

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN MAINTAINING A HARMONIOUS WORKING
ENVIRONMENT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO “LEGAL” STAFF BULLYING BY THE
SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.**

by

SAMUEL BINDUKO

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SUPERVISOR: DR V T ZENGELE

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(ii)

Declaration

Student number 42832977

I declare that **THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN MAINTAINING A HARMONIOUS WORKING ENVIRONMENT: AN INVESTIGATION INTO “LEGAL” STAFF BULLYING BY THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN EKURHULENI NORTH DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

SIGNATURE

(MR S BINDUKO)

.....

DATE

(iii)

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ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying studies have gathered an increasing impetus among researchers throughout the world in the last decade. Previous research has concentrated on bullying in the context of students. Recent research has shifted focus towards workplace bullying of staff by managers. Little is known of upwards bullying where staff members bully managers or students bully their teachers. In this study, workplace bullying focuses on the bullying of teaching staff by the School Management Team. The researcher used the qualitative method for this study. Questionnaires were administered to 80 teachers. Interviews were held with eight members of the School Management Team (SMT) and ten teachers who perceived that they had been subjected to bullying. Data was coded and arranged thematically using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method of analysis. Results indicate that bullying of the teaching staff thrives in all schools but with varying degrees to certain teachers who are vulnerable due to social and environmental circumstances. The researcher recommends that schools identify cases of bullying and develop an anti-bullying policy that is incorporated in the whole school development strategy.

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KEY WORDS

Bullying, Workplace bullying, Staff bullying, Mobbing, School Management Team, Harmonious working environment, professional work ethics.

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ABBREVIATIONS

SMT	School Management Team
DoE	Department of Education
SASA	South African Schools Act
SACE	South African Council for Educators
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
SGB	School Governing Board
NPD	Narcissistic Personality Disorder
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
DBE	Department of Basic Education

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In a school setting, there exists a power imbalance between the principal, who is in charge of the school assisted by the school management team (SMT) on one hand and teachers on the other. The SMT wields power and control over teachers by virtue of the hierarchy of public service post levels.

Although there is no agreement on what constitutes workplace bullying there is general consensus that bullying shares three common things: Impact on the recipient, the negative effect on the victim and the persistence of the bullying behaviour (Agervold 2007). Research by Riley (2010) in Hayward (2010) has identified many ways in which teachers can be bullied. Hayward (2010:16-17) chronicled what he calls a “recurring” problem in almost all schools everywhere in an article entitled, “*Is there a bully in the staffroom?*” A lot has been said about bullying of students, but staff bullying has received little attention. According to de Wet (2010:1451) bullying behaviours in a school setting can be from the principal, deputy principal, Heads of Departments (HODs), colleagues at the same post level, or subordinates.

Hayward (2010:17) purports that, when staff bullying is not dealt with promptly and in an emotionally intelligent way, there can be huge negative consequences like teacher absenteeism, mental and physical illness, stress, classroom ineffectiveness, misery and high staff turnover.

According to Riley (2010) the power imbalance that exists between the school management team and the teachers encourages bullying. The experience of the researcher in the South African context is that in dealing with issues of teacher discipline, the school management team is guided by the provisions of the South African Schools Act 84/1996, the Employment of Educators Act 76/1998, the South African Council of Educators Act 31/2000 and the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).

According to Price & Clark (2011) the democratisation of the workplace has resulted in making it more difficult for managers to exercise authority over subordinates than during the apartheid era. Holding teachers to account is proving to be a daunting task. Members of the school management team may be inclined to threaten and intimidate teachers in the day to day school activities, using a plethora of legal provisions of the Acts from the Department of Education, thereby inadvertently employing bully tactics.

The focus of this research was to investigate the role played by principals in promoting harmony among teachers with particular reference to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT. A harmonious working environment is crucial for the creation of team spirit and the achievement of organisational goals. The role of the principal in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff was explored in this study.

Hayward (2010:16) defines legal bullying as, threats that are made about what will be done to a person who does not comply with the demands of the bully. According to Hayward (2010) the bully, who is in a senior management post, threatens legal action such as being charged for an act of misconduct, or being given a written warning, or being summoned to a disciplinary hearing or threatened with dismissal.

There is need from the outset to clarify the point that this behaviour has to be persistent and intended to do harm and not just a one-off incident. There is a thin line dividing the call by the SMT to perform duties as stipulated in the job description and bullying. The SMT is duty-bound to implement rules and regulations according to the public service but the point of departure is when this is done as a threat or with such persistence that it cannot be justified.

Branch (2007) brings in a variation to the concept of persistence, which is the notion of an on-going threat. Although this is not widely accepted, Zapf (2004) in Branch (2007) stated in a keynote address to the *Fourth International Conference on Bullying and Harassment in the workplace*, that situations may occur in which a single event induces an on-going threat to the target, and could qualify to be called workplace bullying. A verbal attack on someone may induce a long-lasting fear that some other form of attack could occur again. Rigby (2001) in Branch (2007:266) supports Zapf's assertion that "a one-off act of bullying is certainly possible and the threat of its

recurrence can stay with some children for a long time.” This definition may be incorporated in future definitions after further academic research and debate according to Branch (2007).

The SMT includes the heads of departments (HOD’s) of the different learning areas or subjects, the deputy principal and the principal. For the purpose of this study, Directors and owners of private or independent schools were included in the SMT as they are closely associated with the day to day running of the schools and directly influence policies and appointments. The SMT identifies with management and is different from the rest of educators in that they are responsible for the professional and academic affairs of the school.

1.2 Background to the study

Ekurhuleni North District is in the East Rand, Gauteng Province. It is a Department of Education demarcated Educational District covering parts of Benoni, Kempton Park, Daveyton and Tembisa.

The revolution in thinking about bullying in schools began in earnest in Scandinavia. The pioneer was Professor Dan Olweus from the University of Bergen (Rigby 1996:12). Writing on bullying way back in the 80’s, Besag (1989:3-4) noted that bullying is not easily defined and measured. The researcher embarked on this study cognisant of the problems of definition and measurement.

Hayward (2010:16) had this to say about the growing problem of staff bullying in South African schools, “...following the popularity of an article on staffroom bullying last year, we are featuring another one as this problem is recurring.” Staff bullying takes many dimensions as shown in a study conducted among teachers in Australian schools (www.schoolbullies.org.au).

The research on this topic was motivated by a dearth of research on staff bullying in South African schools today with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT. The personal experience of the researcher at the school where he was teaching prompted

him to investigate the phenomenon of staff bullying after coming face-to-face with it a couple of times.

1.3 Previous research on workplace bullying

Research into teaching staff bullying is a relatively new phenomenon. According to Blase and Blase (2002) research in educational management and leadership tends to focus more on the effectiveness and efficiency of educational managers rather than morale and interpersonal relationships between managers and subordinates. It has been assumed that negative leadership is merely the absence of effectiveness (Blase & Blase, 2002).

In this day and age, bullying of teachers is not something that one can easily turn attention to. For a very long time bullying has been associated with students beating up others or taking their lunch packs. Workplace bullying at the level of adults comes as a surprise to many. The question that has not been answered by research on school bullying is: What happens to the school bullies when they grow up and become adults or managers?

According to Hauge, Skogstad & Einarsen (2007) managers and supervisors have been found to be the most frequent perpetrators of workplace bullying. Studies of bullying among teachers have not received research attention for quite some time in the South African context until the 2000s. De Wet (2010:96) had this to say about bullying “the aim of the article is to report findings from a qualitative study on school principals’ bullying behaviour in the light of scarcity of literature on workplace bullying in South African schools.” The researcher wanted to close in this gap by specifically conducting a study on staff legal bullying by the SMT.

According to Blase and Blase (2004) theirs was the first large, empirical study that focused on principals’ abusive behaviour towards teachers in South Africa. This was followed by a paper exploring bullying behaviour of educational leaders with

narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) on teachers by Kirsten et al (2005). de Wet (2010) did a study on principal on teacher bullying and found that ineffective leaders often bully their subordinates. These three studies constituted documented literature on workplace bullying in schools dealing specifically with teachers in the South African context.

This study was intended to bring to light what bullying of teachers entails. From the start, the journey is fraught with problems. Besag (1989:3) gives a hint “bullying is not easily defined and measured and little research is available on this complex problem.” According to Halsall (ed) (1998:110), the term bullying covers a “complex range of social behaviours which may or may not, in fact, be classified as bullying.” The problem was further compounded by the assertion that “what is defined as bullying depends, in part, upon individual perceptions and the context in which the behaviour takes place” (Ibid).

Studying bullying at the workplace is even more arduous especially if you are studying and interviewing the perpetrator. “In studying a behaviour which is often covert and secret, it may be pertinent to turn to such sources as literature to gain an understanding of the range and depth of feelings involved and to gain a quality of insight often unattainable from those so reluctant to discuss their fear” (Besag 1989:3).

This study was done fully cognisant of the limitations that previous researchers encountered. Bullying is a sensitive topic and people generally do not want to be called bullies, especially at the level of school management. The term exudes some associated unwelcome stigma. Victims may also be hesitant to come out in the open for fear of reprisals and retribution.

According to de Wet (2010:1450) workplace bullying “is a pervasive and harmful feature of modern workplaces worldwide.” Studies in workplace bullying began in

Sweden in the 1990s led by Henrik Leymann (Agervold 2007). Thereafter workplace bullying studies received an unprecedented impetus (Blase &Blase 2004; Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson & Wilkes 2006; Lewis 2004). Researchers like Denton & Van Lill (2007); Kistern, Viljoen & Rossouw (2005); Pietersen (2007) and Steinman (2003) studied workplace bullying in South Africa. Blase and Blase (2004) carried out the first largest study when they interviewed 50 teachers on the principals' abusive behaviour towards teachers.

Bullying of teachers has not received a fair share of research in South Africa and it is a fertile ground for new research and ideas. de Wet (2010:1450) explains that all workers in South Africa, including teachers, have a constitutional and judiciary right to a workplace experience in which they feel valued and respected, because the South African work situation is "psychologically and physically toxic." Burton (2001:24) purports that, "South African workers are simmering just below boiling point, are more stressed than any other society in the workplace," because of the rapid changes, economic uncertainty and unrealistic expectations coupled with a general feeling of disempowerment.

It is common knowledge that violent crime is South Africa's most pressing problem, with the city of Johannesburg earning a slot on the world map as the crime "capital" of the world. Maiden and Terblanche (2006) argue that South Africa has the highest rates of violence in the world and community violence in the form of car-jackings, bank robberies, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) bombings, rape, beatings, street robberies, burglary and homicides have a spill-over impact on the South African workplace.

The violence is manifesting itself in the form of violent learners bringing weapons to school, reflecting the society they come from. To illustrate the gravity of the bullying situation in South African schools, a Grade 11 pupil at Phineas Xulu Secondary School in Vosloorus was shot dead by another pupil on 20 November 2012 because of bullying (www.news24.com). Teachers are not left out in the web of the violent

society they work in. Kirsten et al (2005:13) say for many teachers coming to school is like coming to the battleground where the war is between themselves and the school principal. These assertions made the need for research in the area of bullying even more urgent. This is done with a view to getting down to the root of the causative factors and offering tentative solutions based on empirical research, some form of action research.

Thomas (2005:273-288) carried out a study on bullying of teachers and sent out a total of 100 self-report questionnaires via the internal mail system. 10 interviews were carried out with teachers who perceived that they had been bullied. 42 responded from the 100 questionnaires administered. Nineteen of the 42 teachers who responded to the questionnaires reported experiencing one or more forms of bullying in the previous two years. 17 teachers of the 42 witnessed colleagues being bullied. Headaches, fatigue, listlessness, stress and a decrease in workplace morale were the effects bullying had on the victims.

Gibbs (2008:2740) concluded that victims of bullying were affected physically and emotionally. Effects on victims included low job performance and a negative impact on the academic success of the victims' students. According to de Wet (2010:1453) all bullies want power and control and victims seek support but principals do not assist abused teachers. Policies are in place to prevent childhood bullying and laws protect adults from discriminatory abuse, but no regulations exist to shield teacher victims from their peer bullies (Gibbs 2008:2740). This may largely be attributed to a lack of awareness of the phenomenon of teaching staff bullying in schools.

According to Kruger (2008:6) the administrator is key to the success of a school. This calls for the principal of the school to take a leading role in the maintenance of harmony among his teaching staff. According to van Dick and Wagner (2001) workload and mobbing lead to stress reactions, whereas principal support reduces the perception of workload and mobbing. The principal's level of support will make or break the teacher. Any solution to bullying of teaching staff by the SMT must focus

on the bullies, the victims and the bystanders as educating all three groups is crucial in putting an end to bullying according to Fieldman (2004).

Hayward (2010:17) purports that, when staff bullying is not dealt with promptly and in an emotionally intelligent way, there can be huge negative consequences like teacher absenteeism, mental and physical illness, stress, classroom ineffectiveness, misery and high staff turnover. The existence and adverse effects of bullying as revealed in the literature cannot be over-emphasised.

Douglas (2001:11) clarifies bullying by saying that, many people equate bullying behaviour to strong management, which is not true. Strong management is about being able to lead and manage people in a way which does not demean them but guides, encourages, supports and directs them. As a country coming from an era with strong-arm tactics in government and control, South African principals may be made to believe that autocratic leadership is the way to go but this may not work in the new democratic dispensation.

Maguire (2001) did a study on the principal bullying teachers and the impact of bullying on victims. He found out that there was a lack of an effective regime for monitoring of regulations governing principals' behaviour and the characteristics of bullies. There were no anti-bullying policies in place to deal with principals and teachers. This can be attributed to a lack of knowledge about the existence of teaching staff bullying by the SMT at the level of national government.

Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2010) drew the following conclusions from their Australian study: It is an indisputable fact that staff bullying does occur in Australian schools and affects the mental and physical health of those being bullied. They also encouraged that it is time that some action is taken to eliminate staff bullying. A major implication of the results is the role that leadership should be taking to eliminate bullying of staff.

Lewis (2004:281-299) explored the concept of shame within the context of workplace bullying. Based on content analysis from narratives of 15 college and university lecturers who were self-selecting victims of bullying Lewis (2004), found clear evidence for feelings of shame which appeared to last long after the bullying episodes had ended. This made the need to research on bullying even more pertinent as the effects can go beyond the classroom or school milieu. Feelings of shame may affect the victim's private life for a long time.

Lewis *et al* (2002:109-116) concluded in their study that targets of workplace harassment may experience stress, depression, low-esteem, loss of sleep and even post-traumatic stress disorder. Saam (2010) in (Lewis *et al* (2002) asserts that intervention strategies for workplace bullying must target conflict moderation, mediation, coaching and organisational development. These strategies were given as alternatives to curb bullying of the teaching staff. Duffy (2009) argues that legislation and policy development are two key initiatives that can help prevent such mobbing and bullying.

According to Harvey *et al* (2007) there are three individuals involved in all incidents of bullying: the bully, the victim and the individuals who observe the bullying event. The characteristics of each of these individuals can have an impact on the event. The presence of other teachers or SMT members may have an impact on the bullied teacher. De Wet (2010: 1454) identified the characteristics of the bully as, envy, destructive narcissism, evil, hypocrisy and persistence. Researchers like Cemalogly (2007); Einarsen (1999); Hall, (2005), Kirsten *et al*, (2005) agree that abusers often feel threatened in their positions and they bully those they feel have an "edge" over them.

On maintaining harmony and curbing bullying, Hayward (2010:16) divides schools into three groups; quality schools, ordinary and poor quality schools. The quality schools work hard to create a happy, productive organisational climate and anyone passing through the corridors of the school can pick up the "vibes". Of the latter, he

says, poor quality schools are characterised by an inability to deal assertively with bullying and hence bullying rambles under the surface and eventually explodes! Hayward (2010:16) goes on to offer eight ways to deal with bullying which fall out of scope of this section.

1.4 Significance of the study

Most of the books on library shelves and in journal articles today deal with bullying in the context of the students. Bullying of teachers is synonymous with some “*man bites dog*” story. Douglas (2001:3) wrote that, most people when they think of bullying conjure up an image of playground thugs picking on the weak or vulnerable, however, sadly there is mounting evidence to suggest that bullying is not confined exclusively to a child’s world, but also happens at work to adults at their places of work. Some researchers prefer to use the term “psychological harassment” rather than bullying when it is applied to the place of work (Douglas 2001).

Bullying at schools might not be recognised as such because so much has been talked about children being bullied that teaching staff bullying becomes a misnomer. Douglas (2001:4) describes this problem of bullying in the workplace as having probably existed for hundreds of years but since we live in more enlightened times, we might naively expect that people are treated with respect and consideration but the nature of bullying may have become more “subtle and sophisticated.”

Douglas (2001) observed that the principles of control and abuse of position still exist and are very much a reality. This study is important in that it seeks to find out the prevalence of the phenomenon of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in schools. According to the framework given by the National Centre for Social Research, all research should contribute to advancing knowledge or understanding and this study is no exception (Newby 2010:456).

According to de Wet (2010:1450) a reading of literature on the South African workplace bullying “...also indicates a need for research on workplace bullying in schools.” Pietersen (2007); Denton and Van Lill (2000) carried out phenomenological

studies on bullying in industry and academia but these cannot be transferrable to the teaching staff in high schools “*lock, stock and barrel.*” Workplace bullying studies of teachers in South Africa started much later than in the first world. The first study in South Africa was done in 2004 according to Blase & Blase (2004).

Besag (1989), defines staff bullying as “a behaviour which is a repeated attack by those in power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification.” It is in essence the unjust exercise of power of one individual over another by use of means intended to humiliate, frighten, denigrate or injure the victim (Workplace Bullying: Report of NASUWT Survey of members, 1995). It is not, however an isolated verbal warning or reprimand.

Wartgow (2008:117) describes what he calls the impact of the fear and hassles of litigation in the American education system today. He warns that there is a cumulative result of the proliferation of laws and legal mandates. This has resulted in well-intentioned people having created a legal and lawsuit culture in America that has transformed the school system into places in which people are nervous about performing even ordinary activities for fear of violating the law or being sued.

In a survey by the Public Agenda Research Group (2004:4) 78 % of teachers reported that the fear of being sued has prompted teachers, principals and district administrators to reduce their exposure to risk. They do this by avoiding to make the judgements necessary for the society and its educational system to function well. Post-independent South Africa has had a situation where the legal regime has been flooded by rights hitherto not enjoyed. The rights might be militating against well-intentioned causes but being used and abused to meet individualistic ends. This investigation sought to find out how far the threats of bullying are followed up.

1.5 Statement of the problem

To understand the current status or the future of a particular trend, one needs to go back in time and delve into the past. South Africa is a nation emerging from an apartheid system of government. The dawn of a new era in 1994 brought immense challenges to the education system. This study was instituted to find out what is happening in schools today. The problem statement was formulated around the issue that bullying of the teaching staff by the school management team needs to be curtailed as it negatively affects the existence of a harmonious working environment among teachers and the SMT. A bullied teacher is an unhappy teacher, and an unhappy teacher cannot perform well in the discharge of duties. Acrimony and fear do not augur well for the maintenance of harmony in schools.

