) had experienced physical abuse, for example being punched and pushed around. It is important to note that all reported incidents of physical assaults were committed by learners.

Seven (7) of the participants (12%) reported that the perpetrators had damaged property belonging to the victims, which included damage to a motor vehicle. Three (3) incidents of sexual harassment (6%) also occurred, which were inflicted on two female teachers by three male learners. The evidence of reported sexual harassment in this Gauteng West High School were incidents of learner masturbation in the classroom; urinating in front of a teacher; and unzipping pants, touching genitals by male learners and threatening to urinate in the classroom. Mncube and Harber (2013, p.59) state that, "sexual harassment and violence affect learning environments negatively, creating an atmosphere of fear and aggression". Other forms of teacher bullying were reported by two teachers (4%) and this included swearing. Analysis of the number of incidents shows an increase between the number of teachers who reported bullying and the number of incidents of bullying that they reported. The reason for this discrepancy is that a number of teachers alleged that they had experienced these forms of teacher bullying from more than one learner, and on more than one occasion.

Analysis of the experiences of participant teachers revealed that poor discipline is a vexing issue in the South African education system, with teacher bullying being experienced daily. As Blaya (2003, p.650) states, "teachers feel they are faced with growing difficulties to motivate pupils or exert their authority". Teachers claim "they are faced with situations of conflict and opposition which they have not been taught to manage" (Blaya, 2003, p.651). Some significant statements were expressed by respondents to the questionnaires evidencing that bullying regularly occurs.

- *"Learners threaten to assault me and are extremely aggressive – I have been pushed around, hand grabbed, and threatened, ignored and sworn at".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 1: Female, 41 – 45 years).
- *"Learners show an aggressive hostility. They verbally abuse, ignore, use silence/hostility, ridicule, make comments about you to other learners and damage your classroom and property".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 7: Male 25 – 30 years).
- *"Happens every day. Seen as part of the job - verbal, ignoring, hostility, ridicule, making comments to others, damage to classroom".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 18: Female, 25 – 30 years);
- *"I have had a few incidents. A learner threw a punch at me for taking his cap which was not part of the school uniform. Another learner wrote swear words on my car for confiscating jewellery. The male learners respond by being aggressive. The female response is hostility and comments".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 23: Female 45 years and over).
- *"Learners have threatened me with violence".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 25: Female, 45 years and over).
- *"I have had many incidents with learners when they become physical after being asked to leave the class for insubordinate behaviour. Many more cases of mocking, shouting, ignoring and back-chatting me in front of my class".* (Questionnaire respondent no. 31: Female 25 – 30 years).

Among other things, both questionnaires and interviews showed that teachers experienced misbehaviour from learners, who, on being approached and instructed to be orderly were insubordinate and disrespectful. Mncube and Harber (2013, p.56) reiterate that "learners are physically attacking teachers when reprimanded" (See Appendix H for Bullying Experiences of Interviewees). Undermining of the teachers' authority included behaviours as outlined in the table below:

Table 4.5 - Forms of Bullying Experienced by Interview Participants

PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED	**FORM OF BULLYING EXPERIENCED**
PARTICIPANT NO. 1 Female, 41 – 45 years	• Physical – grabbed my arm; pushed me; slammed the door in my face. • Verbal – threatened me; ridiculed me. • Psychological – felt threatened; stronger than me; scared; hostility.
PARTICIPANT NO. 2 Male, 41 – 45 years	• Verbal – shouting, screaming, threatening. • Psychological – would get someone else to do something to me
PARTICIPANT NO. 3 Female, 45 years and over	• Psychological – physically came into your space; walked at you. • Verbal – talk down on you; tell you what they would like to do; they say what they want to say to you.
PARTICIPANT NO. 4 Female, 36 to 40 years	• Physical – waved his hands in front of me; pushed me; • Verbal – shouting, swearing. • Psychological – parent belittled teacher, saying that she had no level of emotional intelligence; parent threatened criminal action against teacher when child was drunk.
PARTICIPANT NO. 5 Male, 25 to 30 years	• Physical – slammed the gate shut and locked teacher in the classroom. • Verbal – laughing, making comments, calling the teacher funny names. • Psychological – making comments that affected my self-esteem; questioning my authority; making derogatory remarks about my physical appearance; • Ridicule – belittled me, degraded, and showed hostility
PARTICIPANT NO. 6 Female, 31 to 35 years	• Verbal – causing disruption and refusing to keep quiet. • Psychological – undermining your authority. • Ridicule; making comments; calling names, like 'bitch', making animal noises, like mooing or barking.
PARTICIPANT NO. 7 Female, 25 to 30 years	• Verbal – Verbally abusive. • Physical – "Slapped me across my face"; throwing shoes at teacher. • Psychological – Writing racist slogans on the board, such as 'Shoot the boer' or 'Kill the boer'.
PARTICIPANT NO. 8 Female, 25 – 30 years	• Physical – Got kicked and hit with a chair. • Verbal – Verbally abusive.
PARTICIPANT NO. 9 Female, 25 to 30 years	• Verbal – Argumentative; made threats of assault. • Hostility • Psychological – 'I was terrified!'
PARTICIPANT NO. 10 Female, 45 years and over	• Physical – Threw pieces of broken pencil at me and hit me on my shoulder – two learners were suspended for assault.
PARTICIPANT NO. 11 Female, 45 years and over	• Verbal – Shouting; obnoxious; making comments; swearing. • Hostility – Being asked to leave the class and refusing. • Physical – Shouldered the teacher; lifted his fist

	toward teacher; assault another teacher. • Psychological effects on me – Had to take medication to relieve knots in my stomach • Sexual harassment – Urinating in front of teacher.
PARTICIPANT NO. 12 Female, 45 years and over	• Sexual harassment – Pulled down their pants and wanted to urinate on the classroom wall; masturbating; rubbing private parts; unzipping pants. • Verbal – Disrupting class; not keeping quiet. • Standing up during teaching; walking around the classroom; eating their food; walking from desk to desk during teaching. • Derogatory; ridicule, hostile; damage to classroom or property; ignoring the teacher. • Psychological – "You don't want to come to school and you have all kinds of sicknesses to stay at home".

Therefore, participants in both the questionnaires and interviews experienced varied forms of bullying (see Table 4.5). These ranged from less obvious forms, such as ignoring the teacher, to extremes, such as assault. Research findings by The Institute of Personnel Development (1997, p.6) reiterate this view and state, "that bullying can range from violence to less obvious forms, such as ignoring someone".

In these reported incidents, there was a perception by teachers that learners who bully believed that such behaviour was acceptable. These learners had become intolerant, chauvinistic, homophobic or discriminatory. The comments made by teachers showed that these learners had no behavioural boundaries or consistent guidelines, and some parents provided opposing, or inconsistent, role modelling when they themselves maintained this bullying behaviour by sabotaging the teacher, or wanting to institute legal proceedings against the said teacher, or the school, for their child's wrong doing and negative behaviour. One respondent gave an example of this, explaining that *"I was angry, really angry, because the father was speaking to me as if I was here to be dealt with, not the fact that his son came late and not the fact that his son was drunk, not the fact that his son was waving his hands in my face. None of that was dealt with"*. Blaya (2003, p.650) reiterates that "parents are neglecting their responsibilities" and that teaching "is becoming increasingly hazardous".

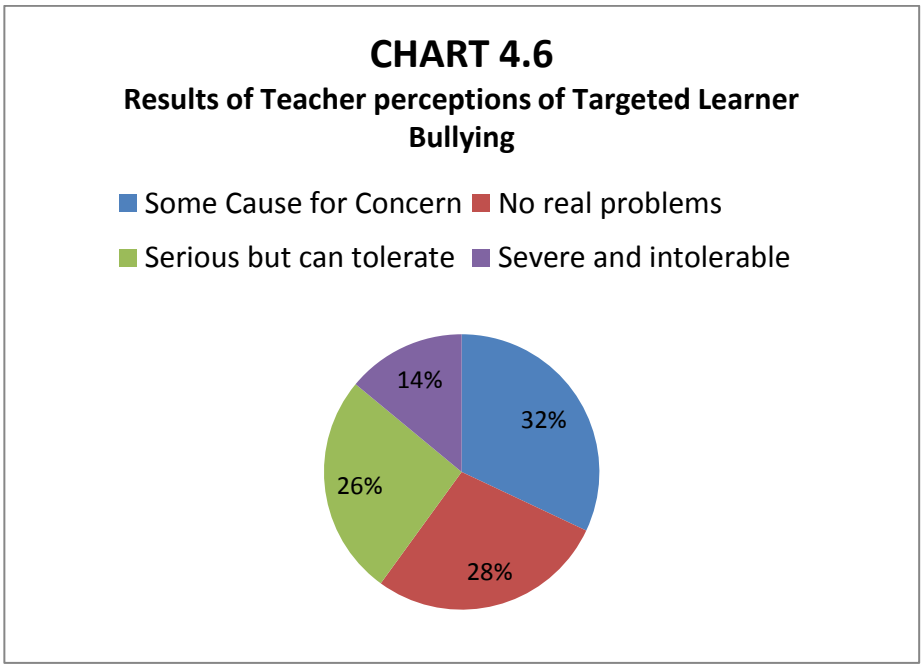
Slonimsky (2010, p.50) makes two main points about a teacher's epistemic authority within teaching. The author states that, firstly, the teacher has the epistemological right to make directives because "she is the representative of the practice to learn" and, secondly, "the learner volitionally submits to the directives" because the learner "trusts the path generated by the teacher, even though they may not understand yet the reason or imagine the telos". However, teachers felt insecure about the learners' volition to submit themselves to the directive of the teacher. Many of the teachers found that black male learners were not willing to 'submit' to a white female teacher in the

classroom, or elsewhere in the school environment. As participants said, *"There is a cultural reaction and, as a white female, it is difficult to address some black learners who are not willing to 'submit' to a female"*; another participant said *"Learners are aggressive when a white female teacher addresses their misbehaviour and this especially happens when they are in groups with other learners"*. Mncube and Harber (2013, p.12) point out, "the values and behaviours of different models of masculinity are socially learned, not genetically determined … learners need to be taught alternate, non-violent forms of masculinity". There is no doubt "that the wider apartheid political system, and resistance to it, has also impacted on South African Schools in a violent way and education can seldom be separated from political agendas in the South African context" (Farquhar & Fitzsimons, 2007, p.225).

The main ideas raised from the abovementioned questionnaires and interviews are about poor learner discipline and the need for a strong partnership to be forged between learners, parents and teachers. Teachers were not only undermined by learners, but also felt vulnerable, not only because of the learners themselves, but also of the parents of misbehaving learners. According to Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, and Van der Walt (2004, p.172), "forging and managing a strong partnership with learners and parents is a hallmark of good leadership, and it not only improves the learners' attendance but also eliminates problems related to learner discipline". Thus teachers need to find ways in which to communicate the rules of disciplinary practices, as well as to show learners how to regulate their own learning, and this adds a further dimension of complexity to the teachers' work.

4.5.1 Teacher Perceptions of Targeted Learner Bullying

Chart 4.6 – Results of Teacher perceptions of Targeted Learner Bullying



The questionnaires showed that eighteen (18) (32%) of the teacher participants perceived the experienced-bullying as some cause of concern, while sixteen (16) (28%) had no real problem. Fifteen (15) (26%) perceived the problem as serious but tolerable. Eight (8) (14%) perceived the situation as 'severe and intolerable' (see Chart 4.6: Results of Teacher perceptions of Targeted Learner Bullying). From the frequent response, *"I left the school where I was teaching"*, it is clear that many teachers were unable to withstand, or overcome the experience of learner bullying. Fourteen percent (14%) were severely affected, and working constituted a severe trauma for those teachers, making it difficult to provide learners with a conducive and pleasant learning-environment. As one of the participants said, *"I hated every day going to teach lessons to that class"*.

Generally, participants felt vulnerable. The feeling was that the role of discipline had changed in the teaching scenario, where teachers now *"had no tools whatsoever"*; it was felt that learners had a powerful stronghold and *"could bully the teacher because he has no grounds to stand on."* Rules and regulations widely protected learners but teachers did not feel that they were afforded the same assistance; one teacher said, *"Show me anything that protects a staff member or a teacher in today's teaching."* They further acknowledged that there were no policies for protecting teachers and there was little punishment against learners who committed offences against teachers. Learners had to have several serious encounters with teachers before any steps or punishment could be instituted against a problematic learner.

The interviews and questionnaires, as well as other research (Burton, 2008), show that the relationship between teachers and learners has deteriorated. Teachers also felt helpless and powerless – *"What are the solutions? Our hands are tied"*; *"Learners gang up on us"* and *"You can't even shout at a learner and then you are in trouble"*. As one teacher said, *"I feel threatened as he (the learner) is much stronger than I am as a female teacher, and I am not allowed to touch him or even defend myself at all when I'm in that position (of assault). So I am just allowed to stand there and whatever happens needs to happen"*. Another teacher complained, *"Learners become so aggressive and if they don't get their way, they could slap you or knock you over later in the corridor"*. Most of the time, female teachers were bullied by male learners and a male teacher had to be called in to assist. "Boys learn to expect dominant authoritarian behaviour from male teachers, since it provides a role model for superior power and strength, and it mirrors much of the power that they see exhibited by other men in their daily lives" (Mncube and Harber, 2013, p.25). A third of the participants in questionnaires and interviews felt that, "culturally boys over 16 years believed they have the right to tell female teachers what to do, and were racist". Mncube and

Harber (2013, p.104) report that "male learners seem to have patriarchal attitudes towards females which cause conflict and violence". According to Mncube and Harber (2013, p.6), "despite progress in respect of more democracy in schools since 1994, there continues to be problems with "race" as historically defined in South Africa – "Black", "Coloured", "Indian" and "White". It was further reported that "an audit of 90 de-segregated schools across all nine provinces published in 1999 showed that racism in schools continued to be pervasive" (Mncube & Harber, 2013, p.6).

Teachers further felt *"belittled, put down like my authority is being questioned"* and *"powerless with no control."* As one interviewee said, *"It's like you feel hopeless after a while. Yes, I mean because you look at somebody who is doing well … and eventually you just give up"*; other bullying encounters made the teachers feel *"helpless"*, *"in tears every second day," "terrified", "it was a horrible feeling, really horrible feeling, really horrible"*, and *"wound up and shaken by the whole thing."* The most common emotion which teachers felt when they encountered bullying was anger. As one interviewee said, *"I suppose I felt anger. I was irritated with myself for getting angry because I usually try very hard to maintain calmness in the classroom, or the corridor or playground".*

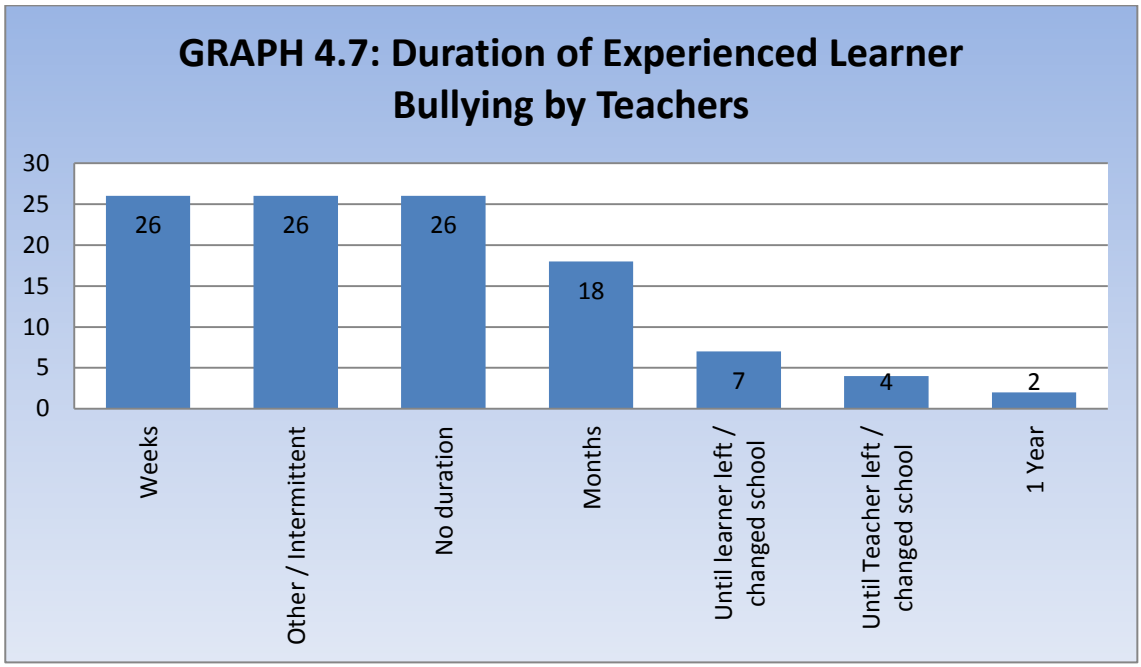
In these circumstances, the potential for a sense of humiliation is obvious because an incident will have been seen or heard by many other members of the school community, namely other colleagues, other learners, the Principal or even parents. The sense of hurt felt by a person who is humiliated by the parent of the learner also cannot be denied or ignored; as one interview highlighted*, "The father mentioned that I don't have a level of emotional intelligence, now the child is sitting there".* Also, many of the respondents alleged that they had been humiliated publically by more than one learner, while one teacher had reached a point where *"I became desensitised"*, and another felt that *"You develop coping skills, certainly it's not tolerated, it's something that is happening and you need to cope with it."* Among these reactions were apathy, disillusionment, introversion, isolation and anxiety.

