




Resilience in the context of South African school bullying: A retrospective study

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- **Certificate of Editing**

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- **Summary**

The current qualitative study made use of phenomenological framework and use of the Draw-and-Talk method of data collection to determine: *What helped young adults adjust positively in spite of the negative effects of school bullying?* Bullying has been associated with a myriad of negative effects that have far reaching consequences well into adulthood. Resilience is the study of what helps people to be okay or to have a better than expected outcome despite the negative effects of trauma. The study aimed to better understand what helped young adults during their school years to achieve a better than expected outcome and through this knowledge sought to add to the body of knowledge aimed at helping youth that were negatively affected by bullying.

A sample of five young adults between the ages of 24 to 32 from the Emfuleni and Midvaal districts were recruited using snowball sampling. Each of the participants took part in a semi-structured interview and were asked if they could draw what helped them to be okay despite the bullying. The findings suggest that the main pathways of resilience used by young adults during their school years included; 1) to avoid their bullies and be in a better environment; 2) positive relationships with friends and family; 3) having a sense of agency, and motivation.

By understanding what young adults believed to have helped them to achieve better than expected outcomes while being bullied at school the study brought to light new revelations regarding avoidance coping, the complicated relationship with friends and family and the agency of young adults in difficult situations.

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● Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The following Master's dissertation is submitted in article format in order to fulfil the requirements of a Master of Arts Degree in Research Psychology¹. This study focused on answering the following research question: *What helped young adults adjust positively in spite of the negative effects of school bullying?* In a time where people have never been more globally connected and aware of problems facing the world, bullying remains a prominent problem facing youth today. Movements such as the *Anti-Bullying Movement*, *#Act-To-Change Movement*, and the *#HearMeToo Movement* are just some of the ways in which social media gives people who are victims of bullying a platform for their voices to be heard. Media representation, such as the Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, draws attention to how the act of bullying not only affects the victims, but also various systems in the victims' lives. Research, and the media, have been key in exposing the negative effects of bullying to the public. However, the focus needs to shift towards reducing the incidence of bullying, and promoting resilience among children and adolescents (Masten & Wright 2010; Ungar, 2008, 2011). In this mini-dissertation, the author chose to begin by first talking to young adults who were victims of bullying during their schooling years and ask them to reflect on what helped them to adjust in the face of their adversity.

1.2 Background and rationale for the current study

In a study with 23 countries Ipsos (2018), an international research company with the South African head office based in Sandton, states that South Africa is rated the second highest country in terms of cyberbullying with 88% of participants having reported being victims of cyberbullying. Assessments done in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)² indicates that in South Africa, 35% of students in their sample reported being bullied at least once a month and 42% reported being bullied weekly (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2017). It is further estimated

¹ Please note that because this mini-dissertation is in article format, there may be some repetition between chapters 1 and 2. I kindly ask for your understanding in this regard.

² The PIRLS study is mostly conducted by the University of Pretoria.

that 57% of learners are victims of bullying at some point during their school career with grade 4 and 8 learners being the most susceptible (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2016; Nkosi-Malobane, 2019). Statistically, according to Lehohla (2015), a high prevalence is shown in reports of both boys (66.6%) and girls (70.3%) who have been bullied. Similarly, Tustin et al., (2014), show in a large quantitative study (n = 4245) across Gauteng and the Western Cape in South Africa that boys aged 15 to 16 reported higher frequencies of physical bullying. In contrast, girls of the same age reported a higher prevalence of emotional bullying. The study further reveals that traditional bullying, such as physical acts of aggression, intimidation or name calling, is reported to be more prevalent among adolescents aged 13 to 14, whereas older adolescents reported higher rates of cyberbullying. The abovementioned findings indicate that both girls and boys are at high risk of being bullied during their schooling years.

Bullying is a complex social phenomenon that is influenced by a variety of factors as well as the interaction and relationship between the bully and the victim (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). For example, a victim of bullying could bully another person out of anger; or bystanders can either hinder or increase the act of bullying (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). When defining bullying, four elements should be highlighted. Bullying is an act where there is a power imbalance, whether social or physical, between peers, where one acts with deliberate intent to harm (directly or indirectly) another peer/s over a period of time (Cohen, 2020). Bullying, or peer victimisation, can thus be seen as a negative social phenomenon in which a child or adolescent intentionally acts with violent intent towards another child with the end goal to humiliate or oppress their target (Vaillancourt et al., 2011). Olweus (1993, 2011) further states that bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour in which an individual, most often a peer, deliberately violates the rights of others through negative physical and verbal behaviour. Bullying can take various forms with the most frequent being physical, verbal, or social forms of bullying, such as exclusion (Dore, 2015; Louw & Louw, 2014).

Physical bullying can be seen as the intentional use of force to cause harm to another person, which can include a myriad of physical activities such as hitting, biting, spitting, kicking etc.

(Olweus, 1993, 2011). Physical bullying further includes the use of force to cause damage to, or steal property from another person, as well as the use of threats of violence directed at a person (Dore, 2015; Naser et al., 2003). Verbal bullying is the act of using words or gestures to belittle or humiliate someone, which includes name-calling, taunting, making fun of or mocking a person, or more serious acts such as racial slurs or making xenophobic comments (Dore, 2015; Hlophe et al., 2017). In addition to physical and verbal bullying, bullying can also take on a more relational character where the end goal is to harm the social relationships or the social status of a person (Dore, 2015; Rosen et al., 2017). Social bullying is accomplished through acts such as excluding or ostracising a person from certain activities or groups, shaming a person, or breaking up friendships, amongst others (Doren, 2014). Louw and Louw (2014) mention additional forms of bullying, such as extortion, sexual bullying, and cyberbullying.

The emergence of the Internet and social media have given rise to bullying extending far beyond the borders of the schoolyard (Hinduja & Patchin, 2017). Cyberbullying is seen as acting with wilful intent to cause harm to a person through the use of technology such as personal computers, social media sites, or cell phones (Tustin et al., 2014). However, unlike traditional methods of bullying, cyberbullying does not depend on physical strength as most of the activities occur online and can, therefore, be a constant threat to a person (Hinduja & Patchin, 2017, 2020; Papatraianou et al., 2014). Due to the distance that social media provides and the anonymity that technology can provide, cyberbullying gives a platform where the effects of the bullying act can be increased and can be even worse than traditional forms of bullying (Caffrey, 2019).

The effects of bullying can range from psychological effects, physical symptoms, to psychosomatic symptoms (Lee, 2018; Vaillancourt et al., 2011). While these symptoms in and of their own already point to the severity of experiencing bullying at school, the effects of bullying are often felt into adulthood (Smith, 2018; Teasley & Nevarez, 2016). The effects of bullying could also change brain structures, affect the physiology of the person, and affect the neurobiology of the individual (Kim-Cohen & Gold, 2009; Kim-Cohen & Turkewitz, 2012).

Hendricks and Tanga (2019) studied the psychological effects of bullying on victims on a sample of 40 participants in the Eastern Cape's Sarah Baartman District Municipality. Findings from their qualitative study indicate that bullying can affect students in a variety of negative ways. For most of the participants in the study, a decline in academic performance was reported due to higher levels of anxiety, an increase in stress, and in severe cases, absenteeism. In cases where absenteeism continues for long periods of time, there is also an increase in the dropout-rate of students. Continued exposure to bullying could also lead to problems with self-esteem, self-regulation, externalising behaviour, and cognitive impairment (Feldman et al., 2014).

In addition to the above, victims of bullying who do not receive counselling or intervention, show signs of suicidal behaviours, which include suicidal ideation (thinking about, planning, or considering suicide) and suicidal attempts (Lee, 2018). These behaviours are normally due to victims feeling helpless and trapped in their current circumstances believing that ending their lives is the only way out (Baiden et al., 2019). For example, Quaden Bayle was recently seen on a video on social media crying and explaining that he rather wants to die than to face the constant ridicule and bullying he is facing due to his dwarfism (Dordley, 2020). The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG, n.d.) states that children as young as seven years old commit suicide due to being bullied. Cohen, Shahar, and Klomek (2020), however, indicate that suicidal behaviour in bully-victims might also be a result of self-blame, exerting control in their lives, or due to self-criticism. Feelings of depression and anxiety are also common effects that victims suffer from. However, these are often overlooked as victims tend to avoid seeking help out of fear of further retribution (Eastman et al., 2018; Reintjes et al., 2010). Feelings of depression and anxiety in victims can also be due to dysregulation in cortisol as a result of hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) functioning or changes in the neurobiology of the victim (Morris et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2019; Vaillancourt et al., 2011). Such dysregulation can in turn lead to the adolescent being in a constant state of stress, agitation or fear as the HPA-axis is also linked to the fight or flight response of the individual (Rivara & Le Menestrel, 2016). Exposure to chronic bullying, whether

cyberbullying, physical or verbal abuse, as well as social exclusion, could therefore cause an allostatic overload, meaning the body's physical ability to withstand adversity depletes (Rutter, 2012).

When individuals' physical systems are exposed to too much strain, other symptoms may manifest. Victims of bullying might complain of having physical symptoms such as headaches, sleeplessness, stomach aches, dizziness, and in some cases, bedwetting (Lee, 2018). In addition to these manifestations, the American Society of Positive Care of Children (American SPCC, 2014) indicates that children experience an increased stress response due to the increased chronic threat. As a result, children can also present with muscle pain from the muscles contracting in response to the stress; problems with the digestive system; and a compromised immune system. Studies have also shown that children who are subjected to constant bullying have higher levels of cortisol, potentially placing them in survival mode (Swartz et al., 2019). The effect of higher cortisol levels can not only affect the health and developmental outcomes of the individual but also affect neurological structures in the brain (Hertzman, 2013; Swartz, et al., 2019). Changes in the structure and chemistry of the brain can, in turn, affect the functioning of the brain well into adulthood (Kim-Cohen & Gold, 2009; Smith, 2018).

As can be seen from the studies mentioned above, bullying in all its many forms can lead to negative outcomes for those who are victims. Despite these pervasive adversities, many children reach 'normative' outcomes and become functional members of society (Masten, 2001). These individuals could be regarded as resilient. Investigations into why resilience occurs showed that children have protective forces they can access that can act as a buffer against negative outcomes (Masten, 2014). These protective forces have been identified as resilience pathways or resilience enablers with vast amounts of literature pointing to the positive effects thereof in a variety of different types of adversities (Windle, 2010; See also: Theron & Theron, 2010; Van Breda & Theron, 2018; Van Breda, 2018).

