Foundation Phase teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour:

A case Study.

By

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DECLARATION

Student number: 203 506 750

I declare that FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNER BULLYING AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE   **DATE**

(Mrs. N. Singh)

ABSTRACT

School bullying is an ever - increasing pandemic which is not only affecting schools in Kwa Zulu - Natal, but is also a national problem. Teachers encounter an increasing amount of bullying and disruptive behaviour in their schools. This study focused on the impact of bullying and disruptive behaviour on teacher morale and on teachers' academic deliverance. The research was conducted in a primary school, focusing on the behaviour of the learners between the ages of 6 to 9, in the Foundation phase at the school. The teachers from the Foundation Phase at the school were interviewed with regards to their experiences with learner bullying and disruptive behavior. Their responses were recorded on a Dictaphone and were then transcribed.

Using a qualitative methodology, the study found that bullying and disruptive behavior was prevalent at the school. The teachers expressed their concerns with regard to such behavior and its impact on their morale and the extent to which it affects teaching and learning in the classroom. The participants were able to identify a few characteristics or behaviour traits displayed by the bully or disruptive learner. The use of Kolb's' Experiential theory, which advocates that self-reflection of ones' experiences allows one to explore ones' experiences. This process allowed participants to reflect on experiences and then learn from them.

The findings show that teachers felt that time was wasted on discipline issues and that they require more support from parents and the school. As a result of learner bullying and disruptive behavior, teachers were despondent as this impacted on their mental health.

The study recommends that the Department of Education provides support structures for teachers and learners as bullying is a result of emotional and physical imbalances which could take place at the home or school front. For teachers, support may be in the form of compulsory developmental workshops on how to handle with discipline issues. This could also be a part of the pre- service training as the newer teachers who are entering this field are experiencing great difficulty with this phenomenon.

Key terms are: disruptive behaviour, bullying, teacher morale, experiential learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Foundation Phase teachers are increasingly experiencing learner bullying and classroom behaviour that is disruptive to learning, a phenomenon generally experienced in senior phases. Most of these teachers battle with this phenomenon daily in their classrooms. The alarming factor is that bullying within school classrooms is on the increase. Most teachers have even opted to resign from some schools and, in some cases, from the teaching profession itself. This is a consequence of the negative effects this has on their morale, it's a growing phenomenon, and is affecting many teachers, particularly because even the ministry of education does not provide adequate support. A study conducted by Marais and Meier (2010), further highlights the challenges the teachers experience as a result of bullying and disruptive behaviour. Both Bott (2004) and Smit (2003), discuss incidence of name – calling as a form of disruptive behaviour in their study. According to Olweus (2010), bullying and disruptive behaviour is a growing phenomenon. An increase in bullying levels has motivated this study to investigate teachers' experiences of the phenomenon and the accompanying effects on the profession in general. Broadly, the issues that are explored in this study concern a pursuit to understand, first, the causes of bullying, second, the various forms through which bullying manifests, and third, the strategies that could be explored to minimize and/or eradicate this phenomenon.

This chapter discusses the rationale, focus, purpose of this study, and the research questions that guided research activity. The theoretical orientation is then discussed,

and this is followed by a brief explanation of the research methodological choices made. The chapter concludes with an overview of the dissertation.

1.2. Focus and Rationale of the study:

The focus of the study is the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour in the Primary school. My conversations with many teachers have highlighted learner bullying and disruptive behaviour as a core challenge. Teachers at the school at which I teach expressed the despair they felt due to an increase in the incidence of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour. In my conversations with many other teachers at neighboring primary schools, I found that they experienced similar challenges. My interest in this phenomenon grew and, as a result, I conducted a research at the school with the intention of gaining an understanding into this phenomenon which plagued the teachers. During the interview and analysis process of this study, I attempted to remain objective and neutral in order to obtain authentic responses from the interviewees. My findings established that many of the teachers felt that such behaviour impacted negatively on teaching and learning in the classroom. My interest was stimulated by the overwhelming negative comments teachers made on this phenomenon, majority of whom felt very demoralized. Allen (2010) also makes reference to such emotions experienced by participants in the study.