Therefore, the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews emphasises the fact that learners should abide by the laws of the country, and that teachers too have rights and need to be treated with respect and dignity within their workplace. In support of this view, the Bill of Rights in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa "prohibits the treatment or punishment of any person in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way" (Education Law and Policy Handbook, 1999, p.20). On these grounds such abuse is a gross violation of the human rights of teachers. From these questionnaires and interviews, it can be seen that the Bill of Rights is clearly being ignored, and there is a real

sense in the responses of the victims that they are feeling overwhelmed by, and angry about, these circumstances.

4.6 The Extent of Experienced Learner Bullying

Graph 4.7 - Duration of Experienced Learner Bullying by Teachers



The questionnaires and interviews showed that the duration of the bullying varied, with fifteen (15) (26%) staff claiming to have been victims of learner bullying for *"a couple of minutes"* to *"several weeks"*. Another fifteen (15) (26%) participants said they had suffered intermittent bullying, which included separate or isolated cases, with ten respondents (18%) claiming to have experienced months of learner bullying by more than one bully. As one participant said, *"The last bullying I experienced lasted for about three of the four terms"* while four (4) (7%) said it continued until the specific learners left, or changed schools. One (1) staff member (4%) claimed to have left her previous teaching post in order to escape the learner bullying and another teacher had not returned to the school after a recent assault by a learner. Yet another took a seven month sabbatical to escape the bullying. A further statement made was that *"Learner bullying was on-going and could be a problem for a whole year"*. According to Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan (2004, p.20), "all research on the effects of bullying shows how damaging and destructive bullying is" and this statement was backed up by yet another respondent, who reiterated that, *"I think it is actually life changing being in the scenario where bullying is taking place. It is life changing because your whole outlook is going to change on everything now"*. Sullivan et al. (2004, p.20) describes that "in most situations victims do survive but carry scars for a lifetime". However, fifteen (15) (26%) of the staff said that they had not endured any significant effect. It is clear from this response that

many teachers were able to withstand and perhaps accept learner-bullying as an unavoidable part of teaching and so did not complain. This in-built acceptance may need to be challenged, as not all teachers are resilient enough to ignore negative effects. Burton (2008, p.106) acknowledges that "the nature and causes of violence in society and in schools need to be examined and discussed in schools and teacher education". Perhaps the teachers who are more resilient and set better boundaries are the ones who do not seek intervention. As one participant said, *"Maybe by the way I've changed lessons and I've also discouraged any kind of interaction outside of school which has improved the bullying by learners"*. Another said she experienced no further effect as the learners were dealt with immediately and suspended for assault, which was throwing broken pencils at her. The other learners apologised and she felt in control. Hazler (1996, p.72) says that, "when the victim acquires new skills or information that helps them revise the distribution of power, a shift takes place within the relationship". (See Graph 4.7: Duration of Experienced Bullying by Teachers).

4.6.1 Grade in which bullying was most problematic

Table 4.8 - Grade in which bullying was most problematic

Grade	No of Teacher Incidents	Percentage
Grade 9	32	40%
Grade 10	21	26%
Grade 8	13	16%
Grade 11	8	10%
Grade 12	6	8%
	80 Reported Incidents	100%

Table 4.8 represents a total number of eighty (80) incidents reported by fifty-seven (57) participants. The results of questionnaires indicated that, in this particular school, learners in all grades were involved, but Grade 9 learners were seen as the worst offenders with thirty two (32) reported incidents (40%), Grade 10 learners were identified with twenty one (21) reported incidents (26%) as the next worst offenders, with Grade 8 being identified with thirteen (13) reported incidents (16%), Grade 11 with eight (8) reported teacher incidents (10%), and Grade 12 with six (6) reported incidents (8%) as the least problematic. Some respondents identified more than one Grade as problematic.

Grade 9 learners, being the most problematic were identified on the basis of the frequency of bullying incidents experienced. These learners would fall into the fourteen to fifteen year-old category. According to Carpenter, results in a 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation study on High School Violence showed that eighty-six (86%) of children between the ages of twelve and fifteen reported teasing or bullying. This means that "bullying in this age group is more prevalent than smoking, alcohol, drugs or sex among this age group" (Carpenter, 2009, p.7).

Grade 9 learners were therefore identified in both the questionnaires and the interviews as problematic and challenging and were *"notoriously more difficult than other Grades"*. Many of the participants felt that, *"They are going through hormone changes and puberty"* as well as *"Teenagers and pushing boundaries with too much hormones and not enough parental discipline"*. Erikson, (as cited in Santrock 2005, p.135), points out that, in the Identity versus Identity Confusion Stage of Development (Adolescence; 10 – 20 years), "individuals are faced with finding out who they are, what they are all about, and where they are going in life. An important dimension is the exploration of alternative solutions to roles".

Within this Grade, a further identified problem with bullying of teachers was that there were 17-year-old learners in a Grade 9 class, where the majority of learners were fourteen, turning fifteen years of age. Learners who kept failing were too old for their classes and were aggressive and intimidating and a *"threat to teaching per se as it's a developmental issue"*. It was also felt that "the inclusion of young people with special educational needs into mainstream schooling will only work if mainstream schools and the learners within these schools act in a genuinely inclusive manner" (Mncube &Harber, 2013, p.9). However, one respondent was also of the opinion that Grade 9 learners coming from disadvantaged areas, who were incorporated into an advantaged school environment *"cannot cope within the school as well as with the workload"*. Another respondent mentioned that the child also *"knows more than the parent and he explains to his parents I'm in charge because I have better knowledge, I can write, I can read, so you need to listen to me and then he is 14 or 15 years old and takes charge of the household"*. According to Burton (2008, p. 82), "at the most fundamental level, the levels of violence (which include the bullying of teachers by learners) also reflect the very basic socio-economic conditions in which a significant proportion of South African children live". In light of this, participants in this High School in Gauteng West were mostly affected by this age group of learners in the school workplace who are responsible for bullying behaviour and the undermining of teachers. (See Table 4.8 – Grade in which bullying is most problematic).

4.6.2 Gender of Learners who Bullied Teachers

Table 4.9 - Distribution of Gender of Learners who bullied Teachers

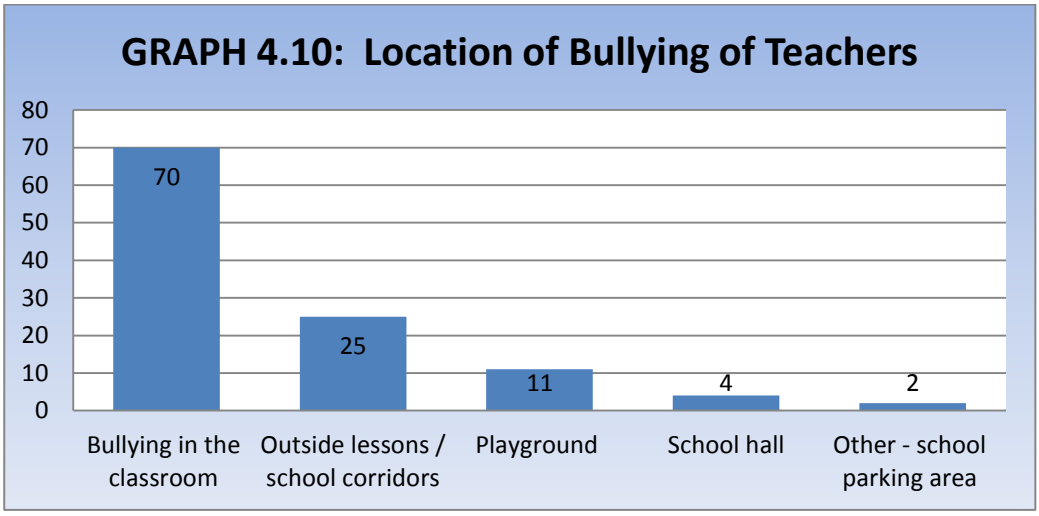
Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
Male	29	51%
Female	1	2%
Both male and female	17	30%
No Response	10	17%
Total	**57**	**100%**

In this school, questionnaires showed that more male learners (fifty one percent) (51%) than female learners (two percent) (2%) appear to be involved in bullying teachers. As two of the participants said, *"Bullying usually occurs across genders. Female teachers get bullied by male learners"* and *"Male learners hold grudges, are rude and non-co-operative during class activities"*. Thirty percent (30%) of both male and female learners were involved in bullying teachers. Ten (10) participants, who make up seventeen percent (17%), did not respond.

However, participants in both questionnaires and interviews identified separate gender classes as problematic. As one participant said, *"Last year it was very bad because Grade 8's and 9's, the boys were in one class and all the girls in one class"*. The classes that had only male learners were extremely intimidating and difficult to work with. Another teacher reported that the boys in those classes were *"aggressive, rambunctious and fighting with one another"*. Working with the view of multiple voices of masculinity, (Langa, as cited in Burton, 2008, p.8), contends "that violence in the context of male peer groups plays a functional role in the sense that it is used to determine the bravest or strongest boy in the group". However, "this hero-villain dynamic tends to lead to school-based violence, which is used as a means of asserting boys' masculinity" (Burton, 2008, p.8). This became more evident when a further participant reported that a male learner had assaulted a female teacher from one of these separate gender classes. Garrett (2003, p.11), in a study conducted by Olweus and Limber (1999), "found that males tend to bully more often than females". These male learners would also bully teachers by *"doing what I want"*, *"walking around the class"*, *"eating food in the class"*, *"talking"*, *"disrupting the class"* and *"walking from table to table"* during lessons. Jefthas and Artz (2007) contend that the gendered nature of school-based violence is evident in the unequal relationship of power in male – female relationships, in which boys tend to hold more power. (See Table 4.9 – Distribution of Gender of Learners who bullied Teachers).

4.6.3 Location of Bullying of Teachers

Graph 4.10 – Location of Bullying of Teachers



Teachers were asked to identify the location where they were bullied. In the questionnaires, seventy percent (70%) of teachers said that the bullying took place in the classroom during regular lessons and twenty-five percent (25%) of teachers said that it occurred outside of lessons in the school corridors. Eleven percent (11%) said teacher-bullying occurred on the playground, with four percent (4%) reporting that incidents took place in the school hall, and two percent (2%) reported other places in the school environment, namely the school parking area. As the respondent reported, *"That afternoon I came to my car and somebody had written on my car in khoki pen, some really unrepeatable words – this was after I reprimanded the learner who persisted in defying my orders"*.

In both questionnaires and interviews, some teachers identified more than one location; namely school corridors, the playground, the school hall or the parking area where bullying took place; three-quarters (75%) of the teachers identified that classroom bullying, which included both physical and verbal abuse, was the highest (70%). (See Graph 4.10: Location of Bullying of Teachers). Significant statements expressed by learners showed that classroom bullying included disruption of lessons; violation of rules; back-chatting; and encouraging one another to talk or act against the teacher. As one teacher said, *"Class time is when learners isolate and target you"*.

In addition, the use of cell-phones by learners, both in the classroom and the corridors, was a major source of conflict, which led to physical altercations between learners and teachers. As two participants said, *"The boy just ignored me, sat with his back to me and put his cell-phone and headphones on"*, and *"Cell-phones in the classroom and corridors are against the school rules and Code of Conduct and sparks aggressive behaviour if you reprimand learners or try to take them away"*. However, there were no reported incidents where cell-phones were used to convey aggression through electronic media, such as cell-phones, blogs, online chat rooms, multi-user domains and social networks, namely Facebook and Twitter. Thus none (0%) of the respondents identified social media as problematic for teacher bullying.

Bullying teachers in the corridors (25%) was a further concern - one respondent said that, *"Learners were verbal and even punched teachers"*. If learners were requested to pick up papers while on the playground, or given other instructions concerning their dress code, they were aggressive, challenging authority both physically and verbally, in order to get attention in front of their peers. No (0%) other locations of bullying were identified, other than the abovementioned. (See Graph 4.10 - Location of Bullying of Teachers).

4.6.4 Characteristics of Learners who carried out Teacher-bullying

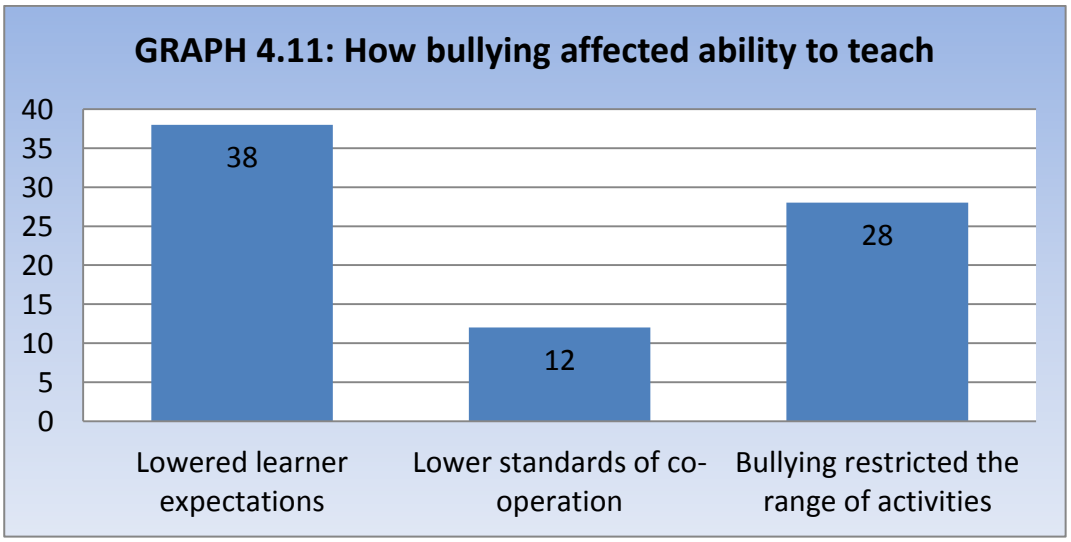
In both questionnaires and interviews, teachers were also asked if there were common characteristics in learners who carried out bullying on teachers. The questionnaires showed that thirty-three percent (33%) of teachers felt that these learners were problematic learners for most teachers. As a participant, said, *"Most have behavioural issues prior to the teacher-bullying"*. Thirty-one (31%) felt that such learners were academically less able than their peers and had learning difficulties. This was reiterated by other interview participants, who said that, *"Academically less able learners tend to act out towards educators while they are teaching"*; another said that *"Learners are weak students, who struggle with self-control in classrooms and social situations, and seek attention"*, yet another interview participant thought that *"not every single child in a standard academic Model C or Government School should be at an academic-level school. They should be identified to go to a technical school or an apprentice school, because some children are reaching senior years, or they are even in Grade 9, and they are frustrated because either they feel that they are not good enough because they cannot perform academically"* or are *"predominately failures, so they were too old for their grades, or those who are a bit bored in the class as well"*. Nineteen percent (19%) of teachers felt that it was difficult for these students to admit that they had problems, and eighteen percent (18%) did not answer the question. Some participants marked more than one category. Many significant statements expressed by teacher participants showed that bullying learners were experiencing issues at home, namely family and financial problems, and that these learners appeared to be the ones who felt that they had the most to prove.

Burton (2008, p.25) argues that "the family has been one of the most, if not the most, influential socialising contexts in childhood and throughout adolescence". Importantly, parents play an important role in modelling behaviour, as well as mediating other factors such as poverty, which may increase the risk of school-based violence (Ward, 2007). Comments by participants in both questionnaires and interviews revealed that the learners who bullied teachers were *"Very aggressive and a lot of them have family problems – even their own parents are scared of them and they can't get the parents assistance they need"*; *"Their parents don't have jobs, or a lot of them are embarrassed because their parents are domestic workers and this is a sore issue"*; *"They have a hatred for females, which comes from their home situation"*; *"They don't have good relationships with their mothers who are domestic workers"*; "They come from broken and dysfunctional families that impact on teacher bullying"; *"They are usually kids from single parents"*. According to Burton (2008, p.25), "South African society is also made up of many broken homes in which children are only living with one parent or are living with extended family.