1.3 Resilience

Over the years, the plethora of resilience literature has defined resilience in several ways. However, it seems that most resilience researchers agree that resilience is a process between the individual and the environment (Masten, 2018, Theron & Ungar, 2018; Ungar 2008, 2012). The environment provides resources for the individual to use to overcome hardship, and individuals reciprocate by making good use of resources provided (Ungar, 2011; See also Masten, 2014, 2018). For this study, resilience is defined as: A dynamic and multi-levelled process in which different systems interact to help an individual withstand, recover from or adapt to significant adversity in the process of supporting functional development (Masten 2014; Masten & Narayan, 2012; Theron & Ungar, 2018; Ungar 2008, 2011, 2013; Van Breda, 2018).

Resilience research requires two critical aspects that should be present, namely: severe adversity, and a better than expected or positive outcome (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Panter-Brick, 2015). Severe adversity or risk can be described as an event that when it occurs, has a higher likelihood of creating lasting problems or malfunctioning behaviour for the individual. Various types of adversity exist, and a myriad of different studies have examined the pathways of resilience that exist (Theron & Theron, 2010; See also Ebersöhn, 2017; Masten & Narayan, 2012; Panter-Brick et al., 2018). Furthermore, an individual must show a positive adaptation to the risk or adversity, which is normally measured against one's competence in an age-related developmental task (Masten & Wright, 2010).

While resilience was originally conceptualised as being a developmental construct, research shows that resilience can manifest during any part of the lifespan (Masten & Wright, 2010). It is, therefore, viable that an individual may at one point in his or her lifespan show no positive adaptation to adversity and yet be resilient in another aspect. Additionally, Ungar (2011) reports that how resilience pathways develop can be different, thereby making the possibilities of how they develop in the lives of different individuals nuanced and multiple. Several predictors to resilience have emerged in the existing literature and have, in time, become known as resilience enablers

shown in Table 1 below (Masten, 2014, Theron & Ungar, 2018). While these enablers and the pathways in which they are used can be vast, Masten (2001, 2014) has compiled a list of enablers known as the ‘shortlist’. Enablers on this list include positive relationships with family and friends, self-regulation, self-efficacy, effective schooling, and meaning in life (Masten, 2014). It is believed that these enablers support a person’s ability to be resilient and can carry over from one developmental domain to another over time (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten & Wright, 2010).

Table 1:*Universal resilience shortlist*

Attachment Relationships	Agency & Mastery	Intelligence	Meaning Making	Self-regulation	Culture & Religion
Connections to others facilitate access to material resources, access to information, role models etc.	Agency (taking action) and mastery (experiencing success).	Access to knowledge, and the capacity to problem-solve.	Dreaming about a better future, hope, and meaning-making.	The ability to adjust behaviour / emotion to behave in socially appropriate ways.	Beliefs and practices that support agency & mastery, guide meaning making, and teach self-regulation.
Examples: parents; child bonds; God-child bonds; teacher child bonds.	Example: Youth seeks employment – homeowner provides employment.	Examples: Teachers prepare children to cope with drug pushers, and children use this knowledge.	Example: Youth dreams about completing a university degree.	Example: Youth falls pregnant at university, and manages her parents’ and her own disappointment.	Example: Belief that God is looking out for you, and has a purpose for your life.

Note: Adapted from *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development* by Masten, 2014, (pp., 147-173)

While the resilience enablers presented in Table 1 are considered universal, how they manifest is cultural and context-specific (Ungar, 2008). For example, having a strong attachment with at least one primary caregiver is a highly beneficial enabler in western contexts (Masten, 2014; Werner, 2013). Fergusson and Horwood (2003), who in their longitudinal study of 1265 Christchurch participants, showed that having a caring relationship with at least one caregiver or guardian can lead to resilient adaptation in later life (See also: Werner & Smith, 1992). In contrast, studies done

in Zimbabwe by Mpofu et al. (2015) showed that attachment in a collectivistic cultural setting transcends the nuclear family and extends to members of the family, the community, peers, and even church members. Similarly, in a South African context, Pasha (2010), in her research on girls in a collectivistic culture, explains that attachment extends beyond that of the nuclear family. Furthermore, her research results on the resilience of girls who have been victims of sexual violence point to their attachments extending to spiritual beings, romantic partners, cultural heritage practices, and extended family (Theron & Pasha, 2015). These examples show that while an enabler can be considered universal, the different ways in which they manifest across cultures makes it important to understand in the context of their specific cultural practices.

Further, resilience processes are also seen as risk-specific in nature as can be seen in a review done by Masten and Narayan (2010) that investigated what helps children in war-torn countries be resilient. Their findings suggest, firstly, that resilience is a complex phenomenon interacting at different levels of functioning, and secondly, how each of the resilience enablers present differently depend not only on the culture but also on the type of traumatic risk exposure. For example, a sense of connectedness and security was derived from supportive caregivers. At the same time, aspects such as problem-solving skills and hope were connected to better adaptation to threats. Similarly, Theron and Theron (2008) and Van Breda and Theron (2018), show how various resilience processes present in different risk contexts for youth in a South African setting. Consequently, in examining resilience in blended families in South Africa, Ebersöhn and Bouwer (2013) found that factors that enabled resilience after the divorce of their parents include not only personal factors, such as a positive disposition and intellectual competence, but also support from parents, spouses, and peers in addition to functional communication between parent and child. These studies prove that even resilience enablers that are considered universal, manifest in different ways across risks and cultures.

1.4 Resilience in the face of bullying

While many studies have investigated the effects that bullying has on the victims, the bully, and even bystanders of bullying (Baiden et al., 2019; Boyes et al., 2014; Lee, 2018); a new trend has begun, which took hold with the advent of Positive Psychology. The focus moved from a more traditional, medical model approach to a more salutogenic approach (Antonovsky, 1996; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The traditional medical model sees solutions to problems in terms of fixing deficits in the individual, whereas a salutogenic approach seeks to identify and use strength based practices to enhance the well-being of individuals (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Therefore, researchers began to consider constructs such as: supportive involvement of the community, teacher, and parents (Bevilacqua et al., 2017; Mann et al., 2014); social skills training (Rubin-Vaughan et al., 2010); and emotional intelligence (Casas et al., 2015) to see if they cannot better help assist victims of bullying. These studies have helped to increase the fight against bullying a great deal. The researcher believes that promoting resilience would allow youth to adjust well, despite bullying. Additionally, understanding how to promote youths' resilience can inform researchers, community members, and youth to become advocates to reduce bullying. Resilience also has a 'cascading effect', where competence in one area of life can have an overspill effect that could benefit the youth in other areas of their lives (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Masten, 2001).

Few international studies could be found that qualitatively investigate resilience and bullying, with the majority of studies being quantitative in nature. Hinduja and Patchin (2017) investigated the role of resilience in the face of cyberbullying in a national study of 1 204 American youth aged 12 to 17. They found that resilience can act as a powerful agent to buffer youth against the negative effects of bullying as well as preventing bullying altogether. Their findings further show that higher levels of resilience are associated with family support, optimism, and positive religious coping, with optimism being most strongly associated with resilience (See also: Schaefer et al., 2018). Other studies that focus on the role of resilience and cyberbullying; investigate the moderating effect it has on fatalisms (Navarro et al., 2018; see also: Ran et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2016); the role of resilience and emotional

regulation (Gianesini & Brighi, 2015); and the role resilience plays in predicting cyberbullying perpetrators and their victims (Kabadayi & Sari, 2018).

In a systematic review on what helped youth to cope with cyberbullying, Raskauska and Huynh (2015), identified 19 studies that looked at ways that people cope in the face of bullying. Their research shows that factors that helped to enhance resilience relate to aspects such as problem-solving solutions, reframing, distancing, avoidance, optimistic thinking, and seeking social support. Similarly, Sapouna and Wolke (2013), in their research on a cohort sample of 3 136 youth aged 12 to 15 in Edinburgh Scotland, found that youth that experienced higher levels of resilience show greater levels of self-esteem, low levels of family conflict, and feel less alienated by peers. Additionally, their study also explains that those with higher resilience scores show lower tendencies of drug and alcohol abuse and are truant less from school (See also: Bowes et al., 2010).

Within the South African context, only one study could be located relating to resilience in the context of bullying. The study conducted by Greef and Van den Berg (2013) looked at resilience characteristics in families where a child has been bullied using a mixed-method approach. The study made use of seven self-report questionnaires and an open-ended question on a sample of 48 mothers and children in grade 5, 6, and 7 in the Western Cape. The findings indicate that within a family context, resilience factors that help the child adjust well are a family's ability to work together, good communication, mutual support, and cooperation between family members. The same study's results also indicate that resources outside of the family (friends or even church members) in the form of emotional support, informational support, and a sense of security are factors that could help in times of family distress (Greef & Van den Berg, 2013). Whilst Greef and Van den Berg (2013) emphasise the importance of positive attachments, a single study does not provide enough understanding of resilience in the context of bullying.

However, Freitas et al. (2016), warn that resilience should not be seen as a magic cure since higher levels of peer victimisation might hamper the protective capabilities of the construct. This would be in line with research done by scholars such as Masten (2001, 2014, 2018) and Ungar

(2008, 2011) who state that a experiencing multiple risks at the same time or experiencing a risk for a prolonged period of time could lead to a person to being as resilient in a particular risk situation. In their research on a sample of 105 learners in primary and secondary schools in New South Wales Australia, Moore and Woodstock (2017) found that youth with lower scores of resilience are more prone to engage in bullying behaviour, which may be due to them having lower levels of mastery, relatedness, and optimism. It is, therefore, important to understand resilience in the context of the individual, and the risk situation in order to effectively help them negate the effects of bullying such as anxiety and depression (Moore & Woodstock, 2017). It is also important to understand how youth see resilience as they are in a different developmental stage and their understanding of what helped them adjust can be different for that of adults (Theron, 2017).

1.5 Research question

Considering that resilience differs in age, context, risk, as well as the effects that bullying has on the development of victims, the current research looked at answering the question: *What helped young adults adjust positively in spite of the negative effects of school bullying?*

1.6 Research aim

The aim of this study is to explore what promotes the resilience of young adults who were victims of bullying during their schooling years. The study thus looks at answering the research question by focusing on the following objectives: 1: Understanding the context within which the individuals experienced bullying by conducting a semi-structured interview; 2; Understanding what helped participants to achieve better than expected outcomes through semi-structured interviews and the Draw-and-Write method.