It is important for this study to investigate teachers' experiences of bullying in the Foundation Phase in order to highlight the impact it has on their morale and general classroom management. The different forms of bullying, such as disruptive behavior, physical violence, name-calling, teasing and disrespect to teachers, form part of the aspects to be discussed in this study. Repeated disruptive behaviour and incidences of bullying tend to consume much of the teaching time and negate the positive classroom atmosphere. My experience as a teacher has also exposed me to many incidences of such behaviour and I found myself spending far too much time resolving conflicts among learners rather than teaching the syllabus. Bullying has become an ongoing problem in the schooling sector in general. The disturbing incidents that prevail highlight the movement of disruptive, bully behaviour from the

Senior Phase to the Foundation Phase. Teachers raise concerns that the younger children may be copying the modeled behaviour of the learners in the senior phase or their home life. Studies conducted by Olweus (2010), Rayment (2006) and Pienaar (2003) have findings that bullying and disruptive behaviour is a learned behaviour.

Accordingly, teachers from both phases share similar experiences regarding bullying, disruptive behaviour, and disrespect for the teachers or peers. Concerns from the teachers include daily disputes, fights and teasing, aspects they deal with and/or have to mediate on daily basis. This is both time consuming and recurrent, despite the fact that much time is spent in the classroom discussing social skills, acceptable conduct and respect for school rules. This indeed disrupts formal instruction time and surely affects teaching and learning. Teachers also expressed concerns that bullying contributed to high levels of learner absenteeism and this impacted on their academic deliverance. Wolke, Woods & Bloomfield's (2001) study reveals that teachers are constantly re- teaching concepts because of absenteeism due to bullying.

Needless to point out, this causes further teacher frustration as they find that too much time is spent on correcting social-skills rather than completing an extensive academic programme. These demands on the teacher are exhausting, frustrating, wearisome and sometimes provoking. Among reasons for this situation is the rationale that, in Foucault's words (in Allen 2010, p12): "bullying begets bullying". This is based on Foucault's theory of power dynamics where the reverse may occur and the learner is bullying the teacher. It is against this background that this study aims to:

- Establish an understanding of bullying and disruptive behavior;
- Investigate the extent to which teaching and learning is affected by bullying and disruptive behavior; and,
- Investigate the impact such behaviour has on the teachers morale.

As is evident in the above objectives, the key terms in this study are disruptive behaviour, bullying, teacher morale and experiential learning.

1.**3**   **The purpose of the study**

As already alluded to earlier, the purpose of the study is to investigate the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences of bullying and disruptive behaviour. Such investigation yielded data designed to develop a deeper understanding of the stresses and anxieties the teachers experience as a result of such bullying and disruptive behaviour. My interest in this phenomenon intensified over the past two years with the growing complaints and negative responses from teachers about their experiences. The need to gain insight and a better understanding on the reasons why teachers felt so demoralized resulted in my interest in the phenomenon of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour and its impact on the teacher.

In my experience, often the consequence is that teachers end up spending time on addressing issues relating to life skills as opposed to subject content. While developing the learners' life skills to cope with conflict is part of the teaching and learning process, the mediation process, which tend to be time consuming, end up taking time away from knowledge transmission.

Bullying and conflicts have become common-place, not only in the classroom, but also on the play-grounds and in the toilets. Bullying manifests itself in many forms, namely: teasing; physical and emotional abuse; extortion; stealing; intimidation; name-calling; disrespecting the teacher and disrupting lessons (Olweus, 2010). Teachers are spending more time on correcting disorderly behaviour rather than focusing on academic work. This is because the increasing incidents of bullying require the teachers' repetitive intervention and counseling, and this impedes completion of the academic syllabus. This process is time-consuming and interrupts the teaching and learning programme. The study aims to understand how such disorderly behaviour impacts on the teachers' morale as well as their performance in classes where some learners are as young as 6-9 years. Thus, the study aims to establish if there are ways to control or eradicate such behaviour which affects teaching and learning at the Foundation Phase at the Primary School, which is used as a research site in this study.

1.**4. Literature Review**

The literature articulates and engages in a discussion of the various forms of bullying and the challenges experienced, either by the victim, teacher, school community, or the perpetrators. The themes which arise from the studies reviewed in this study are on bullying in relation to teasing, fighting, name calling, intimidation, disrespect for teachers and peers, disruptive behaviour in the classroom and the impact thereof. Intervention strategies suggested in the studies are also reviewed. The literature review covers studies conducted at national and international contexts.