It is interesting to acknowledge within this current study that many personal factors may contribute to the enactment or experience of bullying behaviour by learners. Zapf and Einarsen (2003) identify personal issues as important determinants to be considered when explaining bullying in the workplace and observe that no theory would be succinct without placing attention on individual perceptions and characteristics, both of which contribute to the commencement, intensification and resulting consequences of the bullying process. This links to the elicitation of certain negative responses by the victim meshed together with the bully's personal disposition which may trigger certain behaviours in both the bully and the victim, which may result in destructive encounters (Einarsen, 1999).

4.6.5 Bullying affected ability to Teach

Graph 4.11 – How bullying affected ability to teach



Questionnaires and interviews showed that, as a result of persistent bullying experienced by teachers, twenty-two teachers (22) (38%) had lowered their expectations of learners' behaviour and seven (7) (12%) were accepting lower standards of co-operation in class; sixteen teachers (16) (28%) felt that bullying restricted the range of activities they did and the type of lessons they planned for classes which involved these learners who were too unruly and undisciplined (see Graph 4.11 - How bullying affected ability to teach). Teachers reduced the amount of group work or practical work as they could not rely on these learners to co-operate, and work systematically and sensibly. As one interviewee said, *"I tend to steer clear of tasks requiring group participation as I know this causes problematic behaviour"*, while another interviewee said that she used alternative methods (such as question and answer sessions) which were more productive. A further interviewee remarked that *"Learner bullying is making it hard to teach and I feel disillusioned. I often think back to my peers [when I was] a school pupil. I realise nothing is new but it seems to be*

getting worse. People have low standards – hence my own decreasing expectations". Classroom teaching has been affected - as one teacher said, *"I don't reprimand learners anymore, I'm too scared"*, and another said, *"I don't want to put so much heart in my teaching"*. However, twenty one participants (21) (37%) felt that it had not impacted on their ability to teach. Learner bullying and its effect may be viewed from the perspective of the victim, who is the teacher as an individual, as well as its impact on the organisation, being the school workplace. Teachers, who were subjected to constant bullying, outlined severe anxiety, stress and other emotional effects which affected their health. According to Burton (2008), poor learner behaviour is one of the main sources of psychological distress amongst teachers.

In both questionnaires and interviews, a serious effect was shown where the bullying was such that teachers felt unable to work. The responses showed that teachers were regularly absent from school. There were two reported instances where teachers had resigned from their positions due to their emotional stress, and there were references to panic attacks, a fear of going to school each day, a mental illness which had not cleared up, serious ongoing health problems and added difficulties in relationships at home, all due to the bullying behaviour experienced at this Gauteng West High School. Therefore, this too has an effect on the school organisation as a whole because "the quality of the person's work is affected if there is a climate of fear and resentment" (O'Moore, 1997, p.6). The analysis of comments also showed aspects such as absenteeism, low motivation, reduced productivity and staff turnover as areas that impacted teacher performance and morale.

- **Increased Absenteeism**

Both the questionnaires and the interviews showed some significant statements that teacher bullying by learners increased absenteeism and it was cause for concern. Participants said that, *"It also affects you because you don't want to come to school so you have got all kinds of sicknesses and things to stay at home"*; *"It's punishment at school. I mean these classes punish you. So, if you felt sick you would rather stay at home than go to school"*; *"Yes, I did yes. But I mean not for weeks and weeks, but one or two days a month"*; *"I stay at home because I don't feel like coming to school. So, I don't know if it's my health or stress"*. As Santrock (2005, p.609) says, "the stress level of workers also increases when their jobs do not meet their expectations and places individuals at risk of getting sick".

- **Low Motivation**

Some significant statements from interviewees showed the impact of low motivation on the well-being of teachers who experienced bullying by learners. As an interviewee stated, *"At one stage I*

had very high stress levels. Yes, where I was taking medication to sort of relieve the knots and tension in my stomach. I'd get up in the morning and have to go to work, and through the course of the day, it's like a fist in my stomach, but it's improved because I think I'm dealing with it better, by distancing myself".

Other interviewees said that *"There are days when you wonder why you are doing it and I can't say why I am still sitting here … it does have a negative impact on morale and obviously on the day that you're having a bad day it's going to hit harder or hurt … but then you get out of bed the next morning and start again."* It was also stated that *"It does affect self-esteem and it does affect your health and people don't know this, but for us, we can sit and have a good cry in each other's offices because it doesn't solve the problem but it releases the pressure."* Another response noted that *"I'll say definitely my morale has gone down a lot. It's nice to motivate learners when you teach them, but you actually don't know how to motivate them any longer because of the bullying situation, they easily turn things around because you know what you've been bullied by one person, then what respect has the rest of the group? When you want to enforce discipline then in class, they all just follow the same rule and get away with it. Yes, definitely your self-esteem .... Yes, I think stress-wise it impacts a lot on your health".*

An interviewee also felt that, by the end of the year, her morale was very low and she had become negative towards learners. She felt that she was becoming mean to them, as well as starting to comment on their specific character traits and even their race, in the same way as the learners attacked her and made her feel devalued. Also, the bullying was so severe that it impacted on her mental health and she ended up seeing a psychologist and psychiatrist after having a mental breakdown. She has since been put on an anti-depressant and anti-epileptic medication to try to stabilise her mood swings. This has further impacted on her patience, levels of aggression and interaction with people as she feels she is *"ready to fight to defend myself and that's not fair, so it's impacted on my performance and to some extent, I believe has definitely devalued me".*

A further interviewee showed that *"Performance-wise what affected me as well is the fact that I tend to not reprimand as many learners as I used to and I don't do that anymore because you're in a situation where you are threatened by these people and the majority of them being in high school are much bigger than us, as well".*

Santrock (2005, p.454) says that, "when the needs for competence, autonomy, and affiliation are satisfied, the result is enhanced well-being". However, when these needs are thwarted because of

learners who bully teachers, teachers will experience diminished well-being. Therefore, Santrock (2005, p.454) believes "that excessive control by others, non-optimal challenges, and lack of connectedness result in a lack of initiative and responsibility and, in some cases, produce distress and psychological problems".

- **Reduced Productivity**

An interviewee felt that *"There were days when I was very despondent. Some mornings I would wake up and I didn't want to go to school to work. I was trying to think of how to get out of this day but it never happened, as I always had a work ethic and always did my prep, but would sit there and wouldn't get excited about the subject matter. I would say I don't know why I am doing this, because they are not going to learn. I made an attempt not to let it show; because I knew then I would have even a tougher time with the children …. Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet and do what is expected of you …. But I didn't always enjoy it"*.

Another commented, *"Yes, I think stress-wise it impacts on your health because when you're stressed about these situations, when you're scared to go to school the next day, there might be another scenario and you don't sleep well at all. One day, two days that's fine but weeks, months, it has an impact on you. Emotionally you start to get depressed. You start to get negative about things and this is reinforced for the rest of your life …. It actually rolls back into the rest of your life. If you don't have a good support system at home, which understands the situation and which you can talk to, I think those people suffer more".* And a further interviewee said, *"I'm also not as motivated to come to school even when I'm sick. I used to come to school no matter how sick I was. Now, if I'm sick I stay at home because there is no reward in this teaching situation anymore"*. According to Lutgen-Skandvik et al. (2007), negative organisational effects have shown an increase in levels of absenteeism and turnover, and, subsequently, a decrease in levels of productivity, organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

- **Staff Turnover**

An interviewee stated that *"In the last two years, bullying by learners has impacted adversely on my own performance and morale. It's too much and it's a constant challenge. You know you go into class and you think to yourself why am I doing this kind of thing? As a teacher I have actually strongly considered leaving. I have considered going to a primary school so I've been putting my CV out"*.

Another teacher had recently resigned (three weeks previously). She did not come back for the whole first term or the second term as she was assaulted by a learner. As one teacher reported, *"She had a Grade 8 boy in her class and she was explaining to her class and, with all the noise, she walked up to this boy and he was busy doing other work in her class. She took the books; he stood up and slapped her through the face. There was a hearing with the Gauteng Education Department, but the boy is still in this school"*. This learner also had further altercations with other teachers. One teacher highlighted the plight of teachers, saying that *"There is an exodus of teachers"*. As a result of negative behaviours demonstrated towards the victim, the only option may be to escape and leave the school organisation. This may cost the school in having to replace employees and orientate new, and possibly less experienced, employees (Turney, 2003).

One senior teacher revealed that, *"One of the greatest mistakes ever made by the Department of Education was to take away career breaks"*. She explained that, *"When you had enough days accumulated (over a period of five years), you could take a whole term sabbatical, or six months sabbatical …. You knew you were going to have time to re-charge your own batteries and just find yourself"*. A school holiday entailed preparation for the next term and, due to total exhaustion, *"Your level of resignation of teachers is high, because they cannot see their way out, so they resign to have a break. While on these breaks, they often find other employment and don't go back to a difficult teaching environment"*. According to Zapf and Gross (2001), a substantial amount of research-based evidence has shown a link between experiences of work bullying and staff turnover. This would involve thoughts or desires to leave one's present place of employment, or having the intention to seek alternative employment outside one's current workplace. Studies by Zapf and Gross (2001) suggest that resignation is an eventual response to ongoing experienced bullying.

However, some respondents felt that bullying by learners affected their morale or performance for only a short while. As one participant said, *"It impacted on me for a short while ... my focus was on what was important to me"*, while another said that, *"Bullying has not affected my classroom teaching – it has affected me on the playground. The focus is to provide quality education for all at school"*. Other participants felt that they could not afford to let the problem get to them and that they needed to pick themselves up and enforce more discipline, stand firm and teach. Learners could choose whether they want to behave, pass, etc. Some participants also felt that the bullying had no impact on them and, *"I tend to brush it off because the kids in my classroom are the ones that need me and, if there is one child who is misbehaving and who is trying to bully me, you know what, take it outside, go and sit in the sun, deal with it, and, when you have dealt with it, come back and let's talk"*. Moreno-Jiménez, Rodrigues-Muñoz, Pastor, Sanz-Vergel, Garrosa (2008)

identified that the characteristics of the individual will determine how they perceive the negative actions directed towards them and therefore the type of coping strategy used by the person.

Generally, learner bullying impacted on the morale, performance, motivation and productivity of teachers. The overall considerations in teacher-bullying are the effects on the individual who has to endure the most significant amount of damage. Self-esteem, job satisfaction and intention to leave the school organisation played a role, as well as the individual's psychological and physiological well-being. The effects on victims are serious and prolonged (Mathiessen & Einarsen, 2004); and (Turney, 2003). As Jennifer (2000) points out, that regarding job satisfaction an employee's satisfaction at their place of work depends on the environment which they are exposed to.

4.6.6 Devalued Rights and Opinions

The response to questionnaires with regards to teachers rights and opinions being devalued indicated that twenty five percent (25%) of teachers had experienced gender-related devaluation, while nineteen percent (19%) experienced devalued rights and opinions related to age, with eighteen percent (18%) related to the subject or courses being taught; sixteen percent (16%) related to race; twelve percent (12%) related to years of service; and eleven percent (11%) relating to other categories..

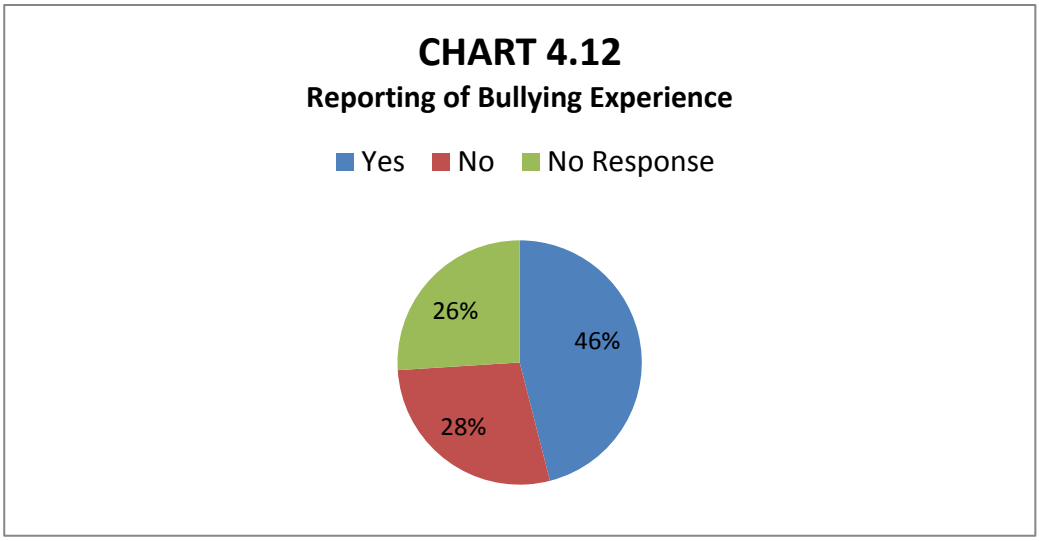
Gender was significant in predicting bullying of teachers by learners in both questionnaires and interviews. Concerning gender, female teachers felt they were bullied and disrespected much more than their male counterparts who seemed more capable in terms of discipline. As the participant said, *"I struggle somewhat with discipline and I am no pushover"*, yet, one male teacher felt that *"As a male, I am disrespected"*. Respect of teachers by learners, irrespective of gender, generally seems to be a problem and male learners have an attitude towards female teachers. Concerning race, one respondent felt that the learners took more chances with her, because even though she was a teacher, she was a, *"White, female and still young. They think I am soft and gentle – I am scared of them"*. On the other hand, some teachers also felt devalued when it came to the subjects they taught. As two teachers said, *"I was teaching Life Orientation and learners don't always take this subject seriously"*; and *"I am a white teacher teaching Afrikaans and I am treated with resentment"*.

However, some participants indicated that they did not feel devalued at all stating: *"Bullying has not devalued my rights. I'm just more alert and responsive"*; *"No, I don't "value" myself according to their opinion"*; *"No, I'm still the same person with the same beliefs and moral*

standing"; *"Not at all – for every horrible child there are thousands who compensate"*. Therefore, where teachers possess personality characteristics such as hardiness, an internal locus of control, a good sense of coherence and a positive attributional style, it is likely that the negative consequences of bullying by learners in their work environment would be less stressful and such individuals would be able to cope with these stressful situations (Headey, 2008).

4.6.7 Teachers Reporting Bullying

Chart 4.12 – Reporting of Bullying Experience



The reporting of learner bullying experienced by teachers was as follows:

- **Did you tell someone?**

  Sixty one percent (61%) said they had told, or mentioned their experience to, someone else.

- **Did you Report Teacher-Bullying?**

  Teachers were asked if they had reported the teacher-bullying and forty six percent (46%) said they had reported it, while twenty eight percent (28%) said they hadn't reported it, with twenty six percent (26%) giving no response to the question. (See Chart 4.12 – Reporting of Bullying Experience).

- **To whom did you report it?**

Table 4.13 - The Reporting by Teachers of Learner Bullying

To whom did you report the teacher-bullying by learners?	Reported Incidents	Percentage
Friend / Colleague	20	28%
Head of Department	18	25%
Family Member	13	18%

Deputy Head	11	15%
Principal	9	13%
Other	1	1%
	72 Reported Incidents	100%

Victims of learner bullying were asked in the questionnaires if they had reported the abuse they had suffered. Table 4.13 shows a total number of seventy-two (72) teacher-bullying incidents that were reported by fifty seven (57) participants. Some participants spoke to more than one person and this included speaking to family, friends or colleagues, Heads of Department, the Deputy Head, Principal or Form Supervisor, all of which were beneficial. Generally, most victims had reported the bullying and the response to this question illustrates the importance of both a supportive environment in school and the value of support systems at home. According to the questionnaires, the majority of teachers who were bullied discussed the problem with a friend or colleague (28%), with the second most important source of support being the Heads of Department with (25%), and the third most important source of support being a family member (18%). Deputy Heads (15%) and the Principal (13%) were also seen as supportive, while one percent (1%) of staff discussed the problem with other sources which were unidentified. According to Shaffer (2002), friends have no expectations of support attached to them, so that, when support is received from friends, it is highly valued. Walen and Lachman (2000) showed that evidence suggests that social support from friends appears to buffer the detrimental effects of interactions that are strained. It can be said that the support of friends can alleviate the negative impact of perceived bullying on individual and organisational well-being. Therefore, friends, in addition to colleagues were deemed as key sources of social support within this school environment.