1.7 Methodology

The Position of the Researcher

The current research is informed by the background of the researcher, as such the following serves to give a summary of the assumptions and background of the researcher that he would have had going into the current study. A complete discussion of this will however follow in chapter 3.

Growing up the researcher was a victim of bullying, however few overt signs of being bullied persisted into his later adult life. The advent of my studies in psychology later in life brought to life the concept of resilience and its effect in my own life. Based on this a curiosity arose to understand what made some bullied individuals less susceptible to the effects of bullying than others.

Conceptualisation of the research project were thus designed with the following assumptions about what might help people to be resilient in the face of bullying: 1) support from family and friends; 2) having a positive outlook on life; 3) high levels of hope; 4) believing in a higher power.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

This study follows a social constructivist paradigm, which views knowledge as being co-constructed through the combined interactions of researchers and participants (Creswell, 2014). From an ontological point, the paradigm believes in multiple realities, no single truth, and complex personal meaning that individuals attach to experiences they live or have lived through (Ponterotto, 2005). The constructivist paradigm has an epistemological belief that knowledge can only be acquired and interpreted by the research through subjective interactions with participants within their naturalistic context (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), which places the onus of knowledge on the participant and *not* the researcher. The participant is seen as the expert, with the researcher acting as a tool to co-create meaning with the participant (Krauss, 2005). The young adults who have undergone bullying during their school careers are thus seen as the experts, with me as the researcher, gaining a better understanding of what helped them adjust well in life in the face of bullying.

The current study also conforms to a qualitative phenomenological framework, which is based on the work of Husserl (as cited in Creswell, 2007). This framework emphasises the uniqueness of each phenomenon as each individual gives their own meaning to a phenomenon. Thus, this study explores the meaning that people attach to experiences that they have personally lived through (Creswell 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012).

1.7.2 Participants and recruitment

The current study investigated the experiences of young adult males and females who self-reported being victims of bullying during their schooling years (i.e., basic education years). Each of the participants was recruited from the Emfuleni and Midvaal municipal districts through snowball sampling.

Definitions of what is considered young adults vary greatly depending on the literature (see Arnet, 2007 and Curtis, 2015). Some literature suggests that adolescence begins from the age of 10 to 25 years, however, according to the South African constitution adulthood is seen to start from the age of 18 years. Following the argument of such writers such as Curtis (2015) and Arnett (2007) one can argue that the age for young adulthood be seen as the period between adolescence and Middle adulthood. Thus the period can be seen to encompass the ages between 24 to 40 years. For the purpose of the current study young adulthood was defined as the period between the ages of 20 to 30 years.

The Emfuleni and Midvaal municipalities are two of the three municipal districts making up the Sedibeng District Municipality (Emfuleni Local Municipality, 2010). The main economic export being mostly iron, steel and oil manufacturing. The Emfuleni and Midvaal area consists of towns such as Meyerton, Vereeniging, and Sasolburg. The Emfuleni and Midvaal districts have a combined population of 845 057 people within a 2693.2 square kilometer area. The median age of its occupants is 28 years for Emfuleni and 31 years for Midvaal. The majority of the population is Sesotho speaking (Emfuleni n=51, Midvaal n=31) . The average income per household is R29 400.00 per year (Wazimap, 2016). Due to young adults who have been bullied being a hidden population, snowball sampling was chosen as a method of recruitment.

According to Creswell & Poth (2018) snowball sampling is a form of sampling in which participants from a hidden population is accessed through referrals by current participants. Each participant was therefore asked if they knew any other young adults who were bullied. If they said yes the participant was asked to first inquire if the person would like to take part. If the person

showed interest in the study the mediator was asked to contact the prospective participant and talk to them about the study. This process was repeated for all the remaining participants.

The following procedures were followed once a participant said they would like to take part: Informed consent was obtained from all the participants informing them about the study's aim, and procedures – that participation is voluntary, who the researcher is, ethical clearance, and the name of the institute from which ethical clearance was received (Creswell, 2014; Department of Health [DoH], 2015; Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA], 2006). Information concerning the data collection method was provided to the participants. The young adults were asked to give their input to what they believed helped them adjust well through a semi-structured interview and a Draw-and-Write activity. Having each of the young adults explain what helped them adjust, the researcher was able to get a more thorough answer as critical thinking and abstract thought allowed for richer, and better thought through answers that enriched the data (Louw & Louw, 2014).

1.7.3 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using the arts-based Draw-and-Talk method set out by Guilemin and Drew (2010). The method requires that the researcher firstly engage with the participants in a semi-structured interview which was recorded with the permission of the participant. During the interview the researcher asked each participant two questions. 1) “What were your experiences of bullying during school?”. 2) “Who or what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying?” Verbal prompts and cues were used to gain more information on aspects that were unclear to the researcher. Once this initial interview has been done the researcher would ask the participant to, using the materials provided, create a drawing based on the prompt: “Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be okay despite experiencing bullying during your school years”. The participant was then given an opportunity to explain the drawing to the researcher. Some prompts and questions used to better understand the drawings included: 1) Why did you decide to use these elements in your picture? 2) Do you think there are aspects not represented in the picture

that you might want to add? 3) To your knowledge which of these elements do you think best helped you while you were bullied? (Mitchell, et al., 2011; Theron 2012).

This method allowed the researcher to engage with the participant to build rapport making the participant at ease with the interview process. It further allowed the researcher to get insight into how the participant experienced bullying when they were in school. Lastly, it also helped to put the participant at ease with the Draw-and-Talk method. The chosen method had some advantages, which helped in the interview process. The advantages of the Draw-and-Talk method were that it surpassed language barriers. Participants could create a visual representation of what they believed helped them which in turn assisted in helping them to verbalise what they could not easily explain. Additionally, the method has the potential to generate rich data as the drawing process helps to give the participant extra time to think about what they would like to draw before they have to explain it to the researcher (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2011; Theron, 2012).

Care was taken to ensure that the participant was comfortable with the writing material available, by creating rapport with the participant and providing a variety of drawing material to choose from such as pencils, pens, crayons and markers (Mitchell et al., 2011). Care was also taken to explain that what is important is not the quality of the drawing but what the drawing represents, as some people might feel embarrassed because they feel they cannot draw well enough (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Theron 2012). Lastly, no participant was forced to create a drawing with the semi-structured interview being in place should any of the participants request to not do the drawing (Mitchell et al., 2011). Interviews were conducted in an office where there was no intrusion with each interview being recorded on two recording devices. This was done to ensure that should there be a problem with one of the recorders the interview would still be captured by the other. This saves the researcher from having wasted the time of the participant the first round and having to do the interview over. Permission was asked from each participant if they would be willing to give their drawing to the researcher both verbally and in writing. Should they not want to give their drawings

to the researcher, they were asked if they would mind having the researcher take a picture of the drawing which could then be analysed in conjunction with the interviews.

1.7.4 Data analysis

In line with the writings of Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts and drawings that came from the data collection phase. Thematic analysis was chosen to substitute the traditional phenomenological analysis. Phenomenological analysis requires that the researcher go through a process of horizontalization in which the researcher codes significant statements or quotes of the two research questions asked. This is then followed by a process of creating clusters of meaning and writing a structural and textural description of the context of the research participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). However, it is believed that by using thematic analysis the researcher was still able to look into what the participants experienced. Through thematic analysis, the researcher was still able to create clusters of participants' experiences in order to identify the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further, in line with the writings of Liebenberg et al. (2020), thematic analysis was used as a versatile method of qualitative analysis to code the drawings that came from the data collection phase. The data analysis phase of the study was done using ATLAS.ti version 8 software (Friese, 2015, Paulus & Lester, 2015).

The process followed as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis of qualitative data is described below (See also Clarke & Braun, 2013)

1. Familiarisation with the data. This stage involved being immersed in the data. This was done by the researcher firstly transcribing the audio files from the interviews and then reading and re-reading the transcripts to get a good understanding of what exactly the participants said in their interviews. Pictures were scanned at 600dpi and added to the ATLAS.ti file. Notes on aspects that seemed important in the drawings were added to a research journal after each interview which was stored on a password protected file on the interviewers computer and Cloud storage. This process also helped the researcher to familiarise themselves with the drawing of each participant.

2. Open coding. Coding included going through the data and generating open codes or segments of code that contained the main idea of a statement. An important feature of this stage in the coding process was to remember that coding occurred on both a semantic and connotative level, i.e. codes were given descriptions of possible psychological constructs that could possibly explain the data. These codes were guided by the research question and helped to form the basis of the next stage in the coding process. Each drawing was coded in conjunction with the explanation that was given by the participant in the subsequent interview that followed.

3. Code grouping. After the completion of the open coding phase, the codes were collected into groups. Each group contained open codes that had a similar theme to the group in general for example, codes that spoke of family or family systems were initially grouped together. Again, code groups were given descriptions to ensure that the codes were recognisable when they were sent to the supervisor of this study, who also acted as a co-coder.

4. Reviewing codes: This process involved making sure that the codes that were identified matched the research question and that the codes in the code groups added to the study. This process was done in collaboration with the supervisor to ensure that possible codes were not lost and to minimise possible biases that the researcher may have had.

5. Defining and naming themes: After the themes were reviewed, each code was defined according to the underlying resilience theory. This process also informed the last process of the analysis, which was drafting the findings.

6. Write up: Findings were drafted in a coherent document that explained the processes involved in the youth being resilient to the negative effects of bullying.

1.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the process in which the researcher puts certain steps in place to ensure the quality and accuracy of his or her work (Creswell, 2014). Various methods have been identified by researchers to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. Among these, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose making use of alternative qualitative terms for their quantitative

counterparts. They suggested using credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure quality in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Suggested strategies to make sure that one captures the complexities of the participants' reality or the credibility of a study, include: prolonged time in the field, being competent in research methodology, reflexivity, member checking, and peer examination (Krefting, 1991). The researcher received training as a research psychologist as well as additional training in the Draw-and-Write method for the purposes of this study. For transferability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest giving a rich description of the research process to ensure that other researchers are able to replicate the process. Additionally, the researcher did peer debriefing with his supervisor at the end of each interview session noting aspects that stood out as well as any possible links that this may have to existing theory and the possibility of data saturation. The researcher also made use of member checking with participants at the end of an interview where he summarised what other participants said in previous interviews and asking if they thought that this agreed with what was said.

