

# **A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

by

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**BLOEMFONTEIN**

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## DECLARATION

I, Pinkie Sibongile Evidence Happiness Tlou, declare that the dissertation, “A strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit”, hereby submitted for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty.

I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the following persons:

My wonderful husband, Mr Abby Thembaletu Tlou, for inspiring and supporting me during the period of my study.

My three children, Buyani, Sandisiwe and Kwanele, for giving me support during my study period.

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# A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit in the Amajuba District. This study was initiated by the increase in cases of bullying in South African primary schools. Bullying can be described as unfair or adverse conduct by an aggressor towards a victim, which includes harmful actions, such as name-calling, inflicting pain, pulling faces and making threats. Primary schools are regarded as institutions that provide academic education to children from Grade R to 7. The appropriate theoretical framework to couch this study is Ubuntu because it emphasises the emancipation and empowerment of the oppressed, and maintaining and strengthening the community. The study uses participatory action research as a qualitative enquiry methodology. The following people constitute the team of participants for co-research: one circuit manager, one Special Needs Education Services senior education specialist, one principal, two teachers, two parents, two learners who are victims of bullying, two learners engaged in bullying and other stakeholders. The other stakeholders included a representative of the South African Police Services (SAPS), a local councillor and a social development representative. The data collected were audio-taped with the consent of the co-researchers, and transcribed and analysed to give meaning and structure to the data. The data were analysed using critical discourse analysis at the textual, discursive and social structure levels. The findings of the study determined whether the intervention was successful or not. This study will help to combat bullying in South African primary schools.

**Keywords:** Bullying, primary school, Ubuntu, participatory action research

# 'N STRATEGIE OM BULLYING IN PRIMÊRE SKOLE IN DIE OSIZWENI KRING TE KOM

## Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie studie is om 'n strategie te formuleer om bullebakkerie in laerskole in die Osizweni-kring in die Amajuba-distrik te bestry. Hierdie studie is geïnisieer deur die toename in gevalle van bullebakkerie in Suid-Afrikaanse laerskole. Bullebakkerie kan beskryf word as onbillike of ongunstige optrede deur 'n aggressor teenoor 'n slagoffer, wat skadelike optrede insluit, soos naamproepe, pyn toebrande, gesigte trek en dreigemente maak. Primêre skole word beskou as instellings wat akademiese onderwys aan kinders van Graad R tot 7 bied. Die toepaslike teoretiese raamwerk om hierdie studie te staaf, is Ubuntu omdat dit die emancipatie en bemagtiging van die onderdrukte beklemtoon en die gemeenskap handhaaf en versterk. Die studie gebruik deelnemende aksienavorsing as 'n kwalitatiewe navraagmetodologie. Die volgende persone vorm die span deelnemers vir mede-navorsing: een kringbestuurder, een spesialis onderwysbeampte, spesiale onderwysbeampte, een skoolhoof, twee onderwysers, twee ouers, twee leerders wat slagoffers van bullebakkerie is, twee leerders wat aan bullebakkerie en ander deelneem belanghebbendes. Die ander belanghebbendes het 'n verteenwoordiger van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiediens (SAPD), 'n plaaslike raadslid en 'n maatskaplike ontwikkelingsverteenwoordiger ingesluit. Die data wat ingesamel is, is met die toestemming van die mede-navorsers geluidbandig en getransskrebeer en geanaliseer om betekenis en struktuur aan die data te gee. Die data is ontleed aan die hand van kritiese diskoersanalise op die tekstuele, diskursiewe en sosiale struktuurvlakke. Die bevindings van die studie het bepaal of die intervensie suksesvol was of nie. Hierdie studie sal help om bullebakkerie in Suid-Afrikaanse laerskole te bestry.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Bullebakkerie, laerskool, Ubuntu, deelnemende aksienavorsing

## PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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### DECLARATION

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that I have proofread and edited the entire body of the following dissertation (including the list of references but not including the appendices):

**A strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni**

**Circuit**

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13 June 2018



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

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## **CHAPTER 1**

# **A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, followed by a statement of the problem, which compounds the research question, the research aim and the objectives of the study. Ubuntu as the theoretical framework guiding the study is introduced. Participatory action research (PAR) as a methodological approach as well as the research design and the instrumentation used during data generation are explained. In addition, critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the strategy used to analyse the data generated in the study is described. Related literature is reviewed in correspondence to the objectives of the study, which are as follows: the challenges caused by bullying in schools, the solutions to these challenges, the conditions conducive to strategy functionality, the threats towards the success of the strategy and the indicators of success. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the value of the research, the ethical considerations and the chapter layout.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

This study aimed to design a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit. According to Olweus (2001:293), bullying is described as a subcategory of interpersonal aggression. Bullying is characterised by intentionality and repetition, with the abuse of power as a primary factor of anguish distinguishing between bullying and other types of aggression. Fekkes, Pijpers, Fredricks, Vogels and Verroove-Vanhorick (2005:1) state that bullying behaviour can be physical or verbal. It includes other types of negative behaviour, such as making faces and social exclusion. This behaviour is repeated by a more powerful person towards the victim over a long period. The researcher views bullying as unfair behaviour by an aggressor towards a victim, which includes various harmful actions, such as name-calling, inflicting pain, making faces and making threats.

Jones (2008:4) defines a primary school as any institution that provides academic education to children from the age of seven to thirteen years. According to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (2002:7), a primary school is a school consisting of Grades R to 7. The researcher agrees with Jones (2008:4) that primary schools teach learners between seven and thirteen years of age.

According to Fonseca, Coeli, Lucena, Veloso and Carvalho (2010:1433), a strategy consists of thoughts, ideas, insights, experiences, goals, expertise, memories, perceptions and expectations. It provides general guidance for specific actions in pursuit of particular ends. A strategy is defined as a devised plan of action to achieve a certain goal (Encyclopedia.com). It is an idea chosen to bring about a desired future, such as the achievement of a goal. It also provides a solution to a problem (Dictionary.com). The researcher views a strategy as a basic directional decision with a purpose and a vision.

According to literature, the challenges of bullying are academic performance, absenteeism, self-esteem and antisocial behaviour. The challenges with regard to bullying in primary schools not only present serious risks to the academic adjustment of learners engaging in bullying and the victims of bullying, as well as schools and communities, but are also extremely pervasive and harmful. A study conducted by Sango and Chiinze (2015:129) in Zimbabwe and Botswana shows that victims of bullying have difficulties in concentration, especially in their schoolwork. Their academic performance usually declines, and their rate of dropping out of school and absenteeism is very high. They show signs of loneliness as well as having trouble in making social and emotional adjustments. They fail to make friends easily. Most victims of bullying have poor relationships with their classmates (Erath, 2008:605; Omotoso, 2010:149).

Shellard (2002:1) is of the opinion that victims of bullying suffer embarrassment. Their insecurity and self-esteem become very low, and they develop a fear of going to school. According to Kartal (2009:1), in Tanzania, incidents related to bullying have been found to have an unacceptable impact on learners' academic performance. The victims of bullying are affected emotionally and socially. Moreover, some victims of bullying become involved in violence, which may even lead to fatalities. Seedat

(2016:23) explains that bullying in South African schools can begin in and continue throughout pre-school. She claims that with the advent of social media, social bullying has become increasingly more dangerous psychologically, resulting in children attempting to take their own lives, sometimes succeeding at this.

The challenges mentioned above may result from a lack of knowledge by parents, teachers, learners and the school community, who may fail to identify signs of bullying. In offering solutions to these challenges, Seedat (2016:23) is of the opinion that parents having a sense of awareness of the signs of bullying can help children develop the skills to stand up against bullying or stop them from becoming bullies themselves. The lines of communication among these parties must be kept open at all times.

Olweus (2001:32) states that a principal of a primary school is obligated to change the attitude and behaviour of teachers for them to understand the danger of bullying at school. The principal can achieve this by putting in place anti-bullying policies. Within anti-bullying policies, supervisory systems during non-teaching periods must be clearly indicated. Financial resources needed for such activities must be available. In contrast, approaches that empower the youth and give them a role in the resolution of bullying help to create longer-lasting solutions and more positive school climates (Davis & Davis, 2012:44).

The Department of Basic Education (2015:8) developed a framework that advises the formulation of anti-bullying policies to be adopted, submitted and revised annually in response to bullying. The latter is a condition conducive to the strategy to be successful. Besides, there has to be a consistent engagement with community structures and role players that play specific roles in addressing bullying that occurs at school. Functional anti-bullying committees should be established in schools, and anti-bullying codes of conduct should be formulated and adopted (Smith, Anonidou & Cowie, 2003:592). Teachers, parents, learners and the entire school community must work together to combat bullying in primary schools (Houston, 2009:615). Houston's (2009) study revealed that adult supervision in schools is the best solution to combat bullying.

Fein, Vorsekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski and Reddy (2004:6) developed a threat assessment for American schools. The findings of their assessment showed that learners had access to instruments of violence prior to the attacks, which confirms that globally, schools are unsafe. Learners who engage in bullying are often products of homes where physical abuse is practised. Victims of bullying come from families where striking back physically is employed as a defence mechanism by the parties concerned to deal with any type of attack. Parental involvement is lacking in these families. All of these factors present a threat to the application of these solutions (Cohn & Canter, 2003:1). In Asia, Henningson (2009:379) identified that most of the bullies are coming from the families that are lacking discipline to the. Most of the victims of bullying tend not to feel safe even if they are with their parent. Poor parental education, divorce, serious illness in the family, drug abuse and sexual assault correlate with victimisation.

There are diverse anti-bullying programmes that address various aspects of bullying (Twemlow & Cohen, 2003:121). According to Prince and Jones (2001:320), anti-bullying programmes show the high level of commitment required for recruiting, training and supervising learners who are involved in bullying. An anti-bullying programme was developed in a nationwide campaign in response to the suicides of several children in Norway during the early 1980s (Ananiadou & Smith, 2003:596). Anti-bullying programmes were advocated to target the whole school with the aim of reducing school bullying (Pepler & Rigby, 2004:321). Recent studies have shown that peer relationships and parental education on bullying are other possible indicators of success to combat bullying in primary schools (Pepler, Jiang, Craig & Connolly, 2008:382).

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Bullying seems to be a problem in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit. Instances of bullying appear to be happening more frequently, which may be a sign of increasingly aggressive and violent behaviour in this area. Learners' behaviour in a classroom differs, with some being bullies. Bullies usually use their physical appearance to make others feel inferior. Bullying is a huge problem, especially if the victim experiences it during the primary school level as this may haunt the victim until

adulthood. Therefore, implementing strategies to combat bullying at an early stage will help victims of bullying to develop some solutions in order not to be bullied.

#### **1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Ubuntu was found to be an appropriate theoretical framework for the study as it emphasises power-sharing among stakeholders. Ubuntu was used in this study to empower all of the co-researchers and bring about change and improvement (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:71). The reflective practice and research design aim to improve the conditions at schools. Gade (2011:4) states that the Ubuntu approach first appeared in writing in Southern Africa in 1846, and the authors associated Ubuntu with philosophy. The focus of Ubuntu is on the fostering of peace and education among learners.

Respect as an aspect of Ubuntu refers to the unbiased consideration of someone's rights, values, beliefs and property (Eze, 2006:26). Ubuntu is relevant to this research because it expresses justice, compassion, dignity, harmony and humanity. Ubuntu is in the interest of building, emancipating and empowering the oppressed and maintaining and strengthening the community (Letseka, 2012:54). The Department of Education ((2001:16) indicates that Ubuntu practises compassion, kindness, altruism and respect for effective learning. Ubuntu contributes knowledge that will ensure more diligence and a culture of achievement (Rosen, 2012:86). In this study, Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness among the victims of bullying and the learners engaged in bullying.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Based on the background set out above, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

How can a strategic approach be used to combat bullying in primary schools?

## **1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.6.1 Research aim**

The aim of this study was to design a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit.

### **1.6.2 Research objectives**

The following research objectives were formulated:

- To determine the challenges that teachers and learners face with regard to bullying in primary schools.
- To evaluate possible solutions to the challenges of bullying in primary schools.
- To investigate the necessary conditions for formulating a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.
- To anticipate threats to the emerging strategy aimed at combatting bullying in primary schools.
- To highlight possible indicators of success to combat bullying in primary schools drawn from best practices.

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This study is located within a qualitative research paradigm. The technique or approach to research that has been adopted in this study is PAR. This approach will assist in designing a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. Dworski-Riggs and Langhout (2010:216) understand PAR as a research approach that promotes social justice by creating conditions that foster empowerment. According to McDonald (2012:37), PAR is a qualitative inquiry that is democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (2014:69-70) state that PAR is an approach to social investigation – a dynamic process and taking action to redress a problem or to engage in social action. PAR focuses on knowledge development with a mandate to remain a communal reflective inquiry with the aim to improve the recent situation (Koch, Selim & Kralik, 2000:110).



Also, PAR offers opportunities to bring applied research and evaluation skills to those closest to the issues involved. Furthermore, it promotes positive change as it contributes towards building knowledge that communities can use to strengthen themselves (McGarvey, 2007:2). Minkler and Wallernstein (2003:4) define PAR as a cooperative approach to research that involves all partners in the research process fairly. In this study, the researcher and the co-researchers will focus on the values of PAR to gather the desired information in discussions.

## **1.8 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROTOCOLS**

The data collected were audiotaped with the consent of the co-researchers. After that, the data were transcribed and analysed to give meaning and structure to it. The researcher arranged information-sharing sessions and workshop sessions with the co-researchers, during which strategic planning took place. Problematic areas were identified and noted down, taking into consideration the priorities. Activities concerning the findings and resolutions were performed on the dates which were agreed upon. A strategic plan was used to perform a SWOT analysis to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the strategy. During these sessions, a team vision was formulated, and the details of the priorities to address within six months as well as activities to be performed were discussed. Further points of discussion during these sessions include dates of action, the resources needed, the persons responsible for activities, the monitoring period and reflection.

## **1.9 DATA GENERATION**

The data for this study were generated through discussions and meetings with the co-researchers from one primary school in the Osizweni Circuit as well as other stakeholders. The team members were the researcher, one principal, two teachers, two parents, one social worker, one policeman, one local councillor, one circuit manager, one member of the Special Needs Education Services, one deputy chief education specialist, two victims of bullying (learners) and two learners engaged in bullying. The study comprised fifteen co-researchers. An information session was held to discuss the details of the research project. Brainstorming sessions and follow-up meetings were added depending on the needs of the project. The

discussions focused on issues of bullying in primary schools and developing a strategy to combat bullying.

Lastly, a reflection session was held where the presentations and procedures for the public launch were discussed. The research report was discussed and reflected upon. All of the co-researchers were supplied with the final research report for public dissemination. The researcher conferred with the co-researchers cited anonymously in the report to ensure that they all agreed on the context. The co-researchers were given two weeks to examine the report and do some corrections if needed. The data generated were stored on audio- and videotapes, and the researcher was the only one with access to this information.

### **1.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Concerning data analysis, the team applied CDA with the aim of making meaning at the textual, discursive and social structural levels. CDA discloses social problems, especially where power imbalances are evident through an exhaustive account clarification and analysis of the textual strategies in a text (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011:108). The discursive level of analysis scrutinises issues that construct dissimilar power relations (Janson, 2008:109). Rogers (2011:28) postulates the social practice level of CDA as language in use, which is a package of specific social practices. He also alludes that it ensures solidarity and distributes social goods and power. Fairclough (2003:23) claims that CDA is a social practice that involves technologies of exclusion and inclusion within a society.

Van Dijk (2013:94) explains that CDA essentially studies the way social power abuses and dominates. He further discovered that through CDA, inequalities are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. The interdiscursive level of analysis is a central and distinctive feature of CDA. It allows the incorporation of elements of context into the analysis of text to show the relationship between solid occasional events. It is more suitable for social practices to show innovation and changes in texts. Therefore, CDA has a mediating role (Fairclough, 1992:5). CDA analyses the relation between language and society. More specifically, CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that studies political

context and the way ideology, identity, inequality is re-enacted (Van Dijk, 2001:119). CDA takes an explicit position; it endeavours to understand and resist social inequality. In this study, the researcher chose CDA because it encourages people to resolve social challenges together with an aim to improve the human defects that victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying confront.

### **1.11 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH**

This study creates an awareness of and contributes towards providing strategies for combatting bullying in schools. It envisages empowering learners, teachers, parents and departmental officials with an understanding of the danger of bullying in schools. It strives to develop an inspirational atmosphere in the community at large. The study also provides support to learners to become better citizens of the country. The researcher has aimed to assist teachers and learners in combatting bullying without violating individuals' rights.

### **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The University of the Free State provides directives in terms of research. In accordance with these, the researcher sought authorisation from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education for conducting research at the identified schools. The co-researchers were to be protected, and their identities remained confidential. The researcher discussed with the co-researchers how the study could benefit the community and the school concerned. Furthermore, the researcher has a moral obligation towards the co-researchers with regard to the information given (Neuman, 2006:397). All of the co-researchers signed informed consent forms assuring them of the confidentiality of the information shared and the steps to be taken to ensure anonymity, including the use of pseudonyms. The co-researchers were informed about their right not to respond or to withdraw from the study should they want to do so. The co-researchers were treated with respect at all times.

## **1.13 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS**

### **Chapter 1: Overview of the study**

This chapter presents an overview of the whole study. It provides the background, aims, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology and research design, as well as how the data were generated and analysed. The ethical considerations and the value of research are also discussed.

### **Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review**

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework (Ubuntu) guiding the study, as well as related literature reviewed.

### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

This chapter discusses the methodological approach used in the study and how the research was designed.

### **Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis and discussion**

Chapter 4 presents, interprets and analyses the data generated towards designing a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations**

The final chapter reviews the background, objectives, methodology and theoretical framework of the study. It further provides the synthesis of findings, the recommendations, the limitations and the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON COMBATting BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study aims to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit, using the Ubuntu approach. Ubuntu is chosen as a theoretical framework for this study because it is a way of life that sustains the wellbeing of the people, society and community. People describe Ubuntu in many different ways (Sindane & Liebenberg, 2000:38). This chapter presents the theoretical framework, namely Ubuntu, as an approach that supports the study in relation to its aim. Operational concepts are defined in the context of this approach, considering the effectiveness of combatting bullying in primary schools. Best practices in terms of combatting bullying were drawn from the South African Development Community, the African continent and internationally, in primary schools of various countries.

The review of literature was guided by specific objectives. These were:

- to determine the challenges that teachers and learners face with regard to bullying in primary schools;
- to evaluate workable solutions to the challenges to combatting bullying in primary schools;
- to investigate the necessary conditions for formulating a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools;
- to anticipate threats to the emerging strategies aimed at combatting bullying in primary schools; and
- to highlight possible indicators of success drawn from best practices of combatting bullying in primary schools.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This component prioritises Ubuntu as an appropriate theoretical framework and analytical tool in this study. The choice of Ubuntu is considered and argued based on its historical background, principles, objectives, formats, epistemology, ontology, axiology and the adaptation of Ubuntu principles as a mechanism for the formulation of a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools using Ubuntu as an approach. The relationship between the researcher and the co-researchers, as well as the values and language used by followers of Ubuntu are explored. Definitions of operational concepts as well as related literature are discussed.

## **2.3 JUSTIFICATION OF USING UBUNTU AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In view of the definition of Ubuntu presented earlier (see Chapter 1.4), the researcher has concluded that Ubuntu is ideal for this study because it promotes humanness, sharing, caring and solidarity, which is ideal for combatting bullying in primary schools. Using Ubuntu as a theoretical framework emphasises the relationship between the victims and bullies. Solidarity among victims and bullies will bring about a sense of co-operation and helping one another in times of prosperity and adversity. Ubuntu introduces sharing as its key principle, which plays an important role in the development of understanding among the members of the African communities. Teamwork stipulates that Ubuntu depends on social, cultural and spiritual oneness. Teamwork necessitates a life that is based on a shared understanding within the community, where appreciation is a shared goal. Therefore, using Ubuntu in this study will develop a spirit of teamwork between the victims and the bullies.

## **2.4 HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF UBUNTU**

Ubuntu was used as a lens through which to examine a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. Ubuntu is believed to be fitting for this study because it expresses compassion, justice, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity. Ubuntu is focused on emancipating and empowering the oppressed, and maintaining and strengthening the community (Letseka, 2012:54). This framework assists the researcher to achieve valuable experiences and points towards a way of development. Ubuntu initiated from

and is generally deeply established in African indigenous cultures. According to Roederer and Moellendorf (2004:441), Ubuntu is a Nguni word that refers to the perception of general human interdependence, solidarity and communalism. Ubuntu can be traced back to small-scale communities in pre-colonial Africa, which underlie virtually every indigenous African culture.

In European societies, Ubuntu is known as *Bildung*, understood as the improvement of humanity (Biesta, 2002:378). The main aim of *Bildung* is to strengthen the person's inner personality and integrity development (Lovlie & Standish, 2002:318). Combatting bullying in primary schools will form the baseline of wellbeing of learners as future adults.

It is indicated that many of the recent ideas about the nature of Ubuntu, as a philosophy of African humanism and an ethic, first appeared in written sources during the second half of the 1900s (Gade 2011:319). It is also shown that Ubuntu was considered as an important object of interest during the political transitional period of power from the minority of white people to the majority of black people in Zimbabwe and South Africa. According to Vevliet (2009:20), Ubuntu is geared towards the development of human dignity. In this study, human dignity is considered as a very important aspect of each and every individual.

According to Philos (2011:311), Ubuntu first appeared in the South African interim constitution in 1994 when Nelson Mandela emphasised the need of understanding, not vengeance, the need of reparation, not retaliation, and the need of Ubuntu, not victimisation, which summarises the objectives of Ubuntu. West (2010:280) argues that Ubuntu is comprehensive and best realised in deeds of kindness, compassion, caring, sharing, solidarity and sacrifice.

Gianan (2011:82) explains that Ubuntu means expressing humanity to others. He further states that Ubuntu is conceived as a philosophy that is universal. Ubuntu can be observed in politics, the corporate world as well as the business world. According to Shore (2009:135), Ubuntu is also seen as a philosophy that promotes the collective good of society. Humanness is taken as an essential element of Ubuntu. Ubuntu encourages morals that are essential for the development

of interdependence. Ubuntu is also based on an African worldview and an interdependent anthropology (Du Toit, 2007:33; Venter, 2004:149).

Letseka (2012:7) emphasises that an Ubuntu-orientated framework could be the engine for transformation, especially if a clear methodology existed for the integration of its principles into a national system of education and training. The Department of Education (2001:3) reports that Ubuntu expresses the idea of a shared understanding and the active appreciation of the value of humans. To combat bullying, exercising a shared understanding among the co-researchers is essential. Ubuntu incorporates values of kindness, compassion, altruism and respect, which are at the core of fabricating changes in combatting bullying in schools. These will help to make the school a better place for teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2001:14).

According to Bennett (2011:1576), Ubuntu involves more than prerogative to equal treatment with others. It also obliges the individual to give the same respect, dignity and acceptance to each member of the community. Ubuntu emphasises the application of people's rights to share and have equal mutual enjoyment. Gianan (2011:66) states that Ubuntu disregards any depersonalising way of thinking. He further says that Ubuntu emphasises that human beings must be treated with value, respect and dignity, regardless of race, colour or belief.

Motsie (2007:10) views Ubuntu as a philosophy that could help in rebuilding trust among different communities. Therefore, Ubuntu criticises social inequalities and injustices and is committed to transformation. Swanson (2007:53) states that Ubuntu philosophises that community strength comes from community support. Its dignity and identity are achieved through mutualism, generosity, empathy and community commitment. Knowing about the origin of Ubuntu in this study helps to understand the purpose of Ubuntu, taking into consideration that the study needs to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. The entire school community should take Ubuntu into consideration to promote better societal respect and equality in all spheres of life. The researcher agrees with the Ubuntu belief that it takes the whole village to raise a child.



## **2.5 PRINCIPLES OF UBUNTU**

Ubuntu represents an African conception of human being and the relationship within the community that embodies the morals that define social behaviour (Van den Heuvel, Mangaliso & Van den Bunt, 2006:48). Ubuntu is derived from African tribal communities that embody the philosophy that includes interdependence, trust, spiritualism and several basic managements (Mbigi&Maree, 2005:252).

The Ubuntu principle plays an important role in seeing the success of African organisation (Mangaliso, 2001:32). Ubuntu is an orientation to life that stands in opposition to rampant individualism, insensitive competitiveness and unilateral decision making. Ubuntu principles are pervasive at all ages in families, organisations and communities in Africa. Respect and human dignity are the main Ubuntu principles used in African communities. The elementary principles that need to be transcended to all ethnic groups are those of working together and respecting others (English, 2002:197).

### **2.5.1 Respect, sharing and kindness**

Eze (2006:95) refers to respect as an objective that is unbiased with regard to human's rights, values, beliefs and property. In the South African government, respect, dignity, caring and sharing are viewed as imperative principles to build human personalities (Bekker, 2006:339; Eze, 2006:95). Therefore, the foundation of sharing among people is laid at an early stage of human development. One's good fortune can only be increased by encouraging the power of sharing among local community members. It is also emphasised in this study that victims and bullies need to share and be kind to one another.

Broodryk (2005:13) views sharing, kindness and respect as important principles of Ubuntu that are based on the values of intense humanness. In the same vein, Letseka (2000:180) argues that sharing, kindness and respect as principles of Ubuntu hold positive consequences in developing humanness. Human moral norms and values are stimulated by applying respect and sharing principles.

Sharing, as a principle of Ubuntu, plays an important role in the development of understanding among the members of the African communities. In the Nyanja language, the meaning of Ubuntu is “unity is strength” (“Mu umudzimulimphamvu”). Sharing in an African community helps to rebuild synergy where respect entails more success for all community members (Mangaliso, 2001:28-29; Prinsloo, 2000:275-276). In this study, it will be important to have the victims of bullying share ideas with learners engaged in bullying and being kind to one another. By doing so, bullying in schools will be reduced.

### **2.5.2 Teamwork**

Teamwork, as one of the Ubuntu principles, encourages co-operation and competitive strategies among African organisations (Mbigi & Maree, 2005:254). Teamwork stipulates that Ubuntu depends on social, cultural and spiritual oneness. Teamwork necessitates a life that is based on a mutual understanding within the community, where appreciation is a shared goal. In a team setting, the co-researchers are encouraged to struggle towards the values of the team, which results in enhancing their working together as a team (Poovan, 2006:25; Van den Heuvel, 2006:21). The co-researchers will be working as a team to develop a strategy to combat bullying.

Teamwork is essential among the co-researchers because it will improve the level of commitment in all the activities that are done together. The positive impact on the overall performance of all the co-researchers involved is loyalty and satisfaction. Teamwork leads to synergic mix co-operation and shared work environments because all the co-researchers are encouraged to engage and support the other members (Regine, 2009:17-22). That means, together people can reach a shared goal.

### **2.5.3 Caring**

Caring for one another is an excellent effort, as long it precipitates resources to do maintenance and sustenance of human life. The primary concern of Ubuntu is the welfare of others. In most instances when Africans meet on the street, they are likely

to inquire about the health and welfare of all the family members (Letseka, 2000:183).

The Department of Education (2000:22) stresses that tolerance does not “mean the shallow notion of putting up with people who are different, but a deeper and more meaningful concept of mutual understanding, reciprocal altruism and the active appreciation of the value of human differences”. The Department of Education (2000:23) emphasises that Ubuntu is a vehicle for achieving a certain level of tolerance. It instils in human beings “not only a truthfulness about the failures and successes of the human past but the active and deliberate incorporation of differences in the moral traditions, arts, culture religions and sporting activity in the ethos and life of a school” (Department of Education, 2000:23).

#### **2.5.4 Compassion**

According to Du Plooy (2014:85), compassion can be traced back in many forms all through religious and spiritual traditions and humanity. Compassion has been found as an important thread that runs through human and religious traditions. African Nguni-speaking communities understand compassion as humanness. According to the Nguni, humanness is associated with “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”, which is translated as “I am a person through other persons”. Nussbaum (2003:2) expresses that compassion is in the interest of maintaining and building the community with mutual caring.

It is important that the spirit and morale of victims be renewed in this study, apart from the processes to realise the set goals and strategies (Mbigi & Maree, 2005:93). In this study, the researcher and the co-researchers will try their best to implement successfully the spirit of humanness between the victims and bullies.

#### **2.5.5 Solidarity and sacrifice**

According to Metz (2005:538), solidarity refers to people engaging in a mutual act and being able to act in a way that is reasonably expected and will benefit others. He further states that it is a matter of having a good attitude, that is, emotions and good

motives towards others and being able to empathise with and assist others. If this is not embraced, hostility and cruelty surface. If there is no solidarity among the school society, a person may say one thing but do the opposite, thereby compromising the quality of equity and social justice.