In the literature, bullying is defined as an aggressive behavior, which can either be physical, verbal or psychological, causing intentional harm (Olweus, 2010; Olweus & Limber, 2010). The perpetrator does not necessarily have to be provoked by the victim. Further definitions and the different categories of bullying are also discussed. Mangope, Dinama and Kefhilwe (2012), for example, investigate the intensity of bullying and the impact on the learners' academic performance in Botswana. Research findings by these scholars reveal that fighting is not considered bullying, but rather part of growing up. This contradicts South Africa's School Regulation Policy on conduct (Department of Education, 1996), which advocates against any form of violence and/ or harm against another individual. Fekkes, Pijpers and Vanhorick (2004) concentrate on the impact of bullying on the learners' health resulting in teachers experiencing stress regarding learner absenteeism and academic deliverance. Apart from common health problems associated with physical bullying, Wolke, Woods & Bloomfield, (2001) investigated the relationship between bullying and absenteeism which affects teachers indirectly. Fekkes, Pijpers & Vanhorick, (2004) advocate the need for teachers to develop skills to deal with bullying.

Allen (2010) discusses bullying with a focus on disruptive behaviour, where the teacher is not well prepared for the lesson, leading to unnecessary disruptions since learners are not actively and purposefully engaged. The study revealed incidences of learners bullying teachers resulting in teachers responding with bullying behaviour. This unstable relationship between the learner and the teacher is unhealthy. The study wishes to argue that teachers' perceptions of learners'

behaviour is strongly influenced by the learners' behavioural patterns. The observation of the learners' behaviouristic and humanistic characteristics guides the teacher with managing learner behaviour. Teachers' perceptions about teaching may alter and their attitude to their work may become negative and their morale can be demolished.

Bester & du Plessis' (2010, p. 205) campaign for 'the zero tolerance policy' on bullying, as cited in the Department of Education policy document (Department of Education, 1996), advocate the need to regulate learner conduct and discipline. Maphosa and Mammen (2011) assert that, while school indiscipline is prevalent, there are many disciplinary measures to rectify bullying. However, South African teachers are constantly finding themselves in a dilemma to find more appropriate forms of discipline. Furthermore, the author's advocate that learner's views regarding more appropriate discipline measures need to be taken into account and this is something ignored in literature at present.

Marais and Meier (2010) interrogate the phenomenon 'bullying', stating that since the abolition of corporal punishment in South Africa (DoE, 1996); learners have become ungovernable in the area of discipline. Teachers feel powerless against learners who constantly challenge their authority. There is a dire need for intervention strategies to be implemented. Fayne and Matthews, (2010) assert that the teacher needs to make a concerted effort to be aware of the learner's background and home life in order to manage them effectively and efficiently. A better understanding of the communities' history and culture will help the teacher make informed decisions about the discipline strategies to employ in the classroom. Teachers must therefore be context sensitive when they deal with behavioural and social problems in the classroom.

Pienaar's (2003) study discusses poor parenting and/or the lack of parental care as factors that result in the learner feeling worthless and unloved, leading to attention seeking behaviour which is categorized as 'disruptive'. Emotionally unstable home environments such as divorced or single parented households may result in persistent misbehavior in middle childhood and adolescence. Rayment (2006) concurs with Pienaar's (2003) view that poor parenting and dysfunctional families result in learners displaying similar aggressive and disruptive behaviour at school. Both scholars reveal that 10% of their respondents witnessed their parents physically

or verbally fighting each other. This could explain the reason for some children's tendency to take these types of experiences with them to school.

Maines and Robinson (2008), using various case studies, highlight the devastating effects bullying and disruptive behavior has on an individual. Shocking statistics point out that incidence of bullying and disruptive behaviour has increased over the years (Maines and Robinson, 2008). The apprehension in this regard is that bullying seems to have reached an unfavorable height in schools, resulting in irreversible damage to society. Reid, Mansen and Rivers, (2004) illustrate that, while there are contradicting views regarding gender based bullying, with a special bias towards females, research reveals that school female learners are equally involved in bullying and disruptive behaviour as their male counterparts.

1.5. Location of the Study

The research site for this study is a public primary school located in the Durban's Central Business District. The school consists of learners from poor family backgrounds who commute to the city centre. There are four other primary schools in the area, one of which is private. Learners spend ample time travelling, and this exposes them to different experiences which can at times be provocative and frustrating, resulting in these youngsters acting out. The study participants, the teachers, vary in age, gender, race and years of teaching. The learners, on the other hand, are from different socio-economic backgrounds. The school is co-ed and Catholic based. It consists of teachers from different faiths, cultures and race groups. Similarly, the learners also belong to different religious faiths and different race groups. At the time when the study was conducted, there were approximately 360 learners in the Foundation Phase aged 6-9 and 11 Foundation Phase teachers who were study participants. Teachers, as part of the study participants, agreed that bullying and disruptive behaviour posed a challenge. They also articulated feelings of frustration with learners who constantly challenged them in the classroom and on the playgrounds. Generally, it came out during data collection that teachers shared similar concerns regarding bullying and disruptive behaviour. This is discussed in detail in the data analysis chapter.