1.5.1 Research questions

The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the level of bullying of staff by the SMT in high schools?
- What is the extent of staff bullying by the SMT?
- What is the impact of staff bullying by the SMT?
- What role should the principal play in creating a harmonious working environment with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT?
- What can be done to eliminate staff bullying by the SMT in South African schools?

1.5.2 Aim of the study

The study aimed to investigate bullying of teaching staff in Ekurhuleni North District with a view to finding ways of curtailing it. This research aimed to bring to the fore, the role played by the principal in eliminating disharmony among staff as a result of bullying by the SMT.

1.5.3 Objectives of the study

The researcher's objectives were:

- To determine the level, extent and impact of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District high schools.
- To investigate the role played by the principal in creating a harmonious working environment between SMT's and teachers.
- To explore what can be done to curtail the SMT from bullying.

1.6 Limitations and delimitations of the study.

The study was confined to Ekurhuleni North District high schools only. The study was basically conducted in four high schools spread out in Ekurhuleni North District. Questionnaires were administered to the teaching staff, interviews were held with victimised teachers, the SMT and principals of the four high schools.

1.7 Methods of research

The qualitative approach was selected to carry out this study. The method was basically inductive and intended to discover the existence, level, extent and impact of bullying among teachers by the SMT and then determine the role that the principal plays in solving the issue of bullying on staff. A phenomenological theoretical framework was employed to ascertain teachers' exposure to bullying by the SMT through an analysis of participants' interview transcripts (de Wet 2010). The teachers filled in self-report questionnaires sent via the internal mail system. All teachers were given questionnaires in envelopes. They filled in and returned them in sealed envelopes. When issuing out the questionnaires instructions were given as to the procedures for returning questionnaires and how the subsequent interviews would be conducted. Interviews with participants who perceived that they had been bullied by the SMT were held to expand on questionnaires.

Interviews of victimised teachers were subsequently carried out after questionnaires had picked up those teachers who perceived that legal bullying had occurred to

them. Voices of the victims of bullying as transcribed in interviews were used to illustrate teachers' experiences of bullying (de Wet, 2010). Interviews were held with teachers and the members of the SMT. Data was coded and arranged thematically using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method of analysing data.

The study population was made up of all High Schools teaching staff and SMT in Ekurhuleni North District. Four high schools were selected in Ekurhuleni North District for study using the purposive, or judgemental sampling method. The four schools were selected on the following criteria; one former model "C" public school in Kempton Park, one township public school in Tembisa, one secular independent school and one independent Church school.

The different schools were selected for the sake of comparison and to make adequate coverage of the different types of school. Guided by the principles of the purposive sampling technique, participants were sampled continuously until no more new information could be obtained. Interviews were subsequently held with teachers who indicated on questionnaires that they had been subjected to legal bullying. Teachers indicated convenient times, venues and dates for subsequent interviews on the questionnaires.

Information was obtained through one-on-one interviews with the four high school principals, four members of the SMT and ten sampled teachers from the four high schools. Data was transcribed and then coded to draw conclusions on the level and impact of staff legal bullying and what the principals were doing about it. Permission to record and video-tape was sought first from the participants. Permission to video or audio-tape was not granted, interviews had to be transcribed *verbatim*.

The research paradigm assumed a mixture of logical empiricism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, systems theory and critical rationalism (Higgs and Smith 2006).

1.8 Clarification of concepts

The concepts used in this investigation are hereby given their contextual meanings. Concepts used herein owe their origin to researchers who have tackled this topic

before, hence definitions are obtained from previous research material and may be in some circumstances, fine-tuned to fit the contemporary context.

1.8.1 Harmonious working environment

A workplace atmosphere that is devoid of harmful conflict among workers and operates smoothly and coherently to achieve organisational goals. Van der Westhuizen (1997:192-192) states that, sound relationships lead to effective management. The education leader has to establish relationships with everyone in the school: the learners, educators, administrative staff and cleaning staff and with the different groups. Prinsloo (2008:189) concurs and adds, “management is often defined as getting people to do things.” They can only do these things if the work environment is conducive and harmonious. This fact brings to the fore issues of job-satisfaction and morale, which make up the core of harmony for teachers in accomplishing educational goals.

1.8.2 Workplace bullying in general

Daniel (2009:1) defines workplace bullying as, repeated mistreatment against a target individual manifested as either verbal abuse, or conduct which is threatening, humiliating, intimidating, or sabotage that interferes with work, or a combination of the three. From this definition one can draw conclusions that the act has to be repetitive but may assume many forms, its aim being to denigrate another person. There is need to differentiate bullying from a once-in-a while call to perform duties which is necessary to prod workers who may be slackening or taking a nap.

1.8.3 Staff bullying

Hayward (2010:16) wrote that, bullying happens when threats are made about what will be done, using legal means, to a person who does not comply with the demands of the bully. The bully who occupies a senior position threatens legal action on the victim, for example being charged for an act of misconduct, threatened with

dismissal, instituting a commission of inquiry, being given a warning or being summoned to a disciplinary hearing.

1.8.4 Mobbing

This is the type of playground bullying where a group of people bullies an individual. “Mobbing is group bullying, ganging up on someone using the tactics of rumour, innuendo, discrediting, isolating, intimidating and above all making it look as if the targeted person were the guilty party or instigated behaviour” (Elliot 2003:3). The term has its origins in the animal kingdom where, for example, geese form a group to terrorise and drive away a predator, such as a fox. This term is explained here to show the difference between mobbing and bullying in the context of this study. It is relevant for this study where there is a possibility that the SMT as a group can mob a teacher.

1.8.5 School management team

Sepeng (2002:13) describes the school management team as having come into existence as a result of the restructuring process of the education system in South Africa since 1996. It is composed of the principal of the school, the deputy principal and the heads of department of different learning areas or subjects. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), this body or team is involved with the daily management issues and professional duties of the school. In the school organo-gram the headmaster or principal is at the top, followed by the deputy principal, then the heads of departments followed by teachers. In independent and church schools, the directors and owners of the schools also form part of the SMT.

1.9 Chapter division

The research report was presented in five chapters summarised below.

Chapter one gave a general outline of the intention to research, the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, significance of the research, aim, chapter division and explanation of concepts.

Chapter two documented a literature study pertaining to bullying in general, staff bullying in particular, research issues on workplace bullying in education and the role played by the SMT in creating a harmonious working environment.

Chapter three described and explain the research design and methodology employed in gathering and presenting data for this study. Justification of the choice of the research design and methodology will be inherently given.

Chapter four presented research findings and the discussion of findings as mirrored against the research questions, aims and objectives.

Chapter five provided the conclusion, recommendations for further study and limitations of this study.

1.10 Conclusion

Chapter one gave an overview of the research and the rationale for embarking on this research journey. Proceeding directly from this, the next chapter documents a detailed review of available literature on staff bullying within the teaching fraternity. This was done with a view to finding out what contemporary literature says about staff bullying, the gaps that were in the literature and the challenges encountered.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one introduced the background to this study on bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT. The significance of carrying out this study was given to justify the purpose, aim and objectives. Chapter two presented a review of available literature on bullying in general and then staff legal bullying specifically. Since the scope of this study was the bullying of teaching staff, more emphasis was given to legal bullying and a cursory glimpse of the workplace bullying was dealt with to put the staff bullying into proper perspective. Literature on methods used to study bullying and the theoretical framework underpinning bullying research was documented in this chapter.

2.2 The principal's role in creating a harmonious working environment

The principal, as the Department of Education's representative at school level, has a vanguard role in maintaining a harmonious working environment for the teaching staff. Van der Westhuizen (1997:191-192) argues that "the character and personality of the school principal and the other education leaders are very important in teaching as they influence the relationships that are important for the job satisfaction of the staff in the various departments in particular, and the happiness of the school in general." Ramsey, (1999:43) concurs and adds "leaders determine good or bad morale more than any other single factor." This puts the role of the principal and the SMT into the limelight as they steer the school towards the attainment of educational goals. Mfusi (2011:19) notes that without experienced managers and effective leaders, schools will become dysfunctional.

Guditus (1984:2-3) describes how the status of authority for principals has been eroded. He writes about the nostalgic times when administration could be drawn on

the authority vested in their positions to issue orders and could expect unquestionable obedience. During this time, equated to the apartheid era in South Africa, principals abused their authority and created authoritarian regimes. Teachers were obedient because they feared authority. The situation has radically changed in South Africa.

With the advent of independence and democracy, Guditus (1984) notes that there have been challenges to authority and legal statutes have put constraints on decision-making powers of administrators. Disciplinary hearings and other due processes and procedures have been mandated for suspension of teachers, thereby reducing “unilateral powers inherent in administrative positions“ (Guditus 1984:3). According to Price (2011:4) “holding teachers to account is proving no easy task.” Citing cases of anarchy in township schools, Price (2011) notes that late-coming, absenteeism and not doing the basic things about teaching are endemic in many South African Schools.

Cornuelle, in (Guditus(1984:3) says of the situation in the United States of America during the 1980s, “Americans everywhere are becoming insubordinate, unmanageable.” The same scenario can be said of South Africa, where there has been a lot of democratisation in the workplaces and elsewhere to such an extent that the rights have given people an excuse to resist authority legally.

When managers find that their authority has been eroded they tend to form coalitions with their peers to protect whatever prerogatives they can and to present a united front against the opposition that challenges, Guditus (1984:3). Accordingly the principal may see the management team as a means of “circulating the wagons” in self-defence in a form of the *Vootrekker Laager* (Ibid).The situation described by Guditus (1984) can be likened to the period that South Africa is getting into after the demise of apartheid and the dawn of the democratic era.

Peters (1976: 2) describes the evolving situation in schools as becoming more and more impractical for principals to rule in the authoritarian way in which their predecessors did. He quickly hints that schools cannot be full democracies in the political sense, because of the lack of responsibility among many staff members and also the fact that teachers are appointed as authorities with specialised knowledge. Goodwin, in Peters (1976:25) says that the responsibility of the head is to see that law and order prevails and a head will either rule his school or there will be no rule. The principal's task is made difficult by the fact that democracy brings with it entanglements that interfere with the discharge of his/her duties.

At the other extreme end of the teacher discipline continuum, Eller and Eller (2011:1) write that with increased school accountability, we can no longer ignore the behaviours of difficult and resistant staff in our schools because a few people cannot keep the rest of the group from moving ahead. The question that comes to the fore is how to deal with such teachers without inviting more problems and bureaucratic hurdles. There is need to strike a delicate balance between tolerating anarchy on one end and bringing order "at a price" on the other.

Organisations are goal-orientated entities and are made up of people who aim to accomplish collectively what individuals acting alone cannot achieve as well according to Guditus (1984:157). People are the most important and valuable resource in any organisation. It follows therefore that, to achieve organisational goals, an organisation must, of necessity, promote the welfare of its members. Guditus (1984:157) affirms this and adds, "many organisations encounter difficulties because they fail to draw sufficiently upon the abundance of talents and energy possessed by those who serve in them." The principal must be a leader in tapping the various talents among the staff.

The principal needs to be equipped with skills to manage schools in the new dispensation. There is need for the principal to find out and understand how resistant

or difficult staff got that way. Eller and Eller (2011) give four stages a person goes through as one experiences life and how this impacts on the mind-set and behaviour of an individual. The four stages are;

1. A person goes through experiences/ events.
2. Common attributes stick out and conclusions form.
3. Conclusions form definite patterns which determine the way of thinking and govern the way one sees the world.
4. Comfort zones form along conclusions- predictability forms. Incoming information is filtered through this frame of reference. Information matching the frame will be accepted. Information that conflicts the frame is discounted. The person resists new information and thought patterns that do not conform to the frame of reference.

The frames of reference can affect both teachers and the principal. This, they do by hanging on to pre-conceived thoughts and misconceptions about staff members. The SMT may remain focussed on staff members' past issues or behaviours without giving them a chance to change. They do this because incoming information about the teacher is filtered through the wrong frame and the principal or SMT member resists new information about the teacher. The SMT may attach negative thoughts to a teacher because of his or her association with other negative staff members. Principals may develop an opinion about a person's attitude or competency because of his or her background (Eller and Eller 2011).

The principal must keep an open mind when dealing with staff members and not be stereotypical. The principal must realise that conflict occurs naturally as individuals encounter differences of opinion related to perspectives and experiences. The principal needs to acknowledge that conflict will be experienced if one implements new programmes, makes changes or takes on difficult or resistant staff (Eller and

Eller ,2011). Staff bullying may be a result of the SMT mishandling conflict in a school.

According to Gibbs (2008) a principal must support victims who have been bullied by other teachers and ensure that this abuse comes to an end by playing a key role in relational trust and collaboration. Teacher leaders are often sanctioned by administration to dominate other teachers. This can be prevented if principals build teacher leadership in all teachers (Gibbs 2008). This is supported by the assertion that good leaders are good followers, and great leaders create leaders, not followers. The role of the principal in maintaining a harmonious working environment is emphasized by the literature as of vital importance.

Ramsey (1999) argues that there are certain characteristics typical of a school with high morale as opposed to one where there is low morale. Of the former he says, you know you have high morale:

- When teachers like to come to school.
- When teachers show up fresh every morning; laugh and have fun together; care about the image of the organisation; tackle even hard tasks willingly.
- When teachers show pride in the school and even go the extra mile to achieve established goals.

This can only happen if the principal and the SMT are at the fore-front of the drive to make this situation tenable in the school.

Bullying tends to affect the morale of the teachers. Ramsey (1999:42-43) defines morale at school as how school staff members feel about themselves, their work, their bosses, their school and professional life. Good morale results in a strong sense of common purpose, mutual support and unified effort. Low morale produces non-committal attitudes, half-hearted efforts and lacklustre performances. Snyman

(2011:4) asserts that creating a work environment ruled by fear severely hampers creativity; it demotivates staff and places blind loyalty above vision. Staff bullying is likely to achieve all of these bad attributes for teachers. Citing one incident as an example of what bullying of teachers achieves, de Wet (2010:1454) wrote about a principal who had been out of the teaching profession for a time to do business. The principal was described by one participant as:

“...more of a businessperson than a teacher...he runs the school like a business...everything must be done according to the book; there is a lot of show, but no heart. He doesn't care about the children or his staff.”

So much importance is attached to morale that Ramsey (1999) says it is the “cornerstone of productivity” in all human organisations and schools are no exception. According to Ramsey (1999:42) morale influences how you lead, how much you can expect, and how much you really get out of people.

Morale is closely related to job satisfaction. Ramsey (1999) concludes by saying that with high morale, school personnel work hard, have fun and reach their goals. In situations where morale is low, nobody tries and nobody cares. Accomplishment becomes an embarrassment.

To establish a relationship of high morale and job satisfaction between teachers and the SMT and to uphold the principles leading to job satisfaction, the SMT needs to be aware of group dynamics. Many times in today's corporate world we hear of team-building efforts. This is a belief that organisational objectives are better attained by and through teams or groups.

Ramsey (1999:39) concludes that as long as you are doing most of the work yourself as a principal, you are not leading anyone, real leaders achieve results by working through others, “the administrator who can get maximum effort out of everyone in an organisation is always a cut above the rest.” Dividing staff through bullying will in no doubt militate against team-building efforts. The SMT needs to ensure that they bring

everyone on board and sowing seeds of division through bullying will lead to an unhealthy working atmosphere.

To understand how to bring out the best in teachers the SMT needs to understand team-building activities and incorporate them in their administrative regime. Ramsey (1998:39) affirms this and says, “we all know principals who consistently bring out the best in everyone. They are able to keep people interested, charged up, focused and working hard.”

2.2.1 Groups in the school

Prinsloo (2008:189-190) observed that, as in any other organisation, the organisational structure of the school makes provision for the existence of different groups. The school principal, deputy principal and heads of department together form the school’s management team. Each of the heads of departments is in charge of their departments made up of a number of teachers, which is another group. Groups act together to achieve organisational goals.

The issue of groups relates to this study in the sense that the SMT was selected for study as a group of managers facilitating the achievement of educational goals through groups of teachers in the different departments. The whole group of teachers and the SMT works together for one purpose, to provide an education to the children of school-going age. These two groups need to work together to achieve organisational goals. Any feelings of animosity and disharmony will militate against the attainment of goals. Bullying is the antithesis of harmony.

According to Prinsloo (2008:190-191) the following are criteria for a group:

- There should be constant interaction between group members
- Group members have to be interdependent. Patients sitting in a doctor’s waiting room do not form a group because they do not depend on each other

to achieve aims. Teachers form a group because they depend on each other to improve the pass rate for example.

- The relationship between group members has to be relatively stable, and should persist for a reasonable length of time. This calls for the maintenance of a harmonious working environment for sustainability. It has to be continuous and long-lasting.
- Group members should strive for common aims for example a 100% pass rate.
- Group identity is essential. Teachers should say “our” school.
- The group must be small enough to bring feelings of solidarity. They must have a common interest uniting them for example a subject, geography.

Group work has a number of advantages. According to Squelch & Lemmer (1994:70-71) top among them being, co-operation not competition, sharing of information and innovation, two-way communication, better decisions and results, higher morale and job satisfaction. The group dynamics are the basis on which team-building revolves around. The SMT as a group must understand fully the group dynamics playing out in a school set up and must encourage rather than confront and antagonise teachers. Legal bullying of teachers is counter-productive in team-building efforts.

2.2.2 Establishing sound human relations

Prinsloo (2008: 198-199) gives the attitudes and personality traits that are necessary for the establishment of sound human relations:

- Friendliness and courtesy: People want to be treated with kindness and the leader needs to be friendly.
- Respect and warmth: People value appreciation and acknowledgement.
- Honesty and sincerity: People will respect a leader who is honest and true to their word.

- Genuineness and spontaneity: Leaders need not be pretenders but true and down-to-earth.
- Consistency :A rule that applies to “A” must also apply to “B”.
- Concreteness: This is the opposite of vagueness and not being specific.

The SMT needs to adopt these attitudinal and personality traits for the accomplishment of educational goals. As is apparent from these attitudes and traits, any form of bullying will defeat the purpose and aim of the establishment of a harmonious working atmosphere.

2.2.3 Guidelines for establishing human relations

Van der Westhuizen (1997:192-193) alludes to the following guidelines in establishing harmonious relations:

- Remember that people are important.
- Take into account people’s opinions, feelings and insights.
- Believe in your staff.
- Create opportunities for staff to realise their full potential, do not stifle them.
- Involve staff in formulating aims so that they own the programme.
- Allocate tasks according to interests and ability.
- Motivate staff.
- Show appreciation and acknowledge achievement.
- Encourage two-way communication.
- Improve morale and group solidarity.
- Delegate tasks, responsibility and authority.

The SMT would do well to adopt these guidelines and bullying of any type would not find a place in schools as it is counterproductive and militates against the guidelines above.