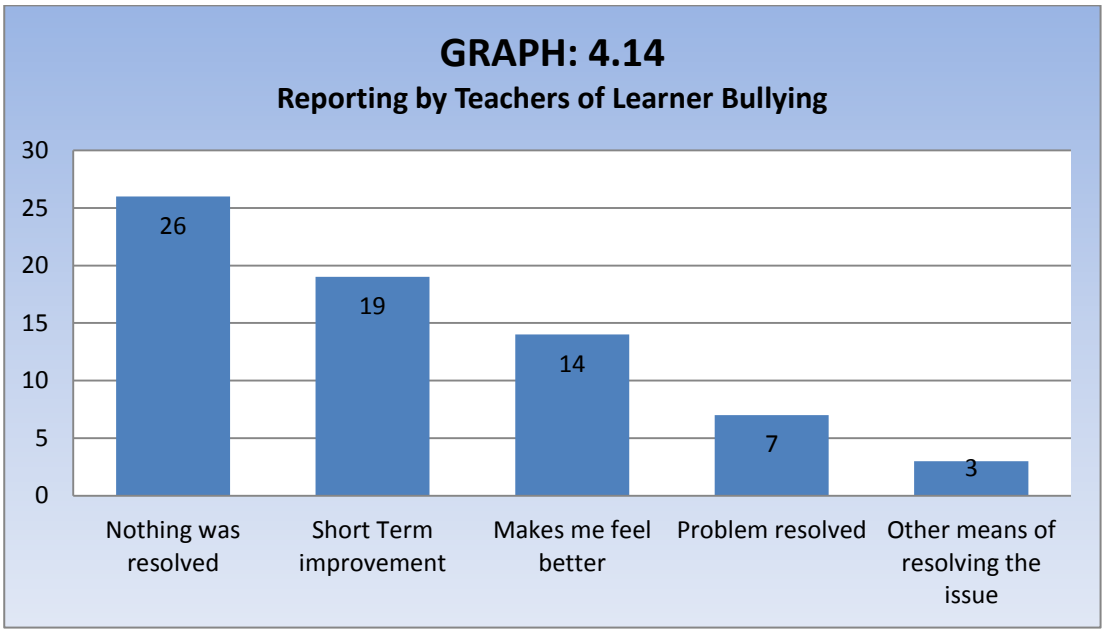
Some significant statements expressed in questionnaires and interviews were, *"I talked to my family and friends about the bullying incidents and wrote statements of incidents to my Grade Supervisor"*, *"I talked about it as it happened and made my family and the Deputy Head aware of it"*, *"I have spoken to other teachers (colleagues) about the learners behaviour but the learner has not acted in that manner again"*, *"I notified my form supervisor and other relevant parties"* and *"I had a good disciplinary hearing and I felt heard"*.

Therefore social support acts as allowing the teacher to effectively direct energy and attention to the tasks necessary to deal with the situation in question (Vartia & Leka, 2011). While those who did report it and were dissatisfied with the outcome felt that, *"There is no use to tell more, the Department of Education will just allow the student to come back"* and *"You just deal with it and forget it when you go home – you learn to cope"*. Avoidance, also known as escape, is considered

as inactive behaviour and a way of active coping (Santrock, 2005). However, inactivity may then lead to depression, feelings of helplessness and an inability to cope (Santrock, 2005).

4.6.8 Consequence of reporting Learner Bullying

Graph 4.14 – Reporting by Teachers of Learner Bullying



Questionnaires showed that twenty six percent (26%) of the teachers who reported the teacher-targeted bullying said that nothing was resolved. Nineteen percent (19%) said that there was a short term improvement, while fourteen percent (14%) said that reporting it did allow them to feel better. Seven percent (7%) said that the problem was resolved, while three percent (3%) gave other means of resolving the issue. For example, one participant said that *"Just letting someone know the nature of what was happening, was helpful"* or *"talking to other teachers and hearing similar stories made me feel that I am not the only teacher to experience this"*. Unfortunately, the majority of cases were not resolved as only 7% of cases were resolved. (See Graph 4.14 - Reporting by Teachers of Learners Bullying).

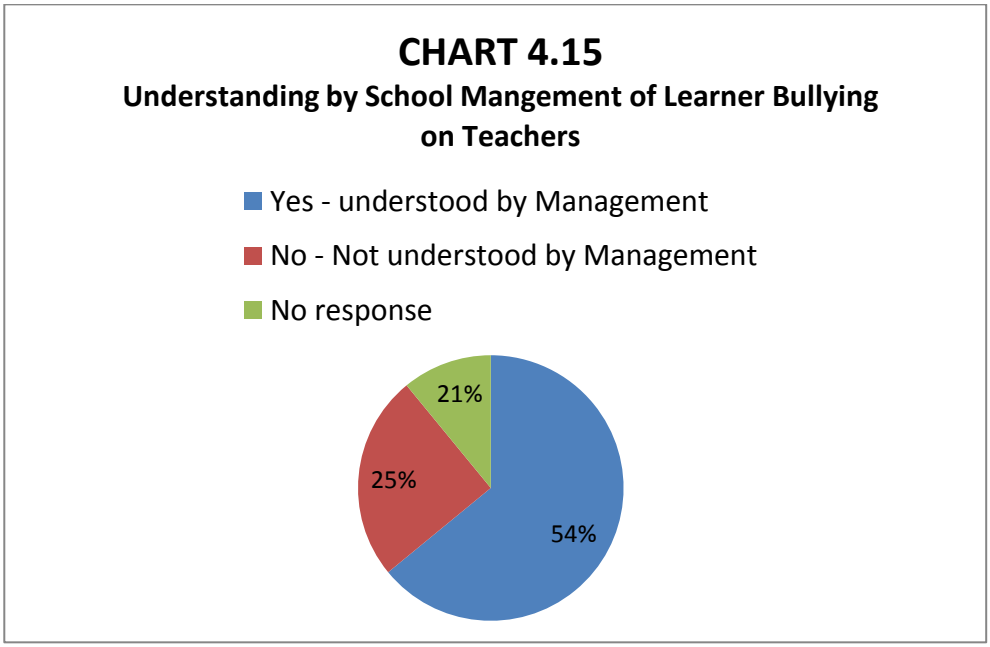
In both questionnaires and interviews, participants reported that *"Some learners continued, while others improved for a short time"*. There was short-term resolve *"Where the learners and class remained a problem, but I felt I had the support I needed"*; *"There was short-term resolve as usual, as issues are not resolved when boys in the 1st teams are handled differently with no consequences for them"*; *"There was short-term resolve where the learner had a disciplinary hearing, and was put on a daily report. It was not done, so why bother?"* Other participants felt that *"There was no resolve as the parent was adamant that I was the problem"*; and *"There was no resolve as the*

learner was asked to apologise but never did, and was not held to it". Furthermore, one teacher participant felt extremely frustrated and said that *"There was absolutely no resolve as I was assaulted and, even if the child was told to write a letter of apology, I would not have accepted if he had given it to me"*.

Teachers "most often stressed the absence of dialogue and the lack of support and attention on the part of colleagues and management, thus making them all the more vulnerable when it comes to coping the difficulties encountered with the learners" (Blaya, 2003, p.661). They need to be empowered with delegated decision-making power; where the flow of information is improved; and they are able to identify strongly with the objectives of the school organisation (Lingard, Brown, Bradley, Bailey & Townshend, 2007). This will then enhance employee- commitment to their school organisation, increase trust in management and allow a sense of empowerment for such teachers (Lingard et al., 2007). Empowerment in turn allows both improved job satisfaction, and workplace climate (Carless, 2004).

4.7 Teachers Support for Assistance Received from Management or Other Support Structures

Chart 4.15 – Understanding by School Management of Learner Bullying on Teachers



The participants in both questionnaires and interviews were asked 'whether the problem of teachers being bullied by learners was understood by School Management'. According to Djurkovic et al. (2004) higher levels of social support can reduce the individuals' negative appraisal of a stressful workplace when a bullying situation is being experienced. Seeking and receiving social support is

considered a prominent form of coping, and is often the first coping activity in which teachers experiencing bullying from such learners could engage. (Lirio, Lituchy, Monserrat, Olivias-Lujan, Duffy, Fox, Gregory, Punnet & Santos, 2007). In the questionnaires, fifty four percent (54%) of staff, which is more than half of the participants, felt that problems were understood by School Management, which was positive. The negative element, however, is a figure of twenty five (25%) of participants who felt that the problem was not fully understood by management, with twenty one percent (21%) of participants giving no response. Perhaps those teachers who gave no response were possibly not experiencing bullying, or might have felt that they were expected to resolve their own difficulties and that this was an unavoidable part of teaching, as they did not see any reason to complain or expect School Management to understand. (See Chart 4.15 – Understanding by School Management of Learner Bullying on Teachers).

4.7.1 The School Management Structure

Participants in both questionnaires and interviews were mostly satisfied with the management processes dealing with their incidents of learner bullying. As one participant said, *"At this school, I do believe the support system is fantastic"* and an Australian teacher said, *"I can come back to this school and teach because I am supported by management"*. Another participant felt that she had the full support of management when twelve learners were continuously making farm-animal sounds while teaching Mathematics. These learners were warned and, when they continued, they were removed from the class for a week as they infringed on the rights of other learners who wanted to learn. Management had problems from both parents and The Department of Education because of the removal of these learners and had very little recourse because *"We may not remove a child from class because they have a right to education"*, although such learners take away the rights of those learners or a teacher who want to engage in meaningful learning.

Participants also felt satisfied with the School Governing Body. As a role player, an important role of every School Governing Body is a commitment to promoting the best interests of the school. This included supporting vulnerable, bullied teachers and assisting in building an enabling school environment. As a teacher reported, *"The Chairman from the School Governing Body was here on Tuesday and Wednesday and he said if we don't get support, we must phone him and he will give us support"*. Leadership and management do not rest on only one person, which means that the success of the school need not depend on the principal alone. Therefore leadership and management are intertwined. As Davidhoff and Lazarus say, "you cannot have the one without the other" (Davidhoff & Lazarus, 1997, p.42).

However, a significant number of participants indicated that there was room for improvement. Some participants had reported the incidents but nothing was done, and one teacher who had reported her incident to the principal said the boy was called in and told to apologise, but as yet had not apologised. Another respondent also reported her incident with no recourse. Teachers clearly felt that there had to be consequences and follow-up for these types of actions, because, if there were no consequences, such learners *"Will not fall into line where education is possible"*. In another case, learners were bunking and when the teacher called the principal, *"All they do is run away from him and disappear for the rest of the day"*. It is apparent that the situation is difficult and teachers wanted matters that are reported to the Head of Department escalated to a Deputy Head or Principal on the same day, and a hearing held with the bully within twenty-four hours of the incident. It was felt that this would be a warning to the bullies.

Heads of Departments and Supervisors also played a significant supportive role and the majority of teachers were satisfied with the assistance they had received. One participant noted that two teachers, including a Head of Department, came to her assistance and reprimanded the bully, while another Head of Department on hearing about a situation, saw the matter as serious and assisted the teacher with the problem. Generally, teaching staff felt that they could go to their Grade Heads or Supervisors and had ongoing support with experienced bullying problems. The finding was that colleagues were generally there for each other, but some teachers were scared to get involved and would rather walk into their classrooms and close the door, as that was easier. Santrock (2005) mentions that empirically derived evidence provides that the communication of trust, reassurance, love, empathy and care are essential facilitators in coping with stressful events.

Teachers felt satisfied that school management had recently introduced a system called 'pencil box' which allowed them to record information about a given child. Building an electronic data base of a problematic learner by more than one teacher facilitated the disciplinary hearing process and teachers could say to the parents, *"Sorry this child must go"*.

However, teachers generally felt angry that there were no straightforward guidelines, rules or regulations. There was a general policy but its scope was too wide and it was not relevant to the bullying of teachers by their learners. One angry teacher noted that *"Someone needed to step in and set an example by taking a bully to court"*. If bullies were charged and the media highlighted the situation, it would prevent learners from running schools. He did feel despondent *as "Policies are not worth the paper it's written on because once it gets pushed to the department, the department is going to say, 'Oh alright, we need to think about this' and 'then we will get back to you' and you're*

lucky if it happens within two years, but if the teacher is in the wrong, it's an immediate effect and it's an immediate disciplinary". A further response was that, *"It's just democracy for children and not for teachers"* and this general concern was highlighted by all the respondents. There needs to be a greater awareness and recognition of teacher-targeted bullying with more scope for principals to deal with the problem more effectively. A participant summed up that, even though she felt the situation could have been handled differently, she understood that *"As principal, his hands are extremely tied"*.

School management is about making sure that a school, as a whole, is functioning effectively. However, if there is "too much movement, too much activity, and too much challenge, it is very likely that there will be a loss of direction and insufficient stability in the school" (Davidhoff & Lazarus, 1997, p.40). This is exactly when management becomes important, as it is essentially about holding the school together by establishing certainty, confidence and security for all within the school environment.

4.7.2 The Department of Education

Some participants described the management process during their bullying episodes as either poor or non-existent. Some also felt that difficulties were at a higher organisational level, being the Gauteng Education Department or District. There were no sufficient structures to address these problems or adequate communication structures in place to deal with learners who bullied teachers. One teacher explained that, *"I think it's a difficult situation in the school, also for the principal, because I know we have had learners involved in crime and the District has been asked for these learners to be sent for special education and they refuse and send them back to school"*.

Another teacher noted that *"The department itself does very little or nothing"*. A different participant stated that there was a particular hearing where the learner was suspended for seven days and *"The same child was the cause of a teacher not coming back to teaching because he threatened her and he slapped her"*. The reasoning given by the Gauteng Education Department for their decision was that the school had to have the learner on a six-month probation period. The teacher's own personal opinion was that *"The South African School's Act states the learner is entitled to education until they turn fifteen or at the end of Grade 9, whichever happens first and this learner was not yet fifteen or not yet in Grade 9 or was in Grade 9, because the problem is the Department of Education, as they need to place the learner in another school if they uphold that expulsion"*. The school then lodged an appeal against the learner returning and *"nothing has ever come of that appeal, not even a courtesy letter to say we have received it"*.

Teachers felt demoralised, as it showed learners that *"The norm of bullying teachers is fine, we are winning, we as the small ones are ruling"*. Some learners have a history of misbehaviour and when a call is made for expulsion, it gets overturned by the Department of Education. Teachers generally perceived the Department of Education as a *"big problem as there was more support for learners than for teachers"* who were bullied by learners in the school place. In a report commissioned by former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, the Ministerial Committee on a National Education and Development Unit, indicated that, "While teachers are singled out, District and Provincial authorities are also to blame for failing schools" (Mkhabela, 2011, p.5).

4.7.3 The Management of Parents and Related Input

Parents of learners who bully teachers were not always helpful in resolving the problems. In many instances, teachers felt they had reported the bullying by phoning parents and, in some instances, parents were shocked to hear what had happened and actually reprimanded their children. However, in many of the cases, teachers felt that parents *"feel more or less the same as the learners and have no respect for educators at all"*. As a participant said, *"More than 90% of the bullying against teachers goes back to the parent"*. Each participant stressed a need to educate the parents. A different participant said that learners deal with parents in a disrespectful manner and *"so they are unable to draw the line between what is happening at home and what is happening at school. So often what they are saying at school is coming straight out of their parent's mouths because their parents have little or no respect for the teachers and they bring that disrespect to school with them and carry it out"*. Teachers further felt that, because parents do not promote education in a positive light, it becomes the teacher's problem to deal with. A newspaper report (Ledwabe, 2013, p.23) reiterates that "teachers are now forced to do the work that parents should be doing at home – teaching their children discipline. However, with the ever-increasing enforcement of children's rights, teachers find themselves powerless to deal with indiscipline".

It was also clear that teachers had got to a stage of apathy. One respondent said, '*You hear in the staffroom, "so and so doesn't ever come for registration in the mornings." I feel, "Here is the phone, pick it up and tell mom and dad, your son has not arrived for registration for ten days"*. Teachers need to handle issues that arise quickly, and a call to a parent before it is out of control could encourage parent involvement. She felt it would be better to say *'The reason for the phone call is, "Your child hasn't come to registration once this week. I've marked him absent five times and, because he is absent so many times, it has impact on whether he can write an exam," and the learner will soon be back in class'*. Interestingly, this same teacher had phoned a parent and was herself bullied by the parent. Many teachers felt that phone calls or cell-phone texts did not solve

problems. Those learners still misbehave. Societal roles of parents are not being fulfilled, which impact on what teachers experience within the school environment.

It therefore became apparent that a further problem experienced was dysfunctional homes. When teachers told learners they would phone their fathers, the child would often respond, *"Please don't do that, I don't know who he is"*, or *"You first have to find him"*, or *"Good luck with that"*. This was especially relevant to the children of domestic workers where many such children had no relationship at all with a father. Where children had step-parents, this also played a role and, as an teacher said, *"Perhaps that was also part of the aggression, in that I don't have my own mother and who are women to tell me what to do?"* Shaffer (2002, p.540) reiterates that "more adults are living as singles today than in the past."