To ensure that the research process is consistent or dependable, strategies such as having an audit trail, triangulation, and having a co-coder are suggested (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher and his supervisor co-coded the data through the following process: Each coded the data independently after which meetings were held to compare the different perspectives and views each of them had about the research data. This helped to ensure that the researcher did not hold any bias toward the data and that the data analysis process remained transparent.

Lastly, to ensure that the researcher remains unbiased towards the data, confirmability strategies such as having a reflexivity journal, are suggested. The researcher made use of these processes to ensure that no bias arose from the researchers's side. The researcher kept a digital journal saved on a password protected folder and cloud storage where he noted details that stood out within each interview. These journal entries contained information such as, aspects of drawings that stood out to the researcher, information on the interview process that the researcher felt could be enhanced and

other observations made during the research process. These entries were then shared with the researchers supervisor to ensure that the researcher did not have any biases in the research process.

1.9 Ethics

While the research was conducted, certain ethical considerations were kept in mind. Firstly, ethical clearance was granted for the study by the North-West University HREC (NWU-00460-19-A1). A mediator to the study approached possible participants. Each participant was asked if they would like to take part in the study after it was explained to them and were handed an informed consent form as per the Department of Health (DoE, 2015) regulations.

All informed consent forms received were stored in a safe in the researcher's house with the researcher being the only person with access to the safe. Additionally, all electronic data were stored on password-protected files on the researcher's personal computer with backups of the files being stored on the researcher's password-protected hard-drive. The only people that had access to the file were the researcher and the supervisor. The data were discussed in a private, secure room with a "do not disturb" sign on the door to ensure that there would be no disturbances. Additionally, to keep the identity of the participants safe, the interviews were conducted over weekends and after hours when it was better suited to them and when the offices at the university were quiet. All participants were informed that their participation is completely voluntary, and they were free to withdraw at any time. Lastly, in the event of possible unforeseen trauma, the services of a psychologist were available. The psychologist was approached and asked if she would assist should the need arise. She offered that she would be willing to help and that she would make one session available free of charge should it be needed. The need however did not arise during the course of the study.

1.10 Conclusion

Bullying has a magnitude of negative effects that affect those that fall victim to it. Negative effects include depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, sleeplessness, declining school grades, and even at times, suicidal tendencies. The use of resilience allows for a holistic manner in which to manage the effects of bullying on these individuals, however, to maximise the effect of possible interventions, a

proper understanding of how resilience would manifest in the face of bullying was needed. For this reason, the current qualitative study used a phenomenological framework with the Draw-and-Talk method to ask young adults aged 24 to 32 about their experiences of being bullied at school as well as what helped them to become functioning adults.

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- **Chapter 2**

Resilience in the Context of South African School Bullying

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- **Abstract**

Bullying is an everyday occurrence and way of life for many young people across the world and can have a myriad of negative effects on the development of the child. The current qualitative phenomenological study aimed to better understand what helped young adults become functioning adults despite the negative effects of bullying. The study made use of the Draw-and-Talk method of data collection to determine what helped young adults overcome bullying. A sample of five young adults between the ages of 20 to 32 were recruited via snowball sampling from the Emfuleni and Midvaal districts of South Africa interviewed during the first six months of 2020, and were asked if they could draw what helped them to be okay in spite of the bullying. Data was analysed using thematic analysis revealed the following findings indicate that the main protective systems associated with resilience would be to avoid their bullies and be in a better environment. Positive relationships with friends and family, having a sense of agency, and motivation were also identified. The study adds to the knowledge-base on resilience in the face of bullying.

Keywords: bullying, Draw-and-Talk, phenomenology, qualitative, resilience, school, young adults

Introduction

Every day, many children around the world fall victim to bullying for who they are, or how they look, for how much money they have or do not have, or for just being someone that is different from the 'norm'. Bullying is rarely an isolated event, and many children are bullied on a frequent basis, particularly if the bullying is not reported or no intervention takes place (Olweus, 2011). Bullying also involves a power imbalance, where one person victimises another who may be perceived as weaker or less powerful either by social standing or physical power (Bowes et al., 2014). This power difference is used by bullies to intentionally violate the rights of and victimise their peers (Lee, 2018). Acts of bullying can take on various forms, of which the most common is physical bullying, where the victim is overpowered by physical acts of aggression such as hitting, kicking, biting, being threatened with weapons, or being overpowered (Neser et al., 2003). Other forms of bullying include verbal abuse, social bullying (which includes being socially excluded by fellow peers, spreading rumours, or turning others against someone), and an increasing phenomenon of cyberbullying (Bowes et al., 2014). The advent of the internet and social media has made it easier for bullying to follow the child home. Cyberbullying can therefore include aspects such as online harassment, distributing rumours and pictures of a person or purposefully embarrassing someone online. (Navarro et al., 2018; Tustin et al., 2014)

Bullying, or peer victimisation, has been shown to be associated with a myriad of negative effects, such as depression, sleeplessness, suicidal ideation, and anxiety to name a few (Cohen, 2020; Cohen, Shahar, & Klomek, 2020). Research into the act of bullying has shown that these effects not only affect the victim but could also affect the bully and could even affect bystanders. Research has given insight into ways of combating this social phenomenon with an abundance of research showing positive ways of combating bullying (Navarro et al., 2018; Ran et al., 2020; Schaefer et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2016). While research has helped advance the fight against bullying, there remains much to be done to improve the lives of bullying victims (Rivara & Le Menestrel, 2016). One possible way to better the lives of victims is to actively fight to reduce

bullying and to gain insight into what promotes the positive adjustment of victims of bullying. At its core, resilience research tries to understand which processes promote resilience within a specific risk, culture, and time in order to promote it effectively (Masten & Wright, 2010; Rutter, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the aim was to understand resilience in the specific risk context of school bullying.

When exploring resilience, two conditions should be fulfilled: Firstly, there should be a severe threat or adversity that the individual faces; and secondly, there should be evidence of better than expected outcomes as measured against normative peer outcomes (Masten, 2001; 2014). However, resilience should not be seen as a static trait that resides within a person allowing them to be resilient to every obstacle that comes their way. Rather, resilience should be seen as a process between the individual and their environment, where the environment makes resources available that the person can reach out for and make use of (Ungar, 2008; 2011). A person can also be resilient in one developmental time and risk but fail to be resilient in another. This is due to resilience being connected to the time, culture, and risk that the individual is facing (Masten, 2014; Theron & Ungar, 2018; Ungar, 2011). Resilience can thus be defined as a dynamic and fluent process between multiple systems that reduce the vulnerability to significant risks in the environment and optimises positive development (Cicchetti, 2010; Rutter, 2012; Theron & Ungar, 2018; Van Breda, 2018).

Studies on resilience have shown that some of the processes that resilience can take can be seen as universal in nature (Masten, 2014, 2018). These pathways can be seen within various systems that individuals interact in such as the family, schools, culture, and community, which are manifested in unique ways due to risk and culture (Ungar, 2011). Within a family context, pathways such as having a close relationship with at least one primary caregiver, motivation from parents, and teaching of agency, to name a few, have been identified (Masten 2014). Community pathways include close personal relationships with other people, spiritual and cultural beliefs, and community resources. Pathways within a school system can include close relationships with friends and

teachers, quality education, and being taught skills that develop intelligence and problem solving (Masten, 2014). Each pathway helps the child in a unique way, for example, having a close relationship with a responsive, caring and sensitive parent can act as an external regulator teaching the child how to handle challenging situations best and teaching self-efficacy (Masten, 2001, Ungar 2011). Through the actions of the parent(s) and other systems such as schooling, church or other environmental influences, the child also learns aspects related to intelligence, spirituality, problem-solving, hope, self-regulation, and have a sense of direction in life (Masten 2001, 2014; Masten & Narayanan, 2010). Through these above-mentioned pathways, the child can develop agency and mastery, which can foster self-efficacy and goal-directed behaviour (Wright, Masten, & Narayana, 2013).

While the pathways mentioned above can be seen as universal, they also manifest in unique ways based on the specific risk. International findings on bullying and resilience indicate that higher levels of resilience may: a) buffer the effects of bullying by acting as a moderator between bullying/cyberbullying, victimisation, suicidal tendencies, and depressive symptoms (Navarro et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2016); b) moderate the effects of depression and lower delinquency levels (Hinduja & Patchin, 2017; Sapouna & Wolke, 2013); c) support greater levels of positive coping, family support, interpersonal connections, emotional regulation, and optimism (Bowes et al., 2010; Freitas et al., 2016; Kabadayi & Sari, 2018; Narayanan & Betts, 2014; Ran et al., 2020; Schaefer et al., 2018); and d) support higher levels of emotional well-being, positivity and support lower levels of psychosomatic complaints and emotional reactivity (Gianesini & Brighi, 2015). These findings provide a quantitative view of resilience enablers associated with bullying and offer a good indication of what the pathways of resilience are in other countries.

South African researchers, Greeff and Van den Berg (2013) studied the role of the family in the resilience process of children who were bullied in the Western Cape. They interviewed a total of 48 mothers whose children were bullied for a period of 6 months. Their findings suggest that the most prominent way that parents helped their children with being bullied was to speak to the principals or

teachers of the school or to offer advice. They further highlight that within the family, the quality of the communication between the child and the parent was of extreme importance. Quality communication coupled with the flexibility of the family to adapt and learn new ways of handling a situation, as well as help from the community and friends, aided in the resilience of not only the child but also of the family as a whole.