It is a tradition of African communities in many regions to reflect norms of working together. By working together, a sense of co-operation and helping one another in times of prosperity and adversity is brought about. The support given to families symbolises solidarity, and sacrifice is a priority. Thus, the aim of this study will be achieved if the researcher and the co-researchers adopt a holistic, flexible and accommodative approach that will develop and uphold a spirit of collaboration among all the members of the community.

#### **2.5.6 Humanity**

Metze (2007:57) asserts that humanity is a matter of reverence for human life. He further argues that humanity is at the heart of the South African educational policy framework, which requires the schooling system to promote humanity. The South African educational policy framework aims to produce learners with qualities based on respect, human dignity and social justice. If all people abide by living out the worldview of Ubuntu, which is a reference basis of values of humanness, love, intense, caring, sharing, respect and compassion, the African communities will be freed of all forms of bullying behaviour (Ansell, 2007:318).

Humanism is understood differently by the South African communities. In Nguni, humanism refers to the fact that “people are people through other people”. In isiZulu, humanism is translated as “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” (Bangstad, 2007:49). The unique gift of South Africa to the world is the spirit of Ubuntu. In isiXhosa, which is one of the eleven official languages in South Africa, humanness means “Ubuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu”, which is roughly translated in English as “a person is (can only be) a person through other persons” (Albions, 2008:85).

According to Cornell and Van Marie (2015:3), Ubuntu entails a social bond that is shaped by the heavy ethical demands it makes on its participants. These

authors further state that Ubuntu refers to how the lives of human beings are intertwined and how they perceive the world and how they should live with other human beings. Hailey (2008:18) emphasises the “shadow side of Ubuntu”, which relies on authoritarian practices and ideals that seem like communalism and social harmony. When these emerge, it can lead to oppression, resistance to change, blind loyalty and human differences. All of these aspects are currently being observed in our schools, which do not want to embrace the anti-bullying policies of the Department of Education.

Bennett (2011:14) agrees that Ubuntu helps teachers to understand the school, classroom practices and the underlying political, social and economic issues in their social world. He further argues that Ubuntu attempts to explain the origin of everyday practices and challenges in schools. It is not simply explanatory but is committed to enabling change towards better relationships and a rational society. Cilliers (2007:1) argues that African humanity encourages the development of trust, respect, sharing and caring among people. Unselfishness of the community stems from the belief that one is a human being through others – people do not live in silos.

The researcher agrees that social interdependence and humanness are important principles of Ubuntu. Humanness must be rooted in the lifestyle of all the members of the community. In this study, to combat bullying, it is appropriate that learners, victims and bullies are rooted in their community.

## **2.6 OBJECTIVES OF UBUNTU**

The Ubuntu theory emphasises that people need to be empowered and emancipated, especially those who were marginalised, discriminated against, excluded and deprived. Thus, this study aims to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools using the Ubuntu approach. This study will benefit all relevant stakeholders in combatting bullying in schools.

As this study aims to combat bullying in primary schools using Ubuntu as an approach, the researcher and the co-researchers will strive to develop a strategy to include all. It will focus on the sound learning that all members of a dynamic learning

community can experience and enjoy. The objective of Ubuntu is striving to develop human behaviour that will be acceptable to the community (Taylor & Medina, 2013:2). This approach suggests that from the values of Ubuntu and human dignity, the practices of compassion and kindness flow, which are at the very core of making schools centres of care and support (Department of Education, 2001:14).

Letseka (2011:48) argues that Ubuntu has prescriptive consequences since it encapsulates moral norms and values of the community by promoting kindness, generosity, compassion, courtesy and respect for others. Philos (2003:402) further submits that the promotion of Ubuntu is critical for South Africa since the country has recently emerged from a political period characterised by civil strife, racial segregation, discrimination, subordination, domination and exclusion.

## **2.7 FORMATS**

Ubuntu raises awareness that all people are to be treated the same as it emphasises humanity and equality for all. According to Himonga (2013:173), Ubuntu has critical interconnected qualities to those of the community, which are interdependence, dignity, solidarity, responsibility, ideals, race and gender.

### **2.7.1 Relationships**

The idea of Ubuntu is to emphasise the relationship among individuals within the community. A group of people can share values with the aim of achieving shared goals, even if they experience language differences. Letseka (2000:181) emphasises the significance of community relationships in African life and culture. Existing cultural relationships, obligations, duties and responsibilities constitute good qualities of African communities. Relationships among the community members should provide conceptual frameworks for analysis and interpreting humanness. Relationships should also provide rational tools for critical reflections on personal wellbeing and morals (Letseka, 2000:182). Building solid relationships between the victims and the bullies is one element of the strategy to combat bullying in schools.

### **2.7.2 Human dignity**

With human dignity, Ubuntu emphasises the essence of being human as recognising that human beings should be admired for their own sake, regardless of race, social status or mental capacity. It also emphasises making moral choices of shaping our identity, resisting injustice and participating in shaping the society (Rosen, 2012:46).

The Constitutional Court considers Ubuntu as encompassing respect for humanity. The Declaration of Human Rights is outlined in Article No. 26:293, which states that everyone has a right to education. That means, the victims of bullying also have a right to quality education. Human dignity should be directed to the full development of human personality. Therefore, human dignity will nourish respect for human rights and fundamental freedom (Lohrenscheit, 2002:174). According to the Makwanyane Constitutional Court, all people should have dignity and are equal (Neuhäuser & Stoecker, 2014:22). Quality education for victims and bullies will promote understanding, tolerance and friendship. Parents have the right to choose schools that implement anti-bullying policies for their children.

### **2.7.3 Solidarity**

According to Himonga (2013:179), solidarity as a format of Ubuntu requires people to avoid individualism and selfishness. He further alludes that people should live in harmony with one another. People living in solidarity give support to one another. It is considered perfect in the sense that solidarity is the vision of a good society. Solidarity aims to living out concepts such as *simunye* (we are one). It inspires slogans such as “an injury to one is an injury to all” (Louw, 2001:169). This study emphasises that one cannot be a human in isolation.

### **2.7.4 Responsibility**

Cornell (2005:206) explores Ubuntu in the notion of responsibility, which entails both the rights and duties inalienable to all human beings, that is, the caring attitude or conduct one feels one ought to adopt concerning the wellbeing of another person. This format includes the responsibility to help others in distress. It is also important to show concern for the needs and welfare of others and the responsibility not to harm

others. In this study, it is the responsibility of all the co-researchers to make sure that bullying is reduced in primary schools.

## **2.8 EPISTEMOLOGY OF UBUNTU**

According to the Ubuntu theory, to achieve knowledge, one has to learn from those who possess knowledge. Achieving knowledge begins when Ubuntu begins to appear. It emerges when those marginalised become conscious of their social situations with respect to sociopolitical power and oppression. The school society must be able to juxtapose the relationship among themselves to create a conducive and supportive teaching and learning environment, which creates a new respect for those who are subjugated and the knowledge they produce. Ubuntu researchers are concerned about the quality of research they deliver in addressing the reductionism of uninformed research methods and the quest for new ways of seeing these (Kincheloe, Steinberg & Hinchey, 2013:19).

An Ubuntu approach enables the researcher and the co-researchers to gain an element of power and control over knowledge; they also become knowing subjects of the concept of working together. Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness of human freedom and the unpredictability of human action. If it were to be completely removed from the human experience for as long as specific circumstances relating to human knowledge are known, then familiarity, rather than identity, remains intact. This shows that human experience is bound by space and time (Philos, 2003:405).

Ubuntu is an expression of African epistemology, which is being in communion with the other. There is a link between religion and Ubuntu; Ubuntu and African humanism are resiliently religious. According to Louw (2002:15), there is a web of reciprocal relationships, which emphasises a shift from solitariness to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, and from individuality to community. To combat bullying successfully, an environment conducive to implementing a strategy to combat bullying is needed, where all parties will feel free and safe.



## **2.9 ONTOLOGY OF UBUNTU**

The ontological assumptions associated with post-positivism and constructivism provide grist for some very acrimonious debates in the world of research. The ontological assumption of the transformative paradigm rejects cultural relativism (Landson-Billings, 2006:7). At the same time, it recognises the influence of privilege in determining what is perceived to be real and the consequences of accepting one version of reality over another. It also leads to considerations of power that influence who will be more or less likely to be included in decisions on the accepted definition of what is actual.

The history of educational research has given privilege to the explanation that ethnicity and poverty are to blame for the lack of academic achievement of African American, Latino, American Indian and Asian immigrant learners (Landson-Billings, 2006:10). The transparent paradigm suggests the need to consider historical, economic, sociopolitical and moral debt in the United States of America. This results in poor opportunities for quality educational experience for those who have been pushed to the margin. Landson-Billings (2006:10) suggests that there is a need to use research skills to understand that the cumulative effects of poor education, poor housing, poor health care and poor government services create a bifurcated society that leaves more than its children behind.

## **2.10 AXIOLOGY OF UBUNTU**

According to Martens, Holmes and Harris (2009:86), axiology is the branch of philosophy that inquires about the nature of moral behaviour. Morality as a topic is addressed in nearly all research on teaching in the United States of America and many other parts of the world. The moral considerations include respect for cultural norms of interaction. Beneficence is defined in terms of the promotion of human rights and the increase in social justice. It rejects cultural relativism and recognises the influence of the privileged in sensing what is real and the consequences of accepting versions of reality.

The interactive link between researcher and co-researcher knowledge is socially and historically situated (Martens et al., 2009:86-87). Power and privilege are explicitly

addressed, and the development of a trusting relationship is critical. Teaching ethics in research as a set of regulations, codes and ethical principles that must be followed to receive the approval of ethical review boards avoids the more fundamental questions of the meaning of morals in research that emerge when a philosophical lens is brought to the teaching of this topic.

Martens et al. (2009:86-87) further note that the transformative paradigmatic assumption related to ethics shifts – the focus of ethics shifts from regulations to a human rights agenda. The moral implications of transformative research are derived from the conscious inclusion of a broad range of people who are generally excluded from the mainstream society.

Respect is critically examined in terms of the cultural norms of interaction in diverse cross-cultural groups. It includes self-awareness in relationships in the community (Symonette, 2009:279). Beneficence is defined in terms of the promotion of human rights that increases in social justice.

## **2.11 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CO-RESEARCHERS**

Ubuntu is underpinned by principles that are needed for working together towards the formulation of strategies to combat bullying in primary schools. The Ubuntu theory is collaborative since it ensures that the researcher and the co-researchers will participate in the process of change. Metz (2007:240) argues that valuing the life of others as worthy of flourishing is part of loving others and promoting harmony.

The researcher should share a sense of solidarity with the co-researchers where one begins to gain an understanding of anti-bullying policies, practices and anti-bullying programmes of a school to establish a centre of learning that provides care and support to victims of bullying. The researcher will also identify the team, working together with all stakeholders concerned. Harding (2004:8) calls for critical researchers to be genuine, thus adhering to ethical issues and ultimately establishing complementary trust among the co-researchers. She believes researchers should be empathetic, accepting and mindful of the issues the

communities face. The co-researchers should be allowed to voice the issues in a manner that is convenient to them. It is critical that researchers work with people rather than on people by allowing them to be more human and developing the ability to listen to them with respect.

The researcher brings the world into play to understand that the set of scholarly practices is not neutral. Jenkins (2008:8) states that practices and the enquiry method are informed by particular paradigmatic ways of seeing the world, as well by the cultural or positional identities one has in relationship to his or her experiences. This maintains reflexivity and humility among co-researchers.

This study is grounded in the Ubuntu theory because, within this approach, a researcher does not conduct a research on his or her own the co-researchers know the problem the research aims to explore. Ubuntu affirms that the research is always collaborative and defined by negotiation and communicative spaces among the researchers and the co-researchers. This approach is best suited for combatting bullying in primary schools.

The relationship between the researcher and the co-researchers should be treated with respect. There must be justice and the co-researchers should not be manipulated by the researcher; they should work together as a team to develop a strategy. The primary task of the researcher during the preparatory sessions is to obtain informed consent from the co-researchers to voluntarily participate in the study. The researcher should also give an outline of the scope of work of the study through the formulation of the research question that is aligned with the objectives of the research.

## **2.12 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS**

To understand the central concepts used in this study, it is necessary to define and discuss strategy, bullying, combat and primary school as operational concepts.

### **2.12.1 Strategy**

According to Fonseca et al. (2010:1433), "strategy" is defined as a term that refers to a complex web of thoughts, ideas, insights, experiences, goals, expertise, memories, perceptions and expectations that provides general guidance for specific actions in pursuit of particular ends. A strategy is a carefully devised plan of action to achieve a certain goal or the art of developing or carrying out such a plan (Encyclopedia.com). A strategy is a plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as the achievement of a goal or the solution to a problem (Dictionary.com).

The researcher views a strategy as a basic directional decision with a purpose and a vision.

### **2.12.2 Bullying**

Olweus (2001:293) defines bullying as a subcategory of interpersonal aggression characterised by intentionality and repetition, with the abuse of power as a primary distinguishing factor between bullying and other forms of aggression. Fekkes et al. (2005:1) argue that bullying behaviour can be physical or verbal or include other forms of harmful behaviour, such as making faces or social exclusion, which is repeated by a more powerful person towards the victim over an extended period. Campbell (2005:11) argues that bullying is not a physical fight between two people of equal strength but rather an imbalance of perceived power.

The researcher views bullying as unfair behaviour by an aggressor towards a victim, which includes harmful actions, such as name-calling, inflicting pain, making faces and making threats.

### **2.12.3 Primary school**

Jones (2008:4) defines a primary school as any institution that provides academic education to learners between the ages of seven and thirteen years. According to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (2002:7), a primary school is a school consisting of Grades R to 7. A primary school is a school at which children receive primary or elementary education from the age of about five to

twelve(Encyclopedia Britannica). A primary school is a school for learners between the ages of about five and eleven, which follows pre-school (Simple Dictionary).

The researcher views a primary school as an educational institution with learners aged six to thirteen.

## **2.13 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section focuses on the related literature to the study, considering what the best practices of combatting bullying in primary schools are.

### **2.13.1 Challenges teachers and learners face concerning bullying**

The challenges to combatting bullying in primary schools in countries such as the United States of America, China, Spain, Australia, Britain, Namibia, Swaziland, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania and South Africa are discussed next.

#### **2.13.1.1 Academic performance**

In Spain, bullying in primary schools not only presents a serious risk for the academic adjustment of learners engaged in bullying, the victims of bullying, schools and communities but are also extremely pervasive and harmful. In Spain, classrooms have been found to be the riskiest places, instead of the playground, as mentioned in their studies at primary schools. The victims of bullying do not communicate their experiences with others; this affects their academic performance inside the classroom (Olweus, 2003:661).

In Australian primary schools, it is evident that bullying has a negative impact on learners' learning, social and emotional wellbeing and mental health status. It has been found that learners who have been seriously bullied, report having serious difficulties in concentrating and paying attention in class because of fear of activities associated with bullying (Skrzypiec, 2008:17). Hazelkorn (2008:200) reports that bullying is common in schools throughout the world and victims of bullying often develop concentration problems and learning difficulties.

A study conducted in Zimbabwe and Botswana shows that victims of bullying often have difficulties concentrating on their schoolwork and may experience a decline in academic performance (Sango & Chiinze, 2015:129). According to Kartal (2009:1), in Tanzania, incidents related to bullying occur from time to time; these have a negative impact on learners, especially on their academic, emotional and social development during the primary school period. Moreover, some incidents involve a gradual increase in bullying, which may lead to fatalities. The incidence of bullying at primary schools has a negative impact on learners' right and opportunity to learn at a school that is safe and secure and where they are treated with respect (Shellard & Turner, 2004:302).

In China, Juvonen, Yueyan and Espinoza (2011:154) claim that bullying experiences affect the academic achievement of victims of bullying in both direct and indirect ways. An increase in bullying predicts lower levels of standardised achievement scores. Predictive associations between peer victimisation and academic difficulties have partly been accounted for by increased levels of bullying. It is assumed that a learner who is victimised by his or her peers becomes worried about being ridiculed or assaulted, and therefore stops participating in class or has trouble concentrating on academic tasks. Juvonen et al. (2011:444) found that learners who were more bullied were more likely to receive lower marks and engage in fewer academic tasks than other learners.

Recently, it has been reported that children who exhibit poor academic performance at school tend to emerge as frequent victims of bullying (Woods & Wolke, 2004:137). Woods and Wolke (2004:138) further insist that poor academic achievement leads to bullying involvement, and being bullied leads to poorer school achievement, possibly mediated by less participation in school activities.

The literature thus discloses that there is a noticeable link between bullying learners and their academic performance, as victims of bullying are unable to perform academically due to bullying activities. Furthermore, the academic challenges of these victims lead to difficulties such as poor self-esteem, frustration and other social ills.

### **2.13.1.2 Absenteeism**

Victims of bullying have a tendency to absent themselves from school more often compared to bullies. Such victims show signs of loneliness as well as having trouble adapting socially and emotionally within the classroom. They find it difficult to make friends due to an inferiority complex and negative relationships with classmates (Erath, 2008:112-113; Omotoso, 2010:1). Shellard (2002:1) is of the opinion that victims of bullying often suffer humiliation, insecurity and a loss of self-esteem. As a result, they develop a fear of going to school.

According to Anderson (2009:13), absenteeism exists when a learner fails to report for school activities. In a study conducted in Britain, Glover (2000:5) found that in a school of 1 000 learners, 70% of them were likely to experience physical or verbal bullying in any given week. That results in their absenting themselves from school often. It is clear that bullying is an entrenched element in schools, and these statistics cannot be ignored. In the United States of America, bullying is a serious problem among learners in primary schools

Seedat (2016:23) explains that bullying in South African schools can begin in and continue throughout pre-school. She claims that with the advent of social media, bullying has become increasingly more dangerous psychologically, even resulting in children attempting to take their own lives. The challenge mentioned above might result from a lack of knowledge on the part of parents and teachers with regard to identifying the signs of bullying.

### **2.13.1.3 Self-esteem of the victims of bullying**

A child's self-esteem is crucial to his or her victim status. If the child has low self-esteem, he or she is more likely to be chosen as a victim of bullying, mainly because the child does not have the confidence to defend him- or herself or retaliate when being confronted (De Reuck, 2002:2). Most studies show that being a victim of bullying leads towards low self-esteem and depression. Such problems can continue until the victim reaches adulthood.

With the loss of self-esteem comes a loss of self-confidence and self-belief, and

several researchers have shown that many victims of bullying begin to believe they deserve to be bullied. In Zimbabwe, research has also found that the victims of bullying see themselves in a more negative light than learners who have not been bullied (Smith, 2008:72). A negative self-image may be the result of bullying, or it may be a catalyst for bullying as learners engaged in bullying are drawn to obviously weaker victims.

According to Pepler (2010:33), victims and bullies spend much time daily interacting with peers in schools; thus bullying behaviour almost always occurs within the peer context. Salmivalli and Voeten (2004:251) further state that bullying activities are more likely to prevail in classrooms characterised by peer norms that support bullying and high levels of peer conflict.

The academic challenges of victims of bullying usually lead to difficulties of low self-esteem, frustration and other social ills, including challenges in developing communication skills if the learner has developed low self-esteem due to bullying activities. Low self-esteem and academic achievement have a close relationship with an everlasting impact on each other. Low self-esteem plays an important role, not only in academic achievements of learners but also in social personal development (Pullmann & Allik, 2008:75). According to Galbraith (2011:419), self-esteem is a feeling that guides individuals' behaviour and motivation.

Low self-esteem multiplies feelings of learners' insufficiency and inability to develop. Learners, especially victims of bullying, feel rejected, which dangerously affects their performance in education (Supple, 2000:846). High self-esteem facilitates the learner to achieve the goals of life because it develops in coping skills and confidence in the individual. Most of such learners do not lose hope, even in the face of failure. However, owing to low self-esteem, victims of bullying have less self-worth.

#### **2.13.1.4 Antisocial behaviour**

In Tanzanian and South African primary schools, victims of bullying are at high risk of developing a range of problems, including antisocial behaviour (Rigby & Thomas,



2010:67).Such victims experience social isolation at school, which results in their performing poorly in their schoolactivities. They also engage in problematic behaviour, such as smoking, drinking, delinquent and criminal behaviour (Rigby & Thomas, 2010:67).Victims of bullying experience high levels of depression and anxiety, which may result in their fighting back when they are bullied,leading to an ongoing cycle of aggression and victimisation.

In Botswana, victims of bullying have been found to display behavioural problems,such as academic problems, especially with reading skills. Victims' imperfect interaction with their peers may also lead to their being disliked by their class teachers.The consequences of bullyingextend into ongoing psychological problems and antisocial behaviour, even reducing good employment outcomes (Farrington, Ttofi& Lösel, 2011:221).

According to Guerin and Hennesy (2002:252), bullying is an aspect of antisocial behaviour; therefore, learners who are engaged in bullying, havehigh levels of aggressive arousal.Attempts by victims of bullying to avoid victimisation could lead to anxious learners engaging in bullying. The externalisation of their heightened feelings of tension and apprehension may contribute to their being provocative victims of bullying.

In Greenland, according to Nordhagen, Nielsen, Stigum and Kohler (2005:698), bullying has been found to be a cause of psychological stress and emotional challenges. Recent studies indicate that bullying in primary schools develop present and future health problems. Victims of frequent bullying experience a range of physiological, psychosomatic and behavioural symptoms, such as anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem,low self-worth, sleeping difficulties, frequent headaches and abdominal pain.

## **2.13.2 Possible solutions to combat bullying**

### **2.13.2.1 Creating a safe school environment**

Schoolshave a judicial responsibilitytoreatea safeand supportive school environment where effective teaching and learning take

place. Parental monitoring involvement plays an important role in the development of individual behaviour. According to Pepler (2008:23), individuals from families with low parental support are unpredictable in their school performance, while individuals who experience bullying from their siblings are more at risk of becoming bullies themselves.

Effective teaching inside the classroom is an effort to combat bullying. When teachers practise good classroom management skills, it results in reducing bullying behaviour among learners. Positive behaviour with excellent discipline techniques by teachers increases the academic performance of learners. Therefore, engaging learners in safe school activities may reduce bullying opportunities (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004:2).

A popular way of addressing bullying is through school-teacher intervention programmes. These intervention programmes may be introduced at an early stage of learners' schooling. Generally, these programmes focus on educating all the members of a school on how to recognise and deal with bullying (Brank, Hoetger & Hazen, 2012:29). In South Africa, as well as in other countries such as the United States of America and Canada, to create a safe school environment, learners are given an important role to play in facilitating other learners' engagement and learning inside the classroom (Clarence, 2016:48). Among others, their duties are to assist other learners in assessment, assignments or tests. Using this solution, bullying can be resolved.

In Canada, the *Accepting Schools Act* (Bill 13), passed in June of 2012, requires "that all school boards take preventative measures against bullying, issue tougher consequences for bullying, and support learners who want to promote understanding and respect for all" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012:774). According to the same source, an anti-bullying programme should include training on the importance of respecting others, accepting differences and showing empathy.

#### **2.13.2.2 Home-school collaboration**

Pepler (2004:27) emphasises that to avoid absenteeism in the classroom, teachers

should develop classroom rules that promote sound social skills, such as respect, to reduce bullying. Weekly classroom meetings are important to discuss the challenges of bullying. Such meetings should involve all of the relevant stakeholders to devise a strategy to combat bullying. Democratic principles are highly encouraged at such meetings. Role plays, story circles, creative writing, peace gardens and peace assemblies can be used as an adjunctive procedure. Offering a solution to absenteeism as a challenge in South Africa, Seedat (2016:23) is of the opinion that parents should have a sense of awareness of all the signs of bullying to help children develop the skills to stand up to a bully or to stop children from becoming bullies. Lines of communication should be kept open at all times.

Family-school collaboration is encouraged to support decisions regarding discipline for victims of bullying who are absent from school on a regular basis. Schools are looking for families to work with them to encourage victims to be more actively involved in school activities. By so doing, the school and home will be able to combat bullying. Schools need to be constant in discipline regarding learners' absenteeism (Teasley, 2004:333).

In Britain, according to Christenson and Sheridan (2001:13), forming correlations means developing progressive relationships between the school and families that are designed to enhance children's learning and address any obstacles of bullying that may impede it. Kearney (2007:43) alludes that because bullying conditions differ, alternative school programmes have to be arranged. Learners who cannot attend meetings owing to a fear of being bullied should receive professional training from their teachers. Such activities can be done at home.

### **2.13.2.3 Developing self-confidence**

Pepler (2004:311) is of the opinion that teachers should identify the problem of bullying behaviour and avoid labelling children as "learners engaged in bullying and victims of bullying". Avoiding labelling promotes how they think about themselves and boosts their self-esteem. Schools should provide training for victims of bullying, including training in self-confidence, friendship-building skills, self-enhancement skills and negotiation skills. Parents should take the initiative in these training sessions in

developing a circle of friends and identifying supportive staff members.

Research done in the United States of America and around the world discovered that boosting the self-confidence of bullies can solve the problem of bullying, based on this premise that self-confidence is an attitude towards oneself, based on one's recognition of abilities and limitations. This attitude is thought to begin as largely positive or negative in early to middle childhood. Furthermore, cognitive development is assumed to occur in the same order for all children but not necessarily at the same chronological age (Battle,2002:9).

#### **2.13.2.4 Peer partnership programme**

In most African countries, peer-led activities and peer support in primary schools have been implemented to combat bullying. Peer-led activities are effective means of promoting a positive atmosphere at school. Engaging learners in specific roles and status may help them significantly influence group dynamics and promote positive behaviour. A peer support programme in primary schools is defined as a flexible framework within which learners are trained to offer emotional support to fellow learners who experience bullying. Beyond mutual help, the strength of the system lies in its potential to create a co-operative community based on mutual trust and respect (Jennifer & Cowie, 2012:239).

Cowie and Smith (2010:188) allude that learners who become peer supporters gain interpersonal skills of self-esteem and self-confidence. Peer supporters' programmes serve to make learners aware of their responsibilities, encouraging them to contribute to the school and the community. These programmes assist in solving problems and disputes among learners. Values are rooted in tolerance and a positive ethos of the school community. The aims of the peer support programme differ from school to school. They reflect the unique set of needs and circumstances of each school. When one is designing and setting up a programme, various needs and aims are discussed so that the activities and processes related to the programme maintain the participants' interest and motivation.

During peer partnership programmes, the victims of bullying are treated separately in activities. The groups of learners may need mental health services according to their

psychological and social needs. The core function of the peer partnership programme is to build positive relationships, showing evidenced outcomes of several peer feedback programmes (Barnard, Croft, Irons, Cuffe, Bandara & Rowntree, 2011:439). Through such programmes, bullies may discontinue their harmful habits of bullying as they mature.

### **2.13.3 Conditions conducive to combatting bullying**

#### **2.13.3.1 Anti-bullying programmes**

Using school-based programmes in some countries received positive feedback from researchers regarding combatting bullying. Different types of programmes are used in different countries. The Bulli and Pupe Anti-Programme in Italy was an intervention programme concerned with bullying violence in primary schools. The programme, developed in 2001 by Baldry, was directed towards the individual and peer groups, enhancing an awareness of bullying and its adverse effect on learners (Baldry & Farrington, 2004:3).

In Canada, the anti-bullying programme Ploughshares Puppets for Peace (P4 Programme) aimed to educate primary school learners on bullying (Beran & Shapiro, 2005:703). The P4 Programme used three-foot, hand-android puppets; two puppeteers enacted a story that involved direct and indirect bullying to reach the solution to this scenario. Learners watched the play and were invited to identify bullying behaviour noticed during the play. The aim was to increase learners' awareness about which behaviour could be categorised as bullying and showed various strategies that learners who are bullied or who witness bullying could use to discourage this behaviour (Beran & Shapiro, 2005:703).

An anti-bullying initiative in the Netherlands was inspired by Olweus (Fekkes, 2006:639). The anti-bullying programme was designed to block and confront bullying behaviour by involving teachers, parents and learners. This anti-bullying programme offered a two-day training session for teachers to inform them about bullying behaviour and instruct them on how to deal with bullying incidents in primary schools. During the intervention programme period, teachers had access to the training staff for additional advice. Intervention schools were supported by an

external organisation that specialised in training school staff and assisting schools in setting up new guidelines. The programme mainly aimed to provide anti-bullying training for teachers, anti-bullying rules and a written anti-bullying school policy. The intervention programme increased the intensity of surveillance and of information meetings for parents.

A behavioural programme for boys, the Integrated School Health Policy, was initiated in South African schools in 2012. The programme mainly involved male learners who were involved in bullying behaviour and was based on the findings of an in-depth research into bullying among male learners aged thirteen (Meyer & Lesch, 2000:61). In Switzerland, the BeProx Programmewas designed to combat bullying and victimisation among primary school learners (Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001:177-178).