2.2.4 Legal provisions for dealing with teachers

Teacher discipline is dealt with by the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and the South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000 (SACE). It is not within the scope of this dissertation to document in detail all the legal provisions of these Acts. A cursory glimpse into the important parts will be given.

The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 deals with the conditions of service, appointments, promotion and transfers, termination of services, incapacity and misconduct. Emphasis will be put on the last two- Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 deals with termination of services and article 11. (1) reads, “the employer may, having due regard to the applicable provisions of the Labour Relations Act, discharge an educator from service –

- (a) on account of ill- health,
- (b) on account of the abolition of the educator’s post...”

Chapter 5 deals with incapacity and misconduct and article 16 states that:

If it is alleged that an educator is unfit for the duties attached to the educator’s post or incapable of carrying out those duties efficiently, the employer must assess the capacity of the educator and may take action against the educator in accordance with the incapacity code and procedures for poor work performance as provided in schedule 1

There is need to clarify that the employer’s representative at school level is the principal. Article 18 deals with a plethora of offences for which an educator may be charged with an act of misconduct if they are contravened.

The South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2000 specifies the disciplinary code and procedures for educators including conducting a disciplinary hearing and warnings.

The employer at school level is represented by the principal assisted by the SMT and the SGB. The legal provisions and circulars are at the SMT’s disposal to invoke

against teachers. In spite of the existence of the legal avenues for bringing teachers to toe the line, it must be made clear that the process of instituting charges against an offending teacher is mindboggling. The whole process is filled with bureaucratic hurdles and few principals or SMT members would be willing to go through the lengthy process that may take months if not years.

Writing about the American system of education, Wartgow (2008:96) says " fear of litigation and political reprisals for failing to comply with the detailed letter of a rapidly increasing number of laws, rules and regulations has effectively eliminated the ability of educators to exercise professional judgement and retain control of their schools." Wartgow (2008) goes on to chronicle how it is almost impossible using the current legal channels to expel a learner from school as the paperwork involved is just daunting.

The next legal hurdle he calls an "undue process- removing an unsatisfactory teacher." Citing an example Wartgow (2008:102) says, literature is filled with examples of how difficult it is to dismiss an unsatisfactory teacher. In one case it took the Grossmont Union School District in Southern California thirteen years and \$312 000-00 in legal costs to "fire" one teacher for incompetence. The same can be said of the current South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA).

The procedure to discharge a teacher is arduous and few principals are willing to even start it. They may just threaten to use the legal instruments but may never set out to do it practically. Wartgow (2008: 103) says ,"the sad reality is that since it is so difficult to "fire" incompetent teachers, principals are more likely to encourage them to transfer to other schools than deal with the hassle of the formal dismissal procedures. This is aptly and succinctly described by Wartgow (2008) as the situation where, "the three Ls (legislation, litigation, and labour agreements) are strangling the three Rs (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic) This study intends to investigate how far the legal threats or bullying really go.

2.3 Bullying of teachers in general

Amay-MSF Trade Union (1994) defines workplace bullying as, “persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress.” It must be made from the outset that there is no agreement on what constitutes staff bullying. According to de Wet (2010:1451) “definitions on workplace bullying usually share three common elements.” These are impact on the recipient, the negative effect on the victim and the persistence of the behaviour. The behaviour can either be from the principal, deputy principal, Heads of Departments, colleagues at the same level, or subordinates in the form of fellow teachers or learners.

From the foregoing discussion one can draw the conclusion that bullying can go both ways- downwards or upwards. The scope of this study is downwards from the SMT to the teachers. The researcher chose to study downwards bullying as he felt that there is more need for research into bullying by a senior person or group on junior employees than there is for upwards bullying. Upwards bullying in the form of learners bullying teachers or the principal, is another fertile ground for future research. The Star newspaper of 27 September 2011 carried an interesting photograph of a principal -Madoda Mahlutshana, of Chris Hani high school in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, running scared and fleeing from a group of enraged pupils- some form of learners physically bullying a principal!

According to www.bullyonline.org, the purpose of bullying is to hide some inadequacy in the bully. “Bullying has nothing to do with managing, good managers manage, bad managers bully. Bullies run dysfunctional and inefficient organisations.”

The relationship that should exist between the school management team and teachers is one of peaceful co-existence devoid of harmful conflicts and disharmony. The SMT should support the teaching staff and implement rules and regulations with love and goodwill. Teachers should not feel threatened, bullied or intimidated in the

discharge of their duties as they will act out of fear or compulsion and not as they are called by their professional ethics and responsibility.

Research has come up with ten ways in which staff bullying occurs, according to Gower (ed) (2010). A sample of these types of bullying appears in a study done among staff in Australian schools by Riley (2010) (www.schoolbullies.org.au). These are listed with their corresponding percentages of teachers experiencing the bullying type as:

- Information is withheld which affects your performance (94.9%);
- Questioning of your decisions, procedures and judgement (94.8%);
- Tasks are set with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines (94.4%);
- Attempts are made to belittle and undermine your work (92.9%);
- Recognition, acknowledgement and praise are withheld (90.9%);
- You are ignored or excluded (89.5%);
- Your mental or physical health has been affected by the behaviour towards you (88.7%);
- You are exposed to an unmanageable workload (87.8%);
- Excluded/ frozen out/ ignored from decision-making (87.6%);
- Undermining of your integrity (86.3%).

To these ten, Hayward (2010) adds five more to suit the South African context. These are:

- Spreading gossip or rumours about a person;
- Removing areas of responsibility without reasonable explanations;
- Blocking applications for leave, promotion or training;
- Regulation bullying, and

- Legal bullying.

The researcher specifically chose to research on teaching staff bullying. Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2009) did research on bullying in Australian schools and concluded that while there is considerable research on student bullying, there is very little research on staff bullying. They made an attempt to differentiate staff bullying from the “playground “bullying by saying the former is identified with the bullying of an adult, who can either be the perpetrator or the victim. Their research focused on answering the questions: Does bullying of staff occur? Who are the bullies? And who are the targets? What type of staff bullying occurs? What is the effect of bullying on the individual? What strategies diminish the practice of bullying?

Douglas (2001:11) clarifies bullying by saying that, many people equate bullying behaviour to strong management, which is not true. Strong management is about being able to lead and manage people in a way which does not demean them but guides, encourages, supports and directs them. As a country coming from an era with strong-arm tactics in government and control, South African principals may be made to believe that autocratic methods work better than *laissez-fair* or some middle-ground leadership style between the two extremes.

Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2010) drew the following conclusions from their study: It is an indisputable fact that staff bullying does occur in Australian schools and affects the mental and physical health of those being bullied. They also encouraged that it is time that some action is taken to eliminate staff bullying. A major implication of the results is the role that leadership should be taking to eliminate bullying of staff. It will be manifested if the Australian case is similar to the South African context. It is also appreciated that it will be very difficult to eliminate bullying if the school principal or SMT is the bully!

Stewart (2009:18)) discovered that Unions call for independent teams to assess cases of bullying because the current system tends to favour school principals over the classroom staff. He advocated for squads of trained, neutral Governors that should be set up to deal with the rise in cases where principals are accused of bullying staff.

It was envisaged that there would be some resistance from the SMT, especially the principal or Directors to carry out this study for the same reason. The SMT could be favoured over teachers in a similar way. One may be forgiven for imagining the sort of responses they would get from SMT members who might be the bullying perpetrators themselves. It may be easier to deal with the victims but they may also not open up for fear of reprisals and victimisation. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to try and curtail this. A clear explanation of the nature of the study is to be made in chapter three on methods to gain access to teachers, the principal being the first '*port of call*.'

Newman (2009) records the findings in a report that she found clear evidence of a system's institutional failure to confront bullying against staff between 2001 and 2007. Fawcet (2003) also documents an incident where an acting principal bullied staff and students and was brought before the court to answer six charges of inappropriate behaviour in the city of Birmingham. Quite a number of other articles appearing in the Times Educational Supplement allude to the growing trend in staff bullying (Browell 2001; Streeter, Brown et al 1995; Andrea 1991).

2.4 Theoretical framework

A number of scholars have developed different theories on abuse of workers by the management. Blase and Blase (2004) used *symbolic interactionism* to study principal -on -teacher bullying. Symbolic interactionism rests on the idea that individuals act towards people and things on the basis of the meaning they attach to those people or things. The meanings are derived from the social interaction that individuals have with one another. The meanings are handled and modified through

an interpretive process used by individuals to deal with things and people they encounter.

Another theoretical framework that can be used to study the causes and effects of bullying is the socio-ecological model. The reasons for and impact of workplace bullying are complex. “The socio-ecological model is a theoretical framework that can be used to examine the multiple effects and interrelatedness of social elements in an environment” de Wet (2011:1451). There are many variations and adaptations of this model, one of which is the Uri Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory. This model states that “the ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls” Bronfenbrenner (1979:3).

Another variation of the social-ecological model is the three-ecology model. This model was selected for this study. The first level takes into account biological and personality considerations influencing behaviour that will result in one being disposed to be a victim or perpetrator of bullying. The central question is what makes someone to be bullied in their biological and personal constitution?

The second level focuses on organisational or institutional factors that shape or structure the environment in which the individual and interpersonal relations occur, e.g. rules, policies or acceptable behaviour. The third and last level focuses on the broad societal factors that help to create a climate in which bullying is nurtured, encouraged or inhibited. Is the issue of bullying of the teaching staff acknowledged at policy-formulation, national level?

2.5 Conceptual framework

Literature on teaching staff bullying is not widely available now in South Africa. Research has tended to focus on bullying in the context of students. Very little is known about bullying experienced by teachers. The conceptual framework is located within the notion of organisational behaviour.

2.6 Ways to identify workplace bullying

Hayward (2010:17) gives ten most common ways to identify bullying at the work place. These are;

- Information is withheld in a way that affects your performance.
- Your decisions, procedures and judgement are questioned.
- Tasks are set with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines.
- Attempts are made to belittle and undermine your work.
- Recognition, acknowledgement and praise are withheld.
- You are generally ignored or excluded.
- Mental or physical health has been affected by behaviour towards you.
- You are given an unmanageable work load.
- You are excluded from decision-making.
- Your integrity is undermined.

De Wet (2010:1453) used the Colaizzi's (1978) guidelines and identified the following types of bullying:

- Principals ignore teachers' thoughts, needs, feelings and accomplishments;
- non-support of teachers;
- verbal abuse and public ridicule of teachers;
- unwarranted and unfair criticism; principals set victims up to fail;
- social and professional isolation;
- lack of empathy;
- unwarranted written reprimands;
- favouritism and forcing teachers out of their jobs;
- Re-assignment or threatening victims with dismissal.

It is intended through this study to specifically identify staff bullying by the SMT. Other forms of bullying may exist but these are outside the scope of this study.

2.6.1 Extent of staff bullying

The extent of bullying in schools *per se* has not been documented. Available literature talks of workplace bullying in general and it is within this umbrella term that the researcher believes staff bullying is covered. A number of authors and researchers allude to the widespread nature of staff bullying. Hayward (2010:16) says, “bullying happens to a greater or lesser degree in every school everywhere.” Bullying at the workplace has existed for hundreds of years, only that in many cases it goes undetected and unreported, it is “subtle and sophisticated” (Douglas 2001:14). According to Duffy and Sperry (2007) bullying thrives in organisations that are hierarchic, bureaucratic and rule-orientated.

Studies allude to the fact that some people are more susceptible and vulnerable to bullying than others due to their personality and social attributes according to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979:3) first level in the ecological system. This is confirmed by de Wet (2010:1454) who gives a narrative that bears out Salin’s (2003:1219) view, that vulnerable groups like SGB employees are often “pushed into a helpless and defenceless position” by their supervisors:

It was in the staffroom...He shouted: “Bring your letters of resignation...I’ll sign them.” The SGB employed teachers were threatened with on-the-spot-dismissal.(Female C23-08-08,p6)

According to de Wet (2010) principals often use official avenues to bully teachers. Official reprimands and warnings seem to be fairly common at some schools. Many teachers in the study related how they received official warnings for what often seemed to be rather trivial transgressions (de Wet 2010). One of the participants in the study said that he received a “written warning” without being accorded the opportunity to give his side of the story. When he confronted the principal in this regard, he was told by the principal that he acted “in accordance with the law.”

2.6.2 Effects of staff bullying

Hayward (2010:16) explains that bullying can have adverse effects on the teachers, the bullied teacher may suffer stress, be absent from school, may become physically and mentally ill, or they may leave the school or profession altogether.

According to Harvey et al (2007) there are three individuals involved in all incidents of bullying: the bully, the victim and the individuals who observe the bullying event. The characteristics of each of these individuals can have an impact on the event. de Wet (2010: 1454) identified the characteristics of the bully as, envy, destructive narcissism, evil, hypocrisy and persistence. Researchers like Cemalogly (2007), Einarsen (1999), Hall (2005) Kirsten et al (2005) agree that abusers often feel threatened in their positions and they bully the ones they feel may have “an edge” over them. Personal strength and great accomplishments by a teacher may thus provoke bullying by the SMT. Bullies are often envious of their victims’ achievements. This study will discover the relationship between achievements and bullied teachers.

Participants involved in de Wet’s (2010) study agreed that bullying had a profound impact on their physical and mental well-being, as well as their professional lives. It was also revealed that bullying had a negative impact on some victims’ socialisation with colleagues.

Hoel, et al (2004) wrote a paper whose aim was to investigate the impact of negative behaviour and bullying in the workplace on the health and well-being of employees. The paper also investigated to what extent the effects remain beyond the period of the experience as well as the extent to which they affect third parties or witnesses. The paper raised the question whether some behaviours associated with bullying may be more damaging than others. The findings imply that some negative behaviours were more difficult to deal with than others.

2.6.3. Solutions of staff bullying

Hayward (2010:16) divides schools into groups –quality schools, ordinary and poor quality schools. The quality schools work hard to create a happy, productive organisational climate and anyone passing through the corridors of the school can pick up the “vibes”. Of the latter, he says, poor quality schools are characterised by an inability to deal assertively with bullying and hence bullying rambles under the surface and eventually explodes! He also goes on to offer eight ways to deal with bullying:

- Make others aware of core values at assemblies and awards functions. The core values emphasised are; empathy, friendliness, honesty and kindness. Tackle the problem or issue not the individual, in other words issues should not be personalised. A good guiding principle that he says the SMT should live by is never say anything about a person you would not say to them directly.
- Make the staff aware of the different forms of bullying that can happen amongst them.
- Write a staff anti-bullying policy consisting of what constitutes bullying and steps to follow if bullied.
- Ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the work load when allocating administrative, extramural and teaching duties to staff.
- Make meetings democratic and open to discussion. Teacher input should be encouraged.
- Be vigilant in identifying bullying behaviour.
- Do staff development on assertiveness, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and stress management.
- Arrange social events like braais, end-of-term lunches and outings where teachers get to know each other well. This will reduce bullying considerably.

While Hayward (2010:17) hints at no easy panacea for bullying, he says, “while there is no one-plan-fits-all to rise above unhealthy relationships, silence is never the answer.” He thinks that speaking out is the first step to freedom

2.7 Overview of reviewed literature

Chapter two has documented available literature on bullying. A summary of the literature review is hereby given as a conclusion to this chapter. The literature review was done to find out the ground covered so far in the field of bullying. It was also done to find missing gaps in the research e.g. that there is a lack of bullying studies in the literature. Literature available alludes to the fact that research on workplace bullying is a relatively new phenomenon. In South Africa research on this topic took off as recently as the early 2000's. The first large-scale study was done in 2004 (Blase and Blase, 2004)

A study of literature on the definition of what constitutes bullying revealed that there is no consensus on what bullying entails but researchers generally concur on what bullying entails by singling out its commonalities and attributes. de Wet (2010) came up with three elements that define bullying behaviour. This is important to this study because there is need to clarify to participants what is considered to be bullying, so that we talk about the same thing. Bullying may be defined differently by different people.

A good source of bullying in schools came from the website- www.bullyonline.org. Here the researcher got an idea of the surveys and results of staff bullying in Australian schools. This is invaluable information for this study as comparisons and contrasts can be made between the South African context as compared to the Australian one.

Literature also alluded to the fact that studying bullying is problematic (Besag 1989) It appeared that a study of workplace bullying in the South African context is all the more pertinent given the level of violence that is bedevilling the South African society. This violence manifests itself and spills over into the classroom as confirmed by Maiden and Terblanche (2006).

The role of the principal in creating a harmonious environment was given as crucial by Ramsey (1999) and Gibbs (2008). The principal, as the Head of Department's representative at institutional level, is tasked with guiding the SMT and teachers to achieve organisational goals. The SMT, will determine whether goals are going to be achieved or not by how they relate to teachers. de Wet (2010) asserts the idea that morale is crucial in maintaining good working relationships. This idea supports the belief that bullying negatively affects morale. Snyman (2011) concurs and says that morale is central to sound human relations.

Prinsloo (2008) Squelch and Lemmer (1994) give the advantages of group work and emphasize the fact that an understanding of group dynamics is essential in team building efforts. This is crucial in achieving organisational goals. The SMT must be knowledgeable of sound human relations and guidelines for establishing human relations as given by Prinsloo (2008).

To bring to light the staff bullying into proper perspective, a study of the legal provisions guiding the SMT on teacher discipline was done. Literature, e.g. Wartgow (2008) inherently insinuated that in spite of the legal powers vested on the SMT to invoke legal provisions, it is difficult to implement because of the time and bureaucratic hurdles involved. Most principals resort to alternative means rather than starting the litigation route. This study seeks to investigate if there is a similarity between the American case and the South African scenario.

Hayward (2010) proffered ways in which staff bullying can be identified. He is also the founding "Father" of the term legal bullying. Recent studies on staff bullying in schools by Riley, Duncan & Edwards (2009) in Australian schools and research by Newman (2009) and Fawcet ,(2003) all lament the lack of research in the field of staff bullying in education.

A number of theoretical frameworks used in studying bullying were given and the ultimate reasons for the choice of the 3-ecology model to be used in this study were given. Methodology used to study bullying by previous researchers like Halsall (ed) (1998), Ahmad and Smith (1990) Olweus (1993) and de Wet (2010) was done to get a grip of which method to adopt for this study, given the pros and cons.

It was noted that there is generally a dearth of literature on the type of bullying. This gap needs to be bridged by doing a study of such a nature into this “un-entered” area. Previous researchers have concentrated on bullying in general and have not singled out bullying types for study. A literature study on the extent of bullying, the effects of bullying on the victims and possible solutions to bullying was also done.

Rod Smith, a family therapist living in the United States, in Hayward (2010:17) succinctly puts it by saying that every person deserves “free passage.” According to him each person has the right to be unhindered in their daily life and to be free of bullying of all kinds. Work place bullying of any kind should be stopped in its tracks. It has no place in modern civilisation. Jefferson (2008:50) affirms this and says, “bullying is not acceptable in a civilised society, and, increasingly, it is recognised as a punishable act.”