While the findings in the aforementioned studies do show ways in which resilience plays a role in the face of bullying, they are mostly quantitative in nature or show how resilience plays a role from the perspectives of families. This study proposes to explore the role of resilience in victims of bullying by answering the question: *What helped young adults adjust positively in spite of the negative effects of school bullying?* Having an in-depth understanding of what helped young adults when they were bullied during their school career could help to further the knowledge-base of resilience and bullying. Findings can also be used to inform school policy and assist in directing possible future interventions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological framework study was to explore how resilience manifested in the context of bullying for young adults aged 20 to 30 years within the Emfuleni and Midvaal municipal districts. In this study, resilience was defined as: A dynamic and multi-levelled process in which different systems interact to help an individual withstand, recover from or adapt to significant adversity in the process of supporting functional development (Masten 2014; Masten & Narayan, 2012; Theron & Ungar 2018; Ungar 2008, 2011, 2013; Van Breda 2018). Further, bullying was defined as a negative social phenomenon in which a child or adolescent purposefully, and with violent intent, violates the rights of others through negative physical or verbal behaviour with the end goal of humiliating, or oppressing their target (Olweus, 1993, 2011; Vaillancourt et al., 2011)

Methodology

■ **Research Paradigm and Design**

The current study explored what young adults' reflections are on what helped them to adjust well during their time of being bullied at school. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), the authors subscribed to the social constructivist paradigm. According to Creswell (2014), people create meaning through their various interactions with one another, and through various sentimental objects (cultural or spiritual artefacts) that they attach meaning to. The researcher and the research participants co-create meaning through the interview process through participants' use of verbal and illustrated explanations, and the researcher probing and summarising to ensure his understanding is a true reflection of what the participant means. In the research process, the researcher acknowledges that the participant is an expert in the subject under question and helps the participant to tell his or her story by listening and asking questions to better understand. In order to better understand the lived experiences of the participants and to keep in line with the social constructivist paradigm, this study utilised a qualitative phenomenological framework.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative phenomenological strategy of inquiry is a research method that allows the researcher to understand the lived experiences of a group of individuals and gain rich insight into their experiences. Through a semi-structured interview, the researcher is able to draw upon the expertise of the participant and together co-create knowledge on what participants believed promoted their resilience (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). Thus, having a qualitative phenomenological study allowed the researcher to have a better understanding of not only what helped the individuals, but also of what could possibly help other youth who are victims of bullying by determining the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

■ **Participants**

The participants were recruited from towns within the Emfuleni and Midvaal municipal districts in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The Emfuleni and Midvaal municipalities make up two-thirds of the Sedibeng district with a main export of mostly manufacturing, and iron and steel

industries. The area has approximately 845 057 people with the majority being Sesotho or Afrikaans speaking. Most of the participants grew up and went to school in the area. Through snowball sampling, a total of five participants agreed to participate (Creswell, 2014). Each of the five participants met the following inclusion criteria: (1) they were bullied for a period of at least six months either in a primary or secondary school; (2) they are between 20 to 30 years of age; (3) they self-reported on having adjusted well in spite of the bullying; and (4) the bullying was inflicted by their peers. This last criterion was included to ensure that the participants did not report on being bullied by teachers, parents, or siblings. Of the five participants, two were women, and three were men; one participant was Indian (Muslim), and the other four participants were Caucasian (see Table 1 for a breakdown of participants).

Table 1

Breakdown of Participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
P1	22	Female	White
P2	24	Male	White
P3	22	Female	White
P4	32	Male	White
P5	25	Male	Indian/Muslim

■ **Data Collection**

Following Guillemín and Drew (2010), the Draw-and-Talk method was chosen as part of the data-collection strategy. The Draw-and-talk method is a participatory visual method that attempts to neutralise possible power imbalances between the researcher and research participants. Within this paradigm, the participants were positioned as the experts of their context and culture. Through the interview process with the participants, knowledge was co-created and extra precautions were taken

to ensure participants' views were understood from their perspectives, rather than those of the researchers (Mitchell et al., 2011). These included rephrasing statements, probing for additional information and asking for clarification if something seemed unclear. The method has a two-fold process with the researcher first engaging in a semi-structured interview and then having the participant complete a drawing based on a prompt. After the participant completed the drawing, they had a chance to explain the drawing to the researcher.

Engaging in a semi-structured interview with the participants allowed them to explain their experiences of being bullied, which served two purposes. Firstly, the drawing prompt followed methodological integrity, and secondly, it provided an opportunity for the participant to get to know the researcher and build rapport (Creswell, 2007; Guillemin & Drew, 2010). Having each participant draw what they believed helped them to be okay based on the prompt "*Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be okay despite experiencing bullying during your school years*" allows the participant to reflect on what they would like to emphasise in their drawing before even beginning the drawing, which acts as a tool to elicit deeper reflections compared to interviews alone (Liebenberg et al., 2020). The method also offers a mild therapeutic benefit by allowing the participant to externalise their emotions into the drawing they create, which may help him/her/them explain the drawings with more ease (Theron, 2012). Once they completed their drawings, participants were asked to explain the meaning behind their drawing (Theron, 2012). While each participant explained the meaning of their drawing, they were probed for more clarification to ensure that what each drawing meant was fully understood. This minimised any possible misinterpretations of the meanings of the drawings (Guillemin & Drew, 2010; Theron, 2012). Data collection was halted in the middle of 2020 due to the advent of the novel COVID-19 virus and participants not wanting to take part in the study for fear of their health. However, despite the small sample size, the themes did repeat (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All interviews were held in the office of the second author at the North West University over weekends or lunch hour to ensure

privacy. Additionally a do not disturb sign was placed on the door to ensure that no one interfered with the interview process.

■ Data Analysis

In line with Braun and Clarke (2006), the drawings and accompanied semi-structured interviews underwent thematic analysis. This method was chosen due to its flexibility as a method of data analysis and to better code the drawings (Braun & Clark, 2006; Clark & Braun, 2016; Liebenberg et al., 2020). The systematic process explained by Braun and Clark (2006) also allowed the researchers to give a richer description of the data. First, the data was transcribed and then read multiple times in order to become immersed in the data. In keeping with ethical standards and codes each participant was asked about the voice recordings in the informed consent forms with verbal permission also obtained before each interview. The transcripts and drawings of each interview were uploaded to ATLAS.ti version 8 for thematic analysis. The data was then independently analysed by each of the authors and then compared and refined during meetings between the authors. During the open coding phase, the data were processed by assigning code labels to segments of the text and drawings that answered the research question (e.g., conflict avoidance). Similar codes were grouped together through the process of axial coding (e.g., *conflict avoidance* was grouped together with *taking action*). Once this was completed, several discussions took place concerning the categories and final themes (as explained by Saldaña, 2016) were generated (e.g., *taking action* became *agency and mastery*). A summary of the main themes associated with each participant is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of participants and main themes

Participants	Type of bullying	Resilience processes
P1	verbal, and physical abuse	self-regulation, and problem solving; positive attachments.

P2	physical, verbal, and social bullying	agency and mastery; positive attachment; self-regulation and problem solving
P3	verbal and social bullying	positive attachment; self-regulation and problem solving; agency and mastery
P4	verbal, and physical bullying	self-regulation and problem solving; agency and mastery; positive attachment
P5	physical and verbal abuse.	self-regulation and problem solving; agency and mastery; positive attachment

○

○ **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was received from the North-West University's HREC (NWU-00460-19-A1) after the proposed study was approved by the relevant scientific community. All participants were given a detailed account of the study outlining the risks and benefits and explaining that the study was voluntary and free of consequences should they want to withdraw. All interviews were held in a secure office to ensure privacy. Data gathered were kept in a safe, locked office and on password-protected folders on the researchers' computers. Debriefing services were on standby. However, no ethical dilemmas arose through the course of the study.

○ **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the process in which the researcher puts certain steps in place to ensure the quality and accuracy of their work (Creswell, 2014). The strategies used in this study were reflective journaling that the researcher kept on Google Keep. This included any information that the primary researcher found interesting or standing out in the research process. In line with writings on peer debriefing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018) these notes were shared with the co-author and discussed after each interview to ensure that no biases emerged in the research. The reflective journal served as a platform for my personal reflections on the research process, and did not constitute data. Additionally, regular peer debriefing with their supervisor allowed the expression of views regarding the research process, which could in turn, be reviewed and checked. The researcher also engaged in member checking by asking the participants

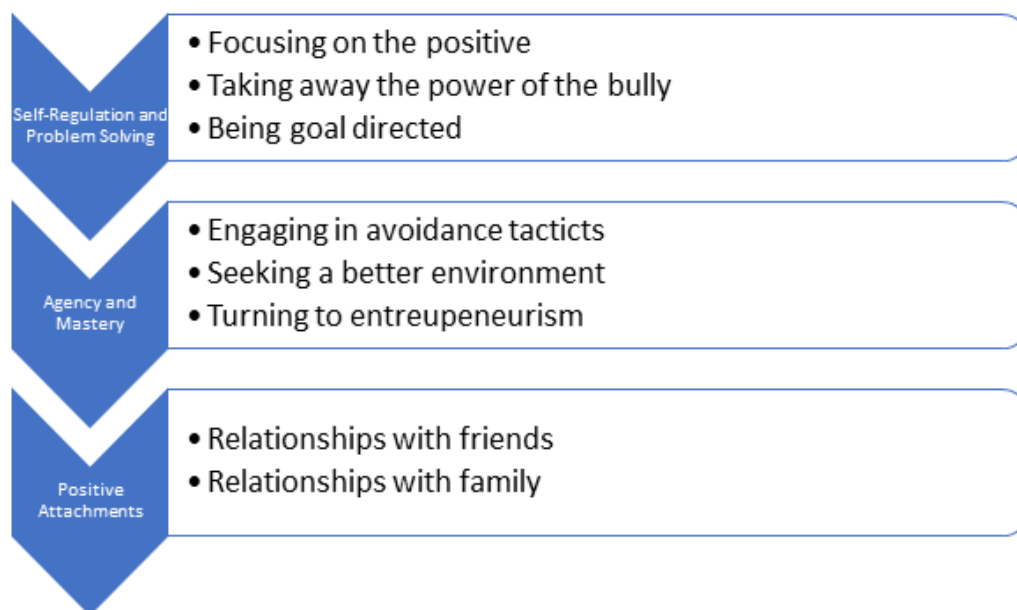
their views on summarised views of what has been said in past interviews. This allowed the participants to express what they thought without creating leading the participant during the interview process. The use of a co-coder was also used to ensure that no biases entered the research from the first author. This was done by having both the authors code the data separately, then comparing the codes and refining them through meetings.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the thematic analysis of the interviews and drawings, four themes were identified that aided the young adults to adjust positively in the face of bullying. The first theme that was identified relates to self-regulation, self-direction, intelligence, and problem-solving skills where participants reported aspects related to focusing on the positive, being able to reflect and focus on the positive, being goal-directed, and taking power away from the bully. Closely related to this was the aspect of agency and mastery, where participants reported strategies used to avoid conflict, and entrepreneurial skills as being helpful in times of bullying. Lastly, having close relationships with other people, especially friends and teachers, were also identified. A visual summary of the themes is offered in Figure 1.

Figure 1:

Themes and findings of What helped young adults adjust positively



- **Self-Regulation and Problem Solving**

Participants reported that the methods they used to cope with bullying related to focusing on the positive, taking away the power of the bullies, being able to reflect and accept what has happened, and being goal-directed.