### **2.13.3.2 Classroom intervention**

Classroom intervention is designed to improve the social relationships of the victims of bullying in individual classrooms. Such intervention involves all of the learners in a classroom to establish classroom rules against bullying. All the learners are involved in developing anti-bullying behaviour so that they will feel responsible for their own behaviour.

Creating positive and negative consequences of bullying will establish social reinforcement of positive behaviour. The adverse effects of bullying should cause discomfort, without being perceived as unfair to victims. Regular classroom meetings should be held where teachers can provide a chance for the learners to develop, clarify and evaluate anti-bullying rules. This will increase the level of school-community communication. In this way, parents will be kept informed about anti-bullying classroom rules (Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 2005:167).

In Zimbabwe, classroom intervention techniques have been implemented to change and improve the bullying behaviour of learners. These intervention techniques are aimed at groups of learners who are involved in bullying, either as learners engaged in bullying or victims of bullying. Immediate talks with the learners engaged in bullying are initiated. Engagement should include documenting the involvement or

participation in bullying activities. A clear message should be delivered that bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Learners who are involved in bullying are closely monitored and warned that additional negative bullying consequences will be administered if the bullying behaviour does not stop (Olweuset al.,2005:14).

Talks with the victims should occur immediately after each bullying incident. These talks should be specific to the bullying episode. The teacher should be provided with all the information, and a teachers' action planto deal with the learners engaged in bullyingshould be available during the talks.The parents concerned should be contacted.Classroom intervention meetings should be held together with the parents of both the learners engaged in bullying and the victims of bullying. In order to minimise unnecessary tension among learners, meetings can be held separately with each family (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007:87).Other relevant stakeholders can be invited to attend as well. During the talks, the decision on the solution should not be taken lightly, butall concerned parents and teachers should plan together through consultation (Olweus, 2003:23).

### **2.13.3.3 Safe school environment**

A school can physically become an anti-bullying environment by implementing some strategies to combat bullying. Adult supervision in areas where bullying activities tend to occur,such as playgrounds and bus stops, is one of the strategies that will help combat bullying. At these places, close supervision by teachers or parents is needed (Shellard & Turner, 2004:345).

It is the responsibility of the school to reduce the amount of time that learners spend onthe playground without proper supervision.Minimising the timewherelearnersare without supervision candecrease the level of bullying activities. According to theUnited States Department of Justice (2004:49),to create a safe school environment,alternating recesses, lunch breaks and class release times are effective in minimising the number of learners engaged in bullying.

#### **2.13.3.4 Peer counselling**

There are certain ways by which learners engaged in bullying may influence the behaviour of peers. Learners who are engaged in bullying may draw the attention of their peers who witness bullying activities (Craig & Pepler, 2004:186), and these bullying activities may be imitated by the learners witnessing these incidents.

Repeated observation of bullying activities desensitises peers. Although there is no research specifically examining desensitisation to bullying activities, research on exposure to television violence in a laboratory context indicates that learners become desensitised by viewing bullying incidents (Thomas, 2000:11). Rigby and Slee (2000:59) found that most bullies become less worried about and feel less empathy for victims of bullying. The disinheriting consequences of peers observing bullying activities might promote imitation, whereby bullying spreads throughout the peer group through a socially transmissible process. Klaczynski and Cummings (2003:88) indicate that primary school boys who are inclined towards bullying behaviour are more likely to act out these impulses after viewing a successful act of bullying.

Ratings of peer behaviour indicate that peers' reinforcement to other learners engaged in bullying behaviour has been increased by 81% (Craig & Pepler, 2005:321). Peer counsellors have been found to be more respectful and favourable to bullies than to the victims of bullying. The information above suggests that it is easy for peer counsellors to align themselves with other peers.

Pepler and Craig (2006:3) report that recent questionnaire data obtained from Grade 6 learners indicate that learners are more comfortable to talk with their peers. Learners who have a high sociometric status in the classroom are more likely to report that they would intercede to help a victim of bullying. The findings demonstrate that the social roles of peer counsellors are well established on the school playground. Only peer counsellors with a high social status may have enough influence to convince victims of bullying to speak up for themselves successfully.



### **2.13.3.5 Anti-bullying rules and policies**

In the United State of America, anti-bullying policies and rules were developed to make sure that bullying incidents are approached consistently by both teachers and learners. Recent studies discovered that schools applying anti-bullying rules and policies experience less bullying behaviour (Cohn & Canter, 2003:67). Anti-bullying policies should be developed, looking at all the reports of bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying policies should ensure a clear definition of bullying and give a clear description on how teachers should respond to bullying incidents. Primary school teachers should impose anti-bullying rules consistently to ensure that all learners are fully informed of the consequences if they are involved in bullying (United States Department of Justice, 2004:24).

It is important for schools to display signs prohibiting bullying at the entrances of the school. A list of all the consequences of bullying should be visible to all learners. Such posters can be displayed in all classrooms. Learners who enrol at the school late should be informed by the school administration about the anti-bullying rules and policies of the school to invalidate any excuses new learners may have to bullying practices (United States Department of Justice, 2004:25).

Teachers play an important part in introducing anti-bullying policies and rules to learners. Research has established that anti-bullying policies should be part of the curriculum. Through such policies, learners will learn how to stand up to learners engaged in bullying and assist victims of bullying (Shellard, 2002:42). An atmosphere of trust needs to be created to give learners the courage to report instances of bullying (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001:56). Trusting relationships between learners and teachers will help to combat bullying (Harris & Willoughby, 2003:77). School teachers should explain to learners that all learners should be valued and respected and create opportunities for learners to work together on classroom activities, such as assignments that require sharing and collaboration. Collaboration needs to be emphasised as a part of anti-bullying policies (Kreidler, Lagies, Mutscheller & Siemens, 2007:78)

Many learners, especially victims, are embarrassed to talk about bullying behaviour. Therefore, teachers should initiate such conversations in the form of classroom discussions to persuade them to talk about it (Fried & Fried, 2000:161). Immediate intervention and action by teachers are very much important when an instance of bullying has been reported. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2001:55) reports that teachers and administrators should make sure that learners understand what to do when they are being harassed or mistreated by others.

## **2.13.4 Threats to a strategy aimed at combatting bullying**

### **2.13.4.1 Lack of implementation of anti-bullying policies**

Fyn et al. (2004:6) indicate that the failure of implementing anti-bullying policies in American schools is a threat to combatting bullying successfully. The findings of their study indicate that learners have had access to weapons prior to attacks or violence, which confirms that these learners have not been taught to adhere to anti-bullying policies. Learners engaged in bullying often come from homes where physical punishment is exercised. It is important that anti-bullying policies should be implemented at home without fail. Parents lack knowledge about anti-bullying policies. Parental involvement in applying these policies at home is lacking. All of these present a threat to the application of the solutions mentioned above (Cohn & Canter, 2003:1).

In Namibia, Henningsen (2009:379) identified that children feel unsafe in families without an understanding of how these anti-bullying policies are used. Parents refusing to be involved at the school in trying to combat bullying are an indication that they are not prepared to understand anti-bullying policies. Parental education, divorce and sexual assault at home also correlate with victimisation. Anti-bullying policies may be implemented even in such families to prevent bullying. Schools have an ethical and legal responsibility to implement anti-bullying policies to ensure a healthy teaching environment (Owen, 2000:43).

An unacceptable atmosphere at school can be changed through the implementation of anti-bullying policies. Parents, administrative and teaching staff and local bodies

will fail to combat bullying as long as anti-bullying policies are not implemented and adhered to. According to Hoover and Olson (2000:88), learners who are in schools without anti-bullying policies feel unsafe, resulting in destructive behaviour, mistrust and gang formation, either formal or informal. Therefore, action should be taken against schools failing to implement anti-bullying policies.

#### **2.13.4.2 Parental supervision**

Parental supervision and involvement play a significant role in predicting individual bullying behaviour. Learners from families with low parental supervision, that are unpredictable and have harsh discipline, are more likely to become victims of bullying (Pepler, 2008:106).

A lack of parental supervision allows perpetrators free reign to bully learners who may not fit their definition of cool because of their appearance (Shariff & Strong-Wilson, 2005:111). It also provides a borderless environment which empowers some learners to harass others. More parental supervision reduces the amount of time available to learners to engage in bullying activities.

#### **2.13.4.3 Communication**

Teachers and learners are enforced to improve their communication skills to be open about bullying. This will help them to combat bullying in school. Harris and Willoughby (2003:56) discovered that in Swaziland, 4% of learners were able to communicate with their teachers when they had been bullied. Harris and Isernhagen (2003:102) report that some learners discovered that some teachers are not interested in trying to stop bullying when they receive complaints about such activities. Most teachers reported that all forms of bullying were harmful to the development of learners' behaviour. The researchers concluded that learners had the perception that school teachers were not interested in attending to their complaints regarding bullying.

McCartney (2005:91) alludes that victims of bullying usually do not communicate to their school teachers that they have been bullied. The reason for this is that learners

lack the confidence regarding their teachers'abilities to solve their bullying challenges.Since they do not want to communicate, they have the belief that they would be ridiculed by others. They do not want other learners to know that they have a problem, such as being bullied, as theyfear it maybecome worse if they communicate their problem with their peers. Most victims of bullying do not have the confidence to speak up about this.Learners dislike it when teachers ask them about bullying problems in front of others, and they prefer teachers giving themopportunities to speak privately.The researcher concluded that teachers should be attentiveto bullying and punish learners engaged in bullying instead of only lecturing them.

## **2.13.5 Indicators of success in combatting bullying drawn from best practices**

### **2.13.5.1 Bullying prevention programmes**

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme was developed and refined in Norway in the 1980s. Bullying prevention programmes are still the best-known advantage for reducing bullying (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2004:35).The Olweus Programmewas designed to raise awareness, intervene to stop intimidation, develop clear rules against bullying behaviour and protect victims of bullying. Teachers, parents, members of the community, bullies, victims and the silent majority of learners are all involved in the programme. The main characteristic of the Olweus Programmeisthat the primary responsibility for solving problems is placed upon the teachers at the school.

The programme intervenes on three levels:

- **Schoollevel:** The school surveys learners anonymously to control the identity and prevalence of the bullying challenges of the school. Supervision of learners is expanded during breaks,and school-wide gatherings are conducted to discuss bullying issues. Conferences are organised to help teachers and parents combat bullying in primary schools. Available resources are used.During the conferences,the attendees are trained to implement such programmes at schools.Steering committeesare formed to run the programme smoothly.

- Classroom level: On this level, teachers are forced to introduce such programmes to learners. The parents of learners concerned are encouraged to attend the sessions (Olweus & Limber, 2001:45).
- Individual level: On this level, teachers intervene with learners who are engaged in bullying or victims of bullying. Evaluation forms are given to provide their progress. The programme has been found to improve the school atmosphere and lead to a decrease in the rate of bullying. Some studies found that behavioural changes became more pronounced the longer the programme was in effect (American Federation of Teachers, 2000:123; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2001:33).

The review by Farrington and Ttofi (2011:334) was instructive in that it identified some factors associated with the effectiveness of bullying prevention programmes. Classroom and school-wide anti-bullying rules related to bullying and the training of teachers were also identified as shared elements of effective programmes (Schellinger, 2011:11). Another successful element included, was the use of parental training activities, meetings and information, although these activities relatively tended not to be too harsh in solving bullying challenges. Moreover, aspects of the training, including the amount of time and the intensity of the training, were also positively associated with the efficacy of the anti-bullying programmes (Domitrovich, 2008:98). Programme dosage and loyalty were functionally associated with the impact thereof. Although the studies above shed some light on the most effective elements of bullying prevention programmes, it is important to note that additional research is needed to test and isolate the critical components of effective bullying prevention programmes.

#### **2.13.5.2 Collaboration among victims and bullies**

Collaboration presupposes conditions of cooperation and social coordination among victims and bullies. It can involve participants working together, such as victims and bullies being oriented to work together with a shared goal, often inspiring ideas to form the basis for a solution to bullying. Collaborative learning among victims and bullies requires working together simultaneously to complete a task on bullying (Luckin, 2010:12).

Teachers are not always very good at analysing the nature and extensiveness of bullying. Recent studies have found that teachers and other staff are usually surprised by learners' reports on their being bullied or having witnessed bullying incidents. The best practice is focused on conducting workshops on mutual understanding among bullies and victims in Namibian primary schools (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003:334). By so doing, it could help teachers to measure progress in reducing bullying in primary schools. In the study above, bullies and victims were provided with problem-solving topics to work together to arrive at solutions. There is evidence of various sources of information on the prevalence of bullying in schools and youth violence in communities.

Shangase (2013:107) indicates that in Nigeria, collaboration was advocated among stakeholders for the effective implementation of the curriculum dealing with challenges of bullying in schools. Working together as a team helped to involve other stakeholders. Involving both bullies and victims in one group to perform joint activities, it was affirmed that they focus on such activities and forget about bullying. Therefore, working collaboratively is a strategy to combat bullying.

### **2.13.5.3 Monitoring and evaluation of anti-bullying programmes**

Monitoring and evaluation play an important role in ensuring the ongoing development of the anti-bullying programmes. They ensure that the goals, objectives and strategies within the plan are being met before it is too late to help the learners. Chemeli (2014:82) argues that evaluation and monitoring should be a process that is continuous and co-current with programme activities; it focuses and embraces all components of combatting bullying. Social welfare committees of the school, led by head teachers, have the role of monitoring and evaluating the school society to ascertain safety needs and promoting a safe zone culture.

Monitoring and evaluation should take place throughout the programme and should be linked to the goals, aims and strategies identified in the action plan of the anti-bullying programme (Chu, Lee, Rutherford & Zhu, 2010:22). Planning and implementation strategies of such programmes should be evaluated. A strategy

should be used to collect information on the uptake, satisfaction with that which has been delivered and the quality of resources or information provided as part of a strategy. The process of monitoring and evaluation which will be carried out should be included in the specific planning identified in the action plan (Balfour, De Lange & Khau, 2012:12).

Anti-bullying programmes address various aspects of bullying victims, bullies, teachers and the entire school (Twemlow & Cohen, 2003:121). According to Prince and Jones (2001:320), peer-led programmes show the high level of commitment required for recruiting, training and supervising. A whole-school anti-bullying programme campaign in response to the suicides of several children in Norway during the early 1980s, in which bullying was considered to be a significant factor, was developed (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003:334). Anti-bullying programmes to reduce bullying in primary schools were advocated. Such programmes targeted the whole school (Pepler & Rigby, 2004:331). Recent studies have shown that peer relationships and parental education on bullying are other possible indicators of success (Pepler, Jiang, Craig & Connolly, 2008:2).

#### **2.13.5.4 Parental involvement**

In a study conducted in the Congo and Zambia, several intervention programmes regarding parental involvement were conducted, which included three components: awareness building, efficiency building and skill building (Ross & Higbee, 2009:9). Awareness building creates a school environment that shows awareness of bullying through parental involvement by conducting an awareness-raising campaign about bullying among learners and parents to be aware of dangers of bullying. Efficiency building refers to the ability of learners and the acts of parents to stop bullying.

Combatting bullying in Mauritius was undertaken by creating a positive community where bullies feel safe, emotionally secure and connected. The focus was on the social climate of the school and home. Recent research indicated that bullies feel more connected to schools where they know that they are taken care of, support one another, have shared goals and actively contribute. By working together, members of

a school, along with the parents can bring about change in the social norms so that they feel it is not appropriate to bully (Olweus & Limber, 2010:331).

Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010:34) identify different types of parental involvement in South Africa, involving modelling, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decisionmaking and collaborating with the community. Parental involvement aims to promote anti-bullying intervention in school systems. According to Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010:35), the parental involvement model can be used as a framework in implementing bullying prevention programmes.

## **2.14 SUMMARY**

This chapter presented Ubuntu as the theoretical framework of the study and the related literature. Ubuntu was seen as a relevant framework of this study due to its principles of a mutual relationship, trust and honesty, all of which are relevant to the objectives of this study. The historical background of Ubuntu was presented, as well as definitions of operational concepts and formats. The epistemology, ontology and axiology of Ubuntu were discussed, as well as the role of the researcher and his or her relationship with the co-researchers. The reviewed literature centred on the objectives of this study: the challenges teachers and learners face concerning bullying, the possible solutions to combat bullying, the conditions conducive to combatting bullying, the threats to a strategy aimed at combatting bullying, and the indications of success in combatting bullying.



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY IN FORMULATING A STRATEGY ON COMBATING BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study aimed to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit, using the Ubuntu approach. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology and design that were used in generating the data from the co-researchers to formulate the strategy. This chapter integrates the theoretical concepts developed in Chapter 2 and attempts to answer the research question using PAR as a methodology. The challenges teachers and learners face concerning bullying will be explored together with the co-researchers, and possible solutions to combat bullying will be derived considering the conditions suitable for implementing the plan to be successful. The researcher also justifies the research design and methodology used to attain the aim and objectives of the study.

The researcher focuses on PAR as an approach, as well as its historical background, objectives, formats, ontology and epistemology. Rhetoric or language, intervention, team establishment, the profiles of the co-researchers, the shared vision, SWOT analysis, priorities, strategic planning and the implementation plan are discussed as well. CDA is adopted as the strategy to analyse the data at hand. This is discussed in the context of three levels: textual, social and discursive paradigms.

### **3.2 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS AN APPROACH**

According to Koch and Kralik (2009:4), PAR is a qualitative inquiry approach that is equitable, democratic, life enhancing and liberating. PAR philosophy considers the idea that people have the authority to determine their own development. PAR recognises that it is essential for local people to participate meaningfully in the process of analysing their own solutions, which they share and have control and power over to lead to supportable development (Attwood, 1997:2). The main reason

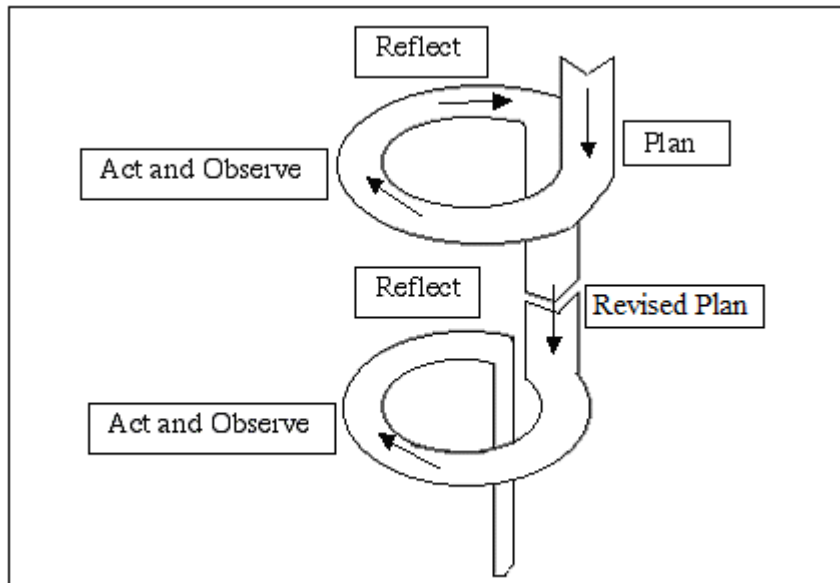
for choosing PAR in this study is that it acknowledges the co-researchers' contribution to the research, which is both practical and liberating. Victims of bullying are aware of what is happening because it happens in their daily lives. For this reason, Marshall and Rossman (2014:69-70) state that PAR is a dynamic educative process of social investigation and an approach to take action to redress a problem or to engage in social action.

McDonald (2012:37) defines PAR as a process of fact discovering, action and reflection, leading to further investigation and action for change. PAR focuses on data development with the directive to endure a collective reflective inquiry to improving a situation (Koch, Selim & Kralik, 2002:8). PAR also focuses on intense truth, aiming to study things in their natural setting and attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in expression of the meaning that people bring to them. By applying PAR, there may be a formation of public spaces where the researcher and co-researchers can restructure their knowledge on how to address the problem of bullying in communities where it has an impact on daily life (Gibson, 2002:45). In this study, several community representative members were involved to reshape their knowledge and their understanding of the problem of bullying in schools.

PAR emphasises the roles played by the researcher and the co-researchers (Gibson, 2002:16). PAR is the organised analysis and collection of data for taking action and making changes by initiating practical, existing knowledge (Gill & Johnson, 2001:264).

### **3.2.1 Historical background of PAR**

The first advocate of action research in English language and social psychologist Kurt Lewin describes PAR as emanate in a spiral step and composed of implementation, action, observation, planning and evaluation (Lewin, 1946).



**Figure 3.1: PAR spiral dynamism(Lewin, 1946)**

In this context, Figure 3.1 attempts to unveil the nature of PAR as spiral dynamism and its stages alluded to above.

According to Koch and Kralik (2006:4), PAR has emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century via Paulo Freire, who had the aim to empower countless impoverished and illiterate children. PAR is the philosophy of social research, which corresponds with social modification in the third world. PAR is rooted in liberating theology and neo-Marxist methods of community development. It originates in the community or workplace, and its goal is to transform and improve the lives of those involved. Through PAR, combatting bullying in primary schools will improve the lives of the victims of bullying, and they will be motivated to plan and act against bullying together. The key features of PAR are motivation, participation, an emphasis on the qualitative method of data collection, a focus on collective analysis, networking among the underprivileged and being an educative experience for those engaged in it.

According to Jordan (2003:187), in the early 1960s PAR originated from countries that were colonised but wanted to be liberated. PAR pursues to encourage social justice by creating conditions that encourages empowerment (Langhout & Thomas, 2010:2016). The PAR approach emphasises empowering the marginalised poor, encouraging them to act in changing the undemocratic elements of reality, which

results in liberating persecuted individuals (McDonald, 2012:37). McDonald (2012:37) further clarifies that PAR was advanced as a means of refining social, economic and cultural practice. There should be a group of activities whereby individuals with differing status and power can influence collaborated knowledge that will assist in combatting bullying in primary schools. This also confirms the theoretical framework of this study, namely Ubuntu, which is rooted in working together or collaboratively, sharing ideas and learning by doing. PAR is suitable for this study because it also encourages working together as equals and sharing ideas with the intention of solving a problem. In this case, the victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying will work collaboratively in developing the strategy to combat bullying.

### **3.2.2 Objectives of PAR**

#### **3.2.2.1 Transformative and emancipatory**

According to Loewenson, Laurell, Hogstedt, D'Ambruso and Shroff (2014:15), the primary objective of PAR is to involve communities as co-researchers to carry out a qualitative study; it is also transformative and emancipatory. PAR is influenced by change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000:285). According to Freire (2000:5), PAR facilitates transformation for those who are excluded and not involved. He further states that it uncovers vested interest and paves the way for the emergence of new and creative solutions.

#### **3.2.2.2 Working collaboratively**

PAR helps co-researchers to develop new capacities, and this way, it is empowering. It is also critical because it helps people interact with others and investigate the reality to change. PAR addresses wider issues relating to social justice, inclusion and the empowerment of marginalised communities (Tsetetsi & Mahlomaholo, 2013:141), while promoting collaboration between the researcher and the co-researchers in the field of study. In this study, to combat bullying, victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying will be encouraged to work together to combat bullying and capacitate one another.

### **3.2.2.3 Liberation**

PAR tends to be life-enhancing, aiming at changing individual and shared practices, social structures and media that maintain injustice, incoherence, irrationality and unsatisfying forms of existence (McTaggart, 2000:498). PAR provides participants with useful knowledge and frees the oppressed through collective efforts and equal participation. Its processes are democratic, liberating and life-enhancing. Gillis and Jackson (2002:36) state that PAR is an approach taken to address problems and liberate, seeking collaboration by all participants. It values participants as social beings. Participants are active contributors to the research, thus PAR capacitates, empowers and develops such participants.

### **3.2.3 Features of PAR**

#### **3.2.3.1 Transforms the role of participation**

Laurell and Hogstedt (2015:12) claim that PAR has two features: it transforms the role of participating from subjects of research to agents of change and active researchers; it involves developing, implementing and reflecting on actions as part of the researchers and on the data generation process. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:295) further state that PAR is essential in assisting communities in planning change and observing the process and consequences. PAR leads people to have control over their lives. Therefore, through PAR in this study, the victims of bullying will be able to take control over their own lives.

#### **3.2.3.2 Empowerment of co-researchers**

PAR emphasises the empowerment of the poor and marginalised members of society about the issues prevailing to literacy, land reform analysis and community. Freire in Tandon (2007:1225) emphasises the importance of critical consciousness to social change relationships in education that have been based on superiority and power. He further identifies that reflection action is necessary for emancipation from oppressive social structures, while Tandon (2007:4) identifies participatory knowledge as the basis of power and control. Mills (2003:6) declares that PAR has the goal of liberation through knowledge gathering.

### **3.2.3.3 Improving power relation**

McTaggart (2006:316) views PAR as a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by the co-researchers in a social situation in order to improve rationality, justice, coherence and satisfaction of their own practices. Miller and Maguire (2009:1) argue that PAR has been shaped by three trends, which include re-conceptualisation of international development help, refraining from adult education as an empowering alternative to banking education and critiques of positivist social science research and its claim to value free knowledge of education.

### **3.2.4 Formats of PAR**

#### **3.2.4.1 Teamwork and power relations**

PAR is how people acquire support from others confronted by similar challenges and issues. Matters voiced by individuals together with the supportive network of a research team increases the likelihood of one's voice being heard (Watters & Comeau, 2014:8). This becomes evident in instances where people are confronted by challenges. If one person endeavours to rectify the issue alone, the attempts prove to be in vain; however, if one becomes involved in a PAR project or works as a collective with people who are facing similar issues, this gives one a louder collective voice (Duguay, 2010:11). It is difficult to work in isolation when one is trying to solve the problem of bullying in primary schools; however, collectively we can share ideas.

Being involved in PAR offers an opportunity to meet and discover individuals who have survived experiences with the same issues. One of the principles of PAR is the equal distribution of power, where tasks are disseminated among team members. PAR facilitates an environment that promotes the development of the team, peer support, friendship, respect and honest interrelationships (Garcia-Iriarte, Kramer & Hammel, 2009:12). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:271-329) are of the opinion that PAR opens a communicative opportunity among co-researchers.

#### **3.2.4.2 Networking**

Watters and Comeau (2014:9) argue that networking with co-researchers is a skill that can be earned and published by participating in PAR. During the PAR

process, co-researchers communicate with one another to build professionalism and confidence in interacting as experts in the research process. Through interactions with others, a person enters into collaboration with organisations that have shared opinions where information and knowledge are shared among them (Duguay, 2010:23). During the networking process, the primary aim is to influence and generate more awareness of the issues being studied, so there will be many opportunities to champion PAR perspectives. In this study, the co-researchers will be networking with other relevant stakeholders, such as a school social worker, parents, the police and a local councillor, with the aim of developing a strategy to combat bullying.

### **3.2.4.3 Empowerment**

PAR is an empowering process, allowing co-researchers to gain an improved sense of mastery and address issues of importance to them. According to Lucock, Barber, Jones and Lovell (2007:804-805), the PAR process is intrinsically empowering in that each member is directly involved in a process that influences the quality of life of others through social change. Involvement in a project can foster a sense of empowerment.

PAR involves all participants in research and allows members of teams to make positive contributions and changes, which result in a feeling of empowerment. It permits all members of the team to have control and power over the research findings and process (Garcia-Iriarte et al., 2009:15; Ochocka, Janzen & Nelson, 2002:382). The empowering nature of PAR affords all of the team members the chance to share their positions and opinions on certain subjects, which guarantees their involvement in decision making in the team. Being empowered leads to the development of an increased sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence (Morris, 2002:98; Rogers, Chamberlin & Ellison, 1997:1044). Empowering effects influence the quality of one's life and enable one to be more proficient and involved with contributions to the PAR process (Morris, 2002:62).

#### **3.2.4.4 Social change**

Social change is an objective of PAR that brings about transformational change in the lives of all the community members. PAR utilises the consequences and the findings of the project to act in bringing about change within the society. According to Nelson (1998:902), social change can be an intimidating term to confront as the scale of involvement in promoting change is broad and varies. Social change can occur to raise awareness in the community and create or improve policies, resources and programme development (Flicker, 2008:287).

The success of PAR depends on the collaboration among co-researchers and is an active intervention aimed at enhancing lives within the society (Macaraan, 2013:5). The PAR process is potentially empowering, liberating and consciousness-raising for individuals. PAR provides a critical understanding of and reflection on social issues (Kemmis, 2008:121). In this study, victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying, working together, will bring about change in an entire society.