1.6.   Objective of the study:

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Establish an understanding of bullying and disruptive behaviour;
2. Investigate the extent to which teaching and learning is affected by bullying and disruptive behaviour;
3. Investigate the impact such behaviour has on the teachers morale; and
4. To establish how the school addresses such problems.

1.7 The critical research questions:

1. What are teachers' understandings of bullying and disruptive behaviour?
2. How does bullying and disruptive behaviour affect teaching and learning?
3. In what ways does such behaviour impact on teachers' morale and confidence?
4. How does the school address such behavioral problems?

1.8.   The theoretical framework

The study is underpinned by Dewey's' experiential theory (Miettinen, 2000), as well as the eco-systemic theory. While Dewey's (2007) experiential theory emphasizes that learning occurs through experiences and reflection, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) eco-systemic theory interrogates the impact of the learners' behaviour on the teaching and learning environment. The following is a brief discussion on these theories.

1.8.1. Experiential Theory

Kolb's (2005) theory contributes towards formulating "a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour" (Kolb, p. 21). In using this theory, it could be argued that Kolb (1999,

2005) encourages self-reflection. This process enables the teacher to explore the experience, reflects on it and learns. Consequently, teachers develop their ability to deal with challenges, thereby improving classroom management and teaching skills. Figure 1 illustrates this theory in a much clearer manner:

Figure 1: Experiential Learning Cycle (A.Y Kolb and D.A. Kolb, 2005, p. 6)
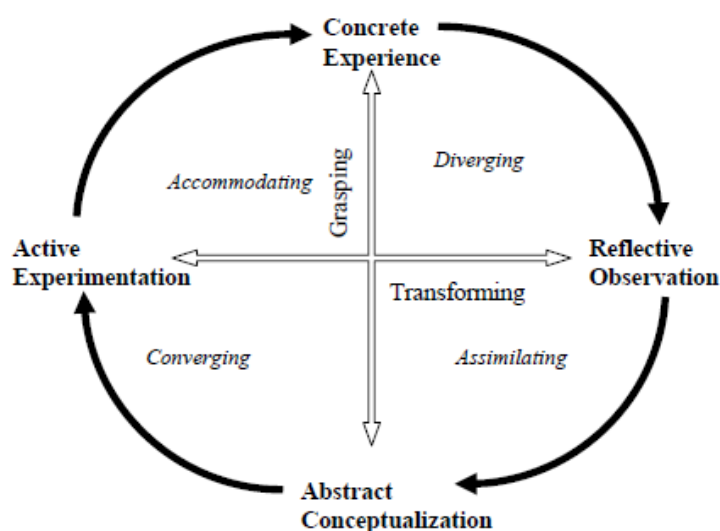
Fig.1 Experiential Learning Cycle

Dewey, cited in Miettinen (2000), shares the fundamental views from this theory and explains that each reflective thought grows and supports each other, creating a platform for further experiences and learning to take place. Experiential learning and the process of reflection is therefore continuous and develops each time.

Experiences and reflections of a teacher may serve as a determining factor regarding their perceptions of classroom management and teaching ability. It can be said that, while a teacher is trained to deliver the curriculum, it does not prepare them for the challenges they may face in the classroom. A few of the challenges are bullying, teasing, and learner name-calling of each other which results into unnecessary lesson interruptions. The challenges teachers face regarding bullying can affect effective delivery of academic programs, as well as teacher self – esteem.

This may result in teachers feeling incompetent. Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000), advocates that "we must take our stand with the child and our departure from him. It is he and not the subject-matter which determines both quality and quantity of learning" .Conversely, Dewey (2007) identifies a probable flaw in his argument on the basis that it minimizes the role of the teacher and the content by transferring responsibility to the child.

