

**Teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on
health: developing a multi-level intervention programme**

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“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

~Abraham Lincoln

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

~Maya Angelou

OPSOMMING

Titel:

Onderwysers se ervarings van werkplek-boeliegedrag en die effek daarvan op gesondheid: die ontwikkeling van 'n multivlak-intervensie program

Boeliegedrag word as 'n hoof stressor in verskeie professies herken en kan ernstige gevolge vir gesondheid inhou. Onderwysers word onderskei as 'n professionele groep wat deur hierdie fenomeen geaffekteer word. Die hoof doelwitte van hierdie navorsingstudie was eerstens om onderwysers se ervarings van boeliegedrag en die effek op gesondheid te ondersoek, en tweedens, om 'n multivlak-intervensieprogram te ontwikkel wat in hierdie werksektor geïmplementeer kan word om boeliegedrag en die gesondheidsgevolge wat daaruit spruit, te takel.

Hierdie navorsingstudie is in twee fases uitgevoer. In die eerste fase is die *biopsigososiale model* as 'n teoretiese grondslag toegepas. Deelnemers is gewerf deur middel van inligtings en opvoedkundige artikels wat *aanlyn* en in die gedrukte pers geplaas was. Keurkriteria is toegepas om 'n groep deelnemers te werf wat verteenwoordigend was van *slagoffers van werkplek-boeliegedrag*. Sewe-en-twintig onderwysers is in hierdie navorsingstudie ingesluit.

'n Kwalitatiewe, fenomenologiese navorsingsontwerp is gebruik om deelnemers se ervarings van boeliegedrag en die effek op gesondheid, te ondersoek. Data is deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en persoonlike dokumente ingesamel. 'n Bandopname is van die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude gemaak en die data is *verbatim* getranskribeer. Metodes van *Interpreterende Fenomenologiese Analise* is toegepas om die data te analiseer en voor te lê. Bevindinge is deur *verbatim* uittreksels en 'n literatuur kontrole ondersteun.

Onderwysers se opmerkings het aangedui dat boeliegedrag meestal deur skoolhoofde begaan word en dat kollegas ook somtyds betrek word om deel te hê aan die proses. Boeliegedrag is daarop gerig om onderwysers se karakter, sowel as hul werk aan te val. Kanale in die organisasie is soms misbruik om

onderwysers te boelie. Sekere gedrag is ook 'n skending van hierdie onderwysers se mense- en arbeidsregte.

Bevindinge is ook ooreenkomstig die teorie en dinamiek wat deur die *biopsigososiale model* voorgestel word. Toenemende stres en trauma is in onderwysers se fisiese, psigologiese en sosiale gesondheid weerspieël. Boeliegedrag het eerstens 'n effek op hul psigologiese gesondheid gehad wat ook vergesel is deur verskeie fisiese gesondheidsprobleme. Episodes van major depressie en/ of simptome daarvan, is meestal aangemeld. Sommige onderwysers het ook simptome van posttraumatiese stres versteuring, kompleks-posttraumatiese stres versteuring en paniek aanvalle aangemeld. Gesondheidsprobleme het verder 'n negatiewe uitwerking op hul sosiale en professionele verhoudings gehad. Die skool organisasie is geaffekteer. Die resultaat is onderwysers wat nie meer 'n passie vir die professie het nie, 'n afname in werkproduksie, 'n toename in afwesigheid en onderwysers se voorneme om die professie te verlaat. Die bevindinge het laastens aangetoon dat sekere persoonlike en organisatoriese eienskappe boeliegedrag fasiliteer en ook hierdie fenomeen aanmoedig.

Relevante literatuur, veldnotas van die navorsingsproses en bevindinge in die eerste fase van hierdie navorsingstudie, is as 'n gids gebruik vir die ontwikkeling van 'n multivlak-intervensieprogram vir die onderwysberoep in Suid-Afrika. Strategiese intervensie-aktiwiteite is voorgestel om van die oorsake van werkplek-boeliegedrag, sowel as die fisiese, psigologiese en sosiale effek op gesondheid, aan te spreek. Daarbenewens is 'n strategiese en metodologiese benadering vir multivlak-intervensie ontwikkel en voorgestel. Strategiese intervensie aktiwiteite is ten einde vir die professionele, sosiale/ gemeenskap, individuele/ familie, diadiese, organisatoriese, bestuur en werkgroep-vlak voorgestel.

Sleuteltermes: werkplek-boeliegedrag, onderwyser, skool, slagoffer, boelie, gesondheid, stres, werktrauma, biopsigososiale model, multivlak-intervensieprogram

ABSTRACT

Title:

Teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health: developing a multi-level intervention programme

Workplace bullying is recognised as a major psychosocial stressor in various professions and can have severe effects on health. Teachers are distinguished as an occupational group that is severely affected by this phenomenon. The general objectives of this research study were to firstly investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health, and secondly, to develop a multi-level intervention programme that can be implemented to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in this context.

This research study was conducted in two phases. The *biopsychosocial model* was applied as a theoretical foundation in the first phase. Participants were sampled by means of informative and educational articles that were placed *online* and in printed media. Selection criteria were applied to sample a group that was representative of *victims of workplace bullying*. Ultimately, twenty-seven teachers were included in this study. A qualitative, phenomenological research design was used to explore teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health. Data was specifically gathered by means of semi-structured interviews and personal documents. Semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and data was transcribed verbatim. Methods of *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* were applied to analyse and present the data. Findings were supported with verbatim quotes and a literature control.

Teachers' reports indicated that workplace bullying is mostly perpetrated by principals and that colleagues are often also involved in the process. Bullying behaviours were aimed at attacking the character, as well as the work of teachers. Organisational channels were often exploited to bully teachers. Certain behaviours were an infringement of teachers' human and labour rights.

Findings are also analogous to the theory and dynamics that is depicted by the *biopsychosocial model*. Escalating stress and trauma were reflected in teachers' physical, psychological and social health. The experience of workplace bullying firstly impacted on their psychological health, which was also accompanied by various physical health problems. Major depressive episodes and/ or symptoms of depression were mostly reported. Some teachers also reported symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, complex-posttraumatic stress disorder, and panic attacks. Teachers' ill-health experiences further negatively impacted on their social and professional relationships. The school organisation is affected. The result is teachers with a lost passion for the profession, lowered work performance, increased absenteeism, and teachers' intention to leave the profession. Findings finally indicated that certain personal and organisational characteristics facilitate and sustain workplace bullying.

Relevant literature, field notes during the research process and findings in the first phase of this study guided the development of a multi-level intervention programme for the South African teaching profession. Strategic intervention activities were suggested to address some of the causes, as well as the physical, psychological and social health effects of workplace bullying. A strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention was also developed and proposed. Strategic intervention activities were ultimately suggested for the professional, social/ community, individual/ familial, dyadic, organisational, managerial, and work group level.

Key terminology: workplace bullying, teacher, school, victim, bully, health, stress, work trauma, biopsychosocial model, multi-level intervention programme

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
C-PTSD	Complex-PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DoE	Department of Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSM-IV-TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EEA	Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998)
FET	Further Education and Training
GAS	General Adaptation Syndrome
HoD	Head of Division
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LRA	Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995)
n.d.	not dated
PDA	Protected Disclosures Act (26 of 2000)
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
REBT	Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy
SADAG	South African Depression and Anxiety Group
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
WBI	Workplace Bullying Institute

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying is a major psychosocial stressor that may have severe effects on individual, familial, work group and organisational health. Teachers are distinguished as a professional group that is severely affected by this phenomenon. The objectives of this study will firstly be to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health, and secondly, to develop a multi-level intervention programme to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in this profession. This chapter will provide an orientation to the research study.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXTUALISATION

Bullying is an extremely prevalent and relevant issue in modern society. This expression is recognised by almost everyone and it indicates that something wrong or unacceptable was perpetrated by someone who can be identified (Namie & Namie, 2011:3). Namie and Namie (2011:3) claim that almost all nations are familiar with the expression "bully" or have some cultural alternative of this expression. Most people will thus be able to explain and exemplify what is meant by *bullying* through their own perceptions of what this phenomenon constitutes.

Bullying is well-known as a childhood phenomenon. This expression has been applied to illuminate aggressive conduct that occurs between learners in schools (Monks, Smith, Naylor, Barter, Ireland & Coyne, 2009:153). This phenomenon can however arise in various contexts, including the workplace (Monks et al., 2009). Workplace bullying is perceived as a "psychological hazard" (Caponecchia & Wyatt, 2011:2), which implies that it is a devastating experience that poses a threat to the psychological health and wellbeing of employees and the organisation.

The devastating effects of workplace bullying are recognised globally. Various institutions have been established nationally and internationally as *online* resources to raise awareness and provide public

education on the nature of workplace bullying and the effects that may stem from this experience. Three renowned supportive institutions include the *Workplace Bullying Institute* (WBI) (2011-2012), the *Tim Field Foundation* (2010), and a South African organisation, *The People Bottomline* (Steinman, n.d.-b).

Research on dysfunctional workplace behaviours is not new to South Africa. Steinman is well-known for her research on *workplace violence*, specifically in the health setting (Steinman, 2003). After conducting internet surveys, she reported that 78 per cent of employees have been victimised no less than one time in their careers (Steinman, 2003:9; Steinman, n.d.-a). Statistics pertaining to workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession, seem to be rare. The lack of statistics may be ascribed to inadequate public awareness and education regarding the prevalence and nature of workplace bullying in this profession.

Lines (2008:97) recognises that a school presents the ideal setting for bullying to arise, given that it is a hierarchal establishment (with regards to the rank of learners and school staff) and there are operational power dynamics. The hierarchical nature of a school system however makes it possible that bullying can also stem from a managerial and organisational level. Research in South Africa reveals that teachers can also be bullied by colleagues and principals (cf. Kirsten, Viljoen & Rossouw, 2005; De Vos, 2010; De Wet, 2010a; De Wet, 2010b; De Wet, 2010c; De Wet, 2011a, De Wet, 2011b). International research indicates that workplace bullying is mostly perpetrated by managers. The findings of an international survey done in 2007, indicated that 10 per cent of bullies are subordinates, 18 per cent of bullies are colleagues/ peers, and 72 per cent of bullies are managers (WBI-Zogby Survey *cited in* Namie & Namie, 2009a:25).

Lutgen-Sandvik (2003:472) noticed that television news promptly reports rare, but lurid stories of dissatisfied employees who return to their previous workplaces to seek vengeance, while employees' versions of humiliation and psychological violence perpetrated by powerful affiliates of the organisation, are rare. In the South African media, we seldom see articles that report workplace abuse by managers and if stories of this nature are reported, they are hardly ever labelled as *workplace bullying* (cf. the *online* article by Mtshali, 2012 as an example). Workplace bullying that is perpetrated by colleagues and/

or principal may go unnoticed owing to the lack of public awareness regarding its nature and an overarching label that highlights behaviours that are characteristic of this phenomenon. Early recognition of workplace bullying may create opportunities for early intervention before severe health effects occur.

According to Lutgen-Sandvik (2006:406), workplace bullying (or mobbing/ emotional abuse) is constant verbal and non-verbal aggression that comprises personal attacks, social exclusion, and many other hurtful messages and antagonistic interactions. Some researchers claim that bullying is hardly ever linked to physical forms of violence (Turney, 2003:3; LaVan & Martin, 2008:148), while other researchers' descriptions indicate that bullying may also be of a physical nature (cf. Zapf & Einarsen, 2001:370; Rowell, 2005:377). Although physical bullying can arise in the work context, it however has a propensity to be not as widespread as psychological bullying (Coyne, 2011:160). The reason why physical forms of bullying may not be as common is that employees are generally protected by law against physical acts of violence, since bullies may be criminally prosecuted for assault and can be held liable for the outcome. Leymann (1990:121-122; 1996:171-172) depicts workplace bullying/ mobbing as a process that starts with a conflict and systematically escalates until the victim experiences serious health problems and is removed from the workplace.

The health effects that may stem from workplace bullying have been documented by qualitative and quantitative methods (Hogh, Mikkelsen & Hansen, 2012:21). Both qualitative and quantitative research findings in this field support the general assumption that being bullied may elicit escalating health symptoms in victims. Victims may firstly be affected on a psychological level and may present with a host of emotional experiences. Victims' emotional health symptoms do not necessarily occur in solitude, but may be symptomatic of a mood and/ or anxiety disorder. In their research, Namie and Namie (2011:25) found that almost every victim experiences severe anxiety and nearly 40 per cent of victims are troubled by clinical depression. Researchers also report acute anxiety disorder (Rowell, 2005:378), panic attacks (Blase & Blase, 2006:125) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004) as psychological health effects of workplace bullying. Traumatic experiences in bullying are not mainly the incidents that emerge (Tehrani, 2012a:41). It is rather a condition of the fear and dread that is induced by someone who is familiar and who by

means of abusive conduct and threats, becomes the most influential person in victims' lives (Tehrani, 2012a:41). Suicidal ideation (Soares, 2012:76) and suicide (Leymann, 1990:123) are also reported effects of workplace bullying. Adverse emotional symptoms may also be accompanied by physical health problems. The most general physical health problems/ psychosomatic stress symptoms that may stem from the experience of bullying, include muscle pain, stress, headaches, gastro-intestinal problems, hypertension (Randall, 2001:147) and sleeping problems/ insomnia (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107).

Physical and psychological health experiences initiate a certain pattern of dysfunctional coping behaviours, which may affect victims' socialisation with family and colleagues. Victims may have propensities toward the misuse of substances and workaholism (Namie & Namie, 2009a:135). They may have intense feelings of self-doubt, shame and humiliation, leading them to inflict isolation from their "natural web of social contacts" on themselves (Duffy & Sperry, 2007:401). Feelings of shame and humiliation may also be ascribed to a stigma associated with being an adult victim of bullying. Victims' stress that they take home has an effect on their children and partners through displaced anger (Namie & Namie, 2011:25). Bullied teachers may channel their frustration and anger toward spouses/ partners and children, which may lead to alienation between family members.

Colleague-witnesses are also affected by workplace bullying. Research has revealed that witnesses report more general stress and psychological stress reactions than employees in workplaces that are not affected by bullying (Vartia, 2001:67). Colleague-witnesses often take on a passive role with regards to bullying. They evade reporting this behaviour, since they do not want to get involved and they fear vengeance, which are some of the same reasons victims do not report their experiences (Caponecchia & Wyatt, 2011:54). The work group may become fragmented and professional relationships may be damaged since colleagues who have witnessed bullying behaviours may withdraw from their targeted colleague(s).

Employee health and wellbeing may ultimately affect the health of the organisation. Behaviours, such as continuous criticism, insurmountable workload, and doubt owing to an on-going lack of security and support at work, destabilises self-esteem and the abilities to execute daily work assignments (Turney,

2003:2). Turney (2003:2) claims that this affects psychological health and eventually one's capability to do the work. The experience of workplace bullying may amend employees' attitudes toward their work and the organisation. Workplace bullying/ mobbing may give rise to high turnovers, low morale, loss of commitment to organisational vision, reduced output, reduced creativeness and enthusiasm (Bultena & Whatcott, 2008:659), as well as increased ill-health absenteeism and employees who leave the organisation early (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107). These outcomes may severely affect the quality of teaching in schools.

Certain workplace bullying behaviours may be a violation of teachers' human and/ or labour rights. Legal outcomes for abusive behaviours in the workplace are still developing (Ebeid, Kaul, Neumann & Shane, 2003:75). The occurrence of workplace bullying in South African schools underscores the void in existing legislation, policies and best practices to address this issue. Legislations in South Africa that may protect teachers who are bullied in the workplace, include the *Employment Equity Act* (EEA) (55 of 1998) (South Africa, 1998), the *Labour Relations Act* (LRA) (66 of 1995) (South Africa, 1995), and *Protected Disclosures Act* (PDA) (26 of 2000) (South Africa, 2000) (cf. Le Roux, Rycroft & Orleyn, 2010). Victims however have to *report* their experiences to legal allies and bullying behaviours need to be proven unlawful.

Workplace bullying does not emerge spontaneously, but is often facilitated and/ or sustained by personal and organisational characteristics. Recent research reveals that *workplace violence* in the teaching profession may emanate from personal characteristics of victimised teachers and their bullies (cf. De Vos, 2010). Characteristics that may be associated with the employee's risk to experience violence in the workplace, include his/ her appearances, health, age, experience, sex, personality, temperament, attitude and anticipations (Di Martino, 2003:17). Furthermore, even though researchers disputed that environmental circumstances advance bullying, most researchers however concur that organisational characteristics do play a part in promoting this behaviour (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley & Harvey, 2007:196). Organisational grounds for workplace bullying include work stress, the type of organisation and leadership style, and organisational culture (Cemaloglu, 2007a:791).

The lack of healthy, vibrant teachers and lack of quality education can ultimately be costly for learners, since they may lack the required skills for employment after school and/ or further and higher education. It is thus necessary to investigate the nature of workplace bullying, how this stressor impinges on teachers' health and to identify effective practices that can be implemented to address this phenomenon in the teaching profession. In conclusion, the following problem statement is put forward: *What kind of multi-level intervention programme can be developed to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession in South Africa?*

1.3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL

George Engel's (Engel, 1977) *biopsychosocial model* (as a systems theory) will be applied as the theoretical foundation in the first phase of this study. The *systems theory* suggests that diverse levels and groups of individuals are interactive systems where the operation of the entire system relies on the interplay between all the elements (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010:37). According to Donald *et al.* (2010:37), one must examine the affiliations between the different elements of a system in order to understand the entire system. Researchers implement a systems approach to health and demand interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration when studying the interaction between the health systems that are depicted in the *biopsychosocial model* (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998:227). In Figure 1.3-1, Sarafino and Smith (2012:14) illustrate the interplay between health systems in this model. *Vide infra*:

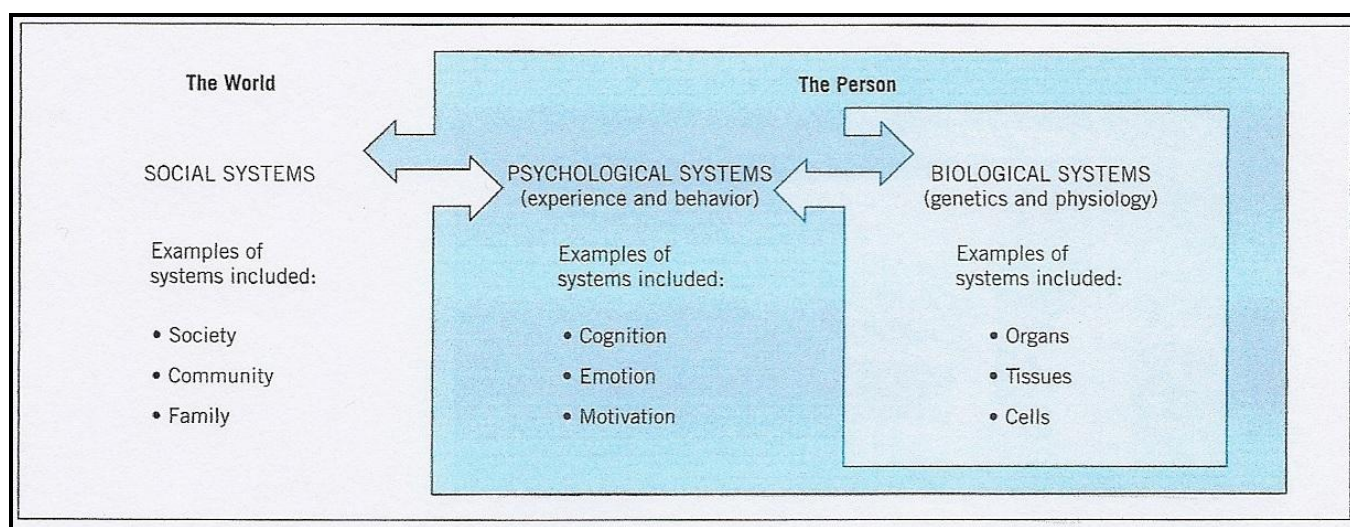


Figure 1.3-1: A diagram of the interplay of systems in the biopsychosocial model

In this figure, Sarafino and Smith (2012:14) explain that an individual comprises biological and psychological systems, which are interconnected and each system also consists of constituents. These

authors further state that the individual interconnects with his/ her social systems in his/ her world. According to these researchers, each system can have an effect on, or can be affected by the other systems.

Source: Sarafino and Smith (2012:14)

Dombeck and Wells-Moran (2006) further describe each system in the *biopsychosocial model*. According to them this model provides one with an insight into three theories, namely:

- The “medicine and human biology theory” provides an insight on how the human body and brain are assembled and how it is influenced by illness (Dombeck & Wells-Moran, 2006). This theory can therefore be applied to understand how the stress and trauma, experienced by bullied teachers, may be somatised and lead to various physical stress-related illnesses;
- The “psychological theory” provides an insight of how the mind develops and works, how cognition and emotion work, and how behaviour and attitudes can be altered (Dombeck & Wells-Moran, 2006). This theory can therefore be applied to understand the role of perception in the emotions that teachers experience, the consequential effects on behaviour and how these health experiences can be amended;
- The “sociology and social work theories” assist people to develop a gratitude for social systems in which folks live, as well as the effects that these systems have on individual and group health (Dombeck & Wells-Moran, 2006). Teachers are also part of various social systems, including family, work group and the school organisation, which may all be affected by their health experiences.

This study will progress as follows:

1.3.1 Phase 1: Applying the biopsychosocial model to investigate teachers’ experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health

In the *first phase* of this study, the *biopsychosocial model* will be applied as a theoretical foundation to investigate the effects of workplace bullying on health. This model may assist in gaining an understanding of holistic health by investigating how the physical, psychological and social health

systems are affected by the experience of a stressful and/ or traumatic life event, such as workplace bullying.

1.3.2 Phase two: Applying the findings as a guide to develop a multi-level intervention programme

Findings in the first phase of this study will guide the development of a multi-level intervention programme in *second phase* to address workplace bullying and the effects on health in the South African teaching profession.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Numerous national and international studies have investigated, reported on, and corroborated the nature and health effects of workplace bullying. The roots or precursors of this phenomenon can be found on individual, departmental, organisational and societal levels (Johnson, 2011:60). The effects of workplace bullying can similarly be found on all aforementioned levels, which recreates and supports the circumstances that is initially the root of bullying (Johnson, 2011:61). Most research findings on the nature and effects of workplace bullying, will indicate a similar dynamic. Meyer (2011) suggests an extensive list of preventative and supportive strategies for *Further Education and Training (FET)-Colleges* aimed at intervention on multiple levels, to address *psychological violence* (which also may include the definition of *workplace bullying*) in this context. She proposes that an intervention programme for future research focuses and contemplates intervening on multiple levels, including the individual, dyadic, work group, managerial and organisational level to make certain that psychological violence is effectively dealt with (Meyer, 2011:438). Based on the review of literature, it is assumed that the causes and effects of workplace bullying may also stem from multiple levels in the teaching profession, and therefore research and a multi-level approach to intervention in this context will be sensible.

Coyne (2011:176) further recognises that there is little evidence that indicates the effectiveness of the numerous initiatives that have been put forward to manage workplace bullying. A multi-level intervention programme may give researchers in the teaching profession the opportunity to implement it, determine the effectiveness of suggested intervention activities, and propose new developments with regards to workplace bullying intervention.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are put forward:

- What is the nature of workplace bullying?
- How does workplace bullying affect health?
- What are teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and how does it affect health?
- What kind of multi-level intervention programme can be developed?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 General objectives

This research study will be conducted in two phases and therefore has two general objectives. The objective of the first phase will be to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health. The objective of the second phase will be to develop a multi-level intervention programme, guided by the findings that will emanate from the first phase of this study.

1.6.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study will be to:

- investigate the nature of workplace bullying by means of a review of relevant literature;
- investigate the effects of workplace bullying on health by means of a review of relevant literature;
- conduct qualitative research to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health;
- develop a multi-level intervention programme.

1.7 KEY TERMINOLOGIES: DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Key terminologies that are used in this study will be briefly defined and described:

1.7.1 Workplace bullying

Numerous definitions on workplace bullying have been put forward. On her website, *The People Bottomline*, South African researcher Susan Steinman (*cited in* Steinman, n.d.-c) defines *bullying/mobbing* as "Repeated and overtime offensive behaviour through vindictive, cruel or malicious attempts

to humiliate, disrespect or undermine an individual or groups of employees and includes, but is not limited to psychological pressure, harassment, intimidation, threats, conspiracies, manipulation, extortion, coercion and hostile behaviour which could impact on the worth, dignity and well-being of the individual or groups.” This definition is used in this study because it highlights various behaviours that can be typified as workplace bullying. Steinman however omits to include the time/ period in her definition of bullying. Her definition is further accompanied by Leymann’s and Gustafsson’s (1996:252) perspective regarding the time-frame that behaviours occur before they are considered to be bullying. These researchers claim that workplace bullying behaviours must transpire frequently (i.e. at least once a week) and for a long time (i.e. at least six months). Researchers mostly exclude isolated incidences in the definition of workplace bullying (cf. Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:5; Vie, Glaso & Einarsen, 2011:37).

Workplace bullying is also a breach of victims’ rights and may have detrimental effects on victims’ health. Based on their findings regarding victims’ experiences of workplace bullying, Carbo and Hughes (2010) also developed a new definition of *workplace bullying* from a *human rights perspective*, which they define as follows: “Workplace bullying is the unwanted, unwelcome, abuse of any source of power that has the effect of or intent to intimidate, control or otherwise strip a target of their right to esteem, growth, dignity, voice or other human rights in the workplace.” (Carbo & Hughes, 2010:397).

1.7.2 School

The focus of this study is on bullied teachers who are teaching in primary (teaching Grades 1-7) and secondary schools (teaching Grades 8-12).

1.7.3 Victim

Teachers, who are on the receiving end of bullying behaviours, will be referred to as *victims* of bullying. Note that other researchers (e.g. Namie & Namie, 2009a:7) may otherwise prefer to refer to *targets*. I am nevertheless of opinion that an employee may be a *target* of bullying behaviour, but is not necessarily affected by the behaviour. The term *victim* highlights the existence of a power imbalance and implies that the targeted employee is physically, psychologically and/ or socially affected by the malicious behaviour.

1.7.4 Bully

De Vos (2010:37) defines a *bully* as follows: “A bully can be defined as an individual who (repeatedly) abuses his or her power to gain control over those individuals that demonstrate certain strengths or vulnerabilities and, in doing so, infringe on others’ human rights.” Bullies in this research study may stem from the learner, collegial and/ or managerial level of the school organisation.

1.7.5 Health

Hamilton-West (2011:4) describes *health* as “essentially an evaluative notion, based on adherence to physical, social and mental ‘normality’, although what is normal depends on a range of factors, including age, gender, culture and social status”. The experience of workplace bullying may impinge on holistic health, leading to escalating physical and psychological *illness*.

According to Hamilton-West (2011:4), *illness* entails moving away from “‘normality’”, which the individual perceives as stressful and it gives him/ her the right to special cure. In this study, the expression *health* will not only pertain to bullied teachers’ physical and psychological state, but also to the health of social and professional relationships, and the school organisation.

1.7.6 Stress

The experience of workplace bullying may elicit certain physical and psychological stress symptoms. Schafer (2000:6) defines stress as follows: “**Stress** is arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them.” The stress experienced by bullied teachers may also be transferred to other areas in the school environment, including the classroom and the work group.

1.7.7 Work trauma

The experience of workplace bullying may also be traumatic. On her website, *The People Bottomline*, Steinman (n.d.-c) defines *work trauma* as follows: “Work trauma is the adverse effects and impact on the employee’s physical and/or emotional wellness, health and safety as a result of physical and/or emotional violence experienced in the workplace.”

1.7.8 Biopsychosocial model

Sarafino and Smith (2012:14) perceive one's body/ physiology, family and community/ society as *systems*. Therefore, the *biopsychosocial model* (cf. par 1.3.1) will be applied in the first phase to depict the dynamics and interrelation of physical, psychological and social health and how these health systems are affected in the event of potentially stressful and traumatic life events, such as workplace bullying. Findings will guide the development of a multi-level intervention programme in the second phase of the study.

1.7.9 Multi-level intervention programme

The expression, *multi-level intervention programme*, consists of three sub-definitions:

1.7.9.1 Multi-level approach

Saam (2010) firstly describes the *multi-level approach* to workplace bullying intervention as follows: "The multi-level approach of interventions in workplace bullying states that different intervention strategies are appropriate and effective at different levels of an organization in relation to bullying activities." (Saam, 2010:69). Participants' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health will guide ideas regarding the specific levels that require intervention in this context.

1.7.9.2 Intervention

According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (Reber & Reber, 2001:367), *intervention (technique)* is "A generic term used for any procedure or technique that is designed to interrupt, interfere with and/or modify an ongoing process. It is used ... in psychotherapy to disrupt ongoing maladaptive behaviour patterns ..."

1.7.9.3 Programme

A *programme* is a general sketch of what is going to be done (Naidoo & Wills, 2009:270). Naidoo and Wills (2009:270) more specifically describe a *programme* as "The collection of activities in a planned sequence leading to a defined goal or goals."

1.8 THE CHAPTER OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapters 2 and *3* will respectively provide a literature review regarding the nature of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on physical, psychological and social health. *Chapter 4* will discuss my

paradigm and approach to this research study, the research design and methods, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations that will apply to the first phase of this study. *Chapter 5* will interpret and discuss the findings that will emanate from the first phase of the study. The findings will then be a guide for the development of a multi-level intervention programme. *Chapter 6* will put forward a multi-level intervention programme for the South African teaching profession. *Chapter 7* will provide the summary, the conclusions and limitations of this research study, as well as recommendations for future research on workplace bullying.

This research study can be outlined as follows:

- Chapter 1: Orientation to the study;
- Chapter 2: The nature of workplace bullying;
- Chapter 3: The effects of workplace bullying on health;
- Chapter 4: Research design, methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations;
- Chapter 5: Teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health:
findings, literature control and discussion;
- Chapter 6: Addressing workplace bullying and its effects on health:
a multi-level intervention programme; and
- Chapter 7: Summary, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the phenomenon of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on health. It provided the rationale and an outline of what can be expected from this study. It briefly discussed the *biopsychosocial model*, which will be applied as a theoretical foundation in the first phase of this study. It was suggested that a multi-level intervention programme is developed to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession. This chapter was concluded with the definitions and descriptions of key terminologies and an outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2 will, by means of a literature review, commence a discussion regarding the nature of bullying and how it may surface in the workplace.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Work environments may be affected by various dysfunctional behaviours, including bullying. To date, a large body of research has been conducted on bullying in various professions. This chapter will review the relevant literature to investigate the nature of workplace bullying. It will discuss what workplace bullying is, the different forms this workplace behaviour may take, and the systematic and escalating process it may follow. Personal and organisational characteristics, that may facilitate and sustain workplace bullying, will also be identified and discussed. This chapter will be concluded with specific theoretical perspectives that may elucidate the psychosocial dynamics of workplace bullying.

2.2 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN STRONG MANAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE BULLYING

Workplace bullying may mostly stem from a managerial level, as was indicated in the introductory chapter. Some people may question whether certain workplace behaviours by managers are *bullying* or merely leadership strategies. The literature refers to “strong” or “tough” management (Namie & Namie, 2011:77; Tehrani, 2012b:15). Namie and Namie (2011:77) propose that the only way to tell the difference, is to pose the following question: “What has this (action) got to do with work?” In Table 2.2-1, Tehrani (2012b:15) compares *strong management* to *bullying*. *Vide infra*:

Table 2.2-1: Strong management versus bullying

Addressing poor performance in teams	Strong management	Bullying
The performance issue is identified.	The identification involves looking at all the potential reasons for the performance deficit.	There is no attempt to identify the nature or source of the poor performance.
The views of the team or individual are sought to identify the causes.	The team/individual takes part in looking for the source of the problems.	There is no discussion of the cause of the poor performance.
New standards of performance are agreed.	Standards of performance and behaviours are set and agreed for the team and manager.	New standards imposed without discussion of what might be appropriate.
Failures to achieve the standards are handled as performance improvement issues.	Support is provided for individuals who are struggling. Where there is an unwillingness to comply, action is taken.	Ridicule, criticism, shouting, withholding benefits, demotion, teasing and sarcasm are used to deal with failure.
Recognition of contribution.	Improvements are rewarded.	No monitoring leading to a lack of recognition for efforts and arbitrary rewards.

Source: Tehrani (2012b:15)

Numerous blamed managers find it difficult to recognise that they are conducting themselves in a bullying or antagonistic manner (Tehrani, 2012b:14). According to Tehrani (2012b:14), line managers' role is to inspire the work group to perform more efficiently when managing a low performance group. Line managers' role is however not limited to inspiring a low performance group, but may also involve maintaining group efficacy and productivity in medium and high performance groups by implementing strategies to prevent and/ or address workplace issues, such as workplace bullying. If changes in the organisation transpire and are handled properly, the essential business improvements can be attained with insignificant or no distress experienced by the staff (Tehrani, 2012b:14). *Strong management* may be a principal's endeavour to increase work productivity, without necessarily harming teachers' and organisational health.

Tehrani (2012b:14) furthermore claims that allegations of bullying can arise when a line manager is unsuccessful in managing change that occurs in the organisation. Bullying may surface when the focus shifts toward personal attacks, rather than promoting health and improving employees' work efficacy and productivity. Table 2.2-1 suggests that in an organisation affected by bullying, the style of communication may be limited, abusive behaviours may transpire and no attempts may be made to effectively address emerging issues. It is however necessary to investigate this supposition in the school organisation during the first phase of this study.

Tehrani (2012b:16) also distinguishes between *bullying* and *healthy conflict*. *Bullying* involves the abuse of power, while with *healthy conflict*, the parties are able to talk about the problem without undermining or showing disrespect toward the person who differs in opinion (Tehrani, 2012b:16). The respectful and successful management of healthy conflict may build positive employee relationships and therefore also a healthy organisational culture and climate in a school organisation.

2.3 SUB-FORMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

2.3.1 Sub-forms of workplace bullying

The literature identifies different types of behaviours that can be considered to be workplace bullying. For the purposes of this research study, the terms *abuse*, *organisational bullying*, *mobbing* and *harassment*, will be defined as sub-forms of workplace bullying. The distinction between *predatory* and *dispute-related bullying* will also be briefly discussed.

2.3.1.1 Abuse

Abuse is defined as "Behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct and involves the misuse of physical and psychological strength." (Di Martino & Musri, 2001:7). This definition is used since it highlights the element of *power* (which is a significant characteristic of bullying) (cf. par 2.3.2.1) and how it may be physically and psychologically exploited to victimise a targeted employee. The definition of abuse also includes the terms *harassment*, *bullying* and *mobbing* (Di Martino & Musri, 2001:7).

2.3.1.2 Organisational bullying

Organisational bullying transpires when organisational practices are applied to dominate, degrade and humiliate employees (Tehrani, 2012b:13). It may occur when a dysfunctional organisation system is abused to pressurise and victimise employees. This form of bullying may also be analogous to *structural violence*. Steinman (n.d.-c) defines *structural violence* as “The intentional use of power and/or organisational systems and structures or laws against an individual or entity (employer, management, shareholders, employee, group of employees, client, government, unions) to carry out a covert or unethical agenda, enforce change or indulge in unfair practices to the disadvantage of the affected individual or entity.” It is understandable that victims may find it difficult to legally defend themselves, as it may be difficult to prove that one is a ‘victim of the system’, which may actually be used as a façade for a personal attack. Tehrani (2012b:13-14) identifies and briefly describes four types of organisational bullying that can be applied as a management style. *Vide infra*:

2.3.1.2.1 External pressure

This form of bullying occurs when an external establishment (e.g. shareholders, clients, government agency) bullies the organisation and the manager is put in a difficult position to achieve certain objectives, while a failure to attain these objectives may give rise to a type of censorship (Tehrani, 2012b:13). This process may also be the root of severe pressure and distress in the employees (Tehrani, 2012b:13). In the case of a school organisation, the Department of Education (DoE) may, for example, pressurise principals to comply with certain changes and/ or to achieve certain objectives. Unreasonable pressure may then be put on teachers, leading to employee ill-health.

2.3.1.2.2 History and culture

An organisational culture develops in due course and consists of joint beliefs, suppositions and behaviours (Tehrani, 2012b:13). Organisational bullying occurs when this culture is founded on negative beliefs and suppositions (Tehrani, 2012b:13-14). In a school organisation, the work group may therefore learn and apply these negative beliefs and suppositions until intervention efforts are made to initiate a change in the organisational culture.

2.3.1.2.3 Senior team tactics

Tehrani also recognises the toxic role that a manager may play in the bullying process. *Senior team tactics* involve situations where the chief executive/ manager appoints another employee to perform harsh and callous acts, leaving the manager innocent (Tehrani, 2012b:14). A principal or other education manager may therefore delegate bullying behaviours to another employee who would ultimately be accused as the bully. Tehrani (2012b:14) claims that if things had gone too far, the manager may give the impression that he/ she is genuinely concerned about the negative conduct and may choose to punish his/ her appointed supporter. The discussion on *senior team tactics* highlights the need to particularly note principals' role in the prevalence of workplace bullying in a school organisation, since principals are in a position where positional power can be abused to bully targeted teachers.

2.3.1.2.4 Process bullying

This form of bullying refers to domineering organisational practices that are utilised on a constant and frequent basis and may make employees feel victimised, for example, the extreme use of statistics to administer workflow or the extraction of overtime when employees do not attain the unreasonable performance objectives (Tehrani, 2012b:14). Tehrani (2012b:14) suggests that there is an awareness among employees that it is not the manager that is the root of the issue, but rather the manner in which the organisation operates. Bullying behaviour does however not arise spontaneously, but can *only* occur if the manager misuses the organisational dysfunction to target certain employees. Phase one of this study will provide an indication whether different forms of process bullying are applied to bully teachers.

2.3.1.3 Mobbing

Namie and Lutgen-Sandvik (2010:343) claim that aggressive employees hardly ever bully others without having some form of co-conspirator. In contrast to being merely spectators, accomplices actively partake in the abuse or support the bully by taking sides against the victim, making determinations in the bully's favour and excluding the person who is targeted (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010:344). Colleagues may form a collective against which the victim may have no defence and as a result, their participation in the process may nurture the bullying process. This social dynamic can be described by the overarching term known as *mobbing*.

According to Leymann and Gustafsson (1996:252), “Mobbing at work involves hostile and unethical communication towards an individual, who is pushed into a helpless and defenceless position.” Gök (2011:319) typifies mobbing as a severe form of harassing workplace behaviour that is long-term. Leymann (1996:168) adds that the definition of mobbing rules out interim conflict situations and focuses on the moment where the psychosocial situation begins to give rise to psychiatric or psychosomatic pathological states. Long term and escalating abuse by colleagues may alienate a targeted teacher, leading to increased stress and eventually mental breakdown.

2.3.1.4 Harassment

Psychological harassment, in particular, is considered one of the fastest emergent sources of stress in the work setting (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:116). While harassment can be of intense, short interval, it can also be less intense and emerge over an extended period of time, as in the case with school bullying or bullying in the military (Björkqvist, Österman & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994:174).

Harassment is considered to be unlawful behaviour and employees are protected by the EEA (55 of 1998) (South Africa, 1998) and the LRA (66 of 1995) (South Africa, 1995). Harassment is perceived as a form of discrimination (Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:5), as is also stated by Section 6(3) of the EEA (55 of 1998) (South Africa, 1998). *Harassment* is defined as “Unwanted conduct - verbal, non verbal, visual, psychological or physical - based on age, disability, HIV status, domestic circumstances, sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, language, religion, political, trade union or other opinion or belief, national or social origin, association with a minority, birth or other status that negatively affects the dignity of men and women at work.” (Di Martino & Musri, 2001:7). When this definition is taken into account, any employee may be vulnerable to become a target of workplace harassment.

Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:24-25) list and illustrate different forms of harassment. According to these researchers, this behaviour can be *verbal* (e.g. jokes, statements, mockery or songs), *written* (e.g. electronic or other mail, faxes, text messages, notices), *physical* (e.g. pushing or any attack), *intimidatory* (e.g. gestures, postures, or threatening posture), *isolation* (e.g. isolating/ excluding the employee in the work group or other job-related social actions), and *sexual* (e.g. acts of physical intimacy, asking for

sexual favours, or other conduct, such as verbalised words or gestures, or the manufacturing, displaying or distribution of written words, pictures or other materials).

2.3.1.5 Predatory and dispute-related bullying

Forms of workplace bullying can further be *predatory* or *dispute-related* (Felson & Tedeschi cited in Einarsen, 1999:22). These two forms of bullying will be briefly distinguished:

2.3.1.5.1 Predatory bullying

Predatory bullying occurs when the victim's behaviour has not been provoking in a way that can give good reason for the bully's conduct (Einarsen, 1999:22). Predatory bullying occurs when the bully displays power or exploits another person inadvertently into compliance (Einarsen, 1999:23). Randall (2001:135) claims that victims of predatory bullying may have a personality profile that makes them susceptible to be targeted founded on their personality weaknesses. The bully's behaviour seems to be intentional efforts to prey on those employees who portray certain traits of susceptibility. Victims may also be bullied for not being part of a certain group (Einarsen, 1999:23). This may include being part of a different gender (cf. par 2.6.1.2.2) or racial group (cf. par 2.6.1.2.3). Employees in a school organisation may come from diverse groups, which may make certain employees more vulnerable to experience workplace bullying.

2.3.1.5.2 Dispute-related bullying

In *dispute-related bullying*, it appears as if the 'victim' and 'bully' may initially both play an active role in the bullying process and have an equal power basis. According to Hoel and Cooper (2001:9), this form of bullying is related to a conflict regarding the breach of social norms. Conflict progressively escalates and if it is not addressed, it becomes personal during which each party involved attempt to oppress the other party (Hoel & Cooper, 2001:9). At some stage, one of the parties may feel like he/ she lacks psychological and social resources and may perceive him/ herself as being in a vulnerable position, which leads him/ her to label him/ herself as the 'victim' of bullying.

2.3.2 Characteristics of workplace bullying

The phenomenon of workplace bullying is further explained by distinctive characteristics. *Vide infra*:

2.3.2.1 Bullying is a power disparity between the victim and the bully

Power may be displayed by individuals and/ or groups in the workplace. Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy and Alberts (2007:841) claim that most definitions for workplace bullying suggest that the victim must for some reason or another feel incapable to stop or avert the abuse, although latest research indicates that resistance toward this behaviour is common (Lutgen-Sandvik *cited in* Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007:841). Namie and Lutgen-Sandvik (2010:347) however claim that when a group is involved in the bullying and supports the bully's aggression, opportunities for resistance to this behaviour may decline and the power imbalance may increase. Bullies may misuse their familiarity of the victim's *Achilles' heel*, be it physical, psychological or social, to put them in a vulnerable or inferior position for as long as it takes, or until the desired harm has been done.

2.3.2.2 Bullying is repetitive and persistent

The *persistence*, *repetition* (and *duration*) of workplace bullying are its features (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010:345). The persistence and repetition of negative acts may be the bullies' weapon to gain control over the teacher. Namie and Lutgen-Sandvik (2010:345) describe the persistent nature of bullying mainly as being "harmful" and "corrosive" and a phenomenon that erodes victims' protection, social support and health. The persistence of negative acts builds continuous distress in an individual, leaving the him/ her helpless and incapable to deal with it (Razzaghian & Shah, 2011:13425). During this process, the power disparity may increase until the victim is eventually removed from the workplace.

Different levels of bullying are further compared to different degrees of "sunburns" (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007:855), which will be illustrated with examples. Lutgen-Sandvik *et al.* (2007:855) compare low levels of bullying or "pre-bullying" to "first-degree burns", as low levels of bullying can cause harm over time, but are common, superficial and generally heal fast. This level may refer to temporary emotional upsets, such as sadness. More serious, frequent and persistent levels of bullying are like "second-degree burns", as this level of abuse is more painful and often necessitates specialist treatment and intervention to mend it (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007:855). Trauma may be prevalent and forms of psychopathology, such as major depressive episode, may be prevalent. The last level is "third-degree burns", which is caused by escalating bullying and can bring about "deep scarring" and lasting harm (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007:855). At this level, the victim may have developed a history of mental illness, as episodes of

psychopathology may reoccur. Different chronic physical illnesses may also be prevalent on this level. Qualitative research with bullied teachers may provide an indication of the level of effects their experiences have on their physical, psychological and social health.

2.3.2.3 Bullying is long-term behaviour

The lack of intervention initiatives to address workplace bullying and consequences for this behaviour, may give bullies the power to continue their abusive behaviour for extended periods of time. Definitions and descriptions of workplace bullying also focus on duration and frequency of behaviours. Leymann and Gustafsson (1996:252) for example claim that workplace bullying behaviours must transpire on a frequent basis (i.e. at least once a week) and for a prolonged period of time (i.e. at least six months). The lack of intervention initiatives to address workplace bullying and consequences for this behaviour, may give bullies the power to continue their abusive behaviour for extended periods of time.

Matthiesen (2006:15) also claims that the degree or number of humiliating or hostile behaviours that are necessary to make individuals feel bullied, may vary from person to person, owing to individual differences in susceptibility. Certain employees may perceive once-off behaviour as bullying, while others may not feel bullied by similar situations and escalating, long term behaviour is required to make them feel bullied. Past experiences and problem solving skills may play a major role in whether an employee feels bullied or not, and the time that has to pass before he/ she feels bullied. This research study will focus on the frequent, escalating and long term bullying behaviour. One of the characteristics of bullying is the deterioration of health (cf. par 2.3.2.4). I am of opinion that frequent, escalating and long term bullying behaviour may be required before a deterioration of physical, psychological and social health occurs.

2.3.2.4 Bullying is harmful to health

Victims may experience a multitude of negative health effects owing to the exposure to systematic and enduring verbal, non-physical, non-sexual, abusive and antagonistic workplace conduct (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004:335-336). Bullying is very destructive and related to damaged physical, psychological and professional health, it causes a deterioration personal relations external to the work context, as well as financial risk (Lutgen-Sandvik, Namie & Namie, 2009:46). Systematic and long-term bullying,

perpetrated by bullies on different levels of the school organisation may therefore wear down bullied teachers' psychological wellbeing, which may further lead to physical ill-health and dysfunctional social and professional relationships. The effects workplace bullying may have on health will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3.2.5 Bullying may be a violation of human and labour rights

South African labour legislation has no definition of *workplace bullying*, except for the one on “occupational detriment” (Le Roux et al., 2010:53). Workplace bullying is an infringement of employees' human rights and has shattering outcomes for the organisation (Carbo & Hughes, 2010:389). Victims may take legal action against behaviours that are characteristic of workplace bullying. Section 6 of the EEA (55 of 1998) (South Africa, 1998), for example, prohibits unfair discrimination and harassment in the workplace (Le Roux et al., 2010:62). Section 186(2) of the LRA (66 of 1995) (South Africa, 1995) protect employees from unfair labour practices, pertaining to promotion, demotion, training or the proviso of benefits, which are often disputed and are demonstrations of workplace bullying (Le Roux et al., 2010:63). The definition of the LRA also comprises “occupational detriments”, as regulated by the PDA (26 of 2000), which whistle-blowers may experience owing to their deeds (Le Roux et al., 2010:63).

The exact nature and prevalence of bullying behaviours, which can be regarded as a violation of human and/ or labour rights in the South African teaching profession, is uncertain. This uncertainty can be ascribed to the lack of statistics on workplace bullying in this context. During personal communication with De Wet (2011c), she was of opinion that one will not obtain statistics with regards to South African teachers' experiences of workplace bullying owing to their fear to report it. According to her, principals have, amongst others, power and influence in labour unions (De Wet, 2011c). This may make education labour unions a biased and ineffective support network pertaining to the resolution of abusive workplace behaviours. The outcome is that bullied teachers may not report their experiences to education labour unions and/ or the DoE, which leads to a lack of statistics on the prevalence and nature of workplace bullying in the South African context. This study will however not be able to make claims on statistics, but will suggest intervention strategies that may enable researchers to gather statistics on the nature and prevalence of workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession.

2.3.2.6 Bullying is dependent on subjective perception

Victims' *subjective perception* of behaviours toward them is further also highlighted as part of the definition for workplace bullying (Hoel & Cooper, 2001:5). According to Quine (2001:74), if a person is exposed to various intimidating behaviours that makes him/ her sense that he/ she is being bullied or harassed, then the bullying exists. Teachers' perceptions of what this behaviour constitutes may play a significant role in what behaviours are reported and to what degree it affects health. Victims and witnesses believe that bullies act deliberately, that they are aware of what they are doing and even put effort into it (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2009:47). Hoel and Cooper (2001:5) claim that most researchers will concur that victims' subjective perception or the meaning they give to their experiences, is what truly matter in circumstances of bullying.

Perception must never be ignored, as a bullied teacher's perception may be *reality* for him/ her, even if this perception seems irrational to family, colleagues and professionals. Professional discretion should nevertheless be applied to determine whether reported behaviours are indeed bullying, or only merely conflicting standpoints between two or more parties. It may be possible that a person may feel bullied without the accused individual intending the behaviour or being conscious of any harm done to the victim (Beale, 2001:83).

2.4 CATEGORISATION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

2.4.1 Person and work-related bullying

Beswick, Gore and Palferman (2006:12), reported that their findings on bullying behaviours fall into two broad groupings, namely *person-related* and *work-related* bullying and are similar to that reported by Hoel and Cooper (2001). Hoel and Cooper (2001:4) specifically label these categories as "personal derogation" and "work-related harassment". *Personal derogation* may consist of overt attacks on the employee's character, while *work-related harassment* may involve covert and malicious attempts to use organisational channels and position to target an employee. According to Beswick *et al.* (2006:12), *person-related* bullying behaviours may, for example, include making offensive remarks pertaining to the victims' personal life, while *work-related* bullying behaviours may, for instance, include giving the victim meaningless work assignments. Beswick *et al.* (2006:12) nevertheless recognise that some behaviours

may be difficult to categorise, as it may fall in either of the two categories, for instance, ignoring the victim's opinions. What is believed to be *person-related* and *work-related bullying* may also mostly depend on the subjective perception of the researcher who reports victims' experiences.

2.4.2 Specific categories of bullying behaviours

The list of behaviours that can be considered to be workplace bullying is wide-ranging. Acts that comprise bullying behaviours can range from direct and grave physical assaults, to threats and verbal abuse, hindering behaviours that harm the victim's work performance, or taking the credit for work that has been done by the victim (Beale, 2001:80). Beale (2001:80) also considers unjust favouritism of certain employees at the cost of other employees, as a form of workplace bullying.

Rayner and Hoel (1997:183) clustered examples of bullying behaviours into five main categories, namely *threat to professional status*, *threat to personal standing*, *isolation*, *overwork* and *destabilisation*. A survey was developed that list twenty bullying behaviours that are grouped into the aforementioned categories (Quine *cited in* Beale, 2001:80). Table 2.4-1 provides the non-exhaustive list of behaviours that may be bullying (Quine *cited in* Beale, 2001:80). *Vide infra*:

Table 2.4-1: Categories of bullying behaviour

Category	Behaviour
Threat to professional status	Persistent attempts to belittle and undermine your work. Persistent and unjustified criticism and monitoring of your work. Persistent attempts to humiliate you in front of colleagues. Intimidatory use of discipline or competence procedures.
Threat to personal standing	Undermining your personal integrity. Destructive innuendo and sarcasm. Verbal and non-verbal threats. Making inappropriate jokes about you. Persistent teasing. Physical violence. Violence to property.
Isolation	Withholding necessary information from you. Freezing out, ignoring, or excluding. Unreasonable refusal of applications for leave, training, or promotion.
Overwork	Undue pressure to produce work. Setting of impossible deadlines.
Destabilisation	Shifting of goal posts without telling you. Constant undervaluing of your efforts. Persistent attempts to demoralise you. Removal of areas of responsibility without consultation.

Source: Quine (*cited in* Beale, 2001:80)

2.5 THE SYSTEMATIC AND ESCALATING PROCESS OF AGGRESSION AND WORKPLACE BULLYING/ MOBBING

2.5.1 Escalating aggression

Different bullying behaviours may be emergent in frequency and severity if not recognised and resolved at an early stage. In Figure 2.5-1, *escalating aggression* is illustrated by placing different aggressive acts on a continuum and indicating how these acts can escalate from verbal or emotional acts to physical assault (Shepherd *cited in* Linsley, 2006:3). *Vide infra*:

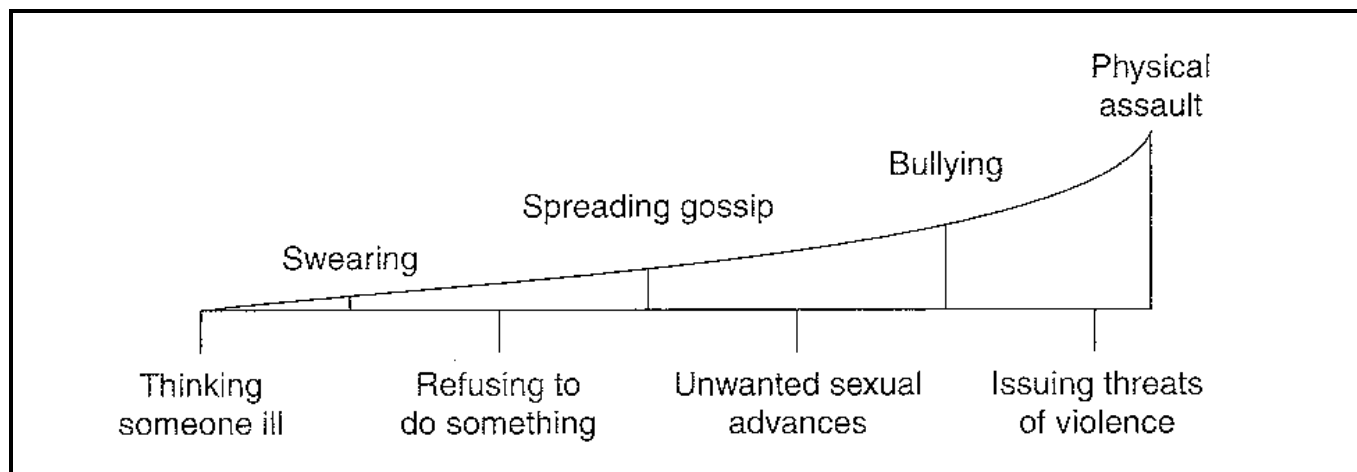


Figure 2.5-1: Escalating aggression

Source: Shepherd (cited in Linsley, 2006:3)

In Figure 2.5-1, psychological bullying behaviours fall short of physical assault, which is according to this illustration, is considered to be the worst act of aggression. However, due to the legal consequences that may be connected to physical assault, it may mostly be an isolated or once-off event, while bullying is typified as escalating, long term behaviour. Due to its relentlessness, bullying may be more severe than threats of assault or physical assault. The figure *vide supra* will be consulted to determine whether targeted teachers experience incidences of physical assault as more severe than workplace bullying. The following sub-section will discuss the process model that has been put forward to illustrate the escalating process and effects of workplace bullying/ mobbing.