Being able to exert control over your emotions and behaviour in the face of adversity has long been associated with adaptive capabilities, and has been associated with greater control over one's environment (Masten, 2014). Self-control has also been associated with executive functioning, which refers to higher cognitive processes used to efficiently coordinate control over one's thoughts and behaviour (Bemath et al., 2020). Some of the skills that have been associated with executive functioning include adaptive thinking, planning, impulse control, and self-control.

Focusing on the positive in a situation, such as being bullied, was associated with focusing on the future and not obsessing over the act of being bullied. This belief that one-day things would be better, allowed participants to accept that what was happened was only temporary, as was explained by participant two:

It [stories that his father told him about his time being bullied] made me not obsess about it, it gave me something in the future to hold on to. Like when they would do something, I would just keep in my mind that one day I will [show] you. It is fine, do whatever you want to me now, one day I am going to [show] you. (P2, M, 24)

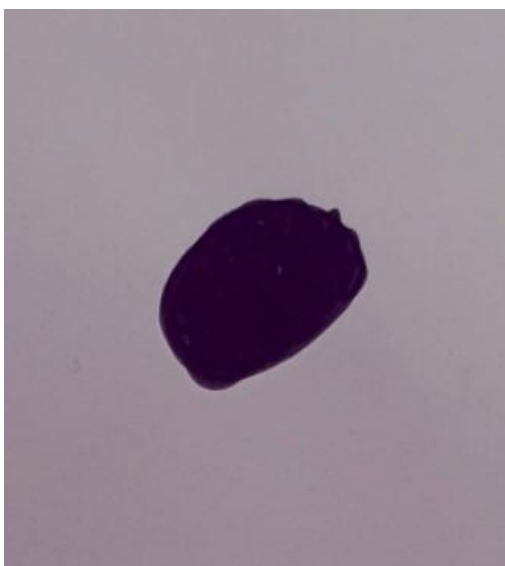


Figure 3: The Black Dot Analogy

For the participants in this study self-regulation included thinking strategically, and making meaning out of their circumstances so that they could accept what they could not control and focus on the future. In a qualitative case study Theron & Theron (2014), showed that to cope with the hardships of extreme poverty their participants used meaning making process to enhance their resilience. They reported that both the participants in the study used such constructs as acceptance, hope for a better future and reappraisals of their current situation. These constructs, specifically focusing on the positive and being future orientated were also shown in the current study.

Focusing on the positive also allowed participants to focus on their own strengths. Being able to understand that while things were difficult, it was temporary and through this they would be able to look forward to a better future. They understood that there is some deeper meaning in what they underwent. This understanding and the ability to shift their perspective and focus on the positive allowed them to believe in a future that was hopeful where things would be better for them.

And that's what you need to know that what I always carry with me is not to go on what's openly seen, but to take a step back, see what the situation is, and what I actually see. Then the answer is also a metaphor, a large sheet of paper with a black dot on it. So it's basically like an assertion type of thing. Learn to stand back learn to see deeper meaning (P2, M, 24)

A second thought that emerged from the interviews and drawings was the ability to be able to reflect on what happened and to accept it. Participants reported that having a space where they were able to reflect on what had happened to them helped them to not only accept it but to also accept themselves for who they are. It also gave them the time to reflect on their perpetrators and accept them for who and what they are. Further, being able to reflect on what had happened to them allowed them the space they needed to learn to capitalise on their strengths.

I think the fact that I was alone gave me plenty of time to reflect over my thoughts. To reflect what happened. So I actually had time, consciously or unconsciously to process

things. To come to terms with things, you know, I was not confronted by people the whole time, I was not busy with other stuff. So I really had time in my head with my own thoughts. So I think it did help me to cope with and process things in a way. (P4, M, 32)

Participants also reported having goal-directed behaviour and taking away the power of their assailants, as being some of the strategies that were used. They reported that they developed an ability to take power away from the bullies by having a sense of humour, being able to laugh at anything, being helpful to their bullies, and judging themselves as means to deter bullies.

Additionally, being goal-directed and having a tenacious attitude was also reported as helpful in times of bullying.

So, I used their own strengths and made it their weakness. So instead of teasing them back, they called me a name or they came past and hit me on the head. And instead of teasing them back or going in retaliating, I looked at them and I was kind of, like, you really don't have anything else to do? But let me help you with something. You know it would, and maybe I could tell it is this Guy, then eventually they left me out (P5, M, 25)

○ **Agency and Mastery**

In order to exercise a sense of control over their environment during a time when they felt like they did not have any power, the participants reported that they engaged in avoidance tactics to escape their tormentors. These tactics included wanting to be in a better environment, such as changing schools, changing classes, and moving away from mutual friends (who were also friends with the bullies) and making new friends. They demonstrated agency by actively seeking more positive environments. Although conflict avoidance is not typically thought to be adaptive, it served an adaptive function for the participants in this context. This state of positive adjustment can be explained by the process of reciprocal determinism as proposed by Bandura (1989). As part of his social cognitive theory, Bandura (2008) proposes that people act not only out of one motivation but also act on environmental influences. People are thus compelled by the benefits of competent actions (Bandura, 1997) and take whatever control they think they might have in a situation and

choose to leave a situation rather than engage in situations that might be more perilous. Participants shared that they sought environments where the bullies would not be. For example, participant two explained:

For me it was all about avoiding the conflict, so wherever they would be, then I would just do something different. It is not that big of a deal. If they are going to be stupid at the rugby then I just don't play rugby (P2, M, 24)

Furthermore, avoiding the bullies and conflict situations could possibly be seen as a form of hidden resilience, also known as atypicality (Ungar, 2011). In this instance participant two took action to protect himself from situations he felt he had no power or control over. This atypicality is also seen in other studies of resilience with children who demonstrated agency by leaving home to live on the street. Malindi and Theron (2010), in a study conducted in the Free State Province, reported that the children who chose to live on the street did so because the circumstances at their homes were unbearable. Living on the street allowed them to access shelters for food and clothing, as well as access to school.

However, while all the participants did report seeking a better environment, some also stated that they stood up to their bullies. Participant two stated that instead of playing rugby he played chess and developed strategic skills. Participant four reported that he would stand up for other people who were being bullied even if it made him a bigger target. *"I know I always fought for her, or that one person who was always picked on because he was considered dumb [stupid]..."*

Similar findings have been shown in other areas of risk. Haffejee and Theron (2019), reported that in an effort to exert some form self-efficacy and agency girls who were victims of childhood sexual abuse sought alternative accommodation to escape abusive environments in which they lived. Our study confirms the findings of Haffejee and Theron by noting the importance of agency in fostering resilience among young people.

Additionally, some of the participants explained that they turned to entrepreneurship as a way of making extra money. They reported doing things such as selling birds or working part-time in a

multi-store. Through doing this, they found an escape from the bullies and were able to enhance skills that they could use later in life, thus achieving mastery. Participant five explained that through learning about business from a business owner he worked for, he learnt to become responsible, which in turn, expanded his way of thinking about life:

I personally think I started working and my mind is exposed to so much, where the guys said no you know, we are going to play PlayStation now, I was like what the hell? It is boring. You know like, do something that will help you later on (P5, M 25).

It would, therefore, seem that entrepreneurial exposure not only gave them a way to escape but also enhanced their self-efficacy, which in turn, developed their agency and mastery. According to Bandura (2008), growing one's abilities through repetition of the task until you have mastered it, is key to one's self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1997) further states that beliefs in one area of a person's life can have a roll-over effect on other aspects of their lives. This roll-over effect can then act as a pathway to resilience as it helps to establish persistence and gives a sense of control over the child/youth's environment, which in turn, allows them to try and overcome challenges (Masten, 2014).

○ **Positive Attachments**

Within the context of bullying, a positive relationship with friends was reported as being helpful by almost all of the participants. Friendship was said to help individuals develop a voice to speak up with. Participant three described her friends as guardian angels that helped to build her up.

At one point they helped me the most, I saw my friends as my guardian angel. Because my dad wasn't there to protect me, my mom wasn't there to protect me, I kind of see them as my protected army if you want to say it. My guardian angel because they taught me how to stand up for myself and not keep my mouth shut and I feel without my guardian angels I would not have been able to get through the bullying (P3, F, 22)



Figure 2: Friends are guardian angels

Participant five spoke of having older friends with whom he worked in the community and who also helped him with problems that he had, which enhanced his understanding of the world. This positive association between positive relationships with friends have been reported by numerous researchers (See Masten, 2001, 2011, 2018; Theron & Ungar, 2018; Ungar, 2008, 2011). It was reported that having friends acts as a means of coping with stress and can be a source of emotional release (Masten, 2014; Schaefer et al., 2018). Given the importance that friends play during adolescence, it should be no surprise that having friends would be seen as a resilience process (Masten, 2014). Schaefer et al. (2018), however, reported quantitatively that social support from friends is a less stable predictor of resilience in their study on the role of resilience on childhood victimisation.

One possible explanation for this might be that those who have been bullied mistrust the motivations of others. Participant two reported that while he did have friends, he did not trust them

with emotions as a result of other people pretending to be his friend and then turning around and making fun of him and bullying him. Being a victim of repeated bullying could, therefore, also have a negative effect on the trust that people have towards others as they grow up.

Positive relationships with family members were also reported; however, the relationship seemed complex. Most of the participants explained that while they could have talked to their parents, they chose not to. The reason for this was two-fold: Firstly, participants reported that at the time of them being bullied, their family went through some financial difficulties or other troubles. This made them not want to add to the burdens of their parents. Secondly, as reported by participant four, not telling his parents was also a matter of pride. Nevertheless, as explained by participant two, his father was there when he needed him, and in times when he was attacked, his father intervened and drove off the bullies.

Verbal, physical, um, the guy I mentioned before he was in a gang. I remember one time I was walking home from school and they stopped me with knives, and they were going to stab me, but then my father came back from Sasolburg because he forgot something at the house. So, as luck would have it, he intercepted them, and he gave them one big speech about I don't even recall, some of it is gone like repressed memories (P2, M, 24).

Parents were then reported as a possible resource; however, it was also reported that having their parents involved could lead to making the situation worse. When parents get involved, they tend to bring the incident to the attention of the school. This can exacerbate the situation as the bully gets into trouble, and this causes the bully to retaliate (Boyes et al., 2014; Lee, 2018). Participants also explained that bringing the matter to the attention of the school rarely gave satisfactory results. This might be due to the amount of work that public schools have, or to schools not having much more they can do than to bring the matter to the attention of the parents (Olweus, 1993).