4.7.4 Management by Unions

One teacher further felt that *"Unions were problematic and this is where the problems in schools have started"*. Another participant said that *"Teachers are workers too, and deserve fair remuneration and opportunities for growth and protection and bullying by learners did not allow this"*. A newspaper article (Tlhabi, 2013, p.2) sums up the problem as she says "But the manner in which South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) fights its battles is ugly and undignified. Who gave it the right to invite children to join its protest and fight political battles? By dragging children into these battles, it is blurring the lines of authority between teachers and their subjects the children". Thus, when the strikes are over, the same children will be expected to act responsibly, respect teachers and obey their instructions. We should be concerned about the outside world and how it influences learners who have impressionable young minds.

4.7.5 Management by Re-Educating Teachers

Many teachers felt that management needed to re-look at re-educating teachers. Teachers' Colleges that were closed down needed to be restarted. As one respondent said, *"We have missed the ball; we have done wrong in taking all those primary school teachers and giving them degrees. Instead of giving them a diploma and showing them 100% how to go about to be a decent teacher, we've dished out degrees"*. He reiterated that teachers need to go back to practical teaching and that would help eradicate some of the bullying. A different participant said that, three years previously, she had done a mini-thesis and examined the age groups of teachers in schools, using a sample in Gauteng. When statistics were put together using the age factor, it was interesting to see that *"teachers holding the schools together were in the 55 year to 65 year category"*. She asked who, in ten years' time, would be there to teach children, because the bulk of the teachers are in that

category. She further felt that, as too few teachers are coming into teaching so that there are not enough teachers and that even these have had inadequate training, and are not really interested in a teaching career, so she felt that the school system *"is going to fall apart and I was only looking at Gauteng. When I started looking at statistics worldwide, it is actually a worldwide phenomenon"*. A further identified problem was the negative public perception of teachers, and the type of person entering the teaching profession. The example given by a respondent was that young people who come into teaching, and who are also experiencing the bullying at a different level, are teachers who have a BA or BSC qualification and have no employment, so they obtain a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), so that they can teach. The respondent further felt that there are practical skills, hands-on classroom working knowledge, and one-on-one interface with children that such teachers have unfortunately never fully developed. Many respondents felt that Training Colleges allowed *"the core of people who finally graduate an ability to cope in the classroom, because you've had the exposure to the kids and, as a student, the kids push you around"*. As Stevenson (1992, p.38) says, "we must make changes in the training of teachers and their teaching schedules, so they, too, will be able to incorporate sound teaching practices into their daily routines." Mncube and Harber (2013, p.106) reiterate this view stating that "initial teacher education needs to be more rigorous in producing professional teachers".

4.7.6 Management of Learners

A teacher is the manager of the classroom. It is clear from both interviews and questionnaires that teachers are struggling with offering either a high level of learner- involvement with classroom work, or clear learner expectations. Much time is being wasted with disruption in the classroom and classrooms are no longer work-orientated or relaxed and pleasant. The day-to-day job of a teacher has become a battlefield. A respondent reported that, in order to produce meaningful educational experiences, teachers need to build relationships with learners and learn the skills necessary to manage the classroom environment. She reported that, on a recent classroom visit, every child was referred to as *"You, you, you"* and that that, for her, was the starting point of teachers being bullied, as there needed to be more respect for learners as well. She further felt that some teachers *"blame the kids but they get to class and they are disorganised …. because you have no skill to manage the class. Teachers needed more consistency, rules and regulations within the classroom environment".*

However, in contrast to this report, many of the bullied teachers had classroom rules and regulations in place, yet still suffered harrowing incidents of bullying with learners. For example, in 2012, Grade 8 and 9 learners were placed in gender-specific classes, namely a boys-only or girls-only

class. Many of the teachers who experienced difficulties became victims within these classroom environments. Since these difficult teaching ordeals, Classroom Management and Assertiveness training courses have been offered to teachers by school management, in order to assist teachers to manage classrooms more effectively. An teacher reiterated that this allowed parents to understand that teachers had the necessary skills but *"Clearly your child is really just that bad that a teacher who has even been on that course is struggling"*.

If parents are well educated, and take a keen interest in both their child and the school, then, and only then will success be ensured. The school under review has since started a new initiative of educating their parents, and the respondent felt that they now needed to address the topic of "Is your child bullying the teacher, are you allowing your child to bully you?" It was clear that, from these questionnaires and interviews, there was a sense of movement, of shifting, of releasing and of changing of behaviour patterns and attitudes as best expressed by an interviewee herself when she said, *"I think that questionnaire was an eye-opener for me …"*, *while another said, "This is a long-term process and it starts with parent education"*.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results pertinent to this study. The main findings that were raised from these questionnaires and interviews were that all the teachers experienced a sense of vulnerability in their workplace. Analysing both data sets, the data showed that a sense of vulnerability can be provoked by a wide range of sources. Within the work environment, and especially at the classroom level, teachers experienced vulnerability on the emotional self, as bullying by a learner in the presence of others had affected their emotional sense of self. Santrock (2005, p.491) mentions that "self-image is based on intrapersonal experiences and whether the interactions with various social environments satisfy psychological needs."

The researcher believes that any form of bullying will not allow teachers to teach as they would like to, and the struggle, not only in the classroom, but within school environments, impacts on their emotional sense of self. They begin to feel they have lost control and feel powerless over their situation. The struggle with the limits of their teaching also impacts on students learning. Bandura (1998, p.424) states that "a low sense of efficacy to exercise control leads to depression and anxiety". Principals, colleagues and parents constitute a further potential source of vulnerability within this school workplace. Beyond the school, the lack of educational policy for the prevention of teachers being bullied further contributes to a source of vulnerability. In conclusion, the

following chapter provides a discussion of the results, followed by recommendations for developing a shared vision. The limitations of the study were also highlighted.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. SUMMARISED DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses the research findings in relation to the aims which motivated the research study. The research considers (1) the nature of bullying behaviours teachers experienced from learners in a High School in Gauteng West; (2) the extent of bullying from learners in a High School in Gauteng West; and (3) the support or assistance teachers received from education management. The discussion draws on the literature review in considering the extent to which the research findings support or disconfirm the theory and research.

5.1 The Nature of Bullying behaviours Teachers experienced from learners

Regarding the interpretation of results from this study, it is important to take into consideration the fact that results are dependent on the varied personal experiences, values and interpretation of such bullying experiences amongst these participants. The results clearly indicate that bullying of teachers by learners within this school context is a severe problem, with this study reporting that sixty eight percent (68%) of teachers had experienced this phenomenon. It may also be inferred that other participants may have experienced bullying but feared being stereotyped or being labelled a 'victim' or 'incompetent' and so concealed the bullying experience in fear of such labelling (Jennifer, Cowie & Ananiadou, 2003).

The primary step in confronting such bullying would be to 'acknowledge' that one is, in fact, a victim (Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004). However, such bullying has a detrimental effect on the motivation, morale and performance of the teaching staff and further acknowledgement may be interpreted as a personal weakness (Hunter et al., 2004). There may be an inability to express the sheer depth of the pain to anyone because of the feelings of humiliation, failure, fear or embarrassment. Therefore, an anti-bullying climate is a key element in combating learner bullying with the emphasis on creating a positive ethos, where people treat each other with dignity and respect. In order to circumvent the repercussions of such feelings, teachers may answer to the 'call' of learner bullying in a way that reaffirms their status as not being a victim, even if the reverse is perhaps true. Therefore, the school organisation has to have an awareness of such behaviours, and prepare for such "everyday aggression" and efforts by learners to harm teachers (Pietersen, 2005, p.1).

South African schools place a great deal of pressure on teachers as these schools are challenging and chaotic (Hoadley, 2007). These manifestations of bullying included overt, direct, physically aggressive acts (such as hitting and pushing), and non-physical, covert acts (verbal and indirect) directed at one or more teachers, leading to victimisation of the target. Results showed that verbal bullying amongst other forms of experienced bullying (See Graph 4.4 – Form of Teacher Bullying) was the most common form of bullying and could be accounted for seventy percent (70%) of reported bullying. A further finding in the National Schools Violence Study (Burton, 2008, p.19) identified that "up to three in five secondary schools have received reports of learner-to teacher verbal abuse".

Verbal bullying forms part of the communication which exists in the social relationship between teacher and learner, and one can see why it would have devastating consequences on the sense of self of the teacher who attempts to form meaningful and important relationships with the learner. As Johnson, Moore and Birkeland (2003, p.4) point out that, "teachers need a sense of success" and "a sense of doing good work". According to Santrock (2005), self-image is based on intrapersonal experiences and whether or not these interactions with various social environments satisfy psychological needs. Therefore, when teachers experience verbal abuse, this does not allow them to meet this need, which is why their emotional self (dignity) is affected. The teacher, having lost control, then feels powerless, which can lead to depression and anxiety. As Pope, McHale and Craighall, (1988, p.77) says, "verbal insults impact ones ideas and feelings regarding one's abilities".

Thus, verbal bullying also impacts on the social sense of self. Teachers are made to feel inferior in front of others and, as Pope et al. (1988, p.109) reiterates, "successful interaction with learners is necessary for positive social self-esteem". According to Humphreys (2002), the individual levels of self-esteem of teachers affect their styles of communication, their acceptance of others and their flexibility. Therefore, self-esteem has an important influence, not only on classroom management but also on their relationship with learners, colleagues, parents and the wider community. If teachers do not have a positive self-esteem, their morale is affected and this permeates every aspect of life within the school, and in the wider school community.

5.2 The Extent of Bullying from Learners

Seventy percent (70%) of the teachers in this study identified that bullying of teachers by learners took place during regular lessons in the classroom. Participants reported that

learners were misbehaving and, when approached and instructed to be orderly, learners were insubordinate and disrespectful. Taking into account that four percent (4%) of the staff left a school due to negative bullying behaviour experienced at work, the situation was perceived as severe and intolerable by fourteen percent (14%) so that work, which was mostly in the classroom, constituted trauma for many teachers, and this impacted on staff turnover and lowered teacher morale with potential implications for learners. The duration of learner bullying varied from "a couple of minutes" to "ongoing and up to a year" or until the respondent left the school. Therefore these results support the assumption that teachers are leaving the school workplace because of bullying. Studies conducted by Zapf and Gross (2001) reiterate that perpetual bullying will eventually lead to resignation. Therefore, such turnover of staff has created loss for the school organisation that need to recruit, select, train and re-orientate new teachers, or even find temporary teachers, for the duration of that teaching vacancy (Djurkovic et al., 2004).

Respondents reported that the characteristics of learners who carried out teacher- bullying were problematic learners for most teachers; academically less able learners; learners who were too old for their Grades; learners from dysfunctional homes; and learners who could be avenging the wrongs they suffered, namely a dislike or hatred towards females, which included their own mothers and the teachers. Twenty five percent (25%) of teachers had experienced gender-related devaluation. In this study, the bullying of white female teachers by black learners was prevalent, so race played a role in bullying in the school organisation.

The male learner's ego is a dominant force in the social formulation of the culture of what is means to be male (Altman, 2009). Also, this is not surprising within the South African context, as African males, given the subjection to the legacy of the previously discriminatory injustices of Apartheid (Grant, 2007; Hunter et al., 2004), may have the desire to assert power within this school environment, and this problem needs to be addressed. According to Altman (2009, p.40), "whites are more likely to differentiate negative actions as being "modernised" discrimination based on race, general discrimination or bullying". The finding therefore shows that there is a need to work towards an empowered workplace that is school connected and holds a positive culture for both teachers and learners. Empowerment leads to an improved organisational climate (Carless, 2004), which would then demonstrate job satisfaction, productivity and a positive workforce. (Lingard et al., 2007).

Teachers reported that the learner bullying they experienced had an adverse effect on their ability to teach and the findings suggest that, because of this, thirty eight percent (38%) had lowered their expectations of teaching in terms of learner behaviour, co-operation and academic output. Furthermore, this lowered expectation was transferred to other learners, even though they might not have been actively involved themselves. Teachers reduced the amount of group work, practical work and the range of activities as they could not rely on these learners to co-operate and work systematically and sensibly. This then reduced the scope for teachers to carry out lessons in the way that they wanted, to make the lessons interesting. Thus, lessons were spoilt for both non-offending learners and the teachers themselves. Lowering of standards also made teachers feel disillusioned, impacting and reducing productivity within the classroom. Whitney-Thomas and Maloney (2001, p.376), states that, "when someone is bullied, the opportunity for exercising control is taken away and this negatively affects the behavioural sense of self."

Therefore, the study clearly outlines that teachers are experiencing severe anxiety, stress and other emotional effects which affected their health. One of the most common reactions by victims is depression, because they perceived no way to gain control of their lives and felt powerless (Carpenter, 2009). This also had an impact on increased absenteeism, low motivation, and reduced productivity. This too has an effect on the school organisation as a whole, because the "quality of the person's work is affected if there is a climate of fear and resentment" (O'Moore, 1997, p.6). Thus, the way teachers were treated in their workplace had far-reaching effects on their self-confidence, performance and their morale.

From this study, it is clear that not all teachers were resilient and could accept or ignore the negative effects of learner bullying. Teachers who do accept learner bullying as 'part and parcel of what comes with teaching' and who do not complain, need to be challenged and made aware of these detrimental consequences and deleterious implications, not only for themselves, but also for the school organisation and wider community. Therefore, the findings related to the direct relationship between learner bullying of teachers, psychological and physiological well-being and self-esteem were consistent with previous research (Jennifer, 2000; Namie and Namie, 2000; Turney, 2003; Lewis, 2004).

According to Neumann and Baron (1998), the range of factors that influence different levels of aggression are social, situational, personal, cognitive and attitudinal in nature. In this study, Grade 9 learners were reported by teachers as being the worst offenders of teacher-bullying by fifty six percent (56%) compared with and Grade 12 learners the least offenders, with eleven percent (11%). The reasons offered by teacher victims were that such learners were in the fourteen- to fifteen-year age group and were going through 'hormone changes and puberty'. As Erikson (in Santrock, 2005) point out, that the adolescent period is one where emotions are heightened and excessive emotional reactions are common in this period. This can also be due to the scholars' interaction, and adjustment to their environment. Erikson (Santrock, 2005, p.153) "encourages one to look at adolescents not just as hormone-driven beings but also as individuals finding out who they are and searching for their niche in the world". Adolescents also go through changes in cognition and they learn to reason and think in different ways (Sullivan et al., 2004). Santrock (2005) explains that this way of thinking correlates with Piaget's theory of formal operational thought, where adolescents are motivated to understand their world because doing so is biologically adaptive.

Respondents also identified that some Grade 9 learners were too old for their classes (grade), kept failing and were chronically disengaged from school (Klem & Connell, 2004). Some Grade 9 learners came from disadvantaged areas, namely informal settlements, and were not coping within the school environment due to socio-economic problems which resulted in an inability to cope academically. According to Burton (2008, p.82), "at the most fundamental level, the levels of violence also reflects the very basic socio-economic conditions in which a significant proportion of South African children live". This means that such learners could possibly feel they were 'in the wrong place' in attempting to achieve their goals. This was consistent with their aggression, frustration, challenging and intimidation of teachers, specifically female teachers, in this Gauteng West High School. Happiness at school can originate from satisfaction with the academic life of the school (Blum & Rinehart, 1997; McNeely & Falci, 2004). In this study, connectedness with teachers was relatively low and this means that such learners are less likely to be receptive to the regulations of teachers to whom they do not feel well connected (Mapfumo & Machena, 2013).

One respondent felt that some Grade 9 learners may have been bored and resentful. However, many respondents felt that Grade 9 learners were problematic even when placed

into same gender classes. Boys were unruly, undisciplined, rambunctious and aggressive, and had little respect for female teachers or their peers. Respondents generally felt that the goal of these learners was to "gain gratification from hurting others" (Field, 2007, p.3). For example, boys would resort to external coping methods such as "taking it out on others" (Kristensen & Smith, 2003). Results confirm that more boys (fifty one percent) (51%) than girls (two percent) (2%) were reported to be involved in teacher bullying. Respondents further felt that Grade 12 learners were older and had become more confident. As Green (2008, p.456) says, "they had higher life satisfaction and were able to more readily envision multiple pathways to desired goals; had the self-beliefs to move towards their goals; and felt better connected to their school".

Characteristics of such learners who carried out the bullying were mostly problematic learners for most teachers, (thirty three percent) (33%), and teachers generally considered such learners as having learning difficulties and academically less able than their peers. It was therefore the weaker learners who struggled in class who are more likely to act out towards teachers while they are teaching. Furthermore, there was a need for learners that were too old for the Grade to be assessed and moved to alternative education, for example a technical school or an apprentice school. Learners need to feel supported, as much as teachers need to feel supported by learners.