There is need to strike a delicate balance between accountability and power. According to Price and Clark (2011:4-5) many South African schools are bedevilled with teacher late-coming, absenteeism and an inability to enact the basic functions of teaching. Holding teachers to account is proving to be a difficult task, while “the behaviour of some teachers in many township secondary schools verges on the anarchic” (Ibid). This has been compounded by power dynamics at play between a seemingly all-powerful teachers’ union (SADTU) and the State (Price and Clark 2011). Ways to deal with this mishap need to be found, but legal bullying is not one of them.

2.8 Conclusion

Chapter Three deals with the methodology used to study legal bullying of teachers by the SMT and the research design. The next chapter leans heavily on chapter two's literature. Strengths and weaknesses of the methodology are documented as mirrored against previous studies and available literature on bullying and the implications for management. Gaps in the literature are brought to the fore.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology used to address research questions raised in chapter one. Picking up from where chapter two left, this chapter leans heavily on the literature available on the methods used previously to study workplace bullying.

To focus on the discussion, the research questions, aims and objectives are hereby revisited. According to the framework given by the National Centre for Social Research to assess research, the research design should address the research question (Newby 2010:456).

3.2 Restatement of the research questions

The study was in the form of an investigation, because of the nature of the subject under study, bullying, and sought to focus specifically on bullying in four schools in Ekurhuleni North District. The following sub-questions emerged:

- What is the level, extent and impact of bullying of staff by the school management team (SMT)?
- What role should the principal play in creating a harmonious working environment with particular reference to bullying of staff by the SMT?
- What can be done to eliminate bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

3.3 Aims and objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate bullying of teaching staff by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District high schools with a view to finding ways to curtail it.

Available literature that was cited in the preceding chapters points to the widespread existence of bullying in schools. There is a general lack of specific research on bullying of teaching staff.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Determine the level and extent of bullying of teaching staff by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District high schools.
- Explore the role of the principal in creating harmony among teaching staff with particular reference to staff bullying of staff by the SMT.
- Investigate the impact bullying has on teaching staff and find ways to curtail it.

3.4 Research design and methodology

3.4.1 Qualitative research strategy

A qualitative perspective allowed the exploration of critical non-quantifiable data from narratives of participants on bullying of teaching staff by the SMT (Theodoros & Theodoros: 2005). The experiences and impact of bullying can best be described by words rather than quantitatively.

Tables and graphs were used to augment and illustrate biographic and demographic data about the sampled teachers, heads of departments and principals. It becomes clearer, to depict bullied teachers by means of a graph and compare them against those who were not bullied. Graphs help the researcher or any reader to compare and interpret trends. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1989:41) tabulation of data in qualitative studies is limited to help identify patterns and is used to support qualitative meanings. Background information on sample size, ages, gender, qualifications nature of posts and employers for sampled teachers, heads of departments and principals was also depicted more effectively by means of tables than as written texts.

Descriptions on bullying experiences were in the form of spoken or written language rather than in form of numbers (Polkinghorne: 2005). According to Schwandt (2001:84) qualitative research is an umbrella term for a variety of research methods that use language data and deals with human lived experience. Qualitative methods are a sophisticated research strategy to understand how and why people act in particular ways (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). There can be no better way to study and understand bullying of teachers by the SMT.

A qualitative research strategy was the suitable approach because the study was conducted in a natural setting of social sectors, the school (Neutens & Rubinson 2010:319). Qualitative research is also highly suited for research on vulnerable groups, like the bullied teachers, because the tradition and techniques of qualitative research offer such groups a unique “voice” to be heard in research (Liamputtong & Ezzy 2005). The researcher collected data from principals and teachers at schools, where the problem of bullying was reported. Data was derived from interviews with participants in the form of words combined to form sentences which are difficult to transform into numbers for analysis (Polkinghorne 2005).

The method used was basically inductive and intended to discover the existence of bullying among teachers by the SMT and then determine the role that the principal plays in solving the issue of bullying on staff. Qualitative research is inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experience as it appears in their lives (Polkinghorne: 2005). A phenomenological study to ascertain teachers’ exposure to bullying by the SMT was done through an analysis of participants’ transcripts in interviews (de Wet: 2010).

Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes and categories of bullying analysis emerged from data gathered from questionnaires and interviews. Patterns and themes were not imposed on data prior to data collection and analysis as is done in verification research (McMillan & Schumacher 1989). Data obtained from questionnaires and interviews moulded the themes and categories used to answer

the research questions for this study. Literature was then used to confirm or illuminate research findings.

The researcher used Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method to analyse participants' scripts where all written transcripts are read over and over again until themes and meanings emerge from the various scripts. From these trends, a description was integrated to explain a bullying phenomenon. Data was coded to comply with particular themes.

The researcher used the inductive analysis which is a process of discovery and analysis in the field, preliminary analysis of data, categorisation and ordering data to identify emerging patterns, themes and descriptive analytical synthesis (McMillan & Schumacher 1989). The information gathered was analysed against the backdrop of literature on work place bullying in schools documented in the literature review of chapter two. Constant reference was made to literature where findings from this study confirmed or differed from previous studies.

The researcher also used grounded theoretical research, whereby concepts obtained from observations and interviews were derived from data and therefore are called "grounded" theory (McMillan & Schumacher 1989). The bullying themes were deduced from questionnaires and interviews held in the four sampled schools.

In chapter one the researcher hinted that ethnography was going to be used in this research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1989) ethnography is an appropriate methodology in exploratory and discovery-oriented research. This study is an example of exploratory research where the level, extent and impact of bullying was investigated in schools. Exploratory studies which examine a topic in which there has been little previous research like staff bullying are designed to lead to further inquiry (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:416).

3.4.2 Research design

The research design selected is closely linked to the research aim and objectives stated above. The research design, which Mouton (2001:55) in Ndlela (2011) defines as “a plan or blue print of how you intend conducting the research” was in two stages. The intentional selection of a particular design is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (1989:8) who assert that “the deliberate choice of a design increases the likelihood that the data will yield information on the research question.”

The first stage dealt with the administration of questionnaires in four sampled schools to pick out teachers who had experienced bullying. The questionnaires were meant to answer the question on the level, and extent of bullying. Ahmad and Smith (1990) argue that the anonymous questionnaire is the best method of investigating incidences of bullying. Olweus (1993) concurs and says that there are three ways to gather information on bullying; participant observation, questionnaires and structured interviews.

The second stage involved asking the bullied teachers in semi-structured interviews to describe their experiences and effects bullying had on their professional and private lives. Interviews were also held with four heads of departments and four principals from the four high schools to get the SMT's side of bullying .

A detailed account of the methods employed to carry out this study will be given later in this chapter. It is now sufficient to point out that the qualitative approach was the better option selected to adequately address the research questions. According to Newby (2010:116) qualitative approaches are “soft”, descriptive and concerned with how and why things happen as they do. The experiences and impact of bullying can best be described by words. The qualitative research method was selected because of the nature of research themes as derived from the literature (Theodoros & Theodoros: 2005).

The level and extent of bullying, however, could better be addressed by the use of questionnaires which could give an indication of the numbers of teachers who had experienced bullying and those who did not. The level of bullying was revealed by how many of the sampled teachers responded that they had experienced bullying. The extent or spread of bullying was obtained through the number of teachers who were bullied in the four schools, in other words, the proportion of bullied teachers in the four schools gave an indication of how widespread the issue of bullying was.

On the research design chosen, the researcher was guided by the principle put forward by Slavin (1984:4) who asserts that, “the best research design is one that will add to knowledge no matter what the results are.” The critical skill in research design is to decide upon a question that is important and then to choose research methods that will answer the question as unambiguously as possible, given the limited resources (Slavin 1984). According to Cohen and Manion (1995) in qualitative research, the researcher typically uses an emergent design and makes decisions about the data collection strategies as the study progresses.

3.4.3 Population and sampling procedures

According to Cohen and Manion (1995:28) “who the researcher decides to study is determined by the sampling strategy and the sample size.” Determining the sample size is of vital importance. Springer (2010:99) calls it “a methodological prerequisite,” obtaining an adequate sample of participants. It was not feasible to include all high schools and all teachers in Ekurhuleni North District, the researcher purposefully selected four different schools for study.

According to Polkinghorne (2005) participants for a qualitative study are not selected because they fulfil the representative requirements of statistical inference, but because they can provide substantial contributions to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation. In this case the experience is bullying of teachers by the SMT. The sampling technique used for this study was purposive.

According to Cohen and Manion (1995:28) the information generated by the enquiry in qualitative research depends more on the information richness of the case and the analytical ability of the researcher rather than on the sample size. Concern is not on how data were gathered or from how many sources, but whether the data collected were sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understand an experience (Polkinghorne: 2005). Selecting an information-rich case for study is termed purposeful sampling according to Cohen and Manion (1995). Springer (2010:99) concurs, “purposive sampling is a procedure in which the researcher samples whoever he/she believes to be representative of a given population.” It is a sample that is chosen because it appears to be representative based on informal considerations (Springer 2010:104).

The unit of analysis in qualitative research is experience, not individuals or groups (Polkinghorne 2005). Bullied teachers were selected for interviews as they were the ones who could provide relevant descriptions of the experience and are primarily the ones who had or were having the experience (Polkinghorne 2005). According to Merriam (2002) there is a need to select a sample from which most can be learned about the experience under study. The four different schools provided a wide hunting ground for the bullying phenomenon as it is incumbent upon researchers to select fertile exemplars of the bullying experience for study (Polkinghorne 2005). Selection of bullied teachers was purposeful and sought out, it was not left to chance, neither was it random (Ibid).

3.4.3.1 Population

The target population consisted of educators and the SMT members, including principals and Directors for private schools, of all high schools in Ekurhuleni North District. The sample of teachers and principals was drawn from four high schools, the sampling frame (Newby 2010:232).

3.4.3.2 The sample

The area selected to carry out the study was Ekurhuleni North District, East Rand in Johannesburg, Gauteng province. This area was selected because it has different school types that are representative of schools that are found in South Africa. Ekurhuleni North District can be taken as a microcosm of the South African macrocosm, a replica of the country's educational landscape. Care must be taken however in interpreting findings as the selection of these schools was to generate findings on bullying which provide an understanding for, not generalised to other institutions and to infer similarities and differences (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:182)

Four schools were selected on the following criteria; one school is a former model "C" school, another one is a township school, the third is an independent secular school and the fourth is a church school. The church school that was selected declined to take part in the study and the researcher had to select another church school to replace it. This did not compromise the sample in any way as any church high school could have been purposively selected. The different high school types were chosen to cover as widely as possible the various characteristics of schools in South Africa.

3.4.4 Data collection

Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments used to adequately obtain information to answer research questions for this study. According to Polkinghorne (2005) data sources for qualitative research are interviews, observations and documents. The researcher used questionnaires for this study to pick out the teachers who had experienced bullying from those who had not. The questionnaires administered to all teachers at first were effective in singling out the bullied teachers for the subsequent interviews.

3.4.4.1 Questionnaires

According to Slavin (1984:90) Questionnaires are a convenient means of collecting attitudinal and perceptual data. Teachers who perceived that bullying occurred to them were better picked out by means of questionnaires. Newby (2010:303) says “if we want to know something we just ask.” In a similar way the best way to get research data is to ask, through a questionnaire.

In constructing questions, care was taken not to use many open ended questions, as according to Slavin (1984:88) these are difficult to code and are disliked by many respondents because they take too much time and work. The questionnaire for teachers was divided into two sections. Section A focused on the biographic data of the teachers’ gender, age, nature of post, employer and qualifications.

Section B of the questionnaire contained questions on bullying. The section started with an explanation of what bullying entails. Teachers were then asked if bullying had occurred to them, when and by which member of the SMT. There were questions on the form that bullying took and the frequency of bullying.

Three open-ended questions asked teachers to describe and explain what they thought was the cause of bullying, the effect of bullying on their professional and private lives and the tentative solutions to bullying.

The teachers who responded that bullying had not occurred to them completed section A of the form only and question 2.1 on section B of the questionnaire where they ticked the box for “NO”. Bullying had not occurred to them. All the other questions in section B did not apply to these teachers. The teachers who did not experience bullying were not going to take part in the subsequent interviews.

The questionnaire contained a section where teachers who responded that bullying had occurred to them were supposed to indicate the time, date and venue of the subsequent interviews convenient to them. This information was used to draw up a timetable for the interviews.

In questionnaire design care was taken to capture interest and make it look easy. Newby (2010:309) has come up with an appropriate acronym- “KISS” for Keep It Short and Simple. Open-ended questions were used sparingly, for instance, to give complex opinions that do not lend themselves to closed-form questions. Figure 4.2 below shows a summary of the administration of questionnaires.

3.4.4.2 (a) Advantages of using questionnaires

Questionnaires are very useful to elicit information about reactions, beliefs and attitudes (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:41). According to Slavin (1984:90) questionnaires are a convenient means of collecting attitudinal and perceptual data.

Ahmad and Smith (1990) argue that the anonymous questionnaire is the best method for investigating incidences of bullying. Olweus (1993) concurs and says that there are three ways to gather information on bullying, which are, participant observation, questionnaires and structured interviews.

3.4.4.2 (b). Disadvantages of using questionnaires

The main problem with questionnaires is that you rarely get a 100% response rate. Not all questionnaires are returned and this represents a lost sample. Those who feel aggrieved especially with topics like bullying are more likely to respond. You cannot probe to get more detail from the respondents and you cannot read gestures or facial expressions.

3.4.5 The semi-structured interview

The research interview has been defined as a “two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information” (Cohen and Manion 1995). Interviews sought to elicit information that would be subsequently analysed in the light of the research topic.

Closely related to the interview is what Slavin (1984) calls an interview protocol. We may aptly call it an interview schedule, consisting of a set of questions that the interviewer will ask each respondent. The interview schedule was altered on many occasions during research, reflecting new themes of interest according to responses of participants (Theodoros & Theodoros 2005). The schedule contained notes for the interviewer indicating and giving guidance on the course of action to take in response to certain answers. Participants were asked to elaborate on answers.

Good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their points of view and good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents’ perspectives (Cohen and Manion 1995:97). The researcher tried as far as possible to bear this in mind when conducting the interviews by putting in an ice-breaker, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of interviewees. Certainly a key strategy for the qualitative interview in the field is to avoid as much as possible questions that can be answered with a yes or no (Cohen & Manion 1995: 98).

Interviews followed a pattern predetermined beforehand in the interview schedule. Teachers were asked the same questions. The three questions which were asked were:

- What is the level, extent and impact of bullying of teachers by the SMT in your school?
- What do you consider to be the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among teachers with reference to bullying?

- What should be done to curb bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

The interview schedule for the teachers consisted of the following 10 probing questions.

- Have you ever experienced bullying in your teaching career?
- When did you experience the bullying?
- What was the form of bullying? (verbal or written)
- What is the frequency of the bullying?
- Who is responsible for bullying? (which SMT member)
- What is the effect of bullying on your profession?
- What is the impact of bullying on your private life?
- What do you think is the cause of the bullying?
- How do you think the issue of bullying should be resolved?
- What role do you think the principal should play in maintaining harmony among teaching staff with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT?

These ten questions adequately answered the research questions, achieved the aims and objectives of the research study and were crafted with the topic of the research in mind. The three main themes of the study which the ten questions addressed are:

- The level, extent and effects of bullying on teachers by the SMT.
- The role of the principal in maintaining harmony among teaching staff with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT.
- Solutions to curtail bullying

Interviews of victimised teachers were carried out in classrooms at break and after school hours so as not to interfere with teaching and learning. The researcher used the voices of the victims of bullying to illustrate teachers' experiences of bullying (de Wet 2010). Interviews were conducted in English. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes on average. The researcher selected one-on-one semi-structured interviews rather than focus-group interviews because bullied teachers were unwilling to be interviewed as a group. This is supported by Hall (2005) who says victims of bullying display low esteem and blame themselves for their victimisation. Victims are unlikely to open up when asked as a group. The bullying experience is dehumanising to such an extent that two victims said they would rather not be identified by anyone, not even by other bullied colleagues.

As the interviews progressed, the researcher transcribed responses on a pro-forma sheet and took particular note of non-verbal gestures and facial expressions. When asked if teachers were willing to be audio-recorded, nine teachers declined. One teacher agreed at first but on second thoughts said he preferred that the interview with him was not recorded.

The interview schedule for principals had four open-ended questions. The researcher started the interview with an explanation of the research purpose. The term bullying was also explained. Questions for principals focussed on whether the principal had any problems with teacher discipline and how he/she handled them. The next question enquired if the principal had given a written warning or held a disciplinary hearing for any teacher and when. The principal was also asked how he/she was creating a harmonious working environment with particular reference to legal bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT. The principal was asked if there was an anti-bullying policy for teachers.

Deviations from the schedule were allowed to accommodate individual situations and circumstances. The researcher did introductory formalities to put the interviewees at ease and explained the scope of the study before conducting the interviews.

Interviews with principals were held in principals' offices for privacy and there were fewer disturbances as anyone who wanted to see the principal had to get permission from the front office.

The researcher transcribed, coded responses and drew conclusions on the level of staff bullying and what the principals were doing about it. Bulletin boards were also used to complement word descriptions from principals about what they were doing to ensure a harmonious working environment. Two of the high schools had anti-bullying policies on notice boards but these were in the context of students.

3.4.5.1 Advantages of interviews

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:203) interviews yield a higher rate of response when compared to a questionnaire. There is more flexibility with the interview and respondents can elaborate and clarify points. Bailey (1994:175 :) in Ndlela (2011:49) gives the following advantages of interviews:

- They are flexible and tend to have a better response rate.
- The interviewer can observe non-verbal behaviour and can record spontaneous answers.
- Responses alone can answer questions
- They are adaptable.

3.4.5.2 Disadvantages of interviews

Interviews are expensive and the interviewer may misinterpret the respondents' answers. An inherent limitation of the interview is that the interviewees may not be completely truthful in their responses in order to please the researcher or to protect their role (Catania 1999). To curb this, the researcher was careful not to indicate agreement with the teachers or preference for the direction of the discussion (Branch 2007:277)

3.5 Research ethics and trustworthiness of the research.

In simple terms research needs to be ethical, valid and reliable. The validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research is related to the selection of viable sources that promote a deepening of the understanding of the experience inquired about (Polkinghorne: 2005). To ensure that this research complied with research ethics a number of requirements were met.

3.5.1 Research ethics

Permission to undertake research was sought and granted by the Gauteng Department of Education provincial offices (Appendix A). The Ekurhuleni North District Office was also approached with the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) letter of approval as a requirement to research in the District schools. The GDE research approval letter gave the researcher blanket permission to research in four Ekurhuleni North high schools. No other permission was sought as the production of the approval letter and compliance with the code was enough to gain access into schools. Individual principals of the identified schools were approached separately for permission to research in their schools and were given two copies of the GDE approval letters. One was kept by the principal as proof and the other one was to be handed over to the SGB chairperson.