Parental involvement, however, was not only associated with negative effects. Many of the participants reported that their parents gave them anecdotes of wisdom that helped them to focus on the positive.

I do know that he would give me this type of speech where he said I should just push through and just wait for the day that I can get my revenge, and then he would tell me a story about a guy that used to bully him and then 20 years later he arrested him for drunk driving. So that was the motivation (P2, M, 22).

This seems to be in line with the research done by Greeff and Van den Berg (2013) who state that communication between parents and their children is identified as one of the chief ways in which parents could enhance the resilience of their children. Through giving their children the space to talk about how they are feeling and helping them think of possible routes to overcome this barrier, the parents are creating agency and emotional intelligence in the child (Masten, 2014).

Conclusion

While being bullied has been associated with negative outcomes, there are ways that young adults overcome these. The current study showed that some of the aspects that helped young adults be resilient, such as avoidance tactics, might be what is referred to as hidden resilience. Aspects of resilience included using avoidance tactics to get away from the bully and move into a more positive environment or using the strengths of the bully against him or her through humour or acts of kindness. Other forms of resilience that came to light were also associated with positive relationships such as having friends or support from parents or teachers; however, the data shows tension in the accounts. Friends have been seen as a source of mistrust and parents, while having good intentions, might make matters worse for the victim, as the bully might retaliate due to the trouble that he or she would get into. Lastly, learning additional skills such as being entrepreneurial was also shown to enhance the resilience of the child and could possibly have a roll-over effect on other aspects of the child's life.

While the current study did bring to light some revelations with regards to what helped young adults during their time of being bullied at school, it is not without its limitations. The study had a small sample that was taken from a small community in the Emfuleni and Midvaal municipal districts in Gauteng. To better understand the role that resilience plays in the face of bullying, a more representable sample would be required. The use of young adults might be problematic. Some

memories might have been altered, thus, using a sample of children in school might give a better idea of the role that resilience plays in bullying. Additionally, the study was cross-sectional in nature, as resilience is developmental in nature having longitudinal data would better help understand resilience and bullying.

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Chapter 3

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will be providing closing remarks on the current study. This includes talking about the main conclusions drawn from the study, personal reflections on the theory, methodology, and personal history of the researcher in relation to the current study. Lastly, the limitations and contributions and recommendations for possible future research are highlighted in more detail.

2.2 Conclusions and contribution of the study

The current section will explore the contributions that the study makes by looking at the reflections of the researcher, the theoretical contributions, methodological implications, and ethical implications that might have surfaced during the study.

2.3 Position of the researcher and personal reflection

I am a 33-year-old white male who grew up living a very protected life. I was fortunate to be born into a family where money was not a problem, which meant that my family – specifically, my grandfather – was well known. This gave me some privilege and protection as most people did not want to get on the bad side of my family. After my first two years at school, my parents got divorced, and my mom remarried. As a result, we started moving around, which was resultant in me having to attend different schools every few years. This caused me to be seen as the new kid every time, which led me to be on the outside of most social cliques. Being an outsider caused me to withdraw socially and made me a target for bullying.

The current research was inspired by my years in school, where I experienced the effects of bullying first-hand. I became increasingly interested in the phenomenon of bullying as I continued my studies in psychology. During my studies, I was introduced to the strength-based perspective known as Positive Psychology. Through the study of Positive Psychology, I was introduced to the concept of resilience. I began to wonder how resilience would play out in those who have been bullied. What would make someone more resistant to the negative effects of bullying? Going into

this study, I had certain assumptions about what could have helped youth adjust positively based on my own experience with bullying. The assumptions about resilience facets that I had were: 1) support from family and friends; 2) having a positive disposition, or seeing what happened as necessary, albeit unpleasant, part of becoming whom you need to be (meaning-making); 3) high levels of hope; 4) believing that what is happening is in the will of a higher power and that God will help one through it (spirituality). In addition to the aforementioned assumptions, other assumptions were kept in check by the use of reflective journals where I wrote possible assumptions that I might have had and possible biases that I had during each interview.

Through the reflective journaling, aspects relating to some personal biases that I might not have known about became apparent. Such aspects included instances where I might have missed possible follow-up questions or missed opportunities that I could have probed for more information and understanding. Additionally, the overall impression of each of the participants and the interviews that were done were also recorded in my reflective journal. This part of the research process proved to be invaluable as it showed me that some assumptions and positions in research might not be as known as it was thought and it helped to better myself, and to better position me as a researcher in the research process.

2.4 Theoretical contributions

To date, little qualitative extant findings has come forth to explore in-depth what helped youth who were victims of bullying to better cope with the negative effects thereof (Theron & Theron, 2010; Van Breda & Theron, 2018). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is one of the few studies to qualitatively explore what young adults adjust well through their specific experiences of being bullied within a South African Context (See also Greeff & Van den Berg, 2013). The study identified three ways in which young adults adjusted well in the face of bullying, which is: 1) self-regulation and problem-solving; 2) autonomy and mastery, and 3) positive attachment.

This study also reveals that what young adults used most in their fight against bullying was their sense of humour. Examples of which include being able to laugh at what had happened, having a sense of humour, and being able to use their problem-solving skills to overcome the adversities they face. Being able to take power away from the bully, focusing on the positive, and being goal-directed are amongst the things that participants spoke of. Literature supports the notion of self-regulation and problem-solving as enablers of resilience (Masten, 2014). What is added to the understanding of resilience and how these resilience enablers manifest in the face of bullying.

The second enabler that the participants spoke of is related to agency and mastery. Specifically, the participants spoke of avoidance in the face of their perpetrators by seeking out places where they would be free from the bullying. Additionally, entering into the workforce by either becoming an entrepreneur or by working their way up in a grocery store is also noteworthy. Joining the working force is closely linked to the concept of self-efficacy, as explained by Bandura (1997). Being able to excel in one area of their lives could have acted as both a buffer against the effects of bullying and as a way of showing them that they are able to accomplish what they set their minds to. This is iterated in the work of Bandura (1997), where he explains that having a sense of self-efficacy in one area of a person's life can have a roll-over effect on other areas, thus, enhancing those areas as well.

Lastly, participants spoke of having someone close to them; there is a rich abundance of the positive effects of relationships with peers and family in the face of adversity and bullying is no different. Participants reported that they regarded relationships with friends as a primary source of comfort but that it was seen as both of value and as something to be feared and distrusted. This was echoed in the writings of many different authors illustrating the effect that positive attachments had in the lives of children in different risk situations (Cicchetti 2010; Masten, 2001, 2014, 2018; Theron & Ungar, 2018; Ungar, 2008, 2011). Friendship was viewed both positively and negatively by the participants. Based on the positive experience, having the right group of friends helped and taught participants how to stand up for themselves. Based on the negative experience, friendship

became a source of mistrust due to peers having posed as friends only to ridicule the participant later. The emphasis on friends does link with what is known about adolescents and the importance of friendships during this time (Louw & Louw, 2014). In order to better understand the impact of friendship on adolescents, research should focus on having children or adults present in a participatory study to amplify their voices.

2.5 Methodological reflections

Snowball sampling was used as a sampling strategy to gain access to the hidden population of young adults who were victims of bullying. This strategy relies on the referrals of current participants and other stakeholders to gain access to more participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each participant was therefore asked if they knew of anyone that has been bullied. If they knew of someone they were asked to mention the study to them and enquire about possible participation in the study. If the new prospective participant agreed they would be called by the mediator to inform them about the study. This method works well to identify possible hidden populations but should not be used as a sole data gathering method as it relies heavily on social connections the participants have. Using additional sampling techniques such as advertising on social media is therefore encouraged to enhance the sample.

The method that was chosen for the current study was the Draw-and-Talk method as described by Guillemin and Drew (2010). Using this method with young adults posed the possibility that some of the young adults might find it juvenile or refuse to do the drawing. Extra attention was given to ensure that the participants knew that it was not the quality of the drawing or whether they thought they drew well enough or not. Each participant was reassured that it was the data, not the quality of drawing that mattered. Additionally, it was also the explanation behind the drawing that mattered. Thus, it did not matter what they drew, as was evident from the drawing of one of the participants who drew only a single black dot in the middle of the page. Seeing only the black dot (Figure 3) made it very difficult to think of a way that this drawing could communicate resilience, however, it was not until after the participant explained the metaphor behind the drawing, that it

served as a very strong message of the pathways that resilience can take. During the course of the study, none of the participants refused to take part in the study with some describing the experience as pleasant.

The method is a robust method that can draw out powerful responses and elicit emotions from participants. Care should be taken to ensure that the participant is at ease and that they do not feel overwhelmed by the whole process. To this end, the semi-structured interview served to build rapport with the participant as much as it did to get to know their story. Additionally, having writing and drawing material that the participant felt comfortable with was also important. Care should also be taken to ensure that there is always an additional researcher available for debriefing, as the method is known for its potential to elicit very strong emotional responses for the participants.

2.6 Limitations

There are three limitations identifiable in the study. Firstly, self-reported data (used in this study) has the potential for participants to feel ashamed of their answers in the interview setting and therefore give more socially accepted answers, thus, changing or omitting the truth. To supplement interviews, the Draw-and-Talk method and probing questions during the interviews were used. The drawings also served as a means of concretising the main themes that emerged from each interview. Secondly, the sample that was used in the study was very small. This was due to the lockdown regulations set in place by the South African Government to combat the spread of the COVID-19. Despite this setback, themes did repeat. Having a bigger sample from other regions could shed additional light on the subject of how resilience manifests in the face of bullying. Lastly, the use of young adults might be somewhat problematic as time might have altered their memories of when they were bullied. Despite this, literature does point to an increase in abstract and logical thinking during the young-adult period. It was, therefore, the opinion of the researcher that young adults could give a better description than what adolescents might offer (Louw & Louw, 2014).

2.7 Recommendations for future research

The following section provides recommendations for future research.