5.3 Teachers Support for Assistance from Management and other Support Structures

The importance of leadership in this research is a recurring theme and both school effectiveness and school improvement have been examined. Research by Mortimore and Mortimore (2001) shows that the way in which principals approached their role was the essential element in creating a conducive and positive working environment in the school. The style of leadership adopted by the principal is an example to all working in the school and involves all staff members in a collaborative process, which allows a shared pride, respect, dignity and ownership (Mortimore & Mortimore, 2001). In this study, more than half of the respondents (fifty four percent) (54%) felt that school authorities acknowledged teacher-bullying by learners and that management in their own right faced enormous challenges in this school workplace.

Results showed that seeking help may be employed as a coping strategy. Forty six percent (46%) of teachers mostly reported bullying to friends and colleagues, while, a significant number of participants, (twenty five percent) (25%), who did report it to management felt

let down by the way the problem had been handled. Having experienced bullying, they felt sceptical of the depth of understanding, assistance and support they received to combat the experienced bullying. As Mapfumo and Muchena (2013, p.561) point out, those who are victims of bullying "may be disconnected from school because schools are unsafe and they lose respect for the justice system of the school". They reported that, after asking for help to deal with their bullying situations, they had been made to feel ineffectual. According to Hart, Wearing and Conn (1995), research showed that it was important to develop a supportive organisational climate that allowed teachers to cope when confronted by misbehaviour by learners. Therefore, it is important for management to listen and to take appropriate action. Teachers who suffer and report bullying by learners should not be dismissed as being incompetent, as this approach will result in dissatisfaction. Furthermore, teachers and learners would see this negative behaviour as being condoned by school management.

The results showed that teachers who were newly qualified or had one to five years' teaching experience in this Gauteng West School were experiencing a high level of bullying by learners. The majority of the teachers who were in the one to five-year category were mature and experienced teachers, having had many years of experience in previous schools. This indicated that both inexperienced and experienced teachers can suffer from learner bullying. It was clear that even teachers who had good subject knowledge, classroom rules, good teaching skills and years of experience, might not have the capacity to stand up to certain learners who bullied. The analysis of the experiences of the teachers revealed that teacher- bullying was being experienced daily, and that poor discipline was a vexing issue.

From this study, it transpired that there is a need to re-educate teachers. Some of the older teachers in this study (a third of the interview sample) felt that their training, which took place in Training Colleges, allowed the attainment of more experiential learning and the role of teacher training taken on by universities may need to ensure that those who want to teach should spend more time in schools and classrooms in hands-on-situations. However, ironically, this may not necessarily help future 'student teachers' to deal with bullying by learners if the problem has yet to be recognised or identified in schools, and if ways to resolve this problem have not been established.

Therefore, within schools, there may be a need for teacher-targeted bullying programmes that support teachers, both in their early years of teaching and with ongoing programmes that address these issues and offer support to teachers, irrespective of the number of years that they have been teaching. Such programmes should cover topics such as classroom management, assertiveness, or anti-teacher bullying interventions. Given that this sample is affiliated to the National Professional Teachers' Organisation (NAPTOSA), the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU), and the Federation of School Governing Bodies (FEDSAS), much of this training could possibly be incorporated into the present training offered by these Unions. Consequently, personal growth and self-actualisation would result in satisfaction and positive well-being (Edwards & Cooper, 1990). It is necessary for school management to counteract the engagement of unhealthy behaviours by such learners, and to ensure that education progress is not further disrupted. Furthermore, high job satisfaction leads to less employee turnover (Fujishiro & Heaney, 2009; Turney, 2003).

This study also shows that parents need to be re-educated. The majority of respondents did not feel that parents understood teacher-bullying by learners, and so were not always helpful in resolving the problems. It is hardly surprising, since no one has actually identified, raised or examined the problem in the school. Some staff felt that the parents themselves felt like the learners and had no respect at all for teachers. Teachers also felt that learners treated their own parents in a disrespectful manner. It was clear that teachers had become apathetic, and had very little confidence about contacting a parent as they could no longer see that this would be beneficial. I feel that this points to an urgent need to increase communication between this Gauteng West High School and the parents of bullies in order to curb this bullying. If parents are well educated and take a keen interest in both their children and the school, then, and only then will success be ensured. Rigby and Johnson (2004, p.40) state that "countering bullying involves not only a whole school approach, but a whole-community approach which can be facilitated through parent-teacher meetings in which the question of teacher and learner bullying can be discussed".

In concluding, and on reflection of the study, it was clear that every teacher was unique and different. Each participant, whether by questionnaire or interview, depicted their individual story of their experience of learner-bullying from their own frame of reference. An examination of the findings revealed a number of common themes:

- All participants who were victims of being bullied by learners wanted to be heard, understood, valued, recognised and affirmed in their workplace.

- There was a perception among the respondents that they did not provoke the bullying, which, when it occurred was considered unexpected and unwarranted.

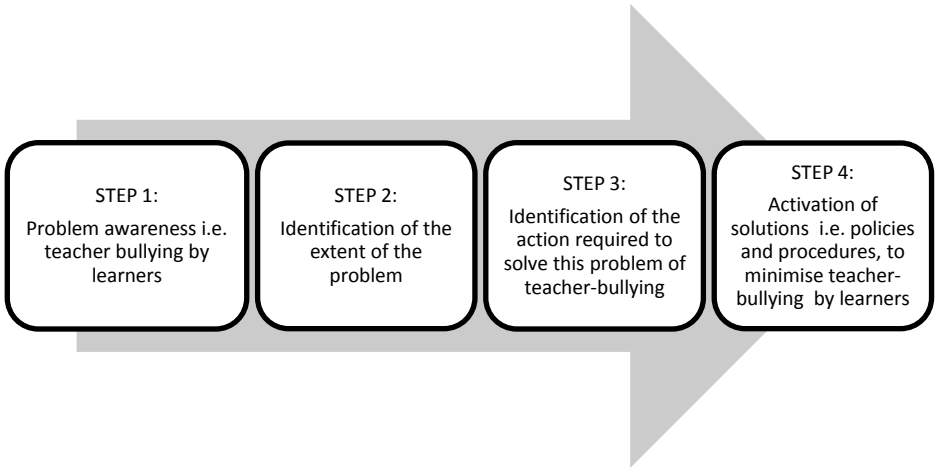
- Participants were able to understand that learner bullies had themselves suffered many detrimental experiences, and could be avenging the wrongs they had personally suffered. These may be actual or perceived maltreatments. The essence of any experience is never totally exhausted, "It can only reflect a particular time, place and the experience of the individuals who were interviewed." (Pietersen, 2007, p.64).

The results of this study therefore suggest that bullied teachers also lose access to the potentially reinforcing effects of a positive, social connection at their school workplace, and they could benefit if re-situated within a more caring and nurturing social context that would rebuild them positively, increasing their self-esteem. (Nickerson & Nagle, 2004).

In addition, if this problem is to be dealt with effectively, everyone involved must be made aware that it is happening, and negative learner behaviours against teachers must be addressed in the early years of schooling, so that learners would learn that such behaviour will not be tolerated in our schools. Accordingly, I make the following recommendations:

5.4 Recommendations for developing a shared vision

Required capacity for direction and learning is as follows:



Degree of Active Involvement
(Adapted from Pietersen, 2005, p.2).

This research has endeavoured to raise awareness of teacher-bullying by learners in the workplace. Pietersen (2005) proposed a decision-making and problem solving Model to facilitate implementing solutions for bullying behaviour in the workplace, which includes managing workplace bullying in four steps:

Step 1 - Problem awareness: recognition and acknowledgment by management that workplace bullying is present in the school organisation;

Step 2 – Identification of the extent of the problem: management must determine how prevalent the bullying problem is in the school organisation;

Step 3 – Identification of actions necessary to solve the problem: selection of suitable policies and procedures to assist management to reduce, and prevent recurrences of bullying incidents in the organisation;

Step 4 - Activation of solutions: implementation and monitoring of policies and procedures to minimise teacher-bullying in the school workplace.

The above Model (Pietersen, 2005) suggests that workplace-bullying in the school workplace is manageable, if management and teacher employees are educated about the occurrence and consequences of teacher bullying in the school workplace. Bullying of teachers by learners must be seen to be unacceptable by the whole school community.

From this study, it is evident that bullying and other negative behaviours take place in different working environments, including our schools. Some recommendations which are specific to this Gauteng West High School aim to resolve the problem as identified in this study are as follows:

- An anti-bullying environment, with a positive school ethos that reflects the whole school community, is required. A school connectedness programme could be used to promote an environment that is harmonious and in which all (adults and learners) are treated with dignity and respect. According to Whitlock (2006), school connectedness programmes could increase learner involvement in meaningful roles at the school; safety at the school; and opportunities for both creative- and academic engagement at the school. As Brookmeyer, Fanti and Henrich (2006) point out school-connectedness has been shown to buffer against aggressive behaviour and exposure to violent behaviour. In addition, school-connectedness is also positively associated with reducing substance use (Wang, Mathew, Bellamy & James, 2005), exposure to weapon violence (Brookmeyer et al.,

2006), the initiation of smoking (Dorbusch, Erickson, Laird & Wong, 2001), and the prevention of dropping out of school (Miltich, Hunt & Meyers, 2004). These findings suggest that addressing-school connectedness in this Gauteng West High School could improve the social skills of bullying learners. More importantly, analysis to date has further linked school-connectedness to lowered bullying victimization (Nickerson, Brock, Chang & O'Malley, 2006).

- Policies must be developed to involve staff, learners and parents. Such policies should create an anti-teacher-bullying / learner's climate with a policy statement that unequivocally states that bullying by any member of the school community is unacceptable. Further, these policies need to incorporate communication and bullying issues with parents. As Blum (2005, p.10) says, "improved communication creates mechanisms for parents to share their needs, cultures and expectations for their children". This may bring some resolve to the breadth of the problem.

- Training for principals and teachers is essential. There is a clear need for teachers and principals to be trained in communication, conflict resolution, boundary-setting skills, classroom management, and assertiveness skills, which would assist in situations where conflict arises when teachers are bullied by either learners or the parents of such learners. This could "enhance the teacher's ability to become aware of and curtail negative behaviour early on before it spirals" (Pearson et al., 2005), which would then further enhance their self-esteem.

- The existing grievance procedure for teachers experiencing learner bullying was not always adequate in finding resolutions to problems pertaining to learner bullying behaviour. There is clearly a need for effective bullying / harassment procedures which are negotiated between the Principal, Head of Departments, and Form Supervisors, specifically to deal with bullying by learners and other negative behaviours. Lack of procedures or lack of awareness leads to unnecessary conflict, bullying or negative experiences and issues pertaining to staff relations and communication with parents should also be addressed. Parents also need to be kept informed about issues that relate to them and their child's education. Schools need to ensure good communication processes with parents, and ensure that these include and outline how complaints, issues or concerns should be addressed.

- Induction Programmes are needed for both newly qualified teachers and teachers who are newly appointed within this school environment. These programmes could offer an awareness and understanding of the problem of learner bullying, as well as provide ways of dealing with the problem, which should include policies and procedures. Pietersen (2005, p.3) says that, "during job orientation, expectations (norms) about interpersonal behaviour in the organisation should be carefully communicated to new employees".

- There is also a need for open discussions, regular staff meetings, good planning, collective responses and approaches to address issues relating to teacher-bullying. A school climate that encourages open and honest discussions can prevent bullying from happening in the first place, which would result in less absenteeism, higher motivation, higher productivity and a lower staff turnover rate. It can therefore be seen that continuing evaluation and improvement needs must be included and fostered.

- Trade Union Programmes, by various trade unions, could be implemented in the school. Training could include teacher-targeted bullying and procedures to deal with such issues, not only for staff, but also for members of the School Governing Body.

- More importantly, this school needs improved communication with, and support from the Gauteng Education Department which is presently fragmented. More clarity in policies and issues is needed, as well as the building of a connection that ensures school commitment with support at all levels.

- This would enhance reporting procedures and improve the confidence of teachers. In addition, counselling opportunities and emotional support must be made available for teachers who are victims of such learner bullying.

5.5 Implications for Future Research

This study was an attempt to understand the nature and extent of teacher-bullying by learners in a Gauteng West High School. The phenomenon of bullying of teachers by learners is a relatively new research focus and these findings offer new information grounded on the experiences of the participants.

The findings of this study may be utilised to further investigate teacher bullying and the following research could be explored in future studies: (1) The relationship between the

level of bullying experienced by teachers in the school workplace, and the rate of staff turnover. (2) Strategies to assist teachers to cope with learner bullying.

In future, too, researchers could attempt to seek the relationship between learner bullying of teachers and other dependent variables such as adaptive behaviour among learners, academic performance and other factors.

Specific attention should be given to teacher – learner relationships and, to an extent, the safety in our schools which may be forcing teachers to resign. Therefore, more in-depth quantitative and qualitative research is needed in the school workplace to broaden our understanding of inter-personal bullying experienced, not only by targets i.e. teachers, but also from the perspective of the alleged bully. As Burton (2008, p.xi) reiterates, although primary and secondary schools are the site of widespread violence, "up until now there has been no national data on the exact extent of the problem, and little understanding of the nature or causes of school violence".

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Inherent in this study are limitations, such as possible investigation bias on the part of the researcher and the participants regarding responses to both questionnaires and interviews, as well as the interpretation thereof. Objectivity is not always guaranteed as bias can exist due to subjective views. Gravetter and Forzano (2006) indicate that people attribute causality and form judgments according to pre-existing beliefs and are therefore subjective. Thus both questionnaires and interviews were used in a sequential explanatory design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), where at first quantitative data was collected and analysed. This was then followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data which explained quantitative results. A limitation of this mixed method was that it was challenging, requiring additional effort, time and resources for the implementation and collection of the data, compared to a single study using either a quantitative or qualitative method. However, this method did allow greater credibility to the findings as the one informed the other (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

While a further limitation of this research could be that teachers who are bullied by learners could feel embarrassed, intimidated or sensitive about giving actual accounts of victimisation and hurtful instances of learner bullying which relate to their own personal experiences. This could result in them answering questions at a fairly superficial level. For

this reason, when administering both questionnaires and interviews, detailed introductions and instructions by the researcher were needed. If this aspect had been neglected, participants could have felt a lack of trust which could further affect the response to sensitive issues. Therefore, researchers recommend the use of questionnaires (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010) and personal interviews (Pietersen, 2007) in order to gain valuable and more accurate accounts from the respondents.

Conversely, questionnaires and interviews are not without disadvantages. According to Merriam (2009), they are subject to response biases such as denial or rationalisation. Furthermore, teachers who have experienced previous bullying would be less likely to label themselves as victims through answering questionnaires or being available for interviews, for fear of appearing vulnerable once again (Bowie, Fisher & Cooper, 2005).

Although this investigation makes an important contribution to teachers experiencing learner bullying, the findings should not be generalised to all schools without further inquiry. Therefore, these limitations have been given due consideration in writing up this research.

5.7 Conclusion

The literature indicates that bullying of teachers is intolerable, because it is cruel, and repeated aggression by the 'powerful' over the 'powerless', without justification (Colorosa, 2005). During the period of time that I worked with the participants, I was privileged to meet and engage with dedicated staff evidencing wonderful personal qualities that the learners had failed to perceive. I firmly believe I would have missed these attributes if I had relied only on questionnaires and not used interviewing as well. Thus, this mixed method study attempted to examine different world views, assumptions, methods and forms of collecting data.

The quantitative and qualitative data has revealed a plethora of elements salient to teacher bullying by learners in this Gauteng West High School. In organising the data, quantitative research addressed the ages, the years of experience, the gender, and the nature of the bullying experienced by teachers but did not address the teachers reactions thereto and their method of response. The qualitative data also revealed that there was a clear problem of bullying behaviour, also known as teacher-targeted bullying, but that prior to the conducting of the research the teachers had not identified or classified it as such.

Both research methods increased the quality of data and elucidated the findings. The questionnaires were both quantitative and qualitative in nature and the interviews were conducted to further interpret the qualitative findings. It was revealed that in this school, teacher-targeted bullying by learners was occurring across all age groups, was not limited to gender specific teachers, and was being practiced by both male and female learners, irrespective of age, race, gender or social background. Data garnered from both the questionnaires and the interviews also indicated that in this school was a prevalence of bullying being practiced by Grade 9 learners (40%). (See Table 4.8 – Grade in which bullying is most problematic). The research eliminated the assumptions that new and inexperienced teachers would be victimised and surprisingly reflected that experienced senior male and female teachers were also being targeted.