The nature of the research was explained to all teachers before administering questionnaires and conducting interviews thereby guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:119). Permission to administer questionnaires and take part in subsequent interviews was sought from individual teachers, SMT members and principals. No learners were involved in this study.

Springer (2010:92) has this to say about research ethics, “the fact that educational research often requires interactions with people raises ethical issues.” In order to comply with the issue of research ethics informed consent was obtained from

respondents. The requisite research code of the Gauteng Department of Education as specified in their Research approval letter, (Appendix A) was complied with. Information gathered was used for research purposes only and respondents were given permission to withdraw at any stage of the interview.

Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed as respondents did not have to disclose their names or the names of their respective schools. All participants freely volunteered to take part in the study. Writing on research ethics, Springer (2010) stressed that participants must be informed in advance about the nature of the study and must be allowed to give or withhold consent to participate without coercion. The researcher agreed to furnish the Department of Education with a copy of the completed dissertation so that anyone interested may have access to the findings of the research. Names of schools and participants have been withheld to protect schools and individuals.

3.5.2 Trustworthiness of the research

Although notions and terms of validity and reliability are closely connected to quantitative approaches they refer to certain quality criteria of the research process (Schwandt 2001). According to Steinke (2004:185) in qualitative research there is no possibility and desirability of measuring validity and reliability, nevertheless qualitative research cannot exist without evaluation criteria. Strategies need to be explained to enhance rigour and quality of the process.

In sampling, the selection process was spread wide enough to encompass all “information-rich” participants (Steinke 2004:185). Interviews were used as a basis for comparing with other and subsequent interviews, cross-checking data. Measures to avoid personal bias were put in place and the researcher did not make value judgements (Cresswell 2007:202). Research questions satisfactorily addressed the research questions and interviews were stopped when repetition of responses

increased reaching a degree of saturation where no new information could be obtained (Robson 2002).

The Selection of participants remained open, additional participants were selected who were thought to be able to fill in, expand or challenge the initial description (Robson 2002). A point of saturation was reached whereby new sources repeated what had been previously learned. The use of multiple participants served as a kind of triangulation on the bullying experience, locating its core meaning from different accounts (Polkinghorne 2005).

The bullied teachers who were identified by questionnaires provided a “participant pool” of people who knew a lot about the experience (Robson 2002). Participants were chosen not because they were available, but because they provided clarifying accounts of the bullying experience. The focus was not on individuals but accounts of bullying experiences.

Research results need to be tested against the backdrop of validity and reliability which will mirror data as measured against aims and objectives of the research topic. Newby (2010:121) aptly calls validity and reliability- the “corner- stones” of any research. The researcher made sure that the information gathered represented the situation that was intended to be examined. If another researcher were to investigate using the approach used for this research, the results should be the same (Ibid).

According to Schumacher and McMillan (2010) reliability in quantitative research refers to the extent to which researchers could discover the same phenomena and agreement on the description of the phenomena between the researcher and the participants. What this means is that a different researcher using similar methods and design could get similar results. This is done through all stages from sampling to data collection and analysis. The researcher was competent to conduct this research because he studied various qualitative research texts and procedures for data

collection (Polkinghorne: 2005). The researcher also got invaluable advice from his supervisor on how to follow correct research procedures in all stages of this study.

Triangulation was used to measure the aspect of reliability. It is defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Triangulation techniques in social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data, (Cohen and Manion 1995:233).

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used. It must however be made clear that this is not the same as mixed methods technique, which is a completely different and unique research method on its own. When the researcher employed questionnaires by the internal mail system for research, it was intended to use quantitative methods as an adjunct of triangulation rather than mixed methods. Questionnaires were also used to pick out teachers who had been subjected to bullying.

Newby (2010:17) lists down the criteria that we need to demonstrate in order for our piece of research to be deemed valid and convincing to others:

- Our data have to be representative of the issue we are investigating. In this study the researcher had to be rigorous in sampling and not choose schools based on accessibility and familiarity.
- Our argument and the evidence that supports it has to be complete. The researcher had done a lot of groundwork in this topic through literature review.
- The presentation of our research processes and results has to be transparent and honest.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the research methods and the design employed for this study were discussed. The rationale behind the choice of the research methods and sampling techniques used to study legal bullying of staff by the SMT were inherently given. Issues of validity, reliability and research ethics in qualitative research were also discussed. In the next chapter, the collected data is presented, analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three dealt with the research design and methods employed to gather data. Questionnaires and interviews were the research instruments used to collect data. The sampling procedures employed were documented. Measures to guarantee trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations were also given.

In chapter four, the researcher turns to show how the data collected was processed. The objective of this chapter being to get data to release the information needed to answer the research questions (Newby 2010:389) This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with presentation of findings. The second section deals with the analysis of data from questionnaires and interviews. The third section deals with the discussion of findings.

According to the framework from the National Centre for Social Research to assess research, data analysis and interpretation should be rigorous, systematic and transparent (Newby 2010:456). The study was carried out to investigate bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT's in Ekurhuleni North District with a view to finding solutions. The researcher had to make use of collected data to determine the level, extent and the impact of bullying on teachers. This information was obtained by the use of questionnaires. Interviews helped to explore and find out the role of the principal in maintaining harmony and what can be done to curtail bullying.

The research aimed at investigating the level, extent and impact of bullying and the role played by the principal in maintaining a harmonious working environment with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT. A description of teachers and the SMT in the sample is given in tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4. and figure 4.4 of chapter three.

This information was necessary to understand the nature and composition of the sample.

4.3 Analysis of findings

This section focuses on the research findings as bench-marked against the research questions. To answer the research questions, the researcher used themes and categories in table 4.1 which were obtained from information gathered by questionnaires and interviews. These themes answered the question on the level, extent and impact of bullying of teaching staff by the SMT in the four sampled high schools in Ekurhuleni North District.

The questions used in questionnaires and interviews for teachers, SMT's and the principals are given below. The full versions of the questionnaire, interview schedules for teachers, SMT's and principals appear at the end of this dissertation in the Appendices section. The interview questions were used as guidelines and were asked to suit the circumstances. All respondents were asked the same questions for trustworthiness. The questions adequately covered the research questions, achieved the aims and objectives of the research study and were crafted with the topic of the research in mind. The three main themes of the study which the ten questions addressed are:

- What is the level, extent and impact of bullying of teachers by the SMT?
- What is the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among teaching staff with particular reference to staff bullying by the SMT?
- What are the solutions to curtail bullying of staff by the SMT?

The above questions formed the categories according to which all respondents expressed their views. The researcher concurs with Newby (2010:453), who has this to say about presentation and analysis of findings, "because qualitative data are non-

numeric it makes qualitative data analysis more complex than quantitative data.” It is more than mere reporting “what they told us.” Commentary and insight are necessary (Newby 2010:454).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1989:414) data analysis is an on-going cyclical process integrated into all phases of qualitative research. Qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting collected data. This is done to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest, in the case of this study, bullying of teaching staff by the SMT.

McMillan and Schumacher (1989) purport that data analysis entails the following cyclical phases:

- Continuous discovery, especially in the field but also throughout the entire study so as to identify tentative themes and develop concepts and mini theories.
- Categorising and ordering of data, typically after data collection, so as to refine one’s understanding of patterns and themes.
- Qualitatively assessing the trustworthiness of the data so as to refine one’s understanding of the setting and social scenes.

The collected data is going to be presented and analysed in the light of the above cyclical phases. Table 4.1 below gives a summary of the information gathered from the four high schools. The bullied teachers were identified by the questionnaires.

School type	Questionnaires		Interviews	No. of bullied teachers	No. of teachers Not bullied
	Issued	Returned			
A (model C)	30	(20)	4	14	6
B (Township)	18	(11)	2	7	4
C (Private)	17	(10)	2	6	4
D (Church)	15	(11)	2	4	7
TOTALS	80	(52)	10	31	21

Table4.1: Information on schools

Table 4.1 shows the school types, the total number of questionnaires administered and those returned. The table also shows the number of interviewed teachers per school, the number of bullied teachers and those who responded that they had not been bullied. Bullied teachers were identified by the use of questionnaires. In all 80 questionnaires were administered and 52 were returned, 10 interviews were held with teachers who perceived that they had been bullied. Thirty-one teachers reported that bullying had occurred to them in the past year. Twenty-one teachers responded that they had not experienced bullying.

Table 4.2 gives information about the 10 interviewed teachers. who reported that they had experienced bullying.

Teacher	Age/ Gender	Employer	Qualifications	Post
A	31-40/ Male	GDE	B.Ed(Hons)	Permanent
B	31-40/ Male	SGB	B.Ed (Hons)	Temporary
C	41-50/ Female	GDE	B.Ed	Permanent
D	>50/ Male	GDE	Diploma	Permanent
E	31-40/ Male	GDE	B.Ed	Permanent
F	31-40/ Female	GDE	B.Ed	Permanent
G	> 50/ Male	Private	B.Ed (ACE)	Temporary
H	31-40/ Female	Private	B.Ed	Temporary
I	31-40/ Female	Church	B.Ed	Temporary
J	41-50/ Male	Church	B.Ed (PGCE)	Temporary

Table 4.2: Information on interviewed teachers

Table 4.2 illustrates that of the 10 interviewed teachers five were males and five were females. This was by design to get an equal balance in the responses by gender. There were more females (32) than males (20) of the 52 teachers who returned questionnaires.

On Qualifications, five teachers had Diplomas in Teaching, 36 teachers had Bachelor's degrees and 11 had Honours' degrees, Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE).

Four principals of the four high schools, 19 Heads of Departments and 80 teachers from the four high schools were included in the sample. The bullied teachers provided the researcher with a "participant pool" on which semi-structured interviews were going to be held (Robson: 2002). Initially 10 of these 31 teachers were

interviewed up to a point where no new information could be obtained (Robson 2002).

Table 4.3 gives information about the four high school principals who were interviewed. There were three male school principals and one female. One principal was above 50 years old. The principals were well experienced both as teachers and administrators. They were also highly qualified except for one who had a teaching diploma.

Principal	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Experience		School
				Teaching	Principal	
A	Over 50	Male	Diploma	25 years	10	Former 'model C'
B	31-40	Male	B.Ed	17 years	8	Township
C	41-50	Male	B.A (PGCE)	23 years	9	Private/ secular
D	31-40	Female	B.Ed (Hons)	11 years	5	Private/ Church

Table 4.3: Information on Principals

Table 4.4 provides information on the heads of departments who were interviewed.

H.O.D	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Experience		School
				Teaching	SMT	
A	36	Female	B.Ed	12 years	5	Model "C"
B	43	Female	B.Ed	16 years	7	Township
C	47	Male	B.Ed	20 years	2	Secular
D	34	Male	B.A. (PGCE)	12 years	4	Church

Table 4.4: Information on interviewed Heads of Departments

The interviewed heads of departments were generally young and well experienced as teachers and as members of the SMT. Gender balance was achieved where two males and two females were interviewed.

Four heads of departments were selected for interviews, one from each school. The 10 teachers, four principals and the four heads of departments constituted the interview sample for this study.

Figure 4.1 shows the age composition of the 52 teachers who responded that bullying had occurred to them.

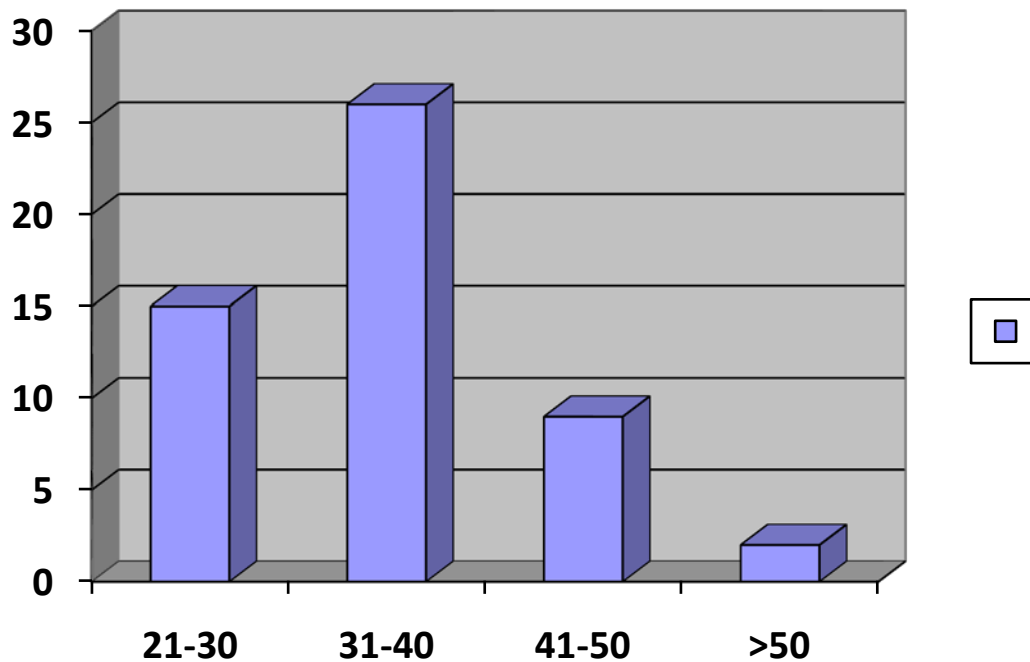


Figure 4.1 The age composition of bullied teachers

The sample of teachers was inclusive and representative with regard to gender, age and experience. Both male and female teachers were involved in the study as well as young and old teachers. Teachers were selected for interviews as they are directly affected by bullying. From the questionnaire responses, 10 teachers were selected for semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview schedule was used, a copy of which appears in the appendices section.

The four school principals were considered to be “information-rich” as they were in charge of schools and interacted with teachers on a day to day basis (Mayan 2009:11).

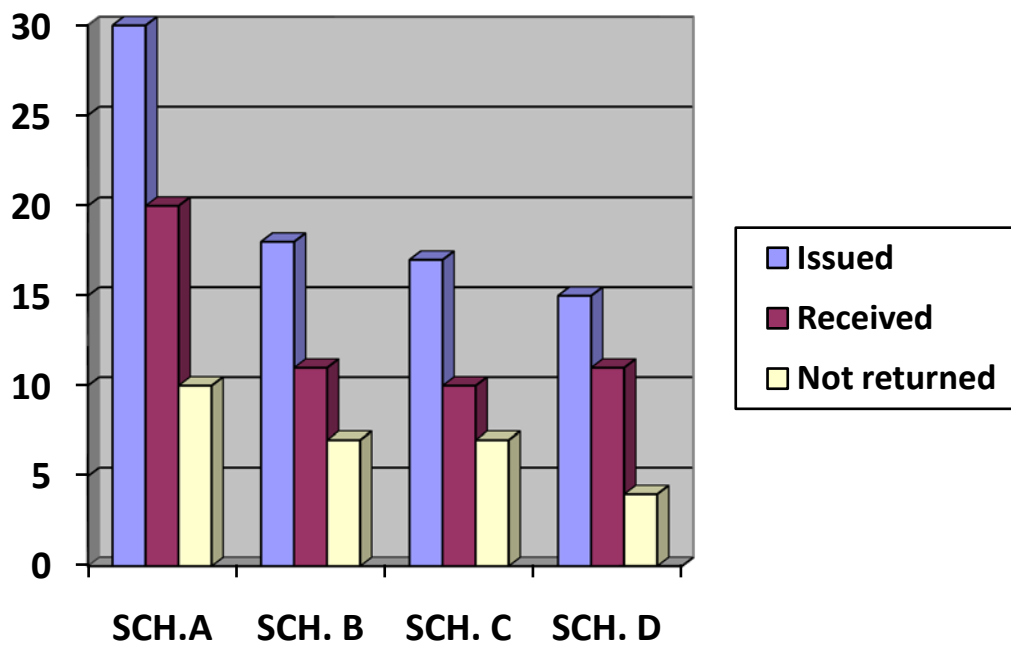


Figure 4.2 Administration of questionnaires

Figure 4.2 shows the total number of questionnaires issued per school in the form of a graph, the number received back and the number of questionnaires not returned. It can be deduced from the graph that a similar pattern is discerned in each school. Not all questionnaires were returned and this represents a lost sample as we cannot be able to tell the views of the respondents.

All 80 teachers in the four schools were given questionnaires to get information about the extent and impact of bullying. Fifty-two questionnaires were returned. Figure 4.3 below shows the proportion of bullied teachers to those not bullied as compared to the total questionnaires returned from each school.

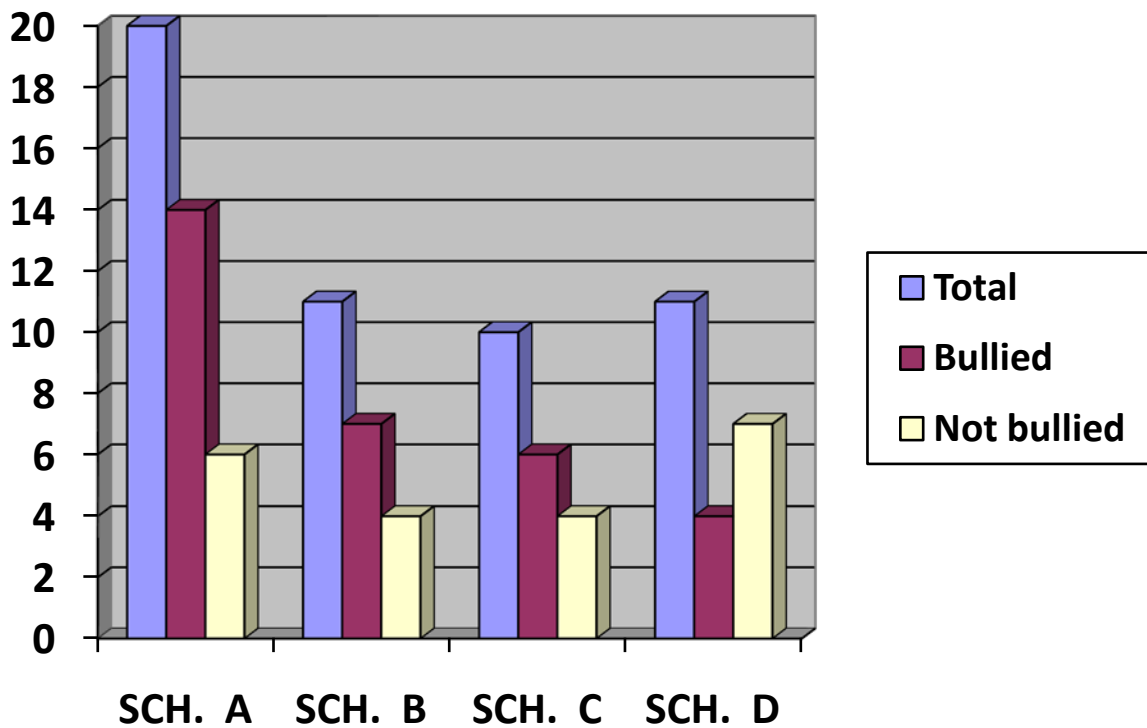


Figure 4.3 Responses from questionnaires

There were generally more educators reporting that they had been bullied than those who reported that they had not in schools A, B and C. In school D less teachers reported that they had experienced bullying. than those who reported that they had not experienced bullying. There were more teachers not bullied than those who were bullied for the church school. In total there were more teachers who were bullied than those who were not for the four high schools

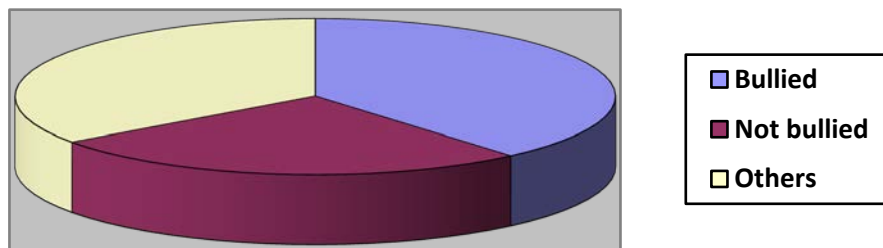


Figure 4.4 Proportions of teachers in sample

Figure 4.4 illustrates the proportion of teachers who were bullied as compared to those not bullied and those who did not return questionnaires. It can be deduced from the pie chart that quite a substantial number of teachers experienced bullying in the four sampled high schools as shown by the blue sector. This is an indication of the extent of bullying.