#### **3.2.5 Ontology of PAR**

According to Murray and Ozanne (2006:12), society is a human construction to be critiqued and changed based on more inclusive interests. Thompson (2004:34) clearly states that PAR is subjective, co-created and can be observed through subjective experience and action. When communities know of inclusion, even learners who were hidden in the society will be taken to school. There are many learners who are denied access or are expelled from school. This type of researcher will benefit the community since it focuses on people who are marginalised and who possess the least power for enacting change. The application of PAR in the study will empower and capacitate victims of bullying. Gaventa (2004:4) is of the opinion that PAR intensifies consciousness when participants begin to challenge dominant ideas in such a way that empowerment is fostered.

#### **3.2.6 Epistemology of PAR**

In PAR, meaningful knowledge is designed in the context of building relationships. PAR believes that it takes a division of work across time to get to know one another



at primary level and for the participants to begin to develop trust among one another. PAR seeks to redefine the privileged relationship between researchers and knowledge production by positioning co-researchers as agents at the centre of their own process of knowledge generation (Lorenz & Kolb, 2009:265).

PAR is grounded on the experiences and participation of communities; they encourage and seek a more horizontal distribution of power. PAR also focuses on action change and is more concerned about knowledge production, social control and social inequity. Learning to know about the world is understood to be a fundamental part of participating and relating to a learning community. This alludes that in combatting bullying, success can be achieved by active participation of the society (Miller & Maguire, 2009:82).

### **3.3 RHETORIC OR LANGUAGE**

The language used in PAR has the power to empower, evolve or further marginalise the oppressed. PAR does not treat co-researchers as mere objects of research but provides a space for growth by encouraging persons to work together as knowing agents of change and improvement (McTaggart, 1997:9). PAR is concerned with changing the real-life situations of people and not only interpreting them. PAR helps people not only to learn from their mistakes and successes but also to avoid the mistakes and emulate the successes of others. To manoeuvre the PAR process effectively and efficiently, the co-researchers must realise the appropriateness of the process, thereby owning it. Kendall (2011:2) argues that in terms of ownership, the co-researchers are given the right to receive feedback about the research findings, return raw data and control the publication of results in any format. These rights demonstrate sustainable learning environments that are beneficial to the community and create satisfactory involvement over the entire research project.

### **3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The use of video and audiotape was explained clearly and agreed upon, as was deciding who would see the recorded data. After every meeting, summarised key points were being used and communicated to all of the co-researchers to verify if all

points were captured correctly. The co-researchers were informed about their right not to respond or to withdraw from the study at any time. At all times, they were treated with respect. The study was discussed with the co-researchers in terms of how it would benefit the community and the school concerned.

### **3.5 RESEARCH SITE PROFILE**

The school where the study was conducted is located in a semi-rural area of Osizweni in Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal. Most of the community members are not learned owing to poverty and most of the youth are dropouts because of gangsterism. The majority of the learners live with their grandparents due to different reasons. Those who are able to complete Grade 12 are unable to proceed to a higher education institution owing to different circumstances.

The total learner enrolment of the school is 720. The school consists of Grades R to 7, meaning it is a primary school. The language of teaching and learning at the school is English (first additional language). The school is dominated by isiZulu-speaking learners. It is a well-known school around Osizweni, with many cultural activities. The school is categorised as quintile 2. Most of the learners survive the school day owing to feeding schemes, such as the National Nutritional School Programme provided by the Department of Education. The school has shown support, dedication and willingness towards the research project and bringing about change through action.

### **3.6 THE CO-RESEARCHERS AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT**

This section presents the co-researchers' profile and their involvement in the study. This is a representative sample of a broad group of individuals affected by bullying. Different stakeholders were consulted when the need arose for a different or expert opinion. The study aimed to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit.

The following people constitute the team of participants for co-research: one circuit manager, one Special Needs Education Services senior education

specialist, one principal, two teachers, two parents, two learners who are victims of bullying, two learners engaged in bullying and other stakeholders. The other stakeholders included a representative of the South African Police Services (SAPS), a local councillor and a social development representative. The names used and attributed to the participants are pseudonyms, not their real names, as the researcher bore in mind that for ethical reasons, the identity of participants in a research study needs to be hidden.

### **3.7 CREDENTIALS OF THE RESEARCH TEAM**

This aspect is about communicating the co-researchers' skills that benefit the research. The names used for the co-researchers are pseudonyms in order to observe the ethical considerations of research.

#### **3.7.1 Circuit manager**

**Mr Vilakazi** is the circuit manager of Osizweni in the Amajuba district, with 12 years' experience with the Department of Education. He holds a Senior Teacher's Diploma and a BEd Honours. Currently, he is studying towards a master's degree. He understands PAR, which is an advantage as he could assist in observing PAR principles throughout the study.

The responsibility of the circuit manager is to oversee and react to educational developments that influence school issues such as bullying. The circuit manager upholds and models professional ethics, policies and legal codes of professional conduct. He focuses on the goals and objectives of the circuit as he plans and guides professional development for the entire school community. He is also responsible for the sustainability and welfare of the school by following relevant policies.

#### **3.7.2 The principal**

**Mr Mkhize** is the principal of Ifindo Primary School. He has a Primary Teacher's Diploma, a BEd Honours degree and an Advanced Certificate of Education. He has been capacitated in many fields as a leader of the school. He resides in the area

where the school is situated and understands the community and its culture very well.

The role of the principal is to involve community members and parents in the development process so as to create an environment conducive to combatting bullying. He helps in creating clear goals and a shared vision for the school and ensures continuous progress towards achieving goals.

### **3.7.3 Special Needs Education Services senior education specialist**

**Mrs B. Nkosi** is a deputy chief specialist at the Amajuba District Office. She holds a Senior Secondary Teacher's Diploma, a BPaed degree and a BEd Honours degree. She is currently studying towards her master's degree. She is responsible for the regular supervision and coordination of the activities of senior education specialists as their immediate supervisor in this section. Coupled with these supervisory functions, she has the duty to provide support to senior education specialists and boost their morale by ensuring that the working conditions are conducive to their work effectiveness and efficiency.

### **3.7.4 Teacher 1**

**Miss Sabelo** is a post level 1 teacher at the school. She holds a Primary Teacher's Diploma and is a member of the school governing body. As a member of the school governing body, she works closely with parents and is responsible for the wellbeing of the learners at school. She acts as a school counsellor as well.

### **3.7.5 Teacher 2**

**Mrs Shezi** is a post level 1 teacher at the school. She holds a Secondary Teacher's Diploma and an Advanced Certificate in Education, specialising in inclusive education. She reports to the departmental head and the deputy principal. Her responsibilities are to facilitate teacher-parent relationships that will lead to sustained high learner performance and ensure high learner attainment.

### **3.7.6 Parents**

**Mama Zondo** is an additional member of the school governing body. She never attended school in her entire life. She is not employed and depends on a social grant. She lives in a Rural Development Programme house with four grandchildren.

**Baba Ntshangase** is the chairperson of the school governing body. He is a local farmer with different livestock. He has completed short courses on agriculture.

The parents promote social and emotional learning to complement academic skills and encourage positive behaviour. Parents also assist in giving advice on resilience, self-awareness and responsible decision making. The representation by the parents collectively gave support to the team and ensured healthy interpersonal relationships and community participation, which could also assist in creating strategies to combat bullying in schools.

### **3.7.7 Social worker**

**Miss Gondwe** is a social worker who holds a BA degree in social work. At present she is studying towards an honours degree in social work. She is not new in the field as this is her fifteenth year working. She knows all the cases that have been referred to the Department of Social Development as she is the one assigned to work in the area. Her expertise and experience assist in forming collaboration and a network among the stakeholders. She also contributed information on how her department could assist in making the strategy work effectively.

### **3.7.8 Local councillor**

**Mr Mlaba** is a local councillor in one of the wards in Osizweni, where the school is situated. He is a teacher by profession, although he no longer teaches owing to his work commitments. He holds a BPaed degree and majored in English and Education. He is also a member of the Community Policing Forum and he has been living in the area for more than 25 years.

### **3.7.9 Local policeman**

Warrant officer **Ngcobo** is stationed at the Osizweni Police Station. He has been working at the SAPS in the area for more than 16 years.

Collaborating with stakeholders in this research will be of great benefit in aligning the resources that the school community have and analysing prevention strategies and intervention services. Partnerships with stakeholders ensure the smooth delivery of services, including safety services between the school and the broader community. The research will provide the school and the broader community with an opportunity of belonging to the same teams to identify needs and share information, if appropriate.

### **3.7.10 Victim learners**

**Mlungisi Mabaso** is a Grade 6 learner at Ifindo Primary School who was almost lost his life due to a physical attack by some of the boys in his class.

**Bayanda Ntshangase** is a Grade 5 boy at Ifindo Primary School who is still angry because of what happened to him when he was in Grade 4.

### **3.7.11 Learners engaged in bullying**

**Siyabonga Mzimela** and **Sipho Zwane** are the leaders of gangs at the school.

## **3.8 BRAINSTORMING SESSION**

The brainstorming session was a way of helping the team to work collectively and gather what the team already knew, to determine where the gaps lay and to find out how things could be done differently to combat bullying in primary schools. The primary reason for the information session was to encourage all the co-researchers to take part in the study by becoming actively involved. The researcher explained to them exactly what the study was all about, to motivate them to participate and get to know one another while in the process of change. The process of deciding collectively on valuable key issues required unity to produce freedom, thereby

expanding learners' learning capabilities and enabling them to lead more meaningful and freer lives (Ratcliffe & Newman, 2011:104).

The first meeting began with a dynamic way of getting to know one another. Each member introduced him- or herself to the group in a fun, explanatory way by using the first letter of his or her name to define his or her personality. The follow-up question was about who generally conducts a research study and makes decisions on issues like those identified for this study. This question was asked to help establish how this study as a PAR project is different from other methods of conducting research, which was explained in detail. The list of issues was compiled and discussed until the research was narrowed down to the research problem. The research question was formulated, and time was spent discussing the potential benefits, pitfalls and how to deal with political sensitivities. Furthermore, the team identified the responsible persons who were to participate in conducting this research study and collectively agreed on clear roles and principles. The team then decided how frequently it had to meet and what activities needed to be done between meetings. A facilitator was appointed to conduct meetings in an orderly way.

In the meeting, the team ensured that everyone in the group had the same opportunities to suggest changes and avoided one person dominating the group, even though some of the co-researchers were sceptical about the value of their contributions. This precaution encouraged all of the co-researchers to contribute to meaningful learning activities with the aim of creating an enjoyable learning environment. The participating team agreed to create a shared vision in addressing the challenge. The co-researchers were requested to consolidate the various visions into one, which served as a guide for the approved activities. As a PAR team, the researcher and the co-researchers were collectively involved in discussing and making sense of the findings and their implications so that they could draw on the conclusions and collectively create knowledge.

The researcher took a leading role in writing up the findings, while other group members had the opportunity to contribute input, thereby ensuring the collaborative nature of the research. This ensured that the co-researchers were involved from the beginning of the process and aware of the research at an earlier stage; this meant

that they responded well once the research had been completed. The enthusiasm the co-researchers showed for the research topic made it clear that it affected their wellbeing directly; they were passionate about it and were emotionally invested in the research. After a participating team had formulated the shared vision, the next step was to conduct a SWOTanalysis.

### **3.9 SWOTANALYSIS**

According to Clarke (2009:226), the drive of situational analysis is to understand the position of the phenomenon, as well as its current and future forces and the processes that may affect its survival and the ability to achieve its chosen goals. The SWOTanalysis used by the team comprises an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the team to help the team assess issues within and outside the study and conduct proper strategic decision making. The aim was to leverage the strengths of the team, to focus on and exploit chances or employ them to counter the threats and understand the weaknesses to decide what areas needed serious attention. The strategic planning logic of the team required that the actions to be taken in future should match its strengths with opportunities and ward off threats while the team worked to overcome weaknesses. This process involved taking items and discussing all ideas in depth. Strengths and opportunities were refined and prioritised. In this context, the SWOTanalysis attempted to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.

#### **3.9.1 Strengths of the team**

The team identified several strengths, which included cooperative, dedicated and determined members who were willing to learn and work collectively (Kemmis, 2008:297) to develop the anticipated strategy. All relevant stakeholders needed were involved, including anSAPS representative and social workers who work closely with victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying, to make sure that the school community reduces the rate of bullying in schools. The parents contributed various experiences and their expertise to the study, creating an inclusive, cohesive society in which all members were equal co-researchers with equal opportunities. The parents were also a source of strength as they encouraged and assisted their



children in the team. The learners in the team were very enthusiastic and keen to participate and learn to assist their peers to combat bullying. Learner involvement in the study was very productive because it was easy to solve learner problems if the co-researchers used them. The school provided a rich space as it was willing to host this study.

### **3.9.2 Weaknesses of the team**

The teachers were not knowledgeable about the proper strategy to support victims of bullying. The team looked at internal elements to combat bullying in schools. A lack of creativity and a lack of cooperation to work together in combatting bullying existed.

### **3.9.3 Opportunities of the team**

Collaboration among the team members enabled mutual trust, frank discussions, shared feedback and healthy disagreements. The co-researchers contributed individual areas of expertise to the situation as well as various perspectives, which are influenced by the professional orientation, education, experience and socio-economic status of the co-researchers. The team looked at external factors that prevented or had a positive impact on combatting bullying using the Ubuntu approach. An example is creating a favourable home environment for bullied learners, which is characterised by positive parental involvement in bringing about mutual trust among them.

### **3.9.4 Threats to the team**

Threats are external factors that are unfavourable to achieving one's objective. A threat is defined as an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something (Team, 2013:6).

#### **3.9.4.1 Presence of parents**

Some learners found it difficult to speak honestly about their feelings and telling as it is in front of their parents.

#### **3.9.4.2 Resources**

The school has very limited resources. The researcher prepared flipcharts, data projector, a screen and other resources that might be needed in the discussions. Also, the lack of competence in using resources was a threat to the team, such as being able to use the internet to find strategies that other countries use to combat bullying.

#### **3.9.4.3 Time factor**

Time was a threat because team members needed to create time for meetings within their tight schedules. Most of the team members were working full-time, and after work, they had to fulfil their research obligations, which might be difficult.

#### **3.9.4.4 Funding for the project**

This academic research was not funded. This might affect the study negatively because the meetings were held after school when the members were hungry after a long, tiring day. Weekdays were also used to avoid paying transport costs for team members who work at the school but reside far from the school.

### **3.10 PRIORITISING ACTIVITIES**

Prioritisation is a management discipline that needs to be exercised at all levels of strategic planning and implementation (Kerzner, 2013:104). According to Molo (2014:123), an action plan should show the activities that will be performed by the team, the person responsible for leading discussions, the timeframe and the monitoring strategies. These activities enabled the co-researchers to learn from one another and promote a strategy to combat bullying. Further priorities are the objectives of the study and its resources (Myende, 2014:25).

The priorities of the study are tabled below.

### 3.10.1 Priority 1:A strategy to combat bullying in primary schools

No.	Activities	Person responsible	Timeframe	Resources	Monitoring
1	Information-sharing session, discussing ethics and securing consent forms	The researcher	60 minutes	Attendance register Consent forms	Participation in action
1	Goal setting	Mr Mkhize (school principal)	30 minutes	Flipcharts Markers	Participation in discussions
1	Explaining procedure to be followed	Warrant Officer Ngcobo (SAPS)	30 minutes	Flipcharts Markers	Participation in discussions
1	Identification of challenges of bullying	Mrs Nkosi (Special Needs Education Services official)	30 minutes	Flipcharts Flashcards	Response by co-researchers
1	Formulating a research question	Mrs Shezi and Miss Sabelo (teachers)	15 minutes	Flipcharts Markers	Brainstorming by researchers

This was the first meeting with the participants. Introductions were done. This was the conceptual phase in this meeting where the problem was identified and the concept was tabled. Roles were clarified, and ethical issues were discussed. The participants contributed and they were listened to and their input welcomed. The researcher was flexible and open-minded. This was the phase where the team members got to know

one another's skills, knowledge and expertise. The challenges of bullying in primary schools were identified, and the research aim of developing a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools was explained. The research question was also formulated at this meeting. The team members showed commitment to and accountability for the given tasks. The team would use the following problem-solving cycle by starting to identify and define the problem.

### 3.10.2 Priority 2: Challenges and solutions to the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools

No.	Activities	Person responsible	Timeframe	Resources	Monitoring
2	Identifying challenges of bullying in primary school	Mama Zondo, Mlungi si Mbaso and Bayanda Ntshangase	90 minutes	Attendance Register Flipchart Tape recorder Markers	Brainstorming in group discussion and the whole group gives feedback
2	Discussing components of the solutions	Miss Gondwe	60 minutes	Markers Flipcharts Tape recorder	Brainstorming in group discussion and the whole group gives feedback

At the second meeting, the challenges of bullying in primary schools were discussed. The challenges would be unpacked in different groups and later be presented by the group representative to everyone for further clarification.

After the challenges had been discussed, they were projected onto a screen and the groups brainstormed solutions to the challenges. The facilitator needed to observe PAR principles, remain neutral in the discussions and maintain a collaborative partnership with the co-researchers.

### 3.10.3 Priority 3: The conditions conducive and the threats to the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools

No.	Activities	Person responsible	Timeframe	Resources	Monitoring
3	Recapping from previous meeting	Mr Mkhize and the researcher	60 minutes	Attendance Register Flipchart Tape recorder Markers	Group discussion
3	Discussion of conditions conducive to combatting bullying	Mr Ngcobo	60 minutes	Markers Flipcharts Tape recorder	Feedback session
3	Discussion of factors that might threaten the successful implementation of the strategy	Mr Mkhize and the researcher	120 minutes (two meetings)	Markers Flipcharts Tape recorder	Feedback session

At the third meeting, the facilitator started by explaining the procedures for the day. The conditions conducive to the strategy and threats were discussed in groups. A feedback session was held, which was used as a discussion forum by the whole group. After all the discussions, the team members were given a task to prepare before the fourth meeting, which was to gather information on the relevant strategy to combat bullying

### 3.10.4 Priority 4: The success indicators of the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools

No.	Activities	Person responsible	Timeframe	Resources	Monitoring
4	Recapping from previous meeting	Mr Mkhize and the researcher	120minutes	Attendance Register Flipchart Tape recorder Markers	Group discussion
4	Discussion on success indicators	Mr Vilakazi and the researcher	120 minutes	Markers Flipcharts Tape recorder	Feedback session

At the fourth meeting, the team members reported back on the assignment that was given to each member in the previous meeting. Each member reported back and all the points were written down to be discussed and checked how they could be applied best when formulating a strategy.

### 3.10.5 Priority 5: Formulating the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools

No.	Activities	Person responsible	Timeframe	Resources	Monitoring
5	Recapping from the previous meeting Discussion on the formulation of the strategy to combat bullying	Mr Mlaba (councillor) and Mr Ngcobo (SAPS)	120 minutes	Attendance Register Flipchart Tape recorder Markers	Active discussion and feedback session
5	Developing the strategy to combat bullying	The researcher	180 minutes	Markers Flipcharts Tape	Participation and feedback

				recorder	session
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At the fifth meeting, the team of researchers brainstormed the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.

### 3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyse the generated data. According to Van Dijk (2008:85), CDA is a discourse analytical tool that is primarily concerned with how social power is abused. Dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.

#### 3.11.1 Definitions of CDA

Van Dijk (2013:23) defines CDA as discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse and inequity are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political process. It is founded on the insight that text and talk play a key role in maintaining and legitimating inequality, injustice and oppression in society. CDA employs discourse analysis to show how this is done; it seeks to spread awareness of this aspect of language use in society and argues explicitly for change based on its findings. CDA can be used as a means for the explanation, description and interpretation of generated data (Van Dijk, 2003:352). Van Dijk further alludes that CDA is meant to provide a higher awareness of the hidden motivations in others and ourselves and enables researchers to solve concrete problems –not by providing unequivocal answers but by making them ask ontological and epistemological questions.

Locke (2004:2) views CDA as associations “between discursive practices, events and text and wider social and cultural structures”. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:88) refer to CDA as a movement that endeavours to ensure equal representation of issues, making democracy possible through the analysis of issues, feelings and perceptions hidden in both written and text. The importance of CDA is that it “strives to explore how these non-transparent connections are a factor in fortifying power and hegemony, and it draws attention to power imbalances, social inequities,

nondemocratic practices, and other injustices in hopes of spurring people to corrective actions” (Fairclough, 1992:32). This demonstrates that CDA is a theory that seeks social change, where the interests of the poor or disadvantaged are taken into consideration in teaching. It reproves inequality of any form that is revealed either in language, text or discursive or social practice (Dube, 2016:1232). CDA confirms the selection of Ubuntu as the theoretical framework underpinning this study in the sense that CDA encourages people to solve social problems together to improve human conditions confronted by people in the society.

CDA also justifies the use of PAR as an approach for data generation since both seek to fight for the disadvantaged members of the society. In CDA, the generated data are analysed at three levels, namely textual, discursive and social practice.

### **3.11.2 Historical background of CDA**

CDA derives from critical theory, whose critical drive originated in the Frankfurt School through Habermas’s key contribution in the theory of communicative action (Tenorio, 2011:187-189). CDA began to gain momentum in the late 1970s. *Language and control* by Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979) and *Language as Ideology* by Hodges and Kress were seminal works that laid many of the foundations for CDA without using the term itself. CDA rose in the 1980s at a symposium held at the University of Amsterdam. Its approach was discussed by scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Norman Furlough, Gunther Kress, Ruth Wodak and Theo van Leeuwen. The term “critical discourse analysis” itself appears to have first been used by Fairclough in an article published in 1985 but was popularised by Fairclough’s (1989) highly influential book *Language and Power* (Breeze, 2013:495).

CDA arose as a form of discourse and text analysis that acknowledged the role of language in structuring power relations in society (Wodak, 2001:13). The theoretical origin of CDA can be traced to the contribution of CDA models by the five most influential European scholars in the field – Fairclough, Hodges, Kress, Van Dijk and Van Leeuwen (Rahimi & Riasati, 2011:109). All of these models, as Tenorio (2011:184) notes, primarily aim to raise awareness regarding practices used in



developing, maintaining and reproducing unequal power relations through language use.

CDA is characterised by various principles, such as that all approaches are problem orientated and thus necessarily interdisciplinary and eclectic. Moreover, CDA is characterised by a shared interest in demystifying ideologies of power through systematic and reproducible investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual) (Wodak, 2009:3). CDA researchers also attempt to make their own position and interest explicit, while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and remaining self-reflective on their own research process (Van Dijk, 2012:21). Hart (2007:106) notes that CDA is a “multidisciplinary theory to analysis consisting of a number of different theoretical approaches to micro-level analysis of text and talk that has to do with the social and or political”.

### **3.11.3 CDA**

After the generation of data from the co-researchers, data analysis had to be conducted. In this study, CDA was adopted for data analysis. CDA is an acronym for “critical discourse analysis”. CDA, according to Van Dijk (1993:252), does not aim to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm, or school or discourse theory. It is concerned with and influenced by presenting social issues, which it aspires to understand better through analysis. CDA concedes the need to examine in practical terms how one goes about doing a critical analysis of text and talk (Van Dijk, 2011:89). Furthermore, CDA can be used as a means of explanation, elucidation and interpretation of generated data (Van Dijk, 2003:352). Govender and Muthukrishna (2012:93) assert that CDA strives to know what structures, strategies and other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in the modes of the reproduction of power relations, enactment, representation, legitimating denial, mitigation or the concealment of dominance among others.

Rogers (2011:1) contends that CDA addresses disparities in educational sites, practices and systems, with an appreciation for the fact that the world is characterised by inequality. Tenorio (2011:183) notes that “from inception, CDA was a discipline designed to question the status quo, by detecting, resisting, analysing

and counteracting enactment of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourses”.

### **3.11.4 Levels of analysis**

#### **3.11.4.1 Textual analysis**

Text refers to actual written or spoken data. It is a product of discourse and is used to describe a linguistic record of a communicative event, which can be an electronic recording or a written text (Sheyholislami, 2001:3). Text, as a meaningful speech event, has to meet seven standards of textuality: cohesion – the ways the words are connected in sequence; coherence – the outcome of cognitive relations, such as mutual knowledge among the participants in the discourse; acceptability – the form of the text in terms of appropriateness to the cultural setting and the way in which it is received by those taking part; intentionality – the text producers’ discourse purpose, goals or plan; informativity – how far the degree of information transmitted is more or less suitable for the receivers in the circumstances; situationality or relevance – the factors that make a text relevant to the situation in which it occurs; and intertextuality – the way in which a text relies on previous texts for its form and references and the way in which it may incorporate other texts (Bloor & Bloor, 2013:6).

According to Nasir and Xiaodong (2013:150), CDA, in relation to text-level analysis, is the “space which allows for analysis of written and spoken text to explore the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias”. In this study, text (spoken words and written formats) will be analysed by the researcher and the co-researchers as equal partners in this research. Issues of inequality, dominance by one party during deliberations and social justice will be taken into cognisance.

Govender and Muthukrishna (2012:29) assert that success in the utilisation of text for analysing data “requires that structures, strategies or other properties of text, talk, verbal interaction or communicative events play a role in the modes of reproduction of power relations, enactment, representation, legitimating denial, mitigation or concealment of dominance among others”. During the discussions in this

research, the spoken text was audio-recorded. The audio-recorded text was analysed at the textual level.

#### **3.11.4.2 Discursive analysis**

The second level of analysis focuses on language as a discursive practice. The discursive level of data analysis is concerned with how text is produced and interpreted by the co-researchers to interpret the configuration of discourse practice (Fairclough, 1992:97). Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) further describe that the discursive level of analysis pays attention to issues that sustain and reproduce the social status quo and how these issues can be transformed. Janson (2009:109) states that the discursive level of data analysis examines issues that “construct and maintain unequal power relations”. Discursive practices may have “major ideological effects – that is, they can assist produce and reproduce unequal power relations between social classes, women and men, and ethnic or cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258).

At the discursive level of analysis, the responses of the co-researchers on issues raised during the discussions were examined. The responses portrayed the underlying assumptions about “the others”; hence, the analysis at this level sought to unearth the oftentacit conceptions of people as they emanated in the discussions, especially when they sought to reproduce social inequality (Dube, 2016:1234).

#### **3.11.4.3 Discourse analysis as a social practice**

The third level considers discourse as a social practice. The main focus in this level is to describe and explain how social issues (gender, power, culture, religion, policies and contextual issues) may have influenced what people perceive to be knowledge and what impact the mentioned social issues have on the construction of that knowledge (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:97). This level is concerned with an explanation of how and why social practices are constituted, changed and transformed in the ways they are.

Analysis at the social practice level of CDA implies a “dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258). During this level, the researcher examined the co-researchers’ input or suggestions during the research process. The researcher then scrutinised the co-researchers’ words to establish whether there were any signs of technologies of inclusion and exclusion. The spoken and written discourse is forms of social practice in the sociocultural context and language. Language users may enact, confirm or challenge more comprehensive social and political structures and institutions.

Analysis at all three levels mentioned in this study is interpretive, descriptive and explanatory (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hu & Joseph, 2013:371).

### **3.12 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, PAR as a methodological approach was extensively discussed. The relationship between Ubuntu, as the theoretical framework guiding the activities of the study, the PAR approach and CDA was illuminated in the context of the study. The ethical issues and the credentials of the team members were presented. This chapter also discussed the SWOT analysis used by the team to analyse its strengths and weaknesses, while alluding to internal opportunities and external threats to help the team assess issues within and outside the study. This was followed by discussions on proper strategic decision making, the priorities according to the objectives of the study, the action plan and the priorities of the study, namely the need for and challenges to the strategy to combat bullying in primary school and the solutions thereto, as well as the conditions conducive and the threats to the strategy, and the evidence of success.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA AND PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OF THE STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study aimed to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit, using Ubuntu as a theoretical approach. To operationalise this aim, this chapter presents, interprets, analyses and discusses the generated data with respect to combatting bullying in primary schools. The objectives of this study are the challenges to combatting bullying, the solutions to these challenges, the conditions conducive to the strategy to combat bullying, the threats to the strategy and the evidence of success. These objectives are analysed in relation to what the literature alluded to in Chapter 2 and what the empirical data attest to. Each objective is discussed by referring to expectations in terms of sound practices as indicated by the educational policy, previous research and the theory behind learning.

The relevant extracts of the empirical data generated are interpreted and analysed using CDA, as propagated by Van Dijk (2008:85). CDA evolves in three levels, which are textual (actual spoken data), discursive (the whole act of communication, involving production and comprehension) and social (issues such as ideology, power or social injustices observed in discussion meetings). CDA is used to understand, expose and ultimately resist social inequality, which may prevent and combat bullying (Van Dijk, 2008:85). The evidence is discussed, using Ubuntu as the theoretical framework of choice. A brief summary is made, considering the findings of the empirical data and whether they correlate or refute the literature reviewed. Lastly, observations are made on the contribution of the findings to the body of knowledge through the articulations of the co-researchers.