2.5.2 Escalating workplace bullying/ mobbing

Leymann (1990; 1996) explains the systematic and escalating process of workplace bullying/ mobbing, which also indicates the systematic deterioration of victims' health and his/ her removal from the workplace. Leymann (1990) and Leymann (1996) will be integrated to depict the bullying/ mobbing process. This model will be considered to determine whether the nature of workplace bullying/ mobbing in the South African teaching profession is similar. *Vide infra*:

- a) Leymann's process commences with a short-phased critical incident (Leymann, 1990:121; Leymann, 1996:171), which starts with a conflict situation that is often related to work (Leymann, 1990:121). This notion may initially be akin to *dispute-related bullying* (cf. par 2.3.1.5.2). Bullying

may therefore develop from minor conflict situations, which may eventually turn into power-driven relationships.

b) The following phase includes *mobbing and stigmatisation* during which, according to Leymann (1996:171), the long-term daily exposure to mobbing behaviours can change the context and may be drawn on to stigmatise the victim. During this phase, behaviours are applied consistently and systematically for a prolonged period of time, in which the intent is to harm the targeted employee (Leymann, 1990:121). Intentional efforts are made to put the target in a vulnerable position, which may cause a decline in physical, psychological and social health. Leymann (1990:121; 1996:171) identifies *manipulation* as the key feature of the bullying event. According to him, the following aspects are manipulated (Leymann, 1990:121):

- the victim's reputation (i.e. gossip mongering, slander and ridicule occur);
- communication with the victim (i.e. he/ she is not permitted to express him/ herself; loudly uttered critique and significant glances; nobody speaks to victims);
- social situation (i.e. the victim is isolated or ostracised);
- the nature of victims' work or the likelihood of doing their job (i.e. the victim receives no work; humiliating or insignificant work assignments are given); and
- violent behaviour or threats transpire.

c) In the following phase *management* takes over the bigotry from people in the previous phases (Leymann, 1990:121; Leymann, 1996:171) and because of prior stigmatisation the situation can easily be miscalculated as being the victim's fault (Leymann, 1996:171). A victim may be involved in frequent and escalating conflict situations before he/ she finally reports his/ her experiences to organisational management. Previous conflict situations may be presented to management and the victim may be blamed for the bullying situation. There may be a desire to "get rid of the evil" (Leymann, 1996:171), which often causes a breach of victims' rights, seeing that personnel management is administrated by labour legislation (Leymann, 1996:171). If the victim reports his/ her experiences, he/ she may be blamed for causing trouble in the organisation. His/ her

behaviour may be seen as defensive and the conclusion is made that he/ she has a personality issue (Leymann, 1990:122).

- d) In the last phase, victims are expelled from work life (Leymann, 1990:122; Leymann, 1996:172). They may also need health care, but can also be incorrectly diagnosed due to professionals' disbelief in their experiences or not making a hassle of determining the social incidents that may have triggered these experiences (Leymann, 1996:172). Victims may be wrongly diagnosed with "paranoia", "manic depression", or "character disturbance" (Leymann, 1996:172). Professionals' approach to victims can be ascribed to their lack of knowledge regarding the nature of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on psychological health.

2.6 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT FACILITATE AND SUSTAIN WORKPLACE BULLYING

Workplace bullying may be facilitated and sustained by various personal characteristics of both victims and bullies. *Personality characteristics* of victims and bullies may play the most important role in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Personality characteristics may determine how others' behaviours are perceived and how conflict is dealt with if it arises. Certain contributing personality characteristics of victims and bullies will briefly be identified and discussed. Demographic characteristics, which may further increase employees' vulnerability to be bullied in the workplace, will also be identified and briefly discussed.

2.6.1 Victims

2.6.1.1 Personality characteristics

The role that victims' personality characteristics may play in the bullying process, has been heavily debated in the literature. Researchers generally have two assumptions regarding the role of victims' personality in the bullying process:

2.6.1.1.1 Assumption 1: Victims with existing psychological problems attract bullying behaviour

It is argued that individuals, who already present with psychological problems, are more probable to experience enduring physical and psychological health problems in the event of bullying or grave

personal conflicts (Einarsen, Mikkelsen & Matthiesen, n.d.:2). Einarsen *et al.* (n.d.:2) postulate that individuals who have psychological problems, a low self-confidence and a high level of anxiety in social situations, may also be more inclined to feel bullied or harassed and may have more difficulty to guard themselves when they are subjected to others' aggression. Einarsen and colleagues' argument is also supported by other literature:

2.6.1.1.1.1 High levels of anxiety and neuroticism

Neuroticism is regarded as the extreme emotional sensitivity to unfavourable life events (Brousse, Fontana, Ouchchane, Boisson, Gerbaud, Bourguet, Perrier, Schmitt, Llorca & Chamoux, 2008:125). Research has indicated that victims of workplace bullying tend to have high degree of instability, anxiety (Coyne, Seigne & Randall, 2000:341) and neuroticism (Coyne *et al.*, 2000:341; Brousse *et al.*, 2008:125). Employees who are generally more anxious in social situations may be more sensitive to certain workplace behaviours and may feel bullied in isolated once-off events.

2.6.1.1.1.2 Avoidance of conflict and submission to bullying behaviours

An attribute that victims share is that they are either reluctant or unable to retort to unnecessary aggression (Namie, 2003:3). Victims' inclination to be submissive, non-controversial and evade conflict, is also reported by Coyne *et al.* (2000:344). Namie and Namie (2009a:54) claim that victims delay taking action against bullying and trust with time gone by, that this behaviour will be brought to a halt. Bullies regrettably understand victims' lack of action as a surrender (Namie & Namie, 2009a:54). Bultena and Whatcott (2008:654) claim that bullies look for those victims who show a slight resistance to attacks and retreat when victims do stand firm against their behaviour. Certain employees' reluctance to be assertive in bullying situations may identify them as easy targets for bullying in future events. Characteristics of submission and non-confrontation are also reported among bullied teachers (cf. De Wet, 2010a:1453).

2.6.1.1.2 Assumption 2: Victims' personality may be caused by the experience of workplace bullying

Leymann (1996:179) believes that the mobbing process cannot be ascribed to the victim's personality, since personality changes can develop as a result of a major psychological disorders (i.e. posttraumatic stress syndrome) that develop from this experience. Potential victims may portray the following 'positive' personality characteristics, which may draw workplace bullies' attention:

2.6.1.1.2.1 Conscientiousness

Victims are reported as being conscientious (Coyne et al., 2000:344). Victims may tend to be hard-working and meticulous at what they do. Victimised teachers are also reported as being perfectionistic in their work (De Vos, 2010:61). The trait, *conscientiousness*, may be the foundation for numerous other qualities that make potential victims better at the work they do. Victims are also typified as people who perform higher than average and who portray attributes such as enthusiasm, intellect, competency, creativeness, integrity, achievement and dedication (Bultena & Whatcott, 2008:654). These traits may trigger envy in certain employees. This may lead to bullying behaviour and bullies' intention may be to highlight victims' vulnerabilities.

2.6.1.1.2.2 Emotional intelligence

Victims may be more sensitive and attentive to others' feelings and needs than bullies are. Goleman (*cited in* Bultena & Whatcott, 2008:654) considers victims to be emotionally intelligent. According to Bultena and Whatcott (2008:654), victims have learned to work things out, have learned to inspect their own behaviours and correct themselves if they are aware that they are at fault. Victims may be more capable of preventing and solving conflict situations by being aware of their own and others' emotional responses.

2.6.1.1.2.3 Sense of right/ wrong and high moral standards

Targeted teachers reportedly portray a "strong sense of right and wrong" and high moral standards (De Vos, 2010:62). In the study conducted by De Vos (2010:62), bullied teachers reported that they are confrontational with their principals and/ or colleagues, especially when they feel that work is not done in an unambiguous manner. These confrontations often involved unethical practices at work and reporting this behaviour led to participants' victimisation.

2.6.1.2 Demographic characteristics

Teachers may also be targeted based on their *age*, *gender* and *race*. These characteristics will be briefly discussed:

2.6.1.2.1 Age

In the health sector, *age* and *experience* amongst other characteristics, have been identified as personal risk factors that may contribute to employees' vulnerability to be targeted in the workplace (Di Martino, 2003:17). The *WBI-Zogby Survey* which was conducted in the United States, reported the experiences of workplace bullying in different age groups, ranging from ages 18-29, 30-49, and 50-64 (Namie, 2010). According to this report, employees between the ages of 30-49 were the most susceptible to be bullied, but it is also recognised that this age group most likely represents the age of the present labour force (Namie, 2010). In the same survey, employees between the ages of 18-29, were the second highest group that observed bullying and was bullied at that time, whereas employees between the ages of 50-64 were the second highest group who experienced workplace bullying in the past, but were not bullied at that time, which can be ascribed to them not being part of the labour force (often reluctantly) (Namie, 2010). In South Africa, teachers may be employed until the age of sixty-five before they retire. All ages may therefore be vulnerable to experience workplace bullying in the school organisation.

2.6.1.2.2 Gender

It is also debated whether employees' gender increase their risk of being bullied. It is generally mistakenly believed and argued that men are more likely to perpetrate bullying behaviours and women experience bullying more than men do (Fajana, Owoyemi, Shadare, Elegbede & Gbajumo-Sheriff, 2011:450). In a *WBI-Zogby Survey* report, it is also supported that both genders perpetrate workplace bullying and women are targeted more often (Namie, 2007:7). In the teaching profession, teachers' gender (i.e. being female) has been reported as a personal characteristic that may have contributed to their susceptibility to become victims (De Vos, 2010:60). Fajana *et al.* (2011:450) also recognise that bullied women report their experiences more than men do. This can be ascribed to males' reluctance to converse about inappropriate conduct, such as bullying, and for that reason they rarely report behaviours of this nature (Fajana *et al.*, 2011:450). Male teachers may not report their experiences for fear that they will be perceived as being weak and vulnerable. It is necessary that researchers also focus on men's experiences and perceptions of workplace bullying and implement strategies to reduce the stigma that is associated with men reporting their experiences of abuse.

2.6.1.2.3 Race

De Vos (2010:59) reported race as a contributing characteristic that may add to teachers' vulnerability to be targeted. Her findings suggested that teachers may be targeted for being part of the minority racial group (De Vos, 2010:59). She reported that bullying may be ascribed to a misunderstanding that exists between different racial groups in the workplace, as teachers from different races may misconstrue each other's work methods (De Vos, 2010:62). Racial differences may thus initiate circumstances that lead to workplace bullying.

2.6.2 Bullies

This sub-section will focus on bullies' personality characteristics and associated behaviours. The types of bullies, as well as the causes of their behaviours will be identified, followed by specific personality characteristics that are reported in the literature. Personality disorders that are related to workplace bullying, will also be discussed. It is however also important to note that research on bullies derives from information gained from victims' standpoints (Rayner, Hoel & Cooper, 2002:63) and witnesses' reports of negative conduct, while the contributions of bullies have been overlooked (Jenkins, Winefield & Sarris, 2011:33).

2.6.2.1 Types of bullies and the causes of their behaviours

Namie and Namie (2009a) and Needham (2003) identify the following types of bullies and describe the causes of their behaviours:

2.6.2.1.1 Chronic bullies

Chronic bullies may habitually use bullying behaviours throughout their life-span and this conduct may be part of their nature and communication style. Namie and Namie (2009a:46) describe *Chronic bullies'* behaviours as a "self-reinforcing cycle", since these bullies dominate, others yield to their behaviour, then they merely persist with their domineering behaviours. Targeted employees' reluctance to oppose *Chronic bullies* may be a reinforcement for their behaviour. *Chronic bullies'* behaviours are associated with antisocial or narcissistic personality disorder and it is recognised that they cannot amend their characters, even if they want to (Namie & Namie, 2009a:46). These bullies are, amongst others, also

described as being manipulative, evil and sadistic (Namie & Namie, 2009a:47). Their behaviours are intentional and they may have little concern for the effects they may have on victims' health.

2.6.2.1.2 Opportunistic bullies

Needham (2003:98) claims that *Opportunistic bullies*' behaviour patterns are similar to those portrayed by the *Chronic bully*, but their behaviours tend to be motivated by personal ambition rather than personality flaws that are portrayed by the *Chronic bully*. *Opportunistic bullies* differ from *Chronic bullies* in that they can delay their behaviour in times when they are in the work setting (Namie & Namie, 2009a:47). They seem to selectively choose the times when they bully.

These bullies seem to be very go-getting and will mark those who stand in their way of success, except if these people can add to their success (Needham, 2003:98). These bullies further coax to those who have the power to endow favours, promotion and status in the upcoming times (Namie & Namie, 2009a:48). According to Namie and Namie (2009a:48), these bullies have people ("executive sponsors") who obstruct reprimands for their malicious conduct (if ever exposed) and who think that they can do nothing wrong, which is the reason why victims have a difficult time being believed by others. The fact that bullies may *only* operate maliciously in the workplace, contributes even more to the difficulty that teachers may have to prove that their experienced victimisation is *bona fide* and not an imaginative or only a perceptive circumstance.

2.6.2.1.3 Substance-abusing bullies

These bullies' conduct can be ascribed to the abuse of substances, including alcohol, marijuana or stimulants (Namie & Namie, 2009a:49). Intoxicated bullies are very perilous and threatening, as they may not be in control of the decisions they make (Namie & Namie, 2009a:49). Intoxication may trigger impulsive, violent behaviour and verbal abuse that may affect all levels of the school organisation.

2.6.2.1.4 Situational or Accidental bullies

Needham (2003:98), in addition, also identifies *Situational* or *Accidental bullies*, who draw on the organisation's history, leadership or management style and feeble hierarchical formations, to benefit them. They are likely to join a mob with employees who have lower positions in the organisation and will

often also use a *Chronic bully*'s influence to advance themselves in the organisation to a more important position (Needham, 2003:98). These employees may not be bullies outside of the work context, but will use opportunities presented in the workplace to target others.

2.6.2.2 Personality characteristics

The literature identifies the following characteristics that may be portrayed by bullies:

2.6.2.2.1 A need for power and control

Bullying is self-centred behaviour and its main intent may be to achieve and retain power. Bullies are stereotypically, amongst other characteristics, also typified as being motivated by power, vengeance, and are alleged to be domineering and aggressive (Rhodes, Pullen, Vickers, Clegg & Pitsis, 2010:99). The abuse of power can be a façade to hide one's own vulnerabilities and anxiety, but to simultaneously also draw attention to victims' vulnerabilities. Peyton (2003:9) claims that bullies generally have a fear of not being sufficiently in control and are often portrayed by their work group as being "control freaks". She further claims that bullies' comprehension of leadership is often misrepresented: rather than guiding the work team and encouraging cohesiveness, their behaviour is over-controlling, which elicits physiological and psychological health effects their staff (Peyton, 2003:9).

2.6.2.2.2 Feelings of inadequacy

De Vos (2010:39) recognises bullies' behaviours as a "physical manifestation of personal inadequacy". In a *YouTube* video, Namie (2011) asserts that workplace bullies target victims because they cannot tolerate characteristics, such as the competency, strength, emotional intelligence and the likeability that these people portray and just want to discard them. Feelings of inadequacy may also be closely related to envy. Namie (2003:3) claims that bullies who lack emotional intelligence, escalate their misbehaviour when they feel threatened and then act in response to victims' affirmed independence, technical and social abilities or moral whistle-blowing, as is indicated by research and subjective evidence. These bullies may not have confidence in their own abilities and may revert to bullying behaviour to highlight victims' vulnerabilities and underscore their own strengths.

2.6.2.2.3 Envy

Competition within an organisation may raise feelings of envy, which may in turn generate a hostile organisational climate (Khalib & Ngan, 2006). Envy may occur as *work envy* or *personal envy* (Peyton, 2003:44-45). Bullies may have *work envy* where they fear that colleagues could also do the work well, or are even better at the trade (Adams cited in Peyton, 2003:44). Bullies may be incited by personal strengths and achievements (De Wet, 2010a:1454), which may be an example of *personal envy*.

2.6.2.2.4 Lack of empathy

Workplace bullies have also been reported as being insensitive to others' feelings (Rhodes et al., 2010:99). They may show a lack of empathy (Seigne, Coyne, Randall & Parker, 2007:127). The effects of their behaviour on victims' health may not be of concern to them. If a lack of empathy is a constant behavioural pattern, it may be indicative of sociopathy (McGrath & Edwards, 2000:143), or psychopathy (cf. par 2.6.2.3.1).

2.6.2.2.5 Manipulation

It was believed that bullies are socially unskilled, but research now reveals that these individuals are skilled (McGrath & Edwards, 2000:141), manipulative (McGrath & Edwards, 2000:141; Rowell, 2005:378), intelligent, often charming and cognisant of their status (Rowell, 2005:378). They may have their own agendas and may attempt to emotionally and socially control others to achieve their goals. The skill to manipulate may enable bullies to persuade others that the victim is the problem in the workplace.

2.6.2.3 Personality disorders related to the perpetration of workplace bullying

Bullies' personalities may also be characteristic of certain personality disorders. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) (APA, 2000:685) defines a *personality disorder* as follows: "A Personality Disorder is an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment."

There is a salient link between bullies' characteristics and behaviours, and specific personality disorders. Researchers (Randall, 2001:90-95; Namie & Namie, 2009a:46) have associated workplace bullying with *antisocial* and *narcissistic personality disorder*. Despite the lack of significant research evidence to show

that most workplace bullies have personality disorders, it is apparent that some features of these disorders may be present and an insight is necessary for the planning of approaches to resolve workplace bullying (Randall, 2001:89). It can be assumed that some workplace bullies may present characteristics and behaviours toward being antisocial and narcissistic, as very little of them are actually clinically/ psychologically assessed for these personality disorders. A discussion will nonetheless be presented on *antisocial personality disorder* and *psychopathy*, and *narcissistic personality disorder* and the relation to workplace bullying.

2.6.2.3.1 *Antisocial personality disorder and psychopathy*

A pervasive pattern of infringement and disregard for other people's rights with no repentance or guilt for one's conduct, are the fundamental diagnostic features of antisocial personality disorder (Von Krosigk, 2009:213). Individuals with this disorder are portrayed as being aggressive, since they take what they desire and are apathetic toward other people's worries (Barlow & Durand, 2012:432). Lying and cheating appears to be second nature to them and they seem to be incapable of distinguishing between the truth and the lies they tell to promote their objectives (Barlow & Durand, 2012:432).

Antisocial personality disorder is also amongst others labelled as *psychopathy*, but there are significant differences between them (Barlow & Durand, 2012:432). These researchers for example note that psychopaths are not criminals and do not portray the aggressiveness as stipulated in the DSM-IV-TR for the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder (Barlow & Durand, 2012:433). They indicate that the DSM-IV-TR criteria provided for the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder focus on conduct that can be observed, whereas the criteria for psychopathy (i.e. the Cleckley/ Hare criteria) focus on personality characteristics (Barlow & Durand, 2012:433).

A specific set of personality characteristics may be indicative of psychopathic tendencies in workplace bullies. In his book, *Without conscience: the disturbing world of the psychopaths among us*, Robert Hare (1993) identifies and discusses the characteristics/ symptoms that may be portrayed by psychopaths. According to him, on an *emotional* or *interpersonal level*, psychopaths are "glib" and "superficial", self-centred and ostentatious, have a lack of repentance for their behaviours, have a lack of empathy for others, deceive and manipulate others, and lack profundity in their emotions (Hare, 1993:34).

Furthermore, psychopaths are also *socially deviant*, and are characterised as being impetuous, having poor control over their behaviours, having a desire for thrill, having a lack of accountability, having a history of conduct problems early in life and portraying anti-social behaviours during adulthood (Hare, 1993:34).

Antisocial behaviour can further be placed on three positions of a scale, where people on the higher end of the scale portray strong deceitful, antisocial and exploitative conduct, while those in the middle of the scale have sociopathic behavioural patterns that are not severe, and most people are positioned on the lower end of the scale (McGrath & Edwards, 2000:151). McGrath and Edwards (2000:156) refer to “‘unsuccessful’ sociopaths” and claim that these individuals have a lack of skills and adaptive traits to allow them to become successful in society by means of sincere efforts and normally they are caught out. The literature also refers to “successful” psychopaths who, on the other hand, function effectively in different parts of society (e.g. politics, business, entertainment) (Barlow & Durand, 2012:433). Psychopaths may therefore operate successfully in the work context. They “manage to operate on the shady side of the law” and they stay out of prison (Hare, 1993:25). According to Barlow and Durand (2012:433), research has not focused on psychopathy, which is attributable to the difficulty of identifying “‘successful” or “‘subclinical” psychopaths.

Little research has been conducted to investigate whether workplace bullies in the teaching profession actually portray characteristics of *antisocial personality disorder* or *psychopathy*. De Wet (2011a:462) has noticed from her research transcripts that bullying colleagues portray “a sense of evil”. These teachers are reportedly dishonest, who immorally altered learners’ marks, perpetrated plagiarism, embarrassed and ignored their colleagues in the presence of learners, and attempted and were often successful in bringing victims in notoriety with principals (De Wet, 2011a:462). De Wet (2010a:1453) also reports the characteristic of *evil* among bullying principals. The intentional, persistent and long-term perpetration of harassment (cf. par 2.3.1.4), or other behaviours that may be regarded as being a violation of teachers’ human and/ or labour rights, while these bullies manipulate and conveniently escape legal prosecution by any means, may be suggestive of *antisocial personality disorder* or *psychopathy*. Clinical assessment is however necessary before the claim can be made that workplace

bullies present with these personality deviations. The *sense of evil* may further only be victims' subjective perception.

2.6.2.3.2 Narcissistic personality disorder

"Narcissistic Personality Disorder is a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy." (APA, 2000:685). Based on the diagnostic criteria stipulated by the DSM-IV-TR, an individual with narcissistic personality disorder considers him/ herself to be highly important and "special", wants to be excessively admired, often fixates on "fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love", expects to be treated favourably, exploits others and takes advantage of them, lacks empathy and is reluctant to identify with others' feelings and needs, is jealous of others and believes that they are jealous of him/ her, and is characterised by his/ her arrogance and pompous conduct and attitude (APA, 2000:717). Researchers in the teaching profession have reported narcissism among bullying principals (Kirsten et al., 2005; De Wet, 2010a). After citing Kirsten and colleagues' (2005) view that some bullying principals may have narcissistic personality disorder, De Wet (2011b:74) recognises that it is not possible to make an intricate psychological diagnosis exclusively based on victims' narratives. To claim that workplace bullies have narcissistic personality disorder requires an in-depth clinical assessment. She does however report that her research data reveals that a bullying principal portrays certain characteristics of narcissism, including a "grandiose sense of self-importance" and behaving as if he has infinite power (De Wet, 2011b:74).

2.7 ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT FACILITATE AND SUSTAIN WORKPLACE BULLYING

Research has not only focused on the personal characteristics of victims and bullies that may give rise to workplace bullying, but also on organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain this behaviour. The following discussion will focus on *work stress*, *the type of organisation* and *leadership style*, *organisational culture* as motive for workplace bullying (Cemaloglu, 2007a:791), and will also include *organisational climate* and *the nature of organisational support* in the discussion.

2.7.1 Stressed work environment as a root of workplace bullying

Work stress is considered to be one of the causes of bullying (Khalib & Ngan, 2006). Work conditions and demands that teachers may experience on a daily basis, may increase stress in a school that may

affect all levels. Stressed work environments can generate a channel for interpersonal conflicts or frustrations, which may cause workplace bullying (Coyne, 2011:168). In the company of potential supporting factors, such as personality, work group pressures and management difficulties, stress reaches its limits and blows up as a form of bullying when prompted by any of the activating factors (Khalib & Ngan, 2006). Bullying is, on the other hand, in theory also a cause of stress in an organisation (Cemaloglu, 2007b:6), which may be reflected in physical, psychological and social health (cf. Chapter 3). Incidences of bullying may trigger stress in a healthy school organisation, which may negatively affect most teaching- and other school activities.

2.7.2 Type of organisation

The structure of an organisation may increase the possibility for bullying to occur. The diversity of a school community (e.g. different races, cultures and ethnic backgrounds, and age-differences) may generate opportunities for bullying to occur. Teachers can be bullied on any level of the school organisation, including by the principal, colleagues and learners (De Vos, 2010). If there is a lack of clear-cut rules that stipulate how bullying will be dealt with on all levels of the school organisation, this phenomenon may become too difficult or complex to manage and the effects for teachers, their families, the work group and the school organisation, may be grave.

2.7.3 Type of leadership style

Researchers have found a relation between leadership style and bullying in organisations. It is not uncommon that mobbing begins with managers and moves down the organisational order (Duffy & Sperry, 2007:399). The type of leadership style can either contribute to a school that is a healthy psychosocial environment for learners and teachers, or to one that is dysfunctional. The literature generally refers to *laissez-faire* and *authoritarian/ autocratic* leadership styles. According to Sloan, Matyók, Schmitz & Lester Short (2010:93), a *laissez-faire* leadership style generates a milieu that “breeds mobbing”, while an *authoritarian* leadership style “breeds bullying”. De Wet (2010a:1453) reports an *authoritarian leadership style* in the teaching profession.

Coyne (2011:168-169) claims that having a high autocratic leadership style, the lack of ability or lack of skills to deal with conflict, as well as the disinclination to tackle bullying, seem to promote this behaviour.

Peyton (2003:18) claims that this type of leadership is often partnered with micro-management where the employees are given very little autonomy and very little liability for work they do. Principals may therefore be inclined to seek control over teachers and the school environment. In this case, employees are constantly monitored and assessed and if these behaviours are excessive, it can be construed as bullying because job-satisfaction is suppressed, which as a result leaves employees feeling powerless and as if they do not have control (Peyton, 2003:21).

2.7.4 Organisational culture and climate

An *organisational culture* is the “shared basic assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours in an organisation” (Janson & Xaba, 2007:138). Organisational culture sets the limits for behaviour (Mentz, 2007:150) – it is an imperceptible guide for workforce that indicates which behaviours are acceptable and will be rewarded, and those behaviours that are undesirable and will be reprimanded (Cilliers & Werner, 2009:212). Newcomers are apt to gradually adjust to the shared organisational norms (Matsela, 2009:35). New teachers will therefore learn to adapt to the organisational culture and may contribute to the dysfunction of a school if it already is a bully-prone work environment. Teachers may be socialised to behave in a manner that is acceptable for that specific school culture, even though it may be harmful to employee and organisational health.

An organisational culture is also accompanied by a specific climate. *Organisational climate* is the general ambience that exists in the school (Mentz, 2007:154) and denotes employees’ perceptions pertaining to their work conditions (Janson & Xaba, 2007:138). Ultimately, the relation between organisational climate and organisational culture in a school determines its efficiency (Janson & Xaba, 2007:139). Workplace bullying may create a work environment where teachers are more focused on solving conflict and protecting themselves, than on quality teaching in the classroom.

2.7.5 The nature of organisational support

Organisational support resources may also facilitate and sustain workplace bullying. Education labour unions ought to be impartial and mediate a solution between a victimised teacher and alleged bully. It is however reported that victims feel that they do not have the liberty to seek advice from labour union agents, since these people are often befriended with bullying principals (De Wet, 2010a:1453). This

biased support-system may prevent the fair investigation of grievances and may also prevent bullied teachers and colleagues from reporting their experiences. This may allow bullying to continue, since it is never addressed.

2.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES THAT CAN EXPLAIN THE PSYCHOSOCIAL DYNAMICS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

Three theoretical perspectives, including the *social learning theory*, *organisational socialisation* and the *attraction-selection-attrition model*, will be briefly applied to explain the psychosocial dynamics of workplace bullying. *Vide infra*:

2.8.1 Social learning theory and organisational socialisation

Bullying may be demonstrated with Albert Bandura's (1977) well-known *social learning theory*. This theory suggests that behaviour is learned through the observation and imitation of behaviour that is modelled by others (Bandura, 1977; Reber & Reber, 2001:689). This principle may also be incorporated in the definition of *organisational socialisation*. According to Werner (2011:252), "Organisational **socialisation** refers to the process through which new employees are exposed to the organisation's values, beliefs and customs, and are moulded into the organisational culture."

Glomb and Liao (2003:487) also infer from Bandura's theory that an employee attains a range of aggressive behaviours by observing others' behaviours and its outcomes. Coyne (2011:168) claims that elevated levels of bullying may possibly occur in an organisational setting that favours bullying, abides this behaviour and socialises employees to think in this manner. It can therefore be hypothesised that if bullying behaviour is modelled in a school, observing colleagues are likely to learn and apply similar behaviours. If there is a lack of consequences for these behaviours, it can become a norm in the school. Rayner *et al.* (2002:86) furthermore claim that if one contemplates culture as a manner in which workplace bullying is supported, one should also be able to utilise culture as a manner to decrease bullying. If respect is modelled and bullying behaviours are prohibited and/ or adequately dealt with by principals, it may also rub off on different levels of the school organisation. This notion may be kept in mind when intervention strategies are identified and developed.

2.8.2 The attraction-selection-attrition model

The *attraction-selection-attrition model* proposes that individuals with similar characteristics than those of the work group, will be attracted to, picked and kept by the group (Schneider *cited in* Glomb & Liao, 2003:487). Glomb and Liao (2003:487-488) draw the conclusion that employees with aggressive tendencies, would more likely be drawn into, selected by and stay in work groups that have similar aggressive affiliates and this would then give rise to a work group with fairly analogous aggressive inclinations. In this way, mobs are formed and aggressive behaviours may be directed toward employees who are more compliant and least probable to oppose aggressive tendencies from multiple employees. Interventionists may strive to create a work environment where aggression and bullying behaviour are rejected by the majority of employees in the work group.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a literature review regarding the nature of bullying and indicated how it may surface in the workplace. The distinction between *strong management* and *workplace bullying* was firstly made. It was suggested that *strong management* may be an attempt to increase the employees' productivity without necessarily being detrimental to the health of employees and the organisation, while bullying may constitute abusive behaviours that may be damaging to employees' and the organisation's health. *Abuse*, *organisational bullying*, *mobbing* and *harassment* were further defined as sub-forms of workplace bullying for the purposes of this study. In the same section, specific characteristics of workplace bullying were identified. Workplace bullying was typified as long-term, repetitive behaviour that is an imbalance of power between the victims and the bully and may be harmful to health, a violation of their human and/ or labour rights, and dependent on subjective perception. Workplace bullying was also discussed as a process that systematically escalates. Personal and organisational characteristics and the role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying, were further discussed. This chapter was concluded with theoretical perspectives that may illuminate the psychosocial dynamics of workplace bullying. These theories suggest that employees may either learn from and imitate modelled behaviour, or fit in with other employees with similar traits.

In Chapter 3, the effects of workplace bullying on physical, psychological and social health will be investigated and discussed by means of a literature review.

CHAPTER 3

THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON HEALTH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The experience of workplace bullying may be the root of stress and work trauma in teachers. This chapter will provide a literature review regarding the physical, psychological and social health effects that may stem from the experience of workplace bullying. The *biopsychosocial model* will be applied as a theoretical foundation. This chapter will be concluded with theoretical perspectives that may explain victims' health experiences.

3.2 THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON THE HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL: AN OVERVIEW

The *biopsychosocial model* (cf. par 1.3.1) will be applied as a theoretical foundation to understand the dynamics of the physical, psychological and social health systems in the event of workplace bullying. The underlying assumption of this model is that physical, psychological and social health processes are continuously and equally affected by psychosocial stressors in a way that may either promote health or illness.

It is assumed that teachers' experiences of workplace bullying may firstly affect psychological processes. Hamilton-West (2011:4) claims that psychological processes (i.e. *cognitions*, *emotions* and *behaviours*) play a significant role in health. She claims that cognitive processes are vital for the recognition of environmental threats and compares this to the functioning of the immune system that similarly identifies physiological threats (Hamilton-West, 2011:49). Teachers' subjective perceptions (cf. par 2.3.2.6) of bullying behaviour may play a salient role in the effects it ultimately has on holistic health. Hamilton-West (2011:49) states that if a potential threat is sensed, cognitive and physiological systems work in synchrony. Therefore, if bullying behaviours are perceived as a psychological threat and a threat to human dignity, stress and trauma may be observed through physical health symptoms.

The following sections will discuss literature regarding the effects of workplace bullying (a *type-II stressor*) on victims' physical health (e.g. underlying physiological processes that are triggered by stress and work trauma), psychological health (e.g. cognitions, emotions, dysfunctional coping behaviours and psychological disorders), and social health (e.g. effects on the health of social and professional relationships, and the organisation).

3.3 WORKPLACE BULLYING AS A TYPE-II STRESSOR

It is commonly accepted that bullying is a severe stressor in the workplace (Monks et al., 2009:152). Stressors may generally fall into two categories. *Type-I stressors* are experiences that are succinct and abrupt, nonetheless life-threatening (e.g. motor vehicle accidents, robberies, rape and sudden disasters), while *type-II stressors* (e.g. abuse, domestic violence) are chronic and prolonged experiences that may lead to "Disorders of Extreme Stress" in which one's sense of trust in relatives, as well as beliefs concerning oneself and the world, is affected (Meichenbaum *cited in* Hoyt, 1994). Workplace bullying can therefore be categorised as a *type-2 stressor* due to its long-term, repetitive and persistent nature (cf. par 2.3.2).

Workplace bullying is, in addition, also identified as a *type-II trauma* or "cumulative trauma" (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004:349). According to Einarsen (*cited in* Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004:349), gradual humiliating bullying may develop from harsh personal chemistry, mounting incidents of conflict, as well as dismissive interpersonal conduct. The calamity is socially constructed and the victim, at least psychologically, senses that he/ she cannot break free from the overwhelming traumatic incident (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004:349). The bully may utilise any available means to gain power and control over the victim, which may make him/ her feel powerless and deprived of social and/ or psychological and emotional resources to escape from the situation.

3.4 STRESS AND WORK TRAUMA AS AN OUTCOME OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

The experience of workplace bullying, as a type-II stressor, may be a root of stress and work trauma in victims. The concepts of *stress* and *work trauma* will be briefly discussed.

3.4.1 Stress

There is a direct association between psychosocial factors and stress-related health difficulties (Namie & Namie, 2011:92). Namie and Namie (2011:92) claim that victims are “under assault” and according to these researchers, these assaults are threatening and causes of stress that set a physiological and biological chain in motion that give rise to stress. Schafer (2000:8-9) mentions four ways in which stress can contribute to illness:

- Stress inflicts enduring deterioration on the body and the mind, which causes one’s resistance to disease to be lower (e.g. developing ulcers after enduring job pressure);
- Stress directly speeds up illnesses (e.g. heart attacks and stress headaches);
- Stress worsens existing illnesses (e.g. increased arthritic pain or outbreak of psoriasis);
- Stress speeds up unhealthy coping behaviours that may cause illnesses (e.g. smoking, binge eating, abuse of alcohol, lack of sleep).

3.4.1.1 Stages of stress: the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

The escalating and deteriorating effects that workplace bullying may have on physical health, may be illustrated by the GAS (General Adaptation Syndrome). This theory was put forward by Hans Selye (Selye, 1957). According to this theory, the human response to a stressor may fall into three successive stages, namely *alarm reaction*, *stage of resistance* and *stage of exhaustion* (Selye, 1957:31). In Figure 3.4-1, Sarafino and Smith (2012:34) illustrate the three stages of the *General Adaptation Syndrome*.
Vide infra:

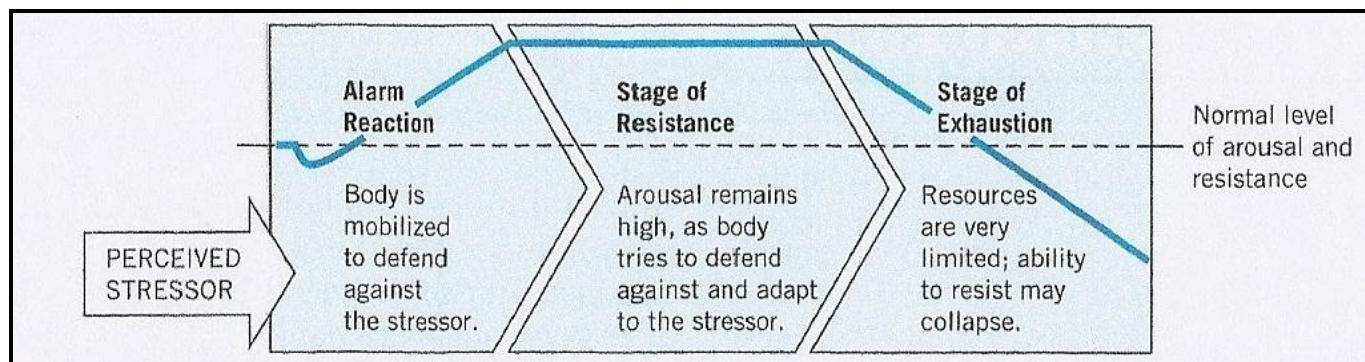


Figure 3.4-1: General adaptation syndrome with three stages

In this figure, Sarafino and Smith further indicate that the dark line exemplifies the changes in the body's degree in which it can resist illnesses.

Source: Sarafino and Smith (2012:34)

These three stages will be briefly discussed:

3.4.1.1.1 The alarm reaction

The first stage of stress is compared to the *fight-or-flight response*, during which the body's resources (specifically hormonal responses) are set in motion (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:33). A victim's body and mind instantly reacts by changing into a "survival mode" when he/ she notices danger (Resick, 2001:4). During this stage, a range of biological reactions are triggered by the autonomic nervous system, including raises in heart tempo, breathing, and blood pressure, a release of accumulated blood sugar, increased muscle tone, increased awareness and reduction of focus from information that is trivial (Resick, 2001:4). This process prepares the victim to physically or psychologically take instinctive action. Amponsah (2011:757) maintains that a continued alarm response increases the level of hormones that may harm and potentially deteriorate one's organs, which consequently leads one to be susceptible to disease.

3.4.1.1.2 The stage of resistance

In the stage of resistance, the body endeavours to get used to the stressor (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:33). The activation of bodily processes stays more elevated than normal and it restocks the hormones that is released by the adrenal glands (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:33). During this stage, one shows little external indications of stress despite continual physiological activation, although the capability to ward off new stressors may turn out to be harmed (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:33). Hans Selye labels the body's failure to effectively deal with a situation that may give rise to health issues, as "diseases of adaptation" (Selye,

1957:124). This process may however differ from one person to another. Eventually, the failure to adapt to the stressor may be the start of numerous physical diseases. According to Sarafino and Smith (2012:34), these health issues include ulcers, hypertension, asthma, and illnesses that stem from a damaged immune function.

3.4.1.1.3 The stage of exhaustion

The lack of intervention may indirectly permit bullying behaviour to continue, and as a result, bullied teachers may be pushed into a stage where they are likely to develop numerous stress-related illnesses. There is a cost to long-term physiological stimulation as a result of stress, as it can weaken one's immune system and exhaust the body's energy reserves until there are extreme boundaries to its resistance (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:34). It is likely that disease, damage to organs and death may arise if stress persists (Sarafino & Smith, 2012:34).

3.4.1.2 Critique of the GAS

Cassidy (1999:23) notices two shortcomings in the GAS. He firstly notices that the GAS neglects to recognise psychological processes (Cassidy, 1999:23). The GAS explains the biological/ physiological response to stress and overlooks the psychological facet (mainly the evaluation of threats and mediation of the stress process), even though Selye was aware of the psychological symptoms that may arise in the process (Cassidy, 1999:23). Cassidy (1999:23) believes that the GAS is nonetheless still of use when the psychological element, namely *cognitive appraisal*, is also included in this model. Teachers' perceptions of bullying behaviours may differ and therefore the degree of stress that is experienced may also be different in individual cases.

Aldwin (2011:16) adds that the susceptibility to stress must not only be understood in terms of the underlying bodily processes of stress, but additionally, the appraisal and coping strategies that people employ to guard themselves against susceptibility of stress, particularly in a later stage of life. The effects of workplace bullying on teachers' health may therefore only be fully understood when the role of cognitive appraisal of bullying behaviours is investigated and used to explain the physiological processes of stress.

Cassidy (1999:23) also further notices that the GAS explains a common physiological stress response to all stressors. He asserts that there is clear evidence regarding individual differences in the response to stress (Cassidy, 1999:23). Persistent verbal abuse and degrading may, for example, be severe enough for one victim to reach the stage of exhaustion, while another victim may only reach this stage after experiencing more severe behaviours, such as harassment and stalking.

3.4.2 Work trauma

The experience of workplace bullying can be severely stressful and over time it may scar the victim emotionally and psychologically, leading to psychological trauma. Tehrani (2004:44) identifies an interpersonal facet (which includes *bullying*) as one of four types of traumatic incidences that can occur in organisations. Giller (1999) claims that “stress”, “trauma” and “adaptation” cannot be evidently divided. *Trauma* is perceived as stress that runs riot (Anon, 2005). The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology claims that the term “trauma” derives from Greek terminology meaning “wound” and is applied to refer to physical harm that is obtained through a direct outer force, or alternatively, injury to the psyche that is obtained through acute assault on one’s emotions (Reber & Reber, 2001:764).

Researchers report that victims experience their exposure to bullying as a major trauma in their lives (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002:98; Hallberg & Strandmark K., 2006:112). A research study reported that although victims also report experiencing other life stressors (e.g. accidents, divorce, severe illnesses, loss), as many as 80.5 per cent revealed that no other life event impinged on them more negatively than the bullying behaviour at that time (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002:98). Victims do not foresee workplace bullying (McKay & Fratzl, 2011:15), it is *always* perceived as not deserved and unjust, and therefore it is a traumatic experience (Keashly & Neuman *cited in* Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008:100). McKay and Fratzl (2011:14) claim that the key advantage of investigating workplace bullying from a trauma-perspective may be that it notifies us regarding the restricted success that educational initiatives and policies have had in the work context.

3.5 THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON HEALTH

The effects of workplace bullying on health will be discussed in three sub-sections. It is important to note that victims’ physical health symptoms may be triggered and mediated by psychological processes.

Nevertheless, for the sake of the “bio”-“psycho”-“social” model, the sub-sections will also be presented in this order – this section will therefore firstly commence with a discussion on victims’ physical health experiences, followed by psychological and social health experiences.

3.5.1 The effects of workplace bullying on physical health

Psychological stress and work trauma may be somatised and observable through physiological processes (e.g. temporary high blood pressure or high blood sugar that are not necessarily ascribed to inheritance or lifestyle). This section will identify the physical health symptoms that may stem from stress and work trauma owing to the experience of workplace bullying.

3.5.1.1 The effects of stress associated with workplace bullying

Victims’ stress and work trauma may be apparent in physical health responses. Trivial symptoms of distress (e.g. shaky hands or stress headaches) are useful early indications when one pays attention and responds to it in a constructive manner (Schafer, 2000:8). Schafer (2000:8) is of the opinion that these symptoms frequently go unnoticed, become unremitting, and develop into advanced illnesses that necessitate health care. He identifies several stress-related disorders in individuals who are referred to him for stress-management classes or counselling (Schafer, 2000:8).

Physical and psychological stress-related disorders include stress headaches and migraines, chest pain that is not related to cardiac problems, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, gastritis, ulcers, colitis, lower back ache, heart attacks, cancer, periods of light-headedness, hypertension and panic attacks (Schafer, 2000:8). In addition to cardiovascular difficulties, Namie and Namie (2009a:136-137) further list other stress-related physical health symptoms that may be related to the experience of workplace bullying, including having a lowered immunity against contagion (more colds and influenza), menstruation problems, skin itches or disorders, allergies, asthma, shifts in weight, loss of hair, diabetes, overactive thyroid, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, as well as changes in the composition of the brain and neurotransmitters.

Sleeping problems are also perceived as a physical health problem in this study. Research also reports that victims of workplace bullying may experience sleep deprivation or insomnia (cf. Sloan et al.,

2010:96; De Wet, 2010a:1456; De Wet, 2010b:196; De Wet, 2011a:460), as well as related symptoms such as nightmares, not enough rest and fatigue (Blase & Blase, 2006:125). Sleeping problems may also be symptomatic of major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1) or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2). The effects of workplace bullying may affect nearly every health system in the body. Individual physical health symptoms can be grouped under the major health systems. *Vide infra*:

3.5.1.1.1 Endocrine health system

Cortisol is known as the *stress hormone*, since it is raised during a stressful life event (Barlow & Durand, 2012:226). The long-term elevated levels of cortisol may result in gastric ulcers, thinning of one's bones and possibly harm to the brain (Sapolsky *cited in* Bremner, 2004:172). It is reported that employees who are frequently bullied experience more psychological health symptoms and present with lower salivary cortisol levels in the morning, in comparison to employees who are not bullied (Hansen, Hogh & Persson, 2011:24).

3.5.1.1.2 Cardiovascular health system

Numerous cardiovascular-related illnesses are associated with the experience of workplace bullying. Physical symptoms may include cardiovascular problems or complaints, high blood pressure (Hallberg & Strandmark K., 2006:114; Namie & Namie, 2009a:136) and strokes (Duffy & Sperry, 2007:401). It is also reported that cardiovascular disease among victims may be partly caused by obesity (Kivimäki, Virtanen, Vartia, Elovainio, Vahtera & Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2003:779).

3.5.1.1.3 Gastro-intestinal health system

The stress that is associated with the experience of workplace bullying may also affect the gastro-intestinal health system. Specific symptoms may include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis, indigestion (Namie & Namie, 2009a:136), and stomach or gastric disturbance (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107; Randall, 2001:147).

3.5.1.1.4 Respiratory health system

Victims may also present with respiratory problems (Hallberg & Strandmark K., 2006:114), which may include asthma and allergies (Namie & Namie, 2009a:136).

3.5.1.1.5 Musculoskeletal health system

The stress that is experienced by victims may also affect musculoskeletal health. Examples of health problems that may fall in this category may include muscle aches, tension or body pains (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107; Namie & Namie, 2009a:140; Randall, 2001:147).

3.5.1.1.6 Immune system

Major and minor stressful incidents can both have direct undesirable effects on the working of the immune system (Padgett & Glaser, 2003:444). According to Leymann (1990:123), there are suspicions that workplace mobbing may have an effect on victims' immune system. Leymann (1990:123) reports that an organisational doctor has witnessed a few "‘mysterious’ cases of cancer". The influence on the immune system can be attributable to psychological processes (Hamilton-West, 2011:30). Victims may present with different illnesses that may be experienced in different degrees of severity, depending on the time-frame of the lowered immunity.

3.5.1.1.7 Reproductive health system

Stress and work trauma may also have various adverse effects on the reproductive/ sexual health of both genders. Victims may have a lowered libido (Manning, 2001:190) and/ or menstrual difficulties (Namie & Namie, 2009a:136). Effects on the reproductive health system may have a severe effect on marital and/ or sexual relationships with spouses/ life partners (cf. par 3.5.3.1).

3.5.2 The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health

This sub-section will provide a literature review regarding the effects of workplace bullying on victims' psychological processes (i.e. cognitions, emotions and dysfunctional coping behaviours). Psychological disorders that are associated with the experience of workplace bullying, will also be discussed.

3.5.2.1 Cognitions: the effects of workplace bullying on cognitive assumptions

The experience of workplace bullying may drastically change a teacher's belief system regarding the meaning of life, their place and importance in the school organisation and in the world in general. Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983) investigated people's cognitive responses toward victimisation and identified three fundamental assumptions about the world that may change, which will be discussed and also

accompanied by explanations on how it may occur in the event of workplace bullying (cf. Rayner et al., 2002). *Vide infra*:

- Individuals may have “the belief in personal invulnerability” (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:3), in which they suppose that certain events will never happen to them (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:4). Teachers may perceive themselves as competent and likeable, and therefore, not likely to experience a life event such as workplace bullying. Rayner et al. (2002:49) explain that one supposes that most individuals at work wish one well, whereas victims of workplace bullying deem that someone “may be out to ‘get them’”. Victims may feel emotionally exposed and may label themselves as easy targets. Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:4) also claim that the victim’s misplaced sense of safety is accompanied by feelings of extreme anxiety and helplessness. The consequential perception of susceptibility often presents itself, to some extent, in victims’ fixation with the fear that the event will reoccur (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:4).
- People may have “the perception of the world as meaningful and comprehensible” (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:3), which refers to their belief that they are guarded against adversity by being good and laudable (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:5). Victims of workplace bullying may feel like they are being pursued, which is accompanied by feeling of disappointment in friends and colleagues (Rayner et al., 2002:49). Family and colleagues may not understand the bullied teacher’s sudden feelings of unworthiness and may not know how to deal with situations of this nature. The victim may perceive this as non-support. The noticeable lack of support when it is needed, is very hurtful for most individuals (Rayner et al., 2002:49).

Experiences of victimisation do not seem sensible (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:5) and leave victims in an uncertain state of mind. Victims may question their experiences to seek meaning (e.g. “Why did this happen to me?”) and they draw the conclusion that the world, which they perceived to be positive in the past, is currently not righteous or meaningful (Rayner et al., 2002:49). Lost sense of meaning may have severe effects on the quality of education that a bullied teacher produces in the classroom.

- The third assumption entails “a view of ourselves in a positive light” (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:3), which entails that they normally function under the assumption that they are worthy and

decent and for that reason they uphold a high self-esteem (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983:6). According to Janoff-Bulman and Frieze (1983:6), these self-perceptions are queried in the event of victimisation. Victims may have a perception that others think of them in a negative manner and that their aptitude and use in the organisation is queried after having a good reputation (Rayner et al., 2002:49-50).

3.5.2.2 The effects of workplace bullying on emotional health

The literature reports a host of emotional reactions that may be experienced by victims of workplace bullying. Anger and aggression may firstly be a significant part of victims' emotional experiences. Wilkie (*cited in* Lee and Brotheridge, 2006:355) puts forward a model of *stress breakdown* that stems from abusive conduct, which is deduced by Lee and Brotheridge (2006) to depict the coping process of adult victims. According to Lee and Brotheridge (2006:355), victims at the outset have a sense of "free-floating anxiety", which is regarded as efforts to do too many things at one time or embracing challenges that are very difficult. As victims attempt to cope with their experience, their physical and emotional health decreases in due course (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006:355). During this process, they lose their emotional control and may show aggressive predispositions – which may be abrupt, erratic and even violent – toward others in the workplace and external to the workplace (Lee & Brotheridge, 2006:355). According to Lee and Brotheridge (2006:355), the victim may withdraw emotionally to evade stimulation as much as he/ she can. Teachers may therefore withdraw from anyone who may trigger negative emotions that are associated with the bullying. Furthermore, according to Namie and Namie's (2009a:217) description anger is only a façade for a range of other emotions (e.g. hurt, envy, shame, fear, frustration, amongst others).

Numerous emotional responses that may stem from victims' experiences of workplace bullying, are documented in the literature. Research studies in the teaching profession that were consulted in this study, were compared and the noted emotional reactions that reoccurred in two or more studies were listed to identify emotions that may be most prominent among bullied teachers. Noted emotional reactions include feelings of shame, burnout, anger (which may also manifest as suppressing anger or the incapability to control it), lower or loss of self-confidence, helplessness/ powerlessness, humiliation, lower self-esteem, anxiety, fixation or obsession with the bully/ experience, posttraumatic stress disorder

(PTSD) or symptoms of PTSD, stress/ psychological distress, fear/ dread, with depression being mostly reported (cf. Blase & Blase, 2006; Blase, Blase & Du, 2008; Blase, Blase & Du, 2009; De Vos, 2010; De Wet, 2010a; De Wet, 2010b; De Wet, 2011a; De Wet, 2011b). Research also reports that bullied teachers cry at work and at their residence (Blase et al., 2008:277), experience extensive sadness and may blame themselves for their experiences (De Wet, 2010a:1456).

3.5.2.3 Dysfunctional coping behaviours

Bullied teachers may engage in self-destructive, dysfunctional behaviours to cope with the physical and psychological effects of workplace bullying. Victims may also misuse substances (Blase & Blase, 2006:125; Namie & Namie, 2009a:135; Sloan et al., 2010:96) and may have a tendency toward workaholism (Namie & Namie, 2009a:135). Victims who experience stress can alter their habits and start smoking, drinking and eating more than they normally would (Peyton, 2003:61). Dysfunctional coping behaviours are likely attempts to deal with and escape the emotional harm that has been inflicted by the bully. Dysfunctional coping behaviours may also be indicative of psychological disorders. De Wet (2010b:196) for example reported that her participants, amongst other health symptoms, also suffer from eating disorders. The studies done by the aforementioned researcher however only consist of small participant groups and therefore more research has to be conducted to investigate disorders that may develop as a result of victims' dysfunctional coping behaviours.

3.5.2.4 Psychological disorders

It is likely that cognitions, emotions and dysfunctional coping behaviours do not occur in solitude, but are part of a cluster of symptoms that may occur as a mood or anxiety disorder. The different psychological disorders that may be experienced by victims of workplace bullying will be briefly discussed. *Vide infra*:

3.5.2.4.1 Major depressive episode

Teachers may be diagnosed with a major depressive episode after experiencing workplace bullying for the first time. The link between workplace bullying and depression is corroborated by research studies (Quine, 1999:229; Kivimäki et al., 2003). It must be kept in mind that bullied teachers' depression may also be *reactive*, which according to the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, means that the psychological response occurs as a result of a particular life event (Reber & Reber, 2001:190) and may not *necessarily* be a long-term problem that is experienced by him/ her. The experience of workplace bullying has also

been linked to suicidal ideation (Soares, 2012:76) and suicide (Leymann, 1996:176). Soares (2012:77) found that the source of bullying plays a significant role in the occurrence of suicidal ideation: according to him, bullying by a colleague has less impact than bullying that is carried out by a higher superior or a number of persons.

Based on the diagnostic criteria stipulated by the DSM-IV-TR, a bullied teacher with major depressive episode may present with the following symptoms (*adapted from* APA, 2000:356):

- The teacher may present with five or more of the following symptoms during the same two-week time-frame, one of which is at least having a *depressed mood* or *loss of interest or pleasure*, a change in preceding functioning (i.e. a depressed mood, such as sadness/ emptiness or tearfulness; a noticeably reduced interest or pleasure in almost all/ all activities, which may include activities at school and/ or at home; a considerable change in body weight or a decrease or increase in desire for food; sleeping problems, such as sleeplessness or excessive sleeping; a disturbance of psychomotor activities; fatigue or loss of energy; a sense of worthlessness or extreme inappropriate guilt; reduced concentration or indecision; recurring thoughts of death, recurring suicidal ideation without a precise plan, or an attempted suicide, or a precise plan to commit suicide). The teacher will experience most symptoms on a daily basis. Symptoms result in clinically significant distress in the teacher's social life, profession, or other major areas of one's functioning;
- Other diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV-TR specify that symptoms of major depressive episode must however not be ascribed to the physiological effects of substance abuse or medical conditions (e.g. hypothyroidism), it is not justified by bereavement, or does not meet the diagnostic criteria for Mixed Episode.