The researcher explained to teaching staff members the aim of the research, the term bullying and cleared the air on ethical issues. Ethical matters were cleared by guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Teachers were not going to disclose their names or names of their respective schools. The researcher promised to use the information gathered from the questionnaires for research purposes only.

It was made clear that those teachers who would respond positively to bullying would be interviewed later. These bullied teachers were asked to indicate on the completed

questionnaire the time, venue and date convenient to them. Questionnaires were handed out in envelopes to individual teachers. Instructions were given on how to complete and return questionnaires. After three days on average the researcher collected the questionnaires from the Receptionists.

Information from interviews and questionnaires was coded, the objective being to name units of data. The coding was related to the bullying issue under investigation so that when codes were put together, the researcher obtained insight that was, with the raw data, not available (Newby 2010:462). This was done to search for patterns in the level and impact of bullying of staff by the SMT. Newby (2010:462) warns that coding is "messy" business, without end and the researcher strongly agrees.

Tagging, which is a process of putting a generic name, the code, to a unit of data was done to information from questionnaires and interviews. This process was iterative, being done over and over again until themes started to come out (Newby 2010:467). To create tags, the researcher had to make copies of interview transcripts, annotate and used highlighter pens to bring out the themes.

According to Newby (2010:467) coding does not have to be accurate. It is a matter of interpretation. It is possible that one researcher's interpretation may be different from someone else's, yet still be valid (ibid). By the same token, it is possible that another researcher could come up with different themes and categories from the same questionnaires and interviews. All respondents were asked the same questions to provide a safeguard on issues of trustworthiness. The questionnaire and interview questions provided the main categories from which themes and sub-themes emerged. Below is a table which summarises the themes that came out of the questionnaires administered to and interviews held with teachers who experienced legal bullying, members of the SMT and principals.

Themes	Categories
Level and extent of legal bullying	Teachers SMT Principals
Causes of legal bullying	Teachers SMT Principals
Effects of legal bullying on professional and private lives of teachers	Teachers SMT Principals
The role of the principal in maintaining harmony	Teachers SMT Principals
Solutions	Teachers SMT Principals

Table 4.1 Themes and categories from questionnaires and interviews.

The themes that emerged from the research are now going to be reported and analysed.

➤ **4.4 The theme: *Level and extent of staff bullying.***

Information on the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT was obtained through questionnaires on teachers and interviews with the teachers, SMTs and the principals. The views of each of the three categories are going to be reported separately according to views from each school.

➤ 4.4.1 Views of teachers from school “A”.

Teachers revealed that the level of bullying in school “A” was very high and bullying was widespread. Thirty questionnaires were administered to school “A” and 20 teachers responded. Fourteen teachers responded that bullying had occurred to them in their teaching career. Ten teachers confirmed that bullying occurred to them within the past two years and it was still continuing. Two teachers responded that bullying had occurred in the past five years while two teachers who were above 50 years old wrote that bullying had occurred to them more than seven years ago and was still going on.

The form of bullying according to questionnaire responses was verbal and written warnings. All fourteen teachers wrote that they received verbal threats of “*impending legal actions*” from the SMT. One disadvantage of the questionnaire was observed at this point as the researcher would have liked to probe teachers further to get an idea on what the SMT actually said during the verbal threats. Six teachers responded that they had received written warnings.

On the frequency of the bullying only one teacher wrote that it was on a weekly basis. The rest responded that it was irregular. According to ten teachers, bullying in school “A” came specifically from the principal, two deputy principals and one member of the SMT. Four teachers responded that they were being bullied by one of the deputy principals.

➤ 4.4.2 Views of teachers from school “B”

At school “B” a total of 18 questionnaires were handed out and 11 teachers responded. Seven teachers confirmed that they had experienced bullying in the last two years of their teaching career. Four teachers responded that they had not experienced bullying. The form of bullying according to questionnaire responses was verbal and written warnings. Three teachers confirmed that the frequency was about

weekly while the other four teachers wrote that it “*did not conform to any discernible pattern of regularity.*” Bullying in school “B” was instigated by the principal and the deputy principal. According to the responses the heads of departments relayed information to the principal to use against them thereby aiding bullying. The heads of departments were instrumental and acted “*as accomplices*” in bullying of teachers

➤ **4.4.3 Views of teachers from school “C”**

The researcher administered a total of 17 questionnaires to school “C” and 10 teachers responded by returning completed questionnaires. From the 10 responses six teachers confirmed that bullying was currently taking place in their teaching careers. Four teachers wrote that they had not experienced bullying.

According to the six teachers who were bullied the major forms of bullying were verbal and written warnings. Two teachers responded that the frequency did not conform to any particular pattern that would fit into weekly or monthly cycles. One teacher responded that it was “*very frequent*” and all teachers from this school wrote that the director was the major culprit in causing the bullying. Once the director had instigated bullying on a teacher, he would then influence the principal to take it up and exacerbate it.

Two teachers interviewed at the private secular school said there was rampant “*abuse*” of teachers by the Director and the principal. One teacher (Teacher “H”) told the researcher that at the beginning of 2013 she was “*fired*” for leading a sit-in for non-payment of the previous year’s salaries. Apparently all the teachers were owed November and December 2012 salary arrears according to this teacher. The researcher had sampled two teachers for interview from this school, but when the third teacher also asked to be interviewed, the researcher had to oblige. The information from the third teacher corroborated the other two teachers’ accounts of bullying at this school perpetrated by the Director of the school in cahoots with the principal.

➤ 4.4.4 Views of teachers from school “D”

At school “D” 15 questionnaires were administered and 11 teachers responded. Breaking the trend from the other three schools where more teachers reported that they had experienced bullying than those who did not, there were less teachers who responded that bullying had occurred to them. Four teachers were bullied as compared to seven who responded that they had not experienced bullying. The form of the bullying was verbal for all four responses. The bullying occurred infrequently with one respondent reporting that it “*was once in six months.*” The bullying was from the principal and the Church Superintendent.

➤ 4.5 Views of the SMT.

Four heads of departments were interviewed at the four respective schools. They were identified by the labels HOD “A”, “B”, “C” and “D” for the four respective schools. Interviews with two heads of departments revealed that they were aware that bullying was taking place. The other two said they were not aware that bullying was taking place at their schools. They were of the opinion that what the teachers called bullying was in reality calls for teachers to do their duties “*professionally.*” H.O.Ds downplayed the level and extent of bullying in the high schools. Even those who confirmed that it existed they were sceptical about its existence at high levels. In one head of department’s own words it was “*negligible.*”

The SMT member interviewed from school A said she believed bullying of the teaching staff existed in all schools but it was “*not very high.*” She hinted that normally it was the unprofessional teachers who invited the bullying through their “*negligence of duty.*”

The member of the SMT who was interviewed from school “C” believed that bullying of staff existed in the school. She also agreed that it was relatively high. It was pointless to ask the other two members of the SMT what needed to be done to curb

bullying and its impact on teachers as they did not acknowledge its existence at schools.

➤ 4.6 Views of principals

All the principals of the four high schools were adamant that they were “*not aware of any bullying of teachers happening in their schools.*” One principal even suggested that bullying was restricted to “*students, not adults*”, revealing an obvious ignorance or refusal to accept the existence of staff bullying. This principal was even raising his voice and showing the researcher that the research topic was “*misdirected.*”

A general feeling among the principals was that it was the “*lazy and incompetent*” teachers who were quick “*to cry foul*” when they had themselves to blame. Two principals hinted that they faced problems with SADTU members who were not willing to obey them. This was corroborated by the SADTU teacher’s interview transcript for one of the high schools.

While the questionnaires and interviews with teachers showed the existence of bullying in the four schools, subsequent interviews with principals revealed the opposite.

The principal from school “A” did not believe that there was any bullying of staff going on. According to the principal he was “*just doing his duties*” as stipulated by the employer. The other questions on causes, effects and solutions were unnecessary as there existed no bullying of staff at the school according to the principal.

The principal from school “C” did not believe there was any bullying. According to him “*bullying was restricted to students not adults.*” According to him all the other questions did not apply as in the case of the other principals.

➤ 4.7 Discussion

The study investigated the level, extent and impact of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High schools. Information gathered through questionnaires and interviews on sampled teachers revealed the existence of a high level and wide extent of bullying in the sampled high schools.

The level of bullying in the four sampled high schools was indicated by responses from questionnaires. Thirty-one of the 52 teachers, who returned questionnaires confirmed that bullying had occurred to them. This represented 59.6% of the teachers in the sample having experiencing bullying. When this number is compared with 21 teachers who responded that they did not experience bullying one can conclude that the level is relatively high.

The extent of bullying was also widespread as bullying existed in all four sampled high schools with varying degrees. This is supported by Hayward (2010:16) who argues that “staff bullying happens to a greater or lesser degree in every school everywhere.” Douglas (2001:14) concurs and adds that bullying at the workplace has existed for hundreds of years, only that in many cases it goes undetected and unreported, it is “subtle and sophisticated.”

There were differences in the levels of bullying in the four high schools. School A had a 70% bullying rate, school B had a 64% rate and school C had 60%. School D had a 36% rate. Bullying existed in all four schools but with varying degrees from school to school. In the Church school there was relatively less bullying than in the other school types. There was more bullying in the former model “C” school than in all other schools.

During the subsequent interviews with teachers all of them indicated that bullying was going on unabated. The level and extent of bullying in the four schools as

revealed in the questionnaires and interviews with teachers was indicative of the fact that the SMT resorts to using official ways to bully teachers. This is supported by de Wet (2010) who found out that principals often use official avenues to bully teachers. Teachers indicated that official reprimands, verbal threats and warnings were common at schools A, B and C.

The information from the questionnaires was triangulated by subsequent interviews which helped to validate and cross-check data. Bullying existed in all the four schools as shown in the pie chart, figure 4.4 of chapter three. In all four cases it was shown that the major form of bullying was verbal followed by written warnings. On further probing what the teachers meant by written warnings it emerged that the teachers were actually made to write reports to justify or reply to learners' reports of alleged wrong doings. All the four teachers confirmed that the regularity was not that frequent as it was irregular and could not fit into weekly or monthly cycles. This was some form of triangulation where information obtained from questionnaires was used to corroborate and support data obtained by subsequent interviews. It was clarified during interviews that the incidence of bullying had more to do with opportunities and situations presenting themselves to the SMT.

Members of the SMT revealed that there was no bullying at all or it was low and not very widespread. The information on the level and extent of bullying from the perspective of teachers was high while from the SMT it was not. Literature also hints of the difficulties encountered in studying bullying especially if you are studying the perpetrators. According to Gibbs (2008) teacher leaders are often sanctioned by administrators to dominate other teachers. This can be prevented if principals build teacher leadership in all teachers, (Gibbs 2008). Gibbs (2008) also did in-depth interviews with victimised elementary teachers who were physically and emotionally affected. In the interviews it was discovered that teacher bullying is overlooked as trivial by the principal.

The study confirms the view that bullying occurs in all schools (Branch 2007:264-281; de Wet 2010:1450-1459; Frevre 2010:75-85). Societal factors like lack of recourse and the social status of the bullied teachers also played an important part as in the case of the Zimbabwean and the SGB employed teachers.

Private schools are more autonomous in hiring and firing of teachers hence bullying thrives in these schools according to the interview transcripts. Without protection and job security teachers in these schools are susceptible or vulnerable to bullying.

4.8 The theme: *Causes of staff bullying.*

➤ 4.8.1 Views of teachers from school “A”

According to the responses from school “A” the major causes of staff bullying among the SMT members were envy, xenophobia and poor managerial skills. Four teachers were interviewed in school A. Each of the four teachers had different views about the causes and impact of bullying on teachers. One of the teachers who responded that he was bullied in the former model “C” school showed that he was vulnerable as he was “*employed by the School Governing Board.*” The other one said he was vulnerable because he was “*a foreigner from Zimbabwe.*” The third teacher in school “A” said he was bullied because he was “*black and a SADTU representative.*” This was questionable to the researcher as one of the bullied teachers in the school was white. When this point was brought to his attention, he said this was just “*one conspicuous case*” and that among all white teachers at the school he was the only one bullied, yet there were many black victims.

A teacher who was a SADTU representative at the school cited that he was being bullied because of his position According to the teacher (Teacher “A”) the principal was canvassing for teachers to join the National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA).Teacher “A” called the SADTU District officials twice to come and settle issues at the school. This, the SADTU representative thought,

resulted in feelings of animosity between him and the SMT which was just waiting for “*an opportunity to silence him.*” Teacher “A” said he was summoned many times to sign allegations of not doing break duty and administering corporal punishment to learners. He was made to write reports to be put in his file for future reference. He believed that his file could be the thickest, *with documentary evidence to bring him down on the day of reckoning*, which he thought was *definitely coming*.

Teacher “A” likened his file to a *dossier* for a court case. When the researcher asked the teacher if the allegations were not true, as this would not constitute bullying, he replied that everything was *stage managed* to fix him. He emphasized the fact that a similar offence committed by another *favoured* teacher would be overlooked by the SMT, but since it was committed by him, the SMT would take it up “...*as the opportunity would be too good to miss.*”

The teacher who was employed by the school governing body expressed very low self-esteem by continuously referring to himself as a foreigner during the interviews. This teacher said that he was told by the principal in the presence of a Grade 8 class that, if he could not manage his classes, the principal was going to look for someone to replace him. His self-esteem was so low during the interview that he kept on referring to himself as “...*us foreigners, there is nothing we can do as we have no rights.*” This study further revealed that other vulnerable groups like expatriate or foreign teachers are often defenceless and susceptible to bullying.

Teacher “B” also said some members of the SMT took turns to spy on his class, and would go to inform the principal of the “*goings on*” in his classroom on a day to day basis. This is some form of mobbing where the SMT gangs up together to bully a teacher. At one time teacher “B”’s head of department was instructed to do a special class visit where she was to gather enough information to be used in a subsequent disciplinary hearing for incompetence. This information was going to be used as a basis to dismiss teacher “C” without recourse to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). When asked by the researcher in retrospect if

the teacher was not having real problems with class control and teaching, he replied that there were worse teachers than him who had “...*literally and completely lost control of their classes*” but were not affected because they “ *were well connected or influential.*”

A teacher who was retiring in a year’s time (teacher “D”) cared less about giving his best. He said he was very happy to leave and gave the minimum that would just keep his job till then. According to this teacher the cause for his bullying was because he criticised the SMT for mismanaging the school. On two different occasions this teacher had an altercation with the principal and the deputy principal where the principal “*pointed a finger*” at him and threatened to abolish his post. He did not do sports, or attend subject cluster meetings or do anything that would go beyond his basic teaching duties.

One of the interviewed teachers said he was bullied because he was “*more educated*” than the principal and the heads of departments. He thought the SMT was jealous of his educational achievements. A bullied teacher (teacher “B”) specifically cited that he got an Honours degree in Afrikaans and that seemed to have sparked the bullying. The teacher who had obtained an honours degree felt he was being bullied because of his “*exceptional*” achievements. He had obtained a distinction but the principal down-played his achievement by not announcing it in the staff meeting as was the normal trend. Many other achievements result in the local newspaper being invited to flight achievements of a sport or academic nature but his academic achievement was snubbed, according to him.

➤ **4.8.2 Views of teachers from school “B”**

Teachers cited the major cause of bullying as jealousy of teachers’ accomplishments and poor managerial skills. Two teachers were sampled for interviews from school “B”. Teachers at school “B” had a lot of issues to say about the principal, who they accused of running the school like his “*house.*” The researcher could actually pick

the emotions in statements made by one of the teachers like “ *he thinks he owns this school*” and the frown on the face insinuated deep-seated feelings of animosity. Two teachers interviewed at school B said the SMT had created a group of “*sacred cows*” who did what they wanted without punishment or retribution. According to the interviewed teachers the principal had his enemies and these were the ones who were being subjected to bullying. Information obtained from interviews also corroborated what the teachers wrote in response to questionnaires. This was used as a form of triangulation to cross-check data using different methods.

➤ **4.8.3 Views of teachers from school “C”**

Teachers wrote that the major cause of bullying was the inability of the director to pay teachers’ salaries in time. This created tensions as the director wants to use the money for his own personal needs. One teacher cited that the Director lives a “*flashy*” lifestyle and drives expensive cars.

According to one of the two teachers, the school was struggling to pay teachers and this had resulted in the director of the school “*unleashing a reign of terror*” on teachers who raised their voices for unpaid salaries according to one teacher. Contracts were renewed annually and there was no job security.

Most of the teachers were under-qualified according to teacher (G) hence they were subjected to bullying. He said most of the teachers teaching in the high school section were actually primary-school trained teachers. The other teacher reported that the school had more autonomy in the way it was run and aggrieved teachers had less recourse through legal channels to have their grievances solved. According to both teachers the Department of Education had less control of private schools and they could not intervene in recruitment and labour issues at independent schools.

➤ 4.8.4 Views of teachers from school “D”

There were relatively more conciliatory comments from the interviewed teachers on the church school. One interviewed bullied teacher said she was of a different faith and thought she was being victimised for that reason. The other teacher said he had fallen out of favour with the principal and the Superintendent because of his criticism on the way the school was being managed and how some people were “...*getting away with murder*” in the name of religion. In both interviews the researcher could pick out that the aggrieved teachers had done something out of line with the church’s doctrinal teachings.

➤ 4.9 Views of the SMT

The SMT member from school “A” hinted that normally it was the “*unprofessional teachers who invited*” the bullying through their “*negligence of duty.*” The SMT member “C” said that teachers invited the bullying by being outspoken about issues that affect everyone. These outspoken teachers are then victimised as a means “*to silence other teachers.*”

➤ 4.10 Views of principals

Principal “A” thought that the cause of the *so called* bullying was laziness on the part of teachers who then *falsely accused* the SMT of bullying. This view was also held by the other three principals.