## 4.2 ANALYSIS CHALLENGES TEACHERS AND LEARNERS FACE CONCERNING BULLYING

In addressing the first objective, the co-researchers held their initial meeting with the purpose of identifying the challenges that are experienced by the victims of bullying in schools, as well as the solutions thereto. The following challenges were identified: academic performance, absenteeism, the self-esteem of victims of bullying and antisocial behaviour. The identified challenges are discussed below. In this particular instance, the challenges are issues that justify the need to formulate the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.

The following is a synopsis of the challenges underlying this study.

### 4.2.1 Academic performance

Academic performance is the extent to which a learner has achieved his or her short- or long-term educational goals. Individual performance is highly important for an organisation as a whole and for the individuals working in it. Intervention by the school and teachers can be used as a way to prevent or address bullying. Performance comprises both a behavioural and an outcome aspect. It is a multidimensional and dynamic concept. Bullying is one of the contributing factors to the academic performance of victims of bullying at school (Schewick, 2017:11).

The challenge of academic performance was affirmed in the discussions by the groups during the empirical data generation as a contributing factor that makes it difficult to combat bullying in primary schools. The generated data during situation analysis reflected the following comments.

While discussing the challenge, **Mlungisi Mabaso** (victim learner) commented:

*Mina nje ngikhumbula ngiqala ukungena esikoleni samabanga aphantsi eSilungile ngangenza kahle kakhulu emsebenzini wami wesikole. Ngithe ngiqala ngifika la eFindo ukuyokwenza ibanga lesithupha ngafeyila. Into engifeyilisayo manje ukuthi kunabafundi engibasabayo. Uma uthisha esinikeze umsebenzi wokuthi siwenze emakhaya bayasiphuca. Uma uthi uyala bavele bakhiphe ummese. Bathi kuthisha wenziwe yibo, kanti futhi thina asikwazi ukuzilwela, bese thina sithola amamaki aphantsi Angazi ngingasizakala kanjani?*

*[I remember during the years of my early grades at eSilungile, I was doing extremely well in my school work. By the time I started here at eFindo, starting Grade 6, I started to fail my subjects. The reason was that there are learners that I am afraid of. If our teacher gives us homework to do, they claim that work as theirs and we can't fight back. If we refuse, they show us a knife. Then we get low marks. I don't know how to get help.]*

**Bayanda Ntshangase** (a victim learner) interrupted the discussion:

*Hhayi bo mina sengivele ngivilaphe nokufunda ngoba vele kuyafana nje umuntu usebenzela abanye abafundi, bayawuthatha umsebenzi wethu bawenze owabo. Ekhaya uma ngibatshela ukuthi angisafuni nokuya esikoleni abanginaki ngoba abayazi inkinga engibhekene nayo. Ukuhlukunyezwa abanye abafundi akumnandi.*

*[I just became lazy to do my school work because there is no use in doing it since we work for other learners. They demand our work so that the teacher will think I failed to do my work. If I tell my parents at home that I don't want to go to school anymore, they ignore me. To be a victim of learners engaged in bullying is not nice.]*

**Miss Sabelo**, a Grade 7 teacher, commented as follows:

*Mina nginguthisha we sifundo sezokuphatha esikoleni. Ngakho-ke ngihlala nhgiba semihlanganweni yabafundi abangaziphethe kahle. Engike ngikuqaphelilsise ukuthi laba fundi abahlukunyezwayo bayazenyeka ekilasini. Lokho-ke kuba yimbangela yokungaphumeleli kahle ezifundweni zabo. Ngenxa yemdawo isikole sakithi ekuso kuba nzima kubazali ukubona ukuthi kukhona okungahambi kahle kubantwana babo. Nginesicelo mina ukuthi uthishanhloko abize umhlangano nabazali ukuze sibe nezixazululo.*

*[I am a Grade 6 teacher, teaching Life Orientation (LO) to learners between the ages of 12 and 13. The School Management Team (SMT) of the school usually involves me if there is any bad behaviour by the learners. What I normally notice in those learners who are victims of bullying, is that they withdraw themselves from most of the activities, even in classroom activities. So such behaviour causes them to perform poorly in their schoolwork, even if the learner is capable in a particular subject. Owing to our school environment, most of the parents are failing to notice if there is anything that disturbs their children at school. I humbly request the school principal to call a parents' meeting with their children in order to come forth with the solution of combatting bullying.]*

The comments above indicate the attitude of learners to their school work. From what Mlungisi and Bayanda said, it is clear that these learners are not free to go to school. Torturing and cruelty to other learners in this instance is against the principle of Ubuntu, which is the theoretical framework in this study. This invariably denotes an aspect that carries in itself some societal discursive disjuncture (see Chapter

2.13.1.1). According to English (2002:143), Ubuntu optimises the African philosophy of respect and human dignity, which is fundamental to being able to transcend ethnic divisions by working together and respecting one another. Such behaviour stipulates the imbalance of power among learners.

At the textual level in the analytical view, the lack of respect among victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying portrays that learners engaged in bullying overpower the victims of bullying. This reflects inequality and a lack of teamwork among the learners. Section 68(2b) of the *South African Schools Act, 1996* (Act No. 84 of 1996) states that humiliation means any behaviour or act that causes another person to lose self-respect or the respect of others.

Taking the latter concept further, from a discursive practice analysis, the language of the teacher affirms that there is a disconnection between the victims of bullying and their parents. This demonstrates the power and dominance of learners engaged in bullying. It is the responsibility of parents and teachers to monitor the progress of the victims of bullying. According to Hammett and Stachelin (2011:272), in the *Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa*, teachers and the parents can work together using school policies, such as anti-bullying policies, to solve learner problems. When learners are absent from school, they miss essential instruction, which articulates that they are treated cruelly and fear being degraded.

At the social practice level, the responses cited above reveal the lack of communication among learners who are victims of bullying and teachers and parents. Parents and teachers carry the responsibility for implementing safety measures for learners. Teachers in particular are responsible to improve learner performance under their supervision. The citations further reveal that there is a sign of dominance and inequality among the learners, which is visible in Mlungisi's comparison between his performance at his previous school, where he excelled since there was no bullying, and his performance at the recent school.

The literature also emphasises that bullying experiences affect the adaptive functioning and academic achievement of victims of bullying in both direct and indirect ways (Juvonen et al., 2011:154). This emphasises the need to design a



strategy to combat bullying to improve the academic performance of the victims of bullying as well (see Chapter 2.13.1.1). The researcher's opinion about this challenge is that the consequences of bullying for victims of bullying will affect them throughout their entire lives and in such a way that they may fail to perform at their workplaces. The primary aim of the study is to combat bullying, so if schools do not combat the problem of bullying, it will lead to negative consequences for most of the learners in future.

#### **4.2.2 Absenteeism**

Absenteeism as a challenge could be perceived to mean that learners do not attend classes and they miss essential instruction (Jellab, 2016:131). Learners miss what might be best described as the incidental learning that takes place through ongoing conversation and dialogue in the classroom setting. Learners who are absent from class have fewer opportunities to learn the material that enables them to succeed later in school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002:308). Epstein and Sheldon (2002:3) further allude that teachers have argued that consistent school attendance is critical if learners are to build and maintain a foundation for ongoing learning and academic success throughout life. Broadly defined, absenteeism is the outcome of particular behaviour that happens when someone engages in activities that compete with scheduled work. The researcher fully agrees with Epstein and Sheldon in the sense that if the victims of bullying absent themselves from school for a longer period, it may affect their performance in their school work in a broader context.

According to Section 5(b) of the *South African Schools Act, 1996* (Act No. 84 of 1996), school attendance is compulsory. If a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of Subsection 1 is not enrolled at or fails to attend a school, the head of the department may investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school, take appropriate measures to remedy the situation and, failing such a remedy, issue a written notice to the parent of the learner, requiring compliance with Subsection 1. It is the responsibility of the school community to make sure that learners attend school continuously, without fail.

Using the dynamic conflict theory (Meuleman, Davidov & Billiet, 2009:355), conflict is located within the individual. The victims of bullying may find it difficult to decide whether to go to school or not, due to inner conflict.

The data generated during the situation analysis reflect the following comments by the co-researchers. **Mr Ntshangase**, the chairperson of the school governing body, voiced his frustration:

*Mina kuye kungimangaze-ke ukuthi uma ngizihambela ngihlangane nabanye abantwana bakulesi sikole bengayile esikoleni. Kukhona la ngihlangane khona nokungabafanyana kufake umfaniselwano wesikole, bephethe nezincwadi. Uma ngibabuza ngathola impendulo eyangixaka kabi. Bathi kimi abafana bayesaba ukuya esikoleni ngoba basaba abanye abafundi ababashayayo. Angike ngizwe kuthishomkhulu ukuyena kuyenzeka yini anake ukuthi izingane azizi esikole ngenxa yalomkhuba wokushaywa kwezinye izingane.*

*[It always surprises me to see learners of this school loitering in streets during the day, especially boys in school uniform with school bags. If I ask them, I get a very disturbing answer: that they absent themselves from school because of other children bullying them at school. So, they are afraid of those boys. I want to check from the school principal if he is aware that there are such learners at the school.]*

**Mr Mkhize**, the school principal, replied:

*Ngiyavumelana no Mnumzane Ntshangase abanye babafundi balova esikoleni ngenxa yakho ukuhlukumezeka. Sengike ngazama ukukhuluma nabafana abahlukumeza banye. Inkinga nje ukuthi bavele baphike. Njengamanje asinabo ubufakazi kodwa-ke ngibacelile othisha ukuthi abaqaphelisisa.*

*[I fully agree with Mr Ntshangase that some learners absent themselves from school due to bullying. I tried to contact those boys who bully others. They told me that they were not bullying them. And so far, I have no evidence and I asked their classroom teachers to observe such unwanted behaviour.]*

**Mr Vilakazi**, the circuit manager, commented as follows:

*Engikuqaphelisisa uma ngibheka inani labantwana abeza sikoleni ukuthi isikhathi esiningi abafana yibona abangezi kahle esikoleni.*

*[I notice that there are learners who are always absent, especially boys, when I check the statistics of school attendance quarterly.]*

**Mrs Zondo**, a parent, added:

*Mina kuyangimangaza ukuthi uthishomkhulu uthi ebona ukuthi izingane zethu azizi kahle esikoleni angasithinti asazise, kodwa esikhundleni salokhu abize abafana abahlukeza abanye. Yini azoyithola kulezi ngane.*

*Zinamanga nje lezizingane. Wena mhloli uke wasibiza njengabazali uma usubonile ukuthi kunenkinga ezincwadini zesikole.*

*[I am surprised that if the principal see that our children are not coming to school as expected, he never told us as parents; instead, he talks to the learners engaged in bullying. What are you going to gain from them? They are telling lies. And you, circuit manager, you didn't call us when you check school registers.]*

**Mr Mlaba**, the local councillor, supported the parent:

*Phela isikole ngisifanisa nebhodwe lesiZulu elinemilenze emthathu: Uthisha, umzali kanye nomfundi. Uma kukhona ongekho angeke sikwazi isikole ukuthi siye phambili ngaphandle kwezinkinga. Asibambisaneni bo.*

*[The school is like a three-legged pot: teacher, parent and learner. If there is someone who is unavailable, it will be impossible for the school to work properly in solving all the problems. Let us work together.]*

From the extracts cited above, it is evident that there is a problem of absenteeism of some learners, especially boys, due to bullying. Mr Ntshangase, who is the chairperson of the school governing body, is quoted talking about “loitering” and being “afraid”, which invariably denotes the reality of the situation, taking into account Van Dijk’s (2003:352) analytical perspective. This shows that they absent themselves against their own will. One of the principles of Ubuntu – the theoretical framework of the study – is humanness. The kind of learner envisaged by the educational policy framework of South Africa is one who acts in the interest of the society, based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice. If all people abide by and live out the worldview of Ubuntu, which is a reference basis of values of humanness, love, caring, sharing, respect and compassion, South Africa and the whole world globally would be freed of all forms of bullying (Ansell, 2007:318) (see Chapter 2.5.6 for the arguing of love, caring, sharing, respect and compassion as principles of Ubuntu).

This study aimed to create a future citizen who will promote humanness. The constitution dictates promulgate the quest for a sustainable desire for schooling for better citizenry (see Chapter 2.5.6). Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom are a message of the Constitution.

The use of the word “engixakayo” by Mr Ntshangase in the response cited above, which translates to “disturbing”, affirms that there is a misunderstanding as to why

learners absent themselves from school without any reason known to the school. Also, from his comments, it is evident that some learners do not feel free to go to school, because they do not know what may happen to them during the day. Van Dijk (2005:99) affirms that individual problems escalate to be societal problems.

Telling “*lies*”, as referred to by Mrs Zondo above, is contradictory to African ethics. The Ubuntu philosophy represents an African conception of human beings and their relationship with the community that embodies the ethics defining Africans and their social behaviour (Mbigi, 2005:75; Van den Heuvel et al, 2006:48), which encapsulates the impetus of cohesiveness and collaboration (see Chapter 2.5.2). It can thus be argued that Ubuntu, in addressing bullying, encourages networking, good relationships and social cohesion.

Mr Mlaba’s example of a three-legged pot refers to the idea that the whole community must work collaboratively to raise a child in totality. The school cannot work in isolation. One of the formats of Ubuntu is solidarity. This aim is expressed by words such as *simunye* (we are one, that is strength) and slogans such as “an injury to one is an injury to all” (Louw, 2001:19) (see Chapter 2.7.3). To reach a shared goal as a team, segregation needs to be excluded.

The challenge of absenteeism was affirmed in the discussion as a contributing factor to the poor academic performance of victims of bullying. The literature also argues that absenteeism is problematic to the development of the mental ability of victims of bullying. Shellard (2002:1) is of the opinion that victims of bullying often suffer humiliation, insecurity and a loss of self-esteem, and they may develop a fear of going to school (see Chapter 2.13.1.3). Most of the victims of bullying in primary schools decide to absent themselves from schools since they cannot fight back against being bullied.

Watkin (2005:7) defines school absenteeism as a learner simply not physically being at school. According to Anderson (2009:13), absenteeism consists of the failure of a learner to report for work (school) as scheduled. In light of the definitions above, absence can be seen as learner’s failure to present him- or herself at school on a scheduled day in accordance with the teacher’s expectation. The latter

definition stresses that due to absenteeism, learners fail to perform better academically (see Chapter 2.13.1.2). This is evident from Mr Vilakazi, the circuit manager, when he mentions checking attendance against the performance of the learners quarterly.

### **4.2.3 Self-esteem of the victims of bullying**

Self-esteem is generally defined as the evaluation of the self; it is an effective response to one's self-description. The evaluation refers to a judgment of one's worth and what is being judged is one's perception of who one is or one's self-concept. In general terms, self-esteem can be expressed as "I like who I am", "I don't like who I am", or someplace in-between these two endpoints. De Reuck (2002:8) also purports that self-esteem levels represent people's general or typical feelings of global self-worth and liking. Providing victims of bullying with training in assertiveness, friendship-building skills, self-enhancement skills and negotiation skills indicates excellent outcomes for the victims. Self-esteem is the affective evaluative dimension of self-perception – the value one attaches to one's personality, which affects virtually every facet of life. Self-esteem in the context of bullying possesses the following challenge: poor study habits, educational underachievement and the inability to socialise with others.

The *National Education Policy Act, 1996* (Act No. 27 of 1996) on the South African standards for principals emphasises that the principal should work with all of the stakeholders, embrace the philosophy and practice of Ubuntu and have the overall responsibility to build a professional learning community at the school. This can be achieved through effective interpersonal relationships and communication, which recognise, manage and celebrate the diversity of ethnicity, race and gender. Through the provision of opportunities for shared leadership, teamwork and participation in decision-making, the principal promotes the empowerment of those working at the school. By encouraging effective and relevant continuing professional development opportunities, the principal supports whole-school development. Principals also need to be reflective to build personal capacity and be committed to their own continuing professional development.

The sociocultural theory has a holistic view on the act of learning. According to Ellis (2002:212), the sociocultural theory assumes that learning arises not through interaction but in interaction. Learners first succeed at performing a new task with the help of another person and then internalise this task so that they can perform it on their own. In this way, social interaction is advocated to mediate learning. Ellis (2002:212) alludes that the theory goes further to say interactions that successfully mediate learning, are those in which the learners scaffold the new tasks. In this study, the Ubuntu theory emphasises the importance of interaction between the victims of bullying and the learners engaged in bullying to encourage good relationships and cohesiveness.

The data generated during the situation analysis reflected the following comments. **Sipho Zwane** (bully) commented for the first time:

*Kukhona abafundi esifunda nabo abathandayo nje ukuzenyeza uma sisekilasini.*  
[There are classmates who like to isolate themselves.]

**Mrs Nkosi** added:

*Ukuzenyeza kwabantwana abahlukunyezwayo kubenza baze babe nesifo skucindezelaka*  
[Low self-esteem of the victims can lead to severe depression.]

**Mlungisi** commented:

*Angeke uhlale ungazinyezi uma abantu ofunda nabo bengathandi ukudlala nawe. Noma sisebenza emaqenjini ahlukene ngiyesaba nokubeka umbono.*  
[It is difficult not to isolate yourself if your classmates don't want to play with you. Even in our group discussions, I am afraid to make contributions.]

**Mr Mkhize** added:

*Ngifakazelana no Mama Nkosi ukuthi ingane ehlukenyezwayo uyibona nje ngezenzo ezivele zikudide ikhanda*  
[I fully agree with Mrs Nkosi in that victims always show some confusing signs.]

**Mlungisi** said:

*HHayi bonke thishomkhulu kodwa uma uthi uzama ukuzisondeza laba abanye (ebuka uSipho ngokwesaba) bavele bangethuse bese ngivele ngizibone ngingelutho.*

*[Not all of them, Principal, but if I try to come closer to them (looking at Siphos) I just feel scared.]*  
*Mina nje njalo ngibona sengathi bayangizonda nonke nje eklasini. Uma ngithi ngifuna ukuhlala nalaba esifunda nabo ngiboba sengathi abangithandi. Mina futhi ngimasaba kakhulu uSiphos, uyashayana futhi ubashaya bonke eklassini.*

**Bayanda** said:

*Mina ngiyafuna ukukhuluma ngizokubhalela phansi engifunakukutshela kona.*

*[I want to tell you all by writing down in a piece of paper.]*

From the extracts cited above, it is evident that there is no sound relationship among the learners at school. The victims of bullying feel not safe and as such, their constitutional right to safety is violated (see Chapter 2.13.4.2) as the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* advocates the rights and responsibilities of children, including the right to education, non-discrimination and health services. Mlungisi's comment on not being able to put forward ideas during the group discussions is a sign of low self-esteem. There is neither teamwork nor communication among learners.

The language used in the responses cited above indicates that victims of bullying isolate themselves in some activities. They are unable to make friends easily because of the presence of learners engaged in bullying. The word "*isolation*" used by Siphos is an indication of the lack of co-operation among the learners inside the classroom.

Teamwork, as one of the principles of Ubuntu, is portrayed in the extracts above as it emphasises solidarity and unity. In a team setting, the existence of Ubuntu, as a shared value system, implies that team members are encouraged to strive towards the outlined team values, which consequently enhance their functioning together as a team (Poovan, 2006:25; Van den Heuvel, 2006:48).

Most studies show that being a victim of bullying leads to depression and low self-esteem – problems that can carry on into adulthood. With the loss of self-esteem comes a loss of self-confidence and self-belief, and several researchers have shown that many victims of bullying even begin to believe they deserve to be bullied.

Researchers such as Smith (2008:72) have also found that the victims of bullying see themselves in a more negative light than learners who have not been bullied (see Chapter 2.13.1.3, which further clarifies the adverse effects of bullying).

#### **4.2.4 Antisocial behaviour**

Antisocial behaviour is defined as behaviour resulting from an individual's inability to respect the rights of others (Fortin, 2003:12). In this study, antisocial behaviour refers to behavioural disorders, impulsiveness, stealing, vandalism, physical and psychological aggression, bullying, running away from home and truancy (Farrington, 2005:23). The latter definition indicates the challenge that the victims of bullying are facing and the need for developing a strategy to combat bullying in schools.

The Bill of Rights in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act No. 108 of 1996), enshrines the right of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The school must protect, promote and fulfil the rights identified in the Bill of Rights. The social cognitive theory emphasises that observational learning is not a simple imitative process; human beings are the agents or managers of their own behaviours (Bandura, 2001:17). This has relevance in addressing bullying in the sense that it develops a sense of collaboration, respect and humanity.

The challenge of antisocial behaviour was affirmed in the discussions as a contributing factor that makes it difficult to combat bullying in primary schools. The data generated during the situation analysis reflected the following comments:

**Mrs Zondo** (parent) commented:

*Mina nje inkinga yomfana wami ekhaya uhlala ethule ezihleleli yedwa*  
*[My boy prefers to always to be alone at home.]*

**Mrs Nkosi** interrupted her:

*We mama wakhe kungumsebenzi wakho kanye nathi sonke ukuthi sithole imbangela yokuzithulela kwengane yakho.*  
*[As parents and other stakeholders, it is our responsibility to get the source of the learner's isolation.]*



**Warrant Officer Ngcobo** added to **Mrs Nkosi's** comments:

*Yebo asiqaphelisiseni ukuzenyeza kwabantwana.  
[Yes, we need to be vigilant as much as possible.]*

**Mlungisi** interrupted while Mrs Nkosi was talking:

*Mina anginaye umngani. Akekho umuntu ogithandayo kulaba engifunda nabo. Nasekhaya abakaze bazihluphe bangibuze.  
[I don't have a friend; no one who loves me among my classmates. Even at home no one ever asks me about friends.]*

The comments above indicate that the victims of bullying find it difficult to associate with other learners at school. Even at home, the victims of bullying are mostly quiet; this is the textual reality from the point of Van Dijk's approach to analysis. The issue of isolation even at home is a sign of ignorance. There is no communication and no respecting the child's rights at all in the family. Mlungisi feels unloved both at school and at home. If there is no solidarity among the school society, it opposes quality of equity, and social justice is compromised (see Chapter 2.5.4) which catapults the importance of kindness and compassion as a value in society and school. The phrase "*no one who loves me*" is a discursive statement that indicates the feeling of rejection and lack of kindness, compassion, belonging and concern from others.

According to Letseka (2000:180), Ubuntu has normative implications in that it encapsulates moral norms and values such as altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy and respect and concern for others. In this context, there seems to be a disregard of these noble human values that would necessarily be espoused by Ubuntu.

The literature emphasises that bullying is considered to be an aspect of antisocial behaviour, and it follows that learners engaged in bullying may be expected to have high levels of aggressive arousal. Victims of frequent bullying are reported to experience a range of physiological, psychosomatic and behavioural symptoms, including anxiety and insecurity, psychiatric problems, low self-esteem and self-worth, sleeping difficulties, frequent headaches and abdominal pain (Guerin & Hennesy, 2002:33) (see Chapter 2.13.1.3). Learners' morals and values need to be

respected for them to feel valued in a society. Bullying is thus a form of social discursive conduct that is unacceptable in all spheres of the community life.

### **4.3 COMPONENTS OF THE SOLUTIONS TO FORMULATING A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

This section focuses on solutions to mitigate the challenges encapsulated in the previous section. These solutions include creating a safe school environment and parental involvement, home-school collaboration, learner support staff, peer group relationships and mentors.

#### **4.3.1 Creating a safe school environment**

Safe school environment in this study refers to a place with a positive and welcoming school climate. Learners are protected from engaging in high-risk behaviour such as bullying; therefore, such learners succeed academically. A safe school environment encourages behaviour with clear consequences for violating rules as well as rewards for meeting expectations.

In terms of Section 24 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act No. 108 of 1996), learners have the right to an environment that is not harmful to their wellbeing. Moreover, it is the constitutional right of every learner to enjoy education in a harmonious and carefree environment. The objective of the school safety project of the Department of Education (2000:332) is to create a safe and tolerant learning environment that celebrates innocence and values human dignity. This school safety project strives for all schools to be free from crime, bullying, violence and sexual harassment.

In this regard, the guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners (RSA, 1998) refer to the school environment as follows: learners have the right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education, as well as security of property, well-cared for school facilities, school furniture and equipment, clean toilets, water and a green environment, the absence

of harassment in attending classes and writing tests and examinations. All of these factors create an atmosphere that is conducive to education and training.

During the discussions on the challenges of bullying, Miss Sabelo raised the issue of calling a meeting with parents and learners to put forward solutions to the challenges. Mr Mkhize responded positively to the request by organising a meeting at school. Miss Gondwe (local social worker), Mr Mlaba (local councillor) and Warrant Officer Ngcobo (policeman) were present. The meeting was a great success because solutions to the challenges were brainstormed. The discussions on the solutions had all the co-researchers working together with the aim of achieving a shared goal. The co-researchers started trying to devise a solution to the first challenge, which was academic performance.

**Miss Sabelo** said:

*Ngicabanga ukuthi kungumsebenzi wethu ukuthola ulwazi ngemvelaphi nangokusebenza kwabantwana ukuze sithole kahle nokuziphatha kahle komntwana emabangeni aphambili.*

*[I think it is our responsibility to track the learner's performance from the previous school or class in order to be easy for us to find out if there is something troubling the learner.]*

**Mr Mkhize** added:

*Amakhadi amaprofayili abafundi azosisiza ukwazi ukusebenza kanye nokuziphatha kwabantwana.*

*[Learner profile cards will be a great help because it indicates learner performance and learner behaviour as well.]*

**Miss Gondwe** emphasised:

*Ngicabanga ukuthi isikole, abazali kanye nomnyango wezenhlalakahle uma bengasebenzisana ukusiza ukukhulisa kahle abantwana nangokunyusa izinga lemfundo yabo. Nabazali nabo basixwayise uma bebona abangakuqondi kahle kubantwana.*

*[I think if the school, parents and Social Development can work together, it will help to raise our children and to improve their performance. If the parent at home notices certain behaviour, she or he must come to us.]*

**Warrant Officer Ngcobo** added:

*I am happy that all children here [sic]. I just want to warn those who bully others that the consequences are not good. To bully others will affect your future. I don't scare you, but I am telling you the truth.*

From these extracts, it is evident that all the stakeholders were willing to work together as a team to make some improvements on the academic performance of the learners. This is a social reality with negative consequences contradictory to collaborative humanity as celebrated in societies that embrace Ubuntu in their quest for social justice (Van Dijk, 2003:319) (see Chapter 2.4). The fundamentals of sharing and commitment are prevalent in African communities.

At the discursive level, it is evident that the use of learner profile cards will help to navigate their performance in their previous grades. In conceptualising the philosophical outlook of the co-researchers, there seems to be a sense of hope that they will reach their shared goal collaboratively (see Chapter 2.5.5). The emphasis here, according to Freire (2014:2), is to work together in spite of one's differences. This is affirmed by Ubuntu in that within an African society, oneness and sharing play a pivotal role in local communities and organisations, as articulated in the Nyanja expression "mu umudzimulimphamvu" (unity is strength).

Regine (2009:17-22) is of the opinion that the spirit of Ubuntu leads to a synergistic mix, cooperation and collaborative work environments because the community is encouraged to participate, share and support all team members (see Chapter 2.5.2). Teamwork and collaboration are emphasised.

In a safe school, the playgrounds should be filled with the noise of happy children. They may scuff their knees and scrape their elbows, but they are not afraid of one another or intruders. These are schools conducive to effective teaching and learning (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001:22).

The researcher holds the view that academic progress increases when schools emphasise the importance of improving the quality of teachers' classroom management, positive behaviour and discipline techniques. Increased learner engagement also reduces bullying opportunities.

### 4.3.2 Home-school collaboration

Home-school collaboration denotes that there should be a mutual relationship and shared responsibility of helping learners to stop them from absenting themselves from school due to bullying behaviour. Education of the whole child requires solid, well-functioning partnerships among the school, community and family. A family-school partnership is a way of thinking about forming connections between families and schools. Forming connections means developing an intentional and ongoing relationship between the school and the family, which is designed to enhance children's learning and to address any obstacles that may impede it (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001:13).

According to policy, Section 38(b) of the *National Education Policy Act, 1996* (Act No. 27 of 1996) on the South African standards for principals states that the school principal should work with everyone in the community to ensure that the vision and mission of the school are translated into agreed goals and operational plans that are designed to promote and sustain ongoing school improvement. The principal, working with all stakeholders, should embrace the philosophy and practice of Ubuntu and has the overall responsibility to build a professional learning community at the school. This will be achieved through effective interpersonal relationships and communication, which recognise, manage and celebrate the diversity of ethnicity, race and gender. Through the provision of opportunities for shared leadership, teamwork and participation in decisionmaking, the principal promotes the empowerment of those working at the school. By encouraging effective and relevant continuing professional development opportunities, the principal supports whole-school development. Principals also need to be reflective to build personal capacity and should be committed to their own continuing professional development.