3.5.2.4.2 Anxiety disorders

This sub-section will discuss four anxiety disorders that may be associated with the experience of workplace bullying, namely *social phobia*, *PTSD* and *acute stress disorder*, and *panic attacks*.

3.5.2.4.2.1 Social phobia

According to the DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000:429), “**Social Phobia** is characterized by clinically significant anxiety provoked by exposure to certain types of social or performance situations, often leading to avoidance behavior.” Common social phobic behaviours include having a fear of being watched in the workplace, a fear of crowds, a fear of blushing in public or using public restrooms, a fear of writing or signing documents where others are present, the fear of taking exams, or even a fear of choking or spilling food (Bourne, 2005:11). In the event of a feared situation, someone with social phobia is likely to experience anxiety, increased sweating, heart palpitations, trembling, shakiness, light-headedness and perplexity (Lake, 2009:104). In a research study on aggression among tertiary employees, *social phobia* is reported as one of other health effects of workplace harassment (cf. Björkqvist et al., 1994:181). Workplace bullies’ unyielding public scrutiny and taunting may possibly cause targeted teachers a sense of humiliation, which may contribute to an extreme and abnormal fear to perform in the classroom and maintain relationships with learners and colleagues.

3.5.2.4.2.2 Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Bullying may be a traumatic life event (cf. par 3.4.2). PTSD has been associated with the experience of workplace bullying (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004). The DSM-IV-TR stipulates the following diagnostic criteria that may manifest in a bullied teacher with PTSD (*adapted from* APA, 2000:467-468):

- the teacher was subjected to, or observed a situation that involved real or threatened death or grave injury, or a threat to the physical integrity to him/ herself or that of someone else (which may be a learner or a colleague);
- the teacher’s reaction to the bullying involved extreme fear, helplessness or horror;
- the teacher has re-experiences of the incident in one or more of the following ways (i.e. frequent and invasive memories of the bullying incident, including images, thoughts or perceptions; frequent distressing dreams of the bully/ bullying; behaving and feeling as if the bullying is occurring again, including having illusions, hallucinations or dissociative flashbacks incidents, counting those that occur during awakening and intoxication; physiological reactions and/ or

intense psychological distress in the presence of internal or external signs that symbolise or represents an aspect of the traumatic bullying);

- the teacher evades stimuli that are associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness that was not present prior to the trauma, as signified by three or more of the following symptoms (i.e. attempts to evade thoughts, feelings, dialogues associated with the trauma; noticeably reduced interest or participation in significant activities, places or other people that may arouse memories of the trauma, which may include staff meetings, classrooms or the school; an inability to remember a significant aspect of the trauma; sense of detachment or estrangement from others, especially learners and colleagues; markedly lessened interest or partaking in social activities, for example school/ sport or any leisure activities; restricted emotions; a shortened expectation of the future);
- the teacher has persistent increased arousal that was not present prior to the trauma, as indicated by two or more symptoms (i.e. problems with falling or staying asleep; petulance or anger bursts; concentration problems; hypervigilance, exaggerated startle responses);
- the experience causes considerable distress in the teacher's social, professional life, or other major areas of his/ her functioning; and
- the teacher's re-experiences, avoidance behaviour and increased arousal occurs for more than four weeks.

Psychologists suppose that a dissimilar expression, *Complex PTSD* (C-PTSD), should rather be used to recognise trauma that is repetitive or lasting (Mitchell, 2010). In the case of C-PTSD, one has to be physically and psychologically under the control of another individual for an extended period of time (Mitchell, 2010), which is a characteristic of workplace bullying (cf. par 2.3.2.3). It is recognised that a victim of workplace bullying may present with many characteristics of PTSD, but workplace bullying does not meet the *stressor criterion* that is stipulated by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Scott & Stradling, 2001:103). Researchers deem that bullying should be regarded as a case of *captivity* (Mitchell, 2010). The trauma that is associated with the experience of workplace bullying is not related to physical confinement, but rather psychological/ emotional confinement. Mitchell (2010)

further explains that any event that may lead to PTSD, is of a short duration, while the trauma that is connected to workplace bullying cannot be deemed to be an isolated, interim event. A bullied teacher with C-PTSD, may present with the following symptoms (*adapted from Herman cited in Stefko, 2009*):

- the teacher may have limited impulses and portrayed behaviours, including facial expressions or voice tone in expressing affect (e.g. constant sadness, thoughts of suicide, hidden or volatile anger);
- the teacher may have different states of consciousness (i.e. bottling up or reliving incidences of work trauma or dissociation, disconnection from physical and psychological processes);
- the teacher may portray changes in self-perception (e.g. a sense of helplessness, shame, guilt and/ or being unlike other people);
- differences in social relationships (e.g. isolation, distrust, or looking for a “rescuer”). The teacher may perceive the bully as powerful or may be fixated with the bully-victim relationship, which may be accompanied by thoughts of vengeance;
- the teacher may experience symptoms of somatisation (e.g. stress manifests as tension headaches); and
- the teacher may have changes in their belief systems (or “systems of meaning”) (e.g. loss of faith, despair and/ or despondency).

In addition, Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002:107) also reported that victims of workplace bullying may experience symptoms similar to PTSD, but does not comply with the criteria stipulated in the DSM-IV-TR. Those participants, who did fulfil all the criteria for PTSD, reported feeling more negatively affected by other life events (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002:107). This denoted that the subjection to other distressing life events may add to victims’ susceptibility when confronted with workplace bullying (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002:107).

3.5.2.4.2.3 Acute stress disorder

Since many researchers report that victims of workplace bullying may present with symptoms of PTSD, it can be argued that they may also initially present with symptoms of acute stress disorder. Acute stress

disorder occurs during the first four weeks after the traumatic incident and accentuates the severe response that some persons may experience instantly after such event (Barlow & Durand, 2012:155). Teachers' symptoms of acute stress disorder may decrease with timely intervention. However, if symptoms are not adequately dealt with, victims may present with symptoms of PTSD.

3.5.2.4.2.4 Panic attacks

Literature also identifies *panic attacks* as one of the psychological/ emotional outcomes of workplace bullying (Blase & Blase, 2006:125). A panic attack may consist of a combination of physical and psychological responses to an environmental stimulus. According to the DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000:429), “A **Panic Attack** is a discrete period in which there is the sudden onset of intense apprehension, fearfulness, or terror, often associated with feelings of impending doom. During these attacks, symptoms such as shortness of breath, palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, choking or smothering sensations, and fear of “going crazy” or losing control are present.”

According to Lake (2009:100), an individual who does not have a diagnosable anxiety disorder may also have panic attacks that arise as segregated incidents. In the event of workplace bullying, panic attacks may be situational. The school environment in general and/ or the bullying colleague/ principal may be a stimulus for severe fear and anxiety in the teacher, which may consequently trigger panic attacks. Lake (2009:100) furthermore claims that individuals return to their normal functioning and change nothing in their lives after the event has gone by.

3.5.3 The effects of workplace bullying on social health

Traumatized individuals may have difficulty sharing their feelings, expressing their needs, controlling their tempers and adjusting their moods for some period of time (Naparstek, 2006:129). An individual, who may have been outgoing in the past, may seem to be irritable and withdrawn (Peyton, 2003:61). He/ she may further not want to socialise, may become defensive or antagonistic and hold others responsible for his/ her feelings (Peyton, 2003:61). Victims' families, colleagues and the organisation may be affected by their experiences.

3.5.3.1 The effects of workplace bullying on familial health

The physical and psychological health effects that are experienced by victims also reportedly affect family health. Duffy and Sperry (2007:401) are of opinion that victims' changes in communication patterns, changes in feelings, increased petulance and negativity, are without doubt going to place stress on the best relationships. Randall (2001:7-8) adds that the quality of victims' relationships is afflicted as they mislay their "sense of self", become deep in thought and ask questions such as "Why me? What's wrong with me?" (cf. par 3.6.3).

Ultimately, one spouse's experience of workplace bullying impinges on the marital relationship at every level (Duffy & Sperry, 2007:401). It is likely that communication, intimacy and sex, displaying of affection, occupation, parenting and domestic management are impinged on (Duffy & Sperry, 2007:401). Family members may not recognise the extent of distress and trauma that is experienced by the bullied teacher. They may be uninformed of how to cope with the physical and psychological changes that may occur in a victim. This may lead to estrangement, fragmentation and ultimately loss of familial support. Namie and Namie (2011:26) claim that divorce and separation are common in marriages where one spouse experiences workplace bullying.

Family support may also be a buffer against the bullied teacher's development of physical illnesses and psychological disorders. Einarsen (2000:387) claims that individuals with high social support, internal and external to the workplace, are likely less susceptible when confronted with aggression. According to him, social support may also lessen victims' physiological and emotional activation, thus curbing the health effects that may stem from long-term harassment (Einarsen, 2000:387-388). The lack of social support may however have an opposite effect. The nature of support provided by family and friends prior to an experienced trauma, can affect whether the victim decides to disclose his/ her experience or attempt to cope alone (Resick, 2001:134).

Workplace bullying is also, amongst other harmful effects, related to financial trouble (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2009:46). Bullied teachers may be under financial strain owing to additional expenses on physical

and psychological health care. They may further also experience financial strain when they decide to take legal action or leave the teaching profession as a result of victimisation and non-support.

3.5.3.2 The effects of workplace bullying on colleague-witnesses' health

Workplace bullying and its associated stress do not only affect victims, but also often influences the whole work group (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006:426). Lutgen-Sandvik (2006:426) claims that bullies' behaviour may be an example for others' behaviour. Research indicates that witnessing bullying behaviours may also trigger negative health experiences. Vartia (2001:67) has for example found that witnesses experience more general and psychological stress reactions than employees who are not bullied. Colleague-witnesses often avoid being involved in the bullying situation, mainly as a measure of self-protection. According to Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:54), colleague-witnesses do not report bullying, as they do not want to get involved in the process and fear revenge, which is similar to victims' reasons for not reporting bullying behaviour. Colleague-witnesses' role in the process may also be perceived as bullying. Victims sometimes perceive their silence as an involvement in the process and can hold them culpable for being part of the problem (Rayner et al., 2002:140). This sense of distrust may lead to the fragmentation of the work group since bullied teachers may decide to withdraw from professional relationships.

3.5.3.3 The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health

Vartia-Väänänen (2003:12) perceives bullying as a sign of organisational dysfunction. The health of the school may be directly affected by the occurrence of workplace bullying. This section will discuss the effects of workplace bullying on a professional level and the health of the organisation.

3.5.3.3.1 The effects of workplace bullying on a professional level

The experience of bullying may impact teachers on a professional level, which may ultimately have adverse consequences for the school organisation. A loss of self-confidence and damaged work performance are often recognised in victims and are also apparent in a decreased dedication to their work and the organisation (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:111). Principals' abuse reportedly affect or undermine teachers' work in the classroom (Blase & Blase, 2006:135; Blase et al., 2009:13). According to Blase *et al.* (2009:13-14), a third of their participant-group reported experiencing negative effects on their motivation, creativeness, novelty and the risks they take. Blase *et al.* (2009:14) further also report

specific emotional experiences that these teachers have pertaining to their work, which include a raised tension, paranoia, insecurity, fear/ dread, and self-doubt. Teachers may lose their sense of passion for the profession and their motivation to put energy into their work. Findings also reveal that teacher-learner relationships are affected and principal abuse causes a decline in teachers' care, patience/ tolerance and humorousness (Blase & Blase, 2006:135).

3.5.3.3.2 Absenteeism, presenteeism and leaving the profession

Employee absence may occur directly by employing an avoidance strategy or indirectly because of severe health effects (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107). De Vos (2010:80) reported that victimised teachers are eventually hospitalised after experiencing work trauma. Generally, employees who are diagnosed with psychological disorders, are hospitalised or get treatment on a regular basis and are not able to work (Bergh, 2009:381). However, if these employees' are working, their experiences can be seriously or utterly damaging to their work (Bergh, 2009:381).

Other employees may also still go to work despite having health problems (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:107; Namie & Namie, 2011:34). While long-term ill-health absenteeism put employees at risk to be dismissed, long-term presenteeism may on the other hand increase stress levels, which again may bring about absence due to sickness and possibly job-loss (Hogh et al., 2012:23). Bullied teachers may ultimately consider or decide to leave the profession. According to Peyton (2003:17), most employees who are bullied and harassed leave without saying anything. Blase *et al.* (2008:288) report that 76.7 per cent of bullied teachers indicated that they would leave their teaching position, and 49.4 per cent indicated that they wanted to leave the profession because of principals' mistreatment. Teachers may lose their confidence in bullying principals' ability to effectively manage a school organisation and may also doubt the organisation's ability to protect its employees from different forms of abuse.

3.6 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES TO EXPLAIN THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON HEALTH

Theoretical perspectives from the major schools in *Psychology* can be applied to explain the effects of workplace bullying on teachers' health. *Vide infra*:

3.6.1 Behavioural perspective

3.6.1.1 Classical conditioning

One can explain the effects of workplace bullying through learning theories in psychology. Pavlov was one of the pioneers of the learning theory and is well-known for his theory on *classical conditioning* (Corey, 2005:229). Pavlov introduced his theory through experimenting with dogs: when the food is presented a few times with another stimulus such as the ring of a bell, the dog learns that he can expect to be fed once he hears the sound of the bell (Corey, 2005:229). *Classical conditioning* was also used in previous research studies to explain high levels of distress and fear among trauma victims (Resick, 2001:65). According to Resick (2001:65), *classical conditioning* comprises the traumatic incident, known as the *unconditioned stimulus* (UCS) that induces excessive fear that is known as an *unconditioned response* (UCR). She further explains that the trauma becomes connected with cues or reminders, that is, previous neutral stimuli presented during the incident, which becomes *conditioned stimuli* (CS) (Resick, 2001:65).

Bullied teachers' health responses can also be demonstrated by applying the theory of *classical conditioning*. The experience of workplace bullying may trigger a certain psychological response (e.g. distress and work trauma) in the teacher, which is accompanied by a certain physiological response (e.g. symptoms of severe physical anxiety). Behaviours that is perceived as bullying are then associated with specific psychological state and physiological response. In future events, the alleged bullying colleague/ principal (or someone similar to him/ her), similar situations, gestures, words or behaviours, and the workplace may remind the teacher of initial bullying and may trigger similar physical and psychological reactions that were originally experienced, even though these gestures may not be intended to be bullying.

3.6.1.2 Learned helplessness

According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, *learned helplessness* was put forward by Seligman to typify the general supposition that helplessness is learned condition, which derives from the exposure to harmful and unpleasant situations in which there is no possibility where one can escape or evade it (Reber & Reber, 2001:317). A similar sense of helplessness may be perceived in victims of workplace

bullying. Teachers may have a lack of emotional and social recourses to manage incidence of workplace bullying and may perceive this stressor as uncontrollable. They may feel that the bully has most control in the work environment, grievances will not be dealt with, and as a result, they may yield to bullying behaviour and take on a passive/ submissive role.

3.6.2 Cognitive behaviour perspective

Cognitions may play a salient role in the nature of bullied teachers' health experiences. Two well-known theorists, Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, put forward theoretical perspectives that contributed to *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy* (Corey, 2005:269-270). This sub-section will describe their theories on cognitions and its effects on emotional and behavioural responses.

3.6.2.1 Aaron Beck's perspective

Aaron Beck's perspective recognised the irrational and illogical thinking of people with emotional disorders, which he labels as *automatic thoughts* (Beck, 1976:29). Beck (1976) identifies the following distortions in thought:

- *Personalisation* occur when an individual erroneously thinks or believes that general events have a personal connotation to him/ her (*deduced from examples in* Beck, 1976:91). Beck (1976:92) noticed this form of thinking in neurotic and depressed people. A neurotic individual, for example, overrates the extent to which events are connected to him/ her and becomes extremely immersed in the meaning that these events hold for him/ her (Beck, 1976:92). A depressed individual, on the other hand, over-interprets the number of times and extent of the negative emotions that he/ she brings forth in other people (Beck, 1976:92);
- *Polarised thinking* occurs when an individual tends to have fixed thoughts and thinks in terms of "always" or "never" (Beck, 1976:93);
- *Catastrophising* occurs when someone foresees severe unfavourable outcomes (this thinking is distinctive of an anxious individual) and expects the worst outcome of an event (Beck, 1976:93);
- *Selective abstraction* occurs when an individual makes conclusions about the isolated features of a situation and overlooks the meaning of the whole situation (Beck, 1976:94);

- *Arbitrary inferences* occurs when an individual makes inferences when there is no corroborating evidence to make these inferences, or the evidence is the opposite to the inferences made (Beck, 1976:94);
- *Overgeneralisation* occurs when the individual draws general conclusions founded on a particular event (Beck, 1976:94).

3.6.2.2 Albert Ellis' perspective

Albert Ellis' *A-B-C theory of personality* (Corey, 2005:274) can be applied to understand the role of cognition and its effects on psychological and social health in the event of workplace bullying. This theory is fundamental to *Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy/ REBT* theory and practice (Corey, 2005:274). According to this theory, one holds certain beliefs (B) regarding an activating event (A), which leads to certain behavioural and emotional outcomes (C) (Corey, 2005:274). The event (A) does not directly lead to behavioural and emotional outcomes (C), but it is rather one's beliefs about the event (A), that causes the behavioural and emotional outcomes (C) (Corey, 2005:274). Teachers may therefore hold certain beliefs (B) regarding experiences of workplace bullying (A) (cf. par 3.5.2.1), which may ultimately bring about certain emotional (cf. par 3.5.2.2) and behavioural health effects (C) (cf. par 3.5.2.3).

3.6.3 Existentialism and spirituality

The theory of *Existentialism* can be applied to understand teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and the deeper meaning attributed to it. In the event of daunting or taxing experiences, such as workplace bullying, these attributed meanings can be perceived as an endeavour to psychologically survive. The notion of existential survival is also depicted in Victor Frankl's (2008) book, *Man's search for meaning: The classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust*, which tells the story about war prisoners' deeper search of meaning in life as an attempt to endure their captivity. *Existentialism* focuses on humans' innermost experiences of existence, while *phenomenology* provides means to attend to these experiences (Louw & Edwards, 1998:18).

Spirituality also plays an important role in the experience of workplace bullying. Zohar and Marshall (2000) specifically refer to "spiritual intelligence". *Spiritual intelligence* does not necessarily relate to

religion (Zohar & Marshall, 2000:8), but victims may choose to seek relief in religion. This phenomenon is the “soul’s intelligence” through which people “heal” themselves and make themselves “whole” (Zohar & Marshall, 2000:9). The experience of workplace bullying may lead teachers’ to question the meaning of life, existence, and their specific experiences (cf. par 3.5.3.1). Spirituality is one characteristic of human existence that cannot be taken away. Some victims may attempt to ascribe meaning to their experiences and to find a reason to go on with life. If bullied teachers’ reasons for meaning-making and living is exhausted, several forms of psychopathology such as anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation/ suicide may ensue.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a literature review regarding the effects of workplace bullying on health. The experience of workplace bullying may trigger stress and work trauma in victims. This may have a severe effect on physical, psychological and social health. The *biopsychosocial model* was applied as a theoretical foundation to depict the interrelatedness and dynamics between these three health domains. It is argued that psychological health plays a salient role and mediates physical and social health responses. Victims’ perceptions of bullying behaviours and accompanying emotional responses may trigger the certain physical health effects. Victims may also engage in dysfunctional coping behaviours.

When specific cognitions, emotions, and behaviours are grouped in certain case studies, psychological disorders may surface. Mood disorders (e.g. major depressive episode) and anxiety disorders (e.g. social phobia, PTSD, acute stress disorder, panic attacks) may be linked to the experience of workplace bullying, and were therefore discussed. The effects of victims’ experiences on their families, colleagues, and the organisation, were also discussed. Finally, theoretical perspectives (e.g. *classical conditioning, learned helplessness, cognitive distortions, A-B-C theory of personality, existentialism and spirituality*) from the major schools of *Psychology* were discussed to explain victims’ health responses.

Chapter 4 will discuss my paradigm and approach to the research, the research design and methods, method of data analysis and ethical considerations that will apply in the first phase of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The first objective of this research study is to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health. This chapter will firstly briefly discuss my paradigmatic perspective and approach to research. The research design and methods that will be applied to gather data, as well as the method and steps of data analysis, will then be discussed. This chapter will be concluded with the ethical considerations that apply to the first phase of this study.

4.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

A paradigm is perceived as a general orientation that the researcher has of the world, the nature of the research that he/ she holds (Creswell, 2009:6). I am skilled and trained in Psychology, and currently hold a registration as a registered counsellor with the *Health Professions Council of South Africa* (HPCSA). My beliefs in research are firstly supported by Social Constructivism. According to this worldview, people search for insight of the world they work and live in and when using this paradigm, the aim of the research is to rely on research participants' perceptions of the phenomenon that is studied (Creswell, 2009:8).

Bullied teachers' experiences and perceptions of those experiences are reality to them, which is also supported by Interpretivism. Fouché and Schurink (2011:309-310) explain that this approach assumes that reality should only be construed through the meaning that participants assign to their "life world". Two key principles of this approach entail "understanding in context" and that the interpretivist researcher becomes the "primary 'instrument'" through which the data is gathered and analysed (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006:274). When applied to this study, the objective of Interpretivism is to provide a perspective on workplace bullying in the teaching profession, to analyse participants' experiences and give insight regarding how he/ she make sense of this phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis,

2007b:60). The aim will therefore be to represent the phenomenon of workplace bullying, as it is perceived through the eyes of each bullied/ victimised teacher, and ultimately the shared and/ or opposed perceptions that are mirrored by the whole participant group.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN, SAMPLING AND RESEARCH METHODS

4.3.1 Qualitative, phenomenological research design

A *qualitative research design* will be applied in the first phase of this study. This type of research design allows me to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on health. Qualitative research specifically provides an understanding of the nature of bullying in this context, the interrelation between physical, psychological and social health in the event of workplace bullying, and also allows me to creatively identify possible intervention strategies and limitations that may obstruct effective intervention. Through qualitative research, bullied teachers' can be asked to provide more detail of their accounts and contact with them may occur over a prolonged period of time.

Phenomenological research entails an investigation during which a researcher identifies the nature of human experiences of a phenomenon, as it is portrayed by participants (Creswell, 2009:13). This approach tries to comprehend people's perceptions, perspectives and insight of specific circumstances (Delpont, Fouché & Schurink, 2011:305). *Phenomenology* will be applied in this study to mirror teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health.

4.3.2 Participant selection

Workplace bullying is a very sensitive experience and sampling participants may be demanding. At the outset of this research study two challenges concerning the sampling of participants were identified:

- Firstly, the expression *workplace bullying* may be relatively new to the South African population and the extent to which this phenomenon is recognised by employees, particularly in the teaching profession, is indefinite.
- Secondly, teachers who are victims of workplace bullying may generally not be keen to identify themselves for various reasons, including being repeatedly victimised.

An informative and psychologically safe environment therefore had to be created to effectively sample teachers who have been victims of workplace bullying. The mass media was identified as a resource that can address these challenges.

4.3.2.1 Using the mass media to sample participants

It is not unusual for researchers to use various forms of mass media (e.g. community notice boards, press, specialist and popular magazines, newsletters) to sample participants (Kelly, 2006:291). For the purposes of this study, articles were placed *online* and in the printed media. The first article appeared in *The Teacher* and was available on the *Mail & Guardian online* (Pretorius, 2011). This article further attracted the interest of a freelance journalist who also writes for the *Rooi Rose* (Botes, 2011) – a popular magazine that is primarily focused on women. The *Rooi Rose* article reported the experiences of teachers who have been victims of workplace bullying. As Kelly (2006:291) suggests, the use of the mass media elicited a range of responses, which allowed me to select only some participants that met the criteria for selection. Criteria for selection will be discussed in section 4.3.3.

Three advantages of using *The Teacher* and *Rooi Rose* to sample participants were noted:

- Both publications are available nationally. This made it possible to sample a diverse participant group from every province in South Africa. It is also recognised that there will always be limitations, as any sampled participant group will seldom be *representative* of the *whole* population that experiences workplace bullying;
- Teachers distributed both articles among each other, including in the workplace. This led to the sampling of teachers who did not have access to these articles;
- In both publications, the articles were available for at least a month. This provided bullied teachers with a reasonable time-frame to respond to this research approach.

4.3.2.2 Sampling techniques

Two sampling techniques, suggested by Nieuwenhuis (2007a:79-80), were applied to sample bullied teachers:

4.3.2.2.1 Stratified purposive sampling

I applied *stratified purposive sampling* where participants were chosen consistent with the pre-selected criteria that were pertinent to the particular research question(s) (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:79). The participant group therefore consists of teachers who have experienced workplace bullying and can provide insight regarding the nature of this phenomenon and its effects on health.

4.3.2.2.2 Snowball sampling

I also applied *snowball sampling*, where I requested teachers, with whom I already made contact, to recommend colleagues who have had a similar experience of workplace bullying and could potentially partake and add to this research study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:80). This technique made it possible to identify and reach bullied teachers who would otherwise not be available by means of other sampling approaches (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:80). The article that was published in the *Rooi Rose* specifically encouraged bullied teachers to reply with a short text message: “‘Stop bullying teachers’”, their names/ pseudonyms and contact details. I applied the *snowball sampling* technique with the following text message to those who responded to the article:

‘Thank you for your interest in the ‘Stop bullying teachers’ research project. I will contact you shortly regarding your experience. Please encourage one more person, who may have also been affected by workplace bullying, to read the article in the *Rooi Rose*. Note that all participants will remain anonymous or may use aliases if they wish to. Kind regards, Jackie de Vos.’

4.3.3 Response to the research and criteria for selection

Teachers voluntarily contacted me if they believed that they were experiencing workplace bullying and wanted to partake in this research study. A hundred-and-nine individuals contacted me within the specific time-frame during which the empirical research was conducted. Most respondents were generally in favour of having the option to contact me anonymously via telephone or email.

Many teachers withdrew their participation. Several teachers felt that their experiences were unique and that they could easily be identified, which would put them at risk for repeated victimisation/ bullying, including losing their jobs. Some withdrew from the study for being involved in a formal grievance or

disciplinary process at that time and agreeing that they would not discuss their experiences with other parties. Some respondents also portrayed a sense of suspicion and carefully made sure that this research study was legitimate and not a plot or fabrication by bullying colleagues and/ or principals to 'catch them red-handed' for sharing their experiences of workplace bullying. Others only responded to show their support for the research that was being done.

Responses were also received from alleged bullying principals/ other education managers that clearly illustrated their manipulative nature and need for power and control. At the outset they attempted to defend their behaviours, demanded to know whether this study is permitted and demanded/ hinted names of teachers who have already responded to the research and who would be partaking in the study. They were reminded of all participants' right to voluntarily participate in this study (cf. par 4.6.3) and their right to anonymity (cf. par 4.6.4).

Another respondent claimed that he was actually the victim, as he was being fallaciously accused of workplace bullying. This respondent was invited to also share his/ her experiences if he/ she wished to, as it could provide a new perspective and add value to the study. He/ she however declined to participate in the study.

Since many individuals responded to the research study, several parameters further had to be set to ensure that the participant group's experiences characterised the phenomenon of *workplace bullying*. The participants were selected according to the following criteria:

- Teachers' experiences had to fit the definitions (cf. par 1.7) and characteristics (cf. par 2.3.2) of workplace bullying;
- Participants had to be in the *teaching profession*, preferably primary and secondary schools. A few responses were also received from people in other professions, including an estate agent, architect, employees in cleaning services, and administrative personnel working in different parts of the education sector (e.g. working for the DoE and higher education institutions);
- Stress, trauma, and resulting physical, psychological and social health problems, had to be

associated with the experience of workplace bullying;

- Teachers were included in this research study if they received information regarding the nature of this study, were aware that their participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that data was collected outside of the work context and after school hours to protect them from being targeted for participating in the study (cf. Appendices A & B);
- No limit was placed on the age, race, religion or gender of teachers who wanted to participate in this study;
- Lastly, the participant group included teachers from all provinces in South Africa, who are teaching in urban or rural schools.

Ultimately, twenty-seven teachers were selected to participate in this study. More teachers still contacted me months after the empirical research was finalised.

4.3.4 Research methods

This section will provide a detailed discussion on the specific research methods that are applied in this study. Participants were given an option to either share their experience via a *semi-structured interview* and/ or *personal documents* (i.e. sharing experiences through emails, grievance letters, and journal entries) – these are methods that are also suggested in *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (cf. Smith & Osborn, 2008:57). Field notes were also taken during the research process.

4.3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative data was firstly gathered through semi-structured interviews. Twelve participants preferred to be interviewed. Before each interview, participants received a consent letter in Afrikaans and in English via email. The consent letter included the interview questions that gave participants time to get ready for the interview (Greeff, 2011:356) – this gave participants an opportunity to reflect on the nature of their experiences and the effects it has had on health. Teachers remained anonymous and most participated using a pseudonym.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face or telephonically, depending on the participant's preference. Most participants preferred that their interviews were conducted telephonically to protect their identities. Conducting the interviews telephonically had two advantages:

- Firstly, it enabled me to reach participants quickly despite their location, without the necessity of travelling and associated costs. Telephonic interviews are considered to be a valuable method of data gathering, since face-to-face interviews are inclined to be a more costly method of collecting data (Greeff, 2011:355); and
- Secondly, most teachers were extremely sensitive and preferred telephonic interviews to protect their identities because they feared that they may be identified and further victimised or lose their jobs for sharing sensitive information outside of the work context. According to Greeff (2011:355), there is no evidence that suggests that topics of a sensitive nature cannot be examined by means of telephonic interviews, even though participants' responses may be brief and less information is disclosed over the telephone.

4.3.4.1.1 Interview schedule

Semi-structured interviews covered the following questions:

- a) Tell me more about your experience of being bullied. What happened?
 - Was your experience associated with any physical ailments? Were you diagnosed with any physical ailments that occurred after your experiences?
 - Was your experience associated with any psychological ailments? Were you diagnosed with any psychological ailments that occurred after your experience?
 - Was your social relationships affected by your experience, and if so, how?
 - Has your experience had an effect on your family life in any way, and if so, how?
 - Has your experience had an effect on your work in any way, and if so, how?
- b) Would you describe this experience as traumatic? If so, what made it traumatic? If your experience was indeed traumatic, and you could place it on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not traumatic and 10 is extremely traumatic, where would you rate your experience?

c) What type of support do you need to address this experience?

Each semi-structured interview was audio-recorded, providing the teacher had given consent (cf. par 4.6.2). The length of semi-structured interviews approximately ranged between 25 and 90 minutes. I conversed and responded to each participant uniquely and in a flexible manner, as they differed in background, culture and manner in which they articulated themselves. The interviews were transcribed *verbatim*.

4.3.4.2 Personal documents

Participants were also allowed to share their experiences by means of personal documents. This method focuses on written communication that illuminates the experience that is being investigated (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:82). Eighteen participants shared their experiences by means of personal documents. Three of these participants were also among those teachers who were interviewed. Personal documents included email letters, grievance letters, journal entries and/ or other creative writings, such as poems. Participants, who preferred this method, were requested to share their experiences by also addressing all the questions that may have been asked during semi-structured interviews.

4.3.4.3 Field notes

Semi-structured interviews and personal documents were also accompanied by fieldnotes. Two types of field noted were used in this study (cf. Kelly, 2006:315):

- The first type of field note involves as completely as possible unfolding what people have said and done (Kelly, 2006:315). During semi-structured interviews, field notes and interpretations were made regarding the affective state of individual participants (i.e. underlying emotional themes, such as expressions of sadness and anger). The response that was received from alleged bullies was also noted.
- The second type of field note involves documenting ideas regarding the phenomenon being studied for a reflections on theoretical, methodological and ethical issues, and documenting uncertainties that would have to be explicated (Kelly, 2006:315). Field notes were especially made regarding the role the mass media played in the nature of the participant group that was

sampled and specific ethical issues that emerged, such as the right to voluntary participation and protection from harm. Field notes were especially made to explain the nature of workplace bullying in the teaching profession and specific factors that may possibly obstruct effective intervention initiatives. I used these field notes to identify intervention initiatives that may be the most effective practices to address the issue of workplace bullying and its effects on health in the South African teaching profession.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Methods of *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (cf. Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) were applied to analyse and present the data. Smith *et al.* (2009:1) define *IPA* as follows: “IPA is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences.” According to Smith and Osborn (2008:54), IPA is theoretically dedicated to the individual as “a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being” and supposes that there is a link between what he/ she is saying, thinking and his/ her emotional condition. IPA derives from three key philosophies (cf. Smith *et al.*, 2009:11):

- *Phenomenology*: Phenomenologists share an interest in contemplating what it is *like* to be human in a variety of aspects, but particularly things that are important to us and what make up our “lived world” (Smith *et al.*, 2009:11);
- *Hermeneutics*: This theory is concerned with *interpretation* (Smith *et al.*, 2009:21);
- *Ideography*: This theory is dedicated to understand individuals’ perspectives of a specific phenomenon in a specific context (Smith *et al.*, 2009:29).

IPA in this study will therefore be applied to specifically understand (i.e. *phenomenology*) and interpret (i.e. *hermeneutics*) each teacher’s lived experience of workplace bullying and its effects on physical, psychological and social health (i.e. *ideography*). Individual cases will finally be merged and the understanding and interpretations that mirror the experience of the whole participant group will be presented.

4.4.2 Analysing data from a larger participant-group

During the sampling process, the response to the research was overwhelming. Twenty-seven participants' experiences were ultimately illustrative/ representative of workplace bullying. The size of the sample used in studies that are rooted in phenomenology, is debatable. Smith *et al.* (2009:3) and Smith and Osborn (2008:56) postulate that phenomenological-based research and IPA requires a small participant group; which is the general suggestion in most qualitative research studies. According to Smith *et al.* (2009:3), IPA has a small number of participants and the objective is to disclose something of the experience of each individual participant. Working with larger participant groups in IPA is however not rejected. When working with a larger participant group, it is advised that one rather focuses on key themes that emanate from the whole group, which must be illustrated with specific examples that derived from individual participants (Smith *et al.*, 2009:106). The latter will apply to this study.

4.4.3 Applying Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to analyse and interpret participants' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health

IPA is a very flexible method of data analysis. One may choose methods/ applications that work for the specific study that is being done (Smith *et al.*, 2009:99). The data analysis in the first phase of this study was conducted according to steps that are stipulated by Smith *et al.* (2009) and Smith and Osborn (2008). An integrated discussion will be provided regarding the specific steps and methods that were applied to analyse the data.

4.4.3.1 Reading transcripts various times

As Smith *et al.* (2009:82) and Smith and Osborn (2008:67) propose, I firstly engaged with the data, read the transcripts of semi-structured interviews and personal documents various times. I also listened to the audio-recordings of the semi-structured interviews when I first read the transcripts (Smith *et al.*, 2009:82). Envisioning the participant's voice during the succeeding reading of the transcripts, aids a more comprehensive analysis (Smith *et al.*, 2009:82). I listened for and noted underlying psychological/ emotional themes that were common/ shared among participants and reflected the experience of the work group.

4.4.3.2 Commenting on transcripts

A researcher comments on the transcripts, which may be efforts to summarise or paraphrase parts of the transcripts, to make associations or links that emerge, or to make introductory interpretations (Smith & Osborn, 2008:67). Two types of *exploratory comments* applied to this study (cf. Smith et al., 2009:84-88). *Vide infra*:

4.4.3.2.1 Descriptive comments

Specific key words, phrases and explanations given by participants regarding their experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health, were documented (Smith et al., 2009:84). Smith *et al.* (2009:84) claim that the insight of things that are important to the participant (i.e. main objects, incidents, and experiences in his/ her life world) are emphasised by descriptions, suppositions, sound bites, acronyms, distinctive figure of speech, and emotional reactions for the participant *or* the person analysing. One contemplates participants' experiences in terms of their relation to the significant things that form their world (Smith et al., 2009:84-85). One is likely to develop more affluent reports about the significance of objects, while the analysis develops (Smith et al., 2009:85).

4.4.3.2.2 Linguistic comments

The manner in which participants used language to share their experiences was noted. Smith *et al.* (2009:88) suggest that one attends to participants' use of language (e.g. pronouns, pauses, functional features of language, hilarity, repetition, voice tone, whether they are expressive or hesitant, and the use of metaphors). *Hesitation* and *voice tone* was often noticeably mediated by anxiety, sadness, and also by anger and frustration. *Repetition* often occurred when the participant was asking rhetorical questions with the aim of finding the meaning of his/ her experience (cf. par 3.6.3). Repetition was a function of the preoccupation that some participants had with their experiences.

Figure of speech was also noted. Participant 19 referred to the bully as "Die Poppemeester"/ [*The Puppet Master*] (possibly highlighting the bullies' controlling and manipulative nature) and also referred to him/ herself as a "zombie" (possibly highlighting emotional exhaustion and/ or sense of loss of meaning in life). Furthermore, Participant 23 expressed the following: "Ek het gevoel soos Pavlov se

hond ...” [*I felt like Pavlov’s dog*] (possibly highlighting the control-dependency relationship between him/her and the bully).

4.4.3.3 Identifying emergent themes

Finally, salient phrases that surfaced from the transcripts and accompanying comments, were identified. The *emergent themes* were listed and relations between them were identified (Smith & Osborn, 2008:70). The following specific strategies applied to this study to recognise patterns and connections between themes (Smith et al., 2009:96-99):

4.4.3.3.1 Abstraction

Patterns among emergent themes may be identified and labelled with “super-ordinate” themes (Smith et al., 2009:96), which will be referred to as *main themes* in this study. Emergent themes were grouped to reflect the nature of workplace bullying behaviours that are experienced by participants, its effects on individual health (i.e. physical and psychological health), as well as the effects on the health of social and professional relationships, and the school organisation (i.e. social health).

4.4.3.3.2 Numeration

Numeration is the number of times that emergent themes occur in the transcripts (Smith et al., 2009:98). Smith *et al.* (2009:98) suggest that this strategy can be one manner in which the relevant significance of some emergent themes is indicated. *Numeration* must be considered as a pattern within emergent themes, although this method may initially seem uncommonly quantitative (Smith et al., 2009:98). In this study, a theme is identified when a particular idea or experience was highlighted by at least two participants in the group. Finally, the number of times that each emergent theme occurred in the data will be tabulated.

4.4.3.4 Applying the similar approach to other cases and across all cases

A similar process of analysis, as discussed above, was applied to each participant’s case (Smith & Osborn, 2008:73; Smith et al., 2009:100). As Smith *et al.* (2009:100) suggest, I allowed new themes to emerge in each participant’s case. I finally identified patterns across all participants’ cases (Smith et al., 2009:101) to determine teachers’ shared experiences. Findings were grouped, tabulated and themed (cf. Chapter 5).

4.4.3.5 Illustrating findings that emerge from IPA

The set of themes that results from IPA study, are often arranged/ categorised in some form, for example a model (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005:23; Smith et al., 2009:107). Therefore, a model consisting of emergent themes and their interplay, which illustrate the nature and effects of workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession, will be provided (Figure 6.2-2).

4.4.4 Supporting qualitative findings with a literature control

A literature review was continuously conducted during the course of this study. The reasons were to stay updated with the national and international research of workplace bullying and to develop new insights of this phenomenon. Chapter 1 provided a literature introduction of the study, while Chapters 2 and 3 respectively provided a literature review that discusses the nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health. Articles from scientific journals, attained from search engines, such as *GOOGLE*, *GOOGLE SCHOLAR* and *EBSCO host*, were mostly used to conduct the literature review. Topic-specific academic books, websites, expert opinion(s) and newspaper articles were also consulted to add to the literature review and overall understanding of the phenomenon.

4.5 RIGOUR IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative researchers generally view the concepts *internal validity* and *external validity*, *reliability* and *objectivity* as unsuitable to ascertain the “truth value” of a qualitative study (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419). Lincoln and Guba (*cited in* Schurink et al., 2011:419) however recommend four alternative criteria that can be applied to assess the quality of a research project, namely *credibility/ authenticity*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *conformability*, which will be discussed. *Vide infra*:

4.5.1 Credibility / authenticity

Lincoln and Guba (*cited in* Schurink et al., 2011:419) consider *credibility* to be the most important criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research. Five strategies were applied to achieve credibility in this research study (cf. Lincoln & Guba *cited in* Schurink et al., 2011:420; Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). *Vide infra*:

- *Prolonged engagement* means that the researcher spends a considerable amount of time with the research participants to make certain that he/ she has more than a “snapshot view” of the

phenomenon that is being studied (Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). Follow-up discussions (via email or telephone) with several participants occurred during the course of this research study. Long-term engagement with participants assisted me to identify intervention initiatives that may be the most effective practices to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in this context.

- *Triangulation* is also proposed to achieve credibility (Lincoln & Guba cited in Schurink et al., 2011:420; Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). Triangulation can be numerous sources, many occasions, or a variety of methods to build a depiction of what is being investigated (Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). Triangulation was achieved by gathering data through different research methods, and partly through different responses that were received from different stakeholders during the sampling process.
- *Member checks* refer to the process during which the researcher validates the emerging findings with research participants, which enables them to give detail on, correct, expound, or dispute these findings (Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). I often conversed about some of the findings with the participants with whom I had follow-up discussions and also gathered insights concerning intervention initiatives that may be required and/ or effective to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession.
- A *peer debriefer* is seen as an “intellectual watchdog” for the researcher as he/ she adapts decisions about the design, develops potential analytic categories and constructs an explanation for the studied phenomenon (Rossman & Rallis, 2012:65). The promoter(s) of this research study supervised the research process, the methods that were applied to gather data, the codes and themes that were identified from the data, as well as the interpretation of the phenomenon.
- Rossman and Rallis (2012:65) also refers to “Using the Community of Practice”, which entails that credibility can also be achieved by engaging in discussions with colleagues to share provisional hypotheses, as well as unplanned and emerging ideas. I engaged in discussions and shared ideas with peers and experts who also investigate workplace bullying in the teaching profession.

4.5.2 Transferability

With *transferability* the question is posed whether the research findings can be transferred from a particular situation/ case to another (Schurink et al., 2011:420). *Transferability* in this study was achieved by corroborating findings with other research studies that reported similar findings in their investigation of workplace bullying in diverse professions. Furthermore, it is believed that the effects of workplace bullying on physical and psychological health, may be similar in different situations (cf. par 5.5).

4.5.3 Dependability

With *dependability* the question is posed “whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited” (Schurink et al., 2011:420). *Dependability* is a substitute for *reliability* and means that the researcher explains the varying conditions in the investigated phenomenon and the changes that occurs in the design (Schurink et al., 2011:420). Schurink *et al.* (2011:420) claim that these changes are produced by a progressive refined insight of the setting. Regular, logical documenting and field notes during the research process assisted me to gain more in-depth understanding of the nature of workplace bullying in the teaching profession and to identify limitations and a particular manner in which research and intervention on workplace bullying can be approached in this context (cf. par 6.3).

4.5.4 Conformability

Lastly, with *conformability* the researcher needs to pose the question whether the findings can be corroborated by another study (Lincoln & Guba *cited in* Schurink et al., 2011:421). Conformability in this study was achieved by supporting findings with a literature review that was regularly updated. It is theoretically assumed that employees in other work contexts will also experience physical, psychological and social health problems when faced with long-term and escalating workplace bullying.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues needed to be considered before the research was conducted. Form 223 of the *Health Professions Council of South Africa* (HPCSA) (n.d.) stipulates ethical rules of conduct for research in the field of psychology – some of which also apply in this study, including receiving approval from the applicable institution prior to conducting research (Section 87), providing informed consent to research participants (Section 89), and informing them that they will be recorded (Section 91) (Health Professions

Council of South Africa, n.d.). Other ethical considerations that apply in this study include *voluntary participation* and the *right to anonymity*. These ethical considerations, and how it applied in this study, will be briefly discussed.

4.6.1 Ethical clearance

Information regarding the nature and practices of this research project was presented to and approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education Sciences, North-West University, before the research was conducted (Section 87, Health Professions Council of South Africa, n.d.).

4.6.2 Informed consent

Each participant received a consent (Section 89, Health Professions Council of South Africa, n.d.) form via email in his/ her language of choice (Afrikaans and/ or English) and was verbally notified regarding the content of the consent form before participating in this study (Appendices A & B). Most participants were Afrikaans speaking. There was no need to make provision for another official language. Teachers were specifically informed regarding the nature and aim of this study. The interview questions were included in the consent form to inform participants on the questions that would be asked in this research study, before they gave their consent (Smith et al., 2009:53). Participants were allowed to ask me any questions pertaining to the research study, which were answered as thoroughly as possible. They were also notified that the semi-structured interviews would be audio-recorded (Section 91, Health Professions Council of South Africa, n.d.), providing they gave consent. It was explained that audio-recordings are used for research purposes, to capture and compare participants' experiences, and to eventually sketch the nature and effects of workplace bullying in the teaching profession as it is portrayed by the specific participant group. Participation was voluntary and teachers were allowed to withdraw from this research study, without stating reasons.

4.6.3 Voluntary participation

It was expected that principals, who are accused of workplace bullying, may act as gatekeepers by intimidating and threatening teachers who wanted to report their experiences in this research study. The articles that were published *online* and in the printed media during the sampling process (cf. par 4.3.2.1) provided my contact details, which enabled teachers to voluntarily make contact with me (via telephone or email) if they wished to without receiving permission from the principal. This is also consistent with

Section 16 in the *Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (South Africa, 1996), which stipulates citizens' right to:

- “Freedom of expression” (Section 16(1)), inclusive of
- the “freedom of the press and other media” (Section 16(a)), and
- the “freedom to receive or impart information or ideas” (Section 16(b)).

4.6.4 Right to anonymity

It was kept in mind that each teacher's experience of workplace bullying is a very sensitive issue and may have numerous negative repercussions for him/ her (e.g. repeated victimisation, job loss) if not handled anonymously. Participants, who shared their experiences through semi-structured interviews, had to give consent for the conversation to be audio-recorded (cf. par 4.6.2). They were allowed to use pseudonyms and were ensured that alleged bullies' names would also be omitted in the research report.

4.6.5 Right not to be harmed

As a mental health professional, I had the obligation to ensure that participants were not *further* physically or emotionally harmed. Unfortunately, *stress* and *work trauma* implies that these teachers' physical and psychological health has, to a certain degree, already been affected by their experiences. It was thus necessary that I created an environment in which participants felt physically and emotionally safe. Data was therefore gathered after school hours and outside of the work context to protect participants' anonymity and to protect them from being intimidated/ victimised by bullies, which may lead to further harm.

Participants were requested to identify a preferred time during which I was allowed to contact them telephonically and/ or via email. Most contact with participants was mostly in the afternoon when they were home. Most participants preferred telephonic interviews, as this also protected their identity. Participants were allowed to decline or withdraw from the study if they felt that the research topic and questions were psychologically and emotionally overwhelming (cf. par 4.6.2). Most participants however perceived semi-structured interviews and personal documents (particularly journal entries/ personal reflections) as healing. This may be ascribed to their sense of having some form of social/ professional

support. Moreover, severely stressed and traumatised participants were referred to suitable professionals for further assistance to minimise harm that may have resulted from their experiences, when necessary.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter firstly discussed my paradigm and approach to the research. This was followed by a discussion regarding the research design and specific qualitative methods that were used to collect data. Methods of IPA, which were applied in this study, were outlined. The steps to ensure the quality of qualitative research were also discussed. This chapter was concluded with a discussion regarding the ethical considerations that applied to the first phase of this study.

The qualitative findings, literature control and a discussion will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH: FINDINGS, LITERATURE CONTROL AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the findings that emanated from participants' reports regarding their experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on physical, psychological and social health. Findings will be supported by a literature control and accompanied by interpretations, a brief discussion and *verbatim* excerpts.

5.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

- Themes and the frequencies in which it occur will be tabulated. Each theme will be illustrated by two significant excerpts taken from the transcripts and indicated with a 'P', for 'Participant'.
- Several participants preferred to communicate in Afrikaans, as they can articulate themselves better in their first language. Afrikaans excerpts will be translated to English and presented in italic brackets. Remaining excerpts are listed in Appendix C.
- Themes will be cross-referenced with the literature review and often also cross-referenced with other themes to indicate the dynamic relationships that exist between themes. Themes will be interpreted and briefly discussed.

5.3 GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

After the criteria for inclusion to this study was applied (par 4.3.3), specific characteristics of the participant-group (n=27) were noted:

5.3.1 Geographical area

The participant group consisted of teachers from every province in South Africa. Gauteng and the North-West province produced slightly more participants than other provinces. Most participants further mostly emanated from urban, primary schools.

5.3.2 Age and experience

Most participants were middle-aged. Although age was not reported as a contributing personal characteristic to bullying, participants' teaching experience and level of competence certainly played a role. It was notable that some teachers' skills/ abilities often evoked envy in colleagues and principals (par 2.6.2.2.3).

5.3.3 Race

The participant group consisted of teachers of all races and backgrounds. Race (cf. par 2.6.1.2.3) was identified by only three teachers as a personal characteristic that may have contributed to their vulnerability to experience workplace bullying. The group mostly consisted of *white* teachers.

5.3.4 Gender

Most participants were female (n=24). Although participants report being bullied by both genders, most did report being bullied by males. Several teachers claimed that being female (cf. par 2.6.1.2.2) increased their risk to be bullied. It is however recognised that the articles placed in the mass media, may have contributed to the nature of the participant group that were sampled (e.g. the *Rooi Rose* is an Afrikaans magazine that is focused on female readers).

5.4 REPORTED FINDINGS

This section will discuss the findings that emanated from semi-structured interviews and personal documents. It is structured in a way that illustrates the dynamic process of workplace bullying: firstly, the specific bullying behaviours that were reported by participants will be discussed, followed by a report on the effects of bullying physical, psychological and social health, and lastly the personal and organisational characteristics that may facilitate and sustain workplace bullying.

5.4.1 Main theme 1: The nature of bullying behaviours experienced by teachers

Workplace bullying is mostly initiated and perpetrated by principals, who are often supported by colleagues. Reported bullying behaviours in the teaching profession are both *person* and *work-related*, which is also corroborated by the literature (cf. par 2.4.1). Although certain behaviours were a violation of human and labour rights, only a few teachers decided to take formal action (e.g. consulting a lawyer). Most teachers did not find a solution for their experiences. This may be ascribed to principals' power in

education labour unions and/ or being befriended with important role-players in the DoE (cf. pars 2.3.2.5 & 5.4.7.3). It appears that grievances, filed against bullied principals, are not objectively handled. It was also noted that the process of workplace bullying in the teaching profession is in line with Leymann's (1990; 1996) view (cf. par 2.5.2): most cases of workplace bullying seem to start with subtle conflict, but tend to escalate to a point where victims experience health problems and are forced from the workplace.

Participants reported experiencing the following bullying behaviours:

Table 5.4-1: The nature of bullying behaviours experienced by teachers

Main theme 1 The nature of workplace bullying experienced by teachers		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.1.1 Verbal abuse	14
	5.4.1.2 Public humiliation	11
	5.4.1.3 Mobbing	10
	5.4.1.4 Unfair distribution of workload	10
	5.4.1.5 Malicious gossip	9
	5.4.1.6 Attacks on professional competence	8
	5.4.1.7 Lodging or threatening to lodge unfair grievances	8
	5.4.1.8 Ignoring the teacher's attempts to communicate	7
	5.4.1.9 Harassment	7
	5.4.1.10 Micro-management the work-environment	5
	5.4.1.11 Unwarranted criticism towards the teacher's work	5
	5.4.1.12 Isolating the teacher from the work group	5
	5.4.1.13 Making unfounded accusations	5
	5.4.1.14 Favouritism of staff	3
	5.4.1.15 Physical bullying	3

5.4.1.1 Verbal abuse

Teachers reported being verbally abused. Verbal abuse was mostly perpetrated by principals and may be intended to publicly damage the teachers' reputation and/ or attacking/ dismantling their characters. These behaviours may be categorised as a threat to personal standing, as identified in the literature (cf. Table 2.4 1). This can be illustrated by the following excerpts:

(P18): "Kollegas val my tydens vergaderings persoonlik aan – 'jy maak my siek', 'jy is tokkies/ mal', terwyl die res van die personeel en die skoolhoof toekyk en niks sê nie. ... As ek my opinie gee tydens 'n vergadering, '*dink ek ek is beter as ander*', as ek stilbly en nie reageer nie, tart hul my met aanmerkings tot ek wel iets sê of uit die vergadering loop."

[Colleagues attack me personally during meetings – 'you make me sick', 'you are crazy', whilst the rest of the staff and principal notice it, but say nothing. ... When I give my opinion during meetings 'I think I'm better than everyone else'; if I don't speak or react, they (colleagues) mock me with remarks until I say something or leave the meeting.]

(P23): "Ek het een oggend met goed in my hand op my skoot gesit en seker maar op 'n stadium afgekyk, weet jy dat hy (skoolhoof) voor daai hele personeel geskree het oor ek nie vir hom in sy oë kyk as hy praat nie. ... hy sal op my begin skree voor daai klein kindertjies."

[One morning I held some items on my lap and probably looked down, and then he (principal) shouted in front of the staff because I didn't look him in the eyes while he was speaking. ... He would shout at me in front of the children.]

5.4.1.2 Public humiliation

Public humiliation is reported in the literature as a bullying behaviour (cf. par 2.4.2), and was also reported by participants in this study. This behaviour may be intended to gain and/ or demonstrate social power over the victim. In some cases these personal attacks caused irreparable damage to teachers' personal and professional reputations. Bullying behaviours often make the teacher the laughing stock of the school and community. The following excerpts may illustrate teachers' experiences of public humiliation.

(P2): "... he (principal) organised the photo shoot of the staff and he said he's going to publish everything with apologies for my face so I attracted the attention of the local and the abroad companies. ... I had one teacher saying 'is camera having zoom lens?'... I couldn't understand what was happening. Then the principal said 'yes'. ... my face was shot at, *configurised*."

(P6): "He (principal) will ask you a question. If the learners have failed then '*Tell the teachers what it is you've done.*' And then you must tell how they can help you and if they cannot help you, you will find yourself on the street ..."

5.4.1.3 Mobbing

According to the literature review, colleagues are often involved in the bullying process (cf. par 2.3.1.3). Participants' reports indicate that bullying behaviours are at times delegated to colleagues. It appeared as if some colleagues wittingly participated in the bullying process. Other colleagues, who fear being bullied, remained witnesses and kept themselves from being actively involved with the victims to avoid being in the crossfire and possibly becoming victims themselves (cf. par 5.4.7.5), as is also supported by the literature (cf. par 3.5.3.2). Mobbing behaviours included not assisting the teacher in getting work done, collective verbal abuse, and isolating the teacher from the work group.