While this is true, emphasis on the curriculum is of vital importance as teachers find themselves accountable for the academic outcome. The teacher has a greater influence on the outcome rather than the converse. This is in terms of placing most of the responsibility of learning on the child. It is arguable that equal emphasis on content, learner attitude and teachers' performance individually play a critical role in the delivery of academic programs. This theory advocates that the teacher has the potential to take charge of the challenges, namely bullying and disruptive behaviour. The study aims to highlight that the practice of the experiential learning cycle may result in the individual reflecting on the concrete experience, conceptualizing the experience, and then actively experimenting in order to make a significant change.

1.8.2. Eco-systemic Theory

Different to Experiential Theory, this theory looks at the individual's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. According to the eco- systemic view, human beings are in the social context that is linked in dynamic, interdependent, and interacting relationships (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2002). The theory has recently been renamed 'Bio ecological Systems Theory' to emphasize that a child's own biology is the primary environment fuelling his/her development (Paquette & Ryan (2001).

The eco-system theory draws on the Systems Theory. Schools are seen as wholes whose functioning is dependent on the interaction between parts (Donald et al., 2002, p. 47). Donald *et.al.* (2002) argue that, in order to understand the whole; we need to examine the relationship between all parts of the system. The school is an example of a system with different parts, consisting of its staff, its students, its curriculum, and its administration. To understand the school as a whole, one needs

to examine the relationship between its different parts. Each system (viz. school) has its own characteristic patterns which make it unique. The pattern is made up of repeating parts which together form a total impression, or a characteristic way in which things tend to happen. Figure 2 below illustrates clearly how the Eco-systemic Theory can be understood as it pertains to the education process:
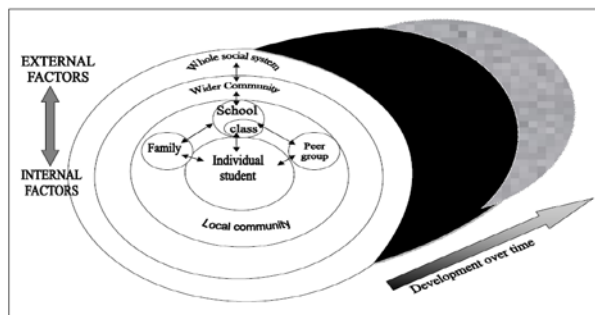
Figure 2: Levels of Systems related to the Education Process (Donald et al., 2002, p.55)

Figure 2 shows the different parts that constitute the whole (gestalt), and these parts interact with each to enhance the holistic development of an individual. According to Donald *et al.* (2002), a fundamental thinking in terms of systems is that cause and effect relationships are not seen as taking place in one direction only, but as occurring in circles or cycles. Because of the interrelationship between the parts, an action in one part of a system cannot be seen as the cause of an action in another part in a simple, one-directional way. In systemic thinking, actions are seen as triggering and affecting one another in a reciprocal way. For the purpose of this study I will focus on the system of support the teachers have within the school structure.

1.9. Methodology

This qualitative study falls within the interpretive paradigm as the research is based on understanding the phenomena of bullying and disruptive behaviour in a primary school. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), the design of qualitative research often emerges as the research progresses.

In order to engage and respond to research questions, the research process draws on the responses of teachers who are the study participants. Selected from one specific school, a sample of 6 teachers will be used. It is for this reason that a case study is selected as the research design. A case study, according to Yin (2014), has well defined steps, namely: design the study and generate the data, analyze and interpret the data, and finally to disseminate the data. Dooley (2002), states that a case study is based on a specific story in a specific work environment. This case study describes who, where, what, when, why, and how in as far as the issues under investigation are concerned, and concentrates on a few events particularly pertinent to the study.

In this study, the participants who have been selected vary in terms of age, gender, race and years of teaching experience. This choice has determined the extent these variables influenced the phenomenon under study. The interview questions were phrased in such a way that authentic responses from the participants were obtained. The intention was to capture the teachers' views and perceptions of bullying and disruptive behaviour and how this impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers in the Foundation Phase who were approached to participate in the study were guaranteed confidentiality of the findings and their names. Two senior teachers and four new teachers (approximately 2 years-experiences) formed part of the study sample. The intention of the selection was to identify participants who will enable the study to establish the extent to which disruptive behaviour and bullying are prevalent and disruptive, regardless of the teaching experience the teacher has, the teachers' gender or the teachers' race.

An interview schedule was thus used to generate data. Interviews were conducted in a neutral setting, namely: a park or coffee shop. There were two 30 minute interview sessions. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone and then the interviews were transcribed into written texts. Participants were given a sample of the questions to peruse prior to the interview. This made them to be comfortable and felt at ease during the interview (Appendix one attached).