The collaboration theory is the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. According to Heyman (2008:346), the collaboration theory emphasises collaborative interaction, which is characterised by shared goals, a symmetry of structure and a high degree of negotiation, interactivity and interdependence. Interaction that produces elaborated explanations is particularly valuable for improving learners' learning. In the collaboration theory, skills such as

coordination, communication, conflict resolution, decisionmaking, problem solving and negotiation are developed.

During the second meeting, solutions to the second challenge, namely absenteeism, were suggested. Miss Gondwe, the social worker, led the discussion, and all of the other co-researchers participated positively. She posed the question of what could be done to reduce absenteeism.

**Mr Mlaba** (local councillor) said:

*Into okumele izanywe ukuthi izinhlelo zonke ezenzeka esikoleni kumele zaziwe nasekhaya. Kubalulekile futhi ukuthi ikomiti lesikole elibhekele ukuhlukunyezwa kwezingane esikoleni lisebenze*  
*[All the programmes taking place at school must be known, even at home. The school governing body must make sure that an anti-bullying committee is working at school.]*

**Mrs Nkosi** added:

*Ngivumelana no baba uMlaba, emihlanganweni akukhulunywe ngezikhathi zokufunda kanye nemithetho yesikole*  
*[If I can add from what Mr Mlaba is saying, during this meeting is where we discuss things like school times and all rules and regulations of the school.]*

**Mrs Shezi** (teacher) voiced her views:

*Amapheshana anemithetho yesikole kumele abe khona emakhaya. Abazali abayibheke imisebenzi eynikezwe abantwana ukuthi bayenze emakhaya. Babheke usuku lomsebenzi. Kubalulekile futhi ukuthi bazisayine izincwadi zabafundi. Ngokwenzanjalo kuzosiza ukubona ukuthi abantwana beza kanjani esikoleni.*  
*[Copies of school rules must be visible at home as well as at school. Another easy way to check if the child attends school is to check homework and everyday activities. Check dates of those activities. There are times where we as teachers ask parents to sign learners' books. By doing so, it will be easy for parents to navigate the attendance of their child.]*

**Mr Vilakazi** (circuit manager) responded, referring to the principal:

*Baba Mkhize ngithanda ukuthi abantwana ababhekwe zikhathi zonke ukuthi bakhona yini ezindlini zabo zokufunda. Othisha uma bengena ababhekisise nabo. Ngakhoke akube khona ithuluzi lokubheka ukuthi beza kahle yini esikoleni.*

*[Mr Mkhize, I want to say, make sure that class registers are marked regularly. You can even introduce period registers. Let's just design a register.]*

**Mr Mkhize** responded:

*Asilenzeni ngempela ithuluzi lokubheka abantwana ukuthi bayeza yini. Abaphathi besikole abasisize.  
[Okay, let's do the learners' class attendance too. We will do it following the daily timetable. The school management team must help you.]*

From these extracts, it is evident the entire school community is willing to work together to reduce absenteeism. Mr Mlaba's comment on involving all stakeholders in planning a school meeting is a sign of collaboration – a sign of reality articulation from involved people. They believed in making decisions collaboratively. At the textual level of analysis, both the school and the home are promoting good relations among them and promoting communication.

The development of period registers by all members is an indication of the discursive level of analysis. Mr Mkhize's comment on developing a tool to check "*learners' class attendance*" is an indication that if all teachers use the period register, it will make it possible to identify all the absentees. The last format of Ubuntu is considered an ideal in the sense that it should be understood as a vision of the good of society. This aim is expressed by words such as *simunye* ("we are one, that is strength") and slogans such as "an injury to one is an injury to all" (Louw, 2001:19) (see Chapter 2.7.3). Together, the co-researchers designed a sample of a period register, which shows that they are willing to work together and help one another.

It is evident in the literature that family-school partnerships are collaborative relationships and activities involving the school staff, parents and other family members of learners at a school. Effective partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect, and shared responsibility for the education of the children and young people at the school. The literature has shown that children are more successful at school when their parents and teachers communicate well and work together effectively (Epstein, 2011:20).

Mutual trust and respect between the school community and the parents of both the victims of bullying and the learners engaged in bullying are strategies with which to combat bullying in schools. It is important to practice democracy so that all parties have a shared understanding of what is taking place in the development of learners.

### **4.3.3 Developing self-confidence**

Self-confidence relates to self-assuredness in one's personal judgement, ability, and power, which is sometimes manifested excessively (Dictionary.com). It influences learner success in school, family life, relationships and leisure activities. It affects learner performance in everything the learner does. A belief in oneself is a fine asset. People who lack confidence and self-belief always underachieve; they are less adventurous and less likely to get the most out of life (Battle, 2002:11). They are more prone to a variety of stress-related problems, including anxiety, eating disorders and mental health problems. Low self-esteem is the fundamental cause of most family breakups, poor parenting and relationship problems. Besides, many types of crime are associated with drug abuse, unemployment, poverty and aimlessness, all of which are, in turn, related to low self-esteem.

The Department of Basic Education has developed a *Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa* (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011:290). This bill outlines youth responsibilities concerning respect and ensuring human dignity. These responsibilities include treating people with reverence, respect and dignity, and to be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously. Ubuntu has normative implications in that it encapsulates moral norms and values, such as altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy and respect and concern for others (see Chapter 2.4).

Bandura's (2012:26) theory of self-efficacy has been the most extensively used theory for investigating self-confidence in sports and motor performance. Bandura originally proposed the theory to account for the different results achieved by the diverse methods used in clinical psychology for treating anxiety. It has since been expanded and applied to other domains of psychological functioning, including



motivation, achievement behaviour, career choice and development and health behaviour, in addition to behaviour in sports. This theory, developed within the framework of the social cognitive theory, poses self-efficacy as a cognitive mechanism for mediating people's motivation and behaviour (Bandura,2012:26).

The meeting continued with the team trying to devise a solution to the third challenge of bullying,namely self-esteem. Miss Gondwe and Mrs Nkosi led the discussions. The primary question for this session was: How can learners' self-confidence be boosted? The team members decided to sit in pairs to make the discussion more vibrant.

**Mlungisi** and **Siyabonga**(Pair 1) responded to the question with**Siyabonga** as speaker:

*Mina nophathina wami la sicabanga ukuthi ukuze kuphele ukuzinyeza kwabanye abafundi kufundeka indlela yokuxoxisana nanganoma ngani.Ezinkulumweni akuvele ukukhulunywe ngezinto ezixabanisayo, ukuhlanzeka, umsebenziwesikole, ukungabibikho esikoleni,ukuxoshwa kwabafundi nokunye. Uma sivuleleka sixoxa ngezinto ezinje singakukhuphula ukuzethemba kwethu.*

*[My partner and I think in order to develop self-confidence for learners, they need to talk with their fellow learners on whatever level. In their discussions, they can talk about conflicts, cleanliness, school work, absenteeism and other things. If we talk like this, we can develop self-confidence.]*

**Mrs Zondo** and **Warrant Officer Ngcobo**(Pair 2) gave their view with**Warrant Officer Ngcobo** as speaker:

*Engxoxweni yethu sicabange ukuthi kungangcono uma singabiza izikhulumi ezigqugquzelayo.*

*[In our pair conversation, we think for learners to gain self-confidence motivational speakers can be called to motivate them.]*

**Miss Gondwe** added to the statement by Pair 2:

*Njengoba sila sonke asibizeni izikhulumi ezizobaqqugquzela ngokuthi kube nemidlalo yokugqugquzela ukuziphatha nokungazinyezi. Leyo midlalo bayoyikhumbula ngisho sebedadala,futhi kungakuhle basebenze nontanga babo.Ngokwenza njalo kuzoba khona nokuzethemba kubantwana.*

*[If, as a team, we decide to invite a motivational speaker to do some self-confidence activities...those activities will be things like your year milestones where a learner will list his or her hopes for the entire year, a pride line where a learner will be telling his or her peers about things*

*done for his or her family, friends and school. That will help to develop self-confidence since they will be working in groups.]*

**Bayanda** and **Sipho**(Pair 3) stated their view with **Bayanda** as speaker:

*Nathi okwethu kuthi akufane nozakwethu abaqeda ukukhuluma. Thina besicabange ukuthi akubizwe abantu abanjengabafundisi bayosigquguzela thina esihlukumezekayo.*

*[We also agree with the previous speakers, even to call pastors.]*

**Mrs Nkosi** concluded the discussion:

*Asiqedeni ngokuthi sithathe okubalulekile emaqenjini ethu. Ukukhuluma kubalulekile. Sizozibiza izikhulumi Kanye nabafundisi ukuze kuphele ukuzenyeza ebantwaneni.*

*[Let's conclude by taking important points from pairs. Firstly, you are saying effective communication is essential. Secondly, is to call the motivational speakers and local pastors to help our learners develop their self-confidence.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that the co-researchers were trying to devise solutions to develop self-confidence as a fact of reality attributable to the text level of Van Dijk. Miss Gondwe's suggestion to work in pairs is a sign of bringing about unity among the team, which refers to the social level of analysis as they were discussing a challenge together and trying to arrive at a solution.

One of the Ubuntu formats is solidarity, which requires people to shun individualism and selfishness and be in unison with one another. People in need should be able to count on the support of those around them (Himonga, 2013:179). Working in pairs shows unity, and the spirit of Ubuntu leads to a synergic mix, cooperation and collaborative work environments, because the community is encouraged to participate, share and support all of the team members (Regine, 2009:17-22) (see Chapter 4.3.1).

At a social level in the extract cited above, the co-researchers were willing to invite motivational speakers. This is evidence of power sharing, which will help the co-researchers to introduce shared ideas.

The literature reveals that self-esteem refers to the positive or negative way people feel about themselves as a whole, which is also often called global self-esteem or global self-worth (Brown, Dutton, & Cook, 2001:627). Many studies show the relationship between stress and self-esteem at multiple levels. Self-esteem is included in psychological resources that help people manage stressful events and their responses to them (Taylor, Seeman, Eisenberger, Kozanian, Moore & Moons, 2010:47). Self-esteem affects people's reaction to stressful events and the way individuals cope with stress. At the same time, stressful events negatively affect self-esteem, which is a psychological resource against psychological disorders. The purpose of this study review is to examine the connection between stress and self-esteem and use this knowledge to reduce stress, improve self-esteem and, as a result, eliminate psychological disorders and improve the quality of people's lives.

#### **4.3.4 Peer partnership programmes**

Building relationships is core to peer partnership programmes and has been evidenced as an outcome of several peer feedback programmes (Barnard et al., 2011:443). In particular, peer partnerships are designed to operate within schools, where the development of a community of practice can lead to a range of productive outcomes, including the enhancement of professional identity, sharing of teaching resources and even research collaboration. Maximum benefit arises from reflection on teaching practice when that practice takes place within a community where there is mutual valuing of personal and intellectual growth and when time is dedicated to the task (Rogers, 2002:197).

According to the Standards for Education Programme (2011:69), peer education programmes can provide strong benefits to peer educators. Peer education programmes allow for direct participation of young people in programmes designed to affect them, thereby promoting positive life skills, such as leadership and communication, and creating opportunities for mentoring and future work contacts.

The social learning theory asserts that people serve as models of human behaviour, and some people (significant others) are capable of eliciting behavioural change in

certain individuals, based on the individual's value and interpretation system (Bandura,2001:271). The diffusion of innovation theory suggests that certain individuals (opinion leaders) from a given population act as agents of behavioural change by disseminating information and influencing group norms in their community (Kaminski, 2011:5).

The meeting continued with the co-researchers trying to devise a solution to the fourth challenge, which is antisocial behaviour. The team agreed on a peer partnership programme.

The co-researchers commented as follows, with **Mr Vilakazi** (the circuit manager) offering a suggestion first:

*Singumnyango wezamfundo kunganjani siqhamuke nezinhlelo zokusebenzisana kubantwana. Kulezo zinhlelo abantwana basebenzisane bebodwa.*

*[As a Department of Education representative, what if we come up with peer partnership programmes? In such programmes, peers will be assisting other peers with different activities.]*

**Mr Mkhize** (the principal) added:

*Okwethu ukuthi sisebenzisane nezinye izinhlaka ukuze lezi zinhlelo zisebenze. Uthisha ofundisa isifundo sokuziphatha kuzomele asisize kakhulu emaqenjini abantwana. Emaqenjini akube khona ongumgquguzeli.*

*[Our task is to involve all other stakeholders to make sure that such peer programmes are taking place. I think LO teachers will take the lead to assist. Learners will be divided into groups. Each group must have a mentor and victim and learners engaged in bullying in order to work together.]*

**Mrs Nkosi** contributed:

*Abantu abangabonela kubo futhi kungaba abafundi abangabasizi, nalabo ababekade befunda khona lapha esikoleni ababengavamile ukukhuluma kanye nalabo bantu abangabagquguzeli nababuyisa ithemba kubantu.*

*[Mentors can be school prefects, former learners who were antisocial and motivational speakers.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that the co-researchers are willing to work collaboratively and include other stakeholders as well. This shows that the team believes in peer-to-peer partnership, which is an excellent exercise because it is easy

to be vocal to one's peers, which is social level analysis. Social injustice in the discussion cited above is taken into consideration by using school prefects as mentors. At the discursive level of analysis, such programmes emphasise sound communication among victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying. Ubuntu alludes to the importance of relationships. The notion of Ubuntu is the idea of community in which a delicate relationship exists between the community and the individual members who compose it, which means a group of people with shared values and practices and a shared notion of the shared goal, whether or not it has shared language (see Chapter 2.7.1).

It is evident in the literature that peer observation is a process by which learners are paired to undertake observations of teaching, allowing partners to talk about teaching, share their reflections and collaboratively discuss ideas for improvement. This leads to a collegial sharing of insights and techniques that provide all parties with a unique and rich opportunity to enhance the quality of education (Bell, 2001:12). The strong focus on the reciprocal sharing of ideas distinguishes peer observation from other programmes designed to improve education and teaching, such as learner evaluations, self-evaluations and external review. Peer observations can be used for both summative (academic decisions, quality assurance and managerial decisions) and formative purposes (reflective practice) (Hatzipanagos & Lygo-Baker, 2006:421). For the purpose of this study, it is important to combat bullying using strategies that are developed by the learners themselves.

#### **4.4 COMPONENTS OF THE CONDITIONS TO FORMULATING A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS USING THE UBUNTU APPROACH**

The data collected outlined factors conducive to the success of combatting bullying in primary schools, as discussed in 4.3. This section focuses on the factors that enhance conditions that are conducive to the purpose of sustainable solutions. The section outlines the conditions that enhance the formation and functioning of a dedicated team, conditions that are conducive to a shared vision, as well as those that support combatting bullying.

#### 4.4.1 Anti-bullying programmes

Anti-bullying programmes in this study are programmes that have been proven to be effective in reducing bullying. These programmes are used in different levels or intervention strategies that are designed only for bullying victims and bullying offenders (Farrington et al., 2011:54). Using school-based anti-bullying programmes has received positive feedback regarding a decrease in bullying. Given that bullying is essentially a group process, occurring among and being influenced by peers (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Zijlstra, De Winter, Verhulst & Ormel, 2007:227), and the majority of anti-bullying programmes are school-based, the application of anti-bullying strategies at school will reduce bullying.

A study of international reviews of anti-bullying school-based intervention programmes revealed five types of intervention: curriculum, multidisciplinary or “whole-school”, social skills training, mentoring, and social worker support (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008:130). These programmes emphasise building relationships, enhancement of self-esteem, goal setting and academic assistance. In this study, anti-bullying programmes refer to a binding force for both victims and bullies working together to combat bullying.

The comments below indicate that an anti-bullying programme is a condition conducive to combatting bullying. **Mrs Shezi** suggested:

*Engikucabangayo ukuthi uma nje singakwazi ukuthi izinhlelo zokulwisana nokuhlukunyezwa kwezingane kuhleleke kahle uma kulungiselelwa unyaka ozayo. Lokho kuzosisa ukuthi uthi nje uqala unyaka sibe sesizisebenzisa lezi zinhlelo.*

*[I think, if possible, these anti-bullying programmes should be arranged early for the following year. That will help to start this programme early.]*

She was supported by **Mr Mkhize**:

*Ukwenza njalo kosisiza kakhulu ukulwisana nalesisihlava  
[That will help us all to fight against this problem.]*

This dialogue of the two co-researchers launched a better sense of progressive and positive hope that prior planning is an excellent weapon to combat bullying. Hope is essential in the sense that by the implementation of these programmes will help victims to develop expectations that one day in their lives will change for the

anticipated better (see Chapter 2.14.1). At the social level of analysis, Mrs Shezi's call to do planning together as a school community is an indication of having same collective goal setting. That shows collaborative unity and solidarity in the members of society.

Mr Mkhize's statement "*this will help us all to fight*" is an indication of solidarity and unity, which emphasises that people must engage in a mutual action and be able to act in a way that is reasonably expected will benefit others (Metz, 2005:538) (see Chapter 2.13.3.1). For anti-bullying programmes to be more effective, shared planning is vital. The collaborative nature of the effort is characteristic to PAR, which is about engagement and active participation (see Chapter 3.2). PAR is a dynamic process – as an approach to social investigation and an approach to take action to redress a problem or to engage in social action.

Bradshaw, Sawyer and O'Brennan (2007:376) state that teachers' failure to act may also be attributable to school-level factors, such as the lack of a school-wide policy regarding bullying, which can lead to passive intervention strategies when dealing with instances of bullying. Moreover, this hesitation to intervene after the fact may contribute to learners' perception that teachers are not doing enough to prevent bullying and not responding appropriately when an incident is reported to them. Staff members should increase communication with learners – learner victims in particular – regarding their efforts to manage bullying situations. Failure to act against bullying also challenges perceptions on society, which in essence may be discursive at some stage where unity and solidarity are sought for. To conclude this section, if these programmes are planned collaboratively, it may lead to better results of anti-bullying programmes.

#### **4.4.2 Classroom intervention**

A positive anti-bullying strategy is trying to keep learners (victims and bullies) busy from engaging in bullying behaviour in class. Victims and bullies should be involved in classroom activities. Classrooms are the primary places where social and emotional skills can be learned and character can be developed, but learning these skills does not always come naturally. Just as with other forms of learning, children

and youth learn relationship skills by trial and error, and extra support should be provided to those who are continually struggling to foster positive relationships.

Curriculum (classroom) intervention includes anti-bullying lectures, presentations, discussions, written curriculum and videotapes. Such intervention attempts to prevent or reduce bullying in the classroom by improving learner attitudes, changing group norms, teaching adaptive social skills and increasing self-efficacy. Vreeman and Carroll (2007:87) conducted the first systematic review of school-based anti-bullying intervention strategies. In their review, the intervention had to be experimental, with control and intervention groups, as well as a follow-up evaluation with measured results.

The comments below indicate that classroom intervention is a condition conducive to combatting bullying. **Miss Sabelo** suggested:

*Yonke into iqala endlini yokufundela. Kungaphela nya ukuhlukumezana kwabafundi esikoleni uma ezifundweni ezenzeka endlini yokufundela kufakwa imisebenzana enjengemidlalo azoxwayisa ngokhlukumezeka kwabafundi.*

*[Everything starts in the classroom. Bullying will be reduced if activities such as anti-bullying roleplays are taken into consideration]*

**Mrs Shezi** supported her:

*Leyo midlalo abayenze emaqenjini. Futhi kubalulekile ukuthi kungahlukaniswa abafundi. Ngichaza ukuthi labo abanhlukunyezwayo badlale nala abahlukumezayo.*

*[Those roleplays must be group activities. Bullies and victims should be in one group.]*

**Mr Mkhize** added:

*Kanti nenkulumo mpikiswano ingaba nomphumela omuhle.*

*[Debates about bullying will also help.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that the co-researchers hold the view that bullying can be combatted through classroom activities; this articulates the reality that anti-bullying mechanisms are to start from classroom management as a fact of reality of the state of affairs (see Chapter 2.13.5.2). Van Dijk (2012:21) alludes to the importance of working as a collaborative society to unveil the power collective unison. The use of dialogue in a classroom situation as part of the interaction activity



is at the textual level of analysis. Mrs Shezi's suggestion that bullies and victims can work together shows collaboration, which is one of the objectives of Ubuntu. At the discursive level of analysis, debates are used in conveying the message; this is best understood in instances of conflicting opinions about the negative effect of bullying

It is evident in the literature that integrating anti-bullying themes into the curriculum will bring about positive consequences. Teachers play a central role in the way bullying policies and programmes are drawn up, presented and delivered to learners. Research has found curriculum intervention to be a critical component of anti-bullying programmes because learners learn how to stand up to bullies and assist victims (Shellard, 2002:44). Therefore, anti-bullying themes should be integrated into the curriculum through activities and discussions that are related to bullying.

#### **4.4.3 Safe school environment**

In this study, safe school environment means a disciplined school; it is about positive behaviour management aimed at promoting appropriate behaviour and developing self-discipline and self-control in learners (Joubert & Squelch, 2005:132). School is more than the academic instruction that occurs in the classroom. Learners' education also depends on an environment that supports learning. It is impossible for learners to achieve at their full potential if they fear for their safety.

The goal of bullying prevention programmes is to improve peer relations and make schools safe and positive places for learners to learn and develop. With the incidence of bullying at school showing no sign of decline and the negative consequences of bullying on victims, the bullies themselves and bystanders well documented, schools are struggling to implement effective bullying prevention programmes. Learners feeling unsafe at school because of bullying should not be tolerated. The Department of Education and Training is committed to providing safe, secure and stimulating environments for all learners, and provides a range of anti-bullying policies and strategies for schools to deliver on this commitment.

According to the organisational theory, surveys indicate that both upward communication and knowledge of organisational changes are critical factors in

engagement. Policies and practices of an organisation, especially those that promote flexibility in work-life arrangements, benefit employee engagement (Kataria, Garg & Rastogi, 2013:109). For a safer school environment, communication among the teachers and learners is important.

The comments below indicate that a safe school environment is a condition conducive to combatting bullying. **Mr Ntshangase** suggested:

*Esangweni lesikole akufakwe izimpawu ezikhombisa ukulwisana nokuhlukumezeka kwabafundi kulesi sikole. Lokhu kuzokwenza abafundi beze esikoleni ngaphandle kokusaba.*

*[Let us put up signs at the school gate, showing we are combatting bullying. That will make the learners come to school freely.]*

**Warrant Officer Ngcobo** added:

*Singumnyango wamaphoyisa singasiza sifake ibhodi eliqgamile elinezikhali ezingafuneki esikoleni.*

*[We, as the Department of Correctional Services, will assist to put up that board.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that Mr Ntshangase and **Warrant Officer Ngcobo** are willing to take the lead in helping the school to combat bullying. The statement “*Let us put up signs at the school gate*” shows a willingness to work together, which is a symbol of togetherness. This statement gave synergy to the group and shows commitment by the co-researchers in making the strategy to combat bullying work.

In the literature, bullying behaviour is suggested to more likely be associated with children in delinquent environments. Several studies have examined the relationship between delinquent peer association attitudes towards violence and bullying (Moon, Hwang & McLuskey, 2008:6). School environment, classroom management, teacher practices and learner behaviour are factors to be considered to combat bullying. In all the classrooms, signs that weapons are not allowed at school must be clearly displayed.

#### **4.4.4 Peer counselling**

Peer counselling in this study involves the engagement of peers to observe bullying interaction (Craig & Pepler, 2004:2). These are activities where peers motivate each

other in pairs in combatting bullying. Ross (2002:124) states that counselling for bullies and victims has been found to be most effective when a part of each session focuses on having each participant begin to understand the motivation and feelings of the other. The bullies need to consider why their victims behave as they do, as well as how they feel as victims; the victims also need to have some insight into what has brought the bullies to their current unacceptable level of behaviour, in addition to considering ways (if any) in which they could try to handle the bullying problem themselves.

The comments below indicate that peer counselling is a condition conducive to combatting bullying.

**Miss Sabelo** commented:

*Niyazi into okumele yenziwe kulaba bafundi bethu abasebenzisane ukuze babone izimpawu futhi basizane ekulweni nokuhlukumezeka.  
[You know what, victims and bullies need to work together and have a shared goal of combatting bullying.]*

**Miss Gondwe** explained:

*Abafundi bangasebenza ndawonye kodwa inkinga eba khona ukuthi ubani ozoba ngumholi wabo nokuthi inkinga enye abafuni ukulalela.  
[Learners can work together, but the problem is to identify the leader, and some learners do not want to listen to their peers.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that a problem of peer counselling is that learners do not listen to their peers. Failure to co-operate and listen to others is unacceptable social conduct, which is alien to societal values for a collaborative sense of unity and, as such, discursive in nature (see Chapter 3.11.2). Van Dijk (2012:19) emphasises the importance of unity and solidarity. The need for working together of children holds true the spirit of togetherness and Ubuntu in people (see Chapter 2.4.), which emphasises that the spirit of Ubuntu leads to a synergic mix, cooperation and collaborative work environments, sharing as well as supporting one another.

According to the literature, peer counselling is a process by which learners are paired to undertake observations of teaching, allowing partners to talk about teaching, share their reflections and collaboratively discuss ideas for improvement. This leads

to a collegial sharing of insights and techniques that provide both parties with a unique and rich opportunity to enhance the quality of their teaching (Bell, 2001:30). It can thus be concluded that there is a need for peer counselling where learners can share ideas and collective insight to combat bullying.

#### **4.4.5 Anti-bullying rules and policies**

Anti-bullying policies of schools in this study are policies that are designed to support both victims and bullies to seek help to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid to go to school (Kraft & Wang, 2010:513). The expectations for learner behaviour are created through the development, implementation and enforcement of an anti-bullying policy. A policy specifically addressing bullying gives a clear message about the importance and seriousness of the issue. Woods and Wolke (2003:4) analysed policy in a sample of primary schools to see how well it matched the components of the whole-school intervention approach. They found no relationship between the content and quality of anti-bullying policies and the prevalence of direct bullying.

According to Evans, Fraser and Cotter (2014:112), every learner has the right to feel safe from bullying at school. Bullying behaviour in schools should be addressed as part of the duty of the schools to provide a safe and supportive school environment. All schools are required to develop and implement a learners' code of conduct that identifies goals and standards for learner behaviour about bullying. The learners' code of conduct should include safe school and specific anti-bullying strategies that aim to promote positive learner behaviour, prevent antisocial behaviour and encourage respect, compassion and cooperation.

The comments below indicate that anti-bullying policies are a condition conducive to combatting bullying.

**Mr Vilakazi** suggested:

*Kungumsebenzi wesikole ukuthi sense imithetho yokuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi yaziwe yiwo wonke umuntu osondelene nesikole.  
[It is the responsibility of the school to make anti-bullying policies available to the entire school community.]*

**Mr Mkhize** added:

*Ngiyethembisa ukuthi ngizoyenza imithetho yazeke kubo bonke abantu  
[I promise to make such policies available to all.]*

From these suggestions and promises, it is evident that policies play a vital role in combatting bullying as a fact of truth and reality (see Chapter 3.11.3), where the use of truth and reality is emphasised (Van Dijk, 2003:300). The availability of anti-bullying rules and policies on paper will help all stakeholders understand their responsibilities in combatting bullying. The statements from the co-researchers emphasise that advocating anti-bullying policies to stakeholders enhances the effectiveness of implementing them and gives responsibility and accountability to both the school and the community. The strength of the policies is also captured through positive hope for the better and the elimination of bullying. It is through the positive implementation of such policies that a sense of Ubuntu can be enhanced among learners (see Chapter 2.6), as Ubuntu emphasises the responsibility to help others in distress, to show concern for the needs and welfare of others and not to harm others.

It is evident in the literature that visibility of anti-bullying policies may have the negative effect of shifting direct bullying behaviour to a subtler (relational) form that is less noticeable to adults. This may be particularly true for learners with better social-cognitive skills, who are more adept in the use of relational aggression (Woods & Wolke, 2003:77). In the researcher's view, the implementation of anti-bullying policies will have effective consequences in combatting bullying in schools because all learners will experience a practical example when some anti-bullying activities are done inside the classroom.

#### **4.5 THREATS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

In this section, the threats to the implementation of a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools are discussed. These refer to the threats to a dedicated team, threats to anti-bullying policies implementation, threats to parental supervision, threats to communication and threats to time. Threats are external factors that are

unfavourable for achieving the objective of an organisation. A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something (Team, 2013:6).