(P20): "(Name omitted) (colleague) teamed up with certain colleagues and all of a sudden I felt excluded ..."

(P26): "Sommiges (kollegas) word nou maar net aangestel om die "waghonde" oor die ander te wees en te help om kontrole uit te voer."

[Some (colleagues) are only appointed as 'watchdogs' to assist in exercising control.]

5.4.1.4 Unfair distribution of workload

Principals often made one of two changes in teachers' workload. In most cases, behaviours fall in the category of *overwork* (cf. par 2.4.2). Work load is increased, which makes it exceedingly difficult for the teacher to sustain his/ her work quality. Some teachers are given less work than they can manage and/ or meaningless tasks without a discussion, which may be characteristic of *destabilisation* (cf. par 2.4.2). Bullies' intention with an unfair distribution of workload may be to trigger burnout in the victims and systematically to force him/ her from the workplace.

(P1): “Hy (skoolhoof) stap daar voor in die saal en hy verklaar aan al daai personeellede wat sy veranderings vir die jaar is, naamlik ‘*Deelnemer se naam uitgelaat*), *you’re a subject, no longer HOD.*”

[He (principal) walked to the front of the hall, and in front of the staff, he declares the changes he has made for the year, namely ‘(Participant’s name omitted), you’re a subject, no longer HOD.]

(P11): “Hoe sieker ek was, hoe meer het sy (onderhoof) opgelaai.”

[The sicker I was, the more work she (vice-principal) assigned to me.]

5.4.1.5 Malicious gossip

Teachers report that principals and/ or colleagues spread malicious gossip. This may be an example of *threat to personal standing* (cf. par 2.4.2). Malicious gossip may be intended to damage the victim’s reputation. Participants also report having a sense of distrust in colleagues (cf. par 5.4.3.17) who revealed information shared in confidence, to other colleagues and/ or the principal. As a result, some participants decided to socially and emotionally withdraw from the work group (cf. par 5.4.3.9).

(P5): “... toe het iemand vir die hoof gaan sê dat ek nou die kind molesteer of teister, of ek weet nie wat nie.”

[Someone told the principal that I molested or harassed the child.]

(P27): “... teachers reported our conversations to the principal ...”

5.4.1.6 Attacks on professional competence

Principals reportedly make attempts to highlight teachers’ perceived incompetence, which may also be a form of public humiliation (cf. par 5.4.1.2). This may be ascribed to a personal sense of inadequacy and therefore they may attempt to target those teachers who they perceive as more competent. According to the literature review, bullies may target and attempt to get rid of employees who they perceive to be more skillful in the workplace (cf. par 2.6.2.2). Participants reported that bullies may be envious of their skills and/ or professional competence (cf. par 5.4.6.4).

(P4): "... in front of everybody in the staff she (support staff) turned around and she attacked me and then said it was because of me that people didn't like math and people who were finding difficult doing it, they couldn't do it because of me."

(P6): "He (principal) attack the teachers directly and said 'You see, you are making your learning areas very interesting, like *this* teacher. Two learners are running away from Accounting because of him."

5.4.1.7 Lodging or threatening to lodge unfair grievances

In some cases, bullying principals misuse their managerial positions to lodge or threaten to lodge formal grievances against targeted teachers. This may be an example of *structural violence* (cf. par 2.3.1.2) or *process bullying* (cf. par 2.3.1.2.4). This form of bullying may be an attempt to demonstrate or gain power over the victim. These grievances are seldom legitimate and often appear to be fabricated. It nevertheless elicits severe distress in teachers.

(P11): "Ek word toe ingeroep toe hulle (skoolbestuur) klaar als bespreek het sonder my. Hoor toe dat ek aangekla word dat ek nie werk in my klas nie, dat ek *kids* dreig en op hul arms laat lê vir 2 weke lank ... Ek vra toe vir hom (skoolhoof) wie al die mense was wat gekla het, hy kon my nie antwoord nie. En wou ook nie die briewe vir my wys nie."

[I was called in after they (education management) discussed it (complaint) without me. Then I hear of a grievance that I don't work in die classroom, that I threaten the learners and let them lay on their arms for 2 weeks ... I asked him (principal) who complained and he couldn't answer me. He also didn't want to show me the letters.]

(P22): "Ek het na hom (onderhoof) toe gegaan en gesê ek verstaan nie wat wil hy hê moet ek doen nie. Toe gooi hy vir my die papiere oor die lessenaar en op die grond. En hy sê vir my 'Jy sal sorg dat jy daai papiere optel en regmaak anders kry jy nog 'n klag van insubordination teen jou' en hy het omgedraai en uitgestap."

[I went to him (vice-principal) and told him that I didn't understand what he wants me to do. He threw the papers over the desk on the ground. Then he said to me 'Make certain that you pick up all those papers and arrange them, otherwise there will be another complaint of insubordination laid against you' and he turned around and walked away.]

5.4.1.8 Ignoring the teacher's attempts to communicate

Participants report that their attempts to communicate with bullying colleagues/ principals are often ignored. This bullying behaviour may also be a form of *isolation* (cf. par 2.4.2). This may be an indication of alleged bullies' lack of ability to efficiently communicate, to solve problems and to show empathy for teachers' feelings or needs.

(P9): "... ek moes briewe skryf, die briewe is geïgnoreer."

[I had to write letters, the letters were ignored.]

(P18): "Omdat my hoof glad nie met my kommunikeer nie ... en my kollegas my die meeste van die tyd ignoreer (ek glo – in opdrag van die hoof), voel ek totaal uitgesluit."

[My principal doesn't communicate with me ... and my colleagues ignore me most of the time (I believe my principal told them to do that), therefore I feel totally excluded.]

5.4.1.9 Harassment

Participants reported repeated incidences of harassment perpetrated by colleagues and principals. Harassment in this work context is mostly based on race, gender and/ or being a different culture or ethnicity. Harassment included cyber bullying (i.e. repeated telephone calls, harassing email-letters and derogatory photos), as is also reported in the literature (cf. par 2.3.1.4). Harassment is demonstrated by the following excerpts:

(P2): "These cultural choirs (colleagues) started singing songs, quoting the registration of my car, the colour ... There were cultures who were following me and during that time my wife was driving a maroon car ... my wife was driving a grey car and I was driving a maroon one. She was tailed by another car ... she took another route and she was tailed by those guys ..."

(P23): "... hy (skoolhoof) het 'n minimum van twee keer 'n dag die stoepe gepatroleer. Gewoonlik was hy so vier keer 'n dag in my klas. ... dan sal hy in my klas instap, dan sal hy aan my hare vat – ek het lang hare – dan sal hy dit so om my gesig vou en sê 'Ag die juffrou ...'"

[He patrolled the perron at least two times a day. He was normally four times in my classroom per day. ... he would walk into my classroom and touch my hair – I have long hair – and then he would cover my face with it ...]

If one investigates the effects of harassment on these teachers' health, it is apparent that this behaviour left them in extreme distress and ultimately had a greater effect on their psychological health in a shorter period of time, than any other form of bullying behaviour that is perpetrated subtly over an extended period of time. These participants reported symptoms of severe depression (cf. par 5.4.3.1) and thoughts of suicide/ death (cf. par 5.4.3.12). Three of these participants also reported symptoms characteristic of PTSD (cf. par 5.4.3.21).

5.4.1.10 Micro-managing the work environment

In some cases, principals micro-manage teachers' work environment. This may be characteristic of an *autocratic leadership style* (cf. par 2.7.3). Micro-management may be a sign of bullies' need to be in control of their environment (cf. par 2.6.2.2.1). Reported behaviours that are characteristic of micro-management, include excessively monitoring teachers' work, over-controlling finances in the school, as well as controlling and limiting the flow of communication between staff.

(P4): "So she's (school support staff) the chairman of the board. She's put herself in that role and she controls all the salaries. She's controlled everything."

(P11): "Sy (onderhoof) het mens gedurig opgecheck, ook as jy op speelgronddiens was."

[She (vice-principal) regularly checked on me, even when I was doing my duty on the playground.]

5.4.1.11 Unwarranted criticism towards the teacher's work

Bullied teachers' work is also excessively critiqued, in comparison to their colleagues' work. This form of bullying may be a form of *destabilisation* (cf. par 2.4.2). These teachers are often expected to repeat and correct their work, but they receive no assistance to rectify alleged mistakes. Unwarranted critique may be demoralising and may result in a loss of passion for the profession.

(P8): "I'm a teacher of profession and every time we do a task, a formal task, you get it back not approved. Sometimes you can do a task three or four times and you see we've got a lot of tasks to do. You will be told that the principal does not like it. And this year I'm doing a task which is

the same as my colleagues. When my colleagues send in they are just accepted, but when it's me it is just a problem."

(P15): Alles wat ek doen word bevraagteken deur hom (kollega), alhoewel die vakadviseur my gedurig prys vir die uitstekende werk ... Hy vind ook onbenullige foute wanneer hy my werk modereer."

[He (colleague) questions everything I do, while my advisor congratulates me for my excellent work ... He also finds fault when he moderates my work.]

5.4.1.12 Isolating the teacher from the work group

Teachers also reported being isolated or ostracised by the work group. Isolating victims from the work group and -activities is also considered to be a form of harassment (cf. par 2.3.1.4). Isolation alienates teachers from the work group, prevents them from having access to essential information and may prevent healthy relationships with colleagues.

(P5): "Hy't (skoolhoof) ook vir my gesê toe ek terugkom by die werk 'Jy moet in jou klas sit ... jy mag met niemand kommunikeer nie.'"

[When I returned to work, he (principal) told me 'You must stay in your class ... and you're not allowed to communicate with anyone else.']

(P24): "Net een vrou op die personeel het met my vriende gemaak. Die res het my behandel asof ek melaats is ..."

[Only one female on the staff made friends with me. The rest of the staff treated me as if I am leprous ...]

5.4.1.13 Making unfounded accusations

Teachers are reportedly falsely accused of misconduct, including stealing or misusing school property or money. This may be an example of *threat to personal standing* (cf. par 2.4.2). Participants may feel insulted by this, since the behaviours they are accused of are often against their moral values. These teachers are hardly ever found guilty of the accusations made against them, but their reputations are damaged.

(P16): “I have been accused by him of being the reason that his CD-player went missing in his (colleague) class.”

(P24): “(Skoolhoof) sou voordurende skimpe gooi van goed wat weg is, geld wat gesteel is, voorraad van kos wat ek aangekoop het wat onnodig is, wat ek gesteel het.”

[He (principal) regularly hinted about things that went missing, money that was stolen, food stock that I bought that was unnecessary, which I have stolen.]

5.4.1.14 Favouritism of staff

Teachers also often feel isolated if the principal has favourites in the work group. Favouring certain colleagues may be a form of isolation (cf. pars 2.4.2). It may alienate the targeted teacher from the work group and may also encourage mobbing behaviour.

(P3): “... daar’s ’n totale skeuring in ons skool ... jy weet dis sy (skoolhoof) gunsteling mense en hy sit by hulle pouse.”

[... our school is divided ... he has his favourites and he (principal) sits with them during breaks.]

(P26): “Sommiges voel dat die hoof en beheerliggaam miskien witbroodjies het.”

[Some feel as if the principal and school board have ‘blue-eyed-boys’.]

5.4.1.15 Physical bullying

Isolated incidences of physical aggression, perpetrated by colleagues and principals, were also reported. Figure 2.5-1, illustrates various aggressive behaviours on a continuum, of which physical aggression is illustrated to be the final and worst behaviour on the continuum. In this study reported acts of physical aggression however preceded severe psychological bullying. Teachers were also more focused on, and affected by bullying behaviours that were psychological in nature and an attack on their characters, than they were affected by the acts of physical bullying.

(P1): “Hy (skoolhoof) klap die deur toe en ek strek uit om die deur oop te maak en hy gryp my arm, en hy druk sy vinger in my gesig en sê ‘*Don’t you ever do that again!*’ En ek sê ‘*I’m gonna scream. Let me go!*’ En hy ruk die deur oop en hy gooi my by sy kantoor uit.”

[He (principal) shuts the door and I reach out to open it and he grabs my arm, points his finger in my face and says 'Don't you ever do that again!' And I say 'I'm gonna scream. Let me go!' And he opens the door and throws me out of his office.]

(P5): "... ek sit nog met my bene oorkruis en hy (skoolhoof) tel iets op die tafel op en gooi my daarmee."

[I sat with my legs crossed and he (principal) picked something off the table and threw me with it.]

5.4.2 Main theme 2: The effects of workplace bullying on physical health

The psychological stress that is triggered by the experience of workplace bullying, may be observed through physical health symptoms and may also trigger the onset of chronic physical illnesses (cf. par 3.5.1). The reported effects of workplace bullying on teachers' physical health are presented in Table 5.4-2.

Table 5.4-2: The effects of workplace bullying on physical health

Main theme 2 The effects of workplace bullying on physical health		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.2.1 Sleeping problems	12
	5.4.2.2 Physical symptoms of severe stress and anxiety	8
	5.4.2.3 Fatigue	7
	5.4.2.4 Tension headaches	5
	5.4.2.5 Hypertension	4
	5.4.2.6 Stress-related physical illnesses	4
	5.4.2.7 Sexual health problems	2
	5.4.2.8 Weight gain	2
	5.4.2.9 Musculoskeletal problems	2

5.4.2.1 Sleeping problems

Some participants reported experiencing sleeping problems, including falling asleep and having nightmares. Two participants shared the following experiences:

(P14): “Ek het sleg geslaap en nagmerries begin kry ...”

[I didn't sleep well and began to have nightmares ...]

(P24): “... tydens die ‘bullying’ ... sleg geslaap.”

[... during the ‘bullying’ ... I didn't sleep well.]

Sleeping problems may be an indication of severe stress and during sleepless nights, victims may attempt to find solutions to their bullying experiences. According to the DSM-IV-TR (2000), sleeping problems may also be symptomatic of major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1) and PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2).

5.4.2.2 Physical symptoms of severe stress and anxiety

It was noted that the experience of workplace bullying may cause severe anxiety in teachers. Psychological anxiety may be accompanied by various physical symptoms – especially when the victim is in the presence of the bully. Physical reactions to bullying may include gastro-intestinal problems (cf. par 3.5.1.1.3), rapid heart rate (cf. par 3.5.1.1), and symptoms similar to heart attacks (cf. par 3.5.1.1.2), as reported in the literature. Health symptoms may also be indicative of panic attacks (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.4). The mentioned health symptoms are illustrated by the following excerpts:

(P12): “My hartklop versnel, ek voel soms naar en raak gewoonlik aan die bewe, voel dikwels duiselig en totaal ontoereikend as ek in haar (skoolhoof) teenwoordigheid is.”

[My heart starts beating faster, sometimes I begin to tremble, frequently feel lightheaded and inadequate when I am in her (principal) presence.]

(P24): “Ek kry angsaanvalle wanneer ek dink ek moet teruggaan werk toe ... Ek het borskaspyne – soos 'n hartaanval – gekry die dag wat ek my persoonlike besittings by die skool gaan haal het.”

[I get panic attacks when thinking I have to go back to work ... I had chest pains – like a heart attack – the day I went to fetch my personal belongings at school.]

5.4.2.3 Fatigue

Participants also reported being fatigued. Mounting stress may cause physical and emotional fatigue. Fatigue may also be related to major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1).

(P20): "... if you look at my sick periods it was mostly when I was so unhappy and feeling so physically tired."

(P22): "Ek het baie gesukkel met my gesondheid: ek was die heeltid moeg gewees."

[I struggled with my health: I was tired all the time.]

5.4.2.4 Tension headaches

Regular stress and anxiety that are associated with workplace bullying may cause tension headaches (cf. par 3.5.1.1). Teachers reported having headaches more often during episodes of bullying.

(P16): "I had such headache and felt nauseous and very dizzy."

(P24): "... tydens die 'bullying' ... voortdurend hoofpyne."

[During the 'bullying' ... I had frequent headaches.]

5.4.2.5 Hypertension

Severe stress may lead to situational hypertension (cf. par 3.5.1.1.2). This was reported by participants:

(P3): "... verlede jaar het ek geweldige bloeddruk probleme ervaar ... 200/130 ..."

[Last year I experienced severe problems with my blood pressure ... 200/130 ...]

(P7): "I was having this high blood pressure."

I speculated whether there were more participants that were suffering from hypertension, but did not visit a doctor to be formally diagnosed with this condition. Hypertension may on the other hand also be a genetic condition.

5.4.2.6 Stress-related physical illnesses

The stress that is associated with bullying behaviour may have an effect on victims' immune systems (cf. par 3.5.1.1.6). In severe cases, victims may also be diagnosed with severe stress-related illnesses, such

as fibromyalgia (cf. par 3.5.1.1). The effects of workplace bullying on immunity and the physical health of teachers, are illustrated by the following excerpts:

(P11): “... ek gediagnoseer met Endogene Depressie, Fibromialgie ...”

[... I was diagnosed with Endogenous Depression, Fibromyalgia ...]

(P22): “My immunititeit was baie laag ... Dit was vir my ’n skok om te sien dat emosie ’n mens so verskriklik siek kan maak. ... ek was die heeltid moeg gewees. Dit was toe eintlik hierdie Febromialgie. Ek het lank gesit voor iemand my gediagnoseer het met dit en dit ontstaan ook mos maar van spanning en trauma en chroniese moegheid.”

[My immune system was very low ... I was shocked to see that emotion can make you so ill. ... I was tired all the time. It was actually Fibromyalgia. I waited a long time before someone diagnosed me. It is caused by stress, trauma and chronic fatigue.]

5.4.2.7 Sexual health problems

Sexual health problems may be a result of the stress associated with the bullying behaviour (cf. par 3.5.1.1.7). A male and female teacher reported experiencing sexual health problems:

(P2): “So sexually I’m out. I can’t perform anything with my wife. We can take months without attending each other.”

(P22): Dokters gaan sien ... omdat ek nou opgehou menstrueer het ...

[I went to see doctors ... because my menstrual cycle stopped ...]

Participants’ sexual health problems also impinged on relationships with spouses/ life partners (cf. par 5.4.4.3).

5.4.2.8 Weight gain

Two participants also reported an increase in body weight:

(P12): “...gewigstoename.”

[... weight gain.]

(P18): “... vind troos in kos (sit gewig aan).”

[... I find consolation in food (weight gain).]

Weight gain may be a result of dysfunctional coping behaviour (cf. par 3.5.2.3) and may, amongst other symptoms, also be symptomatic of major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1).

5.4.2.9 Musculoskeletal problems

Stress is not only psychological, but may also manifest in body pains (cf. par 3.5.1.1.5). Two teachers reported body/ muscle aches and pains, which may be related to their experiences of workplace bullying:

(P1): “Ek loop al ses, sewe, agt weke loop ek mank. Hulle het X-strale geneem van my been, my hakskeen. ... Dat die fisioterapeut vir my sê ‘*it’s a nerve*.’”

[I’m limping for six, seven, eight weeks. They took X-rays of my leg, my heel. ... The physiotherapist says ‘it’s a nerve’.]

(P12): “Spierspasmas in my skouers en rug, waarvoor ek gereeld na ’n Chiropraktisyn gaan.”

[I have muscle spasms in my shoulders and back, for which I regularly consult a Chiropractor.]

5.4.3 Main theme 3: The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health

The experience of workplace bullying firstly had an effect of psychological health. In severe cases the psychological health symptoms may form part of more serious psychological health problems, such as major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1) and PTSD/ C-PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2). The following psychological health effects emerged from the transcripts:

Table 5.4-3: The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health

Main theme 3 The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.3.1 Depression	17
	5.4.3.2 The use of medication to cope with health effects	14
	5.4.3.3 Crying and tearfulness	12
	5.4.3.4 Anger and lessened control of temper	9
	5.4.3.5 Effects on personality	9
	5.4.3.6 Hospitalisation	7
	5.4.3.7 Avoidance behaviour	7
	5.4.3.8 Feelings of helplessness	7
	5.4.3.9 Social and emotional withdrawal	7
	5.4.3.10 Psychological distress	7
	5.4.3.11 Teachers' search for meaning	6
	5.4.3.12 Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide	5
	5.4.3.13 Preoccupation with bullying experience	5
	5.4.3.14 Fearing the unpredictability of exposure to bullying	5
	5.4.3.15 Symptoms of burnout	5
	5.4.3.16 Anxiety and panic attacks	4
	5.4.3.17 Feelings of exclusion and distrust	3
	5.4.3.18 Feelings of not being appreciated	3
	5.4.3.19 Self-blame	3
	5.4.3.20 Feelings of worthlessness	3
	5.4.3.21 Symptoms of trauma and PTSD	3

5.4.3.1 Depression

The experience of workplace bullying may result in clinical depression (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1). More than half of participants reported being diagnosed with, or experiencing symptoms of major depressive episode. Participants reported some level of depression as a consequence of experiencing workplace bullying, which was reportedly uncharacteristic for them prior to their experiences.

(P3): “Ek is totaal-en-al *depressed*. En dit is net te wyte aan een persoon (skoolhoof).”

[I was totally depressed. And that is ascribable to only one person (principal).]

(P18): “Ek is met depressie gediagnoseer en afgeboek met verlof vir die res van die kwartaal.”

[I was diagnosed with depression and booked off for the rest of the term.]

According to observational notes made during contact with the participants, some teachers presented with symptoms of depression, even though they did not necessarily articulate themselves as ‘feeling depressed’ or being diagnosed with a major depressive episode. Depression or feelings of depression may be ascribed to the sense of helplessness that victims may experience due to not having a solution to address the problem. It was also noted that several teachers developed a *history* of mental illness (e.g. recurrent major depressive episode) over time as a result of the frequent, long-term experience of workplace bullying.

5.4.3.2 The use of medication to cope with health effects

Victims may need medicinal treatment to cope with the health effects of their experiences. Teachers report that they abuse medication to cope with the health effects of workplace bullying, such as depression (cf. par 5.4.3.1), an inability to sleep (cf. par 5.4.2.1), stress and anxiety (cf. pars 5.4.2.2 & 5.4.3.16). Two participants reported the following:

(P1): “Die hele jaar verlede jaar is dit ek plus ’n halfdosyn of twee wat op pille is om die jaar deur te bring.”

[Last year I myself and a half dozen other colleagues were on pills to get through the year.]

(P23): “Weet jy ek kan vir jou sê dat 80 persent van die personeel – ons het op kalmeerpille geleef. Dit onder mekaar versprei en uitgedeel. Hande vol. Ons het net die boodskap uitgestuur en die pille het gekom.”

[Let me tell you, 80 per cent of our staff lived on tranquilisers. We distributed it among each other. Hands full of them. We just sent the message and the pills came.]

Medications were mostly prescribed. Medications may however also be abused to cope with the effects of stress (cf. par 3.5.2.3), as illustrated by the second excerpt. The misuse of medications may be a strategy to cope with the stress and trauma associated with workplace bullying.

5.4.3.3 Crying and tearfulness

Constant crying and tearfulness are also reported in the literature as psychological/ emotional effects of workplace bullying (cf. par 3.5.2.2). In certain cases, constant crying may be symptomatic of depression (cf. 3.5.2.4.1). Two teachers reported the following:

P8: “So you suffer and you cry a lot of times.”

P22: “Ek het my oë uitgehuil. Die aar in my oog het gebars, soos wat ek gehuil het ...”

[I cried my eyes out. The vein in my eye bursted ...]

It was noted that constant crying and tearfulness may be triggered by participants’ feelings of vulnerability, a lack of control over their circumstances and harm done to their self-esteem.

5.4.3.4 Anger and lessened control of temper

Escalating anger may be one of the emotional responses in victims of workplace bullying (cf. par 3.5.2.2). In this study, semi-structured interviews had underlying themes of anger. Feelings of anger may be ascribed to the unexpected and severe effects workplace bullying may have had on their lives. Teachers’ anger is often displaced onto family members, colleagues and/ or learners, as they reportedly lose control of their temper. Anger and lessened control of temper seemed to be uncharacteristic for most of the participating teachers.

- (P4): “My son has suffered terribly ... I became *really, really, really* short-tempered ... I’ll lose my temper really easy to the point that I was feeling I was being abusive to my own child.”
- (P7): “I’m very angry I must tell you. ... When they (principal/ education managers) say something now I become ... I explode. If they say something I don’t like, I explode.”

5.4.3.5 Effects on personality

The experience of workplace bullying may bring about a change in victims’ personalities (cf. par 2.6.1.1.2), which was also noted in this study. Participants reported having a low self-esteem, low self-confidence and feelings of worthlessness, which were previously uncharacteristic for them. These feelings often resulted in other emotional and behavioural responses, such as anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4) and social/ emotional withdrawal (cf. par 5.4.3.9).

- (P18): “... geen selfbeeld, geen selfvertroue, geen selfwaarde ...”
[... no self-image, no self-confidence, no self-worth ...]
- (P24): “My selfbeeld was aan flarde nadat hulle (skoolhoof en kollegas) my beet gehad het.”
[My self-esteem was in shreds after they (principal and colleagues) were done with me.]

5.4.3.6 Hospitalisation

In severe cases, victims of workplace bullying have to be hospitalised for stress and depression (cf. pars 3.5.2.4.1). Participants reported the following:

- (P6): “... in most cases we are about four teachers who were hospitalised.”
- (P16): “I have been on medication for on and off 2 years, I spent 7 days in hospital for stress and depression end take meds to calm me at night so I can at least have some sleep.”

Hospitalisation and sick leave may ultimately have a grave effect on victims’ work performance (cf. pars 3.5.3.3.2), as is also indicated in this study. Some participants’ had to take a long sick leave to recover from the psychological health effects.

5.4.3.7 Avoidance behaviour

Bullied teachers' behaviours include avoidance of the person who is responsible for their experienced distress or the avoidance of potential bullying situations. This may be a strategy to avoid conflict with a dominant party in the workplace. Avoidance behaviour may also be one of the diagnostic criteria of PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2). Alleged bullying principals and colleagues may, on the other hand, perceive avoidance behaviour from self-labelled victims as attempts to ignore them and not contribute to the cohesiveness of the work group.

(P13): “Ek vermy die personeelkamer net om enige vernedering voor die personeel te voorkom.”

[I avoid the staff room to prevent any humiliation in front of the staff.]

(P27): “Whilst in school I kept to myself for many reasons ... I did not want to get into any altercation with the principal.”

5.4.3.8 Feelings of helplessness

Feelings of helplessness (cf. par 3.5.2.2) and not having a solution for the problem were prominent themes in numerous interviews. The inability to predict and control the outcomes of workplace bullying may bring about a sense of helplessness (cf. *learned helplessness theory* par 3.6.1.2). There was inadequate organisational support for teachers who reported experiences. Inadequate organisational support (cf. par 5.4.7.2) and simultaneous escalating acts of bullying, also may have contributed to feelings of helplessness in participants.

(P18): “Die boelie gedrag het sedert die begin van die jaar net vererger en dit laat my moedeloos voel. ... ek kan nie dink dat daar 'n meer vernederende en magtelose ervaring kan wees as om deur iemand geboelie te word ...”

[This bully behaviour has escalated since the beginning of the year and makes me feel discouraged. ... I don't think there is another humiliating and helpless experience than to be bullied.]

(P20): “You feel powerless and can't see that things will improve ...”

5.4.3.9 Social and emotional withdrawal

Victims of workplace bullying may tend to withdraw from relationships at work and at home (cf. par 3.5.3), as indicated by the following excerpts:

(P1): “Ek onttrek. Ek en my katte, ons is gelukkig saam ... As mense my uitnoodi sal ek 'n verskoning maak ... *sense is never gonna be my weakness again. Sense is what people expect in me.*”
[I withdraw. Me and my cats, we are happy together. ... When people invite me to a social function, I will make excuses ... ‘sense is never gonna be my weakness again. Sense is what people expect in me.]

(P27): “Socially I refused to go anywhere and did not attend any family function for the month ...”

In this study, social and/ or emotional withdrawal may be ascribed to participants' preoccupation with their experiences (cf. par 5.4.3.13), feelings of exclusion and distrust in colleagues (cf. par 5.4.3.17) and/ or attempts to avoid the bully (cf. par 5.4.3.7). Social and emotional withdrawal may, amongst other diagnostic criteria, also be symptomatic of a major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1).

5.4.3.10 Psychological distress

Observational notes indicated that some participants were distressed, even though many did not articulate this. Psychological distress often manifested in escalating physical health symptoms (cf. par 5.4.2.2). Victims may reach a *stage of exhaustion* (cf. par 3.4.1.1.3). In this study, participants' psychological distress was accompanied by depression (cf. par 5.4.3.1).

(P16): “... I spent 7 days in hospital for stress and depression ...”

(P27): “I was diagnosed with severe stress and depression.”

5.4.3.11 Teachers' search for meaning

Victims may seek meaning in their experiences through spirituality (cf. pars 3.5.3.1 & 3.6.3). In cases where organisational resources were not effective to address teachers' experiences of workplace bullying, different channels in spirituality (including religion) were used to seek meaning in work life and life in general.

(P2): “So you start wondering is God allowing people to do this? Is God allowing people to hate me like this?”

(P7): “Why is he (principal) treating me like this?”

5.4.3.12 Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide

Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are symptomatic of depression and have been linked to the experience of workplace bullying (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1). The emotional harm done by bullying, as well as teachers’ sense of inability to cope with abusive behaviours toward them, mostly triggered thoughts of suicide. One participant attempted suicide.

(P14): “Ek wou selfmoord pleeg, want ek het myself nog altyd as ’n harde werker gesien en ek het geglo dat hy (skoolhoof) reg is en ek is verkeerd.”

[I wanted to commit suicide, because I’ve always seen myself as a hard worker and I believed the he (principal) is right and I’m wrong.]

(P24): “Daardie middag kom ek huis toe. Pak die medisynetas uit en drink 180 slaappille, al die kalmeerpille en al die antidepressante wat ek het, almal gelyk. ... Are is platgeval, maar ek word opgeneem in die hospitaal en “gered”.”

[That afternoon I went home ... drank 180 sleeping tablets, all the tranquillisers and anti-depressants I had, all at once ... My veins collapsed but I was hospitalised and “saved”.]

5.4.3.13 Preoccupation with bullying experience

Victims may become absorbed in thought and fixated with their experiences (cf. par 3.5.2.2), trying to make sense of their experiences (cf. par 3.5.2.1). Teachers’ preoccupation with the bullying is often an attempt to find solutions for the problem. Teachers’ preoccupation with their experiences in some cases also affected social relationships (cf. par 3.5.3.1).

(P6): “... you don’t stop thinking about your work for a moment.”

(P23): “My verhoudings het daaronder gely. Die mense het vir my gesê dis al waaroor ek gepraat het.”

[My relationships were affected. People told me that it was all I talked about.]

5.4.3.14 Fearing the exposure to bullying

Victims may experience a sense of fear (cf. par 3.5.2.2). Participants' inability to predict the next onslaught and the effects it may have on health evoked extreme fear. Their fear may have stemmed from a sense of lost control – not knowing what to expect and what the outcome of the bullying will be. Some teachers' fear also led them to avoid the bully and/ or situations where bullying may occur (cf. pars 5.4.3.7). Experienced fear also elicited physical symptoms of stress and anxiety (cf. par 5.4.2.2). The fear and avoidance of the bully and/ or potential bullying situations may also be indicative of PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2).

(P1): “Ek is bang. Ek is bang want wanneer sê jou liggaam vir jou, jou kop vir jou genoeg is genoeg?”

[I'm afraid. I'm afraid because when does your body and your head say enough is enough?]

(P20): “You ... live in constant fear of what the next way will be that you will be disadvantaged by the bully.”

5.4.3.15 Symptoms of burnout

According to literature reports, burnout may also be prevalent among victims of workplace bullying (cf. par 3.5.2.2). Participants' expressed a sense of emotional exhaustion and a loss of passion for the profession, which may be characteristic of burnout. Burnout in this work context is mostly related to work overload (cf. par 5.4.1.4).

(P11): “Ek was oorwerk en uitgebrand ...”

[I was over-worked and burnt out ...]

(P22): “... 'n mens doen later net wat jy voel jy moet doen sonder om dit te geniet, want jy is so moeg en so getap en so emosioneel leeg.”

[... later you do just what you feel you have to without enjoying it, because you are so tired drained and emotionally empty.]

5.4.3.16 Anxiety and panic attacks

The experience of workplace bullying may elicit severe anxiety in victims (cf. par 3.5.2.2). Not all participants articulated experiencing some degree of anxiety, but during the semi-structured interviews it

was derived from certain participants' tone of voice and the manner in which they shared their experiences (e.g. hesitancy and stuttering) (cf. par 4.4.3.2). Victims may also report having panic attacks (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.4), which was reported by two participants.

(P22): “Dis hierdie verskriklike angs. Omdat ek ... angsaanvalle gekry het, moes ek toe nou op 'n stadium 'n psigiater gaan sien.”

[It's this extreme anxiety. I had panic attacks and therefore at some stage I had to consult a psychiatrist.]

(P24): “Ek kry angsaanvalle wanneer ek dink ek moet teruggaan werk toe ... Ek het borskaspyne – soos 'n hartaanval – gekry die dag wat ek my persoonlike besittings by die skool gaan haal het.”

[I get panic attacks when thinking I have to go back to work ... I had chest pains – similar to a heart attack – the day I went to fetch my personal belongings at school.]

5.4.3.17 Feelings of exclusion and distrust

A few teachers reported having a sense of exclusion and distrust in their colleagues – especially if colleagues were part of a mob (cf. par 5.4.3.17). Distrust may be a symptom of C-PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2). Some teachers felt that they could not tell colleagues anything in confidence (cf. par 5.4.1.5). Distrust in colleagues was also one of the reasons why some teachers withdrew themselves from the work group (cf. par 5.4.3.9).

(P20): “... all of a sudden I felt excluded and started to distrust most of my colleagues.”

(P27): “Whilst in school I kept to myself for many reasons ... because teachers reported our conversations to the principal ...”

5.4.3.18 Feelings of not being appreciated

A few teachers felt that the school and DoE did not show appreciation for their professional competence and contribution to the profession. This may be related to *destabilisation*, thus not giving employees credit for their achievements and contributions to the school when due (cf. par 2.4.2). Feelings of not being appreciated triggered thoughts of leaving the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.3).

(P1): "... niemand gee om vir ons nie. Die Departement gee nie om vir ons nie."

[... nobody cares for us. The Department does not care for us.]

(P11): "Ek het toe die Vrydag klaargemaak sonder 'n behoorlike dankie, nie eers 'n kaartjie nie."

[I left the Friday and didn't even receive a 'thank you', or a card.]

5.4.3.19 Self-blame

Victims may tend to blame themselves and think that they are the reason that the bullying is occurring (cf. par 3.5.2.2). Self-blame and feelings of guilt may be closely related. It appeared as if participants generally had an internal locus of control – they tended to first question their own contribution, before considering other possible factors that may have contributed to the bullying situation.

(P14): "... ek het myself nog altyd as 'n harde werker gesien en ek het geglo dat hy reg is en ek is verkeerd."

[I always perceived myself as a hard worker and I believed that he was right and I wrong.]

(P16): "I've lost my self-confidence, thinking there must be something wrong with me."

5.4.3.20 Feelings of worthlessness

Being bullied is also linked to feelings of worthlessness (cf. pars 3.5.2.1). Three participants generally felt that they were not worthy human beings and teachers. Feelings of worthlessness may be related to a major depressive episode (cf. par 3.5.2.4.1) and/ or a lowered self-esteem.

(P2): "I can say I've lost my worth up to now."

(P19): "Jy is gegradeer tot 'n *zombiaan*se gesiglose betekenlose niks."

[You are degraded to a faceless zombie, without meaning, nothing.]

5.4.3.21 Symptoms of trauma and PTSD

The effects of workplace bullying on teachers' psychological health depended on the degree in which they perceived their experiences of workplace bullying as distressing and/ or traumatic. During the data-gathering process, participants typified their experiences as severely traumatic and generally rated it between 5 and 10 on a self-reported scale. It however seemed as if there was some stigma attached to admitting being traumatised due to the experience of workplace bullying. Participant 26, for example,

responded “Was dit traumaties? 'n Mens voel amper soos 'n "sissie" as jy wil 'ja' (sê).” [*Was it traumatic? One almost feels like a “sissy” when you want to say ‘yes’.*]

The literature on workplace bullying supports that victims may experience PTSD (cf. pars 3.5.2.2 & 3.5.2.4.2.2). Some participants, who reported being harassed, also reported having symptoms indicative of PTSD. Participants reported physical symptoms of anxiety in the presence of the bully (cf. par 5.4.2.2), avoidance behaviour (cf. par 5.4.3.7), feelings of anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4) and fearing the exposure to bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.14), and may meet the minimum criteria for this diagnosis. I however noted three of these teachers also recently had other traumatic life experiences that were not related to workplace bullying and could have been the initial trigger for PTSD, including rape/ sexual assault, house robberies and hijacking. The symptoms of PTSD, reported by Participant 2, were possibly a result of physical violence allegedly perpetrated by colleagues. Workplace bullying added to and magnified the trauma that was already experienced by these teachers. During communication with these teachers, I noted that they were more focused on the effects that frequent bullying had on their health, than they necessarily were on the other traumatic life events.

Other health reports such as a constant crying and tearfulness (or sadness) (cf. par 5.4.3.3), suicidal ideation (cf. par 5.4.3.12), feelings of anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4), helplessness (cf. par 5.4.3.8), isolation and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17), a search for meaning (cf. par 5.4.3.11) and a preoccupation with the bullying experience (cf. par 5.4.3.13), may be characteristic of C-PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2).

(P1): “My mond is aanhoudend, aanhoudend droog. ... die Dinsdag na die kaping roep hy my in om my uit te trap ... geheel-en-totaal-en-al onbenullig. Hy (skoolhoof) weet dit gaan my afsluit. Dat ek voor hom staan dat ek niks vir hom sê nie. Ek kan nie 'n woord uit kry nie, want daar's niks in my mond nie. ... Ek dink die Post Traumatic Stress (het my vasgevat).”

(P2): “When somebody knocks at the door, I could feel the sound around the left and right behind my eyes ... even the dogs – when they were barking I could feel my heart was beating fast.”

5.4.4 Main theme 4: The effects of workplace bullying on social health

The effects of workplace bullying also take a toll on teachers' relationships with family and colleagues.

Table 5.4-4 presents the effects of workplace bullying on teachers' social and professional relationships:

Table 5.4-4: The effects of workplace bullying on social and professional relationships

	Main theme 4 The effects of workplace bullying on social and professional relationships	n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.4.1 Effects on teachers' relationships at work	14
	5.4.4.2 Effects on teachers' children	11
	5.4.4.3 Effects on teachers' marital relationships	11
	5.4.4.4 Inadequate social support	3

5.4.4.1 Effects on relationships at work

The experience of workplace bullying affected most teachers' relationships with colleagues. Teachers withdrew from relationships at work (cf. par 5.4.3.9). This can be ascribed to feelings of exclusion and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17) and/ or attempts to avoid the bully and/ or potential bullying situations (cf. par 5.4.3.7). Some colleague-witnesses may alternatively also withdraw their involvement with victims; due to fear that they may also be bullied (cf. pars 3.5.3.2 & 5.4.7.5).

(P9): "Ek sê niks in die personeelkamer nie ... Ek bly onbetrokke."

[I keep quiet in the staffroom ... I stay uninvolved.]

(P13): "Ek het geen vriendskapsverhouding met enige van die personeellede nie – inteendeel, ek stoot hulle sover moontlik van my af weg."

[I have no friendship with any of my colleagues – on the contrary, I push them away.]

5.4.4.2 Effects on teachers' children

Participants' preoccupation with their experiences (cf. par 5.4.3.13) and anger flares or lessened control of their temper (cf. pars 3.5.2.2 & 5.4.3.4) may affect their relationships at home – especially

relationships with their children. The victim's sudden hospitalisation for psychological ill-health may also have a traumatic effect on familial health.

(P11): "Ek kon net nie verder nie en hy het my afgeboek vir die res van die kwartaal. Ek is opgeneem ... vir 3 weke. My kinders by die huis was histeries. Wou my nie kom sien by die kliniek nie, en my dogter het ook in 'n diep depressie gegaan. Wou haarself met 'n mes sny en my seun het sy studies opgeskop."

[I couldn't cope anymore and I got sick leave for the rest of the term. I was hospitalised ... for 3 weeks. My children were hysterical.]

(P18): "Volgens my kinders praat ek te veel, is te kwaai en raas net altyd by die huis, maar eintlik is ek net verskriklik gefrustreerd met my omstandighede by die werk. Later is ek ongelukkig by my werk en by my huis – voel ek behoort nêrens nie."

[According to my children I talk too much, am too strict, but actually I'm very frustrated with my situation at work. I am unhappy at work and at home – I feel like I belong nowhere.]

5.4.4.3 Effects on teachers' marital relationships

Victims' relationships at home may be affected and may even lead to separation or divorce (cf. par 3.5.3.1). The effects of workplace bullying also severely strained participants' relationships with spouses or life partners. The distress teachers brought home from work triggered frustration and caused conflict between spouses. These conflicts often lead to separation or divorce and may have added to teachers' existing trauma.

(P10): "My persoonlike verhouding het skipbreuk gelei. Ek is uit my lewensmaat."

[My personal relationship ended. I lost my life partner.]

(P27): "There came a stage when our relationship was estranged."

5.4.4.4 Inadequate social support

Some participants' experiences may frustrate family members, which may consequently lead to inadequate social support:

- (P2): “I wish my wife was here. To my surprise basically she never considered it seriously. She said I was having a nervous breakdown. I should attend the doctor. This is how I am living.”
- (P17): “Ek moes my die hele tyd inhou en as ek iets gesê het, het my man vir my gesê hy is nie lus om na al die nonsens te luister nie.”
- [I had to contain myself and if I said something, my husband said that didn't want to listen to this nonsense.]*

According to literature reports, victims who feel supported do not experience severe health effects (cf. par 3.5.3.1). I noted that those participants, who had a sense of social support from family, did not experience severe health effects than those participants who had a sense that they were not supported by family. Teachers were overall more focused on, and affected by the inadequate organisational support (cf. par 5.4.7.2).

5.4.5 Main theme 5: The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health

Teachers' health experiences also affected the health of the school. Table 5.4-5 presents the effects of workplace bullying on the health of the school organisation.

Table 5.4-5: The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health

Main theme 5 The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.5.1 Loss of passion for the teaching profession	12
	5.4.5.2 Adverse effects on work performance	9
	5.4.5.3 Thoughts of leaving current position or profession	9
	5.4.5.4 Absenteeism due to ill-health	6
	5.4.5.5 Presenteeism despite being on sick leave	5
	5.4.5.6 Resigning from the teaching profession	3

5.4.5.1 Loss of passion for the teaching profession

The experience of workplace bullying may have a direct effect on employees' work performance (cf. par 3.5.3.3.1). Participants reported not enjoying teaching anymore and merely working due to financial obligation.

(P7): "I used to enjoy teaching ... at work I feel I'm just here because I'm earning money at the end of the month."

(P18): "Ek doen my werk soos 'n masjien – omdat ek weet ek moet ... My klas is my 'tronk' – dis waar ek 99% van my skooldag spandeer."

[I do my work as if I am a machine – because I know I have to ... My classroom is my 'jail' – that is where I spend 99% of my day at school.]

5.4.5.2 Adverse effects on work performance

As discussed above, participants' work performance was severely affected. Some felt they were not being appreciated because of the way they were being treated, and therefore did not put more energy into their work in the classroom than was absolutely necessary.

(P7): "My productivity declined dramatically. I used to enjoy teaching ..."

(P23): "Ek het een maal 'n maand in my stoor gesit en huil ... Ek het vir hulle (leerders) niks beteken ten minste een hele dag in 'n maand nie, en dan praat ek nie eers van die ander *abuse* tussenin nie ... Ek het nooit getwyfel aan my vermoë om skool te hou nie, maar hierdie dinge het my en my kinders geaffekteer en dis 'n tragiese storie."

[Once a month I cried in my basement ... I meant nothing to them (learners) for a day once a month, then I don't even speak about the abuse in between ... I never doubted my ability to teach, but these things affected me and my learners and it's a tragic story.]

5.4.5.3 Thoughts of leaving current position or profession

Victims may think about, or ultimately decide to leave their profession (cf. par 3.5.3.3.2). Several teachers considered leaving their current teaching position or ultimately, the profession, due to the severe health effects of workplace bullying and inadequate organisational support.

(P2): "... I withdrew myself and started to plan the polite way of leaving ... I was aiming to resign ..."

(P6): "Sometimes you feel like you're fighting your own battle and you're alone and you get demotivated as a result. When you get demotivated you think you must start looking for a job elsewhere. Maybe in the line of construction where there's less noise."

5.4.5.4 Absenteeism due to ill-health

According to a literature report, hospitalised employees may be unable to work (cf. par 3.5.3.3.2). Participants ultimately had to take sick leave or were hospitalised (cf. par 5.4.3.6), mostly for psychological health problems, which also affected work performance (cf. par 5.4.5.2).

(P6): "... as a result of this abuse thing, there are too many teachers who are absent from school."

(P18): "Ek is tydens die tweede week van Februarie ('n nuwe skooljaar!) met depressie gediagnoseer en afgeboek met verlof vir die res van die kwartaal."

[During the second week of February (a new school year!), I was diagnosed with depression and booked off for the rest of the term.]

5.4.5.5 Presenteeism despite being on sick leave

Victims may also return to work, which may increase stress (cf. par 3.5.3.3.2). Participants also went back to school despite ill-health. This can be attributed to a fear of stigmatisation or for feeling responsibility towards learners.

(P10): "Ek is afgeboek en té bang om by die huis te bly vir ingeval daar nou weer iets gesê gaan word."

[I am booked off and too scared to stay at home in case something is going to be said.]

(P24): "Ek is so siek ek kan nie werk nie, maar ek is daar."

[I'm so sick I cannot work, but I'm there.]

5.4.5.6 Resigning from the teaching profession

Participants decided to leave the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.3), mostly due to feelings of an inability to cope, having inadequate organisational support, not being appreciated, and chronic health problems that were triggered by the experience of bullying.

(P11): “Ek het die aand besluit om binne 24 uur kennis te bedank.”

[I decided to resign within 24 hours.]

(P26): “Ek is nie meer in die onderwys nie.”

[I’m not in the teaching profession anymore.]

5.4.6 Main theme 6: Personal characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Certain personal characteristics (cf. par 2.6) (especially certain personality traits of victims and bullies) facilitate and sustain workplace bullying in the teaching profession. Participants were not asked to specifically comment on the role of personal characteristics in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Personal characteristics that may facilitate and sustain workplace bullying in this context, spontaneously emerged from the data:

Table 5.4-6: Personal characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Main theme 6 Personal characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.6.1 Teachers’ confidence in their achievements and professional competence	8
	5.4.6.2 Gender	6
	5.4.6.3 Bullies are perceived as not having empathy	5
	5.4.6.4 Bullies are perceived as being envious	5
	5.4.6.5 Bullies are perceived as being controlling	4
	5.4.6.6 Teachers’ avoidance of conflict and submission to bullying behaviour	4
	5.4.6.7 Bullies are perceived as being manipulative	4
	5.4.6.8 Race	3

5.4.6.1 Teachers' confidence in their achievements and professional competence

Victims may be high-achievers (cf. par 2.6.1.1.2.1). Bullied teachers' are often high-achievers and show great confidence in their teaching ability. Some participants seem to have Type-A personalities (cf. par 6.5.6.1.2). They tend to be perfectionistic in their work and strive to be the best at what they do. Bullies may be threatened and/ or envious by teachers' self-perceived competence and may, on the one hand, also feel that they are not given credit for the work that they are doing.

(P4): "Last year fifty per cent of my class got distinctions and the other fifty per cent got B's ... I truly believe that I'm successful in doing it."

(P26): "Ek is gemaak vir die onderwys en het myself op alle vlakke tot die hoogste vlak bekwaam ..."
[I am made for teaching and qualified myself to the highest levels ...]

5.4.6.2 Gender

Literature on workplace bullying reports women may be targeted more often (cf. par 2.6.1.2.2). Female teachers felt that they were being bullied because of their gender. Most participants in this study were middle-aged females and were mostly bullied by middle-aged males. This may be ascribed to culture – specifically a gender hierarchy, where males are perceived as the dominant gender at home and in the workplace.

(P9): "Omdat jy 'n vrou is en hy (skoolhoof) 'n man dink hy dis geweldig intimiderend en is hulle dan geneig om basies van jou te probeer ontslae raak."

[He (principal) finds it very intimidating because you are a woman and then they have the tendency to try to get rid of you.]

(P23): "Ek is 'n enkellopende dame en daarom was ek 'n teiken."

[I was targeted because I'm a single woman.]

5.4.6.3 Bullies are perceived as not having empathy

Bullies are characterised as lacking empathy (cf. par 2.6.2.2.4). Participants' accounts indicated that bullying principals may also have a lack of empathy. Bullying principals tend to disregard the personal issues and health problems that teachers experience.

(P7): “You know ... they don’t have empathy. I once told my principal that the trait you have to have is empathy, where you put yourself in my shoes, but I could feel that he could not understand what I was saying. He couldn’t.”

(P23): “Op ’n stadium het ek ’n trauma beleef ... ek was toe opgeneem in die hospitaal vir trauma vir ’n week. ... Ek vra net twee skooldae dat ek net my dinge agtermekaar kry. Hy (skoolhoof) het op die interkom geklim en hy het nege dames so wild en wakker geroep, waaronder vier van hulle baie jong onderwyseressies was ... en hy het voor hulle nou vir my afgekraak. Die doktersbrief wat die dokter geskryf het gelees: ‘*Psigiater so en so*’, en die dokter se naam gelees, ‘*sê nou hierdie vrou is getraumatiseerd en sy moet nou weer twee dae af kry.*’”

[At some stage I experienced a traumatic incident ... I was admitted in hospital for a week. ... I asked two days leave so I could sort things out. He (principal) called nine ladies on the intercom, of which four were very young teachers. Then he read the letter the doctor wrote: ‘Psychiatrist so and so’, and he read the doctor’s name, ‘says here this woman is traumatised and has to get two days’ leave again.]

5.4.6.4 Bullies are perceived as being envious

Workplace bullies are also reported as being envious (cf. par 2.6.2.2.3). Participants ascribed their bullying colleagues’/ principals’ behaviours to being envious on their professional competence.

(P6): “Our principal deliberately makes life a misery in school, especially towards teachers that outwit him in skills and knowledge. ... there are a few teachers that are more qualified than him.”

(P10): “Ek het nou begin dink wat met my hierdie jaar gebeur het en is dit professionele *jealousy*?”
[I thought about what was happening to me this year and wondered if it was professional jealousy?]

5.4.6.5 Bullies are perceived as being controlling

Workplace bullies may also be controlling (cf. par 2.6.2.2.1). In the school organisation, bullies tendencies to be controlling may be reflected in certain bullying behaviours, such as micro-management of the work environment (cf. par 5.4.1.10), interpersonal/ group control through isolating the teacher from the work group (cf. par 5.4.1.12), favouritism of staff (cf. par 5.4.1.14), and having control in teachers’

support networks (cf. par 5.4.7.3). Bullies' tendency to be controlling was also clear during the sampling process, when some responded to the research study (cf. par 4.3.3).

(P4): "So she's (school support staff) the chairman of the board. She's put herself in that role and she controls all the salaries. She's controlled everything."

(P6): "He controls everything at school."

5.4.6.6 Teachers' avoidance of conflict and submission to bullying behaviour

Employees may be bullied owing to their tendency to avoid conflict and be submissive to bullying behaviours (cf. par 2.6.1.1.1.2). Some participants' lack of assertiveness makes them easy targets for chronic bullying. It was noted that these participants want the bullying situation to resolve itself and preferably do not want to have any active part in finding a solution to the situation. They do not want to be involved in the conflict and often attempt to avoid the bully and/ or a situation where conflict/ bullying may arise (cf. par 5.4.3.7), which is also the reason they do not file a formal grievance against bullies.

(P18): "Ek vermy konflik, probeer my bes om 'nice' te wees, maar die hoof vind elke dag iets waarmee hy nie tevrede is nie."

[I avoid conflict, try my best to be "nice", but the principal always finds something that he is not satisfied with.]

(P20): "I voiced my opinion and (principal) nearly shouted at me to calm down and I just decided to keep quiet."

5.4.6.7 Bullies are perceived as being manipulative

Bullies are also typified as being manipulative (cf. par 2.6.2.2.5). Bullies often manipulate others to involve them in a mob against the targeted teacher.

(P4): "... she (administrative personnel) also manipulates the Board. She has six people who she knows on the Board, and now they've started to say that they don't want me there."

(P19): “Let me start at the beginning, to qualify for this scheme you have to be a white male, preferably Afrikaans speaking. You have to have the most outstanding manipulating skills because you have to get your bosses to believe you and prosecute your workers.”

5.4.6.8 Race

Race is also reported as a personal characteristic that may contribute to workplace bullying (cf. par 2.6.1.2.3). Participants reported experiencing racism from their principals and education labour unions. Two teachers, who reported their race as a contributing characteristic, were also bullied by means of repeated and persistent forms of harassment (cf. par 2.3.1.4).

(P1): “Rassisme was nooit deel van ons skool nie. Dis nou, want hy’s (skoolhoof) die grootste rassis. Blanke vrouens loop onder hom deur soos min. ... Dis rasse *bullying!*”

[Racism was never part of our school. It is now, because he (principal) is the biggest racist. He targets white women. ... It’s racial bullying!]

(P2): “On the wall facing the main entrance, the principal decided to draw cultural Tswana people dancing. This dancing bears the home and place of these mocking cultural choirs.”

5.4.7 Main theme 6: Organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Participants were not asked to comment on the role of organisational characteristics in the occurrence of workplace bullying. Organisational characteristics that may facilitate and sustain workplace bullying spontaneously emerged from the data. Various participants reported that organisational characteristics play a salient role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying in the teaching profession, as tabulated in Table 5.4-7:

Table 5.4-7: Organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

	Main theme 7 Organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying	n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.7.1 Teachers observe colleagues being bullied	11
	5.4.7.2 Inadequate organisational support for bullied teachers	10
	5.4.7.3 Principals have control of teachers' support system	8
	5.4.7.4 Whistle-blowers are targeted	7
	5.4.7.5 Colleague-witnesses fear to be bullied	6

5.4.7.1 Teachers observe colleagues being bullied

Numerous teachers were not the only ones being bullied at the same school. They were also aware of colleagues that are targeted by the same bullies, but who are fearful of sharing their experiences for research purposes or reporting it to education labour unions and/ or the DoE. I noted that these teachers seldom intervene when a colleague is bullied. Colleague-witnesses, who associate with the victim, are also reportedly bullied (cf. par 5.4.7.5), and therefore they withdraw their involvement with victims.