1.10. Data analysis

Face to face interviews were conducted with individual participants. Tone of voice, body language and speech were observed, recorded and analyzed carefully to ensure the validity of the findings. The data generated during the interview thus became an evaluation in relation to the participants' verbal responses and non-verbal responses, namely: facial expressions, tone of voice, use of language, as well as body language. The interviews which were recorded were then transcribed. These transcriptions were then analyzed and were then captured using the thematic analysis method. Four evident themes surfaced during the thematic analysis process.

1.11. Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), the design of qualitative research often emerges as the research progresses. The research draws on the responses of teachers to add value to the study. A sample of 6 teachers was selected from one specific school. This case study describes who, where, what, when, why and how and concentrates on a few events. The interviews thus allowed study participants to speak about their experiences. This is something that caused the researcher to consider the findings as valid as it is the participants own responses. It is also very important that their responses are not distorted but rather recorded, capturing the essence of what the participant says.

Using the interview method to collect data can was very effective in this research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) emphasize that a good interview puts the subjects at ease, allowing them to communicate freely about their experiences. They believe that a good interview will yield rich data filled with words that reveal the participants views (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p97).

1.12. Limitations

First, scheduling interviews with teachers may be difficult due to their availability and time constraints. This is the reason the interview times with participants were

negotiated based on their availability. Second, the sample size was small, especially since teachers were not drawn from diverse schools with differing learner demography. This limited the external validity of the study. With a small sample size, the findings in this research cannot be considered representative of all Primary school teachers' experiences with bullying. The findings should therefore not be generalized beyond the context under which the study was conducted. Research represents data generated in an urban area and can therefore not be generalized to represent teachers and data in rural areas. Also the study was conducted in one geographical area, a unique context with unique socio- economic challenges.

1.13. Ethical Issues

Ethical measures included gaining informed consent from the Principal and the study participants. A consent form was drawn up for the Department of Education, the Principal of the school and the teachers to sign. Pseudonyms were used for the school and all the participants who were interviewed. The study consisted of adult participants. Teachers were also reassured that they were under no obligation to continue with the interview if they wished to withdraw. They were also assured that pseudonyms were to be used to protect their identity and that of the children in this study. Each interview began with stating the purpose of the interview, assuring the study participants of confidentiality and an assurance that there was no right or wrong answers to the interview questions. The procedure for the interviews was explained before each session began. The transcripts were available to the participants to authenticate the data. The completed study will be available from the libraries. The data is stored in my office and will be disposed of after 5 years.

1.14. Conclusion and overview of the thesis

The significance of the eco-systemic theory to this study is concerned with understanding individuals in relation to their social context. This includes the home, family, school and the wider community. People are constantly bombarded by

societal tribulations or issues such as domestic violence, poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS, learner-on-learner violence. They have to make sense of it all and, in the process, shape their own future.

Making sense of a situation or experience requires reflection. Reflection on experiences can bring about vital transformation when it comes to bullying and disruptive behaviour in schools. This process of learning from experience can benefit the teachers as well. In doing so, intervention programmes can be designed to assist and support teachers. The process of reflection allows teachers and learners to learn from experiences, as well as to make necessary adjustments. Hence the eco-systemic and the experiential perspectives are mutually supportive of each other and influence each other. Both the theories are therefore equally important to this study. They allow the teacher to gain a better understanding of the new knowledge in the hope that changes will be implemented.

In chapter one the phenomenon under study was introduced, followed by the rationale, the focus and purpose of the study. The research questions which formed the foundation of this study were outlined. The theory that framed this study was discussed. The methodology utilized in this study was briefly discussed. Finally, this chapter provided an overview of the study.

Chapter Two discusses the literature review. It begins by clarifying the terms and thereafter briefly discusses the impact bullying and disruptive behaviour has on teacher morale and the delivery of academic programs. The review highlights the factors that contribute to the phenomenon. It also alludes to the fact that, while South Africa is experiencing this challenge, this phenomenon has become a national concern. This review discloses that studies on the phenomenon of bullying and disruptive behaviour largely focus on the impact it has on the learner, while limited studies have been conducted focusing on the impact on the teacher.