#### **4.5.1 Implementation of anti-bullying policies**

The Department of Education has designed anti-bullying policies and programmes to support schools in combatting bullying, but the policies have not been implemented successfully due to various factors. The aim of anti-bullying policies is to ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without the fear of being bullied. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will learners be able to benefit fully from the opportunities available at school. Failure to implement such policies means failure to combat bullying.

The *School Standards and Framework Act* 1998 states that all maintained schools should have in place an anti-bullying policy that outlines procedures to prevent bullying among learners. Safeguarding procedures are in line with Sections 3(5) and 87(1) of the *Children's Act* 1989 and Section 157 of the *Education Act* 2002, stating that the welfare of all children in the care of a school should be protected. Policies are designed to ensure that a school is alert to signs of bullying and acts promptly and firmly against it.

The comments below indicate that the failure to implement anti-bullying policies is a threat to combat bullying.

**Mr Vilakazi** commented:

*Ukuhluleka kothisha nabazali ukusebenzisa lemithetho kungaqhubekisela ukuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi phambili.  
[The failure of teachers to use anti-bullying policies will push bullying forward.]*

**Mr Mkhize** further suggested:

*Okubalulekile kodwa ukuthi sifundisane ngalemithetho ngoba uma singayiqondisisi kahle kungafana nokukhuthi siyadlala nje.  
[What is important is to teach each other about these policies; if we don't, it will look like a waste of time]*

**Mr Mlaba** added:

*Mina ngicela lemithetho ibhalwe namgolimi lwesiZulu hhayi isingisi kuphela ukuze sithole ulwazi olunzulu ngalemithetho  
[I have a request that these policies should be translated to isiZulu for us to understand the content.]*

From these extracts, it is clear that the failure to apply and understand the anti-bullying policies will cause the strategy to fail and indeed attribute this to a waste of time – “*if we don’t, it will look like a waste of time*”. This view is a divisive stance that negates unity in people for a better purpose, which is discursive in nature. At the textual level of analysis, Mr Mlaba is requesting the team members to provide anti-bullying policies that are translated to isiZulu to have a collective understanding of these. This emphasises that there is a shared understanding among the team. Ubuntu embodies the concept of a mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human differences (Department of Education, 2001:3).

#### **4.5.2 Parental supervision**

Parental supervision in this study denotes parenting techniques that involve monitoring or looking after children’s activities (O’Malley & Thompson, 2013:133). Parents should be vigilant when observing their own children for bullying behaviour. Bullying hurts everyone, and perpetrators may be held criminally responsible. Parents should be concerned about changes in behaviour and pay attention when there are times where a child is unwilling to talk as this could be due to threats made during bullying.

The *National Education Policy Act, 1996* (Act No. 27 of 1996) stresses parental choices and responsibilities; strategies have been developed to encourage parental participation at home and at school, and to connect home and school more effectively. Most parents cannot connect their children’s poor performance to their lack of interest in their children’s work (Lorgat, 2003:3). The *South African Schools Act, 1996* (Act No. 84 of 1996) supports the researcher’s topic by stating that parents must take an active interest in their children’s school work and make it possible for the children to complete their school work. The *National Education Act, 1996* (Act No.

27 of 1996) likewise addresses parental involvement in the monitoring of home education.

The comments below indicate that a lack of parental supervision is a threat to combat bullying.

**Mrs Zondo** commented:

*Ukwehluleka kwethu njengabazali ukubona ukuthi kukhona ukuphazamisa ingane esikoleni yokona okuyigqinamba enkulu ekulweni nokuhlukunyezwa kwezingane zethu.*

*[Failure by us as parents to see the signs that something is wrong with a child as school is a threat to combatting bullying.]*

**Mr Mlaba** added:

*Ziningi izimpawu ongabona ngazo ukuthi kukhona okungahambi kahle enganeni yakho. Njengakho nje ukuthi ingane ebxoxa ekhaya gwiqiqi uyibone isizithulela nokunye.*

*[There are many signs that parents can identify to see there is something wrong with your child. For example, an active child suddenly is quiet.]*

**Mrs Zondi** explained further:

*Abazali abaningi abafundisekile ngalezizimpawu okwenza kube yinqinamba ekulwisaneni nokuhlukumezeka kwabantwana.*

*[Most parents don't know such signs of bullying.]*

From these extracts, it is evident that parents need to know the signs of bullying. Mrs Zondi indicated that parents failed to understand signs of bullying. This is indicative of the true state of affairs at the textual level, as from the stance of Van Dijk (see Chapter 3.11.4.1), the state of affairs among the co-researchers is emphasised. This is discursive as well when taking into account the practice of betraying the sense of responsibility in the context of society (see Chapter 3.11.4.2), where Van Dijk encourages the sense of responsibility among the co-researchers.

In the literature, it is emphasised that it is the parents' responsibility to show warmth and be engaged towards the wellbeing of a child. Having parents who are disengaged (e.g. parents who spend little time with their children or do not regularly supervise their activities), increases the likelihood that a child will bully others, while having warm, involved parents reduces this likelihood (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon,



2000:329). Parents' intervention in their children's lives is a basic need to avoid bullying and, as such, advocates the advancement of the sense of Ubuntu that learners have to embrace (see Chapter 2.5.4). Solidarity and sacrifice as formats of Ubuntu emphasise having a good attitude that embraces positive emotions and sound motives towards others and being able to empathise with and assist others. If this is not embraced, hostility and cruelty surface.

### **4.5.3 Communication**

Communication is the act of conveying information for the purpose of creating a shared understanding. It is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behaviour. Keyton (2011:7) stresses that communication is the process of transmitting information and shared understanding from one person to another. Communication worth is realised in bullying when victims keep others informed of what is happening to them and try to be open at all times.

In the *Public Service Commission Communication Strategy* (2008:29), it is stated that effective communication is the lifeblood of an organisation. It is the medium through which the vision and goals of an organisation are interpreted and understood by both its internal and external stakeholders. If a victim or a bully fails to communicate his or her problem effectively, it makes it difficult to combat bullying. Seedat (2016:23) is of the opinion that parents having a sense of awareness of the signs of bullying can help their children develop the skills to stand up to bullies or stop them from becoming bullies. The lines of communication should be kept open at all times.

The remarks below indicate that a lack of communication is a threat to combat bullying.

**Mrs Nkosi** commented:

*Okuba yinkinga enkulu kulwisaneni nokuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi ukuthi laba bafundi abahlukuyezwayo abafuni ukukhuluma. Lokho kubenzima ukuthola umsuka wale nkinga.*

*[The main problem in combatting bullying is that most of the victims don't want to talk. So it is difficult to find the root of the problem.]*

**Miss Gondwe** added:

*Laba ntwana noma ungakhuluma nabo kanjani bavele banga funi ukukhuluma.*  
[These children just don't want to talk.]

From these extracts, it is evident that there is a lack of communication, especially by victims. This denotes the textual level of reality, as advocated by Van Dijk (see Chapter 3.11.4.1), which emphasises the effectiveness of communication. Looking at the discursive level, victims' silence is a sign that they prefer to keep things to themselves, which is dangerous.

In the literature, it was discovered that victims usually do not tell teachers or school administrators that they have been bullied because they do not believe adults can do anything about it, do not want other learners to know they have a problem, fear being laughed at or not believed, fear it will become worse if they tell, are shy and lack the confidence to speak up and do not want to hear adults say, "Ignore it" (McCartney, 2005:91). Stress and depression are the consequences of victims being silent.

#### **4.6 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS OF COMBATING BULLYING DRAWN FROM BEST PRACTICES**

The indicators of success of the strategy to combat bullying are bullying prevention programmes, collaboration among victims and bullies, monitoring and evaluation of anti-bullying programmes and parental involvement. In context, success indicators are signals that have been identified to have resulted in the success of the strategy.

##### **4.6.1 Bullying prevention programmes**

Bullying prevention programmes are designed to raise awareness, improve peer relations and intervene to stop intimidation, develop clear rules against bullying behaviour and support and protect victims. To make sure that such programmes are active, the co-researchers agreed to organise awareness-raising campaigns and learner camps. At these camps, the learners were taught about strategies to prevent bullying at the earlier stage. This was affirmed by **Mrs Shezi**:

*Ngicabanga ukuthi kubalulekile ukuthi izinhlelo zokulwisana nokuhlukumezeka kwabafundi kwenziwe isikhathi sisekhona ukuze ukuze zisetshenziswe ngonyaka olandelayo.*

*[I think if possible, these anti-bullying programmes should be arranged early for the following year. That will help to start this programme early.]*

This statement by Mrs Shezi indicates the success of the strategy to curb the threat that can hinder the strategy. It also indicates the intervention of the team to work together with the school to combat bullying.

#### **4.6.2 Collaboration among victims and bullies**

According to Luckin (2010:10), collaboration is the ability to multiply one another's strengths to produce a result that no party could have achieved alone. It is a mutual engagement of parties in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. Collaboration means to work together. It presupposes conditions of cooperation (agreeing to work together, multiple parties contributing) and social coordination (awareness of others' contributions, coordination of behaviour). Collaboration is also more than these two aspects; it can involve participants working in unison, oriented towards a jointly agreed goal and often generating ideas to form the basis for a solution or decision. There is also a sense in which collaborative learning involves working together in unison to complete a task, while co-operative learning can involve individuals undertaking different subtasks but co-operating in the overall endeavour (Luckin, 2010:12).

In the discussion, both the victims and the bullies understood the meaning of the word "collaboration", as it entailed that both parties had to participate in discussions on combatting bullying. Working together of bullies and victims is a proper sign of collaboration and teamwork with the aim of reaching a shared goal. After the discussion, both these parties agreed to help each other.

**Mr Mkhize** said:

*Iqembu ngalinye kumele libe naloyo elibonela noma elifunda kuye ukuze anahlukunyezwayo naba hlukumezayo basebenze ndawonye.  
[Each group must have a mentor and victim and bullies in order to work together.]*

Bullies and victims working together helps one another know their strengths and weaknesses; this is a collaborative ideal enshrined in the spirit of Ubuntu (see Chapter 2.5.4). The aim of this study will be achieved if the researcher and the co-

researchers can adopt a holistic, flexible and accommodative approach that will develop and uphold a spirit of collaboration among all members.

Shangase (2013:107) indicates that Nigeria advocated collaboration among stakeholders for the effective implementation of the curriculum dealing with the challenges of bullying in schools. Working together as a team helped to develop victims of bullying holistically. Involving both bullies and victims together in one group to do joint activities can help by proving that it is possible for them to work together without any problem. Therefore, working collaboratively is a strategy to combat bullying.

#### **4.6.3 Monitoring and evaluation of anti-bullying programme**

Marangu (2012:83) explains that monitoring and control of programmes are the process of tracking, reviewing and regulating the progress to meet the performance objectives defined in the project management plan. He further explains that monitoring includes status reporting, progress measurement and forecasting. Performance reports provide information on the performance of the project with regard to scope, schedule, cost, resources, quality and risk, which can be used as input to other processes. Monitoring and evaluating of anti-bullying programmes can be extremely important to progress in combatting bullying.

Monitoring and evaluation are important factors in ensuring the ongoing development of the anti-bullying programme and ensuring that the goals, objectives and strategies within the plan are being met. The co-researchers during meetings agreed to work collaboratively to monitor programmes, and the monitoring tool was also designed with dates. A capacity-building workshop for all the co-researchers present was organised.

It is evident in the literature that evaluation and monitoring should be a process that is continuous and co-current with programme activities; it focuses and embraces all components of the strategy (Chemeli, 2014:82), in this study, to combat bullying. Using these programmes resulted in learners taking part in awareness-raising campaigns to combat bullying. They designed and distributed pamphlets to other

primary schools. Performances were done by both bullies and victims of Soul Buddies as a strategy to keep learners occupied with the aim to combat bullying.

#### **4.6.4 Parental involvement**

This type of involvement includes helping families (e.g. parents and extended family members) to become knowledgeable about child development and providing resources that enable them to establish home environments that support learners' learning. Parental involvement in the form of sound parenting has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. In the primary age range, the impact caused by different levels of parental involvement is much more significant than differences associated with variation in the quality of schools. The scale of the impact is evident across all social classes and ethnic groups (Desforges & Aboucher, 2003:17). Harris and Goodhall (2008:56) also found that parental engagement in children's learning at home makes the greatest difference to learner achievement.

**Mrs Shezi** (teacher) voiced her views:

*Amaheshana anemithetho yesikole kumele abe khona nasemakhaya. Lokhu kuzosiza ekuboneni umsebenzi wabantwana ebayenzile esikoleni. Umzali abheke ngisho usuku okwenziwe ngawo lomsebenzi. Ngokwenza njalo kuzoba lula ukulandelela ukuthi umntwana uza kahle yini esikoleni.*

*[Copies of school rules must be visible at home as well as at school. Another easy way to check if the child attends school is to check homework and everyday activities. Check dates of those activities. There are times where we as teachers ask parents to sign learners' books. By doing so, it will be easy for parents to navigate the attendance of their child.]*

Mrs Shezi indicates that parents have copies of school rules. Therefore, parents should have an understanding of what is taking place at school. It has been indicated that children are more successful at school when their parents and teachers communicate well and work together effectively (Epstein, 2011:19). After the discussions, parents were being involved in all planning of the school.

## **4.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter analysed the data and offered a presentation and interpretation of the results and findings on the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. This was in line with the objectives of the study, as mentioned in Chapter 1. Many sources of data, including discussion sessions by the researcher and the co-researchers, jointly indicated that there was a need for the formulation of a strategy. The data generated identified the challenges teachers and learners face concerning bullying and which hinder the implementation of school safety policies. Possible solutions to combat bullying in primary schools were offered and the team considered the conditions conducive to combatting bullying. Furthermore, threats to the strategy aimed at combatting bullying were anticipated. Indicators of success in combatting bullying drawn from the best practices were indicated.

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLSIN THE OSIZWENI CIRCUIT**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to design a strategy to combat bullying in primary schoolsin the Osizweni Circuit. This chapter presents the research question and aim and objectives. It further discusses findings and recommendations informed by the objectives of the study, which are determining the challenges to the strategy, evaluating possible solutions to these challenges, investigating the necessary conditions conducive to implementing the strategy, anticipating threats to the emerging strategy and highlighting the possible indicators of success. Chapter 5 also alludes to the presentation and discussion of the strategy to combat bullying. The chapter concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the study, making recommendations for future research and concluding the study.

### **5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Based on the background set out above, this study seeks to answer the following research question:How can a strategic approach be used to combat bullying in primary schools?

### **5.3 RESTATING THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Restating the aim and objectives of the study demonstrate that both the aim and objectives of the study were realised at the theoretical and empirical levels, before providing the recommendations and findings of the study.

#### **5.3.1 Research aim**

The aim of this study was to design a strategy to combat bullying in primary schoolsin the Osizweni Circuit.

### **5.3.2 Research objectives**

The objectives that guided the study were as follows:

- To determine the challenges that teachers and learners face with regard to bullying in primary schools.
- To evaluate possible solutions to the challenges of bullying in primary schools.
- To investigate the necessary conditions for formulating a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.
- To anticipate threats to the emerging strategy aimed at combatting bullying in primary schools.
- To highlight possible indicators of success to combat bullying in primary schools drawn from best practices.

## **5.4 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher and the co-researchers found that learners face certain challenges due to bullying in schools, namely academic performance, absenteeism, self-esteem and antisocial behaviour. Each challenge is discussed below, together with recommendations, conditions, threats and evidence of each.

### **5.4.1 Academic performance**

This study established that bullying affects the academic performance of learners. Most of the times, the victims of bullying do not receive support from teachers or parents when they report such incidents. Teachers mostly are not aware of bullying taking place on the school premises. Victims of bullying are overpowered and humiliated by the learners engaged in bullying. Some of the victims of bullying are afraid to communicate their experiences with teachers, parents and their peers. During the discussions between the researcher and the co-researchers, the team discovered that in educational group work, when they are doing educational activities, victims of bullying lack confidence – they fear being laughed at and end up not participating at all. Schewcik (2017:11) alludes that bullying behaviour is one of the contributing factors in the academic performance of targets of bullying in primary schools (see Chapter 4.2.1).



#### **5.4.1.1 Recommended solution: Creating a safe school environment**

The researcher and the co-researchers worked collaboratively on creating a safe school environment where all learners feel confident and accepted. There was an agreement among the researcher and the co-researchers during the discussions that the use of learner profile cards to navigate learner performance from the previous grades can assist in combatting bullying. Following this, learner profile cards were successfully designed (see Chapter 4.4.3). By so doing, it will be easy for the current teacher to see if something is disturbing the learner in class. It is evident in the literature that a safe school environment means a disciplined school; this is about positive behaviour management aimed at promoting appropriate behaviour and developing self-discipline and self-control in learners (Joubert & Squech, 2005:2). The development of the strategy led to co-operation, a collaborative work environment, sharing and support by learners, teachers and all other stakeholders.

#### **5.4.1.2 Recommended conditions: Anti-bullying programmes**

Anti-bullying programmes can have a positive impact on learners' lives if they can be thoroughly implemented at schools. According to Farrington et al. (2011:54), anti-bullying programmes are used in different levels or intervention strategies that are designed only for targets of bullying and bullying offenders. All programmes need to be monitored by the researcher and the co-researchers. Pre-planning of such programmes by the researcher and the co-researchers involved will bring positive consequences at the beginning of each year.

#### **5.4.1.3 Threats and risks towards the implementation of anti-bullying programmes**

The strategy will fail if the anti-bullying policies are not properly monitored by the team members because monitoring is the answer to the implementation of any planned activities. Hoover and Olson (2000:88) alluded that learners who attend schools that do not implement anti-bullying programmes feel unsafe, leading to unacceptable behaviour, mistrust and gang formation, either formal or informal

(see Chapter 2.13.4.1). Therefore, a committed, supportive, caring and reliable team is needed to implement the formulated strategy.

#### **5.4.2 Absenteeism**

The researcher and the co-researchers agreed that bullying negatively affects the school attendance of learners. It is evident that due to bullying, the rate of learners dropping out from school increases. It is evident in the literature that absenteeism as a challenge could be perceived to mean that learners who are absent from class could miss essential instruction (Jellab, 2016:131) (see Chapter 4.2.2). The cruelty of learners engaged in bullying has a significant impact on victims of bullying developing a fear of going to school.

Learners who engage in bullying tend to lie when teachers ask them about their negative behaviour. The school management team of the school was always not aware that there are children who absent themselves from school due to bullying behaviour. During the discussion among the researcher and the co-researchers, it was demonstrated that some parents were angry at the school because they did not receive any reports from the school informing them about their children's absenteeism (see Chapter 4.2.2). The challenge of absenteeism was also affirmed in the discussions as a contributing factor to the poor academic performance of victims of bullying.

##### **5.4.2.1 Recommended solution: Home-school collaboration**

A mutual understanding among the researcher and the co-researchers was developed to create connectivity between the school and home. During the discussions, the researcher and the co-researchers agreed that school times and rules and regulations should be available at homes as well (see Chapter 4.3.2). Parents and teachers working together when checking homework and dates of daily activities was another strategy used to navigate whether learners were absent or not. According to Heyman (2008:346), the collaboration theory emphasises collaborative interaction, which is characterised by shared goals, a symmetry of structure and a high degree of negotiation, interactivity and interdependence (see Chapter 4.3.2).

The researcher and the co-researchers collaboratively developed a period register tool to assist teachers to check if the learners were in class during the period.

#### **5.4.2.2 Recommended condition: Classroom intervention**

Engagement of victims of bullying and learners engaged in bullying in all classroom activities must be enforced. Extra support by parents and teachers in their daily classroom activities will foster positive relationships among them. Follow-ups, close monitoring and evaluation of their involvement to see learners' progress will be beneficial. Joint group activities, which will lead to the development of positive attitudes, should be emphasised. During the discussions, the matter was raised that curriculum (classroom) intervention should include anti-bullying lectures, presentations, discussions, written work and videotapes (see Chapter 4.4.2). Research has found curriculum intervention to be a critical component of anti-bullying programmes because learners learn how to stand up to victims of bullying and to assist learners who engage in bullying (Shellard, 2002:44). It is essential that both victims of bullying and learners engaging in bullying work together to have a shared understanding of each other's behaviour.

#### **5.4.2.3 Threats and risks towards parental supervision**

Parental supervision as a strategy to combat bullying cannot be successful if parents are not involved in monitoring, supervising and observing their children's behaviour. During the discussions among the researcher and the co-researchers, it was suggested that parents need to know the signs of bullying (see Chapter 4.5.2). In the literature, it is emphasised that it is the parents' responsibility to show warmth and be engaged towards the wellbeing of their children. Having parents who are disengaged (e.g. parents who spend little time with their children or do not regularly supervise their activities) increases the likelihood that a child will bully others, while having warm, involved parents reduces this likelihood (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000:329) (see Chapter 4.5.2). Vigilant parents are needed to thoroughly monitor their children's lives. If they are not vigilant enough, they will be unable to see the perpetrators of bullying.

### **5.4.3 Self-esteem**

The researcher and the co-researchers found that bullying affects the self-esteem of learners. Low self-esteem poses challenges such as poor habits and the inability to socialise with others. The researcher and the co-researchers discovered that victims of bullying isolate themselves from others and are unable to play with other learners (see Chapter 4.2.3). It is also evident in the literature that victims of bullying see themselves in a more negative light than learners who have not been bullied (Smith, 2008:72). Some victims of bullying feel as if other learners do not like them, to such an extent that they may feel scared. It was also evident that relationships, teamwork and communication among learners are lacking, which resulted in low self-esteem. The researcher and the co-researchers also discovered that low self-esteem can lead to depression.

#### **5.4.3.1 Recommended solution: Developing self-confidence**

For a learner to succeed in life holistically, he or she needs to uplift his or her self-confidence. Motivational talks presented to learners was a strategy used to develop their self-confidence. Activities by which self-confidence is promoted were designed and the learners were encouraged to work in groups (see Chapter 4.3.3). Effective communication by the researcher and the co-researchers was encouraged. Input by other stakeholders, such as pastors, was also welcomed.

#### **5.4.3.2 Recommended condition: Safe school environment**

More attention should be given to the application of discipline to all learners of the school to promote positive behaviour of learners. Learners' self-control also needs to be monitored by teachers and parents. During the discussions, the researcher and the co-researchers reached an agreement that it is the responsibility of the school to install signs showing that no fighting or bullying will be tolerated on the school premises (see Chapter 4.4.3). In the literature, bullying behaviour is more likely associated with children in delinquent environments (Moon, Hwang & McLuskey, 2008:6). Creating a safe school environment will lead to learners feeling free to go to school.

### **5.4.3.3 Threats and risks towards communication**

Failure to communicate can hinder the strategy to combat bullying because communication is the process of transmitting information and bring shared understanding from one to another. If the victim or bully fails to communicate his or her problem effectively, it makes it difficult to combat bullying. In the literature, it was discovered that victims usually do not tell teachers or school administrators that they have been bullied because they donot believe adults can do anything about it, donot want other learners to know they have a problem, fear being laughed at or not believed, fear it will become worse if they make it known, are shy and lack the confidence to speak upand donot want to hear adults say, "Ignore it"(McCartney, 2005:91) (see Chapter 4.5.3).

### **5.4.4 Antisocial behaviour**

The researcher and the co-researchers discovered that antisocial behaviour results from individuals' inability to respect the rights of others. Learners' rights are not protected at schools. The co-researchers also discovered that victims of bullying tend to isolate themselves from others. They prefer to be alone (see Chapter 4.2.4). There are signs of ignorance on the side of parents, which is an indication of a lack of communication. The literature emphasises that victims of frequent bullying are reported to experience a range of physiological, psychosomatic and behavioural symptoms, including anxiety and insecurity, psychiatric problems, low self-esteem and self-worth, sleeping difficulties, frequent headaches and abdominal pain (Guerin & Hennesy, 2002:33).

#### **5.4.4.1 Recommended solution:Peer partnership programmes**

It became evident that building a relationship among peers was vital. Peer education programmes were providedto develop the social behaviour of victims of bullying. Assistance by life orientation teachers was provided; mentorship was encouraged, and all stakeholders were involved (see Chapter 4.3.4). It is evident in the literature that peer observation is a process by which learners are paired to make observations of teaching, allowing partners to talk about teaching, share their reflections and collaboratively discuss ideas for improvement. This leads to a

collegial sharing of insights and techniques that provide all parties with a unique and rich opportunity to enhance the quality of education (Bell, 2001:31) (see Chapter 4.3.4). researcher and the co-researchers were willing to work collaboratively to make sure that the strategy works. By using peers, sound communication with the aim of reaching a shared goal was emphasised among victims of bullying.

#### **5.4.4.2 Recommended condition: Peer counselling**

Peers working together can be used as a strategy to develop sound peer relationships and mutual understanding. It is important for teachers to motivate learners to develop trust in one another. During the discussions among the researcher and the co-researchers, it became evident that a problem of peer counselling is that learners do not listen to their peers. Failure to co-operate with and listen to others is unacceptable social conduct that is alien to societal values of a collaborative sense of unity and emphasises on the importance of unity and solidarity (see Chapter 4.4.4). According to the literature, peer counselling is a process by which learners are paired to make observations of teaching, allowing partners to talk about teaching, share their reflections and collaboratively discuss ideas for improvement (Bell, 2001:30).

### **5.5 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

#### **5.5.1 Synopsis of the strategy**

This study aimed to create an anti-bullying society. The researcher and the co-researchers explored the triggers that lead learners to bullying behaviour and measures that can be implemented to stop bullying. All the relevant stakeholders came together with the aim of devising a strategy to combat bullying. The strategy was developed after some meetings with the stakeholders where the team looked at the challenges and formulated solutions thereto.

#### **5.5.2 Development stages of the strategy**

The challenges facing primary schools about bullying were explored with the co-researchers. Solutions were derived considering the conditions suitable for

implementing the strategy to be successful and justified. The research design and methodology used to achieve the aim and objectives of the study were discussed. Several meetings among the researcher and the co-researchers were held to devise the strategy. During the brainstorming stage, the team collectively shared their experiences with bullying. During the first meeting, the team started discussing ways of devising a strategy to combat bullying. The possible challenges to the strategy were unpacked, namely absenteeism, academic performance, low self-esteem and antisocial behaviour. All team members were actively involved in identifying and unpacking the challenges.

After unpacking the challenges, the team members proposed the following solutions:

- Creating a safe school environment where both the victims and learners who engage in bullying activities feel safe.
- Home-school collaboration is a strategy that can be adopted to develop unity.
- Developing self-confidence in victims will help them come to school without fear.
- Peer partnership programmes should be encouraged as a solution to antisocial behaviour.

Following these solutions, the researcher and the co-researchers devised a strategy of working together and unity (see Chapter 3.10.2).

The third meeting was held to discuss the conditions and threats were. At the fifth and last meeting, the co-researchers discussed the evidence of success.

## **5.6 EVIDENCE THAT THE STRATEGY WORKED**

### **5.6.1 Prevention programmes**

The team agreed to organise awareness-raising campaigns and learner camps as a strategy to combat bullying. The team emphasised that it was important to conduct such awareness-raising campaigns at the early ages for learners to become better citizens as adults (see Chapter 4.6.1). It was also agreed that such programmes should be arranged before the problem of bullying appears, not afterwards. Teamwork was the talk of a day.

### **5.6.2 Collaboration among victims of bullying and learners who engage in bullying**

It is evident that the strategy of victims of bullying and learners engaging in bullying working collaboratively was a success, because the researcher and the co-researchers worked collaboratively to make sure that they were involved in joint activities. The team agreed that working together as a team would breed success.

### **5.6.3 Monitoring and evaluation**

All the stakeholders accepted the monitoring and evaluation programmes that were found to be effective. The team agreed that keeping records of the monitoring was important. Monitoring and evaluation can be very important to various programmes of combatting bullying. Teamwork was drawn to attention.

### **5.6.4 Parental involvement**

The team agreed that parents played a vital role in the development of children. Therefore, to combat bullying, parents should be fully involved. It was also discovered that parents are more knowledgeable of what is happening with their children since they live together. Parents were entreated to monitor learners' homework and progress.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The researcher used Ubuntu as a theoretical framework and PAR as an approach to generate data. In future, if another theoretical framework and another approach can be used to combat bullying in primary schools, the results of this may be different from those of this study. The focus of the research was on schools in semi-rural areas. The researcher's future recommendation is to focus on primary schools in urban areas. The focus of this study was on only one primary school. In future, research may compare bullying activities in a number of primary schools. Although there are different types of bullying activities, the researcher did not



categorise such activities. In future, research may focus on different types of bullying activities to see which are more harmful than others.