➤ 4.11 Discussion

The major causes of bullying according to teachers were lack of the requisite managerial skills, envy and vulnerability. The issue of envy is confirmed by similar research studies which purport that, abusers often feel threatened in their positions and they bully the ones that they feel have an edge over them (Cemalogly 2007; Einarsen 1999; Hall 2005 in de Wet 2010). Jealousy is also mentioned in the

literature where personal strength and accomplishments may provoke bullies and adult bullies are often envious of the accomplishments of their victims (de Wet 2010).). School “B” teachers said that the principal favours some other teachers and those who are not the principal’s favourites are bullied. This is supported in literature. According to Hindle (2011:21) destructive narcissism cannot stand criticism of any kind, even constructive criticism is taken as insubordination. Teachers who do not show blind, loyalty are bullied. Interviews with teachers showed that principals lack management skills and favoured some teachers.

The issue of vulnerability is confirmed by de Wet (2010:1454) who gives a narrative that bears out Salin’s (2003:1219) view, that vulnerable groups like SGB employees are often “pushed into a helpless and defenceless position” by their supervisors. Mobbing of a teacher by the SMT was also discovered in the case of the Zimbabwean teacher. Mobbing is group bullying (Elliot 2003:3). Private schools have more autonomy in the way they are managed teachers in such schools are more vulnerable and susceptible to bullying. This is supported by Duffy and Sperry (2007) who found out that bullying thrives in organisations that are hierarchic, bureaucratic and rule-orientated.

➤ **4.12 The theme: *Effects of bullying on teachers’ lives***

The effect bullying had on teachers’ private and professional lives was similar for all four high schools. Teachers in school “A” cited low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack of motivation to work and a desire to quit the teaching profession.

In school “B” the effect bullying had on the teachers was varied. Three teachers responded in the questionnaires that they suffered from stress, trauma, insomnia, shame and low self-esteem.

In school “C” teachers wrote that they were thinking of leaving the teaching profession altogether. The other three responded that bullying had interfered with their job performance and social life. Two teachers hinted that they suffered so much shame they only attended functions and extramural activities if it was compulsory.

One teacher said if she had another option she would gladly leave because coming to school for her was a “*nauseating*” experience every day. She was experiencing nightmares and insomnia.

Sometimes it was difficult to code responses to interview questions on the effect of bullying on the victim when two of the teachers exclaimed and just said “...*Eish!*” and the facial expression was that this was the answer and there was no need to probe any further. The researcher concluded that the teachers were short of words to express their situations. This is also supported by Hoel, et al (2004) who wrote a paper whose aim was to investigate the impact of negative behaviour and bullying in the workplace on the health and well-being of employees. This paper also raised the question whether some behaviour associated with bullying may be more damaging than others. The findings imply that some negative behaviours were more difficult to deal with than others. The effects bullying had on teachers’ interview transcripts ranged from psychological trauma to absenteeism and adverse job performance.

Teachers in school “C” cited the impact of bullying on their lives as shame, low self-worth and feelings of job insecurity. The effects of bullying were different from the other three schools in that the employer in this school was the Director. In the other two schools the employer was the Ministry of the Public Service. According to the responses in school “C” the Director has power to dismiss teachers.

The effects of bullying on teachers’ lives in school “D” were similar to those from the other three schools except that one teacher wanted to leave this school to join a

secular one as his beliefs were different. Effects were loss of interest in the job, low self-esteem, shame and stress.

Three members of the SMT and the four principals could not be drawn to give the effects of bullying on teachers. Their main reason being that they could not give effects of something they did not believe that it even existed. One SMT member mentioned stress on the affected teacher.

➤ **4.13 Discussion**

All interviewed teachers raised the point that bullying impacted negatively on their lives. This is supported by literature which asserts that bullying adversely affects victims' social life, physical and mental well-being (de Wet 2010; Gibbs: 2008; Maidern & Terblanche: 2006; Hayward: 2013; Blase & Blase; 2004) Many teachers in the interviews intimated that they would rather be absent from school as far as possible (Blase and Blase 2002). The interview transcripts also raised the sentiment that bullied teachers had reduced loyalty, apathy and mediocrity in the discharge of their duties (Agervold: 2007). Snyman (2011:4) argues against creating a work environment ruled by fear saying that it hampers creativity, demotivates staff and places blind loyalty.

Hall (2005) says victims of bullying display low esteem and blame themselves for their victimisation like teacher B who was employed by the SGB and was not a South African citizen. Two teachers hinted that they suffered so much shame they only attended functions and extramural activities if it was compulsory (Lewis :2004; Denton & Van Lill :2007; Hoel et al 2004).

The negative impact of bullying on teachers' lives is also supported by Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2010) who drew the conclusion from their study that it is an indisputable fact that staff bullying does occur in Australian schools and affects the mental and physical health of those being bullied. Hayward (2010:16 also explains that bullying can have adverse effects on the teachers, the bullied teacher may suffer

stress, be absent from school, may become physically and mentally ill, or they may leave the school or profession altogether.

Participants involved in de Wet's (2010) study agreed that bullying had a profound impact on their physical and mental well-being, as well as their professional lives. It also manifested that bullying had a negative impact on some victims' socialisation with colleagues.

➤ **4.14 The theme: *The role of the principal in maintaining harmony.***

➤ 4.14.1 Views of teachers from school "A"

The second-last question on the questionnaire dealt with what the teachers thought was the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among staff with reference to staff bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT. Firstly the teachers were supposed to give what they thought was the expected role of the principal in promoting harmony among staff. They were then supposed to describe what the actual role was at their particular school.

The expected roles were different from the actual role playing out at school "A". Five of the fourteen respondents thought that the principal and the SMT should lead the teachers in the maintenance of harmony for educational goals to be achieved. Their perceived roles however, were not translated to reality. In all five responses teachers noted that the SMT did the opposite by instigating and perpetuating disharmony among staff. The other teachers perceived that the SMT in collaboration with teachers were supposed to act in a reciprocal manner in creating and promoting harmony among staff. The actual role of the principal was different from the expected also with three of the teachers saying the principal was the culprit in causing disharmony at school "A".

➤ 4.14.2 Views of teachers from school “B”

On the expected role of the principal in maintaining harmony among teaching staff the seven teachers agreed that the principal was supposed to be the leader in this regard. The situation in reality was however different as in the case of school “B” the principal was responsible for sowing division and disharmony among staff. This according to three responses he did by creating friends who formed an *inner circle*.

➤ 4.14.3 Views of teachers from school “C”

Responses suggested that the principal must be “*professional enough to protect teachers against bullying by the Director.*” Currently the principal was being used by the Director to bully teachers. The teachers from school “D” said the principal was supposed to be professional.

➤ 4.15 Views of the SMT

All members of the SMT agreed unanimously that the principal was supposed to lead in the maintenance of harmony among staff. They added that to do this he needed the co-operation and support of all teachers and the SMT.

➤ 4.16 Views of principals

The four principals however strongly believed that they were instrumental in the maintenance of harmony in the school. They concurred with the SMT view that the teachers needed to play their part in assisting the principals to make this goal a reality. Principals did not accept that bullying existed in the four high schools.

➤ 4.17 Discussion

Interviews with the school principals regarding the maintenance of harmony theme revealed a general lack of knowledge among principals on the existence of bullying in schools. Two of the four principals however, articulated very well the role they

should play in curbing bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT. One principal even absolved himself from the responsibility and said the whole issue of maintaining harmony among staff is the responsibility of the teachers themselves. This, he said, was to be achieved by teachers doing the right thing and showing an “*eagerness and willingness to work together with management.*” All Principals and heads of departments did not take ultimate responsibility for maintaining harmony among staff.

There was an apparent absence of anti-bullying policies in three schools on the notice boards. In the case of one school there was an anti-bullying policy for learners and not for teachers. This goes to reveal a general ignorance by the SMT of the existence of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT.

➤ **4.18. The views of teachers on the perceived role of the principal.**

Teachers who were interviewed perceived that the principal should play a leading role by setting a good example. Two teachers thought that principals must be impartial and treat all staff as equal. According to one teacher, the principal should be like a “*father*” and treat his teachers equally like his “*children*”. The SADTU teacher thought otherwise. Echoing the terms used by his mother organisation, he suggested that the department must only appoint SADTU principals, in his words “...*comrades*” who sympathise with teachers’ grievances.

➤ **4.18.1 The views of teachers on the actual role of the principal.**

Teachers’ perceived role of the principal was a far cry from the actual role as expressed in the interviews. All teachers hinted that principals caused disharmony instead of harmony by treating teachers selectively. Major issues raised included the

selective and preferential treating of some teachers at the expense of others. Bullying of some teachers and overloading other teachers with more teaching periods while others had many “free” periods were also cited.

➤ 4.19 Discussion

The role of the principal in creating a harmonious environment with particular reference to bullying of staff by the SMT was explored. The role of the principal was given as crucial by Ramsey (1999) and Gibbs (2008). The principal, as the Head of Department’s representative at institutional level, is tasked with guiding the SMT and teachers to achieve organisational goals. Mfusi (2011:19) notes that without experienced managers and effective leaders, schools will become dysfunctional.

Principals said they acknowledged that their role was important but teachers had to play their part also. In interviews with school principals they confirmed that all of them had not pressed any charges on any teacher for an act of misconduct in their tenure as principals. When asked why it was like that in the face of rampant indiscipline among teachers, principals responded that they were either reluctant on humanitarian basis or they were hesitant because of the consequent reaction of SADTU. or the teachers themselves. Principal “A” aptly summed it up and said, “*Ours is a dangerous job, you can get killed for nothing*” He cited an incident where a principal was “*sjamboked*” (beaten up using a special whip) in the 2007 teachers’ strike for opening the school gates, and allowing lessons to continue. Responsibility for dismissal of a teacher comes with “*grave risks*” according to principal “B”.

Gibbs (2008: 2740) purports that the “administrator is the key to the success of a school.” A principal must support victims who have been bullied by other teachers and ensure that this abuse comes to an end by playing a key role in relational trust and collaboration they influence the relationships that are important for the job satisfaction of the staff in the various departments in, particular and the happiness of

the school in general.” Ramsey, (1999:43) concurs and adds, “leaders determine good or bad morale more than any other single factor.”

Van der Westhuizen (1997:191-192) emphasizes that the character and personality of the school principal and the other education leaders are very important in teaching. Harmony is very essential for the attainment of educational goals according to Prinsloo (2008), Ralph (2010), Gower (ed) (2010). The study unearthed the fact that there is widespread existence of staff bullying by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High schools and that ultimate responsibility for bullying lies with the SMT which seems to be unaware of the problem. Interviews with the four high school principals revealed that all of them did not believe that bullying of staff existed in the schools This is a very unfortunate situation as the first step towards finding a solution to any problem is to acknowledge its existence and explore the causes The SMT determines whether goals are going to be achieved or not by how they relate to teachers. de Wet (2010) argues that morale is crucial in maintaining good working relationships. This idea supports the belief that bullying negatively affects morale. Snyman (2011) concurs and says that morale is central to sound human relations.

According to Hindle (2011:21) the education system contains within it too many school principals who are unable or even unfit to manage, some of them promoted for political ends rather than their educational achievements. Intimidated, and concerned for their tenuous position, principals approve or turn a blind eye to teachers who take off for meetings, funerals, stealing teaching time for learners (Hindle 2011:21).

➤ **4.20 The theme: *Solutions for staff bullying.***

➤ **4.20.1 The views of teachers on solutions to staff bullying**

The researcher asked what the bullied teachers suggested should be done to resolve the issue of staff bullying. Their suggestions were that the SMT must just be

professional, impartial and not personalise issues. When asked if they would gather enough courage to approach the SMT, all of the interviewed teachers were scared to confront the SMT as they envisaged stiff resistance and defensiveness on the part of the SMT. This, they said, would make the situation worse and would lead to them being victimised.

Tentative solutions offered by the teachers were; training workshops for the SMT members to equip them to cope with conflict management , staff development seminars to make teachers aware of bullying and the provision of an anti-bullying hotline that would be able to go past the principal and the SMT. Two of the teachers hinted that communication channels with the District and the Gauteng Department of Education provincial offices require that complaints be lodged and channelled through the principal, who may be the perpetrator of bullying. Three teachers said they resolved to just withdraw from staff functions and lunches.

Seven teachers thought that the major solution in curbing bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT lay in staff training of SMT members and appointing principals on the basis of merit not on nepotism.

According to the teachers in school “D” solutions to the problem of bullying lay in the government taking control of private schools especially in matters concerning recruitment and salaries.

➤ **4.21 Views of the SMT**

Solutions to bullying according to the SMT members lay in mutual trust and co-operation between the SMT and the teachers. The principal must take a leading role in this thrust according to the interviewed SMT members.

➤ **4.22 Views of the principals**

The principals however strongly believed that the solution to this problem of bullying lay with the teachers themselves. Their views were aptly summed up by principal “A” who said that “*the solution to this problem if ever it exists is for teachers to exercise a very high degree of professionalism in the discharge of their duties*”.

➤ **4.23 Discussion**

Solutions to the problem of bullying in high schools have to start with the acknowledgement of the existence of the problem by the authorities in the Ministry of Education at policy-making levels. There is need for an awareness of the bullying phenomenon to all stakeholders. Ways to identify and report incidents of bullying need to be put in place and principals need to play a leading role in curbing bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT.

➤ **4.24 Discussion of research findings**

Hayward (2010:17) succinctly puts it by saying that every person deserves “free passage.” According to him each person has the right to be unhindered in their daily life and to be free of bullying of all kinds. Work place bullying of any kind should be stopped in its tracks. It has no place in modern civilisation. Jefferson (2008:50) affirms this and says, “bullying is not acceptable in a civilised society, and, increasingly, it is recognised as a punishable act.”

It is difficult to stop bullying if the bully is the leader or in the case of this study, the SMT according to Strandmark and Hallberg in de Wet (2010). The impact of bullying on teachers was shame, stress, absenteeism, illness, low self-esteem, poor job performance and loss of sleep (Kirsten, Viljoen & Rossouw :2005; Riley, Duncan & Edwards :2009; Lewis, Coursol & Wahl :2002; Brandow & Hunter: 2008).

The SMT is struggling to stamp their authority on teachers through legal means at their disposal, but because of the implications involved, they inadvertently resort to bullying according to interview transcripts.

There is need to maintain harmony among the teaching staff in high schools so that everyone works towards one goal as a team. Prinsloo (2008) Squelch and Lemmer (1994) give the advantages of group work and emphasize the fact that an understanding of group dynamics is essential in team building efforts. This is crucial in achieving organisational goals. The SMT must be knowledgeable of sound human relations and guidelines for establishing human relations as given by Prinsloo (2008).

For post-independent South Africa, there is need for high school principals to strike a delicate balance between accountability and power when dealing with issues of teacher discipline. According to Price and Clark (2011:4-5) many South African schools are bedevilled with teacher late-coming, absenteeism and an inability to enact the basic functions of teaching. This point is acknowledged and there is no need to condone such bad practices. It is also appreciated that holding teachers to account is proving to be a difficult task, as “the behaviour of some teachers in many township secondary schools verges on the anarchic” (Price & Clark 2011:5). Ways to deal with this mishap need to be found urgently and put in place, but bullying is not one of them.

4.25 Conclusion

This chapter presented the information obtained from the research study, analysed it and discussed the findings as mirrored against research questions. The role of the principal in maintaining a harmonious working environment was explored. There is no doubt that the principal plays a vanguard role in the creation and maintenance of harmony among the teaching staff in theory and this is supported by literature. According to this study, school principals in particular and the SMT in general seem to be unaware of the existence of bullying in high schools.

The last chapter deals with three broad sections to address the research topic. The first section gives a summary of the research, the second section provides recommendations and the last section gives limitations of this study and field of study for further research.

CHAPTER 5

A SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

5.1 Introduction

Chapter one gave a summary of the research journey, introduced the research topic, the aims and objectives of the study, the research questions and stated the research problem. Staff bullying was defined and a preliminary literature preview was carried out to put the research into proper perspective. A brief description of the research design and methodology was given and a summary of the five chapters of the research journey concluded the first chapter.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the topic. The major gaps in literature were identified and previous studies on workplace bullying served as a launching pad for this study which singled out teaching staff bullying for investigation. It was discovered from literature that there was a lack of staff bullying studies on teachers.

Chapter three gave a detailed account of the research design and methodology for this research. Sampling strategies and research instruments were documented and their selection justified. A qualitative research approach was selected for this study and a motivation for this approach was given. Measures were put in place to ensure trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations were given.

Chapter four presented the data collected, analysed it and interpreted it in the light of the research questions and objectives. A comparison was made between what literature says on workplace bullying and the research findings of this study.

The last chapter of this study, chapter five, gives a summary of the research findings measured against the research topic and the aim. This chapter provides the recommendations for teachers, SMT, Department of Education and the government with particular reference to bullying of teaching staff by the SMT's in the various schools. Limitations and challenges encountered in the study are documented. Lastly this chapter provides recommendations for further study. A conclusion gives a brief summary on the study.

5.2 Summary of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate the level, extent and impact of bullying of teaching staff by the School Management Team (SMT) in four Ekurhuleni North District high schools. This was done for the purpose of curbing staff bullying. The role of the principal in maintaining harmony with regard to staff bullying was explored with a view to solving the problem.

The investigation revealed that there is a relatively high level of bullying of teachers by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District high schools. The extent of bullying was widespread as all four sampled schools exhibited some degree of bullying. This confirms Hayward's (2013:12) assertion of the pervasive nature of bullying in the South African context that bullying does not only happen among learners.

The principal plays an important role in maintaining a harmonious working environment and solutions to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT need the intervention at the level of the principal. The study revealed a lack of awareness among principals of the existence of bullying in schools hence there was no anti-bullying policy for teachers in all four high schools.

Major findings that emerged from the study were:

- Staff bullying thrives in all schools sampled for study. The level is high and the extent is widespread.
- Bullying is targeted at teachers by the SMT. Victims have some circumstances surrounding them that make them vulnerable to bullying.
- The main causes of bullying according to the study were; jealousy of victims' achievements, racism, xenophobia and poor managerial skills.
- Bullied teachers suffer stress, shame, illness, lack of sleep, low self-esteem and lack of job security.
- Bullying of the teaching staff is a response to lack of effective authority to discipline teachers. Principals hesitate to implement rules because of the procedures involved.
- The school management team members bully teachers because there is no effective alternative to stamp their authority in the face of indiscipline among teachers.
- A harmonious working environment is a necessary pre-requisite for achievement of educational objectives.
- There is a general lack of a harmonious working environment in the four schools among many teachers because of the existence of bullying by the school management team.
- The principal plays a vanguard role in the maintenance of a harmonious working environment. Interviews with principals revealed that they appreciated and knew about their role in this regard. The principal must lead in putting up an anti-bullying policy for teachers. There were no anti-bullying policies for teachers. There was an anti-bullying policy for students in two high schools.
- Principals in the four sampled schools professed ignorance about bullying of teachers in their schools. Three of them actually thought it was part of their duty to enforce rules. Principals could not separate the two.
- Teachers need to speak up and unite against any bullying by the SMT.