Chapter Three comprises the theoretical underpinning of this study, experiential theory and eco-systemic theory. The experiential theory advocates that children and adults learn from their experiences through reflection, causing their perceptions to change and adjust with the experiences. The eco-systemic theory, on the other hand, asserts that the individual does not function in isolation, but rather in relation to

the social context in which he/ she finds themselves. Their actions and decision therefore impact are influenced by their social context. Both these theories influence and inform each other and equally important.

Chapter Four discussed the research design and methodology. The qualitative research design and the interpretivist paradigm employed in this study are explained. The key research questions that guided this study are clearly outlined, followed by a description of the type of sampling used in this study. The data generation techniques are discussed, as well as the trustworthiness of this study. The chapter also describes the type of analysis that was used in this study by elaborating on the definition of thematic analysis which was used to interpret the themes. It then concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study and the ethical considerations that were undertaken in this study.

Chapter Five is a presentation and analysis of the data. There are seven emergent themes that are analyzed and discussed in light of the theoretical frameworks, experiential theory and eco-systemic theory. The relevant literature which was reviewed is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Six presents the conclusion and the recommendations that this study yielded. The findings of this study are discussed in light of the three research questions that guided this research. The recommendations that emerged from the findings and recommendations for further study conclude this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction:

A study of this nature requires that specific specialist terms be defined for clarification purposes. These are bullying, victim, teacher, disruptive behaviour. Much debate exists in the definition of bullying. This may vary from individual-to-individual, school-to-school and community-to–community. This depends entirely on culture, personal history and personal experiences. While this is true, there is an indication that for bullying to take place, there needs to be the intrusive group versus the submissive group. There are two participants/ groups in bullying, which are the victim and the perpetrator. Olweus and Limber (2010) define bullying as aggressive behaviour which can either be physical, verbal or psychological, causing intentional harm. The perpetrator does not necessarily have to be provoked by the victim. This study concerns itself with teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour. The literature I reviewed focuses on the negative impact this phenomenon has on all stakeholders at a school. The chapter is organized in the following way:

2.2. Defines the terms bully and the characteristics of a bully;

2.3. Defines a victim and the characteristics of a victim;

2.4. Defines and discusses disruptive behaviour;

2.5. Teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour;

2.6. The impact of learner' bullying and disruptive behaviour on teacher morale;

2.7.Factors which promote bullying in South Africa;

2.8. Intervention strategies to address learner bullying and disruptive behaviour in schools;

2.9 .Psychological interventions as preventative measures against bullying;

2.10. Conclusion.

2.2. Definition and characteristics of a bully

Reid, Mansen and Rivers (2004) state that "a 'bully' enjoys more physical or psychological power than the 'victim', "applying this to devalue another to make himself/herself appears superior" (Reid *et.al.* 2004, p. 241). Bullying is deliberate, repetitive, and regular abuse of power which could be carried out either by groups or individuals on a group or an individual. Liouh (2010) and James (2010) maintain that bullying is intentional, repeated negative behaviour which affect the victims, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is an abuse of power where the bully does not need a reason to be provoked but merely inflicts 'hurt' on the victim, either physically or verbally. Liouh (2010), however, elaborates further that bullying is a form of power imbalance unless students are at par in their strengths. James (2010) and Liouh (2010) share the view that bullies have greater access to power over their victims, who are physically and mentally too weak to defend themselves. Liouh (2010) amplifies two bullying categories as follows: overt, which includes verbal and physical abuse, and covert, which encompasses relational antagonism as well as harassment.

According to Bassett (2007), bullying and disruptive behaviour is present in children of all ages. Such behaviour may continue into adulthood in the form of road rage, victimization, assaults and numerous other negative behaviors. Mangope *et.al.* (2012) finds that there is no universal consensus on the classification of what bullying is, but concurs with Charach, Pepler and Ziegler (1995) who define a bully as being an individual or group who obtain status or excitement with harmful behaviour towards an individual or a group, disregarding the welfare of the victim. Mangope *et. al*. (2012) states that it involves deliberate acts of harmful behaviour towards a person who is weaker or less powerful. It can therefore be said that power relations is central to bullying behaviour.

Bassett (2007) believes that bullies seem to gain satisfaction from causing either physical or emotional pain on others. Their desire for power and the need to feel in control leaves them with very little empathy for their victims. Olweus *et.al* (2010) articulates that bullies, both male and females, were cowards who had psychological problems and family problems. Olweus *et.al*. (2010) discusses the alarming statistics

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on bullying, indicating that 60% of bullies who were branded in grade 6 through to grade 9 were convicted of criminal offences by the age of 24. This behaviour may be the underlying cause of continuous rebellious, juvenile behaviour into adulthood. Bassett (2007), shares the same views and states that bullying is a repeated, intentional behaviour causing either physical or emotional harm to its victim. Such unsavory behaviour is evident of the social degeneration of values globally due to increasing over-emphasis on the rights of the child and, in the process, contradicting some long-established value systems.