## **5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It is evident in Chapter 3 that the study mostly employed principles of PAR. The inclusion of parents and the police as co-researchers in the study contributed to the victims of bullying and learners engaging in bullying being unable to voice out their concerns freely. The scheduling of times for meetings was a problem as meetings were conducted after school. The learners were exhausted as they were involved in classroom activities for the entire day. The study was conducted in one school, and the findings cannot be generalised because the researcher was unable to gather different opinions from other learners.

## **5.9 CONCLUSION**

The aim of the research was to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools.

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to the study and a layout of the chapters of the study, indicating what would be the focus of each chapter.

Chapter 2 presented the conceptual framework on which this study is based, which is Ubuntu. Ubuntu was seen as a relevant framework of the study due to its specific principles. Operational concepts were defined. The challenges teachers and learners face concerning bullying, the possible solutions to combat bullying, the conditions conducive to combatting bullying, the threats to a strategy aimed at combatting bullying, and the indications of success in combatting bullying were discussed.

Chapter 3 presented PAR as the methodological approach to the study. The PAR approach and CDA were illuminated in the context of the study, and the ethical considerations were presented. The credentials of the team, a SWOT analysis, the priorities according to the objectives of the study, the action plan and the priorities of the study were discussed.

In Chapter 4, the data were analysed and the results of and findings on the strategy to combat bullying in primary schools were presented and interpreted. Many sources of data, including discussion sessions by the researcher and the co-researchers, jointly indicated that there was a need for the formulation of a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. Challenges, solutions, threats, conditions and evidence of success were discussed.

In Chapter 5, the findings and recommendations were presented. A discussion of the strategy to combat bullying was presented, and the limitations of the study were clarified.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### DISCUSSIONS DURING DATA GENERATION

##### IZINKULUMO ZABANTU ABASIZA EKHULANGANISENI UMSEBENZI WAMI

**Izinqinamba ezikhona ezikoleni zamabanga aphansi mayelana nokuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi behlukunyezwa ngabanye**

**Mlungisi Mabaso** (ongumfundi ohlukunyezwayo) wakhuluma wathi:

Mina nje ngikhumbula ngiqala ukungena esikoleni samabanga aphansi eSilungile ngangenza kahle kakhulu emsebenzini wami wesikole. Ngithe ngiqala ngifika la eFindo ukuyokwenza ibanga lesithupha ngafeyila. Into engifeyilisayo manje ukuthi kunabafundi engibasabayo. Uma uthisha esinikeze umsebenzi wokuthi siwenze emakhaya bayasiphuca. Uma uthi uyala bavele bakhiphe ummese. Bathi kuthisha wenziwe yibo, kanti futhi thina asikwazi ukuzilwela, bese thina sithola amamaki aphansi Angazi ngingasizakala kanjani?”

Ngikhumbula nje uMiss Khanyile owayengifundisa izibalo wayeze angibize ngodokotela wakhe. Wayengihlekisa uma esethi ngizomjova esegugile eseugog0. Ngiyamkhumbula mina ngoba ngangizibona ngingumuntu obalulekile nje kuye nakwabanye abangani bami.

**Bayanda Ntshangase** (Naye ungumfundi ohlukunyezwayo) Wavele wakhuluma kungakashiwo ukuthi akakhulume, Wathi:

Hhayi bo mina sengivele ngivilaphe nokufunda ngoba vele kuyafana nje umuntu usebenzela abanye abafundi, Ekhaya uma ngibatshela ukuthi angisafuni nokuya esikoleni abanginaki ngoba abayazi inkinga engibhekene nayo. Ukuhlukunyezwa abanye abafundi akumnandi. Mina sekuthi angivele ngisiyeke nje isikole. Wena thishomkhulu uzokwazi yini ukusisiza ukuthi size esikoleni?’

**Nksz. Sabelo** uthisha ofundisa ibanga lesikhombisa waphawula kanje



Mina nginguthisha we sifundo sezokuphatha esikoleni. Ngakho-ke ngihlala ngiba semihlanganweni yabafundi abangaziphethe kahle. Engike ngikuqaphelilise ukuthi laba fundi abahlukunyezwayo bayazenyenza ekilasini. Lokho-ke kuba yimbangela yokungaphumeleli kahle ezifundweni zabo. Ngenxa yemdawo isikole sakithi ekuso kuba nzima kubazali ukubona ukuthi kukhona okungahambi kahle kubantwana babo. Nginesicelo mina ukuthi uthishanhloko abize umhlangano nabazali ukuze sibe nezixazululo.

**Mnu Ntshangase** Ungusihlalo womkhandlu wesikole saseFindo. Wayekhuluma ekhombisa intukuthelo yakhe:

Mina anginayo nakancu imfihlo. Phela mina angifundile ngivele into ngiyisho njengoba injalo, Ngifunge umama ongizalayo. Kanti sibizelwa lendaba yezingane ezingezwa. Azivele zithelwe induku lezizinto.

Mina kuye kungimangaze-ke ukuthi uma ngizihambela ngihlangane nabanye abantwana bakulesi sikole bengayile esikoleni. Kukhona la ngihlangane khona nokungabafanyana kufake umfaniselwano wesikole, bephethe nezincwadi. Uma ngibabuza ngathola impendulo eyangixaka kabi. Bathi kimi abafana bayesaba ukuya esikoleni ngoba basaba abanye abafundi ababashayayo. Angike ngizwe kuthishomkhulu ukuyena kuyenzeka yini anake ukuthi izingane azizi esikole ngenxa yalomkhuba wokushaywa kwezinye izingane.

Ngempela ngempela nithule nithini ningabazali uma niboba izingane zenu zingayile esikoleni. Khulumani bazali! Ngempela ngizwa ngicasuka ngempela uma izinkinga zakulesi sikole Sekungaze kubone nabantu bangaphandle ukuthi izingane azizi esikoleni. Asilungiseni nje. Ihlazo phela leli.

**Mnu. Mkhize** uthishomkhulu wesikole waphawula wathi:

“Maye! Kodwa Jesu baba.Yobe! Ngiyavumelana no Mnumzane Ntshangase abanye babafundi balova esikoleni ngenxa yakho ukuhlukumezeka. Sengike ngazama ukukhuluma nabafana abahlukumeza banye. Inkinga nje ukuthi bavele baphike. Njengamanje asinabo ubufakazi kodwa-ke ngibacelile othisha ukuthi abaqaphelilise. Nami sengivele ngaba namahloni nje Inkinga impela. Siyazikhuluma lezizinto singothisha.”

**Mnu. Vilakazi** umhloli wesiyingi sasOsizweni waphawula kanje:

Engikuqaphelisisa uma ngibheka inani labantwana abeza sikoleni ukuthi isikhathi esiningi abafana yibona abangezi kahle esikoleni. Ingabe kwenziwa yini lokho.

**Nkk.Zondo** umzali wacela ukungenelela enkulumweni:

Mina kuyangimangaza ukuthi uthishomkhulu uthi ebona ukuthi izingane zethu azizi kahle esikoleni angasithinti asazise, kodwa esikhundleni salokhu abize abafana abahlukeza abanye. Yini azoyithola kulezi ngane. Zinamanga nje lezizingane. Wena mhloli uke wasibiza njengabazali uma usubonile ukuthi kunenkinga ezincwadini zesikole.

**Mnu. Mlaba** Ikhansela lendawo lalisekela umzali:

Phela isikole ngisifanisa nebhodwe lesiZulu elinemilenze emthathu: Uthisha ,umzali kanye nomfundi. Asibambisaneni bo.

## **Ukuzenyeza kwabafundi**

**Sipho Zwane** Umfundi ohlukunyezwayo obelokhu ethule uyaqala nje ukukhuluma.

Kukhona abafundi esifunda nabo abathandayo nje ukuzenyeza uma sisekilasini. Abantu abafuni ukuba abangani name. Ngibenzeni vele.”

**Nkk. Nkosi** waphawula naye kanje:

Ukuzenyeza kwabantwana abahlukunyezwayo kubenza baze babe nesifo sokucindezelaka

**Mlungisi** wavele wangenelela enkulumweni:

Angeke angeke nje impela bomisi nawe mhloli. Angeke uhlale ungazinyezi uma abantu ofunda nabo bengathandi ukudlala nawe. Noma sisebenza emaqenjini ahlukeno ngiyesaba nokubeka umbono. Impela impela nje angeke. Mina vele ngizwa sengazathi sengiyagula vele. Sengihlala ngiphethwe ikhanda njalo uma ngibacabanga laba abasihluphayo

**Mnu. Mkhize** wangezelela wathi:

Ngifakazelana no Mama Nkosi ukuthi ingane ehlukunyezwayo uyibona nje ngezenzo ezivele zikudide ikhanda.

**Mlungisi** wathi:

HHayi bonke thishomkhulu kodwa uma uthi uzama ukuzisondeza laba abanye (ebuka uSipho ngokwesaba) bavele bangethuse bese ngivele ngizibone ngingelutho.

**Bayanda** wayefuna ukusho okuthile kodwa wacela iphepha wacela ukubhala angakhulumi ngomlomo. Wayekhombisa ukwesaba ukukhuluma.

UBayanda wabhala kanje ephepheni:

Mina nje njalo ngibona  
sengathi bayangizonda bonke nje  
eklasini. Uma ngithi ngifuna  
ukuhlala nalaba esifunda nabo  
ngibona sengathi abangithandi. Mina  
futhi nginbaba kakulu uSipho,  
uyashayana, futhi ubahlala bonke  
eklasini.

Mina nje njalo ngibona sengathi bayangizonda nonke nje eklasini. Uma ngithi ngifuna ukuhlala nalaba esifunda nabo ngiboba sengathi abangithandi. Mina futhi ngimasaba kakhulu uSipho, uyashayana futhi ubashaya bonke eklassini.

**Nkk Zondo** umzali wathi

Mina nje inkinga yomfana wami ekhaya uhlala ethule ezihleleli yedwa. Nasekhaya nje min auyangixaka ngoba uthanda ukuvele azihlalele ngaphansi kwesinye isihlahla. Maye! Kodwa akuve kungikhathaza

**Nkk. Nkosi** iwangenelela wamphazamisa Umama Zondo esakhuluma wathi:

“We mama wakhe kungumsebenzi wakho kanye nathi sonke ukuthi sithole imbangela yokuzithulela kwengane yakho.”

**Iphoyisa a Ngcobo** wangezelela kulokho okushiwo u **Nkk. Nkosi's** wathi:

Yebo asiqaphelisiseni ukuzenyeza kwabantwana.

Mlungisi wavele wakhuluma kungakashiwo ukuthi akakhulume:

Mina anginaye umngani. Akekho umuntu ogithandayo kulaba engifunda nabo. Nasekhaya abakaze bazihluphe bangibuze.

**Nksz. Sabelo** wathi:

Ngicabanga ukuthi kungumsebenzi wethu ukuthola ulwazi ngemvelaphi nangokusebenza kwabantwana ukuze sithole kahle nokuziphatha kahle komntwana emabangeni aphambili.”

**Mnu. Mkhize** wangezelela enkulumweni wathi:

Amakhadi amaprofayili abafundi azosisiza ukwazi ukusebenza kanye nokuziphatha kwabantwana.

**Ukusebenzisa aphakathi kwemindeni nesikole**

**Unkosazane Gondwe** wagcizelela ngokuthi:

Ngicabanga ukuthi isikole, abazali kanye nomnyango wezenhlalakahle uma bengasebenzisana ukusiza ukukhulisa kahle abantwana nangokunyusa izinga lemfundo yabo. Nabazali nabo basixwayise uma bebona abangakuqondi kahle kubantwana.

**Iphoyisa uNgcobo** wacabanga ukuthi akake akhulume angezelele:

Kuyangijabulisa ukuthi zonke izinhlanga zabantwana zila. Ngingathanda ukuthi ngikhulume nalabo abahlukumeza abanye abantwanaukuze baqondisise imiphumele engemihle yalezizinto zokuhlukumeza abanye abantwana. Kumele nakanjani balazi kahle le iqiniso.

**Mnu. uMlaba** ikhansela lathi:

Into okumele izanywe ukuthi izinhlelo zonke ezenzeka esikoleni kumele zaziwe nasekhaya. Kubalulekile futhi ukuthi ikomiti lesikole elibhekele ukuhlukunyezwa kwezingane esikoleni lisebenze.

**Nkk.uNkosi** awaqhubeka ngenkulumo wathi:

“Ngivumelana no baba uMlaba, emihlanganweni akukhulunywe ngezikhathi zokufunda kanye *nemithetho yesikole*”

**Nkk. uShezi** (teacher) voiced out her views:

Amapheshana anemithetho yesikole kumele abe khona emakhaya. Abazali abayibheke imisebenzi enikezwe abantwana ukuthi bayenze emakhaya. Babheke usuku lomsebenzi. Kubalulekile futhi ukuthi bazisayine izincwadi zabafundi. Ngokwenzanjalo kuzosiza ukubona ukuthi abantwana beza kanjani esikoleni. Lokho nje kukodwa kungawenza umahluko omkhulu ezimpilweni zabantwana bethu.”

**Mnu. uVilakazi** omgumhloli wesiyingi wabe esethi:

“Baba Mkhize ngithanda ukuthi abantwana ababhekwe zikhathi zonke ukuthi bakhona yini ezindlini zabo zokufunda. Othisha uma bengena ababhekisise nabo. Ngakhoke akube khona ithuluzi lokubheka ukuthi beza kahle yini esikoleni.”

**Mnu. uMkhize** waphendula wathi:

“Asilenzeni ngempela ithuluzi lokubheka abantwana ukuthi bayeza yini. Abaphathi besikole abasisize. Asihlalani phansi silibhale ithuluzi:

A TOOL FOR A PERIOD REGISTER: [ITHULUZI LOKUBHEKA ABANTWANA ABAKHONA ENDLINI YOKUFUNDELA]

PERIOD REGISTER [OKOKUBHEKA ABAKHONA]							
CLASS [IBANGA] _____							
DAYS OF THE WEEK [IZINSUKU ZESONTO] _____							
PERIOD [ISIKHATHI SOKUFUNDA]	SUBJECT [ISIFUNDO]	GRADE & CLASS [IBANGA]	TIME IN [ISIKHATHI SOKUNGENA]	TIME OUT ISIKHATHI SOKUPHUMA]	NAMES OF ABSENT LEARNERS [ABANGEKHO]		TOTAL ABSENT [INOMBOLO YABO]
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

## Ukungazethembi kwabafundi

Iqembu lokuqala uMlungisi **noSiyabonga** bezama ukuphendula: **Siyabonga owayekhulumela** iqembu:

“Mina nophathina wami la sicabanga ukuthi ukuze kuphele ukuzinyeza kwabanye abafundi kufundeka indlela yokuxoxisana nanganoma ngani. Ezinkulumweni akuvele ukukhulunywe ngezinto ezixabanisayo, ukuhlanzeka, umsebenzi wesikole, ukungabibikho esikoleni, ukuxoshwa kwabafundi

nokunye. Uma sivuleleka sixoxa ngezinto ezinje singakukhuphula ukuzethemba kwethu.”

Iqembu lesibili uNkosikazi u**Zondo** nephoyisa u**Ngcobo** bazama nabo bebeka imibono yabo: Iphoyisa u**Ngcobo** kunguye isikhulumi seqmbu:

“Engxoxweni yethu sicabange ukuthi kungangcono uma singabiza izikhulumi ezigqugquzelayo.”

**Unkosazane uGondwe** Wagcizelela lokho obekushiwo yiqembu lesibili:

“Njengoba sila sonke asibizeni izikhulumi ezizobaqguqguzela ngokuthi kube nemidlalo yokugqugquzela ukuziphatha nokungazinyezi. Leyo midlalo bayoyikhumbula ngisho sebedadala, futhi kungakuhle basebenze nontanga babo. Ngokwenza njalo kuzoba khona nokuzethemba kubantwana. Mina nginganifundisa nemidlalo ebalulekile.”

Iqembu lesithathu u**Bayanda** no**Sipho**, uBayanda **ekhulumela** iqembu:

“Nathi okwethu kuthi akufane nozakwethu abaqeda ukukhuluma. Thina besicabange ukuthi akubizwe abantu abanjengabafundisi bayosigqugquzela thina esihlukumezekayo. Phela abafundisi bayashumayezana abadlali nathi”

**Nkk. Nkosi** decided to make a conclusion to that discussion:

“Asiqedeni ngokuthi sithathe okubalulekile emaqenjini ethu. Ukukhuluma kubalulekile. Sizozibiza izikhulumi Kanye nabafundisi ukuze kuphele ukuzenyeza ebantwaneni.”

## **IZIXAZULULO EZINGABA KHONA EKHULUKUYEZWENI KWABANTWANA**

### **IZINHLELO ZOKWEHLISA UKUHLUKUNYEZWA KWABANTWANA**

**Mnu Vilakazi** (Umhloli wesiyingi) gave some suggestions:

“Singumnyango wezamfundo kunganjani siqhamuke nezinhlelo zokusebenzisana kubantwana. Kulezo zinhlelo abantwana basebenzisane bebodwa.”

**Mnu Mkhize** (Uthishomkhulu) wangezelela wathi:

“Okwethu ukuthi sisebenzisane nezinye izinhlaka ukuze lezi zinhlelo zisebenze. Uthisha ofundisa isifundo sokuziphatha kuzomele asisize kakhulu emaqenjini abantwana. Emaqenjini akube khona ongumgquguzeli.]

## **UKUSEBENZISANA NONTANGA BAKHE**

**Mnu Nkosi** wafakaza wathi:

“Abantu abangabonela kubo futhi kungaba abafundi abangabasizi, nalabo ababekade befunda khona lapha esikoleni ababengavamile ukukhuluma kanye nalabo bantu abangabagquguzeli nababuyisa ithemba kubantu.]

**Mnu. Shezi** wacela ukuthi kunganjani uma kungenziwa lokhu:

Engikucabangayo ukuthi uma nje singakwazi ukuthi izinhlelo zokulwisana nokuhlukunyezwa kwezingane kuhleleke kahle uma kulungiselelwa unyaka ozayo. Lokho kuzosisa ukuthi uthi nje uqala unyaka sibe sesizisebenzisa lezi zinhlelo.”

**Mnu. Mkhize** wagcizelela ngokuthi:

“Ukwenza njalo kosisiza kakhulu ukulwisana nalesisihlava”

## **IZINHLELO ZOKUFUNDA EZINDLINI AOKUFUNDELA EZNGEHLISA IZINGA LOKUHLUKUMEZEKA**

**Nksz.Sabelo** suggested that:

Yonke into iqala endlini yokufundela. Kungaphela nya ukuhlukumezana kwabafundi esikoleni uma ezifundweni ezenzeka endlini yokufundela kufakwa imisebenzana enjengemidlalo azoxwayisa ngokuhlukumezeka kwabafundi.

**Nkk. Shezi** wasekela ngokuthi:

Leyo midlalo abayenze emaqenjini. Futhi kubalulekile ukuthi kungahlukaniswa abafundi. Ngichaza ukuthi labo abanhlukunyezwayo badlale nala abahlukumezayo.

**Mnu. Mkhize** agcizelela:

Kanti nenkulumo mpikiswano ingaba nomphumela omuhle.



## **UKUFAKWA KWEZIMPAWU EZILWISANA NOKUHLUKUNYEZWA KWABANTWANA EZIKOLENI**

**Mnu. Ntshangase** wathi yena:

Esangweni lesikole akufakwe izimpawu ezikhombisa ukulwisana nokuhlukumezeka kwabafundi kulesi sikole. Lokhu kuzokwenza abafundi beze esikoleni ngaphandle kokusaba.

**Uphoyisa Ngcobo** wagcizelela:

Singumnyango wamaphoyisa singasiza sifake ibhodi eliqgamile elinezikhali ezingafuneki esikoleni.

**Nkk. Sabelo** wathi:

Niyazi into okumele yenziwe kulaba bafundi bethu abasebenzisane ukuze babone izimpawu futhi basizane ekulweni nokuhlukumezeka.

**Nksz.gondwe** waqhubeka naye wathi:

“Abafundi bangasebenza ndawonye kodwa inkinga eba khona ukuthi ubani ozoba ngumholi wabo nokuthi inkinga enye abafuni ukulalela.”

**Mnu Vilakazi** wacele ukugcizelela naye ngokuthi:

“Kungumsebenzi wesikole ukuthi senze imithetho yokuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi yaziwe yiwo wonke umuntu osondelene nesikole.”

**Mnu. Mkhize** naye wagcizelela:

Ngiyethembisa ukuthi ngizoyenza imithetho yazeke kubo bonke abantu”

**IZINTO EZINGABA YIZINQINAMBA EKULWISANENI  
NOKUHLUKUNYEZWA KWABANTWANA.  
UKUHLULEKA KOTHISHA NABAFUNDI UKUSEBEZISA IMITHETHO  
ELWA NOKUHLUKUMEZEKA KWABANTWANA**

**Mnu. Vilakazi** wathi:

Ukuhluleka kothisha nabazali ukusebenzisa lemithetho kungaqhubekisela ukuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi phambili.

**Mnu. Mkhize** further suggested:

Okubalulekile kodwa ukuthi sifundisane ngalemithetho ngoba uma singayiqondisisi kahle kungafana nokukthi siyadlala nje.

**Mnu. Mlaba** wagcizelela ngokuthi:

Mina ngicela lemithetho ibhalwe namgolimi lwesiZulu hhayi isingisi kuphela ukuze sithole ulwazi olunzulu ngalemithetho.

**Nkk. Zondo** waphendula naye wathi:

Ukwehluleka kwethu njengabazali ukubona ukuthi kukhona ukuphazamisa ingane esikoleni yokona okuyigqinamba enkulu ekulweni nokuhlukunyezwa kwezingane zethu.

**Mnu. Mlaba** naye wagcizelela ngokuthi:

Ziningi izimpawu ongabona ngazo ukuthi kukhona okungahambi kahle enganeni yakho. Njengakho nje ukuthi ingane ebxoxa ekhaya gwiqiqi uyibone isizithulela nokunye.

**Nkk. Zondi** waqhubeza inkulumo ngokuthi:

“Abazali abaningi abafundisekile ngalezizimpawu okwenza kube yinqinamba ekulwisaneni nokuhlukumezeka kwabantwana.”

**Nkk. Nkosi** waphawula ngokuthi:

“Okuba yinkinga enkulu kulwisaneni nokuhlukunyezwa kwabafundi ukuthi laba bafundi abahlukuyezwayo abafuni ukukhuluma. Lokho kubenzima ukuthola umsuka wale nkinga.”

**Miss Gondwe** waphawula wathi:

“Laba ntwana noma ungakhuluma nabo kanjani bavele banga funi ukukhuluma.”

## **AKUBE NEZINHLELO EZIBA KHONA EKULWISANENI NOKUHLUKUNYEZWA KWABAFUNDI EZIKOLENI**

Lawa kwaba ngamazwi ka **Nkk. Shezi** ngkuithi:

Ngicabanga ukuthi kubalulekile ukuthi izinhlelo zokulwisana nokuhlukumezeka kwabafundi kwenziwe isikhathi sisekhona ukuze ukuze zisetshenziswe ngonyaka olandelayo.”

**Mnu. Mkhize** wathi:

“Iqembu ngalinye kumele libe naloyo elibonela noma elifunda kuye ukuze anahlukunyezwayo naba hlukumezayo basebenze ndawonye.”

**NKK. Shezi** uthisha washo lokho afisa ukukusho emhlanganweni:

“Amapheshana anemithetho yesikole kumele abe khona nasemakhaya. Lokhu kuzosiza ekuboneni umsebenzi wabantwana ebayenzile esikoleni. Umzali abheke ngisho usuku okwenziwe ngawo lomsebenzi. Ngokwenza njalo kuzoba lula ukulandelela ukuthi umntwana uza kahle yini esikoleni.”

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY



#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the audio recording.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



University of the Free State  
205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Ryalaan,  
Park West/Parkweg, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid Afrika  
P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid Afrika

## APPENDIX C

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

Request for permission to conduct research at \_\_\_\_\_

10/01/17

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building no: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of education: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I, Pinkie Sibongile Evidence Happiness Tlou, am doing research supervised by Nkoane M.M. in the Department of education towards an MEd at the University of the Free State. I am requesting permission to conduct a research in your institution. The study is entitled: A strategy to combat bullying in primary schools in the Osizweni Circuit.

The aim of the study is to formulate a strategy to combat bullying in primary schools. As the principal, parents and learners of the school, your input will be highly valuable in this study since you are experiencing the day to day challenges concerning bullying issues.

An information session will be held to discuss details with regard to the project in addition to SWOT analysis and brainstorming sessions as well as follow-up meetings, depending on the needs of the project. The discussions will focus on issues of bullying in primary schools and come up with a strategy to combat bullying. Lastly, there will be a reflection session during which the report, presentations and plans for the public launching of the research report will be discussed and reflected upon. All co-researchers will receive the final research report for public dissemination. Members who will be quoted in the report will be contacted directly to ensure that they are happy with the context in which their anonymous quote will be used. All co-researchers will be given two weeks to consider the report and include any amendments or corrections. The data generated will be stored on audio- and videotapes, and the researcher will be the only one with access to this information.

All co-researchers are assured of the confidentiality of the information they will share, and steps to be taken to ensure anonymity including the use of pseudonyms. They have a right not to respond or to withdraw from the study at any time. The co-researchers will be treated with respect at all times.

This study will create awareness of and contribute towards providing strategies for combating bullying in schools and in the whole province should the need arise. It envisages empowering learners, teachers, parents and Department officials with an understanding of the danger of bullying in schools. It will develop an inspirational atmosphere in the community at large. The study will also support learners in becoming better citizens of the country. The researcher aims to assist teachers and learners in fighting bullying without violating individuals' rights.

Yours sincerely

---

P S E H Tlou  
Researcher

## **APPENDIX D**

### **A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OSIZWENI DISTRICT**

Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ [MD (OR PhD, etc.)]

Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

#### **EXAMPLE OF PARENT/ GUARDIAN CONSENT**

##### **RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET**

I am currently doing a research on bullying in your child's school. This research project is specifically focussed on bullying and ability to deal with challenges.

Participation in this research would require your child to participate in discussing some of the challenges they face in relation to bullying and how s/he deals with them. This discussion is expected to take between 60 and 90 minutes. The discussion will be recorded on a digital voice recorder, after which the discussion will be transcribed. I am the only person who will have access to the recording and transcript. Your child's identity will be protected by using a number or pseudonym in the transcript. Once the discussion has been transcribed your child will be asked to read through it to make sure that it accurately reflects the contents of the discussion. This should not take more than 30 to 40 minutes of your child's time.

Participating in this research project will not affect your child's physical or psychological wellbeing in any way. Her/his participation in this research project is totally voluntary and s/he will not be penalized in any way for choosing not to take part. Should s/he choose to participate, your child retains the right to withdraw from the research at any time with absolutely no negative consequences. Your child will not derive any direct benefit from participating in the research. However, if s/he wishes, s/he will be given the opportunity to discuss the results of the research once the project has been completed.

Should you consent for your child to be approached to participate in the research, her/his informed consent will be sought and all the proceedings will be treated with confidentiality.

The results of this research project may be published in journals and conference proceedings. Should this happen, your child's identity and personal information will remain strictly confidential.

You are welcome to contact me with any questions you might have regarding the research. Furthermore, you are welcome to contact the secretary of the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State (Mrs C Vercueil: 051 401 7083; [vercueilcc@ufs.ac.za](mailto:vercueilcc@ufs.ac.za)) should you have any concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of this research.

Sincerely,

TLOU P.S.E.H.

**Name:**

Tel:

Email:

---



## **APPENDIX E**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (parent's name and surname), the legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name and surname), hereby grant permission for my child to be contacted regarding participation in the above-mentioned research project.

I further acknowledge that I have been fully informed as to what my child's participation in this project will entail, as well as with regard to her/his right to withdraw from the study at any time and to have her/his participation treated in the strictest confidence.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of parent/guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX F

### ETHICS CLEARANCE



Faculty of Education

22-Aug-2017

Dear Ms Pinkie Tlou

Ethics Clearance: **A strategy to combat bullying in primary schools at Osizweni circuit in Amajuba district.**

Principal Investigator: Ms Pinkie Tlou

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

#### APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2016/1200**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MM Mokhele'.

Prof. MM Mokhele

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee

Office of the Dean: Education

T: +27 (0)51 401 9683 | F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: NkoaneMM@ufs.ac.za

Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa

www.ufs.ac.za



## Appendix G

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1041

Ref.:2/4/8/1179

Mrs PSEV Tlou  
PO Box 2039  
Newcastle  
2940

Dear Mrs Tlou

#### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A STRATEGY TO COMBAT BULLYING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT OSIZWENI CIRCUIT IN AMAJUBA DISTRICT"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 27 March 2017 to 07 June 2019.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Amajuba District

Dr. EV Nzama  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 29 March 2017

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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