(P15): "Dit (werksplek afknouery) gebeur ook met ander lede op die personeel."

[It (bullying) also happens to other staff members.]

(P27): "Teachers that are friendly to me are harassed by receiving the silent treatment or a fault finding mission is conducted against them."

5.4.7.2 Inadequate organisational support for bullied teachers

Teachers who reported their experiences of bullying rarely received adequate organisational support, even though there are support systems in place (e.g. education labour unions). This can be ascribed to bullying principals' positions in education labour unions. It may also be an example of *senior team tactics* (cf. par 2.3.1.2.3). Workplace policies that can protect teachers from various bullying behaviours also seemed to be lacking. Participants did not seem to have confidence in principals', school governing bodies, labour unions and the DoE's ability to deal with bullying.

(P1): “Die Departement is veronderstel om ’n *wellness* hulplyn te hê. Dit werk nie.”

[The Department is supposed to have a wellness helpline. It doesn't work.]

(P6): “There is nothing taking place. They have what you call the EAP, but it's not working. You know why it's not working? It's because you need to go to the principal to get support.”

5.4.7.3 Principals have control of teachers' support system

It appears as if principals, who are accused of bullying, have significant power in systems that are supposed to be supportive resources for teachers. These principals reportedly have high positions in education labour unions and/ or are befriended with people in the school governing bodies, labour unions and/ or the DoE (cf. par 2.7.5). This may make it difficult for teachers to seek support if they are bullied or to file formal grievances if the principal is the bully, as the investigation of a formal grievance may be biased. This may be a reason why some teachers and colleague-witnesses decide not to report experiences of bullying.

(P10): “My unie het doodeenvoudig die skool se kant gekies ... ongelukkig is my hoof die unie se verteenwoordiger. ... Hy't gesê hy's die verteenwoordiger en hy's *in control*, ‘so julle kan glad nie vir my gaan verkla of enige iets nie of iets gaan sê by die Unie nie.’”

[My union has chosen the school's side ... unfortunately my principal is the union's representative ... He said that he is the representative and he is in control 'so, you cannot lay a charge or say anything to the Union against me.]

(P20): “The bully's (principal) biggest asset, is their authority and usually back-up friends in authority as well.”

5.4.7.4 Whistle-blowers are targeted

Whistle-blowers are reportedly further bullied (cf. pars 2.3.2.5 & 2.6.2.2.2). It may be also the reason why colleague-witnesses withdraw from teachers' owing to the fear to be bullied (cf. par 5.4.7.5).

(P11): “Ek was oorwerk en uitgebrand, maar dit nie besef nie, want as jy kla of iets sê, word jy gemerk.”

[I was over-worked and burnt out, but didn't realise it, because if you say something, you are targeted.]

(P15): “Ek het gevra dat die Unie nie moet optree nie, aangesien die omstandighede dan meer ondraaglik sal wees. Die Unie het my ook “gewaarsku” dat alle kanonne op my gerig sal wees.”

[I asked the Union not to do anything, as my situation would then become more unbearable. They also “warned” me that all cannons would then be aimed at me.]

5.4.7.5 Colleague-witnesses fear to be bullied

Colleague-witnesses sometimes do not intervene in a bullying situation or withdraw from the professional relationship with the victim due to the fear that they may also be bullied (cf. par 3.5.3.2), which is also the case in this study.

(P6): “So everyone is afraid. Go to the principal and you increase your problems ... Most teachers are looking for a job elsewhere. They do not open their mouth as they fear of losing their jobs.”

(P27): “... teachers were afraid to speak to me for fear of the principal ... Teachers that are friendly to me are harassed by receiving the silent treatment or a fault finding mission is conducted against them.”

5.5 GENERALISATION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The question of whether qualitative studies can be generalised, has triggered new debates. In the past it was assumed that generalisation can only be applied in quantitative research. Researchers have however reported three methods on how qualitative findings can also be generalised (cf. Firestone, 1993; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Three broad disputes for generalisation in qualitative research are identified, namely *sample-to-population extrapolation*, *case-to-case transfer* and *analytic generalisation* (Firestone, 1993:16), of which the *analytic generalisation* is the most popular method that is applied (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007:240).

Analytic generalisation applies to this study. In this form of generalisation, one applies a *theory* to make certain predictions and then corroborate these predictions (Firestone, 1993:17). It is supposed that one can generalise a set of qualitative findings to a “broader theory” (Yin *cited in* Creswell, 2009:193). The

biopsychosocial model (cf. pars 1.3.1 & 3.2) was applied as the theoretical foundation for the first phase of this study. Findings reported in this chapter reflected the theory and dynamics illustrated by this model and indicated that it may also be relevant in practice. Bullied teachers' experiences mostly affected psychological health, which triggered physical health symptoms that are indicative of escalating stress and trauma, and further also negatively affected teachers' social and professional relationships, and the health of the school organisation. Findings were also corroborated in by the literature review. It is theoretically assumed that the physical, psychological and social health experiences that stem from the experience of workplace bullying, may be similar among employees in different work contexts.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter reported the findings that emanated from the semi-structured interviews and personal documents from teachers who have experienced workplace bullying. Findings indicated that workplace bullying is mostly perpetrated by principals. Bullying behaviours were *person* and *work-related*. Findings also indicated that the experience of workplace bullying has severe escalating effects on physical and psychological health. Teachers reported being diagnosed with, or experiencing symptoms of major depressive episode. Some teachers' health symptoms were also akin to PTSD/ C-PTSD. A few teachers reported experiencing panic attacks. Teachers' experiences affect their social health. Their relationships at home and at work were strained. Ultimately, the health of the school organisation was also affected as a result of increased absenteeism, bullied teachers' loss of passion for the profession, and lowered work productivity.

Findings revealed that personal and organisational characteristics facilitate and sustains workplace bullying in the teaching profession. Personality characteristics of bullied teachers and their bullies, played a salient role, including teachers' submission to bullying behaviours and conflict, and bullies' alleged lack of empathy, and manipulation, amongst other findings. Organisational characteristics, such as an existing bully-prone work environment, inadequate organisational support, and bullying principals' control in teachers' supportive resources, also facilitate and sustain bullying.

This chapter was concluded with a discussion regarding the generalisation of the qualitative findings. It is suggested that the theory and dynamics depicted by the *biopsychosocial model*, can be generalised to

other participant- and/ or work groups (through *analytic generalisation*) to depict the health effects that may stem from the experience of workplace bullying. Relevant literature, fieldnotes made during the research process, and findings that were reported in this chapter, will guide the development of a multi-level intervention programme for the South African teaching profession in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

ADDRESSING WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH: A MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Findings in Chapter 5 suggested that the causes and effects of workplace bullying occur on multiple levels in the teaching profession. This chapter will firstly summarise the current nature of workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession. The steps that need to be taken to address workplace bullying and its effects on health will then be briefly identified. The rationale for applying a multi-level approach to intervention will be discussed and a strategic and methodological approach to intervention will further be developed and suggested. A multi-level intervention programme will finally be put forward to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the South African teaching profession.

6.2 STEPS TO PROGRESS FROM THE CURRENT SITUATION TO A PREFERRED SITUATION: APPLYING EGAN'S 'SKILLED HELPER MODEL'

In Figure 6.2-1, Egan (2010:70) proposes "The Skilled Helper Model", consisting of three deictic stages.

Vide infra:

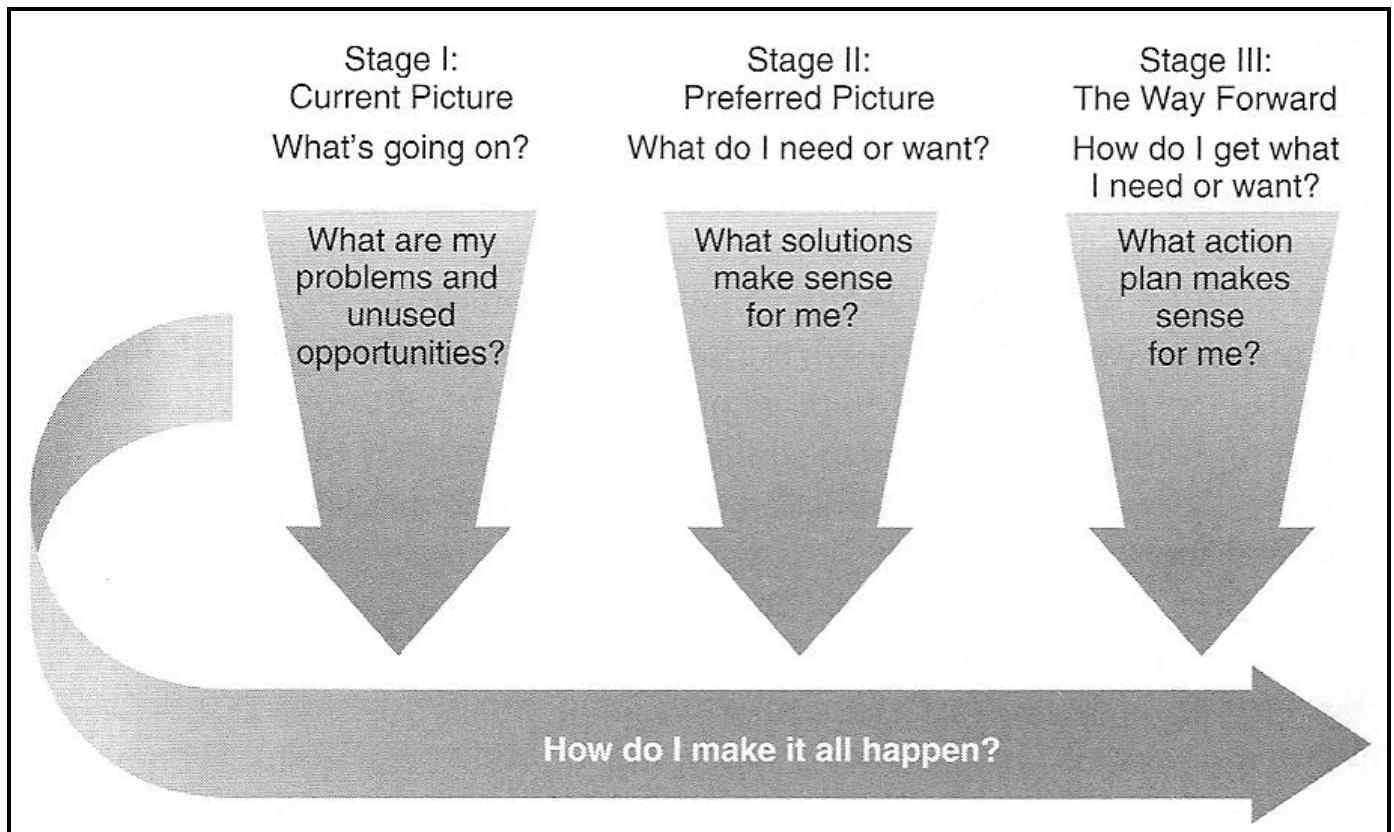


Figure 6.2-1: The Skilled Helper Model

Source: Egan (2010:70)

Egan (2010:70) briefly describes each stage as follows, which will also be broadly applied to this study:

6.2.1 Stage 1: Depicting the current situation

In Stage 1, one depicts the “Current Picture” (i.e. what are the issues and what new opportunities emerged from the findings in Chapter 5?) (cf. Figure 6.2-1). Figure 6.2-2 depicts the current situation (i.e. the nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health) and highlights the issues that need to be addressed. *Vide infra*:

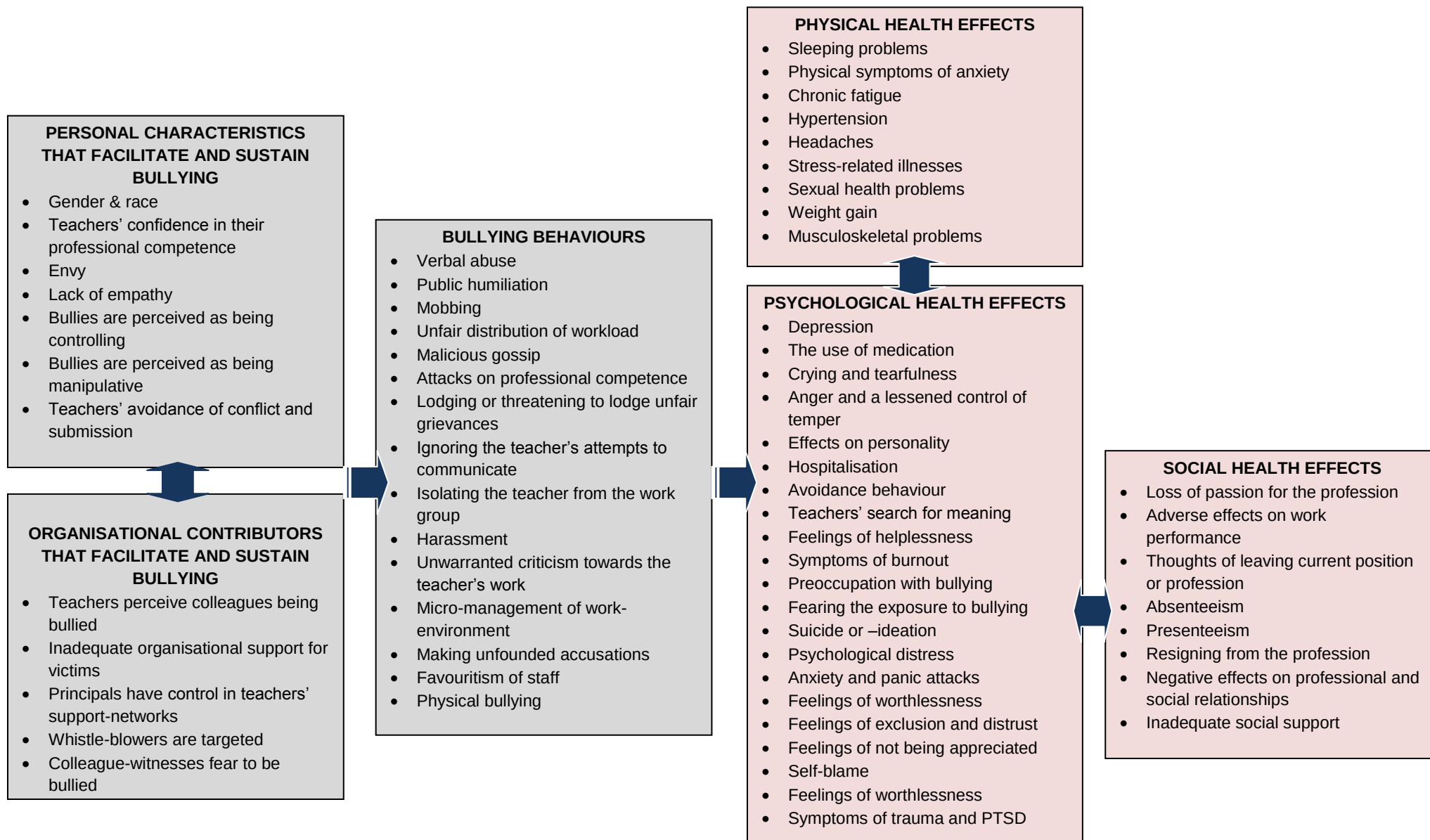


Figure 6.2-2: The nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession: the current situation

Figure 6.2-2 depicts the following issues:

6.2.1.1 Issue 1: Bullying behaviours are person and work-related attacks

Bullying behaviours were personal attacks on targeted teachers' character (i.e. *person-related* bullying) and attacks toward their work (i.e. *work-related* bullying) (cf. par 2.4.1). Examples of *person-related bullying* included verbal abuse (cf. par 5.4.1.1), public humiliation (cf. par 5.4.1.2), mobbing (cf. par 5.4.1.3), malicious gossip (cf. par 5.4.1.5), harassment (cf. par 5.4.1.9), isolation from the work group (cf. par 5.4.1.12), favouritism of staff (cf. par 5.4.1.14) and physical bullying (cf. par 5.4.1.15). Examples of *work-related bullying* included an unfair distribution of workload (cf. par 5.4.1.4), attacks on professional competence (cf. par 5.4.1.6), lodging or threatening to lodge unfair complaints (cf. par 5.4.1.7), ignoring the teacher's attempts to communicate (cf. par 5.4.1.8), micro-managing the work environment (cf. par 5.4.1.10), unwarranted criticism toward teachers' work (cf. par 5.4.1.11), as well as making unfounded accusations (cf. par 5.4.1.13).

6.2.1.2 Issue 2: Workplace bullying affects physical, psychological, and social health

Findings in Chapter 5 indicated that workplace bullying initially affects teachers on a psychological level (i.e. cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally) (cf. par 5.4.3), which were also accompanied by symptoms of physical ill-health (cf. par 5.4.2). Health symptoms rarely occurred in solitude. Clusters of physical and psychological health problems were in some cases symptomatic of psychological disorders, specifically major depressive episode (cf. par 5.4.3.1), panic attacks (cf. par 5.4.3.16) and PTSD (cf. par 5.4.3.21), as was also reported in the introductory chapter. A constant crying and tearfulness (which may be indicative of sadness) (cf. par 5.4.3.3), suicidal ideation (cf. par 5.4.3.12), feelings of anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4), feelings of helplessness (cf. par 5.4.3.8), search for meaning (cf. par 5.4.3.11), isolation and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17), a preoccupation with the bullying experience (cf. par 5.4.3.13), and symptoms of somatisation (cf. par 5.4.2), may be characteristic of C-PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2) in teachers who do not have a diagnosable psychological disorder.

Bullied teachers' ill-health is noxious for their social relationships, including relationships with children and spouses/ life partners (cf. pars 5.4.4.2 & 5.4.4.3) and colleagues (cf. par 5.4.4.1). Bullied teachers often have a tendency to socially and emotionally withdraw relationships at work and at home (cf. par

5.4.3.9). Their communication may be limited due to feelings of isolation and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17). Changes in behaviour often frustrate family members, which may have an effect on the nature of the social support they receive (cf. par 5.4.4.4). Colleagues-witnesses may also withdraw their involvement with victims due to their fear that they may be targeted (cf. par 5.4.7.5).

The school organisation is further affected owing to teachers' loss of passion for the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.1) and reduced work productivity (cf. par 5.4.5.2). Teachers' ill-health is the reason for increased absenteeism (cf. par 5.4.5.4). Some teachers considered leaving their current teaching position, or ultimately, the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.6).

6.2.1.3 Issue 3: Personal and organisational characteristics facilitate and sustain workplace bullying in the teaching profession

Personal characteristics of bullied teachers and bullying colleagues/ principals play an important role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying in this context (cf. par 5.4.6). Demographic characteristics, such as gender (e.g. being female) (cf. par 5.4.6.2) and race (cf. par 5.4.6.8) reportedly increased some teachers' risk to be targeted. Personality characteristics of victims and bullies nevertheless play the most important role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying. Teachers seem to have confidence in their achievements and professional competence (cf. par 0), which may be provoke envy (cf. par 5.4.6.4) in bullying colleagues and/ or principals. According to some teachers, bullying principals also lack empathy (cf. par 5.4.6.3), and are controlling (cf. par 5.4.6.5) and manipulative (cf. par 5.4.6.7). Some teachers also tend to evade conflict and yield to bullying behaviour (cf. par 5.4.6.6), which may make them easy targets for repeated bullying.

A number of organisational characteristics (cf. par 5.4.7) play a major role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying in this context. The current organisational support system seems to be inadequate to address bullied teachers' grievances (cf. par 5.4.7.2). Bullying principals' often hold high positions in education labour unions and their relationship with role-players who may be involved with the investigation of formal grievances (cf. par 5.4.7.3) are the major organisational issues that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying. Whistle-blowers are also often bullied (cf. par 5.4.7.4) due to this biased support system. Participant 6 claims that "There is nothing taking place. They have what you call the

EAP, but it's not working. You know why it's not working? It's because you need to go to the principal to get support." Colleagues' observation of this inadequate organisational support system creates a fear that they will also be targeted and therefore they often withdraw their involvement with the victim (cf. par 5.4.7.5).

6.2.2 Stage 2: Determining the preferred situation

In Stage 2, one determines the client's "Preferred Picture" (i.e. what solutions make sense to address teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health?) (cf. Figure 6.2-1). Solutions need to be proposed to address the personal and organisational causes of workplace bullying, as well as the physical, psychological and social health problems that stem from this experience.

6.2.2.1 Addressing personal and organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Strategies need to be implemented to address the personal and organisational characteristics that initially facilitate and sustain workplace bullying – both person and work-related attacks. Intervention ought to focus on working with the victims on an *individual level* to equip them with skills to prevent and manage incidents of workplace bullying. On a managerial level, one may attempt to suggest new skills to the bully – that is if he/ she is receptive to intervention initiatives on this level. On an *organisational level*, resources need to be implemented to guide ethical behaviour and specify the consequences for bullying behaviours at all levels of the school organisation.

Strategies also need to be implemented to provide an effective support system for teachers who are bullied. Participant 22 stated that "Dit sou lekker wees as daar 'n objektiewe instelling kon wees wat as bemiddelaars in sulke situasies kon optree. Dit sou ook lekker wees as daar 'n plek kon wees waar 'n mens sulke wanpraktyke anoniem kan aanmeld en boelies kan verkla." [*It would be nice if there was an objective institution that can act as mediators in such situations. It would also be nice if there was a place where one can anonymously report bullies' misconduct*]. This quote underscores the need for an external professional support network, where bullied teachers can report and/ or seek advice for their experiences.

6.2.2.2 Addressing the effects of workplace bullying on physical, psychological and social health

In order for the health effects of workplace bullying to be effectively addressed, a professional support system needs to be in place. A multi-professional support network (i.e. various health care professionals, including counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists and general practitioners) play a significant role in assisting victims to manage and/ or recover from physical and psychological ill-health.

Teachers' health experiences often cause frustration in family members. Family members may not be aware of the nature of victims' experiences and therefore it is necessary to also involve them in the process. Participant 2 shared the following: "I wish my wife was here. To my surprise basically she never considered it seriously. She said I was having a nervous breakdown. I should attend the doctor. This is how I am living."

Colleague-witnesses may also not know how to deal with victims and/ or bullying situations. Education and training may equip them with skills to manage workplace bullying on a work group level.

6.2.3 Stage 3: A plan of action to achieve the preferred situation

In Stage 3, one determines the "The Way Forward" (i.e. what plan of action needs to be taken – what kind of multi-level intervention programme can be put forward to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession?) (cf. Figure 6.2-1). Literature on workplace bullying imply and/ or suggest that interventions may occur on two or more of the following levels in different combinations: societal, individual, familial, managerial, dyadic, work group and organisational level (cf. Rayner et al., 2002; Turney, 2003; Heames & Harvey, 2006; MacIntosh, 2006; Saam, 2010; Coyne, 2011; Farmer, 2011). Johnson (2011:56) proposes an ecological model for research and intervention in workplace bullying. According to this model, interventions should widely be considered and the precursors, as well as the effects of workplace bullying on all levels, should be the aim of intervention (Johnson, 2011:59).

Figure 6.2-1 finally illustrates an "Action Arrow", which specifies the broad and particular actions that one has to take to generate the desired changes (Egan, 2010:70). To address the issues that are identified in

the South African teaching profession, a multi-level intervention programme with specific strategic intervention activities, will be suggested for intervention on a professional, social/ community, individual/ familial, dyadic, organisational, managerial and work group level (Figure 6.2-3).

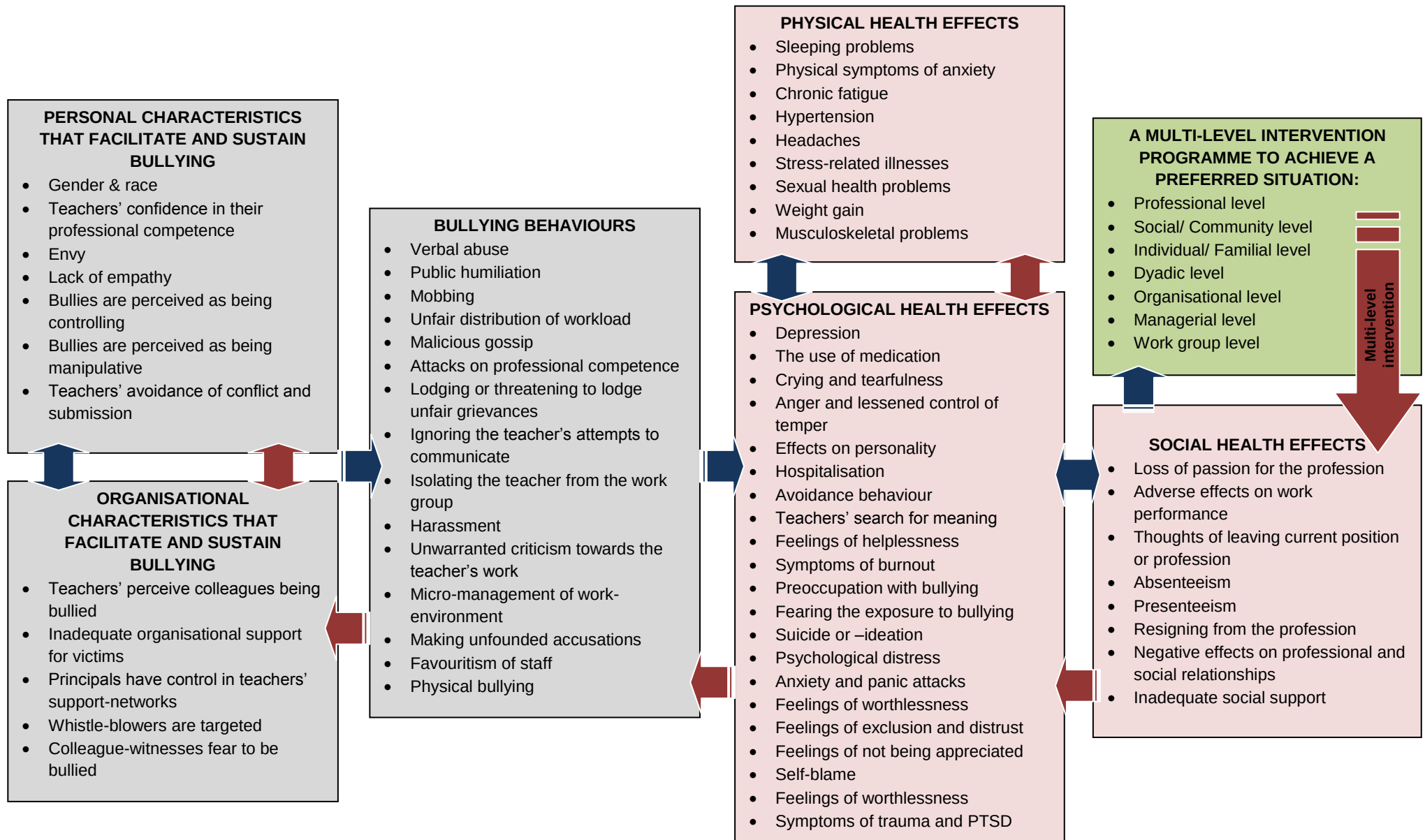


Figure 6.2-3: A plan of action to achieve the preferred situation

6.3 A STRATEGIC AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION

Firstly, it is necessary that researchers and interventionists take note of the impediments in an organisation that may pose difficulties for multi-level intervention. During the first phase of this study, I noticed that bullying principals may be an impediment to multi-level intervention, especially when it is carried out in an individual school. Consider the following:

- A bullying principal may be a *gatekeeper* and refuse to cooperate with an intervention programme that focuses on different levels of the school organisation. His/ her refusal may be driven by the need to control or manipulate the work environment, or to protect him/ herself from being incriminated.
- Bullied teachers may not be effectively reached if they work in an environment where whistle-blowers are targeted. They may not report their experiences or partake in intervention activities due to the fear that they will be victimised. It is thus necessary that the interventionist implements other resources where victims can share their experiences without being at risk to be intimidated or further victimised.
- The work group may resist intervention initiatives due to a lack of awareness and education on the nature of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on health.

These examples may have an effect on the manner in which one approaches multi-level intervention in the South African teaching profession.

In Figure 6.3-1, I suggest that interventionists take a strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention that may allow them to systematically move from intervention on a social level to intervention on different levels in an individual school. *Vide infra*:

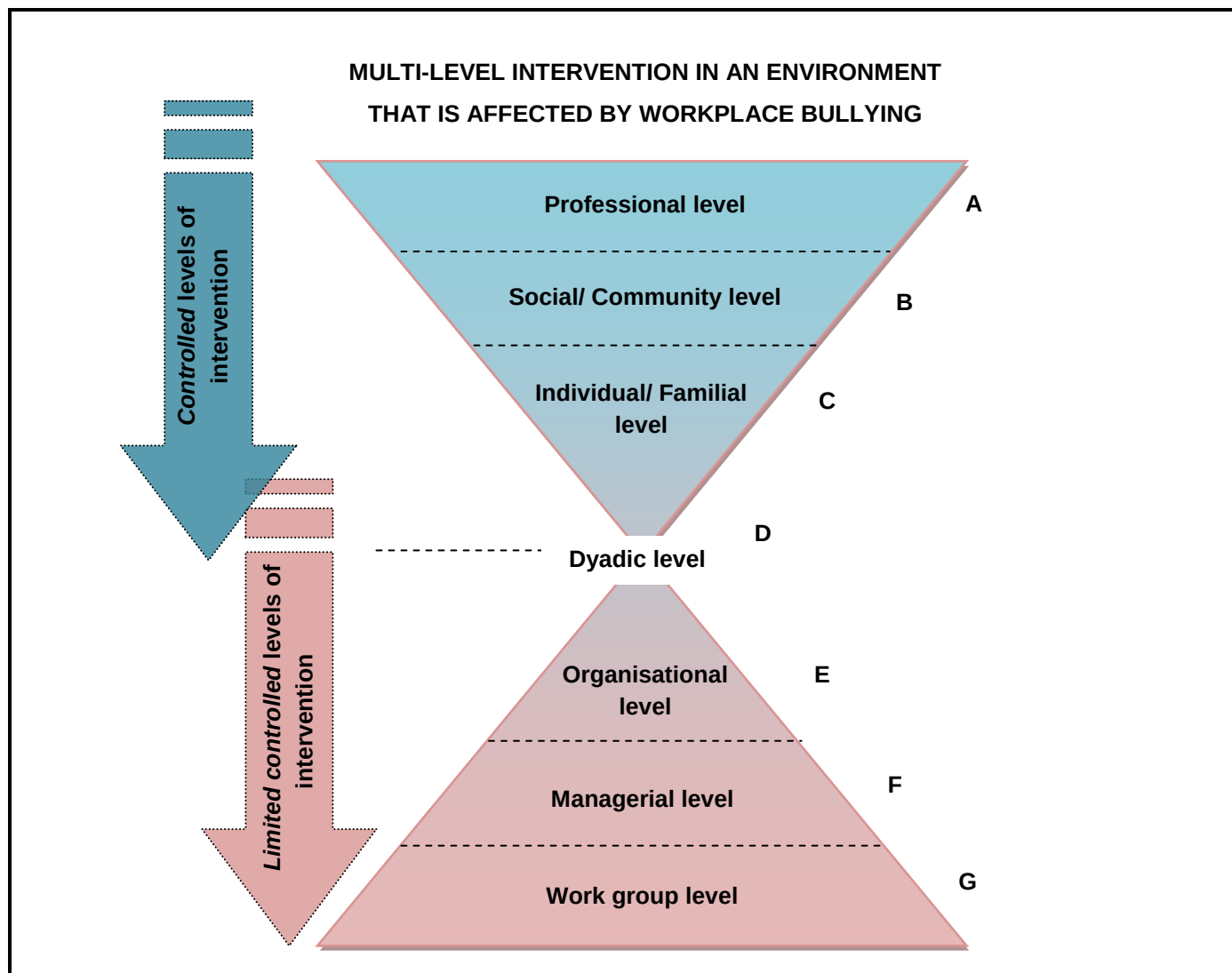


Figure 6.3-1: A strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention

- A. It is suggested that intervention starts on the *professional level* (cf. par 6.5.1). This level will entail establishing and educating a multi-disciplinary support network that will be involved at other levels of intervention to address the causes and effects of workplace bullying.
- B. The interventionist then intervenes on the *social/ community level* (cf. par 6.5.2). On this level, the mass media will be used as an advocate to raise public awareness regarding the prevalence and nature of workplace bullying, its effects on health and intervention initiatives that are implemented to address this issue. Alternative resources will also be made available to individuals who want to report and/ or seek advice for their experiences. This will lead to intervention on an individual/ familial level.

- C. Intervention on the *individual/ familial level* (cf. par 6.5.3) will address the physical, psychological and social health experiences that may surface in the victim and will also include family members as a form of social support. Some victims may further request the intervention of a third-party to address the bully-victim relationship on the *dyadic level*. Other victims may on the other hand choose not to confront the bully. In this case, the interventionist may only intervene on the first three levels.
- D. Intervention on the *dyadic level* (cf. par 6.5.4) intent to find a solution for the victim-bully relationship. Intervention will depend on the bully's receptiveness to find a solution and attend to the victim's experiences. Bullying principals may resist the implementation of intervention activities in the school. This may pose difficulties for intervention on the *organisational* (cf. par 6.5.5), *managerial* (cf. par 6.5.6) and *work group level* (cf. par 6.5.7). Bullying colleagues may also show resistance toward intervention initiatives, especially on a *work group level*.
- E. If a principal is not opposed to the implementation of strategic interventions in the school, intervention will occur on the *organisational level* (cf. par 6.5.5), which will focus on addressing the organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying. The aims will be to create a supportive psychosocial environment, to create a healthy school organisation and initiate organisational development.
- F. Intervention on the *managerial level* (cf. par 6.5.6) will assist principals to assess their own behaviours, to effectively recognise, prevent and manage stress in the school, to attend to bullied teachers' emotional experiences and to gather adequate information from the teacher and the alleged bully to solve a conflict situation.
- G. Intervention on the *work group level* (cf. par 6.5.7) will suggest activities to educate the work group regarding the nature of workplace bullying and its effects, managing this behaviour from a colleague-witnesses' standpoint, and will provide information regarding the content of the anti-workplace bullying policy and the resources that will be available to prevent and manage this phenomenon in the school organisation.

To conclude, based on the impediments that may occur in the teaching profession, it is theorised that the interventionist will have control whether intervention occurs on the first three levels (levels A-C), while he/ she may have limited control whether intervention will occur on the last four levels (levels D-G).

6.4 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:91) recommend a “time-course model” in which they plot intervention activities in relation to the time that bullying has occurred and the steps that need to be taken to address its effects. Their model consists of three intervention strategies that can be implemented (Caponecchia & Wyatt, 2011:90):

- “*Prevention strategies*” are implemented with the aim to prevent the “hazard” from spiraling into a harmful circumstance.
- “*Management strategies*” are akin to “damage control”. According to these researchers, the risk factor has already occurred at this stage, but management strategies are implemented that endeavor to limit its effects before it exacerbates.
- “*Recovery and learning strategies*” are efforts to repair and strengthen the individual, work group (and)/ or organisation after harm has already been done.

These three intervention strategies will be applied in this research study to develop the multi-level intervention programme. Table 6.4-1 summarises the strategic intervention activities that will be suggested for each level, the aim(s) of each activity, and indicates whether the intervention activity will be aimed at *prevention*, *management* and/ or *recovery and learning*. *Vide infra*:

Table 6.4-1: A summary of the suggested strategic intervention activities, the aim(s) of each activity and the type of strategy

	Suggested strategic intervention activities	Specific aim(s)	Prevention	Management	Recovery and learning
Professional level	Strategic intervention activity 1: Establishing a multi-disciplinary support network	To establish a multi-disciplinary support network that may be involved on other levels on intervention	•	•	•
	Strategic intervention activity 2: Workshop for registered health professionals	To raise awareness and provide education to health professionals regarding their role in addressing the health effects of workplace bullying		•	•
	Strategic intervention activity 3: Workshop and round table discussion for law specialists and policy-makers	To raise awareness regarding the need for anti-workplace bullying policies and legislation among law professionals and policy-makers	•	•	
Social/ Community level	Strategic intervention activity 4: Mass media campaign	To use the mass media as an advocate to raise public awareness To build a network of media allies	•		
	Strategic intervention activity 5: Multi-disciplinary conference on workplace bullying	To raise public awareness and provide education to different stakeholders	•		
	Strategic intervention activity 6: Telephone helpline and/ or crisis intervention	To create a supportive resource for victims to report their experiences and/ seek advice outside of the work context To address immediate health care needs through crisis intervention	•	•	

Individual/ Familial level	Strategic intervention activity 7: Counselling	To address the physical and psychological ill-health in victims To involve family as a social support network To help victims identify possible options to deal with bullying To provide victims with skills to deal with bullying		•	•
	Strategic intervention activity 8: Inpatient-treatment, psychiatric care or long-term therapy	To provide support to teachers who experience depression and/ PTSD or other psychiatric conditions			•
Dyadic level	Strategic intervention activity 9: Mediation, conciliation, arbitration and/ or legal action	To address the bully-victim relationship and decide on a solution		•	•
Organisational level	Strategic intervention activity 10: Developing a risk-management system for individual schools	To address the organisational culture in an individual school and initiate organisational development To create a supportive psychosocial environment	•	•	•
	Strategic intervention activity 11: Creating an information-rich work environment	To provide educational and informative documents in the workplace	•		

Managerial level	Strategic intervention activity 12: Mentor-coaching for principals	To coach principals to assess their own behaviours To coach and empower principals to recognise and manage signs of stress in the workplace To coach principals to recognise the emotional impact of bullying on a victim To coach principals questioning skills to gather information from conflicting parties	•	•	•
Work group level	Strategic intervention activity 13: Educational workshop	To educate the work group to recognise and manage incidences of workplace bullying To educate the workgroup regarding the content of the anti-workplace bullying policy and available organisational resources	•	•	•

6.5 ADDRESSING WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH: A MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Relevant literature, communication with bullied teachers, fieldnotes made during the research process, and findings in Chapter 5 guided ideas regarding strategic intervention activities that may be most effective to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the South African teaching profession. This section will provide a detailed discussion regarding the content of the strategic intervention activities for each of the seven levels.

6.5.1 Professional level

A multi-professional support network is vital to address the causes and effects of workplace bullying in the teaching profession. A support network may intervene on different levels of the school organisation, but may also function independently and provide professional services external to the school organisation. In a research study, victims identified the need for a neutral, external institution that creates a safe milieu, that can be an advocate for employees, listen to their worries, think about disputes, advise on steps to take, and can lay down enforceable punishments (MacIntosh, 2006:676), which is also suggested for this research study.

6.5.1.1 Strategic intervention activity 1: Establishing a multi-disciplinary support-network

The support that is available to teachers seems to be inadequate (cf. par 5.4.7.2) and therefore it is suggested that a multi-disciplinary support network – consisting of professionals with different expertise and who can be approached to intervene on different levels – is established. It is recommended that names of professionals, who practice or intend to practice in the field of workplace bullying in the national arena, are listed and distributed as a guide for referral among other professionals, academics, schools, bullied teachers and/ or families, as well as the friends and colleagues of bullied teachers. Membership of the multi-disciplinary support team will be voluntary. No funding will be needed, but frequent communication must occur between members to ensure constant interest and participation in intervention activities. Table 6.5-1 provides an example list of professionals that may be considered for intervention on each level:

Table 6.5-1: Establishing a multi-disciplinary support-network

Multi-levels	Examples of professionals that may be involved at each level
Professional level	• Professionals knowledgeable in the field of workplace bullying, who are skilled to provide training to other professionals
Social/ Community level	• Journalists • Multiple professionals (e.g. human resource managers, labour relations officers, counsellors, psychologists, academics/ researchers, social workers, law specialists) • Various interest groups, for example representatives from the Department of Education (DoE) and various education labour unions, mental health and recovery institutions
Individual/ familial level	• Counsellors • Psychologists • Psychiatrists • General Practitioners
Dyadic level	• Professionals specialising in addressing workplace disputes (e.g. labour relations officers, mediators / conciliators/ arbitrators, human resource managers, law consultants, labour union representative)
Organisational level	• Law consultants • Researchers • Psychologists • Human resource managers • Representatives of education labour unions • Journalists
Managerial level	• Counsellors • Human resource managers
Work group level	• Counsellors/ Psychologists

6.5.1.2 Strategic intervention activity 2: Workshop for registered health professionals

The experience of workplace bullying causes physical (cf. par 5.4.2) and psychological ill-health (cf. par 5.4.3). Different health professionals (general practitioners, counsellors, social workers psychologists, psychiatrists, etc.) will therefore play an important role in assisting victims to manage and/ or recuperate from physical and psychological health problems on the individual/ familial level.

Unskilled and unknowledgeable health professionals may cause more harm than what has already been caused to health. It is recommended that various mental health professionals (e.g. social workers,

psychologists, EAP-professionals) are educated with the anticipation of getting them involved and raising awareness among these professionals concerning the negative traumatic effects experienced from workplace bullying (Farmer, 2011:199). It is suggested that a workshop, comprising of the following aspects, is presented to health professionals. *Vide infra*:

6.5.1.2.1 Session 1: Group activity: What is the nature and effects of workplace bullying?

It is suggested that an informative and educational *Power Point Presentation* is presented to raise awareness and educate attendees regarding the nature of workplace bullying and the effects it may have on health. The presentation will focus on the following aspects:

- The definition of workplace bullying (cf. par 1.7);
- Typical bullying behaviours (cf. pars 2.4.2 & 5.4.1);
- The possible effects of workplace bullying on physical and psychological health (cf. pars 3.5.1 & 3.5.2);
- Psychological disorders that are associated with the experience of workplace bullying (cf. pars 3.5.2.4 & 5.4.3);
- The effects of workplace bullying on social and professional relationships, and organisational health (cf. pars 3.5.3, 5.4.4 & 5.4.5).

6.5.1.2.2 Session 2: Small group activity: Managing a report of workplace bullying

Timely and effective intervention on the individual/ familial level (cf. par 6.5.3) may prevent the escalation of physical and psychological health effects in victims. It is imperative that health professionals recognise when a victim's reported experience is characteristic of workplace bullying, can identify what type of health care is needed, and can recognise ethical issues that may derive from that specific case. The work group will be divided into small groups and this session will comprise the following activities:

6.5.1.2.2.1 Analysing a case study

The interventionist beforehand compiles several case studies that illustrate the phenomenon of workplace bullying in the teaching profession. Small groups will each receive a different case study that

depicts a typical experience that may be reported by a victim of workplace bullying. Groups will then analyse the case study as follows:

- Based on the information provided in Session 1, is the case study indicative of workplace bullying? What aspects of the case study indicate that the experience is *workplace bullying*?
- What health effects does the victim present with?
- What are the victim's immediate needs in terms of physical and psychological health care?
- Identify and list a multi-disciplinary support network (cf. par 6.5.1.1) of professionals who may be most appropriately skilled and trained to intervene in this particular case study.
- Identify the ethical issues that may possibly emerge the particular case study.

6.5.1.2.2.2 Presentation of findings and group discussion

Each small group will be given the opportunity to present their case study, the multi-disciplinary team that are proposed to address the immediate needs of the victim, as well as the ethical issues that may surface from the particular case study. This may be accompanied by a group discussion.

6.5.1.2.3 Session 3: Individual activity: Identifying one's professional activities and attending to personal and professional health

6.5.1.2.3.1 Identifying professional activities

It is also essential that each health professional is aware of his/ her level of training and the level at which he/ she can be involved in supporting a victim. Each attendee will be requested to apply his/ her small group case study and make a note of the professional activities that he/ she can implement to support a victim to manage and recover from his/ her health experiences. These suggestions should be in line with his/ her level of training and scope of practice, as is stipulated by his/ her professional body/ institution. It is important that he/ she recognises the limit of his/ her professional training and knows when to refer to another professional for specialised consultations.

6.5.1.2.3.2 Attending to personal and professional health: A self-awareness exercise

According to Proctor and Tehrani (2001:178), there is a price to being a helper, since listening to victims' accounts may cause him/ her to experience similar pain and distress that they experience. Each health

professional needs to recognise when he/ she presents with health problems, such as professional burnout, which may reduce his/ her efficacy to deal with victims. Welfel (2006:60) claims that a health professional has the duty to engage in self-monitoring and to take steps to amend or suspend practice if required, in order to avoid doing harm to clients. Each professional attendee will be required to respond to the following questions:

- What emotional, psychological and physical health experiences are signs that I am “burned out”?
- What stress-reducing activities can/ do I implement to prevent burnout?
- Who will be part of my social and/ or professional support network when I am experiencing burnout?

6.5.1.3 Strategic intervention activity 3: Workshop and round table discussion for law specialists and policy-makers

Workplace bullying may infringe on teachers’ human and/ or labour rights. It is therefore also necessary to raise awareness and educate law specialists and policy-makers who may be involved in legally preventing workplace bullying and protecting teachers who are victims. This intervention activity may initiate discussions on the development of new legislation and/ or revision of existing legislations. Based on their review of legislation that may apply to bullying and harassment in the workplace, Le Roux *et al.* (2010:65) claims that there is an ambiguity of vested legal solutions to manage workplace bullying and they highlight the need for new legislation. Johnson (2011:60) recognises that legislations that prohibit workplace bullying, will however not make this issue fade away. Legislation may nevertheless be the first step to reduce and ultimately prevent workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession.

A workshop and round table discussion regarding the nature and effects of workplace bullying, and the necessity for the development of preventative measures (e.g. anti-workplace bullying policies and legislation) that can also be applied to manage incidences, will be facilitated by a professional(s) who is knowledgeable on the topic of workplace bullying and its relation to law and policy-development. Attendees may include law specialists, and representatives from education labour unions and the DoE. The following sessions will be presented:

6.5.1.3.1 Session 1: The nature of workplace bullying and recent research

A similar *Power Point Presentation* that is foreseen to be presented to health professionals (cf. par 6.5.1.2.1) will also be presented in this session. The phenomenon of workplace bullying will be defined from a human and/ or labour rights perspective (cf. par 1.7) to trigger a discussion for the following session.

6.5.1.3.2 Session 2: A round table discussion

The following issues will be discussed:

6.5.1.3.2.1 The need for the development of anti-workplace bullying policies in individual schools

The necessity for the development of anti-workplace bullying policies in individual schools will be underscored. Anti-workplace bullying stipulations can also add to vested anti-harassment and violence deterrence policies, given that bullying is a different, although legal type of harassment, as well as a “sub-lethal” type of violence that is not physical in nature (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2009:68). An anti-workplace bullying policy may supplement existing South African legislations. Attendees will be requested to share their thoughts on strategies that can be implemented to encourage individual schools to develop anti-workplace bullying policies as a preventative strategy.

6.5.1.3.2.2 The role of law specialists/ consultants in the multi-disciplinary support network

The role of the law specialists/ consultants in the multi-disciplinary support network will be discussed. It is suggested that a self-regulating body needs to examine and do something about complaints of bullying, especially when the manager is identified as the perpetrator and official structures do not exist in the organisation to handle these issues (Turney, 2003:7). These law specialists/ consultants (in collaboration with representatives from education labour unions) can be approached by bullied teachers to provide advice, especially when there is a chance that reports of workplace bullying may not be scrutinised by an objective team in the school organisation. Reports can therefore be investigated without the case being subjected to ‘office politics’ where the bully has relationships with important role-players and/ or hold high positions in education labour unions (cf. par 5.4.7.3). This independent body is likely to intervene on the dyadic level (cf. par 6.5.4), and will especially investigate reports pertaining to

unlawful workplace behaviour, such as different forms of harassment (cf. par 5.4.1.9), physical assaults (cf. par 5.4.1.15) and various other unfair labour practices (cf. par 2.3.2.5).

6.5.2 Social/ Community level

Johnson (2011:60) recommends that apart from legislations, educational campaigns that raise public awareness of workplace bullying and its effects, are required. The mass media will be used for *advocacy* to raise public awareness and to provide education. Wallack, Dorfman, Jernigan and Themba (1993:27) define *advocacy* as “*Advocacy* is a catch-all word for the set of skills used to create a shift in public opinion and mobilize the necessary resources and forces to support an issue, policy, or constituency.” There are two advantages that may emanate from a public that is informed (Namie, Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2011:451). Firstly, the familiarity with the subject of bullying facilitates the elimination of its stigma, and secondly, individuals will feel empowered to tackle the present acceptance of this phenomenon (Namie et al., 2011:451). Advocacy and public awareness may increase the credibility of the phenomenon of adult/ workplace bullying. It may mobilise different stakeholders in the teaching profession to initiate strategies that will begin to address this issue on all levels of the organisation.

6.5.2.1 Strategic intervention activity 4: Mass media campaign

It is suggested that public awareness and education is provided by involving media allies and using different media channels. Namie and colleagues have effectively used mass media allies and channels in the international arena as a tool to raise awareness on workplace bullying (Namie et al., 2011:452). There are many mass media channels that can be approached to raise public awareness in South Africa. Interventionists need to be mindful when choosing media channels for the campaign. All advantages and disadvantages of specific media channels should be considered (e.g. Who is the target audience of the particular media channel? What will be the time frame of the campaign? What costs are involved with using the particular media channel?). The following mass media channels can be considered:

- Educational and informative television programmes that air in family time and that specifically attend to social issues that affect the wellbeing of people and/ or communities;
- Articles and paid advertisements in printed newspapers (i.e. community-, national-, and target-specific publications);

- Magazine articles that will reach different segments of the target group, including bullied employees, bullies, families of victims, and etcetera;
- Collaboration with topic-specific websites.

A classic account of workplace bullying in the media begins with a “‘human interest’ angle” where a victim – who is firstly psychologically screened beforehand and then referred to the media correspondent – explains his/ her experiences of workplace bullying, which is then usually shortened for three to five few minutes *live* or concise paragraphs in printed media (Namie et al., 2011:452). Media reports, which share other bullied teachers’ experiences and the effects bullying has had on their health and wellbeing, may draw the attention of other teachers who may be bullied, but who are also oblivious to their experiences. This was highlighted by Participant 18 in the first phase of this study: “Toe ek die artikel in die *Rooi Rose* lees, was dit asof dit my eie verhaal is. Ek was totaal oorweldig en oorstelp van vreugde dat iemand, iewers, uiteindelik begrip het vir dit waardeur ek elke dag moet worstel.” *[When I read the article in the Rooi Rose, it seemed as if it was my own story. I was totally overwhelmed with joy that someone, somewhere, finally understands with what I go through every day.]*

The forte of the mass media lies in its capability to get in touch with larger audiences and groups that would not be easy to reach by way of more interpersonal means (Green & Tones, 2010:362). The mass media however has its boundaries, since it cannot develop skills, attain sustained attitudes and amend behaviours, except if it forms part of wide-ranging programme (Green & Tones, 2010:362); which may be achieved by this multi-level intervention programme. The mass media is an appropriate method to reach all stakeholders who may not be reached through other methods. Raising awareness by means of mass media channels may give stakeholders the opportunity to also respond via a supportive telephone helpline (cf. par 6.5.2.3) or directly to an individual professional to seek advice. This method can help the interventionist to identify teachers and/ or individual schools that may need and benefit from intervention other levels.

6.5.2.2 Strategic intervention activity 5: A multi-disciplinary conference on workplace bullying

A multi-disciplinary conference on workplace bullying will be presented in a formal setting or tertiary institution. Professionals who are part of the multi-disciplinary team (cf. par 6.5.1.1) will be assigned to conduct educational presentations on the facet of workplace bullying they specialise in. Renowned professionals will be invited to be guest speakers. Educational presentations will cover the following categories:

- recent national and international research on bullying in various professions (particularly the teaching profession);
- the nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health;
- the link between workplace bullying and law;
- strategies that can be implemented to deal with this phenomenon on different levels; and
- support networks that can be approached to effectively manage the experience and effects of workplace bullying.

This conference will be informative/ educational and all stakeholders and/ or interest groups interested in learning more about the phenomenon of workplace bullying or who may add to presentations may attend this event. Examples of the various interest groups that may be involved include:

- *Representatives from various education labour unions and the DoE.* Representatives from education labour unions and the DoE will be invited to attend the conference. This may be an opportunity to educate and inform these representatives regarding the prevalence of workplace bullying in the teaching profession and the severe effects it may have on the health of teachers and the school organisation.
- *Multi-professionals.* Professionals in the health and law sectors (e.g. human resource and labour relations managers, counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, law professionals), and academics will be invited to attend the conference. This event may also encourage professionals to join the multi-professional support network (cf. par 6.5.1.1). Information

regarding the nature of the conference will also be made available at schools and in the printed media to encourage teachers to attend this event.

- *Representatives from SANCA (South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence) (SANCA, 2006) and SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group) (SADAG, 2012).* Representatives and professionals working for SADAG and SANCA will be invited to provide information and support to bullied teachers who may seek advice to manage experiences of depression (cf. par 5.4.3.1), symptoms of trauma/ PTSD (cf. par 5.4.3.21), anxiety and panic attacks (cf. par 5.4.3.16), thoughts of death or thoughts of attempted suicide (cf. pars 5.4.3.12), or who may be abusing any form of substance (cf. par 5.4.3.2). It is imperative that SADAG is aware of the phenomenon of workplace bullying and how it may be a trigger for mood disorders, particularly major depressive episode (cf. par 5.4.3.1). Bullied teachers may be encouraged to join the “Let’s talk” campaign, which is an initiative by *pharma dynamics* (2012) and SADAG (2012). It is fundamental that bullied teachers’ experiences are shared during a campaign of this nature to raise public awareness regarding the link between specific stressors, such as workplace bullying, and depression.
- *Representatives from Department of Social Development (DSD).* Raising awareness and educating representatives from the DSD may trigger discussions regarding the revision of the current *National Policy Guidelines For Victim Empowerment* (Department of Social Development, n.d.). This policy supports victims of abuse in different social and domestic environments, but it overlooks the workplace as a context where people may also be abused and victimised (cf. Department of Social Development, n.d.).
- *Community journalists.* Community journalists will be invited to report on the nature of the conference and the various interest groups who were involved. This will add to the mass media campaign (cf. par 6.5.2.1) and will further raise public awareness regarding initiatives that are implemented to address workplace bullying in the teaching profession.

6.5.2.3 Strategic intervention activity 6: Helpline support and/ or crisis intervention

The mass media campaign and the suggested conference may encourage individual teachers to report their experiences of workplace bullying. During the first phase of this study it was apparent that most

teachers were in favour of an option where they can anonymously share their experiences telephonically (cf. par 4.3.3). It is therefore suggested that a *telephone helpline* (Proctor & Tehrani, 2001:167) is established where trained and supervised counsellors form a short-term support network for bullied teachers and/ or family members who want to report experiences and seek advice to deal with the effects of workplace bullying. A telephone helpline may be an ideal resource for bullied teachers who have limited support due to principals' control in their support systems (cf. par 5.4.7.3), who may fear being targeted for reporting incidences of bullying (cf. par 5.4.7.4), and who prefer to remain anonymous.