- More research regarding the beliefs and expectations of young people regarding what helped them to do well in the face of bullying is needed. While numerous quantitative studies do exist, they cannot always fully explain the causal relationships that they identify. More qualitative studies in various school settings are necessary to understand better how to promote resilience and reduce bullying.
- Future qualitative research could also inform the policies of schools, making it easier to help those that are victims of bullying (Teti et al., 2020). An understanding of how bullying affects youth is also needed with the voices of the youth being heard in what they believe helped them. To this end, participatory research with youth could yield very rich data and offer youth-based solutions. It is critical that participatory researchers foreground youth voices on what supports their resilience.
- Future research should also focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the role of friends in the face of bullying. Current literature points towards tensions on the roles of peers in the face of bullying, indicating that while some peers are a source of resilience, others might constrain resilience. Further research on this could contribute to developing effective interventions within schools and communities.
- Research into bullying should be repeated with larger sample sizes, and look into how people in different cultures and different areas in South Africa experience resilience in the face of bullying.
- International collaborations can enhance the understanding of resilience and bullying across different cultures around the world.
- Further qualitative and quantitative data of bullying within the school context in South Africa can enhance the understanding of how to better protect current and future victims of bullying.

2.8 Conclusion

The current qualitative study used a phenomenological framework with the Draw-and-Talk method to answer the research question: *What helps young adults adjust positively in spite of school*

bullying? The findings suggest that while resilience does play a role similar to that described in other risk areas, there were some ways in which resilience was different. Pathways in which resilience was the same included having friends and family to support youth. However, peers were not always supportive and at times, constrained the resilience of the participants because they were not trustworthy. Participants also explained that they used avoidance tactics to get away from the bullies and used problem-solving skills such as humour or future-orientated thinking to get them through the day. Bullying can have many negative effects, but some of these effects can be mitigated by the afore-mentioned resilience pathways. Having a deeper understanding of how these pathways play out in the face of bullying can help to better the lives of current and future victims and can inform the policies of schools to foster more positive school environments.

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

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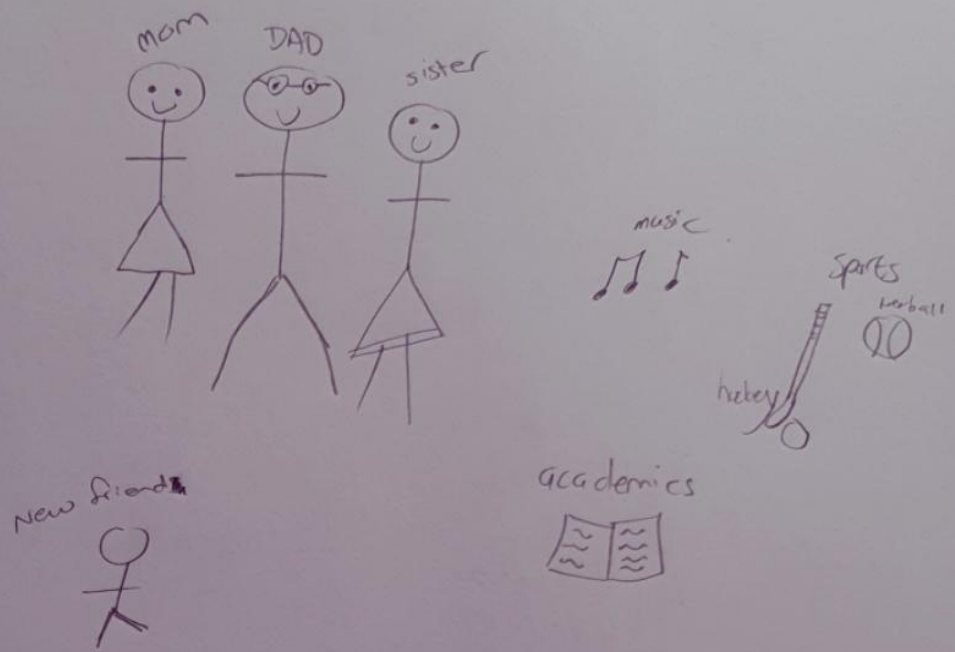
Ungar, M. (2013). Resilience after maltreatment: The importance of social services as facilitators of positive adaptation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37, (2–3), 110–115.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.08.004>

• Appendices

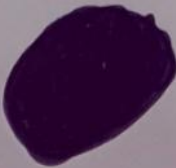
○ Appendix A: Drawings

Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying during your school years



Prompt:

Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying during your school years



Prompt:

Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying during your school years

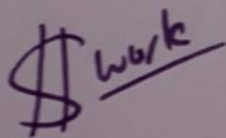
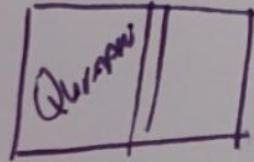
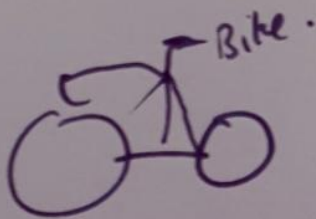


Prompt:

Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying during your school years



Please create a drawing that shows who/what helped you to be strong despite experiencing bullying during your school years



Cycling friends

○ **Appendix B: Example of transcript**

19 November 2019

Interview 1

G: Alright, good afternoon. Thank you for participating in the study, we will be looking at the experiences of resilience and how it factored in bullying. So, you've read the informed consent, you've signed it? Ok. Then, I just, I'm just going to inform you of the procedures. There are two parts an interviewing section and a drawing section, so if you are fine then we can start? Ok?

G: Can you please tell me of your experiences of being bullied at school?

P1: It was more emotional bullying than physical bullying, where the girl would like take on my self-image and say ok you are not good enough, you don't have this, you don't look a certain way, so it was very emotional. Like telling you that you are not good enough, and telling you that you are too thin, you don't have breasts, you don't have this, you will never be like me. Things like that. It was only once that she got physical that was in matric where she tripped me in class in front of everyone and that's where the bullying kind of stopped after that. Um when my parents got involved and things like that. So up until then it was only the emotional bullying and then it got physical.

G: And was this only by one particular person?

○ Appendix C: Coding example

The screenshot displays the ATLAS.ti software interface for a project titled "Dissertation 1 - ATLAS.ti". The interface is divided into several panes:

- Top Panel:** Contains navigation and management tools such as "Home", "Search Project", "Analyze", "Import & Export", "Tools & Support", "Tools & Filter", and "View".
- Left Panel (Code Groups):** Lists various code groups with their respective counts:
 - Dissertation 1
 - Documents (5)
 - Codes (94)
 - Memos (0)
 - Networks (0)
 - Document Groups (0)
 - Code Groups (16)
 - Memo Groups (0)
 - Network Groups (0)
 - Multimedia Transcripts (0)
- Center Panel (Code Manager):** Shows a list of code groups with their counts:
 - Avoiding conflict (7)
 - Destructive coping mechanisms (3)
 - Entrepreneurial Spirit (9)
 - Friendship (8)
 - Having your own space (1)
 - Listening to music (1)
 - Nature as a source of escape (6)
 - Parental involvement (9)
 - Receiving compliments to deter bullying (5)
 - Relationships with family (2)
 - Religion and religious teachings (10)
 - School work as a means of distracting and coping (4)
 - Standing up for oneself (4)
 - Teachers (3)
 - Thought processes (12)
 - Using exercise or sports as a means of escape (9)
- Right Panel (Search Codes):** Displays search results for the term "Anger as a means of coping". The results are organized into columns: Name, Grounded, Density, and Groups.

Name	Grounded	Density	Groups
Anger as a means of coping	1	1	0 [Destructive coping mechanisms]
Asking the owner for more responsibility in the story due to outgrowing old position	1	1	0 [Entrepreneurial Spirit]
Associate yourself with good company	1	1	0 [Friendship]
Avoiding conflict	3	3	0 [Avoiding conflict]
Being Cunning and having a sense of humour	2	2	0 [Thought processes]
Being exposed to a better environment	2	2	0 [Avoiding conflict]
Being goal directed	3	3	0 [Thought processes]
Being in a state of survival	1	1	0 [Avoiding conflict]
Being strong in academics	1	1	0 [School work as a means of distr...]
Being taught about business	1	1	0 [Entrepreneurial Spirit]
Broadening your understanding of the world	1	1	0 [Thought processes]
Business helping change mindset	1	1	0 [Entrepreneurial Spirit]
Changing classes	0	0	0 [Avoiding conflict]
Changing mindset/having friends help	2	2	0 [Friendship]
Choosing a different high school	2	2	0 [Avoiding conflict]
Commitment to something higher than the self	2	2	0 [Religion and religious teachings]
Compliments as a means of stopping bullying	1	1	0 [Receiving compliments to deter...]
Commitments from teachers	1	1	0 [Receiving compliments to deter...]

○ **Appendix D: Author Guidelines for South African Journal of Psychology**

4. Preparing your manuscript for submission

4.1 Formatting

Manuscripts should be submitted as a Word document only. Templates are available on the [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#) page of our Author Gateway.

The text should be double-spaced throughout and with a minimum of 3cm for left and right hand margins and 5cm at head and foot. Text should be standard 12 point.

4.2 Journal Style

The South African Journal of Psychology conforms to the SAGE house style. [Click here](#) to review guidelines on SAGE UK House Style.

Research-based manuscripts should use the following format: The introductory/literature review section does not require a heading, thereafter the following headings /subheadings should be used:

Method (Participants; Instruments; Procedure; Ethical considerations; Data analysis (which includes the statistical techniques or computerized analytic programmes, if applicable); Results; Discussion; Conclusion; References.

The “Ethical considerations” section must include the name of the institution that granted the ethical approval for the study (if applicable).

4.3 Keywords and abstracts

Helping readers find your article online Authors should include (a) an Abstract of up to 250 words and (b) up to 6 alphabetised keywords The title, keywords and abstract are key to ensuring readers find your article online through online search engines such as Google. Please refer to the information and guidance on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords by visiting SAGE’s Journal Author Gateway Guidelines on How to Help Readers Find Your Article Online.

4.4 Artwork, figures and other graphics

For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures and graphs in electronic format, please visit SAGE’s [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#).

Figures supplied in colour will appear in colour online regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in colour in the printed version. For specifically requested colour reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from SAGE after receipt of your accepted article.

4.5 Supplementary material

The *South African Journal of Psychology* does not currently accept supplemental files.

4.6 Reference style

South African Journal of Psychology adheres to the APA reference style. View the [APA](#) guidelines to ensure your manuscript conforms to this reference style.

4.7 English language editing services

Authors seeking assistance with English language editing, translation, or figure and manuscript formatting to fit the journal's specifications should consider using SAGE Language Services.

Visit [SAGE Language Services](#) on our Journal Author Gateway for further information.