The present research offers evidence about the most common types of bullying perpetrated by learners on teachers; the extent of such bullying; and the management thereof. It has endeavoured to raise awareness of the issue of learner bullying of teachers in the working environment, a problem which tends to remain hidden as, by its very nature, it is subtle and difficult to identify. Furthermore, there is no one primary reason for the high rate of teacher-targeted bullying by learners. Rather, there is a variety of interlinking and compounding factors that contribute to teacher bullying as identified within the context of this school workplace. A pre-requisite in the fight against teacher-targeted bullying is an acknowledgement, by adults and learners alike, that such bullying is both dehumanising and degrading.

The contention is that workplace bullying is a form of harassment, irrespective of who the bullies are. Therefore, a possible way forward for this Gauteng West High School would be for management to formally acknowledge the existence of the problem of teacher-targeted bullying, as well as its complexity. Furthermore, the concerns of staff suffering such bullying must be taken seriously and problems need to be dealt with urgently. Such bullying reflects the erosion of societal values. Children are expected to be different people at school when they come from a world that is violent, brutal and rife with abuse. Punishment alone is not going to solve this conundrum. Also, whole-school strategies need to be sought where teachers, learners and parents are involved. As Burton (2008, p.78) reiterates, "effective management systems within the school will enable and enhance effective discipline and control".

The study completed for this research represents, as far as I know, contributes to the scant research conducted in this specific research context that addresses bullying by learners within their workplace, namely the school. Something can be done about teacher-bullying and they do not need to remain easy targets. Thus, this study further supports the need for South African schools to train teachers in learner bullying and classroom management, as well as to have a written policy and effective measures, such as school connectedness programmes, to reduce learner bullying of teachers by promoting positive youth development and educational outcomes (Blum & Libbey, 2004).

Findings obtained in this study represent a step in the direction towards clarifying this complex process. It is recommended that future research takes cognisance of suggestions made in the present study which may further clarify the understanding of the difficult experiences to which teachers are exposed, as well as what could be done in an attempt to further highlight and eradicate the challenge. Ultimately, school organisations have a responsibility to ensure productivity by ensuring that teachers are operating at an optimal level within a positive work environment that is conducive to improving ongoing performance (Hansen, Hough, Persson, Karlson, Garde & Orbaek, 2006).

Reducing the bullying of teachers will only be addressed if the voices of the teacher victims are listened to – and acted upon in a humane way. As researcher, one's role is to truly listen, understand, accept and value whatever is presented to them, which opened the door to trust, and lessened the detrimental effects of their bullying experience. As a respondent said, "I would say it's the first time somebody has put a name on this abuse and it has me thinking". By completing the qualitative data, the teachers had identified behaviours which previously had gone unnamed and unaddressed. I am pleased to report that an immediate outcome of this research was the addressing of teacher-targeted bullying by the Governing Body of this Gauteng West High School with the parents. Thus, there was a cognitive acknowledgement of teacher-targeted bullying within the school and willingness on their part to identify, confront and rectify learner/parent behaviour and its impact.

I hope this limited study has encouraged these individuals to find the necessary reinforcement and encouragement to confront their fears, allowing them to realise their existing strengths and claim their rights as a unique human being. Teachers who took part in this study may endeavour to change the script by which they have been living their lives. It is possible to break the cycle of teachers being targets of bullying by their learners, creating ever widening circles of caring.

As Mead (as cited in Colorosa, 2005, p.226) reiterates, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix H - **Experiences of Teachers who were bullied by learners in a High School, Gauteng West**

Appendix I - **School Anti-Bullying Policy for Learners**

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

September 2012

My name is Caron Hoffmann and I am presently a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on teachers who have experienced bullying by their learners within their workplace, being the school environment. The area of research is designed to investigate 'The nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a High School in Gauteng West.'

The reason why I have chosen your school is because the research is aimed at exploring the teachers' experiences of teacher-targeted bullying. This may lead to more successful strategies to support teachers within this school. It would be appreciated if I could have your permission to conduct this research during available break times, as this would allow the teachers to be available and result in a better response for my data collection.

The procedure for this research will entail using a volunteer teacher group at the school, who will complete a questionnaire which will allow an in-depth response by establishing factors contributing to difficulties experienced by teachers; the effect on teacher performance, morale and student learning; and the support needed from education management to assist teachers who experience teacher-targeted bullying by their learners.

From these questionnaires, I will extend the process to an unstructured interview, in order to follow up on volunteer teachers who have experienced bullying from their learners. The purpose would be to understand the teacher's life experience or situation, as expressed in their own words.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their participation at any time during this project without any penalty, so that there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

The names of the research participants and the identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be kept safe and will only be used for this research, after which it will be destroyed three years after the project has been completed. If you request it, the final research report can be made available to your school once it has been completed.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

_____

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APPENDIX B

LETTER TO TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

September 2012

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Caron Hoffmann and I am presently a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on teachers who have experienced bullying by their learners within the workplace, being the school environment. The area of research is designed to investigate 'The Nature and Extent of Teachers as Targets of Bullying by their Learners in a High School (Gauteng West).'

The reason why I have chosen your school is because the research is aimed at exploring teachers' experiences of teacher-targeted bullying. This may lead to more successful strategies to support teachers within this school. I am inviting you to take part in this study, and help me to gain new knowledge in this field. I would greatly appreciate your participation, so please accept my invitation to participate in the research project.

What is involved?

This study will involve you filling in one anonymous questionnaire. This should not take longer than twenty minutes of your time. This questionnaire will include short questions on your experience of whether or not you have experienced bullying by learners within your workplace.

This questionnaire is completely confidential as ONLY the researcher has access to your personal information. All participants will be from this High School and you will be one of approximately 75 volunteer participants. The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times, and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study, and you are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality at all times.

If you are being bullied, and if you are willing to be interviewed, you may volunteer, in order to allow me, as the researcher, to gain a greater understanding of the bullying process. This will be used to help you to understand your own life experience, or situation, as you have expressed in your own words. I will audio record the interview to assist me with accurately remembering what was experienced, so that I shall have an accurate and verbatim transcription for the purposes of this research. You will be given a pseudonym, and will not be identified in my interview in any recognisable way.

Although I will not be able to provide you with direct personal benefits for your participation, I hope to use your contribution to increase the knowledge currently available on this subject, by identifying the factors contributing to the difficulties experienced by teachers; the effect on teacher performance, morale and student learning; and the support needed from education management to assist teachers who experience this teacher-targeted bullying from their learners.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate, or withdraw your participation, at any time, without any consequence.

Confidentiality: Efforts will be made to keep all your personal information confidential.
Information about you that will be collected during the research will be kept safe and locked away and no-one but the researcher will be able to see it. It will not be shared with, or given to, anyone except my research supervisors, Ms Veronica Moodley and Ms Moeniera Moosa. All research data will only be used for this research, whereafter it will be destroyed within three years after completion of the project. The final research report can be made available to your school on completion, if you so request it.

If you have any questions you may ask me now or later, even after the study has started and, if you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me using the details below. .

Yours sincerely,

_____

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Should you experience any emotional discomfort due to recalling unpleasant incidences in filling out the questionnaire, please contact:
Life Line on 011 728-1347
for free counselling services.

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in, and return the reply slip below, indicating your willingness to fill in a questionnaire for my voluntary research project called: The nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a High School (Gauteng West). This is intended for the purposes of Caron Hoffmann's Masters Research Thesis.

Permission for the use of a questionnaire

I, _____

Give / do not give* my consent to filling in a questionnaire.

[ ] I know that I may withdraw my participation from the study at any time, and that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way if I should do so.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential in all academic writing, and that I shall be guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality at all times.

[ ] I am aware that my questionnaire will be kept safe and locked away, and will only be used for this research, after which it will be destroyed within three years after completion of the project.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail: caronhoffmann@yahoo.com
Tel No: 011 760-9212
Cell : 084 923 0702

* Please delete as appropriate

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

TEACHER BULLYING BY THEIR LEARNERS (TEACHER-TARGETED BULLYING): CONFIDENTIAL

Instructions:

(a) Cross in the appropriate box, or write in the appropriate space, to indicate your answer

1. Please indicate your age group:

20 - 24 years	
25 – 30 years	
31 – 35 years	
36 – 40 years	
41 – 45 years	
45 and over	

2. Please indicate your gender:

Male	
Female	

3. Please indicate your teaching experience:

1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 and over	

4. How many years have you been teaching in your present school?

Less than 1 year	
1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	

21 – 25 years	
26 and over	

5. Have you ever been subjected to being bullied by a learner?

Yes	
No	

6. What form did the teacher bullying by the learner take?

Verbal Abuse	
Physical Abuse	
Sexual Abuse	
Psychological Abuse	
Cyber Bullying	
Ignoring You	
Silence / Hostility	
Ridicule	
Making Comments About You To Other Learners	
Damage To Your Classroom	
Damage To Your Property	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. How did you perceive the learner bullying behaviour that was targeted against you?

No Real Problem	
Some Cause For Concern	
Serious But I Could Tolerate It	
Severe and Intolerable	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____

8. What was the duration of the learner bullying experienced?

Weeks	
Months	
Years	
Until You Left or Changed Schools	
Until The Learner Left or Changed Schools	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. In which grade has teacher bullying been most problematic?

Grade 8	
Grade 9	
Grade 10	
Grade 11	
Grade 12	

10. What gender were the learners who carried out the teacher-bullying?

Male	
Female	
Both Male and Female	

11. Where did the teacher bullying take place?

Classroom	
Corridors	
Playground	
Sports field	
Hall	

Social Media	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. What were the characteristics of the learners who carried out teacher bullying?

Problematic Learners for Most teachers to Deal With	
Academically less able learners	
Difficult to say	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. How has the bullying affected your ability to teach? Do you now:

Have Lower Expectations In Terms Of Class / Learner Behaviour	
Accept Lower Levels Of Co-Operation In Class	
Restrict The Range Of Activities You Do with Learners In Class	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Has the bullying devalued your rights and opinions with reference to your:

Gender	
Age	
Race	

Years Of Service	
Subject or Courses You Teach	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. Did you tell anyone about the teacher bullying you suffered?

Yes	
No	

16. Did you report the teacher bullying?

Yes	
No	

17. To whom did you report the teacher bullying?

Family Member	
Friend / Colleague	
Head Of Department	
Deputy Head	
Principal	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. What was the consequence of reporting it?

Made me feel better	
Short term improvement	
Nothing was resolved	

Problem was resolved	
Other	

Please briefly explain or justify your response:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. Is the problem of teachers being bullied by learners understood by the school management?

Yes	
No	

20. If you have experienced teacher bullying and would like to volunteer to be interviewed, please complete your details below:

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Should you experience any emotional discomfort due to recall of unpleasant incidences in filling out the questionnaire please contact:
Life Line on 011 728-1347
for free counselling services.

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM TEACHERS
INTERVIEW

Please fill in and return the reply slip below, indicating your willingness to be interviewed for my voluntary research project called: The Nature and Extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a High School (Gauteng West). This is intended for the purposes of Caron Hoffmann's Masters Research Thesis.

Permission to be interviewed

I, _____

Give / do not give* my consent to be interviewed.

[ ] I know that I don't have to answer all the questions, and that I may withdraw my participation from the study at any time, and that, should I do so, I would not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will be taking audio recordings during her interview, to accurately transcribe these with pseudonyms for the purposes of research. I will not be able to be identified in any way, and am guaranteed of anonymity and confidentiality at all times.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential in all academic writing.

[ ] I am aware that the research material will be kept safe and locked away and will only be used for this research, after which it will be destroyed within three years after completion of the project.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact person: Caron Hoffmann
Masters Student
Faculty of Humanities
University of the Witwatersrand
E-mail: caronhoffmann@yahoo.com
Tel No: 011 760-9212
Cell : 084 923 0702
* Please delete as appropriate

APPENDIX F

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Can you please tell me about your experience as a teacher being bullied by a learner?

2. How does learner bullying impact your performance and morale as a teacher?

3. How did you attempt to resolve the bullying problem and what do you think should be done in order to prevent the act of teachers being bullied by learners at your school?

APPENDIX G

TEACHER: INFORMED CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDED NOTES

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness for audio recorded notes for my voluntary research project called: The Nature and Extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a High School (Gauteng West). This is intended for the purposes of Caron Hoffmann's Masters Research Thesis.

Permission for the use of audio recorded notes

I, _____

Give / do not give* my consent for audio recorded notes.

[ ] I know that I may withdraw my participation from the study at any time and that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will be taking audio recordings during her interview to accurately transcribe these with pseudonyms for the purposes of research.

[ ] I will not be able to be identified in any way and am guaranteed of anonymity and confidentiality at all times.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential in all academic writing.

[ ] I am aware that the research material will be kept safe and locked away and will only be used for this research, thereafter, it will be destroyed within 3 years after completion of the project.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

E-mail: caronhoffmann@yahoo.com
Tel No: 011 760-9212
Cell : 084 923 0702

*Please delete as appropriate.

APPENDIX H

EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WHO WERE BULLIED BY LEARNERS IN A HIGH SCHOOL, GAUTENG WEST

INTERVIEWEE 1's EXPERIENCE:	"One of the cases I was called as a Head of a Department, I was called to an educator's class where the educator struggled to control a couple of learners misbehaving. I went into the class and the learners were on the desks, sitting on the desks, misbehaving. I asked them to settle down, to sit and the one boy just ignored me, he sat with his back to me and he put his cell phone on, his headphones on, so I confiscated the cellphone and I took it to the educator next door because I knew this boy would follow me. Upon arriving back into the class, he grabbed my arm and pushed me outside the class and then threatened me, and said that he wants his cell phone back and I need to give it back immediately. At that stage, two other educators were also on the corridors and saw that, and I said to him, "You are not allowed to touch me", and fortunately those educators also started reprimanding him, and then he left me, he walked back into the class and then he slammed the door in my face. Then I went down to... one of the people that witnessed this was a deputy head and I went down to the headmaster, explained the situation to him; he called the boy in and said that the boy has to apologise to me and, as yet, he has not apologised at all."
INTERVIEWEE 2's EXPERIENCE:	"A learner would be in the wrong in doing something that he's not supposed to, but if you, as a teacher, would confront him, the learner would start shouting at you, screaming at you, threatening you with all the different ways that he would go about so as to have his way and I see that as a form of bullying. I've experienced where a child would shout at me, scream at me and then threaten me that if he cannot do something to me, he'll get someone to do something to me."
INTERVIEWEE 3's EXPERIENCE:	"I think one of the things I find intimidating which leads to me feeling like I'm being bullied is the fact that kids come physically into your space and they then talk down on you and being short in stature; or I say to the child 'Now just step away, let's talk about this reasonably' because the learner feels that they can just come in and say what they think, and they are always right, so you need to create a space because by creating that space ... I find the boys particularly, and it's a cultural issue that I have very great difficulty in dealing with, being a white woman and a woman, in that the boys, and those that have been through an initiation school, very often come back after their initiation with this attitude: every woman is now going to listen to them, and they walk at you, and they tell you what they would like to do, and I think, because I'm pig headed to start with, they don't get away with it, but it still is quite a feeling if they push you up against the wall."
INTERVIEWEE 4's EXPERIENCE:	"I was given a subs class to do, and I went in, settled the class down, was busy with the register and a boy walked in, about 15 minutes into the lesson, shirt un-tucked, bag on the shoulder, walked straight in to take a seat, and I reprimanded him and he came up to the table, and he waved his hands in front of my face, and he said, 'Don't you dare shout at me'. So I said, 'I have every right to shout at you, because this behaviour is absolutely unacceptable', and I think I said, 'This is trashy behaviour' and he turned around, and he said, 'But you don't call my mother trash'. I said, "I never did call your mum trash, I said 'your behaviour is trashy', it's not acceptable". I said, 'I'm actually just going to give your father a call' because he looked like he was on something to me, and when I did, the father said to me - I phoned from my office - 'Put my son onto the phone'