Helpline counsellors may also have to apply crisis intervention to address the immediate needs of bullied teachers. James and Gilliland (2005:3) summarise a *crisis* as follows: "crisis is a perception or experiencing of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanisms." According to these researchers, basically all counselling begins as a crisis intervention (James & Gilliland, 2005:xxi). A bullied teacher's experiences may be overwhelming and crisis intervention may be required to protect him/ her from immediate physical and/ or psychological harm, or when thoughts of suicide are present. The telephone helpline may provide information and may operate as a course toward counselling or support services (Proctor & Tehrani, 2001:167). Counsellors will assess each case to determine whether it is necessary to refer the respondent to appropriate professionals for specialised consultations, such as crisis intervention and individual counselling (cf. par 6.5.3.1) or in-patient treatment/ psychiatric care or long-term therapy (cf. par 6.5.3.2).

Namie *et al.* (2011:451) discovered that limitations for telephone counsellors in their campaign had to be established, seeing that these counsellors had a high risk to be vicariously traumatised. It is therefore necessary to attend to helpline counsellors' health, assist them to recognise when they present with health problems and identify effective practices that may help them reduce stress (cf. par 6.5.1.2.3). It is also important to note that Namie and colleagues had to stop this costly telephone counselling service (Namie *et al.*, 2011:451). It is therefore necessary that adequate funding is available before establishing a supportive telephone helpline. The helpline can alternatively also be administrated by a mental health professional in private practice.

6.5.3 Individual/ Familial level

Intervention on the social/ community level (cf. par 6.5.2) may attract teachers who require intervention on an individual/ familial level. The experience of workplace bullying may induce numerous physical and psychological health problems (cf. pars 5.4.2 & 5.4.3), may also impinge on familial health (cf. pars 5.4.4.2 & 5.4.4.3) and therefore respondents may need assistance or consultations from various health professionals to manage the effects of bullying and to possibly prevent current health effects from escalating. The following strategic intervention activities are suggested for this level:

6.5.3.1 Strategic intervention activity 7: Counselling

Counselling services is reportedly one of the approaches that fails to be helpful as a response to workplace bullying, as indicated by a research study (cf. MacIntosh, 2006:671). The ineffectiveness of counselling services may however be caused by professionals' lack of knowledge, education and training regarding the theory and practice of workplace bullying. Intervention on the professional level (cf. par 6.5.1) is therefore essential to ensure that mental health professionals are adequately educated before intervening on this level.

A counsellor may be an approach to manage personal and emotional impact that may stem from bullying and harassment (Proctor & Tehrani, 2001:167). Individuals manage their emotions and illnesses linked to trauma, better when they unveil these experiences to supportive listeners (Tracy, Alberts & Rivera, 2007:5). A counselling process may help teachers to reduce various symptoms of physical and psychological stress, anxiety, depression and trauma (cf. par 5.4.3).

Although each mental health professional may have a unique way of conducting the counselling process, each counselling process may generally be similar to the elements of the "integrated model of counselling" that is proposed by Tehrani (2012c:156). This model consists of five main elements: *assessment, education, symptom reduction, integration and understanding and rehabilitation and return to work* (Tehrani, 2012c:156). According to Tehrani (2012c:156), the emphasis or significance of each element may change during the advancement of counselling. More emphasis may therefore be placed on the element of counselling that is necessary to address the victim's individual needs. The counsellor

needs to be constantly conscious of the process, the elements, the termination of the counselling relationship and agreement (Tehrani, 2012c:156).

This model of counselling will be applied as a *framework* to illustrate a counselling process for teachers who are victims of workplace bullying. Important points, made by Tehrani (2012c), will be highlighted. Each element will further be elaborated and supported with literature and/ or activities that may be applicable to that element. *Vide infra*:

6.5.3.1.1 Element 1: Assessment

The first element entails determining the nature of the teacher's experience and identifying specific needs that have to be addressed during the counselling process. Tehrani (2012c:157) suggests that the assessment begins with providing a sketch of what will happen during the first session. She identifies three sections of *assessment* (Tehrani, 2012c:157):

- Firstly, a structured interview is conducted to take the victim's life history and giving him/ her the chance to explain why he/ she has sought counselling (Tehrani, 2012c:157);
- The victim may need to undertake psychometric evaluations to determine the aims and direction of the counselling process. The questionnaires include those that measure clinical health signs (e.g. anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress), and work health and well-being (e.g. personality, coping skills, locus of control, style of behaviour, health and lifestyle) (Tehrani, 2012c:157). The counsellor ought to implement tests that allow him/ her to write comprehensive notes that indicate the nature of the bullied teacher's experiences, the physical, psychological and social health effects that emanated from his/ her experiences, and other professionals that may be involved in his/ her health care. The second section of *assessment* therefore entails reviewing the outcomes and providing feedback on questionnaires the victim has completed (Tehrani, 2012c:157); and
- Thirdly, the counsellor and victim talk about what outcomes he/ she anticipates and a decision is made regarding what the best approach will be (Tehrani, 2012c:157).

The element of *assessment* may be akin to Egan's (2010:70) approach (cf. par 6.2), which may be a practical guide for this phase of counselling.

Tehrani (2012c:157) furthermore advises that the victim must preferably not be involved in a bullying situation or other negative behaviours prior to the counselling process, since the risk of the experience of trauma may destabilise the counselling process. The teacher may have to be removed from the bullying situation for a while to address his/ her existing health experiences and to empower him/ her to identify alternatives to manage future incidences of workplace bullying.

Tehrani finally concludes that after assessment, a written report and a plan for prospective counselling sessions, where suitable, are provided to the victim and the programme and plan must be decided on (Tehrani, 2012c:158). The counselling commences only when the counsellor and client have agreed on the substance of the report and the counselling programme (Tehrani, 2012c:158).

6.5.3.1.2 Element 2: Education

Tehrani (2012c:158) claims that *education* is a continual activity, is fully incorporated in other counselling activities and is a significant constituent of the integrated counselling approach. *Education* during a counselling process may include the following:

6.5.3.1.2.1 Discussing the outcomes of psychometric assessments

The results from the previous psychometric testing may be used to show the victim the basic coping skill that he/ she may be lacking and what steps he/ she has to take to develop that particular skill (Tehrani, 2012c:158).

6.5.3.1.2.2 Self-education

The entire counselling process is one of action learning for a few clients, in which they are requested to seek answers and significance from experiences (Tehrani, 2012c:158). Some victims may engage in self-education activities, such as reading recommended books, or utilising their own expertise, family feedback and reading to devise theories on their responses and reactions (Tehrani, 2012c:158). Teachers' experiences may prompt or aggravate psychological issues in the family and/ or lead to the separation between spouses/ life partners (cf. par 5.4.4.3). Due to the impact on family, it is sensible to contemplate including them in the counselling process (Hoel & Cooper, 2000:115). This may help family members understand the nature of the teacher's experience and the effects on his/ her health. Family can show their support by listening to the victim without judging or evaluating him/ her, validating his/ her

experience, showing empathy, sharing their own experiences, and educating themselves on the topic of workplace bullying (Namie & Namie, 2009a:98-100).

6.5.3.1.2.3 Educating the victim about the normality of physical health responses

Bullied teachers may perceive their physical health responses (cf. par 5.4.2) as abnormal. Education may therefore involve informing a victim regarding the physical health effects that may be evoked by workplace bullying, explaining that this is the nature of the human response to stress and how it is vital for his/ her survival (Tehrani, 2012c:158). The counsellor may help the teacher identify specific changes in physical health that have occurred as a result of his/ her experience. The counsellor may apply the theory of the *General Adaptation Syndrome* (Selye, 1957) to illustrate the effects of stress and how it may manifest biological/ physiological processes.

6.5.3.1.3 Element 3: Symptom reduction

This element may entail equipping the victim with various personal strategies to manage physical and psychological distress, anxiety and depression (cf. pars 5.4.2 & 5.4.3). According to Tehrani (2012c:158-159), the preliminary work or counselling is inclined to be a response to the needs that were identified in the personal account, psychometric assessments, and where it has been established that the client has a problem that makes him/ her susceptible to distressing symptoms. The needs of each client will differ. The arrangement of training or coaching will address the insufficient utilisation of a specific coping skill (Tehrani, 2012c:159). Coping skills may, for example, include conflict solving skills to address the relationship between the victim and the bully, or stress management skills to manage physical and psychological stress responses to workplace bullying. Tehrani (2012c:159) recognises that practical activities may not be a normal element of a counsellor's role (particularly when he/ she takes a "non-directive stance" to his/ her work), but she suggests that these activities may nevertheless hold apparent advantages for clients, as it may provide them with some respite from health symptoms and raises their self-confidence. Practical techniques of the *Cognitive Behaviour Therapies* can be applied to address the health symptoms in teachers. *Vide infra*:

- *Systematic desensitisation* is part of Tehrani's (2012c:159) *symptom reduction* process. In this form of therapy, the client is taught to become less sensitive to the situation that arouses anxiety, by being systematically subjected to it with the aim of reducing anxiety (Corey, 2005:241).

Desensitisation may reduce a teacher's fear (cf. par 5.4.3.14) and anxiety (cf. par 5.4.3.16) when he/ she is in the company of the bully or in the workplace where he/ she has experienced bullying behaviour. The steps of the *desensitisation* process with a victim of bullying will be briefly outlined and applied (Corey, 2005:242-243; Tehrani, 2012c:159):

- One of the first resources that are provided to the client, is helping him/ her to relax by means of a relaxation script, in which he/ she visualises a safe milieu where he/ she feels comfortable and peaceful (Tehrani, 2012c:159). Visualisation may be any nature setting, for example, sitting by a lake or strolling through a gorgeous field (Corey, 2005:242). During this process, the client is also taught to relax his/ her muscles, while visualising diverse parts of the body, with the focus on muscles in the face (Corey, 2005:242);
- When relaxation is achieved, it is secure to address the client's indications of re-experiences that may manifest in a number of forms (e.g. flashbacks, nightmares, hallucinations, emotional and physical re-activations) (Tehrani, 2012c:159). When re-experiences occur, the client reacts as if the event is really taking place (Tehrani, 2012c:159);
- The goal is to lessen the power of re-experiences and hearten the client to recall the cause of the reaction, which may be a distressing image, sound, smell, bodily reaction or taste (Tehrani, 2012c:159). The client undergoes the relaxation exercise, and steadily at he/ she own pace, with purpose thinks about the feared stimuli and identifies methods in which it can be manipulated by altering its size, shape, colour, smell or intensity, which is an similar process for each of the five senses (Tehrani, 2012c:159). By means of this process, the conscious mind becomes aware that the feared perception is a creation, rather than an actual incident (Tehrani, 2012c:159);
- The client is then requested not to think about the stimuli until he/ she decides to revisit it (Tehrani, 2012c:159). According to Tehrani (2012c:159), the procedure of desensitisation makes the client cognisant that he/ she can consciously manage symptoms, such as feared flashbacks, hallucinations and sensory re-activations. Corey (2005:242) stresses that homework and more sessions are vital constituents of a thriving *desensitisation*

process. The client practices chosen relaxation activities on a daily basis and visualises scenes that were concluded in the preceding sessions (Corey, 2005:242-243).

- *Techniques of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT)*. It may firstly be necessary to explain and discuss the basic theory and dynamics of the *A-B-C theory of personality* (Corey, 2005:274) (cf. par 3.6.2.2) with the client. The basic assumption of this theory is that one has beliefs of certain life events, which accordingly prompt emotional and behavioural effects (Corey, 2005:274). This theory can be applied to address the cognitions and emotions of teachers with symptoms of depression and anxiety (cf. Corey, 2005:275). The following techniques of REBT can be applied:
 - *“Disputing irrational beliefs”* (Corey, 2005:279). The counsellor actively disputes the teacher’s irrational beliefs and instructs him/ her to do this on his/ her own (cf. Corey, 2005:279). Clients examine particular “must”, “should”, “ought” until they no longer have that irrational belief or its vigor is reduced (Corey, 2005:279). Irrational beliefs that are associated with feelings of helplessness (cf. par 5.4.3.8), preoccupation (cf. par 5.4.3.13), self-blame (cf. par 5.4.3.19) and worthlessness (cf. par 5.4.3.20), may be addressed during the counselling session. During this session, the teacher may identify and replace negative cognitions and emotions with positive affirmations to reverse the negative effects on his/ her health.
 - Victims may experience various negative emotions, such as constant crying and tearfulness (cf. par 5.4.3.3), anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4), fear (cf. par 5.4.3.14) and anxiety (cf. par 5.4.3.16), amongst others. *“Rational-emotive imagery”* can be applied to help a client create new patterns of emotional responses (Corey, 2005:280). In this technique, the client visualises how she/ he would think, feel and act exactly the way that he/ she would like to in actual life (Maultsby cited in Corey, 2005:280). Corey (2005:280) claims that if clients alter their emotions with regards to difficult times, they will have a better chance of amending their behaviours in those circumstances.
- *Consulting other professionals*. A bullied teacher may be referred to other professionals who can assist him/ her to manage and reduce physical and psychological health symptoms that are

associated with stress and work trauma. It is suggested that the victim visits a general practitioner (Pearson, 2001:155). A general practitioner is the starting point to assess the nature and degree of sleeping problems (cf. par 5.4.2.1), physical symptoms of anxiety (cf. par 5.4.2.2), fatigue (cf. par 5.4.2.3), tension headaches (cf. par 5.4.2.4), hypertension (cf. par 5.4.2.5) and other stress-related physical illnesses (cf. par 5.4.2.6), sexual health problems (cf. par 5.4.2.7), weight gain (cf. par 5.4.2.8) and musculoskeletal problems (cf. par 5.4.2.9). Referral to other health specialists may be necessary.

6.5.3.1.4 *Element 4: Integration and understanding*

Tehrani (2012c:159) suggests that victims need to reflect upon and become interested in their own responses to events during the counselling process. Some personal strategies to deal with bullying may include keeping record or journaling the details of bullying incidents (Pearson, 2001:154; MacIntosh, 2006:672; Tracy et al., 2007:5; Tehrani, 2012c:160) and keeping files at another safe place other than the workplace (MacIntosh, 2006:672). Documenting experiences through journal writings may encourage victim to contemplate his/ her varying perceptions through recognising recurring patterns of behaviours, incidents or emotions (Tehrani, 2012c:160). Documenting experiences may also reduce teachers' need to fixate over the bully and/ or their experiences (cf. par 5.4.3.13). Victims may also keep phone messages and electronic mail, faxes and written communication that are connected with the incident (MacIntosh, 2006:672). These forms of communication may be needed to prove alleged bullying behaviours. Adequate documentation of experiences may assist a legal professional when the teacher decides to take formal action against the bully (cf. par 6.5.4.1.4).

6.5.3.1.5 *Element 5: Rehabilitation and return to work*

The counsellor has a significant function in getting the victim ready to go back to the workplace (Tehrani, 2012c:160). This phase of counselling may assist a teacher to identify strategies, which enable him/ her to deal with and/ or prevent future incidences of bully on his/ her return to work.

6.5.3.1.5.1 Applying visualisation techniques to prepare the teacher to return to work

Tehrani (2012c:160) recognises that the workplace is the context where the traumatic bullying occurred, even though victims do not go back to the same role and the same organisation. Some teachers may decide to leave their current teaching position (cf. par 5.4.5.3) or ultimately, the profession (cf. par

5.4.5.6). According to Tehrani (2012c:160), the workplace can elicit recollections that have not been completely processed. The counsellor may employ visualisation techniques, where the victim visualises returning to the work setting and identifying the triggers of distress in order to get rid of and manage it (Tehrani, 2012c:160). The teacher may visualise anything that he/ she recognises as the trigger for his/ her distress, which may include a specific setting (e.g. school, staffroom) or the bully. Visualisation techniques can identify practical steps or areas that the counselling process must focus on if the employee's return to work is to be thriving (Tehrani, 2012c:160).

Tehrani (2012c:160) also advises that counselling should continue for a few weeks after the employee has returned to work to handle unforeseen responses to the work environment, even if his/ her return to the work context is successful. The victim may still be vulnerable after the prior experience of bullying and for that reason it may be necessary to help him/ her assess new circumstances or situations that may potentially be perceived as workplace bullying.

6.5.3.1.5.2 Assertiveness training

The counselling process may, in addition to Tehrani's (2012c) suggestions, also include assertiveness training. Coyne (2011:176) suggests that emotional regulation and assertiveness training may, among others, lessen the submissiveness and susceptibility in the victim, as well as the reactivity and domination of the bully. Victims may be submissive and the lack of assertiveness may increase their risk to be bullied (cf. par 5.4.6.6). Assertiveness will enable bullied teachers to verbalise their rights and feelings when they feel that they are being bullied. This skill may further be an effective informal method to solve a future conflict situation in its early stages, before a bully-victim relationship develops.

Sessions that focus on assertiveness training may include the following:

- The teacher may practice how to respond to the bully, both verbally and non-verbally. Apply the teacher's experience of workplace bullying, then focus on the following practical activities:
 - The teacher assesses the situation and practice verbal responses that affirm his/ her rights. It may be necessary to identify obstructive thoughts that may be associated with psychological problems, such as depression (cf. par 3.6.2.1). In assertiveness training,

negative statements can be substituted with repeated verbalised positive statements, which may lead to more strength and confidence (Bishop, 2006:22);

- The teacher may practice body language and role-play *aggressiveness*, *passiveness*, and *assertiveness* and how it may present in *posture* (i.e. gestures), *facial expressions* (i.e. eye contact) and *movement* (i.e. voice tone) (Bishop, 2006:51).

6.5.3.1.5.3 Identifying alternative options to manage the experience of workplace bullying

The counsellor may assist the teacher to identify formal and informal options to manage his/ her experience. It can be empowering if one educates a victim about options, including legal choices, and identifying the requirement for, and the accessibility of support (Sloan et al., 2010:96). Empowerment may reduce a sense of helplessness to deal with the bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.8). Sessions may focus on the following aspects:

- The counsellor may assist the teacher to identify and contact different professionals who may intervene, including professionals that can address legal issues;
- The teacher may compile a list that identifies his/ her social support network. Talking to someone he/ she trusts (e.g. a friend in the workplace, human resource manager, labour union representative or someone external to the work context), may help him/ her surmount his/ her feeling of isolation (Pearson, 2001:154);
- The victim may also decide to directly speak to the bully (Pearson, 2001:154). It is suggested that he/ she must decide what he/ she wants to say to the bully, must recite it with someone else and must know what to expect (Pearson, 2001:154). Pearson (2001:154) advises that the victim tells the bully that he/ she finds his/ her conduct unacceptable by focusing on the behaviour and the effects it has had on him/ her. The victim should note down what was said and what was the result of the meeting (Pearson, 2001:154). If this informal approach of speaking directly to the bully is ineffective, other formal approaches can be considered (Pearson, 2001:154), which may include mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or legal action (cf. par 6.5.4.1). It is also important for the victim to know that speaking informally to the bully may be risky. Bullies may manipulate and even intimidate a victim in an informal conversation where a third and supportive party is absent.

6.5.3.2 Strategic intervention activity 8: Inpatient-treatment, psychiatric care and therapy

A prolonged experience of workplace bullying may result in acute depression (cf. par 5.4.3.1), anxiety and panic attacks (cf. par 5.4.3.16), and symptoms of trauma/ PTSD (cf. pars 5.4.3.21) and may require inpatient-treatment/ hospitalisation (cf. par 5.4.3.6) and tertiary intervention strategies from specialised professionals (e.g. psychiatrists and/ or clinical psychologists). Psychiatric intervention may require making an accurate diagnosis and determining the nature of therapy needed (e.g. psycho-education, psychotherapy and/ or medication) to manage and recuperate from the effects of work stress, work trauma and to reduce the progression of psychological disorders.

6.5.4 Dyadic level

Intervention on the social/ community level (cf. par 6.5.2) and the individual/ familial level (cf. par 6.5.3) may encourage bullied teachers to request a third-party to intervene on a dyadic level. Early and successful intervention on this level may prevent the dynamics of the bullying relationship from spilling to the organisational and work group level and may prevent the escalation of existing social health effects.

6.5.4.1 Strategic intervention activity 9: Mediation, conciliation, arbitration or legal action

Firstly, one of three processes, namely *mediation*, *conciliation* or *arbitration*, are suggested intervention strategies to deal with bullying (Peyton, 2003:99-108). The aims of strategies, such as conciliation and arbitration, is to prevent the victim being evicted from the workplace (Leymann, 1990:123). A legal professional/ consultant (in collaboration with consultants from education labour unions) need to carefully assess the victim's grievance to determine which approach may be most effective. The nature of the experience may indicate which process may be the most suitable strategic intervention activity:

6.5.4.1.1 Mediation

Mediation entails assisting parties in conflict to find a common resolution to an common issue and the mediator is an impartial facilitator who aims to allows them to reach their own solutions and achieve an outcome from which each party benefits (a "win/win" result is achieved) (Peyton, 2003:99). Mediation may therefore be effective to address and solve early stages of aggression or conflict between a teacher and an alleged bullying colleague/ principal, in order to prevent it from developing into a bully-victim relationship. The process of mediation is not suggested when bullying is chronic (e.g. the bully is known

for targeting others in the workplace), and a power disparity (e.g. superior and employee) and trauma (e.g. depression or anxiety disorder) is the outcome of bullying (Ferris, 2004:393).

Mediation may not be appropriate to address workplace bullying for several reasons (*applied and adapted from* Peyton, 2003:101-102):

- The teacher is intimidated by, or fears the alleged bullying colleague/ principal (cf. par 5.4.2.2). If the teacher has a sense of fear, mediation strategies may thus cause further psychological and emotional harm, which may be an ethical issue;
- The teacher or the alleged bullying colleague/ principal is declining to communicate or not attending the process willingly;
- Threats of physical violence and/ or emotional abuse has occurred;
- There is a clear power disparity between the teacher and the alleged bullying colleague/ principal;
- There is an extended history of “entrenched attitudes”;
- Previous efforts of mediation between the teacher and the alleged bullying colleague/ principal were unsuccessful;
- The teacher, the alleged bullying colleague/ principal, or both parties have a problem with substance abuse or have psychological health problems. (Bullies may for example portray traits of *narcissistic* or *antisocial personality disorder* (cf. par 2.6.2.3), while bullied teachers may experience symptoms of *depression* or *trauma/ PTSD* (cf. par 5.4.3));
- A criminal or legal action is in progress;
- A legal decision has already been made regarding the same bullying situation;
- The teacher, alleged bullying colleague/ principal, or both parties is/ are not competent to compromise.

6.5.4.1.2 Conciliation

Similar to mediation, *conciliation* involves an intermediary who assists people to negotiate (Peyton, 2003:107). Conciliation entails advising the involved parties on the possible solutions to the issue (Peyton, 2003:107). During the process of conciliation, an obligatory legal agreement is outlined (Leymann, 1990:125). The teacher and bullying colleague/ principal may, for example, draw up an agreement that stipulates the conduct that is perceived as unacceptable and the consequences for breaching the agreement. In most cases the victim will require psychological treatment (Leymann, 1990:125).

6.5.4.1.3 Arbitration

With *arbitration* the interventionist is obliged to reach a verdict founded on legal principles (Peyton, 2003:108), which may be stipulated by South African legislation. *Arbitration* may be an effective intervention strategy in situations where reported behaviours may be a violation of human and/ or labour rights, including different forms of harassment (cf. par 5.4.1.9), physical bullying (cf. par 5.4.1.15), and/ or other unfair labour practices (cf. par 2.3.2.5), such as the unfair distribution of workload (cf. par 5.4.1.4).

6.5.4.1.4 Legal action

A teacher may also decide to take *legal action* to hold the bullying colleague/ principal or the DoE liable and claim reimbursement for the harm done to his/ her health. Certain workplace bullying behaviours that were reported by teachers in the first phase of the study are covered by Section 6 of the EEA (55 of 1998) (South Africa, 1998), Section 186(2) of the LRA (66 of 1995) (South Africa, 1995), and the PDA (26 of 2000) (South Africa, 2000) (cf. par 2.3.2.5). Teachers who reported experiencing an unfair distribution of workload (specifically an unfair demotion) (cf. par 5.4.1.4), harassment (cf. par 5.4.1.9), and who may be victimised for whistle-blowing (cf. par 5.4.7.4), can be protected by aforementioned Acts.

An employer may be vicariously liable if workplace bullying is recognised as unlawful (Le Roux et al., 2010:64). The legal category on “injuria” may apply, which refers to “the intentional affront to another by an unjustified aggression upon his or her person, dignity or reputation” (Le Roux et al., 2010:64). Le

Roux (*cited in* Le Roux et al., 2010:64) claim that the law will grant damages when this category has been perpetrated.

Le Roux et al. (2010:64) specifically refer to the court case *Media 24 Ltd v Grobler* (cf. South Africa, 2004) to illustrate the category of “injury”. In this case the Court stated that an employer should take reasonable steps to protect an employee from both physical and psychological harm (e.g. sexual harassment by colleagues), and if the employer fails to do so, he/ she is obligated to reimburse the victim for the consequential harm (Le Roux et al., 2010:64-65). Le Roux et al. (2010:65) uses this example to argue and conclude that a victim can also hold an employer vicariously legally responsible for failing to take reasonable action to prevent workplace bullying. This may be especially applicable when a bullied teacher had to undergo psychiatric treatment, is unable to work and has suffered financial loss due to his/ her experiences. The teacher will however have to provide adequate documentation to prove that physical, psychological and/ or financial harm has been done. Some victims may however tend to avoid taking legal action for various reasons, including the financial strain and the stress that may be associated with the process. Teachers, who are generally submissive to bullying behaviours and tend to avoid conflict (cf. par 5.4.6.6), may also avoid taking legal action.

6.5.5 Organisational level

Interventionists need to implement strategies, such as a support system and setting definite outcomes for this behaviour on an organisational level, which may ideally reduce and ultimately prevent bullying. Intervention on this level can additionally be seen as a strategy that is aimed at *organisational development*; which is appropriate to address workplace bullying at this level (Saam, 2010:66). *Development* is defined as “The process of growth and learning, resulting in change or progression.” (Clifford & Thorpe, 2007:8).

6.5.5.1 Strategic intervention activity 10: Developing a risk-management system for individual schools

Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011) propose a *risk-management system* as an intervention strategy to address workplace bullying. A risk management system can overall be seen as a compilation of several intervention strategies. In Figure 6.5-1, Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:88) illustrate five successive

phases that are applied in a risk-management system and examples of activities that can be implemented in each phase. *Vide infra*:

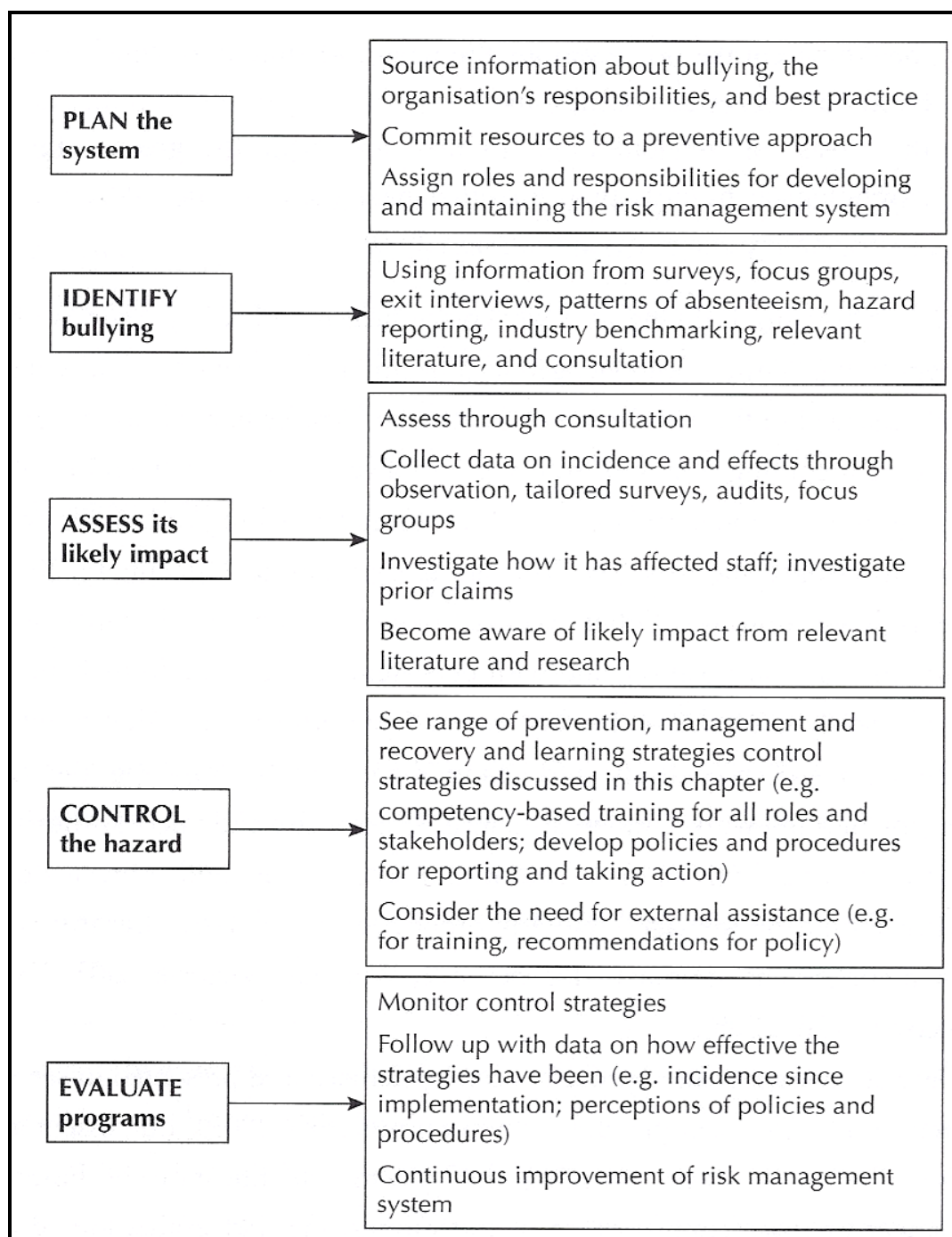


Figure 6.5-1: Examples of processes at each phase of a risk management system for workplace bullying

Source: Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:88)

Suggestions made in Figure 6.5-1, will be applied and will guide the discussion regarding steps to develop a risk-management system for an individual school. Each phase will also be supplemented with other suggestions from the literature. *Vide infra*:

6.5.5.1.1 Phase 1: Planning the system

The interventionist will introduce the option of developing a risk-management system to the principal. Each school may have a unique organisational culture and -climate. A plan must thus be put forward to gather information regarding workplace bullying in the school, the school organisation's responsibility toward its employees and what the best practices will be in this setting (cf. Figure 6.5-1). Resources should be dedicated toward the prevention (cf. Figure 6.5-1) of workplace bullying, rather than the management of incidences. In addition to what is suggested by Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:88) in Figure 6.5-1 with regards to managing and maintaining the risk-management system, it is proposed that the multi-disciplinary team (e.g. consulting industrial psychologists, human resource managers) (cf. par 6.5.1.1) temporarily maintains this system, while guiding and empowering the principal, other staff and/or human resource managers over time to effectively manage and maintain the system.

6.5.5.1.2 Phase 2: Identifying workplace bullying in the school

Various qualitative and quantitative methods (cf. Figure 6.5-1) can be used to determine whether workplace bullying is prevalent in the particular school, and if so, what the nature of this phenomenon is. Ferris (2009:183) claims that if other measures (e.g. surveys, interviews, conversations with employees) suggest that bullying/ mobbing has occurred or the organisation wants to understand the nature and degree of bullying/ mobbing, other approaches such as anonymous surveys, semi-structured individual interviews, and subsequent group interviews or discussions and reports, may also be effective.

Interventionists must bear in mind that the nature of each school culture differs. They must therefore use their own discretion regarding the type of methods that must be implemented to determine the prevalence and nature of workplace bullying in the school. For example, in a school where a risk-management system is implemented as a preventative strategy, informal group discussions may suffice. In a school that is severely affected by workplace bullying, a private individual interview may have to be

conducted to protect the victim from being intimidated or repeatedly bullied. Data-gathering strategies should therefore fit the current organisational culture.

It is imperative to recognise signs that may be characteristic of workplace bullying in the school, some of which is indicated by findings in Chapter 5, such as the loss of passion for the teaching profession (cf. par 5.4.5.1), reduced quality of teachers' work performance (cf. par 5.4.5.2), presenteeism despite being on sick leave (cf. par 5.4.5.5), teachers' thoughts of leaving the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.3), increased absenteeism due to ill-health and hospitalisation (cf. pars 5.4.3.6 & 5.4.5.4) and the teachers who contemplate resigning from the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.3), or who have already left the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.6) and the reasons for this. It must also be noted when certain teachers do not want to partake in the assessment, how conflicts and problems are resolved between staff, and how the school and staff are generally governed.

6.5.5.1.3 Phase 3: Assessing the likely impact of workplace bullying

Investigate, through different data collection methods, whether there were previous claims of workplace bullying and consult with employees to determine the effects on their health (cf. Figure 6.5-1). Individual consultations may allow teachers to freely express their experiences, without feeling intimidated. In addition to what is proposed by Caponecchia and Wyatt (2011:88) in Figure 6.5-1, it may also be necessary to identify vulnerable teachers who are bullied and who may also benefit from counselling (cf. par 6.5.3.1) and/ or inpatient treatment, psychiatric care and/ or long-term therapy (cf. par 6.5.3.2).

6.5.5.1.4 Phase 4: Controlling workplace bullying

It is suggested that an anti-workplace bullying *policy* (cf. Figure 6.5-1) is developed and tailored for the particular school to create a supportive psychosocial environment. To create and uphold a healthy organisation, management needs to develop a “zero-tolerance” plan to contend with any form of discrimination or abuse (Ebeid et al., 2003:83). McKay and Fratzl (2011:19) claim that the organisation need to be proactive by establishing policies and procedures of which employees are aware of, and frequently revising and updating it in order to evade workplace bullying that may result in trauma. The following steps are suggested to develop an anti-bullying workplace policy for the individual school:

6.5.5.1.4.1 A facilitated discussion between all stakeholders

An organisational consultant who is well-informed and can provide his/ her skills and expertise in policy-development can be called on (Duffy, 2009:260) to facilitate a discussion in the school organisation. Namie and Namie (2011:135) further recommend that the group involved in writing a policy should comprise representatives from all divisions of the organisation (e.g. human resources, risk management, legal delegates, unions, non-supervisory staff from various functional departments, and directors). The work group, principal, labour union representatives, and representative from the DoE will be invited to attend this discussion. The group will be informed of the initial assessments (cf. par 6.5.5.1.3) that were done in the school and the current prevalence and nature of workplace bullying in that organisation.

6.5.5.1.4.2 Developing and structuring the anti-workplace bullying policy

All suggestions will be considered and an anti-workplace bullying policy will be developed and tailored to address the school's needs. Significant elements that may be included in the school's policy were identified in the literature, and *adapted and applied* to this study. *Vide infra*:

- a) The school organisation's opposition to workplace bullying will be stated (Namie & Namie, 2009b). The anti-workplace bullying policy will affirm the school's mission to prevent behaviours that may be abusive in nature or a violation of teachers' human and/ or labour rights.
- b) The reason for the anti-workplace bullying policy will be stated (Duffy, 2009:256; Namie & Namie, 2009b). Duffy (2009:255) proposes that the policy should indicate the organisation's core values and that the policy is designed to support.
- a) It is important to delineate a statement with regards to the expenses to the human being and the organisation, since this is educational, rather than merely proscriptive and assists others to understand the necessity for the policy (Duffy, 2009:256). The report with regards to the nature of bullying after conducting initial assessments (cf. par 6.5.5.1.2) in the school organisation, may also be provided. The report will provide a summary of the prevalence and nature of bullying (cf. par 6.5.5.1.2) and the effects this behaviour may have on the health of teachers, their families, and the school organisation (cf. par 6.5.5.1.3). The issue of workplace bullying will be attended to when it is labelled as a grave threat to psychological and work-related health and safety (Turney, 2003:7). Furthermore, if the school is not bully-prone or already affected by bullying, the policy

may be highlighted as a preventative strategy. Applying preventative policies, especially for personal attacks or work-related bullying, will decrease the psychosomatic health symptoms that surface in victims (De Pedro, Sanchez, Navarro & Izquierdo, 2008:225).

- b) The phenomenon will be labelled. Namie and Namie (2009b) suggest that a name is given to the phenomenon and must either be expressed as positive conduct that is longed for or negative conduct that is prohibited. According to Rowell (2005:378), to address the phenomenon of workplace bullying, it must firstly be labelled as what it is, namely “psychological abuse”. The group of attendees will be requested to make suggestions regarding possible labels that will be recognised at all levels of the school organisation.
- c) Clear definitions and examples of workplace bullying will be provided. Acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours will be defined (Pearson, 2001:153), the concept *bullying* will be defined (Namie & Namie, 2009b) and examples of bullying behaviours will be listed (Duffy, 2009:256). According to Duffy (2009:256), examples of bullying behaviours must be provided to educate and not for increasing observation, and consequently fear. Principals should not feel that the policy limits their rightful managerial rights. Principals’ managerial rights will be assured in this policy, provided that their rights are not misused (Namie & Namie, 2009b).
- d) Workplace bullying will be recognised as a serious wrongdoing, an organisational issue and will relate to everyone in the school organisation (Pearson, 2001:153). It will be stipulated that bullying behaviour may be perpetrated on different levels of the school organisation and the policy will highlight that perpetrators on all levels will face consequences for this behaviour.
- e) Furthermore, since workplace bullying occurs on all levels of the organisation, it is also necessary to identify contact persons on all levels for managers, administration and employees (Duffy, 2009:257). Bullying may, for example, also be educator-on-principal or education manager-on-principal bullying and therefore support must also be available on the managerial level. Duffy (2009:257) is of opinion that the failure to take this step will send a wrong message that this workplace behaviour mainly arises on the level of employees.

- f) The policy will pledge confidentiality (Pearson, 2001:153; Duffy, 2009:258) and will stipulate that a due procedure will be offered to everyone (Duffy, 2009:258). This agreement may reduce teachers' and colleagues' fear to report bullying (cf. pars 5.4.7.4 & 5.4.7.5).
- g) The anti-workplace bullying policy will establish clear formal and informal processes to manage workplace bullying (Pearson, 2001:153). Duffy (2009:257), for example suggests informal solutions, such as facilitated discussions, to address and resolve the issue of workplace bullying/ mobbing and uphold the dignity of all who are involved. The work group must be encouraged to firstly attempt to solve disputes in an informal manner, before sudden formal steps are taken. Conflict may be successfully solved in this manner and may also build positive colleague relationships. According to Duffy (2009:257-258), informal resolution alternatives are probably successful in high-care work environments where employees, who are in the midst of workplace bullying/ mobbing, are receptive to listen to the ailing effects of their conduct on the victim, are willing to amend their conduct and commit to behave from a value central to that of care.
- h) Duffy (2009:258) also proposes alternative dispute resolutions, such as mediation resulting in a written, negotiated signed contract between the parties; the employment of a restorative justice framework, in which the victim is reinstated to organisational entirety; providing strategies for perpetrators to change, for instance, contributing in particular manner to cultivate positive work relations; or any other form of dispute resolution. Duffy (2009:258) suggests that the alternative dispute resolution should significantly accentuate the effects that the behaviour has had on the victim.
- i) Clear protocol must otherwise also be primed for receiving, managing, and investigating formal accusations of bullying/ mobbing (Duffy, 2009:258). These protocols should be written, published, and obtainable to all employees (Duffy, 2009:258). A description will be provided on how formal grievances will be investigated, by whom it will be investigated and how proof will be evaluated, in the interest of openness and clarity (Duffy, 2009:258). Certain members of the multi-disciplinary support network (cf. par 6.5.1.1) may be involved in formal and informal resolutions of workplace bullying. Further stress should be removed by means of the accuser and the accused knowing beforehand what the processes are for a formal investigation (Duffy, 2009:258).

- j) Teachers must be made aware of the process that will be followed after a formal grievance was filed. Duffy (2009:258) suggests that each party should be informed independently and initially verbally, where they have the chance to be escorted and to their have enquiries answered. According to her, this may be followed with a written report of the results (Duffy, 2009:258).
- k) The time-frame for investigating victims' grievances will be stipulated (Duffy, 2009:258). Victims may experience symptoms of trauma/ PTSD (cf. par 5.4.3.21) and since their experiences tend to be more severe due to long term duration (i.e. ranging between six months to two years), the organisation thus has the duty to investigate grievances as meticulously and fairly as possible in a short time period (Duffy, 2009:258). Investigating grievances within a short period of time may assure the teacher that his/ her grievance is taken seriously and may for that reason mirror the school organisation's concern and care for its employees. This may address teachers' feelings of not being appreciated (cf. par 5.4.3.18).
- l) The policy will pledge that no one will be victimised when complaining of workplace bullying (Pearson, 2001:153). It is imperative that this clause is included in the policy, since whistle-blowers are reportedly targeted (cf. pars 5.4.7.4).
- m) According to Duffy (2009:258), workplace bullying/ mobbing should set off an internal evaluation of the organisational context and should be directed toward identifying varying factors that contributed to this phenomenon. Identifying and addressing issues at an early stage can prevent the escalation of events that may result in bullying and ill-health. Duffy (2009:258) claims that the "basic ingredients" of organisational liability and change processes are the cognisant raising regarding the shattering effects of workplace bullying/ mobbing, and the increased training and education of employees.
- n) Finally, written and published documents for petition against formal enquiries should be accessible to all employees (Duffy, 2009:259). The complainant and the accused should be at liberty to benefit from this process (Duffy, 2009:259). Both the victim and the alleged bully should be allowed to disagree with findings and/ or make further enquiries. Parties may feel that the investigation process may have been biased or did not address the issue and may therefore request another investigation.

6.5.5.1.5 Phase 5: Evaluating the system

The following strategies can be implemented to monitor and evaluate the risk-management system in the school:

- Rayner *et al.* (2002:180) suggest that all forms of absence (e.g. sick leave, voluntary leave, rates of employees who leave the organisation and other types of absence, such as leave with no pay) be monitored. Based on the findings in Chapter 5, interventionists may ask the following questions: Do teachers have a loss of passion for the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.1) and/ or have lowered work performance (cf. par 5.4.5.2)? Is there an increase of absenteeism and stress-related illnesses (cf. par 5.4.5.4)? Do teachers consider resigning from the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.6), and if so, what are the reasons?
- *360-degree reviews* may also be effective in evaluating the efficacy of the risk-management system. 360-degree reviews provide every employee with reviews from their peers, subordinates and managers, and it can also be a channel for the manager to learn from those they manage, rather than those that manage them (Mattice, n.d.:5). Mattice (n.d.:5) claim that these reviews generally obtain high involvement from employees, have the strongest effect on conduct and performance, and significantly increase efficient communication in the organisation.
- Rayner *et al.* (2002:182) finally suggest that monitoring is done frequently (e.g. every six months), or else momentum is lost. The monitoring procedure must have an unambiguous structure and the “soft information”, for example sentiment or opinions, with the “harder information” regarding the use of the system and categorised results, must be utilised (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:182). The information must be re-examined no less than once a year by a team who can make decisions with regards to changes in the system (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:182). It is further advised that it is better that the reviewing is done by advisors external to the organisation, as this will generate a stronger validity, in view of the fact that these advisors may have less conflict of interest than the staff working for the organisation (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:182).

6.5.5.1.5.1 Inviting journalists/ the mass media as an incentive for the school

Journalists/ mass media allies may also be invited to write articles on individual schools who participate in the development of a risk-management system. This may be an incentive for the particular school and

may also encourage other schools to develop an increased interest in this activity – preferably as a preventative strategy for workplace bullying. Schools' increased interest may be an indication that the attitude toward workplace bullying is changing for the better and that a change in organisational culture in individual schools is achieved.

6.5.5.2 Strategic intervention activity 11: Creating an information-rich work environment

Informative documents that raise awareness regarding workplace bullying and the effects it may have on health, can be made available in individual schools (these documents can also be distributed among schools with the assistance of the DoE). The *Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Act, Code of Practice 2004* (Department of Justice and Attorney-General, 2011:29) proposes several ways to inform employees regarding the workplace policy and procedures that may be followed, specifically relating to the prevention of *workplace harassment*. These proposals may also be effectively *adapted and applied* for the South African teaching profession (Department of Justice and Attorney-General, 2011:29):

- Attach the workplace policy to teachers' payslips;
- Distribute a copy of the policy and sections regarding the handling of grievances among teachers and translate it into other languages, if necessary;
- Teachers can be informed regarding the policy and grievance handling system through training sessions (cf. par 6.5.7.1.3);
- The principal may discuss the policy and grievance handling system at staff meetings;
- Constituents of the policy and grievance handling system can be incorporated in teachers' employment contract;
- Place preventative posters in the workplace and include the contact details of people who can be approached to manage and resolve complaints (e.g. a list of the multi-disciplinary team);
- Develop brochures and pamphlets and place them in prominent places in the workplace where teachers can easily have access to it;
- Place the policy and grievance handling system in teachers' staff guidebooks;

- The policy and grievance handling system can also be placed on the school's internal/ intranet system (if the school has one);
- Provide educational information in newsletters (e.g. *The Teacher*, which is a national target-specific newspaper, may be used for this purpose).

These informative and educational methods can also be made available for the prevention of other workplace bullying behaviours.

6.5.6 Managerial level

It may be necessary to equip principals with skills that allow them to prevent and effectively manage workplace bullying in the school. *Mentor-coaching* is suggested for this level of intervention.

6.5.6.1 Strategic intervention activity 12: Mentor-coaching for principals

Mentor-coaching may be an effective intervention initiative if the principal is receptive to intervention on this level. *Mentor-coaching* is an umbrella term that refers to thinking about a problem and also thinking about the action that can be taken (Pask & Joy, 2007:10). I suggest that the expression, *mentor-coaching*, is used to give principals the sense that they are *assisted* on an equal level, rather than *trained*. Principals may have a resistance towards intervention on this level if they feel that they are being trained to manage the school. Principals are mostly highlighted as perpetrators of bullying behaviours (cf. par 5.4). Coaching the bully is most efficient after the standard of conduct has been set by the policy (Namie & Namie, 2009b). The following strategic intervention activities are suggested for *mentor-coaching*:

6.5.6.1.1 Assisting principals to assess their own behaviour

People may often be oblivious of how their conduct affect others and do not realise that they are bullies (Georgakopoulos, Wilken & Kent, 2011:15). Coaching may be an effective manner to hold managers accountable for their conduct and provide them with skills and abilities to manage it (Ferris, 2009:184). According to Ferris (2009:184), a vital component of the coaching procedure should include the attitude leaders portray towards others and their insight with regards to the concept of bullying/ mobbing. The principal may be educated to distinguish between *strong management* and what may be perceived as

workplace bullying (cf. par 2.2). If the principal is accused of bullying, it may be necessary to identify specific behaviours that may be perceived as workplace bullying by teachers or other staff in the school organisation, such as those indicated in Chapter 5 (cf. par 5.4.1).

6.5.6.1.2 *Assisting principals to recognise and address stress in the school organisation*

It is imperative that principals are trained to recognise potential stressors in the workplace that may give rise to bullying situations and may consequently impinge on teachers' health (cf. par 2.7.1). The general suggestions put forward by Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:174-175) for managers to deal with stress, will be adapted and applied to address stress that may specifically be associated with workplace bullying:

- Managers need to identify stress in others and in themselves, before it has an effect on the colleagues they work with, as stress can be transmittable (Hindle *cited in* Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:174). Individual stress may set off work-related conflicts, which may affect the well-being and productivity of the whole work group;
- Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:174) advise the training of managers and employees to productively manage stress. According to these researchers, poor management is a major source of stress in employees and managers should thus be well trained. Stress may be reduced by training the manager in time management, solutions for conflict, decision-making and people management (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:174). Employees can also be trained to constructively manage stress (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:174). Training on all levels of the school organisation may prevent workplace bullying, or at least, prevent incidents from escalating and having severe effects on health.
- Employees are in many cases uncertain of what their role in the organisation is (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:174). The principal may assist teachers to clarify their roles and expectations in the school organisation. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:175) propose the implementation of the "role-analysis technique", which involves an open dialogue of each employee's role expectations in the organisation by asking the following questions:
 - "What do you think is expected of you?"
 - "What do you expect of me (your manager)?"

- “What information do you need to do your job well?”
- “What areas of your work cause you the most trouble?”

By asking these questions, the principal or education manager may gain an indication of whether the teacher experiences stress on any level and whether existing organisational practices may be perceived as bullying.

- Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:175) advise that the manager should be familiar with patterns of *type-A personality* in him/ herself and in others. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology defines *type-A personality* as “A temperament characterized by excessive drive and competitiveness, an unrealistic sense of time urgency, inappropriate ambition, a reluctance to provide self-evaluation, a tendency to emphasize quantity of output over quality and a need for control.” (Reber & Reber, 2001:771). Teachers’ confidence in their achievements and professional competence (cf. par 0), the manner in which they do their work and the value they attach to it, may also be related to characteristics of a *type-A personality*. This may increase stress in the individual and in the work group.
- An unfair distribution of workload appears to be the reason for some teacher’s experienced symptoms of burnout (cf. par 5.4.3.15). Ebeid *et al.* (2003:83) claim that employees in a healthy organisation have a balanced workload. Work must be equally divided (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:175). School subjects and activities, as well as the number of learners in classrooms must therefore be equally divided among the work group.
- It is also suggested that mentors and developing training programmes, with the aim of building self-confidence and self-awareness, are provided to female teachers, given that they experience more stress than men do and for this reason, it is important that fitting coping tactics are developed (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2007:175). These facilities must however also be available to male teachers to avoid gender prejudice.
- Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007:175) lastly propose that other people should be part of the *decision-making process*, which may reduce stress and may have advantages for both the individual and the organisation. Involving the work group in the decision-making process may

attend to some teachers' feelings of not being appreciated (cf. par 5.4.3.18) or feeling excluded from the work group (cf. par 5.4.3.17).

6.5.6.2 Techniques for solving conflict

Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008) suggest helpful techniques that can be applied by managers when they are faced with solving a conflict situation between colleagues:

6.5.6.2.1 *Emotional mapping*

Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:31) argue that the alleged bully may have hurt the victim, whether it was his/ her intention or not. The effect of bullying on the victim should nevertheless be given major deliberation when examining whether he/ she was bullied or not (Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:31). It is essential that the principal recognises the role of subjective perception (cf. par 2.3.2.6) and that the individual may have certain vulnerabilities that may contribute to him/ her feeling bullied on some level (cf. par 2.6.1.1.1).

The technique, "*emotional mapping*", can be applied by managers to assist them to understand the effects workplace bullying has on the victim (cf. Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:32). In this technique the victim lists all incidences that he/ she converses about and the emotion(s) that are associated with each incident (Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:32). Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:32) claim that this technique may prevent managers from questioning the emotional response, since they may think that they would never react in a similar manner. It may also help them to understand that victims of bullying do not behave like they usually would, due to lowered self-esteem and self-confidence (Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:32). Teaching principals this skill, may develop emotional intelligence. It may also alter the perception that they are lacking in empathy (cf. par 5.4.6.3). This technique may further be beneficial to victims, since it may assist them to become aware of their own emotional responses toward experiences of bullying.

6.5.6.2.2 *Questioning skills for conflict resolution between two parties*

Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:34) claim that good questioning skills may help the manager move conflicting parties from "entrenched positions" and may trigger conversations about their interest to attend to their needs. These researchers suggest a "good questioning framework" (cf. Table 6.5-2). In

this framework, one explores the situation by asking “who?”, “why?”, “what?”, “where?”, “how?”, “when?”- questions and apply these questions to the “SPEND formula”, namely “**S**ituation”, “**P**roblem”, “**E**motion”, “**N**eed”, and “**D**ecision” (Scott-Lennon & Considine, 2008:34). *Vide infra*:

Table 6.5-2: An example of a good questioning framework

	S Situation	P Problem	E Emotion	N Needs	D Decision
Who?					
Why?					
What?					
Where?					
How?					
When?					

Source: Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:33)

Scott-Lennon and Considine (2008:34) finally suggest that the “S”, “P” and “E” is used for accumulating the basic information that is needed, while “N” and “D” is applied to explore options to find a solution. This method may assist principals to gain a comprehensive insight of a grievance and to determine the best approach for solving the conflict or potential bullying situation.

6.5.6.3 Recognising when mentor-coaching may be an ineffective intervention strategy

It is imperative to recognise that *mentor-coaching* may in some cases be an ineffective intervention strategy, especially when the principal is accused of bullying. Bullies’ personalities may be of such nature that training may not be the ideal practice (Namie & Namie, 2011:117). Traits that may be associated with antisocial (cf. par 2.6.2.3.1) or narcissistic personality disorder (cf. par 2.6.2.3.2), for example chronic envy on others’ achievements (cf. par 5.4.6.4), a lack of empathy (cf. par 5.4.6.3), being controlling (cf. par 5.4.6.5) and manipulative (cf. par 5.4.6.7), may make coaching efforts complicated and prone to failure. Workplace behaviours that are typical to these personality disorders may possibly be managed by means of arbitration (cf. par 6.5.4.1.3) and/ or legal action (cf. par 6.5.4.1.4). Namie and Namie (2009b) further advise that if bullying behaviour is a result of underlying personality disturbances,

the bully must be assisted by a registered mental health professional at a location outside of the workplace. This process however has to be voluntary.

6.5.7 Work group level

Bullying may have severe consequences for teachers' relationships with colleagues (cf. par 5.4.4.1) and ultimately affects the whole work group. Colleague-witnesses may withdraw from relationships due to the fear that they may also be targeted if they associate with the victim (cf. par 5.4.7.5). Intervention on this level may alleviate fear and distrust and may repair the cohesion of the work group. As a result, work relationships may be restored and peer support may be created, which may lessen bullied teachers' tendency to withdraw (cf. par 5.4.3.9) owing to feelings of distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17). An educational workshop is suggested as an appropriate intervention strategy on this level.