5.3 Conclusions from literature and empirical research

Bullying is a social ill that will haunt teachers for a long time if it is not dealt with properly and promptly. Policies need to be put in place to curtail bullying of every type in schools including staff bullying. The researcher suggests that bullying awareness be made part of the teaching curriculum given the high level and widespread nature of bullying in South African schools for both teachers and students.

5.3.1 Background on bullying

Literature confirms that there is widespread bullying of teachers by the principal in schools all over the world (Thomas 2005:273-288; Gibbs2008:2740; de Wet 2010:1453; Gibbs 2008:2740). The importance of the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among teaching staff is over-emphasised (Gibbs 2008; Kruger 2008).

The adverse effects of bullying are well documented in literature (Maguire (2001; Riley, Duncan & Edwards 2010; Lewis 2004:281-299).Solutions to bullying have been given by Douglas (2001); Fieldman 2004); Hayward (2010:17); Saam (2010).Causes of bullying have been well expounded by de Wet (2010: 1454); Cemalogly (2007); Einarsen (1999); Hall, (2005), Kirsten et al ,(2005)

This research has been viewed by the researcher as important in that it brought to the fore the issue of bullying of teachers in Ekurhuleni North as a pioneer study that will rekindle a desire among academics and education policy-makers to explore this phenomenon further and deal with it accordingly. Emerging directly from the findings of this research it is imperative that recommendations are made to the relevant stakeholders on what should be done next.

5.4 Recommendations for educators

Recommendations for teachers were taken from both the literature and this study. As the victims of bullying the first thing is to report all cases of bullying to authorities so that a solution can be found. Silence will not help but actually perpetuate it. Hayward (2010:17) hints at no easy panacea for bullying, he says, “while there is no one-plan-fits-all to rise above unhealthy relationships, silence is never the answer.” Hayward (2010) thinks that speaking out is the first step to freedom. Teachers need to stand up against bullying by the school management team. As the victims teachers need to be their own liberators by reporting any bullying whenever and wherever it appears.

Bullied teachers need to seek counselling. When counselling, it is necessary to counsel both the bully and the bullied. Both the bully and the bullied must benefit from individual counselling (Hayward 2013).

5.5 Recommendations for the SMT.

The focus to curtail bullying should be on the bullies, the victims and the bystanders as educating all three groups is crucial in putting an end to bullying (Fieldman 2004).

- Workshops and seminars on bullying need to be held with all stakeholders to bring awareness and general revulsion to bullying. Education programmes on bullying need to be targeted on the SMT.
- Principals must support victims who have been bullied by the SMT and ensure that this abuse comes to an end by playing a key role in relational trust and collaboration (Gibbs 2008:2740; Brumer and Lavi 2010:44-45)). Teacher leaders are often sanctioned by administrators to dominate other teachers. This should not be the case and principals must be the ones to make sure that this does not happen. This can be achieved if principals build teacher leadership in all teachers (PsyINFO Database Record © 2010 APA).

- The role of the school principal in eliminating staff bullying is brought to the fore by Brumer and Lavi (2010:44-45) who assert that principals must issue a clear directive for staff members to report and document all incidents of bullying. Maguire (2001) did a study on the principal bullying teachers and the impact of bullying on victims. He found out that there was a lack of an effective regime for monitoring of regulations governing principals' behaviour and the characteristics of bullies. District and provincial offices of the department of education should assist bullied teachers.
- Gibbs (2008: 2740) is quick to add that the "administrator is the key to the success of a school." Snyman (2011:4) asserts that creating a work environment ruled by fear severely hampers creativity, it demotivates staff and places blind loyalty above vision.
- Jefferson (2008) says although there seems to be a common understanding of the harm caused by student bullying across school systems and higher institutions and the need for institutional protections and actions, there is a noticeable absence of similar policies and procedures when the alleged bully is a higher education administrator. The Department of Education must as a matter of urgency produce a circular requiring all schools to put up an anti-bullying policy for students and teachers alike.
- Casella (2007:804) says certain supervisory behaviours are counter-productive to the school environment. School administrators need to establish clear orientation policies that address the issue and how it can be handled. They must also establish a hotline system where teachers can anonymously report situations when they feel victimised without fear of retribution. This should be part of all new teachers' orientation and induction courses as they join the profession. These steps would constitute a proactive approach to a

topic that is more and more worrisome. Administrative training courses at universities should prepare future educators accordingly.

- Blase and Blase (2004:245-273) advocate for the importance of preparing prospective and practising school principals to deal with personal and leadership that seriously damage teachers, teaching and student learning. Bandow and Hunter (2008) concluded that uncivilized behaviour not only harms individuals but diminishes employee performance. There is need for the SMT to formulate an anti-bullying policy for teachers. Managers need to be aware of how uncivilized behaviours affect working relationships and lead to legal, psychological and retention issues. Many current teachers may be waiting for opportunities to leave the profession because of bullying. In the mean-time they are giving half-hearted service to the future citizens of the country.

- Prinsloo (2008:189-190) urges the school management teams to make others aware of core values at assemblies and awards functions. The core values emphasised are; empathy, friendliness, honesty and kindness. The following guidelines from Prinsloo (2008) are invaluable for the SMT:
 1. Make the staff aware of the different forms of bullying that can happen amongst them
 - 2 Write a staff anti-bullying policy consisting of what constitutes bullying and steps to follow if bullied.
 - 3 Ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the work load when allocating administrative, extramural and teaching duties to staff.
 - 4 Make meetings democratic and open to discussion. Teacher input should be encouraged.
 - 5 Be vigilant in identifying bullying behaviour.
 - 6 Do staff development on assertiveness, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence and stress management.
 - 7 Arrange social events like braais, end-of-term lunches and outings where teachers get to know each other well. This will reduce bullying considerably.

- Prinsloo (2008: 198-199) gives the attitudes and personality traits that are necessary for the establishment of sound human relations:

- 1 Friendliness and courtesy: People want to be treated with kindness and the leader needs to be friendly.
- 2 Respect and warmth: People value appreciation and acknowledgement.
- 3 Honesty and sincerity: People will respect a leader who is honest and true to their word.
- 4 Genuineness and spontaneity: Leaders need not be pretenders but true and down-to-earth.
- 5 Consistency: A rule that applies to “A” must also apply to “B”

- Van der Westhuizen (1997:192-193) alludes to the following guidelines in establishing harmonious relations:

- 1 Remember that people are important
- 2 Take into account people’s opinions, feelings and insights
- 3 Believe in your staff
- 4 Create opportunities for staff to realise their full potential, do not stifle them.
- 5 Involve staff in formulating aims so that they own the programme.
- 6 Allocate tasks according to interests and ability
- 7 Motivate staff
- 8 Show appreciation and acknowledge achievement.
- 9 Encourage two-way communication
- 10 Improve morale and group solidarity.
- 11 Delegate tasks, responsibility and authority.

- The SMT must take heed of the given guidelines in order to effectively maintain harmony among the teaching staff.

5.6 Recommendations for the Department of Education.

It is very encouraging that the Department of Basic Education has issued an Action Plan entitled "Towards the Realisation of schooling 2025." The action plan aims at ensuring job satisfaction and that teaching takes place through responsible leadership, promotion of harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond." This Action Plan should incorporate bullying of staff by the SMT. The most effective level at which such interventions can be made is the national or provincial Department of Education where policy formulations are debated and promulgated.

The Department of Education should fund and hold seminars on staff bullying in school clusters to bring awareness to the SMT's and teachers.

5.7 Recommendations for government

Duffy (2009) concludes that legislation and policy development are two key initiatives that can help prevent such mobbing and bullying. The government needs to realise that legal bullying of teachers by the SMT works against the attainment of educational goals.

The government has a moral obligation to put in place policies that are aimed at limiting the bullying phenomenon in all schools.

It is encouraging to note that the government has realised the gravity of the crisis in education and at the Mangaung ANC Elective Conference in December 2012 the President made a pronouncement on reintroduction of school inspectors to monitor and supervise teaching in schools. There is a strong belief in government circles that teachers are letting the system down and they need close supervision. This inherently and indirectly acknowledges the failure of principals to do this job.

Introducing school inspectors without empowering them with authority to enforce rules, however, does not seem to be the answer. It may just be shifting the staff bullying responsibility from the SMT to school inspectors. The result might be the same, as the introduction of school inspectors on the drawing board is already facing stiff resistance from SADTU which sees this move by government as a way to find faults. SADTU is coincidentally an affiliate of COSATU which is a member of the tripartite alliance with the African National Congress which forms a majority in government. The Minister of Basic Education understands the power vested in SADTU better when on 24 April 2013 SADTU members marched in Pretoria demanding that the Minister and her Director General resign (www.news24.com).

According to de Wet (2010:1450) all workers in South Africa, including teachers, have a constitutional and judiciary right to a workplace experience in which they feel valued and respected. According to Hall in Mfusi (2011: 18) educators are lost from the teaching profession through retirement, resignation and death. More teachers are leaving the profession than joining it, especially because of the exodus of teachers to foreign countries. Bullying of the teaching staff will exacerbate the problem of teachers leaving the profession. Kimberley in Mfusi (2011) says that South Africa is the biggest contributor of foreign teachers to the United Kingdom followed by Australia. The U.K. like other countries, worldwide is facing a growing shortage of teachers particularly in mathematics, science and modern languages. The Mercury in (Mfusi 2011:19).

The resolution of the crisis in authority and management in our school system requires government to restore political authority over schools in ways that will ensure that teachers and principals can be held to account (Price and Clark 2011:6-7). Emotional outbursts on teachers by politicians serve little to correct the crisis in education and will exacerbate rather than inhibit bullying of teachers by the SMT.

5.8 Limitations of this study

The study was restricted to Ekurhuleni North District therefore the findings cannot be generalised to the whole country. Another limitation was the duration of the study. The data collection was done over a relatively short time span. A study of this nature has to be conducted over an extended period to yield better results. The researcher needs to go back and forth interviewing as many teachers and SMT members as possible to get a variety of views.

An inherent limitation of the interview as a research instrument is that the interviewees may not be completely truthful in their responses in order to please the researcher or to protect their role (Catania 1999). To curb this, the researcher was careful not to indicate agreement with the teachers or preference for the direction of the discussion (Branch 2007:277). That, however, may not have completely eradicated this flaw.

Another limitation was the reluctance of perpetrators of workplace bullying to be involved in research (Branch 2007:277) There was open resistance from the Church school to carry out this research. The researcher had to find another church school after the sampled one's principal refused to take part in the study. There was also open resistance from the private secular school but after explaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the study the principal gave the researcher permission to carry out the study.

There should have been a higher number of participants, more schools and wider coverage that also included schools in the rural areas.

5.9 Recommendations for further study

This study was important because the researcher wanted to investigate the level, extent and impact of bullying of teaching staff by the SMT in four Ekurhuleni North District High schools as this would bring an awareness of the problem to all stakeholders. Solutions to the staff bullying were also suggested to improve harmony among teachers. The role of the principal in all this was explored and defined. The bullying of vulnerable teachers like foreign national teachers and those in private schools can also be singled out for future research.

5.10 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that the principal plays a very important role in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff. Literature prioritises the role of the principal in this respect and upholds the sentiment that it is the responsibility of the principal to marshal all human resources under his/her jurisdiction towards harmony and team work. This is done so that the attainment of educational goals can be realised. The principal does this by making the SMT aware of the drive to unite staff. The SMT represents leadership and these educational leaders must assist in the creation of a conducive atmosphere. They should not exacerbate the divisions by perpetuating staff bullying.

Chapter three of this study showed how the data for this study was collected and formed the basis for the analysis and interpretations done in chapter four. The level and extent of staff bullying is very high and the impact is not healthy for education. Interviews with the SMT and principals revealed ignorance of the staff bullying phenomenon which does not augur well for solutions to the problem.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GDE APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2013/215

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	28 September 2012
Validity of Research Approval:	4 February 2013 to 27 September 2013
Name of Researcher:	Binduko S.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 1097 Kempton Park 1620
Telephone Number:	082 264 4647
Fax Number:	011 391 2530
Email address:	binduko@webmail.co.za
Research Topic:	The role of the principal in maintaining a harmonious working environment: An investigation into staff "legal" bullying by the school management team in Ekurhuleni North District High schools
Number and type of schools:	FOUR Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

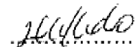
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Makhado'.

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

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

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

Kind regards


.....

Dr David Makhado

Director: Knowledge Management and Research

DATE: 2012/09/28
.....

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX B

The research questions

- 1 What is the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the school management team in your school?
- 2 What are the effects of bullying on your private and professional lives?
- 3 How should the principal maintain a harmonious working environment with reference to staff bullying by the SMT?
- 4 How should the issue of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT be solved?

APPENDIX C

THE QUESTIONNAIRE (for teachers)

I am a student at the University of South Africa doing research for a Master's degree in Educational Management. The **TOPIC is : The role of the principal in creating a harmonious working environment; an investigation into "legal" staff bullying by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High Schools.**

This questionnaire is to be administered to sampled teachers in Ekurhuleni North District. The information disclosed will be treated with strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is appreciated.

GUIDELINES

1. Kindly respond openly and honestly to the questions.
2. Do not write your name or the name of your school.
3. There are no right or wrong answers

SECTION A

Biographical information:

Please complete by making a 'TICK' in the appropriate box.

1. **Gender :** F M
2. **Age group:** (21-30) (31-40) (41-50) (Over 50)
3. **What post do you hold at present?**
4. **Nature of post:** Permanent Temporary/ relief
5. **Employer:** Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)
School Governing Body (SGB)
Independent (Private) School

6. **Qualifications:** Diploma Bachelor's degree Honours degree
Masters' degree Doctorate

SECTION B

“Legal” staff bullying occurs when there is a ***persistent/ repeated*** effort by the School Management Team (SMT) to denigrate someone, e.g. verbal warning, written warning, disciplinary hearing, charges for acts of misconduct or threats of dismissal. The SMT includes the Principal, Deputy Principal (s), Director (s) and the Heads of Subject Departments HOD’s).

2.1 Has any staff bullying occurred in your teaching career? Y N

.2 What form is the bullying ?

Verbal written

Other (Specify).....

2.3 How often/ has the bullying been?

Every day Every week Monthly

2.4 What do you think is the cause of the bullying?

.....
.....

2.5 How has bullying affected your work performance and your private life?

.....
.....
.....

3 If bullying has occurred to you kindly indicate below the date, time and venue convenient to you for a subsequent interview.

Date:.....Time.....Venue.....

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (for teachers)

I am a student at the University of South Africa doing research for a Master's degree in Educational Management. The **TOPIC is: The role of the principal in creating a harmonious working environment; an investigation into "legal" staff bullying by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High Schools.**

- Please give your honest opinion in answering the following questions.
 - There is no wrong answer.
 - The purpose of the interview questions is to hear you perception(s) about staff bullying by the SMT.
 - Do you have any questions or concerns to be addressed before we can continue?
- 1 What is the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in your school?
 - 2 What are the effects of bullying on you private and professional lives?
 - 3 What is the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff with particular reference to bullying?
 - 4 What are the solutions to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

Do you have anything to say about bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

I wish to thank you very much for your time and co-operation in this interview. **END**

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE(for the heads of departments)

I am a student at the University of South Africa doing research for a Master's degree in Educational Management. The **TOPIC is: The role of the principal in creating a harmonious working environment; an investigation into "legal" staff bullying by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High Schools.**

- Please give your honest opinion in answering the following questions.
- There is no wrong answer.
- The purpose of the interview questions is to hear you perception(s) about staff bullying by the SMT.
- Do you have any questions or concerns to be addressed before we can continue?

Introduction and ice-breaker: Creating a harmonious working environment is crucial in achieving educational goals. The staff needs to work as a team and any harmful conflict and low morale is likely to militate against the attainment of educational goals. I am specifically looking at staff bullying by the SMT.

1. What is the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in your school?
2. What are the effects of bullying on you private and professional lives?
3. What is the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff with particular reference to bullying?
4. What are the solutions to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT How do you deal with issues of teacher discipline (procedures in place) in the school?

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for your time and co-operation. **END**

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE(for the principals)

I am a student at the University of South Africa doing research for a Master's degree in Educational Management. The **TOPIC is: The role of the principal in creating a harmonious working environment; an investigation into "legal" staff bullying by the SMT in Ekurhuleni North District High Schools.**

- Please give your honest opinion in answering the following questions.
- There is no wrong answer.
- The purpose of the interview questions is to hear you perception(s) about staff bullying by the SMT.
- Do you have any questions or concerns to be addressed before we can continue?

Introduction and ice-breaker: Creating a harmonious working environment is crucial in achieving educational goals. The staff needs to work as a team and any harmful conflict and low morale is likely to militate against the attainment of educational goals. I am specifically looking at staff bullying by the SMT.

- 1 What is the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in your school?
- 2 What are the effects of bullying on you private and professional lives?
- 3 What is the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff with particular reference to bullying?
- 4 What are the solutions to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for your time and co-operation. **END**

APPENDIX G

An interview transcript

I am interviewing one bullied teacher.

R- The purpose of this study is to investigate the level, extent and impact of teaching staff bullying by the School Management Team and explore the role of the principal in creating a harmonious working environment. I would like to assure you that the information gathered will be treated as confidential and will be used for the purpose of research only. Please give your honest opinion in answering the questions. There is no wrong answer. The purpose of the interview questions is to hear you perception(s) about staff bullying by the SMT. Do you have any questions or concerns to be addressed before we can continue?

T- A-a (shaking the head)

R- What is the level and extent of bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT in your school?

T-Eh! You know what? The principal at this school is not that bad. It is the deputy principal who is the real bully. Mr X (mentions the name) is waging a war against me. I do not know the reason but he has made my life to be hell at this school. The level is too high.

R- When you say the level is too high do you know of others who are also bullied besides yourself?

T- Many, uhmm (thinking out the number) about ten.

R-What are the effects of bullying on you private and professional lives?

T- Eish! To tell you the truth, it's only that I don't have an option I would just quit this job. I am sooo stressed I am sick right now. I can collapse any moment.

R-What is the role of the principal in maintaining harmony among the teaching staff with particular reference to bullying?

T- The principal should be like a father, treating all teachers like his children, not hate some and love others. It does not work like that. It's bad.

R-What are the solutions to bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

R-The school management team must treat teachers in a professional manner. Yeah they must just be professional and not personalise issues. Principals must be appointed on the basis of merit not nepotism. They must also be trained because many of them don't know nothing.

R-Do you have anything to say about bullying of the teaching staff by the SMT?

R-I wish to thank you very much for your time and co-operation in this interview. **END**