	and I did, and I put the son onto the phone, and obviously he spoke in Sotho to his dad, and he said to his dad that 'I had called mom a rubbish.' So the story turns, so by the time I spoke to the father again, he said, 'Yes my son has done something, he did it within context'. So I went down to the principal and reported it. He said - you know what, 'I had a run-in with the same boy on the grandstand and he is reeking of alcohol.' So there was a meeting arranged, I explained my situation to the Headmaster. I said when the parent comes; I actually just don't want to meet him, because he is not interested in his son's wrong. He is interested in what I've done, which is my problem. So when the parent came in, I was called over the intercom and I went down to the office, and I was quite highly strung because, as soon as I was ready, the father sat there, he spoke about my level of emotion. Firstly, when I had to give my story the son was called in, and I gave my story in front of the son. The father mentioned that I don't have a level of emotional intelligence ... now the child is sitting there ... I was so cross, I was so cross ... you know, I usually don't get angry, actually the Deputy Principal was sitting next to me I said to him, 'This is bullshit', and the mum heard me use the word, [and she said], 'Oh, she thinks we [are] bullshit now', and the mum went ballistic, and I got up and walked out of that meeting, I went to the Union Rep and I said, 'Listen here, this is the situation'. He said, 'You are within your right, no parent should come into the school and reprimand any educator on this matter. They don't have the right. The matter should have been dealt with by the parent and the child. They are not here to deal with you, but the child did this wrong, so you need to remember that'. So he went to the meeting, he knocked on the door, he called Mr M… and he said, 'I think your meeting has been running in an illegal way' and apparently ... I don't know what happened after that. But in any case, at the end of the day, I went to the Headmaster and I apologised because ... I mean, I put him on the spot when I walked out, but I was really, really angry because the father was speaking to me as if he was here to deal with me, not the fact that his son came late, and not the fact that his son was drunk, not the fact that his son was waving his hands in my face, none of that was dealt with, and it went on for ... well, fortunately, I didn't teach the child. The one day I was coming out of my office and ... I've got the funny office where the door moves out, so obviously I can't see if there is someone in front of the door ... and I was coming out of my office, and I opened it and this child happened to be standing outside the door, and obviously the door went into him. So he gave me a push with his hand, and he says, 'You don't touch me,' and I just thought *I don't even think this is worth it* but I went and reported the incident, and I actually said to the principal, 'If the parent is coming in on disciplinary you can take it forward, I'm not sitting in that disciplinary, and that's exactly what I did, but the child had a run-in with another teacher. He had a beanie on his head, and she pulled off the beanie and he turned around and swore so that's why the disciplinary happened, because now this is now the second incident. So basically there was nothing that we could actually do, and apparently he had tested positive for drugs and the one day I found an e-mail at the printer, and I went to the Headmaster and I said, 'I found this e-mail, I read it because I saw my name is on it, so I am being honest, I know I shouldn't have read it but I was right there, and I saw my name so I read it' and it said something to the effect about the child was drug tested and it turned out positive, but the father had taken the child to a hospital for a drug testing, and that was not positive that was negative, so now the father said that the child is being victimised by the school, and there's no doubt he would like the minutes of a meeting with me, because he's not done with

	that, he's escalating to this lawyer. I mean this is where it went to, but anyway I went to the Headmaster and I said, 'Now I'm going to the police station and I'm telling you I am, and I am going to get a case now, and that's what I did because I said, if the father is now going to get a lawyer, then I need to report what had happened' and I said to the police, 'I am not reporting the charge against the child because I'll know he'll be arrested and then I'll have to get a lawyer, and then I'll have to appear in Court. I am getting a case number just so that I can safe-guard myself when the next step comes in, just to protect myself and that's what I did. But what had happened ... by last year the prelim ... just before the prelim we do this training session, ... then you get your paperwork and, what have you, with the Matrics, and another teacher and I were in the hall and this child toddled in late again, and a teacher said to him, 'You just wait aside and, when I'm done, I will deal with you' and while she was holding this (like this) and he came and just snatched it out of her hand, and she pulled it back from him and then he became vulgar again, and then, after that incident, the father came to school and I was walking out of the reception, through the reception area, and he called me, and obviously I knew who he was, and I was still so highly strung after the previous incident that I said, 'Sorry, can I help you, do I know who you are?' and he said, 'No, I'm' I said, 'Sorry, I didn't recognise you, I don't mean to be rude', and then he said, 'You know what, I am so sorry about everything' - now he began to see what his son was doing, it took so many incidents before he realised that his child had a problem."
INTERVIEWEE 5's EXPERIENCE:	"Last year I had a class and there was a slam shut gate. I went into my classroom and somebody slammed the gate shut, and the papers were scattered all over, and they were taking out their phones while I was shouting at them to get the key, and they refused to get the key and they were like laughing, so it did affect me, and I thought that was nonsense, you don't do that kind of thing."
INTERVIEWEE 6's EXPERIENCE:	"There are just, however, one or two children in a class that just push the envelope, they don't keep quiet, they will use anything as an excuse to try and distract you from your job. I just had it now, the lesson before this one, before break, there is a boy and he went to go and donate blood and, in all due respect to him as a human being, I feel it's the only good thing he did today. He just doesn't keep quiet, so it's a continuous disruption. I find it tends to be in the same age group every time, it's the grade 9 age group where it's a particular problem, and then also where you have children where there is either some indication of abuse from their side ... from their families, or there are drugs involved. Last year kids, that I had a lot of issues with in my classrooms, every now and then they were being bust for peddling marijuana at school, some of them were expelled for it when enough information was gathered, that sort of thing. I mean they undermine your authority - basically make me look this small - and then that happens in front of everyone else as well, and that is the biggest issue, and as one gets more experience, you become better at handling it, so I'm not as ... I think I was a very argumentative with the kids last year, and I've learnt not to do that this year, but you get that one or two that just pulls it out of you, and you just want to fight everything with them, and then you just say, 'Okay, no, I'm not going to do that because I'm not going to give you the gratification for this' because that's what they want, that is what they want; so I actually had kids calling me all sorts of things last year at school - I've been called bitch, and things like that, but, like I say, it's that definite undermining of my authority - like last year I had children who would become farm animals in the class, and they would sit there and go,

	'Moo, and bark, and the more I'm trying to teach, the more they will do it and its ... really you just can't work like that. So yes, and unfortunately in those instances, it was a class where you'd have approximately ten of the children - up to half of the class join in - so it's too many for you to handle the issue on your own, and then you have to call people in and, unfortunately, I felt it last year that I didn't get the support I needed
INTERVIEWEE 7's EXPERIENCE:	"I had a boy who initially started being very verbally abusive if he didn't get his way in class, and that eventually ended up in a physical altercation where he slapped me across the face and, because I wouldn't give him a memo - I refused to because ... the way he asked me for the memo was very rude, and I said, 'Go and look in your text book for the work, and then come back to me, because I'm not going to give you the memo' and consequently he slapped me because I wouldn't give him the memo; and then my last year of teaching at my previous school, I ended up with a remedial class with a bunch of guys who were repeating and a predominantly older age group for their grade - those boys used to throw me with their shoes when I walked into the class, because the class was predominantly black, and I was a white teacher. I would some mornings walk into my class and have, 'Shoot the boer' or 'Kill the boer' written all over my board, which really intimidated me - I was really not in the mood to teach them anymore because I felt scared to go in there, because they were hitting my hands with rulers, they were throwing me with shoes and writing these things on the board on a regular basis."
INTERVIEWEE 8's EXPERIENCE:	"Well mainly, I suppose the instances were when, before we had mixed classes, we had separate-gender classes and what would happen ... a lot of the times the boys are quite aggressive and rambunctious and everything, and they'd often fight with each other and I'd get pulled in trying to separate them or stop them from fighting with one another. There was an incidence which was actually caught on camera in this school, because in my classroom is a camera, where I was trying to hold them off another boy and I got kicked and hit with a chair, but they weren't actually trying to hit me, but they would get so angry that they got me and the kid behind me ... but that's like the main thing that's happened. I've got one or two very aggressive learners, mainly seniors, who I often find are black learners, who don't like having a white authority figure and that is where I've sometimes had clashes, where they've been like verbally abusive, I suppose." (Teacher was in her ninth month of pregnancy).
INTERVIEWEE 9's EXPERIENCE:	"The one that I was referring to in the little questionnaire that I answered happened last year or the year before, and it actually, I was shaken by it, it was a very, very disturbing incident. This boy and his girlfriend were kissing and cuddling just outside my classroom after hours, I was busy with extramural activities in my classroom and I caught them, and I said, 'Excuse me, this is not the place for that, would you please leave' and he got aggressive with me, and I had to ask him several times to please leave and he turned to me and he said, 'I am going to smash your glasses into your face' and then his girlfriend said to him, 'No, no calm down, calm down' and I said, 'Come, hit me my boy and I will lay a charge of assault against you'. I stood up to him, I didn't back down because I thought, if I back down, then he's won and bullies like to win. So ... and then she calmed him, but I could see his eyes change, I thought, 'Oooh, this kid's going to hit me', and then she calmed him down and moved away and I reported the incident but, ag, nothing happened. Then I had another one on the field not so long ago. This kid put cheap gold buckle things on his shoes - it's against school rules, we are supposed to obey them and I said to

	him, 'Please take them off' and he argued, and argued, and argued, and argued and in the end I lost it, and I swore at him ... shouldn't have I know. I reported it, and he phoned his mother and said, 'You know, this teacher just swore at me' but wouldn't say that he had goaded me, no, you know ... and I find it... actually the black boys against the white woman. That's where I'm finding it. Every time I've had that kind of a situation it's been a black boy, and I'm a white woman, I've never had it from the coloureds or the whites. I'll say to them, 'Come on now, you know you've crossed the line just …' and I have a way with them, I don't generally have discipline problems, I don't."
INTERVIEWEE 10's EXPERIENCE:	"Well, I was helping a student at my desk when I felt something come over the class and actually hit me on the shoulder, so something was being thrown at me, and I ignored it and I saw it was a little half a piece of pencil. So, it didn't hurt, so I just ignored it, got up did my teaching and then, as I had my back to the class and I was writing on the white board, several more pieces of broken pencil came. Some hit me, and some didn't hit me. So, I stopped what I was doing and asked for the culprit, and that didn't happen and so I called the Dean or the person in charge of the year group and he dealt with it - that was pretty much the incident. So they discovered approximately where the students were because there were broken pencils beneath their seats, and the other children in the class actually gave them up, said it was those four or those six, so it was never down to a group of kids who were being taken out by Mr M and spoken to and two students were suspended for assault."
INTERVIEWEE 11's EXPERIENCE:	"I'll start with the recent one. It actually happened on Friday after your initial request for this. A Grade 9 boy, he last year assaulted a female teacher, a female white teacher. This Friday, he was in my class and he was extremely obnoxious. While I was teaching he would keep on shouting in between, making comments and things and when I'd say to him, if he wished to say or ask something please put up your hand, he just said, 'Ah but, mam, but mam!!!' you know, that kind of attitude, and then I said to him, 'Look, I am not going to stand for this any longer, I am phoning the Principal now' and I phoned him, but unfortunately, he had gone home, he was lying in bed and he was ill, because I asked for this boy to be removed from my classroom immediately because I'd asked him to leave my class and he refused, and fortunately another teacher came by- she is quite a strict disciplinarian and she is quite feared by the kids and I asked her to remove this kid from my class. So he went, and also he made the comment that it's 'because 'I'm black, you're being racist' - it was just to elicit [a] response from the class because they laugh at him, they think he's very funny, and I responded by saying 'No, it must be because I'm a white female' but anyway, I lost it, I'm afraid, but I was extremely angry ... he tried to provoke me and he managed to get it right. Three years ago, there was a boy walking in front of me outside by the grandstand, he was wearing a cap and, in a joking manner. I grabbed this cap from his head, which obviously provoked him, and I get the impression he was under the influence of some kind of drug as well because his eyes were very strange. He turned around, he grabbed me by the wrist and he said, 'Give that back to me' and I resisted and I said to him, 'I will not give it back to you'. He shouldered me and he pulled out his fist like he was going to hit me and the girls that were with him pulled him back and then I went and wrote a statement about it. The upshot of it, he was called in for a disciplinary hearing he didn't appear, he didn't turn up, and then he was told by the Principal to write a letter of apology. First of all, he never did it, he never wrote or apologised in person, and secondly, I wouldn't have accepted a

	letter of apology because, as far as I'm concerned, that is an offence that should be punished by expulsion. Another incident ... a matric boy, a white boy this time ... I was walking, I came out with my class to go to the grandstand to go and do a practical for my Arts and Culture, and I saw this matric boy standing urinating through the palisades in full public view, with his girlfriend watching, so I walked up to him and I said to him, 'This is not acceptable, this is like a crime, it's public exposure'. He says, 'Oh, but mam all the toilets are locked'; I said, 'Then you go across the field to the trees, somewhere where it's private'. 'Oh no, that's too far'. So I went and I wrote a statement about that as well, the Form Supervisor called him in, he told the form supervisor - I was lying, firstly, and then, secondly, he swore at him, and then I was walking outside to go back to my class - it was the grade 8 who was still outside and, as I rounded the corner, he came around the other corner, and I said to him, 'You called me a liar'. Then he swore at me, 'I'm going to bring my mother to come to school to come and f.... you up' - you know, that was his attitude, nothing came of that either, so it's also a boy, that I don't teach, but I mean in this case, with Friday's case, this is a boy that repeatedly will come back to my class. The teacher that he beat up last year is still not back at school, she has developed all kinds of health problems, stress problems because of this boy, and she says that if this boy is here, she will not come back to school. She has just been off sick, and she is saying that she is not coming back while this boy is still here, that was a move for expulsion, the Department declined it. The proper procedure wasn't followed or some or other thing, the parents also seem to be covering up for this boy because they went up to this lady that was beaten and they said to her ... well she made a case against him and they requested that she should withdraw the case, and then they'll move the boy to another school. So she withdrew the case, and he is still here.
INTERVIEWEE 12's EXPERIENCE:	"Last year it was very bad because the Grade 8's and 9's, the boys were in one class and all the girls in one class. The boy classes were bad, really, really very bad. I had Grade 8 learners, and one of my colleagues came into my class to ask me something and three Grade 8 boys stood up, stood at the back, pulled down their pants and wanted to wee on my wall. I'm telling you, it's bad really - and some of them will stand up, as if there is no teacher in the class. 'I'll do what I want.' 'I'll walk around.' 'I'll eat my food, even it's against the class rules.' 'I'll walk from table to table.' 'I'll talk.' 'I'll disrupt the class.' 'There is no teacher in my class.' 'No teacher will tell me to keep quiet.' 'You won't tell me to keep quiet in the class.' It was bad; I'm telling you now, really it was very bad.' In general, some of them will say to me 'Oh Mrs Brown or Mrs Green, when I wear green or brown.' Yes, they treat us women very badly, especially in the Afrikaans department ... You know, I would say it's verbal and also sexual, because some of the boys would walk into your class and they will take their thing in their hand and they would walk to you and say, 'You know what, I want to go to the toooilet'… They would shake it up and down … Once I had a boy, who was sitting on his chair (gestures a reclined position) … and he was playing with himself and making himself … (masturbating) and he said, "Ek trek nou draad, ek trek nou draad." I sent him out of the classroom. They also ignore you or they get angry if you're seated and you tell them to take out their books, pen and make notes ... and they'll say "Who are you to tell me", and they'll pick up their bag and walk out the class. And when they are busy with other work, like this other teacher who took their books and then they make a helluva war - how can you take their books while they're busy working even, if it's another subject that's in the class"

APPENDIX I

SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR LEARNERS

SECTION D4
RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT FOR LEARNERS

Racism, discrimination, and sexual harassment are based on the assumption by some groups and individuals that certain groups are better or more worthy than others as a result of perceived physical and inherited differences.

The school is committed to working towards the elimination of racism, discrimination, and prejudice in its corporate conduct and in the conduct of all members of the school community.

The school will not tolerate racism, sexism, slurs, discrimination, or harassment of any kind, and will rigorously investigate any allegations of this. Those found guilty will be dealt with in terms of the school's disciplinary code and procedures and those of the department of education.

Anyone who feels that he or she is a victim of racial slurs, discrimination, or sexual harassment should report the matter to any member of staff or student leader. The staff member or student leader approached by the complainant must report the matter to the principal as a matter of urgency. Any report of such action must be treated as confidential, and the person reporting the incident may do so without fear of prejudice.

In terms of this code, racial slurs, discrimination and harassment are considered to be acts of serious misconduct as defined in the South African Schools Act, and those found guilty face possible suspension and expulsion.

WHAT IS BULLYING, AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THERE IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others through verbal harassment, physical assault or more subtle methods of caution of manipulation.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	1ST TIME OFFENDER	2ND TIME OFFENDER	3rd TIME OFFENDER
"mean" letter-writing name-calling mean teasing harassing making fun of mocking irritating	2 x break detentions; a call to parents Offender writes a letter of apology stating what they did and how their actions hurt the other	A call to the parents. Internal suspension from the classroom for **at least** one day in addition to the consequences listed in	Disciplinary hearing.

annoying pushing grabbing shoving poking tripping kicking taking property damaging property excluding behavior spreading rumours play fighting	person, as well as what they would do differently in future. Copy of the letter is sent home to the parents and returned to the principal the next day.	the previous column. Additional days will be added if bullying continues. Further punitive measures to be taken including the possibility of a disciplinary hearing.	