6.5.7.1 Strategic intervention activity 13: Educational workshop

Van Heugten (2011:219) suggests that workplace cultures may be improved by educating all employees about the impact of workplace bullying and how to avert this problem, sooner than having to manage difficulties on an individual level when serious circumstances occur. Education of workplace bullying and trauma can include defining the phenomena, its precursors and effects (including trauma), legal details and investigating the organisational policy (McKay & Fratzl, 2011:19), which will all be considered at this level of intervention. Also, educating employees regarding the symptoms that may be elicited (e.g. strong fear reactions, anger, depression, evasion, withdrawal, absent-mindedness, low self-esteem, and crying) may assist in authenticating victims and spurring them on to share their experiences (McKay & Fratzl, 2011:19). The team-training workshop will consist of the following sessions:

6.5.7.1.1 Session 1: The nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health

This session will educate the work group on the following:

- Workplace bullying will be defined (cf. pars 1.7.1 & 2.3.2) and accompanied by examples and categories of bullying behaviours (cf. par 2.4);
- The work group will also be educated regarding the stress (cf. par 3.4.1) and trauma (cf. par 3.4.2) that may stem from the experience of workplace bullying and the consequential effects on physical, psychological and social health (cf. pars 3.5.1, 3.5.2, & 3.5.3);

- The work group will be made aware of bullying behaviours that are prohibited by South African legislation (cf. par 2.3.2.5).

6.5.7.1.2 Session 2: Steps to respond to and manage workplace bullying

Researchers seldom stipulate practical steps that colleagues-witnesses can take to respond to, and manage workplace bullying. Colleague-witnesses may be unsure of what to do when a peer is being bullied and may consequently withdraw from the victim (cf. par 5.4.7.5). Advice, as suggested by Rayner *et al.* (2002:156-159) for witnesses, will be applied and presented to educate (potential) colleague-witnesses. *Vide infra*:

- “*Validate the experience*” (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:156). The victim may find it difficult to describe his/ her experiences and may have self-doubts (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:156). It is thus necessary to authenticate the victim’s experience and support his/ her dispute that he/ she is treated in an unacceptable manner, although his/ her explanations for the event may not be faultless (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:156). It is necessary that the bullied teacher knows that he/ she has a supportive peer/ colleague at work who understands his/ her experience. This may avoid his/ her withdrawal from the work group (cf. pars 5.4.3.9 & 5.4.4.1).
- “*Assess risk*” (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:156). Systematically assess the victims’ options, and offer guidance and advice when it is sought and the answer is indefinite (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:156). The colleague-witness may help the teacher identify a social and professional support network and may help him/ her decide which formal/ informal strategies may be best suited to address his/ her experience. Rayner *et al.* (2002:156) however highlights that the decision is the victim’s. Witnesses’ decision not to intervene may have long-term consequences, since it strengthen the belief that this behaviour is acceptable (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:157). The colleague-witness must therefore consider the risks that are involved when making the decision not to address a bullying colleague’s/ principal’s behaviour. It is nevertheless suggested that he/ she communicates with the victim on a personal level and provides him/ her with support and empathy (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:157), regardless whether he/ she chooses to intervene or not.
- “*Protecting oneself*” (Rayner *et al.*, 2002:157). According to Rayner (2002:157), witnesses are of little assistance to the victim if they also turn out to be victims. Witnesses must guard themselves

by resisting victims' efforts to wittingly and unwittingly involve others in the conflict and not get involved further than what is required for their role in the organisation (Rayner et al., 2002:157). It may be more effective to involve a professional that is skilled to deal with situations from an objective standpoint to protect witnesses from getting too personally involved. The witness must also set clear boundaries, since victims can be emotionally exhausting (Rayner et al., 2002:157). Conversations after work hours and the provision of a small amount of regular support (instead of being "an occasional avenging angel"), is advised (Rayner et al., 2002:157). Colleague-witnesses should avoid that the bullied teacher becomes emotionally dependant on him/ her. It is necessary to provide regular support and empower the teacher to take steps to address the situation and the effects it may have on individual health.

- *"Involving others"* (Rayner et al., 2002:157). When the witness involve other role-players and decides to report the incident with/ for the victim, the focus must be on the effects the bullying behaviour has had on the victim (Rayner et al., 2002:157). The witness must refrain from making judgements, for example, signifying that the bully is a psychopath (Rayner et al., 2002:157-158). Colleague-witnesses must thus take an objective stance when deciding to support the bullied teacher.
- *"Assisting targets with formal procedures"* (Rayner et al., 2002:158). When the victim makes a decision to file a complaint, the witness may support him/ her with formal processes by providing practical help, such as giving advice in highly emotional situations, helping him/ her to compile a systematic and sound grievance that will be taken seriously by the organisation, and assisting him/ her during a formal hearing (Rayner et al., 2002:158). Rayner *et al.* (2002:158) further advise that the focus should be on the victim, and if not, the witness has a risk of being branded as a troublemaker. This may make the colleague-witness an easy target for bullying, especially by education managers.
- *"Witnessing your own group bully"* (Rayner et al., 2002:158). If a witness observes the bully among his/ her own peers, he/ she can gently challenge the bully's behaviour, which may be enough to stop the behaviour (Rayner et al., 2002:158). It may be a more effective strategy if the bully is confronted by a peer in his/ her own group. Rayner *et al.* (2002:158) recognise that a

situation where the victim is perceived as provoking and not fitting in with the customs of the group, may be difficult. These researchers make two suggestions for dealing with this situation (Rayner et al., 2002:158):

- Firstly the witness must emphasise to the bully that while the victim's behaviour can be disapproved, the bullying behaviour is unacceptable and has to stop; and
- Secondly, the witness acknowledges to the victim that the bullying toward him/ her was unacceptable, but that it was in response to his/ her behaviour and some compromises have to be made by everyone to negotiate and work serenely together.

Lastly, the manager may be asked to step in, but there is a risk that the witness may be resented by the group and his/ her actions may be perceived as gossip (Rayner et al., 2002:159). If the group feels that the issue should be dealt with by them, it may be best to not involve the manager, but to rather involve impartial group members to congregate the parties (Rayner et al., 2002:159). It is necessary that these group members take on an objective and non-biased role. Rayner *et al.* (2002:159) finally suggest that other parties, such as labour unions, may be considered if these steps are not realistic. Professionals from the multi-disciplinary support network (cf. par 6.5.1.1) may also be contacted to intervene when no solution is found.

6.5.7.1.3 Session 3: Educating the work group about the supportive organisational resources that are available to prevent and manage workplace bullying

This session will educate the work group regarding the supportive resources that are available to prevent and manage workplace bullying in the school:

- In this session content of the anti-workplace bullying policy will be discussed (cf. par 6.5.5.1.4). The work group may share their thoughts regarding the possible deficiencies in the policy and issues that need to be attended to;
- The work group will also be made aware of the educational information regarding workplace bullying and harassment that will be available (cf. par 6.5.5.2); and

- Finally, the work group will be provided with the contact information of professionals in the multi-disciplinary support-network (cf. par 6.5.1.1) who can be approached outside of the work context to address experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health.

6.6 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Findings in the first phase of this study suggested that intervention initiatives, to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the teaching profession, must focus on multiple levels. A multi-level intervention programme was put forward that suggested strategic intervention activities for seven levels: the professional, social/ community, individual/ familial, dyadic, organisational, managerial, and work group level. This intervention programme is, to my knowledge, unique for the South African context. I suggested a strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention (cf. par 6.3). Although numerous researchers propose that workplace bullying intervention may occur on multiple levels, most overlook to specify how certain impediments may affect the approach to intervention. It was recognised that certain impediments in the teaching profession may pose difficulties for effective intervention, for example, a bullying principal who may be reluctant to cooperate with the implementation of an intervention programme on other levels of the school organisation. It was therefore suggested that an interventionist starts intervention on a professional level (i.e. by establishing and training a multi-disciplinary support network), raise public awareness and provide education through the mass media on a social level, and by this means, draw teachers who want to anonymously report their experiences and seek advice. Depending on the bully's receptiveness to intervention on a dyadic level (i.e. directly addressing the victim-bully relationship), interventionists may or may not have access to an individual school. The developed intervention programme is a flexible programme that may allow interventionists to systematically move into individual schools after a supportive and information-rich environment has been created.

6.7 SUMMARY

Findings in Chapter 5, guided the development of a multi-level intervention programme to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the South African teaching profession. This chapter firstly discussed the rationale for taking a multi-level approach to intervention. It also developed and suggested

a strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention. It laid out an intervention programme with practical strategic intervention activities. Intervention initiatives were suggested for seven levels: the professional, social/ community, individual/ familial, dyadic, organisational, managerial and work group levels. Work of different researchers was applied to illustrate how the strategic intervention activities may be implemented in the teaching profession. In conclusion, this chapter identified the anticipated contribution of this research study.

Chapter 7 will conclude the study by summarising the chapters, discussing the synthesis between theory and practice, identifying the limitations of this research study, and finally suggesting recommendations for future research on workplace bullying.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will summarise and conclude the content and findings of this research study. The synthesis between theory of workplace bullying, its effects on health and how it presents in practice, will also be discussed. The limitations of this study will be identified and recommendations for future research on workplace bullying, will finally be provided.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This section will provide a brief summary of each chapter:

- *Chapter 1* provided an orientation to what can be expected from this study. It introduced the salient research that has been done on workplace bullying, its effects on health (cf. par 1.2) and explained the rationale for this study (cf. par 1.4). Literature indicates that the experience of workplace bullying affects physical, psychological and social health. The *biopsychosocial model* was therefore identified as the theoretical foundation of this study (cf. par 1.3). This chapter also stipulated the research questions (cf. par 1.5) and objectives of this study (cf. par 1.6). The first main objective of this study was to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health. The second main objective was to develop a multi-level intervention programme (guided by teachers' experiences) that can be implemented to address workplace bullying and its effects on health in the South African context. This chapter was concluded with the definitions and descriptions of key terminologies used in this study, namely *workplace bullying, school, victim, bully, health, stress, work trauma, biopsychosocial model, and multi-level intervention programme* (cf. par 1.7). Finally, a chapter layout of this study was presented (cf. par 1.8).
- *Chapter 2* discussed the salient literature regarding the nature of workplace bullying and how it may present in practice. Early in this chapter, a distinction between *strong management* and

workplace bullying was indicated (cf. par 2.2). *Abuse, organisational bullying, mobbing* and *harassment* were defined as sub-forms of workplace bullying for the purposes of this study (cf. par 2.3.1). Specific categories of workplace bullying behaviours were also identified (cf. par 2.4). It was indicated that bullying behaviours may be *personal* and/ or *work-related*. Workplace bullying was discussed as a phenomenon that is characterised by its *power disparity, persistent, repetitive* and *long-term* nature, which is harmful to health, a violation of *human and/ or labour rights* and is dependent on the victim's *subjective perception* (cf. par 2.3.2). Workplace bullying was also typified and discussed as an escalating and systematic process that starts with conflict, leads to serious harm and ultimately victims' removal from the workplace (cf. par 2.5). Personal characteristics, of both victims and bullies that may play a salient role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying, were also discussed (cf. pars 2.6.1 & 2.6.2). *Work stress, the type of organisational culture and climate, type of leadership style* and *nature of support*, were further discussed as organisational characteristics that may lead to workplace bullying (cf. par 2.7). This chapter was concluded with theoretical perspectives that may explain the psychosocial dynamics of workplace bullying (cf. par 2.8). These theories suggest that employees may either learn from modelled behaviour or blend in with other employees with similar characteristics.

- *Chapter 3* presented the salient literature regarding the effects of workplace bullying on health. The *biopsychosocial model* was applied as a theoretical foundation to depict interrelation and dynamics between the physical, psychological and social health systems in the event of workplace bullying (cf. par 3.2). Workplace bullying was identified as a *type-II stressor* (i.e. a long-term, chronic stressor) (cf. par 3.3) that can be the root of stress (cf. par 3.4.1) and work trauma (cf. par 3.4.2) in victims. The *General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)* was also discussed to depict the stages of stress (cf. par 3.4.1.1). It was argued that the psychological health of victims is firstly affected by workplace bullying. For example, cognition (cf. par 3.5.2.1) leads to negative emotions (cf. par 3.5.2), which triggers physical ill-health (e.g. high blood pressure) (cf. par 3.5.1), and dysfunctional coping behaviours (e.g. the abuse of substances) (cf. par 3.5.2.3). Cognitions, emotions and dysfunctional coping behaviours may further not occur in solitude, but may be symptomatic of a mood or anxiety disorder (cf. par 3.5.2.4). These health experiences may have a negative effect on families, colleague-witnesses' and organisational health (cf. pars 3.5.3.1,

3.5.3.2 & 3.5.3.3). This chapter was concluded with theoretical perspectives from the major schools in *Psychology* (i.e. *classical conditioning*, *learned helplessness*, *cognitive distortions*, *A-B-C theory of personality*, and *existentialism and spirituality*) that may elucidate victims' ill-health experiences (cf. par 3.6).

- *Chapter 4* discussed the paradigm and my approach to the research, the research design and methods, method of data analysis, the quality of qualitative research, and ethical considerations that applied to the first phase of this study. A qualitative, phenomenological research design (cf. par 4.3) was applied to conduct the first phase of this study, which was to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health. The use of *online* and printed media to sample the participant-group (cf. par 4.3.2.1) was also discussed and criteria for participant selection were stipulated (cf. par 4.3.3). Ultimately, twenty-seven participants were included in the study. Qualitative data was further gathered by means of semi-structured interviews (cf. par 4.3.4.1) and personal documents (cf. par 4.3.4.2), which were accompanied by field notes (cf. par 4.3.4.3). Data was transcribed *verbatim* and analysed by applying methods of *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (cf. par 4.4.3). The strategies that were applied to ensure the quality of the qualitative research were also briefly discussed (cf. par 4.5). *Ethical clearance*, *informed consent*, *anonymity*, *voluntary participation* and the *right not to be harmed*, was in conclusion discussed as the ethical considerations that applied to the first phase of this study (cf. par 4.6).
- *Chapter 5* reported the findings that emerged from the first phase of this study. Salient themes and the frequencies, in which they occurred, were tabulated. Themes were also supported by *verbatim* excerpts that mirrored teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on their health. Findings were corroborated by the literature review. Findings revealed that principals are mostly the perpetrators of workplace bullying and are often supported by colleagues (cf. par 5.4.1). Findings also indicated that workplace bullying has an effect on physical (cf. par 5.4.2), psychological (cf. par 5.4.3) and social health (cf. par 5.4.4), and ultimately affects the school organisation (cf. par 5.4.5). It is finally suggested that *analytic generalisation* applies to this study (cf. par 5.5). This method of generalisation allows researchers to suggest a theory that can be applied to investigate the same phenomenon in different cases (cf. par 5.5). It was suggested

that the *biopsychosocial model* can be generalised to different cases to understand the dynamic effects of workplace bullying on physical, psychological and social health.

- Relevant literature, communication with bullied teachers, fieldnotes made during the research process, and findings that were reported in Chapter 5 guided the development of a multi-level intervention programme in *Chapter 6*. The logical documentation of findings and limitations during the research process (cf. par 4.5.3), allowed me to suggest a strategic and methodological approach to intervention (cf. par 6.3). Finally, a multi-level intervention programme was put forward that can be implemented in the South African teaching profession to address workplace bullying and its effects on health (cf. par 6.5). Strategic intervention activities were suggested for seven levels, including the *professional, social/ community, individual/ familial, dyadic, organisational, managerial* and the *work group* level. This chapter was concluded with a discussion regarding the anticipated contribution of the multi-level intervention programme (cf. par 6.6).

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

This section will discuss the conclusions with regards to the objectives of this research study. It will also provide a synthesis between the theory of workplace bullying and what has been reported in practice.

7.3.1 General objectives

The general objectives of this study were:

- to investigate teachers' experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on health, and
- to develop a multi-level intervention programme for the South African teaching profession.

The general objectives were reached by focusing on specific objectives.

7.3.2 Specific objectives

7.3.2.1 Investigating the nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health

Chapters 2 and 3 addressed the first two specific objectives, which were to investigate the nature of workplace bullying and its effects on health by means of a literature review. The third specific objective

was to investigate **teachers' experiences** of workplace bullying and its effects on health. Findings were corroborated with the literature review. The following findings and conclusions were reported:

7.3.2.1.1 Principals are mostly perpetrators of workplace bullying

According to the literature review, workplace bullying mostly stems from the managerial level (cf. par 1.2). This is also the case in the teaching profession (cf. par 5.4.1). Principals were mostly highlighted as the main perpetrators of workplace bullying, while colleagues were also often involved in the process. Some colleagues joined the *mob* wittingly, while other colleagues only remained witnesses and withdrew their involvement with the victim to protect themselves from becoming a victim (cf. par 3.5.3.2 & 5.4.7.5).

7.3.2.1.2 Bullying behaviours are person-related attacks

It was noted that bullying behaviours systematically escalated in severity (cf. par 2.5). Participants' experiences ultimately fitted the characteristics of workplace bullying (cf. par 2.3.2). Bullying behaviours were aimed at attacking the character of targeted teachers (i.e. *person-related bullying*) (cf. par 2.4.1). Behaviours that were considered to be person-related, included verbal abuse (cf. par 5.4.1.1), public humiliation (cf. par 5.4.1.2), malicious gossip (cf. par 5.4.1.5), ignoring the teacher (cf. par 5.4.1.8), harassment (cf. par 5.4.1.9), favouritism of staff (cf. par 5.4.1.14), and physical bullying (cf. par 5.4.1.15). According to Figure 2.5-1 (cf. par 2.5.1), physical violence may follow bullying behaviour. In this study, physical acts of bullying however preceded severe psychological bullying.

7.3.2.1.3 Bullying behaviours are work-related attacks

Principals often exploit organisational channels to bully teachers (i.e. *work related bullying*) (cf. par 2.4.1). Mobbing (cf. par 5.4.1.3), an unfair distribution of workload (cf. par 5.4.1.4), attacks on professional competence (cf. par 5.4.1.6), lodging or threatening to lodge unfair grievances (cf. par 5.4.1.7), micro-managing the work environment (cf. par 5.4.1.10), undue criticism toward the teacher's work (cf. par 5.4.1.11), isolating the teacher from the work group (cf. par 5.4.1.12), and making unfounded accusations (cf. par 5.4.1.13), can be considered to be attacks on teachers' work.

7.3.2.1.4 *The effects of workplace bullying on teachers' health are analogous to the theory and dynamics that are depicted by the biopsychosocial model*

Findings indicated that the experience of workplace bullying triggered escalating stress and trauma in teachers, which severely affected physical, psychological and social health. This dynamic is supported by the *biopsychosocial model* (cf. pars 1.3.1 & 3.2). Psychological health was firstly affected and accompanied by physical ill-health experiences. The health of social and professional relationships and the school organisation were also affected.

Participants' experiences of workplace bullying firstly affected their *psychological health*. Most teachers reported being diagnosed with, or experiencing symptoms related to major depressive episode (cf. pars 3.5.2.4.1 & 5.4.3.1), for example crying or tearfulness (cf. par 5.4.3.3), effects on personality (cf. par 5.4.3.5), withdrawal (cf. par 5.4.3.9), suicidal ideation or attempted suicide (cf. par 5.4.3.12) and feelings of worthlessness (cf. par 5.4.3.20). Psychological ill-health in most cases seemed to be initially a *reactive* response to workplace bullying (cf. par 3.5.2.4). Most participants indicated that their health responses were uncharacteristic for them. In some participants' cases, depression became recurrent and chronic as the workplace bullying persisted and escalated over time. Some teachers therefore developed a history of psychopathology or mental health issues.

A few teachers also presented with symptoms of PTSD (cf. par 5.4.3.21), including having an inability to sleep (cf. par 5.4.2.1), physical symptoms of anxiety (cf. par 5.4.2.2), feelings of anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4), attempting to avoid the bully and/ or situations that may give rise to bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.7), a search for meaning in their experiences (cf. par 5.4.3.11), social and/ or emotional withdrawal (cf. par 5.4.3.9), preoccupation with the experience of bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.13), fearing the exposure to bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.14), and feelings of exclusion (cf. par 5.4.3.17). It was however noted that these participants also experienced other traumatic life events (e.g. rape, sexual assault, hijacking, house robberies), and the bullying may have added to the existing trauma. Only one of these participants' symptoms of PTSD may have been a direct result of bullying colleagues' alleged physical aggression or violence.

I also noted that participants were more focused on the effects that frequent bullying have had on their health, than they necessarily were on the other traumatic life events. The trauma that derives from workplace bullying may have a more profound impact on these teachers' lives than the other traumatic life events, as is also supported in the literature (cf. par 3.4.2). Participants' reports of constant crying and tearfulness (or sadness) (cf. par 5.4.3.3), suicidal ideation (cf. par 5.4.3.12), feelings of anger (cf. par 5.4.3.4), helplessness (cf. par 5.4.3.8), isolation and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17), search for meaning (cf. par 5.4.3.11), and a preoccupation with the bullying experience (cf. par 5.4.3.13), may be characteristic of C-PTSD (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.2). Some participants also reported suffering from panic attacks (cf. par 3.5.2.4.2.4), which were triggered by cues/ reminders of the bullying (cf. par 5.4.3.16).

Participants' psychological ill-health experiences were accompanied by symptoms of *physical ill-health*. Symptoms of physical ill-health included an inability to sleep (cf. par 5.4.2.1), physical symptoms of anxiety (e.g. heart palpitations, nausea) (cf. par 5.4.2.2), fatigue (cf. par 5.4.2.3), tension headaches (cf. par 5.4.2.4), hypertension (cf. par 5.4.2.5), stress-related illnesses (cf. par 5.4.2.6), sexual health problems (cf. par 5.4.2.7), weight gain (cf. par 5.4.2.8), and musculoskeletal problems (cf. par 5.4.2.9).

Teachers' health experiences affected the quality of their relationships with family members and colleagues (cf. par 5.4.4). The change in teachers' mood (e.g. anger and lessened control of temper) and mental health status in some cases affected their children (cf. par 5.4.4.2) and often led to separation from their spouses/ life partners (cf. par 5.4.4.3). It was noted that those teachers, who had a sense of social support from family, experienced a lesser effect on health, than teachers who did not receive adequate social support (cf. par 5.4.4.4). Teachers' withdrawal from colleagues, were mostly ascribed to a sense of exclusion and distrust (cf. par 5.4.3.17) and avoidance to be in the presence of the bully and/ or situations where bullying may occur (cf. par 5.4.4.1). Colleague-witnesses also withdrew their involvement due to the fear that they may become victims (cf. par 5.4.7.5).

The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health that are reported in the literature (cf. par 3.5.3.3), were also reported in the teaching profession. Some participants expressed having a loss of passion for the teaching profession (cf. par 5.4.5.1) and some considered leaving (cf. par 5.4.5.3) or

resigning from the profession (cf. par 5.4.5.6). Their health experiences also had a grave effect on their work performance (cf. par 5.4.5.2) and led to absenteeism (due to ill-health and hospitalisation) (cf. par 5.4.5.4). Some teachers also went to work despite being on sick leave, due to the fear that they may be stigmatised or feeling responsible for the learners (cf. par 5.4.5.5).

7.3.2.1.5 Personal and organisational characteristics facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Findings indicated that personal and organisational characteristics facilitate and sustain workplace bullying (cf. pars 2.6, 2.7 & 5.4.6, 5.4.7). Some participants highlighted demographic characteristics, such as gender (i.e. being female) (cf. par 5.4.6.2) and race (cf. par 5.4.6.8) as reasons why they were bullied. Teachers, who responded to this study, were mostly white middle-aged females, teaching in urban primary schools.

Personality characteristics of victims and bullies however played the most salient role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying. Some participants reported having confidence in their achievements and professional competence (cf. par 0). This may evoke feelings of envy in bullies (cf. par 5.4.6.3). Bullies were also characterised as having a lack of empathy (cf. par 5.4.6.3), being controlling (cf. par 5.4.6.5) and manipulative (cf. par 5.4.6.7). Findings indicated that teachers are submissive to bullying behaviours and tend to avoid conflict with bullies (cf. par 5.4.6.6). Furthermore, there was little evidence that suggested that workplace bullies have narcissistic tendencies (cf. par 2.6.2.3), which is mostly postulated by other researchers. Bullies' characteristics that were reported in this study, namely generally having a lack of empathy (cf. par 5.4.6.3), displaying controlling behaviour (cf. par 5.4.6.5), being manipulative (cf. par 5.4.6.7), violating teachers' human and labour rights (e.g. harassment, physical assault and different forms of organisational bullying that are covered by South African legislation), and perpetrating these behaviours on a chronic basis, may be characteristic of an *antisocial personality* (cf. par 2.6.2.3.1).

Organisational characteristics also played a salient role in facilitating and sustaining workplace bullying. Workplace bullying in the teaching profession occurs because principals/ colleagues *can* perpetrate these behaviours, since the system allows it. The main issue is that bullying principals are often

befriended with people who form part of teachers' support system. Bullying principals have power and/ or high positions in education labour unions (cf. par 5.4.7.3). Teachers therefore lack an adequate, objective support system that can investigate formal grievances (cf. par 5.4.7.2). This makes it difficult for teachers to report their experiences, as it may possibly lead to repeated bullying. Some participants also observed other colleagues being bullied at school (cf. par 5.4.7.1), but interestingly seldom intervened. Whistle-blowers are also reportedly victimised (cf. par 5.4.7.4). These may be reasons why teachers and/ or colleague-witnesses seldom report incidences of workplace bullying.

7.3.2.2 Developing a multi-level intervention programme

The fourth specific objective of this study was to develop multi-level intervention programme that can be implemented in the South African teaching profession to address workplace bullying and its effects on health. Findings in the first phase of the study guided me to identify several strategic intervention activities that may address workplace bullying and its effects on health in this context.

7.3.2.2.1 Developing and proposing a strategic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention

Communication with respondents in the first phase of this study indicated that there are impediments (e.g. bullying principals who may refuse to cooperate with the implementation of a multi-level intervention programme in an individual school) that may pose difficulties for effective intervention. It was therefore suggested that a systematic and methodological approach to multi-level intervention is taken (cf. par 6.3), which may allow interventionists to systematically move into individual schools after a supportive and information-rich environment has been created (cf. par 6.6). Seven levels of intervention were suggested.

7.3.2.2.2 Seven levels of intervention

Strategic intervention activities were identified and discussed to intervene on seven levels. *Vide infra*:

- *The professional level* (cf. par 6.5.1): The aim of this level was to create a support-network for victims and raise awareness among health and law professionals regarding the role they may play on other levels of intervention.

- *The social/ community level* (cf. par 6.5.2): The aim of this level was to raise public awareness through mass media advocacy and a conference of workplace bullying. The aim was to educate different stakeholders (i.e. teachers, their families, education managers, education labour unions, DoE, multiple professionals, academics) regarding the nature of workplace bullying, its effects on health and the supportive resources that are available to address this issue. Strategic intervention activities also aim to involve different interest groups that may be support networks for victims. It was suggested that a supportive telephone helpline is established that may allow teachers to anonymously report their experiences and seek advice, without being at risk for intimidation or repeated bullying. Helpline counsellors may further apply crisis intervention and direct respondents to professionals who can intervene on an individual/ familial level.
- *The individual/ familial level* (cf. par 6.5.3): Intervention on the social/ community level may encourage individual teachers' to seek help to address their experiences of workplace bullying and its effects on individual and familial health. This level of intervention assists teachers to manage their experiences and reduce the effects of workplace bullying on physical and psychological health by means of a counselling process. Family are included in the process to be a support base for the victim. Strategic interventions are also suggested to assist teachers who experience severe depression, panic attacks or PTSD, and who may require inpatient treatment and psychiatric care.
- *The dyadic level* (cf. par 6.5.4): This level suggested strategies to solve or address the relationship between the victim and the bully. This relationship may be addressed through *mediation, conciliation, arbitration or legal action*. Intervention on this level will depend on whether the victim and the bully both agree to it.
- *The organisational level* (cf. par 6.5.5): This level of intervention suggested strategies that may encourage *organisational development* and a *change in organisational culture*. It was suggested that a risk-management system is developed for individual schools. It was also suggested that an information-rich work environment is created by providing informative and preventative information where teachers can easily have access to it.

- *The managerial level* (cf. par 6.5.6): Intervention activities on this level suggested steps to coach principals to assess their own behaviours, to effectively recognise, prevent and manage stress in the school, to attend to bullied teachers' emotional experiences and gather adequate information from the teacher and the alleged bully with the aim of solving conflict.
- *The work group level* (cf. par 6.5.7): This level suggested intervention activities to educate the work group regarding the nature of workplace bullying and its effects, to manage incidences of bullying from a colleague-witnesses' standpoint, and to provide information regarding the content of the anti-workplace bullying policy and the resources that are available to manage such experience.

7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified during the course of this study:

- The educational and informative articles that were placed in the mass media may have played a role in the specific group of participants that were sampled (cf. par 4.3.2.1). The *Rooi Rose*, for example, is an Afrikaans life-style magazine that mostly targets women. This article therefore attracted more *white Afrikaans-speaking, female* teachers, teaching in urban schools. The articles possibly did not reach teachers in rural schools. It can therefore not be claimed that white female teachers, teaching in urban primary schools, are mostly bullied. It can also not necessarily be claimed that women are more likely to be victims of bullying in this work context;
- A larger participant-group was used for this IPA-based study (cf. par. 4.4.2). Findings and interpretations in Chapter 5 generally reflected the experiences of the *work group*. This may however also be a forte, since communicating with a larger participant-group increased my knowledge regarding the nature of workplace bullying in the teaching profession and contributed to my understanding of the systematic and methodological approach that has to be taken to intervene in this context;
- Although participants' communication through personal documents was adequate and often very creative, they may have provided limited information regarding their experiences. It was also not

possible to make field notes with regards to underlying emotional themes, as I normally would have during a semi-structured interview;

- It is also recognised that participants may have experienced more health problems than were necessarily reported. 'Silent' physical health problems that are stress-related and may have been triggered by the experience of workplace bullying (e.g. hypertension and high blood sugar), may have been overlooked and not reported by participants if they did not consult medical professionals for a possible diagnosis;
- Some teachers' stress and trauma may also have been initially caused by other stressful life events and experiencing bullying may have added to their existing physical and psychological health problems;
- It is recognised that alleged bullying principals may refuse to cooperate with the implementation of an intervention programme in the school, as they may be incriminated. There may therefore be some resistance toward intervention on some levels, especially on the *dyadic, organisational, managerial* and *work group* levels. However, intervention is not unsuccessful if it only occurs on a *professional, social/ community* and *individual/ familial level*. Interventionists will have to conduct further research to identify and suggest creative ways in which change of school cultures can be initiated.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made for future research on workplace bullying:

- It is suggested that the research findings are communicated to the DoE to inform them of the nature of workplace bullying in the teaching profession, the effects it may have on health and the nature of the multi-level intervention programme that can be implemented to address this phenomenon. It is imperative that representatives from the DoE are aware of the content and aims of the multi-level intervention programme;
- It is suggested that more research is conducted to determine whether female teachers are more vulnerable to experience workplace bullying, and also to determine male teachers' experiences and perceptions of workplace bullying;

- Coping strategies and perspectives of colleague-witnesses may be researched to provide more clarity on their role in the bullying process;
- Research regarding the bullies' perspective (whether they are self-proclaimed bullies or being fallaciously accused of bullying) will make a significant contribution to the literature on workplace bullying;
- It is suggested that the multi-level intervention programme is implemented and evaluated to determine whether proposed intervention activities are effective to address workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession;
- It is necessary that academics conduct further research to identify preferred and effective intervention strategies to address workplace bullying in the South African teaching profession, as well as other professions.

7.6 SUMMARY

Findings of this study confirmed that South African teachers are severely affected by workplace bullying. These findings guided the development of a multi-level intervention programme that may be implemented in this context to address workplace bullying and its effects on health. This research study also contributed to initial ideas regarding the consideration that must be given to impediments in a particular work context and how it may affect the approach to multi-level intervention.

My hope is expressed that the DoE will recognise bullying is not only a childhood phenomenon, but a workplace stressor that may have severe effects on the health of bullied teachers, their families, the work group and ultimately the school organisation. It must be recognised that workplace bullying in this context is mostly perpetrated by principals and that the 'system' (e.g. bullying principals' high positions in labour unions) is one of the major factors that facilitates and sustains this behaviour. It is recommended that the multi-level intervention programme is implemented to advance the research and intervention on workplace bullying in the teaching profession and to promote the health and wellness of teachers and schools in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A

AFRIKAANS LETTER OF CONSENT



FAKULTEIT OPVOEDINGSWETENSKAPPE

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Beste deelnemer,

Baie dankie vir u belangstelling en deelname in hierdie navorsingsprojek. Werkplek 'bullying' (bullebakkerij) is beslis nie 'n nuwe navorsingsonderwerp nie, maar min navorsing is tot dusver in Suid-Afrika oor hierdie onderwerp gedoen – veral in die onderwyskonteks.

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is om 'n ondersoek in te stel aangaande onderwysers se ervaring van *bullebakkerij* en hoe hul gesondheid, familie en werk daardeur geraak word. Alle informasie wat ingesamel word, sal verder gebruik word om bewustheid te skep oor hierdie fenomeen en ook om stappe voor te stel wat hierdie kwessie kan takel.

Bullebakkery/ 'workplace bullying' is die konstante, herhaalde en toenemende fisiese en/ of psigologiese gedrag wat 'die teiken' negatief affekteer, en behels 'n verskil in magsverdeling tussen die teiken en die boelie. Hierdie ervaring kan tot ernstige stres en gesondheidsprobleme lei. Boelie gedrag in hierdie konteks kan begaan word deur leerlinge, kollegas en skoolhoofde of ander onderwys-bestuurders.

U kan u ervaring (wat die volgende vrae hanteer) via 'n telefoon onderhoud deel en/ of deur middel van e-pos aanstuur deur die volgende vrae te beantwoord:

a) Vertel my meer van u ervaring. Wat het gebeur?

- Het u enige fisiese simptome wat geassosieer word met u ervaring? Is u tans met enige gesondheidsprobleme gediagnoseer?
- Het u sekere psigologiese probleme wat geassosieer word met u ervaring? Is u tans gediagnoseer met enige geestesgesondheidsprobleme?
- Is u sosiale verhoudings geaffekteer, en indien wel hoe?
- Watter effek, indien enige, het u ervaring op u gesinslewe of familie gehad?
- Het u ervaring u werk geaffekteer, en indien wel, hoe?

b) Sou u hierdie ervaring as traumaties beskryf? Wat maak dit vir u traumaties? Indien u ervaring traumaties is, en u dit op 'n skaal kan sit van 1 tot 10, waar 10 geweldig traumaties is, watter nommer sou u hierdie ervaring gee?

c) Watter tipe ondersteuning benodig u om hierdie ervaring te kan verwerk?

Laastens, neem asseblief kennis van die volgende:

- Deelname is vrywillig;
- Alle deelnemers bly anoniem;
- U kan van 'n skuilnaam gebruik maak indien u dit so verkies;
- Telefoon onderhoude word buite werkkonteks en –ure gevoer, in 'n privaat tyd en plek wat u verkies;
- U mag in Afrikaans of Engels kommunikeer, soos u dit verkies;
- Alle inligting word slegs vir navorsingsdoeleindes gebruik;

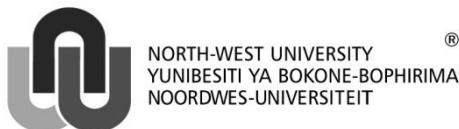
- Alle telefoon onderhoude word vir navorsingsdoeleindes opgeneem mits u verbale toestemming gee;
- U mag my kontak indien u verdere vrae oor die aard van die studie het;
- Indien u sou wou, mag u enige tyd van die studie onttrek sonder om redes te verskaf.

Vriendelike groete.

Jackie de Vos

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH LETTER OF CONSENT



FACULTY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

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Ethical clearance number: NWU-00012-11-A2

Dear participant,

Thank you for your interest and participation in this research project. Workplace bullying is certainly not a new research topic. Little research has however been done on South African soil, especially in education contexts. The aim of this research project is to investigate how teachers are affected by bullying, and what the impacts are on their health, family- and work contexts. Information collected in this study will further be used to create awareness regarding workplace bullying and to suggest steps that can be taken to address this phenomenon.

Workplace bullying is constant, repeated and escalating physical and/ or psychological behaviour that affects 'the target' in a negative way, and involves a difference in power between the 'victim' and the 'bully'. Being bullied may lead to severe stress and consequent health problems. Workplace bullying in this context can be perpetrated by parents, learners, colleagues, principals and/ or education managers.

You may share your experiences via telephonic interviews and/ or email letters by answering the following questions:

- a) Tell me more about your experience of being bullied. What happened?
 - Was your experience associated with any physical ailments? Were you diagnosed with any physical ailments that occurred after your experiences?
 - Was your experience associated with any psychological ailments? Were you diagnosed with any psychological ailments that occurred after your experience?
 - Was your social relationships affected by your experience, and if so, how?
 - Has your experience had an effect on your family life in any way, and if so, how?
 - Has your experience had an effect on your work in any way, and if so, how?
- b) Would you describe this experience as traumatic? If so, what made it traumatic? If your experience was indeed traumatic, and you could place it on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not traumatic and 10 is extremely traumatic, where would you rate your experience?
- c) What type of support do you need to address this experience?

Lastly, the following ethical guidelines are followed in this research study:

- Participation is voluntary;
- All participants will remain anonymous in transcriptions and research reports;
- You are allowed to use an alias if you wish to;
- Telephonic interviews are done outside of the school context and working hours, in a private time and place;
- You are allowed to communicate in Afrikaans or English;
- All information collected is solely used for research purposes;
- All interviews are recorded for research purposes providing you have given consent;

- You are allowed to contact me in case you have more questions regarding the nature of the research study;
- You may at any stage withdraw from the study if you wish to without giving reasons.

Kind regards.

Jackie de Vos

APPENDIX C

VERBATIM EXCERPTS

5.4.1 Main theme 1: The nature of workplace bullying

Main theme 1 The nature of workplace bullying experienced by teachers		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.1.1 Verbal abuse	14
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5.4.1.1 Verbal abuse

(P2): "One of the high officials said to the principal if I commit suicide, they're not going to attend the funeral ... So one day they (principal and colleagues) organised a workshop. At that workshop I was being teased and mocked."

- (P4): "... she (school support staff) attacks me publicly in the staffroom."
- (P5): "Toe sê hy (skoolhoof) 'Hoor hierdie fokken klein mannetjie' ..."
[Then he (principal) said 'Listen to this fucking little man' ...]
- (P8): "... she (principal) just attacked me 'Get out of my office! Get out of my office!' ... Then I said 'Please Ma'm you're acting unprofessional.' Then she said 'Unprofessional means going to look where you were born – from your mother's hole you'll find unprofessional!'"
- (P11): Met die (leerders) se vraestel was een van die prentjies te donker afgerol en sy't (onderhoof) my die aand gebel en op my geskreeu."
[One picture on an examination paper was copied too dark and that evening she (vice-principal) phoned me and shouted at me.]
- (P12): "Sy (skoolhoof) skree op die personeel soos wat ek nie eers op my eie kinders sal skree nie."
[She shouts at the staff like I would not even shout at my own children.]
- (P16): "I have had an extremely difficult year in 2010 being treated like this on so many occasions ... shouted at, kicked out of his class, ignored when trying to greet him (colleague) ..."
- (P20): "I voiced my opinion and (principal) nearly shouted at me to calm down and I just decided to keep quiet."
- (P21): "Wanneer hy (skoolhoof) sien dat jy op jou standpunt staan, hou hy daarvan om jou te verkleineer, te vloek of te beskinder."
[If you stand your ground, he likes to humiliate you, use profanity, or gossip about you.]
- (P24): "Sy (kollega) gil op my ek is nie bevoeg om skool te hou nie – ek is nie behoorlik opgelei nie.
[She (colleague) yelled at me that I wasn't competent to teach – that I'm not adequately trained.]
- (P25): "Hy (skoolhoof) het by geleentheid snedig opgemerk dat hy dink dit tyd is om my psigiater te gaan sien."
[He (principal) shrewdly remarked that it was time for me to consult a psychiatrist.]
- (P26): "Dit is vir baie van hulle (manlike kollegas) 'n gegewe dat hulle maar die dames kan verkleineer, neerhalende aanmerkings teenoor hulle kan maak en tweedehands kan behandel - alles natuurlik onder die dekmantel van "grappies".
[It's a given for them (male colleagues) that they can humiliate the ladies, make insulting statements and treat them like second-hand – under the cover of 'jokes'.]

5.4.1.2 Public humiliation

- (P1): “Dan kom jy die oggend in die personeelkamer in en jy het jou *meeting* in die oggend waar hy (skoolhoof) dit (dissiplinêre verhoor teen die onderwyser) in daai *minute* druk!”
[It the meeting he (principal) makes sure that it (unfair disciplinary action against this teacher) is in the agenda!]
- (P5): “Hy (skoolhoof) het my daar voor die kinders ook gehumiliseer.”
[He (principal) humiliated me in front of the learners.]
- (P8): “So when I had to prepare - ‘cause I had to prepare stuff for class moderation - she (principal) said ‘*move away from my computer. Move away from my space, otherwise I will pull the chair out from underneath you.*’ Then, she did exactly that. I had to move away. She pulled the chair then I almost fell. So I said ‘*You’re being childish. Why are you pulling the chair off?*’ She just said to me ‘*Childish is what you are being now.*’ That was not a good thing because that was in front of the whole ... part of the staff.”
- (P10): “Dan word ek in die personeelkamer bespreek. Daar word nie name genoem nie, maar op die ou einde weet almal op wie word daar gemik.”
[I’m discussed in the staffroom. No names are mentioned, but in the end everyone knows who it was aimed at.]
- (P17): “... my voor die personeel verneder (skoolhoof) met meer as een geleentheid.”
[He (principal) humiliated me more than once in front of the staff.]
- (P18): “Om ... deur iemand afgebreek en gedurig verneder te word voor ander, totdat jy in die aarde vertrap is tot niks ...”
[... You are belittled and humiliated in public, stepped on until you are nothing ...]
- (P22): “... hy (skoolhoof) het ook daarvan gehou om my te verkleineer in die personeelkamer en gesê ‘*Ek verstaan nie hoe sekere onderwysers nie discipline kan hê in sekere klasse nie.*’”
[... he (principal) also liked it to belittle me in the staffroom and said ‘I don’t understand how certain teachers do not have discipline in their classrooms.’]
- (P23): “Hy (skoolhoof) het op die *intercom* geklim en hy het nege dames so wild en wakker geroep, waaronder vier van hulle baie jong onderwyseressies was ... en hy het voor hulle nou vir my afgekraak. Die doktersbrief wat die dokter geskryf het gelees: ‘*Psigiater so en so*’ en die dokter

se naam gelee, 'sê nou hier die vrou is getraumatiseer en sy moet nou weer twee dae af kry.'"

[He (principal) called nine ladies - of which four of them were very young teachers - on the intercom ... and he belittled me in front of them. He read the sick note the doctor gave me: 'Psychiatrist so and so', and he mentioned the doctor's name, 'says here this woman is traumatised and has to be booked off again for two days.]

(P25): "Tydens jaarliks besprekings het hy (skoolhoof) 'n punt daarvan gemaak om my sonder respek te behandel, my te verneder en te verkleineer."

[During annual discussions he (principal) made a point to treat me without respect, and to humiliate and belittle me]

5.4.1.3 Mobbing

(P2): "I'm a vice-principal for a long time, so when I try to demand the work from the teachers, I am not fully assisted (by principal and colleagues). I end up doing the work alone."

(P4): "... she (administrative personnel) also manipulates the Board. She has six people who she knows on the Board, and now they've started to say that they don't want me there."

(P5): "... hy't (skoolhoof) ook die ander onderwysers so opgesweep teen my. ... elke keer is daar iets tussen ek en hy dan roep hy die onderwysers in, dan moet ons nou vergadering hou oor my."

[He (principal) also incited the other staff against me. ... Every time we have quarrel, the rest of the staff is called in to hold a meeting about me.]

(P13): "Die manspersoneel draai teen my en daag my op elke gebied en elke geleentheid uit."

[The male staff turns against me and challenges me on every terrain and situation.]

(P18): "Kollegas val my tydens vergaderings persoonlik aan – 'jy maak my siek', 'jy is tokkies / mal', terwyl die res van die personeel en die skoolhoof toekyk en niks sê nie."

[Colleagues attack me personally during meetings – 'you make me sick', 'you are crazy', whilst the rest of the staff and principal notice it, but say nothing.]

(P19): "Hy (skoolhoof) het mense gedwing om beëdigde verklarings af te lê wat ten gunste van hom as die hero. Verder het hy geviktimiseer mense gekry om te spioeneer. ... You make some of your

inner circle men and women feel like Dirk Prinsloo made Advocate Visser feel. Weak. Ready to jump when you move a finger.”

(P24): “Net een vrou op die personeel het met my vriende gemaak. Die res het my behandel asof ek melaats is ...”

[Only one female on the staff made friends with me. The rest of the staff treated me as if I am leprous ...]

(P25): “... op- en aanmerkings oor my kleredrag gemaak en ’n kollega opdrag gegee om dit vir my te sê. Ek het hom (skoolhoof) later by die dames in die kantoor hoor spog en almal daar het dit snaaks gevind en saam met hom gelag.”

[... he (principal) commented on my dress code and instructed a colleague to say it to me. Later I heard him bragging about it to the ladies in the office and they all found it funny and laughed with him.]

5.4.1.4 Unfair distribution of workload

(P3): “My werkklas is verskriklik. Ek’s heeltemal oorlaai. Ek het geweldig baie goed wat ek moet doen by die skool. Hy (skoolhoof) het nooit vir my meer vry periodes gegee nie.”

[My workload is shocking. I’m totally overloaded. I have many things I have to do at school. He (principal) never gave me more off periods to do the work.]

(P7): “We have a problem of workload here at work. ... I’m one of those – I have too many periods.”

(P12): “My verantwoordelikhede neem toe, maar sy (onderhoof) neem stelselmatig al meer outoriteit by my weg.”

[My responsibilities are increasing, while she (vice-principal) systematically takes away my authority.]

(P13): “... hy (skoolhoof) al meer van my begin verwag, terwyl hy voor die personeel verkondig dat hy my werkklas minder maak omdat ek nie als in die skool kan doen nie. ... Ek werk soos ’n slaaf ...”

[... he (principal) increasingly expected more from me, and at the same time he tells the staff that he’s decreasing my workload because I can’t do everything in the school ... I’m working like a slave ...]

- (P16): “The workload was tough ... no one even listens to you or does anything about the unfair divisions of work.”
- (P22): “Ek is eintlik laerskool opgelei, toe sê hy (skoolhoof) vir my ek gaan vir die volgende jaar graad-elf en twaalf wiskunde gee. ... toe sê hy vir my hy’t my nie gevra nie, hy sê my net. Ek het nou so min geslaap want ek moes skoolhou, ek moes nuwe werk leer ...”
[I’m trained as a primary school teacher. He (principal) said that I was going to teach grade-eleven math the following year. I had little sleep because I had to teach, I had to learn new work ...]
- (P24): “My werksdruk was ongelooflik.”
[My work load was overwhelming.]
- (P27): “Inequitable workload infringes my labour rights ... I was burdened with 22hrs of exam subjects and a class of 47 learners as opposed to class sizes of 23, 22, 30, 28, 25, and 25 which were allocated to the other teachers.”

5.4.1.5 Malicious gossip

- (P3): “As jy inkom in die personeelkamer dan sit hy (skoolhoof) by hulle (kollegas) en jy kan baie keer aanvoel dat daar ook van jou gepraat word.”
[When you go into the staffroom you he (principal) sits with them (colleagues) then you often feel as if they are also talking about you.]
- (P4): “She (school support staff) talks badly about me to other staff ...”
- (P10): “Ek het ’n jong meisie wat hoof is van ons graad en sy voel totaal bedreig. Om een of ander rede gaan sy uit haar pad uit om my ongemaklik te maak en goed agter my rug te gaan sê wat totaal onwaar is om haar in die *limelight* te sit dan lyk dit of so fantasties is.”
[We have a young girl heading our grade. For some reason she goes out of her way to make me feel uncomfortable and say things behind my back that are false to put herself in the limelight and make it seem as if she is fantastic.]
- (P15): “Dit het ook al onder my aandag gekom dat my kollega vir die hoof “stories aandra” omtrent my vermoë.”

[It also came to my attention that my colleague spreads stories of me to my principal regarding my competence.]

(P17): "... vir die personeel gesê ek kla hom (skoolhoof) aan van viktimisasies terwyl dit nie so was nie ..."

[... He (principal) told the staff that I accuse him of victimisations, while it was not the case ...]

(P21): "Wanneer hy (skoolhoof) sien dat jy op jou standpunt staan, hou hy daarvan om jou te verkleineer, te vloek of te beskinder."

[If you stand your ground, he likes to humiliate you, use profanity, or gossip about you.]

(P26): "Sy (kollega) en haar trawante het ook stories oor my bevoegdheid (of gebrek daaraan) by die ouers versprei."

[She (colleague) and her henchmen spread gossip to parents about my competency (or lack thereof).]

5.4.1.6 Attacks on professional competence

(P5): "Toe het ek hulle (leerders) uitgevat toe kom vra hy (skoolhoof) my wat doen ek. 'Wat is jy besig om te doen?' Toe sê vir hom 'ek wil die kinders opwarmingsoefeninge leer ...' 'Ja jy weet nie wat jy doen nie. Vat die kinders terug en dis 'n opdrag.'"

[I took them (learners) outside then he (principal) asked me what I was doing. 'What are you doing?' I answered him 'I want to teach the children warm-up exercises ...' 'You don't know what you're doing. Take them back and that's an order.']

(P13): "Ongelukkig is my werk geleidelik deur die nuwe hoof bevraagteken. ... gedurende die tyd wat volg, bevraagteken die hoof my werk openlik in die personeelkamer."

[Unfortunately my work is gradually questioned by the new principal ... thereafter he questions my work publicly in the staffroom.]

(P17): "My beskuldig dat my werk swak is, dat ek indiensopleiding moet ontvang ..."

[He (principal) accused me that my work was done badly and that I have to receive training ...]

(P20): "To live in constant fear of being accused of incompetence ..."

(P24): "Hy (skoolhoof) het met die eerste intrapslag vir ons gebulder dat ons niks weet nie."

[From the beginning he (principal) criticised us that we knew nothing.]

(P26): “Sy (kollega) en haar trawante het ook stories oor my bevoegdheid (of gebrek daaraan) by die ouers versprei.”

[She (colleague) and her henchmen spread gossip to parents about my competency (or lack thereof).]

5.4.1.7 Lodging or threatening to lodge unfair grievances

(P1): “... as hulle (skoolhoofde) sien jy's kalm en jy gaan aan met jou dinge en jy's nie gerattle nie, roep hulle jou in om 'n klagte teen jou te oop-en-bloot. ‘Somebody has come and I have numerous complaints that this has happened. I have an allegation that you swore at a child.’ ‘I never swore at a child in a class, so give me the names.’ ‘No.’”

[When they (principals) see you're calm and not rattled, they call you in to lay a grievance against you ...]

(P12): “In Jan 2011 gee sy (skoolhoof) my uit die bloute 'n voorlopige skriftelike waarskuwing oor sg. growwe ongerymdhede wat ek sou begaan het. 'n Hele lys van leuens en verdraaide feite word aan my voorgehou en ek word ingelig dat indien ek nie my gesindheid verander nie, ek dit as 'n skriftelike waarskuwing moet beskou.”

[During January 2011, she (principal) gave me an interim written warning about so-called extravagance. She showed me a list of lies and distorted facts and informed me that if I don't change my attitude, I can see this as a written warning.]

(P16): “I was threatened with a statement that charges will be laid against me.”

(P20): “(Colleague) would look for any possible incident to blame me of misconduct.”

(P23): Op 'n stadium het hy (skoolhoof) my ingeroep oor my kleredrag. ... hy't my ingeroep en gesê ‘Ek kla jou aan oor jou kleredrag. Ek gaan jou aankla by die komitee.’”

[At one stage he called me in and said ‘I'm lodging a complaint against you regarding your dress code. I'm going to lodge a complaint to the committee.’]

(P27): “At staff meetings we are always threatened (by principal) with ‘insubordination’ ‘derelictions if duty’ or ‘I am allowed to use my positional power’ ...”

5.4.1.8 Ignoring the teacher

(P3): “Ek het al vir hom (skoolhoof) briewe geskryf en skriftelik vir hom gegee en hy reageer glad nie daarop nie. Hy antwoord my nie terug nie en ek het geen kommunikasie met hom nie.”

[I also wrote him (principal) letters and had given it to him, but he doesn't respond to it. He doesn't answer me and I have no communication with him.]

(P4): “She (support staff) never greeted me. Not one time. Not once. So I walked to the office, or the staffroom and she won't greet me and now everybody else won't greet me.”

(P5): “... ek kom by sy (skoolhoof) kantoor, staan voor sy deur dan kom iemand agter my dan praat hy met die een agter my dan hy maak of ek nie voor daai persoon staan nie.”

[I go to his (principal) office, stand in the doorway and somebody comes and stands behind me, then he speaks to that person and pretend that I'm not even there.]

(P14): “Die afgelope week was ek terug by die skool. Hulle (kollegas) het my verjaardag geïgnoreer en gemaak asof ek nooit weg was nie.”

[The past week I was back at school. They (colleagues) ignored my birthday and acted as if I was never even gone.]

(P16): “Many a time I would be totally ignored when I greeted him or spoke to him. He simply turned his back and walked away, something he did not ever do to any other teacher on the staff.”

5.4.1.9 Harassment

(P1): “Hoekom moet ek elke liewe oomblik kwesbaar voel want ek weet nie wanneer ek aangeval gaan word met hom (skoolhoof) deur 'n brief, deur 'n email? As ek nie op 'n plek is nie, kom ek huis toe dan het ek 'n email wat sê ‘I noticed you were not there.’”

[Why do I have to feel vulnerable every moment because I don't know when I'm going to be attacked by him (principal) through a letter or email? If I am not at a certain place, when I arrive at home I have an email that says 'I noticed you were not there.']

(P11): “Sy (onderhoof) het elke dag gebel, nie om te vra hoe dit gaan nie, maar wanneer ek terugkom of iets van skoolwerk of vraestelle gevra. ... Ek was in so 'n toestand dat my man die hoof gebel het en gesê het dat as sy weer met my praat of bel, hy 'n interdik teen haar gaan kry.”

[She (vice-principal) phoned me every day, not to ask how I am doing, but to know when I will be back at school or she asked questions concerning schoolwork. ... I was so upset, my husband phoned the principal and told him if she contacts me again, he will get a restraining order against her.]

(P18): “Die ‘bully’ kan geen onderskeid tref tussen ‘n vriendskaplike verhouding en ‘n professionele verhouding nie. Hy wil my soengroet by elke moontlike geleentheid en het onlangs, 8 uur in die oggend, vir hom *Jelly Tots* uit ‘n swanger juffrou van 24 jaar oud se broeksak gehaal.”

[The ‘bully’ cannot distinguish between friendship and professional relationships. He wants to greet me with a kiss with every possible opportunity and recently, 8 o’clock in the morning, he took Jelly Tots from a 24-year old pregnant teacher’s trouser pocket.]

(P19): “Another skill you (as principal) should have is a roving eye. You have to flirt and even sexually harass the young girls in your office. They starve for your attention and like a druggie they will come back for more of you.”

(P22): “Op ‘n stadium het ek *check* rompies gehad, maar hulle het tot op my knieg gekom, maar sykouse en hofskoene daarby gedra. Hy (skoolhoof) het baie daarvan gehou dan sê hy ‘Jy het vandag nou weer net so aangetrek om my te treiter.’ ... Hy sal sulke suggesties maak.”

[At one stage I wore check skirts that were knee length, but wore stockings and heels as well. He (principal) liked it very much and then says ‘Today you just dressed this way to tease me again.’ ... He will make suggestions like that.]

5.4.1.10 Micro-managing the work environment

(P6): “But he (principal) says there are no meetings. The department will talk to him directly and he will talk to the teachers directly. When you ask him to hold a departmental meeting he will say “no, the buck stops with me so I know everything that is happening in the school.”

(P23): “... hy (skoolhoof) het ‘n minimum van twee keer ‘n dag die stoepe gepatrolleer. Gewoonlik was hy so vier keer ‘n dag in my klas.”

[He (principal) patrolled the halls a minimum of two times a day. He was usually in my classroom four times a day.]

(P24): “Hy sou daaglik in die klasdeur kom staan en kyk dat ek werk. ... As hy in die klas ingekom het, moes ek in my voorbereiding hom wys presies wat en waar dit geskryf is wat ek nou besig is om te doen.”

[He would stand in the door of my classroom en make sure that I do my work ... When he came into my class I had to show him my preparation and what I was busy doing at that moment.]

5.4.1.11 Undue criticism towards the teacher's work

(P13): “Ongelukkig is my werk geleidelik deur die nuwe hoof bevraagteken. ... gedurende die tyd wat volg, bevraagteken die hoof my werk openlik in die personeelkamer.”

[Unfortunately my work is gradually questioned by the new principal ... thereafter he questions my work publicly in the staffroom.]

(P16): “My book evaluations were also most unfair at times ...”

(P24): “Ek moes weeklik my voorbereiding aan (naam uitgelaat) inhandig. Dan het sy dit ‘gemerk’, als was verkeerd en ek moes dit oor die naweek oor doen en Maandag weer ingee.”

[I had to submit my preparation to (name omitted) on a weekly basis. Then she ‘marked’ it, everything was wrong and I had to do the work again and submit it the following Monday.]

5.4.1.12 Isolating the teacher from the work group

(P19): “You (as principal) make sure that the strong links in your organisation become isolated.”

(P20): “(Colleague) teamed up with certain colleagues and all of a sudden I felt excluded ...”

(P23): “Hy (skoolhoof) het my so gemanipuleer – dat ek die enigste een is met wie hy gepraat het in die personeelkamer. Hy het my vir homself geannekseer.”

[He (principal) manipulated me – I was the only one with whom he spoke in the staffroom. He had taken me for himself.]

5.4.1.13 Making unfounded accusations

(P12): “Daar was sedert ... 2006 herhaalde gevalle waartydens die hoof my en ander personeellede van dinge beskuldig wat nie waar was nie.”

[Since 2006 there were repeated incidences during which the principal accused me and other teachers of things that were not true.]

(P15): “Die hoof berispe my oor insidente waarvan ek nie bewus is nie.”

[The principal blamed me for incidents that I wasn't aware of.]

(P17): “... my 4 keer ingeroep kantoor toe, my beledig en beskuldig sonder rede ... my beskuldig dat ek die skool se verversingsgeld misbruik.”

[... he (principal) called me to his office four times, offended and blamed me for no reason ... blamed me that I abused the school's money for refreshments.]

5.4.1.14 Favouritism of staff

(P21): “My enigste dryfveer is dat ek op die oomblik vir ander poste ook aansoek doen. Om weg te kom uit sy dampkring en vanaf sy witbroodjies.”

[My only motive at this moment is to apply for another teaching position. I want to get away from the atmosphere and his 'blue-eyed boys'.]

5.4.1.15 Physical bullying

(P8): “So when I had to prepare - 'cause I had to prepare stuff for class moderation - she (principal) said ‘move away from my computer. Move away from my space, otherwise I will pull the chair out from underneath you.’ Then, she did exactly that. I had to move away. She pulled the chair then I almost fell. So I said ‘You're being childish. Why are you pulling the chair off?’ She just said to me ‘Childish is what you are being now.’ That was not a good thing because that was in front of the whole ... part of the staff.”

5.4.2 Main theme 2: The effects of workplace bullying on physical health

	Main theme 2 The effects of workplace bullying on physical health	n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.2.1 Sleeping problems	12
	5.4.2.2 Physical symptoms of severe stress and anxiety	8
	5.4.2.3 Fatigue	7
	5.4.2.4 Tension headaches	5
	5.4.2.5 Hypertension	4
	5.4.2.6 Stress-related physical illnesses	4
	5.4.2.7 Sexual health problems	2
	5.4.2.8 Weight gain	2
	5.4.2.9 Musculoskeletal problems	2

5.4.2.1 Sleeping problems

(P1): “Die vakansie wat nou net verby is, het ek nie ’n enkele aand geslaap nie.”

[I didn’t sleep one single night this past holiday.]

(P2): “Sleepless nights.”

(P3): “Ek het in die huis gekom die middag, gaan lê op die bed en ek slaap tot vyf-uur. Opgestaan , gaan eet aandete, het opruim in die huis dan is ek agt-uur in die bed. ... Ek is totaal-en-al *depressed*.”

[In the afternoon, I laid on my bed and slept until half-past five. I ate dinner, cleaned the house, and went to bed at eight. ... I’m totally depressed.]

(P9): “Jy gaan maar na jou huisdokter toe ... vir moegheid, vir die feit dat jy nie kan slaap nie.”

[You go to your GP ... for fatigue and an inability to sleep.]

(P12): “Erge slaaploosheid.”

[... severe sleeplessness ...]

(P16): “I have been on medication for on and off 2 years, I spent 7 days in hospital for stress and depression and take meds to calm me at night so I can at least have some sleep.”

(P18): "... slaap baie sleg ..."

[I do not sleep well ...]

(P21): "Ek kan egter nie slaap nie, en gebruik al vir die afgelope 9 jaar die slaappil."

[I cannot sleep and am using sleeping medication for nine years.]

(P22): "Ek sê vir my man na ek vir jou die sms gestuur het ek van hom (skoolhoof) gedroom en weer in 'n koue sweet wakker geword."

[I told my husband that after I sent you a sms, I dreamt of him (principal) and woke up in a cold sweat.]

(P27): "My GP gave me Alzam to assist me to sleep."

5.4.2.2 Physical symptoms of severe anxiety

(P1): "My mond is aanhoudend, aanhoudend droog. ... die Dinsdag na die kaping roep hy my in om my uit te trap ... geheel-en-totaal-en-al onbenullig. Hy (skoolhoof) weet dit gaan my afsluit. Dat ek voor hom staan dat ek niks vir hom sê nie. Ek kan nie 'n woord uit kry nie, want daar's niks in my mond nie. ... Ek dink die Post Traumatic Stress (het my vasgevat)."

[My mouth is constantly dry... the Tuesday after my hijacking he calls me in. He knows he is going to shut me off (emotionally). I'm standing in front of him, but am unable to say anything, because my mouth is dry. I think that the Post Traumatic Stress has a grip on me.]

(P2): "When somebody knocks at the door, I could feel the sound around the left and right behind my eyes ... even the dogs – when they were barking I could feel my heart was beating fast."

(P16): "I had such headache and felt nauseous and very dizzy."

(P18): "Ek het 'n permanente 'knop' op my maag, ek voel altyd gespanne en baie gestres, skrik (vir niks) ..."

[My stomach is permanently in a knot, I always feel stressed and alarmed (for no reason) ...]

(P21): "Tel koue sweet in die oggende ook? Maagpyn as ek Sondae moet dink dat ek moet teruggaan skool toe?"

[Do cold sweats in the morning count? Stomach aches on Sundays if I think that I have to go to school?]

(P22): "Dis hierdie verskriklike ang. Ek was nogsteeds siek."

[It's severe anxiety. I was sick.]

5.4.2.3 Fatigue

(P9): “Baklei teen die sisteme, dan begin mens ongelooflik moeg raak. By die huis is jy uitgeput.”

[If one fights the system, you become exhausted. You are exhausted at home.]

(P14): “Ek het sleg geslaap en nagmerries begin kry en ek was moeg ...”

[I didn't sleep well, had nightmares and was fatigued ...]

(P16): “I felt extremely tired and had strange headaches for a few days.”

(P17): “Ek was gedurig moeg ...”

[I was regularly fatigued.]

(P18): “Ek is gedurig moeg en is min lus om te kuier met vriende.”

[I was regularly fatigued and did not want to socialise with friends.]

5.4.2.4 Tension headaches

(P2): “I had a severe headache.”

(P8): “The migraine, the headaches ...”

(P18): “... baie hoofpyne ...”

[... many headaches...]

5.4.2.5 Hypertension

(P1): *Field note:* Participant afterwards reported being hospitalised for high blood pressure.

(P18): “... bloeddruk is gevaarlik hoog ...”

[... my blood pressure was dangerously high ...]

5.4.2.6 Experiencing stress-related illnesses

(P4): “Then I got pneumonia. I'm sure I got pneumonia because I was so stressed ...”

(P10): “Ek het nie die twee gekoppel nie, maar ek het brongitis gekry, uit die bloute.”

[I never connected the two, but out of the blue I got bronchitis.]

5.4.3 Main theme 3: The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health

Main theme 3 The effects of workplace bullying on psychological health		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.3.1 Depression	17
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5.4.3.1 Depression

(P2): "I somehow got depressed at first."

- (P4): "I just got really, really down and depressed and I lost my sense of humour."
- (P5): "Ek voel net heeltemal depressief."
[I just feel totally depressed.]
- (P6): "Personally I just wait for Fridays so I can be out of the system for the weekend. Sunday evenings I feel very depressed like a little school boy."
- (P7): "I didn't even know I was going through a depression."
- (P9): "Ek was later na 'n sielkundige toe. Die sielkundige het my na (Psigiatriese hospitaal-naam uitgelaat) ... dis 'n hospitaal vir depressiewe gevalle."
[I went to a psychologist. The psychologist sent me to (Psychiatric Hospital name omitted) ... it's a hospital for cases of depression.]
- (P14): "'n Vriendin het onlangs vir my die Rooi Rose artikel gemail omdat ek vir 6 weke by die skool afgeboek is vir uitbranding en depressie."
[A friend recently emailed me the article in the Rooi Rose because I was booked off for 6 weeks for burnout and depression.]
- (P16): "... I spent 7 days in hospital for stress and depression ..."
- (P17): "Depressief!"
[Depressed!]
- (P20): "I had to make use of anti-depressants to cope as this (bullying) behaviour towards me contributed and increased my stress and depression level."
- (P21): "Hy (skoolhoof) veroorsaak my slaaploosheid en my depressie."
[He (principal) causes my sleeplessness and depression.]
- (P22): "Ek het dokters gaan sien en ek kry toe nou 'n antidepressant. Dokters gaan sien en hulle het maar gesê dis stres en depressie."
[I went to see doctors and then I got an antidepressant. The doctors said I have stress and depression.]
- (P24): "... depressie ..."
[... depression ...]
- (P25): "... gehospitaliseer met Major Depressie as gevolg van spanning ..."
[... (I was) hospitalised with Major Depression because of stress ...]

(P27): “I was diagnosed with severe stress and depression.”

5.4.3.2 The use of medication to cope with health effects

(P5): “... ek het al baie pille gedrink.”

[... I've taken many pills.]

(P7): “I’m on anti-depressants ...”

(P9): “Ek is op slaappille. Ek was op antidepressante.”

[I'm taking sleeping tablets. I was taking antidepressants.]

(P14): “Die psigiater het my vir 10 dae laat opneem vir depressie en my op medikasie gesit.”

[The psychiatrist sent me to hospital for 10 days for depression and prescribed medication.]

(P16): “I have been on medication for on and off 2 years, I spent 7 days in hospital for stress and depression end take meds to calm me at night so I can at least have some sleep.”

(P17): “Was op antidepressante – het party dae sommer twee ekstra kalmeerpille gedrink.”

[Used tranquilizers – some days I even took two extra pills.]

(P18): “Ek het my huisdokter verlede week weer besoek. Sy is nie tevrede met my bloeddruk en algemene gesondheid nie – het die dosering van die bloeddrukpil verhoog, nog 'n pil bygevoeg, kalmeerpil bygevoeg wat ek 2 maal per dag moet neem, asook die antidepressante se dosering verdubbel.”

[I consulted my GP last week and she wasn't satisfied with my general health. She increased the dosage of my hypertension medication, added a tranquilizer, which I have to take two times a day, and she also doubled my dosage of antidepressants.]

(P20): “I had to make use of anti-depressants to cope as this behaviour towards me contributed and increased my stress and depression level.”

(P21): “Ek is by twee geleenthede met Major Depressie gediagnoseer. Huidiglik het ek na vier jaar se medikasie, die antidepressante weggesmyt en probeer al vir 7 maande daarsonder regkom ... ek kan egter nie slaap nie, en gebruik al vir die afgelope jaar 'n slaappil.”

[I was diagnosed with Major Depression on two different occasions. After four years of taking medication, I threw it away and am trying to cope without it for seven months ... I can't sleep and am using a tranquilizer for two years.]

(P22): “Ek het die dokters gaan sien en toe kry ek nou ’n antidepressant.”

[I consulted doctors and am currently on an antidepressant.]

(P24): “Daardie middag kom ek huis toe. Pak die medisynetas uit en drink 180 slaappille, al die kalmeerpille en al die antidepressante wat ek het, almal gelyk. ...”

[That afternoon I went home ... drank 180 sleeping tablets, all the tranquillisers and anti-depressants I had, all at once ... My veins collapsed but I was hospitalised and ‘saved’.]

(P27): “My GP gave me Alzam to assist me to sleep.”

5.4.3.3 Crying and tearfulness

(P1): “... dat mense my sien huil – ek hou nie daarvan nie.”

[... I don’t like it if people see me crying.]

(P9): “... jy is huilerig ...”

[... you are tearful ...]

(P10): “As ek terug kyk na die hele jaar tot op hede, waar ek in my klas staan en snik en dik oë gehuil ...”

[If I look back to the past, where I stand in my classroom and so band cry ...]

(P11): “Ek het in my lewe nog nie so verneder gevoel nie, was so ontsteld en het vir ’n hele dag lank gehuil.”

[I never felt so humiliated in my life. I’ve never been this upset and cried for the whole day.]

(P12): “By tye voel ek huilerig ...”

[Sometimes I’m tearful.]

(P14): “Ek het sleg geslaap en nagmerries begin kry en ek was moeg en huilerig.”

[I didn’t sleep well, had nightmares and also was tired and tearful.]

(P17): “My laaste jaar ... het ek die hele eerste kwartaal elke dag gehuil.”

(P18): “Ek is geweldig emosioneel, huil baie ...”

[I’m very emotional and cry a lot ...]

(P23): “Ek het een maal ’n maand in my stoor gesit en huil ... Twee weke voor hy weg is het ek begin huil en ek het nie geweet hoekom nie. Ek is so gemanipuleer. Wat gaan ek nou doen? ... Ek het

gevoel soos Pavlov se hond sou gevoel het as hy hom by die veearts gaan aflaai het om uitgesit te word.”

[Once a month I sat in my basement and cried ... Two weeks before he went away, I started crying and didn't know why. I'm so manipulated. What am I going to do now? ... I felt like Pavlov's dog would feel if you took him to the veterinary...]

(P24): “... huilerig.”

[... tearful.]

5.4.3.4 Anger and lessened control of temper

(P2): “I feel I can't control my temper.”

(P3): “Ek is vreeslik aggressief teenoor hom maar ek probeer om dit glad nie te wys nie.”

[I am extremely aggressive toward him, but I try not to show it.]

(P5): “Ek het later gevoel dat ek iets sou doen. Ek wil hom as't ware seer maak wil ek sê.”

[Later I felt that I would do something. I would say I wanted to hurt him (principal).]

(P11): “Ek het maar op my tande gebyt en tot tien getel en soms om die gebou te loop om asem te skep en kalm te raak ...”

[I bit on my teeth, counted to ten and often I circled the building to take a breath and calm down ...]

(P17): “Ek was ... kortgebonde ...”

[I was ... short-tempered.]

(P18): “Ek is byna altyd ongelukkig, hartseer, emosioneel, humeurig ... Ek voel kwaad ...”

[I'm almost always unhappy, sad, emotional, short-tempered ... I feel angry ...]

(P24): “... kwaad, aggressie.”

[... angry, aggressive.]

5.4.3.5 Effects on personality

(P1): “... ek weet in my harte van hart dat hy die een ding gaan afbreek wat die seerste is en dit is wie ek is.”

[... I know in my heart that the one thing he is going break the one thing that hurts the most – and that is who I am.]

(P2): “I can say I’ve lost my (self-) worth up to now.”

(P6): “... and there are things that he does that will always break us.”

(P11): “Was so seergemaak, om te dink het my *als* vir die skool gegee en in die proses myself verloor ...”

[I was so hurt to think that I gave everything to the school and in the process I lost myself ...]

(P16): “I’ve lost my self-confidence ...”

(P19): “Jy is gegradeer tot ’n *zombiaanse* gesiglose betekenlose niks.”

[You are degraded to a faceless zombie, without meaning, nothing.]

(P22): “My vriendinne was ook bekommerd oor my ... hulle het op ’n stadium gesê hulle ken my nie meer nie. Ek is vir hulle ’n vreemdeling.”

[My friends were worried about me ... at one stage they said they don’t know me anymore. I’m like a stranger to them.]

5.4.3.6 Hospitalisation for psychological ill-health

(P2): “I was somehow depressed at first. I went to the hospital.”

(P9): “Ek was later sielkundige toe. Die sielkundige het my na (Hospitaal naam uitgelaat) aanbeveel ...”

[I went to a psychologist and he recommended (Hospital name omitted) ...]

(P11): “Ek kon net nie verder nie en hy het my afgeboek vir die res van die kwartaal. Ek is opgeneem ... vir 3 weke. My kinders by die huis was histeries.”

[I couldn’t go on anymore and he booked me off for the rest of the term. I was admitted ... for three weeks.]

(P14): “Die psigiater het my vir 10 dae laat opneem vir depressie ...”

[The psychiatrist admitted me for ten days for depression ...]

(P24): “Ek het in (Psigiatryse hospitaal-naam uitgelaat) beland a.g.v. depressie. Ek het medikasie begin neem.”

[I was hospitalised because of depression. I began to use medication.]

5.4.3.7 Avoidance behaviour

(P1): “Ek ignoreer hom (skoolhoof). Ek bly uit sy pad uit tot en wyl dinge nou verander het.”

[I ignore him (principal). I stay out of his way until things have changed.]

(P2): “So I did not attend staff meeting due to this defamation of character.”

(P3): “... in my hart was ek oortuig ek moet dit nie doen nie, want dan moet ek kontak maak met hom (skoolhoof) die hele tyd.”

[... I was sure that I mustn't do it, because I will have to have contact with him (principal) the whole time.]

(P11): “Ek en sy het baie vasgesit en ek het haar vir weke geïgnoreer.”

[We had many conflicts and I ignored her for weeks.]

(P12): “Ek gaan net deur die dae en probeer uit die hoof se pad en uit die moeilikheid bly.”

[I just go on with my day and try to stay out of the principal's way.]

5.4.3.8 Feelings of helplessness

(P1): “Ek weet nie wat ek daaraan kan doen nie.”

[I don't know what to do about the situation.]

(P5): “... ek voel ek het nie mag amper nie.”

[... it almost feels like I have no power.]

(P12): “Ek kon sien die kere wanneer ek gehuil het van magteloosheid en moedeloosheid, vir hom (man) baie swaar was.”

[The times that I cried because of helplessness and hopelessness, I could see that it was very difficult for my husband.]

(P21): “Ek het later besef dat mens nie kan *burp* teen donderweer nie.”

[I realised that one cannot burp against thunder.]

(P23): “Ek het gevoel soos Pavlov se hond sou gevoel het as hy hom by die veearts gaan aflaai het om uitgesit te word.”

[I felt like Pavlov's dog would feel if you took him to the veterinary...]

5.4.3.9 Social and emotional withdrawal

(P8): “You don’t want to go out.”

(P18): “... trek myself al hoe meer terug ...”

(P23): “Ek het in die personeelkamer gesit in ’n hoek. My verhoudings het daaronder gely.”

[I sat in the staffroom in a corner. My relationships were affected. People told me it’s all I talked about.]

(P24): “Het geen vriende. Kan nie meer met mense gesêls nie.”

[I have no friends. I can’t speak to people anymore.]

(P26): “By die skool het ek my heeltemal aan enige vriendskaplike verhoudinge onttrek en net my werk gedoen. Ek was te bang dat enigiets wat ek vir enigiemand sê teen my gebruik kon word. Die feit dat ek myself onttrek het, het weer tot gevolg gehad dat mense my as afsydig beskou het.”

[I withdrew from relationships at school and only did my work. I was afraid that I might say something that could be used against me. People also perceived me as aloof, due to my withdrawal.]

5.4.3.10 Psychological distress

(P4): “Then I got pneumonia. I’m sure I got pneumonia because I was so stressed ... this stress at the moment is just overwhelming.”

(P12): “Geweldige spanning, tot so ’n mate dat ek deesdae soms hakkel ...”

[Severe stress, to the degree that I stutter ...]

(P18): “Ek het ’n permanente ‘knop’ op my maag, ek voel altyd gespanne en baie gestres, skrik (vir niks) ...”

[My stomach is permanently in a knot, I always feel stressed and alarmed (for no reason) ...]

(P20): “I had to make use of anti-depressants to cope as this (bullying) behaviour towards me contributed and increased my stress and depression level.”

(P25): “... gehospitaliseer met Major Depressie as gevolg van spanning ...”

[... (I was) hospitalised with Major Depression because of stress ...]

5.4.3.11 Teachers' search for meaning

(P1): "Hoekom moes ek dit deurloop, hoekom?"

[Why did I have to go through this, why?]

(P10): "Ek het nou begin dink wat met my hierdie jaar gebeur het en is dit professionele *jealousy*? ...

Ek kan myself nog nie 'n antwoord gee nie."

[I have begun to think about what has happened to me the past year and is it professional jealousy? ... I can't give myself an answer yet.]

(P15): "Ek weet nie wat ek verkeerd doen om hierdie behandeling te ontvang nie."

[I don't know what I did wrong to be treated like this.]

(P18): "My geloof is tot die uiterste beproef sodat ek begin twyfel of daar enigsins 'n God is wat omgee vir my."

[My religion is tested to its limits until I began to doubt if there is a God that cares for me.]

5.4.3.12 Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts

(P1): "Jy wil nie aanhou nie. Dis waar ek is."

[You don't want to go on. This is where I am.]

(P2): "... I started asking myself what? Why would I commit suicide? What would motivate me? What would push me?"

(P3): "... ek so desperaat gevoel, dat ek regtig begin dink het om 'n einde te maak aan alles. Ek het dit beplan ..."

[... I felt so desperate, that I thought about making an end to it all. I planned it ...]

5.4.3.13 Preoccupation with bullying experience

(P8): "When you're doing a task you don't think about doing well. You think about the person who's going to moderate that."

(P17): "My hele gesin was moeg om van die skool te hoor! Ek moes my die hele tyd inhou en as ek iets gesê het, het my man vir my gesê hy is nie lus om na al die nonsens te luister nie."

[My family was sick and tired of hearing about the school! I had to contain myself and if I said something, my husband said that didn't want to listen to this nonsense.]

(P18): “Ek is gedurig moeg en min lus om te kuier met vriende. As ons wel die slag kuier, vang ek myself elke keer dat die gesprek net weer eindig by die skool, met my wat praat en hulle wat luister.”

[I'm often tired and not want to visit friends. When we are together, I catch myself every time in a conversation where I talk about the school and they are listening.]

5.4.3.14 Fearing the unpredictability of exposure to bullying

(P2): “I started developing this fear that my family is going to be destroyed.”

(P14): “Ek is bang. Ek wil nie meer misbruik word nie en dit is vir my moeilik om mense in die oë te kyk omdat almal weet ek is opgeneem met depressie en dit word as 'n swakheid gesien.”

[I'm scared. I don't want to be abused anymore and it's difficult for me to look people in the eye because everyone knows that I was hospitalised with depression and it is perceived as a weakness.]

(P27): “Even my verbiage began to suffer. I had a problem articulating my problems and thoughts. I began to live in fear.”

5.4.3.15 Symptoms of burnout

(P5): “Ek voel net moeg.”

[I just feel tired.] Field note: in the context of the interview, this was perceived as emotional exhaustion.

(P9): “... jy voel net gedreineer.”

[... you feel drained.]

(P14): “'n Vriendin van my het onlangs die *Rooi Rose* artikel *gemail* omdat ek vir 6 weke by die skool afgeboek is vir uitbranding en depressie.”

[A friend recently emailed me the article in the Rooi Rose because I was booked off for 6 weeks for burnout and depression.]

5.4.3.16 Anxiety and panic attacks

(P11): "... met tye sulke angsaanvalle gekry dat dit soos 'n hartaanval gevoel het en my man elke keer met my hospitaal toe was."

[... at times I got panic attacks, which felt like a heart attack and my husband went to hospital with me each time.]

(P13): "Die nuutste is angsaanvalle."

[The latest is panic attacks.]

5.4.3.17 Feelings of exclusion and distrust

(P26): "Ek het 'n bietjie van my vertroue in die mensdom verloor en was meer agterdogtig t.o.v. mense se motiewe."

[I somewhat lost my trust in humanity and was suspicious of people's motives.]

5.4.3.18 Feelings of not being appreciated

(P18): "Hy (skoolhoof) toon geen reaksie wanneer ek iets positiefs by die skool doen nie."

[He (principal) shows no reaction when I do something positive at school.]

5.4.3.19 Self-blame

(P9): "... mens begin dink die fout lê by jou."

[... one begins to think you're at fault.]

5.4.3.20 Feelings of worthlessness

(P18): "Ek is geweldig emosioneel, huil baie, voel verneder, nikswerd ..."

[I am extremely emotional, cry often, feel humiliated, and worth nothing ...]

5.4.3.21 Symptoms of trauma and PTSD

(P23): "Op 'n stadium het ek 'n trauma beleef ... ek was toe opgeneem in die hospitaal vir trauma vir 'n week."

[At some stage I experienced a traumatic incident ... I was admitted in hospital for a week.]

5.4.4 Main theme 4: The effects of workplace bullying on social health

	Main theme 4 The effects of workplace bullying on social health: social and professional relationships	n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.4.1 Effects on teachers' relationships at work	14
	5.4.4.2 Effects on teachers' children	11
	5.4.4.3 Effects on teachers' marital relationships	11
	5.4.4.4 Inadequate social support	3

5.4.4.1 Effects on teachers' relationships at work

(P2): "... I withdrew myself and started to plan the polite way of leaving."

(P3): "So eintlik wat ek wil sê is daar's 'n totale skeuring in ons skool as gevolg van die feit dat hy (skoolhoof) sekere mense so ... jy weet dis sy gunsteling mense en hy sit by hulle pouse."
[... our school is divided ... he (principal) has his favourites and he sits with them during breaks.]

(P5): "Op die ou einde toe bly ek maar in my klaskamer ..."
[In the end I stayed in my classroom ...]

(P15): "Ek bly nou in my klas en die personeel wat met my wil gesêls kom dan daar vir my "kuier"."
[I stay in my classroom and the staff who wants to speak to me can visit me there.]

(P17): "Ek en my man het die laaste 5 jaar geen personeelfunksies bygewoon nie. Ek het totaal 'uit' gevoel by die skool."
[My husband and I have not attended any school function for 5 years. I didn't feel part of the school.]

(P18): "Omdat ek gedurig verneder, afgekraak en geviktimiseer word by die skool, het ek my byna heeltemal onttrek. Lewer nie bydraes meer nie, praat nie meer op vergaderings nie, maak nie nuwe voorstelle nie, neem nie deel aan geselsies nie."
[I totally withdrew myself because I'm constantly humiliated, belittled and victimised at school. I make no contributions, do not speak in meetings, don't make any suggestions, and don't partake in conversations.]

- (P21): "... die skoolhoof veroorsaak dat daar spanning onder die personeel is omdat hy witbroodjies het. As jy 'flavour of the year' was, en eenkeer met hom verskil, word jy uitgeskakel."
[... the principal causes stress among the work group because he has 'blue-eyed-boys'. If you were the 'flavour of the year' and you disagreed with him once, you were phased out.]
- (P22): "Dit het my verhoudinge met die personeel ook beïnvloed, want jy is mos nou die *target* en hulle wil nie met jou vereenselwig word nie, anders word hulle ook 'n *target*, jy weet."
[It affected my relationships with the staff, because you are the 'target' and they don't want to associate with the target, otherwise they will also be targeted ...]
- (P23): "Ek het in die personeelkamer gesit in 'n hoek. My verhoudings het daaronder gely. Die mense het vir my gesê dis al waaroor ek gepraat het."
[I sat in the staffroom in a corner. My relationships were affected. People told me it's all a talked about.]
- (P24): "Het geen vriende. Kan nie meer met mense gesêls nie. Onttrek – sit alleen in klas."
[(I have) no friends. (I) can't stalk to people anymore. (I) withdraw – sit alone in my classroom.]
- (P26): "By die skool het ek my heeltemal aan enige vriendskaplike verhoudinge onttrek en net my werk gedoen. Ek was te bang dat enigiets wat ek vir enigiemand sê teen my gebruik kon word. Die feit dat ek myself onttrek het, het weer tot gevolg gehad dat mense my as afsydig beskou het."
[I withdrew myself from social relationships at school and only did my work. I was too scared to say something that could be used against me. People on the other hand perceived me as aloof because I withdrew myself.]
- (P27): "Whilst in school I kept to myself for many reasons ... because teachers reported our conversations to the principal, ... teachers were afraid to speak to me for fear of the principal, ... I did not want to get into any altercation with the principal."

5.4.4.2 Effects on teachers' children

- (P4): "My son has suffered terribly ... I became really, really, really short-tempered ... I'll lose my temper really easy to the point that I was feeling I was being abusive to my own child."
- (P5): "Dit het ook 'n effek op ons twee kinders wat nog in die huis is. Hulle is altwee hoërskool en dit het hulle skool ook geaffekteer."

[It also affected our two children. They are both in secondary school and it affected their schoolwork.]

(P6): “You take part of work at your workplace to your home and that’s your social life at home. Ultimately, your wife and your kids they need your attention ...”

(P9): “As jy moeg en uitgeput by die huis kom het dit ook outomaties ’n invloed op jou kinders.”
[If you are tired and exhausted, it automatically affects your children.]

(P12): “My kinders ... het my spanning sleg ervaar en ek en veral my een seun het by tye erg gebots.”
[My children ... experienced my stress and me and my son often had conflict.]

(P20): “My family only consists of me and my 11 year old son, but I tend to be more irritated, tired and unhappy.”

(P22): “Daai depressie en angs en goeters dra jy dan mos ook oor aan jou gesin. Ek dink nie iemand het rêrig verstaan waardeur ek gaan nie. Toe het al drie my kinders wat baie akademies sterk is, almal tien persent geval in hulle persentasie.”
[The depression and anxiety spills over to your family. I think nobody really understood what I’m going through. My three children, who were all academically strong, fell ten percent (in their school performance).]

(P24): “Effek op my gesin ... my onttrek van my kinders ...”
[It had an effect on my family ... withdrew from my children.]

(P26): “Ek was meer gespanne en dit het oorgespoel na my gesinslewe. My man en kinders moes in baie gevalle my “af”-tye by die huis gade slaan, terwyl hulle glad nie die oorsaak daarvan was nie!”
[The stress escalated and spilled to my family. My husband and children were affected, while they were not the cause.]

5.4.4.3 Effects on teachers’ marital relationships

(P2): “So sexually I’m out. I can’t perform anything with my wife. We can take months without attending each other.”

(P5): “By die huis het dit baie my familie beïnvloed - my vrou het al twee keer probeer selfmoord pleeg.”

[It affected my family – my wife attempted to commit suicide two times.]

(P6): “You take part of work at your workplace to your home and that’s your social life at home. Ultimately, your wife and your kids they need your attention ...”

(P9): “My verhouding met my man het ook maar half skade opgetel.”

[My relationship with my husband was also harmed.]

(P12): “Ek kon sien die kere wanneer ek gehuil het van magteloosheid en moedeloosheid, vir hom (man) baie swaar was.”

[The times that I cried because of helplessness and hopelessness, I could see that it was hard on my husband.]

(P17): “Ek moes my die hele tyd inhou en as ek iets gesê het, het my man vir my gesê hy is nie lus om na al die nonsens te luister nie.”

[I had to contain myself and if I said something, my husband said that didn’t want to listen to this nonsense.]

(P18): “My sosiale verhoudings het in die afgelope jaar groot skade gelei. My familie (man en kinders) hoor net elke dag my klagtes en gekerm.”

[My social relationships were severely harmed during the past year. My family (husband and children) listens to my complaints and moaning everyday.]

(P24): “... huweliksprobleme, baie baklei en rusies.”

[... marital problems, many fights and quarrels.]

(P26): “Ek was meer gespanne en dit het oorgespoel na my gesinslewe. My man en kinders moes in baie gevalle my ‘af’-tye by die huis gade slaan, terwyl hulle glad nie die oorsaak daarvan was nie!”

[The stress escalated and spilled to my family. My husband and children were affected, while they were not the cause.]

5.4.4.4 Inadequate social support

(P18): “My gesin verwys soms (spottenderwys?) na my as ‘mal’ – nie baie aangenaam vir ’n ma om te hoor nie, alhoewel ek weet hul bedoel dit nie so nie.”

[My family sometimes (mockingly?) refers to me as ‘crazy’ – not pleasant for a mother to hear, although I know that that’s not intended.]

5.4.5 Main theme 5: The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health

Main theme 5 The effects of workplace bullying on organisational health		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.5.1 Loss of passion for the teaching profession	12
	5.4.5.2 Adverse effects on work performance	9
	5.4.5.3 Thoughts of leaving current position or profession	9
	5.4.5.4 Absenteeism due to ill-health	6
	5.4.5.5 Presenteeism despite being on sick leave	5
	5.4.5.6 Resigning from the teaching profession	3

5.4.5.1 Loss of passion for the teaching profession

(P1): “Dis asof die onderwys net ’n *job* is.”

[It seems as if teaching is only a job.]

(P6): “One feels like you made the wrong choice career-wise ...”

(P9): “Dit is ’n *gefight* om skool toe te gaan ... as ek more kan bedank, bedank ek more. ... Ek gaan hou skool en ek doen wat ek moet doen en ek verdien my salaris elke maand ...”

[It’s a fight to go to school ... if I can resign, I will resign tomorrow. ... I teach and do what I have to and I get a salary at the end of each month.]

(P10): “Jy bly vir jouself sê jy is okay maar ... ek het net nie lus nie.”

[You tell yourself that you’re okay, but ... I don’t have the desire.]

(P12): “Het so seergekry dat ek nooit weer wil skoolhou nie.”

[I’m so hurt that I never want to teach again.]

(P13): “Ek is ’n departementshoof by ’n laerskool en onderwys is my passie - of is *veronderstel* om my passie te wees.”

[I’m a head of department at a primary school and teaching is my passion – or supposed to be.]

(P16): “I have lost my interest and passion for teaching and that obviously means that what I used to do with zeal and enthusiasm for the pupils, I just do not have the wish or desire or energy for anything extra for tasks, activities for the pupils.”

(P17): “Ek was nie lus om skool toe te gaan nie, het letterlik party dae omgebied.”

[I didn't have the desire to go to school; I literally prayed that some days ended.]

(P22): “... ’n mens doen later net wat jy voel jy moet doen sonder om dit te geniet ...”

[... you only do what you think you must do without enjoying it ...]

(P24): “... geen werkstevredenheid nie, lewer die minimum van prestasie, doen net wat van my verwag word, wil nie by die werk bly nie ... wil nie klas gee nie.”

[... no job satisfaction, give a minimum performance, only do what is expected of me, do not want to stay at work ... do not want to teach.]

5.4.5.2 Adverse effects on work performance

(P2): “I found myself not performing well.”

(P4): “I truly believe that I’m successful in doing it, but I can’t ... this stress at the moment is just overwhelming.”

(P7): “My productivity declined dramatically. I used to enjoy teaching ...”

(P12): “Dit voel vir my asof ek glad nie meer kreatief kan dink nie.”

[It feels as if I can't think creatively anymore.]

(P18): “Ek voel soms of ek myself teleurstel – is nie regtig tevrede met die kwaliteit van my werk nie, maar waarom sal ek tog moeite doen as niemand anders omgee of dit self doen nie?”

[I often feel disappointed in myself – I'm really not satisfied with the quality of my work, but why would I care if nobody else cares or does the work themselves?]

(P20): “You are not motivated and you put less effort in the execution of your tasks.”

(P24): “... lewer die minimum van prestasie, doen net wat van my verwag word ...”

[... give a minimum performance, only do what is expected of me ...]

5.4.5.3 Thoughts of leaving current position or profession

(P1): “Ek staan op die brink om ’n pos te vat ... net om weg te kom ...”

[I'm on the brink of taking another teaching position ... just to get away ...]

(P9): "... as ek more kan bedank, bedank ek more. Ek gaan hou skool en ek doen wat ek moet doen en ek verdien my salaris elke maand ..."

[... if I can resign tomorrow, I will resign tomorrow. I teach and do what I have to and I get a salary at the end of each month.]

(P10): "Heel wat van die personeel het bedank en ander poste gekry. Ek weet vir 'n feit dit gaan met my ook gebeur."

[Many of the other teachers resigned and took other teaching positions. I know for a fact that it's going to happen to me too.]

(P13): "Miskien is dit beter om die onderwys te bedank en by die Spar op die hoek te gaan werk ..."

[Maybe it's better to resign and work at the Spar that's on the corner.]

(P14): "Ek het vir my hoof gaan sê ek dink ek moet bedank ... ek het gevoel ek is klaar met die onderwys en ek wil heeltemal 'n nuwe beroep probeer."

[I told the principal that I think I have to resign ... I felt I was done with teaching and had to try another profession.]

(P21): "My enigste dryfveer is dat ek op die oomblik vir ander poste ook aansoek doen."

[My only motivation is that I am applying for other teaching positions.]

(P22): "Ek wou op 'n stadium bedank ... ek het ang en vrees gehad as ek skool toe gaan."

[At some stage I wanted to resign ... I was anxious and feared going to school.]

5.4.5.4 Absenteeism due to ill-health

(P7): "I stayed home for three months, then from April 27 to the end of September at home."

(P11): "Die hoof het my huis toe geneem en ek was weer vir 10 dae afgeboek ... So ek was toe nou so baie siek en so baie afwesig dat ek toe nou net bedank het by die ander skool."

[The principal took me home and I got 10 days sick leave. ... I was ill and absent so often that I resigned from the other school.]

(P14): "'n Vriendin van my het onlangs die Rooi Rose artikel gemail omdat ek vir 6 weke by die skool afgeboek is vir uitbranding en depressie."

[A friend recently mailed me the Rooi Rose article because I am booked off from school for 6 weeks due to burnout and depression.]

(P27): “I was on leave ... I was diagnosed with severe stress and depression.”

5.4.5.5 Presenteeism despite being on sick leave

(P4): “I got pneumonia and I continued to go to school with pneumonia.”

(P11): “Ek het al hoe sieker geword, soms gevoel of ek voor die *kids* wou flou raak.”

[My illness escalated and it often felt as if I was going to pass out in front of the kids.]

(P25): “Ek het weereens voor my siekverlof verby was teruggegaan werk toe, omdat ek die kinders wat in my klasse is jammer gekry het as gevolg van die chaos waaraan hulle blootgestel is en omdat ek gerugte gehoor het van baie groot moeilikheid waarin ek is.”

[Two weeks before my sick leave was over, I went back to school because I felt sorry for them for the chaos to which they are subjected to and because I heard rumours of the big trouble I was in.]

5.4.5.6 Resigning from the teaching profession

(P24): “Aan die einde van die kwartaal ... het ek my bedanking ingehandig want ek het gevoel ek kan beslis nie skoolhou nie.”

[At the end of the term I handed in my resignation, because I felt that I didn't want to teach anymore.]

5.4.6 Main theme 6: Personal characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

	Main theme 6 Personal characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying	n=27
Emergent theme	5.4.6.1 Teachers' confidence in their achievements and professional competence	8
	5.4.6.2 Gender	6
	5.4.6.3 Bullies are perceived as not having empathy	5
	5.4.6.4 Bullies are perceived as being envious	5
	5.4.6.5 Bullies are perceived as being controlling	4
	5.4.6.6 Teachers' avoidance of conflict and submission to bullying behaviour	4
	5.4.6.7 Bullies are perceived as being manipulative	4
	5.4.6.8 Race	3

5.4.6.1 Teachers' confidence in their achievements and professional competence

(P1): "Maar wat my hart breek, is 'n kind wat ek nie eers ken, kom vandag na my toe en vra 'ma'm please help me, these boys are talking ugly to me.' Ek ken die luitie van nêrens nie. 'What grade are you my boy?' 'Grade eight ... M'am if I give you their names will you find or will you deal with them 'cause they're calling me gay and they're calling me names?' Hoekom kom daai kind na my toe? Hy ken my nie. Omdat hy my vertrou, want ander sê vir hom 'she'll help you.'"
[What breaks my heart is that a learner who I do not know, comes to me today and asks me 'ma'm please help me, these boys are talking ugly to me.' I don't know this boy. 'What grade are you my boy?' 'Grade eight ... M'am if I give you their names will you find or will you deal with them 'cause they're calling me gay and they're calling me names?' Why does that child come to me? He doesn't know me. It's because he trusts me because others tell him 'she'll help you.]

(P3): "Ons is meriete onderwysers ..."

[We are merit teachers ...]

- (P9): Jy het 'n beter bestuursvermoë as die persoon self. ... Ek het in 'n groepie van tien elke jaar gemiddeld twee of drie onderskeidings. My uitslae is onsettend goed.
[You have better management skills than that person. ... In a group of ten, I have an average of two or three distinctions. My results are extremely good.]
- (P11): “Ek was 'n baie hardwerkende onderwyser en als moes perfek wees ... ek was 'n meester-onderwyser.”
[I was a very hardworking teacher and everything had to be perfect ... I was an excellent teacher.]
- (P12): “Ouers en kinders hou van my, kinders kom praat met my as daar probleme is ...”
[Parents and children like me, children tell me if there are problems ...]
- (P23): “Ek is 'n vrou wat baie jare onderwys ondervinding het. Met hierdie departementele toetse wat ons elke jaar skryf, was ek die een wat die hoogste punt gehad het in my groep.”
[I have many years of teaching experience. I had the highest mark in the group with the departmental tests that we write each year.]

5.4.6.2 Gender

- (P1): “Blanke vrouens loop onder hom (skoolhoof) deur soos min.”
[He (principal) targets white women ...]
- (P13): “Die manspersoneel draai teen my en daag my op elke gebied en elke geleentheid uit.”
[The male staff turns on me and challenges me on every terrain and occasion.]
- (P19): “Let me start at the beginning, to qualify for this scheme, you have to be a white male, preferably Afrikaans speaking. You have to have the most outstanding manipulating skills because you have to get your bosses to believe you and prosecute your workers.”
- (P26): “Dit is vir baie van hulle 'n gegewe dat hulle (skoolhoofde) maar die dames kan verkleineer, neerhalende aanmerkings teenoor hulle kan maak en tweedehands kan behandel - alles natuurlik onder die dekmantel van ‘grappies’.”
[It's a given for them (male colleagues) that they can humiliate the ladies, make insulting statements and treat them like second-hand – under the cover of 'jokes'.]

5.4.6.3 Bullies are perceived as not having empathy

(P11): “(Ek was) een oggend op speelgronddiens en het verskriklik sleg gevoel. Raak toe flou en al wat sy (onderhoof) doen is, skree in die gang en sê sy het nie nog verlof oor nie. Sy het geen simpatie of empatie gehad nie.”

[One morning on the playground I didn't feel well. I passed out and she yelled that I don't have any leave left. She had no sympathy or empathy.]

(P19): “Het die mens dan nou al so verval tot laag in sy beroep. So laag dat empatie, *compassion*, simpatie, omgee en ander gevoelens by jou verby fladder.”

[Have humans descended in the profession, in that empathy, compassion, sympathy, care and other feelings pass you by.]

(P21): “Hy het geen respek vir mense se gevoelens nie.”

[He has no respect for others' feelings.]

5.4.6.4 Bullies are perceived as being envious

(P11): “Sy (kollega) was verskriklik jaloers op my en wou als net beter as ek probeer doen.”

[She (colleague) was very jealous of me and wanted to do everything better.]

(P18): “Aangesien ... ek die hoogste kwalifikasie het, word ek as 'n bedreiging gesien ...”

[I have the highest qualification and therefore I'm seen as a threat.]

(P26): Alhoewel ek 'n goeie spanleier is, baie verdraagsaam is, vriendelik is, nie 'n probleem met gesag het nie en altyd baie nederig by 'n nuwe skool begin het, was dit gewoonlik nie baie lank voordat sommige damespersoneel se naels begin uitkom het nie.”

[I'm a good team leader, tolerant, friendly, don't have a problem with authority and always very humble when I start at a new school, it didn't take long before the female teachers show their claws.]

5.4.6.5 Bullies are perceived as being controlling

(P19): A teacher referred to the bully as “Die Poppemeester”

(P10): “My unie het doodeenvoudig die skool se kant gekies ... ongelukkig is my hoof die unie se verteenwoordiger. ... Hy’t gesê hy’s die verteenwoordiger en hy’s *in control*, ‘so julle kan glad nie vir my gaan verkla of enige iets nie of iets gaan sê by die Unie nie.’”

[My union has chosen the school’s side ... unfortunately my principal is the union’s representative ... He said that he is the representative and he is in control ‘so, you cannot lay a charge or say anything to the Union against me.]

5.4.6.6 Teachers’ avoidance of conflict and submission to bullying behaviour

(P25): “Ek het die indruk gekry dat (skoolhoof se naam uitgelaat) kans sien om my te boelie, omdat ek saggeaard is, dit nie in my geaardheid is om terug te baklei nie ...”

[I got the impression that (principal’s name omitted) bullies me because I’m soft-centred and because it’s not my nature to fight back ...]

(P27): “Whilst in school I kept to myself for many reasons ... I did not want to get into any altercation with the principal.”

5.4.6.7 Bullies are perceived as being manipulative

(P11): “Die onderhoof ... is baie manipulerend en het my gekies as haar victim.”

[The vice-principal ... is very manipulative and has chosen me as her victim.]

(P23): “Hy (skoolhoof) het my so gemanipuleer ... Ek het gevoel soos Pavlov se hond sou gevoel het as hy hom by die veearts gaan aflaai het om uitgesit te word.”

[He (principal) manipulated me ... I felt like Pavlov’s dog would feel if you took him to the veterinary...]

5.4.6.8 Race

(P6): “... he (principal) does not want teachers to read newspapers in the staffroom. He says ... during the time of apartheid, this was not allowed and he will not allow it as well.”

5.4.7 Main theme 7: Organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying

Main theme 7 Organisational characteristics that facilitate and sustain workplace bullying		n=27
Emergent themes	5.4.7.1 Teachers observe colleagues being bullied	11
	5.4.7.2 Inadequate organisational support for bullied teachers	10
	5.4.7.3 Principals have control of teachers' support system	8
	5.4.7.4 Whistle-blowers are targeted	7
	5.4.7.5 Colleague-witnesses fear to be bullied	6

5.4.7.1 Teachers observe colleagues being bullied

(P1): "... is daar personeel in die personeelkamer wat dieselfde ervaring as wat ek oorleef het, deurgemaak het ... Kom kyk na ons onderhoof, wat altyd lag. Hoe hy (skoolhoof) haar afknou en afknak soos hy die afgelope drie maande gedoen het. Hy breek haar ..."

[There are other teachers that have the same experience as me. Take a look at our vice-principal who always laughs - the way in which he bullied her the past three months. He breaks her ...]

(P3): "... 'n kollega van my ... sy het ook siek verlof gevat ... sy was ook 'n slagoffer ..."

[A colleague of mine also took sick leave. She was also a victim.]

(P6): "He (principal) attacked the teacher directly and said 'You see, you make your learning areas very interesting, like this teacher (other colleague). Two learners are running away from Accounting because of him.'"

(P9): "... die hoof self was baie seksueel ingestel op die meisie onderwyseresse."

[The principal was very sexual attuned to the female teachers.]

(P11): "Van my vriendinne gaan deur dieselfde storie."

[My female friends are experiencing the same problem.]

(P12): "Sy (skoolhoof) skree op die personeel soos wat ek nie eers vir my eie kinders sou skree nie."

[She shouts at the staff like I wouldn't even shout at my own children.]

(P19): "... Allerhande siek, seksuele grappies met jong juffies gemaak (skoolhoof)."

[(principal) made sick, sexual jokes with young female teachers.]

(P22): Daar was 'n paar van ons wat nogal 'n moeilike tyd gehad het. ... Hy (skoolhoof) het haar begin betas en dis toe hoe sy (kollega) haar gunsies gekry het.

[There were a few of us that had a difficult time ... He (principal) began to touch her (colleague) and that's how she got her favours.]

(P23): "... dat hy vir my voor daai hele personeel geskree het oor ek nie vir hom in sy oë kyk as hy praat nie. Dit het 'n paar keer gebeur met my en dit het 'n paar keer gebeur met die ander mense daar."

[... he shouts at me in front of the whole group because I don't look him in the eyes. It happened a few times to me and also a few times to others.]

5.4.7.2 Inadequate organisational support for bullied teachers

(P2): "I've written letters to the Labour Council, they were resented. I phoned lawyers ... they said I should write a letter to my official locally. Up to now, no reply ..."

(P3): "Daar is nie hulp nie. Ons het elke moontlike pad probeer stap om met hom 'n gesprek te voer."

[There is no help. We have done everything possible to have a conversation.]

(P4): "Because if you don't have management support it's very hard to be a teacher."

(P9): "Jy het nie 'n ondersteuningsnetwerk in die beheerliggaam self nie."

[There is no support system in the school governing body.]

(P17): "Ek het *Solidariteit* se regsafdeling gekontak, baie hulp ontvang, maar daarteen besluit om die hoof aan te kla. Van die (unie-naam uitgelaat) weinig hulp ontvang."

[I contacted Solidarity's labour department, received help, but decided against laying a charge against the principal. I received little assistance from the labour union.]

(P18): "Van die Onderwysdepartement se kant kry ek geen hulp nie – hul oplossing: kry vir jou 'n ander pos."

[I received no help from the DoE – their solution is 'get another job'.]

(P22): "... Dit sou ook lekker wees as daar 'n plek kon wees waar 'n mens sulke wanpraktyke anoniem kan aanmeld en boelies kan verkla."

[It would be nice if there was a place where one can anonymously report bullies' misconduct.]

(P23): “Ek sal graag wil hê dat daar hulp is, want ek het tien jaar met hierdie situasie gesit en weet jy ek kan vir jou amper sê 80 persent van die personeel en daar was geen hulp nie.”

[I would like to have some help, because I have experienced this situation for ten years and I can tell you that 80 per cent of the staff did not receive any help.]

5.4.7.3 Principals have control of teachers' support system

(P3): “Hy (skoolhoof) is baie hoog op in (unie-naam uitgelaat) en mense dink hy's wonderlik. ... jy kan ook nie met hom skakel nie, die ou wat bokant die hoof is, want hy's kop-in-een-mus met die hoof ...”

[He (principal) holds a high position in (labour union name omitted) and people think he's wonderful. ... you can't contact the person who is the principal's senior, because he's in cahoots with the principal ...]

(P4): “... I talk to people and they ask 'Why don't you just go to the Board?' And I tell them I can't go to the Board because ... she's (school support staff) the chairman of the Board and she has handpicked the Board.”

(P16): “For two years now I have requested to move from this school and have also contacted my SMC, but she and the principal are 'very good buddies' so that does not help either.”

(P18): “Ek het gevind die vakbond is maar baie baantjies vir boeties (Die hoof dien op die belangegroep ...)”

[The labour unions are 'jobs for pals' (The principal serves on the interest group) ...]

(P21): “Hy (skoolhoof) draai almal 'n rat voor die oë. Selfs die vakunie waaraan ons behoort (hy is op hulle bestuur).”

[He (principal) throws dust in everybody's eyes. Even the labour union (he is part of the management).]

(P23): “My hande is afgekap want die beheerliggaam is toe ook gewissel en hy (skoolhoof) het vriende daar gehad.”

[I could do nothing because the school governing body was changed and he (principal) had friends there.]

5.4.7.4 Whistle-blowers are targeted

- (P3): Field note: During the research process, disciplinary action was taken against this participant for sharing the experience of workplace bullying.
- (P4): “I’m quite happy to say it myself – say there’s something wrong here. But I stopped doing that a long time ago because she (school support staff) makes my life so miserable every time I speak.”
- (P19): “... daarvoor word ons ook gekasty as sou jy iets sê.”
[... we are also disciplined if we say something.]
- (P21): “Die vakbond moet ingelig word oor hoe dit hier gaan. Maar sodra hy (skoolhoof) dit hoor, haal hy jou oor en oor daaroor uit.”
[The labour union needs to be informed of what’s going on here, but if he (principal) hears this, he repeatedly takes you on about it.]
- (P22): “Ek is verwytd van negatiwiteit. Omdat ek gekla het van goeters wat verkeerd gegaan het, is ek aangekla van negatiwiteit.”
[I am blamed for negativity. Because I complained about things that went wrong, I was accused with negativity.]

5.4.7.5 Colleague-witnesses fear to be bullied

- (P3): “Niemand (personeel) praat ’n woord nie. Niemand sê ’n woord nie.”
[Nobody (on the staff) says a word.]
- (P10): “Ek is ook die enigste een wat vir jou sal sê. Die ander is te bang. Jy mag nie in jou persoonlike lewe daaroor praat nie.”
[I’m the only one who would tell you. The others are afraid. You are not allowed to talk about it in your personal life.]
- (P20): Colleagues tend to take sides and will side with management to their advantage. Even if they agree, they are not willing to take a stand.”
- (P22): “... jy is mos nou die *target* en hulle wil nie met jou vereenselwig word nie, anders word hulle ook ’n *target*, jy weet.”

[... you are the 'target' and they don't want to associate with the target, otherwise they will also be targeted ...]