2. 3. Definition and characteristics of a victim

Marais (2010, p. 43) attributes disruptive behaviour to inappropriate behaviour associated with disciplinary problems that affect "the fundamental rights of the learner to feel safe and be treated with respect in the learning environment". Research conducted by Charach *et.al.* (1995) reveals that victims of bullying were generally very feeble and often 'nerds' who were afraid to retaliate. Olweus and Limber (2010) states that the victims display characteristics which may indicate that they are introverted; unpopular among peers; lacking in social skills or come from overprotective homes. Apart from their physical weakness, victims may also be targeted because of their age, race, ethnicity or gender.

James (2010) advances that the victim experiences social alienation, low self-esteem, attention deficit and mediocre problem solving skills. Such behavioural deficiencies could be attributed to inconsistent parenting based on elements such as unloving and abusive family relations, as well as fickle values. According to the above author, victims believe that because of the inconsistency in educator intervention, bullying is unlikely to stop. As a result, victims prefer to report their grievances in this respect to fellow pupils rather than to educators. Bassett (2007) supports this view by stating that victims were hesitant to seek help from adults for fear of further harassment by the bully. According to Sharp (cited in Reid *et al,* 2004), both sets of students either with high or low self-esteem were prone to bullying. However, his findings were that the latter were more likely to report the incident.

Bassett (2007) supports the view that victims may be lacking confidence and may experience feelings of vulnerability, trepidation, embarrassment and low self-esteem. This may be because they feel bad about themselves. Learners with special educational needs and learning disabilities were equally prone to bullying, impacting on the learners' self-esteem. Mangope *et.al.* (2012) support this view, adding that the victims tend to fear going to school; become depressed and also avoid interacting with people because of their low self-esteem. Bassett (2007) insists that if bullying were to occur on a continuous basis, it could leave permanent scars. Hence it seems there is agreement between the above authors, that bullying has a negative effect on the victim, affecting them emotionally and psychologically.

2.4. Disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour associated with bullying takes a myriad of forms. According to Levin and Nolan (1996), disruptive behaviour can be either minor or severe. Attributes of disruptive behaviour range from disrupting a lesson to the extreme of harming individuals either physically or emotionally. The above forms are among disruptions that qualify as bullying which, according to Gordon and Browne (Gordon and Browne, 2004), fall under the umbrella of inappropriate behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour in the classroom, according to Levin and Nolan (1996, p. 161), may include disrespect for the teacher and peers in the following ways:

- verbal interruptions (e.g. talking out of turn, name calling, humming, calling out);
- off-task behaviors (e.g. daydreaming, fidgeting, doodling, tardiness, inattention);
- physical movement that, whether intended or not, is bound to disrupt (e.g. wandering about, visiting other learners, passing notes, sitting on the desk, throwing objects around the classroom); and,
- Disrespect (verbal aggression, teasing, punching, neglecting academic work, refusing to follow directions, and assault).

On his part, Bott (2004, p. 9) attests to learners having reported recurrently being called names such as "stupid, dumb, skinny, fat or retarded by other learners in the

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classroom and on the playground, and that they felt ashamed and humiliated by the experience of being called those names." Similarly, Smit (2003, p. 30) recounted instances of offensive name-calling based on racial discrimination. Apart from racial discrimination, James (2010) includes social exclusion or malicious gossip, in addition to differences based on religion, culture, gender or sexuality.

Rayment (2006, p.99), suggests that disruptive behaviour which leads to physical violence causing both emotional and physical stress is,

> … by far the most challenging misbehavior to deal with. It is often a
> subset of revenge seeking and one in five boys will resort to violent
> physical conflict.

Bullying, on the other hand, may be caused by an individual acting out of emotional stress, ultimately leading to a vicious cycle where a frustrated victim reverses roles and becomes the perpetrator. It is a case of the victim turned perpetrator, though they know better since they themselves suffered in a similar way at some point in their lives. It is therefore evident that the act of bullying or disruptive behaviour has negative emotional and psychological effects on the victim. The terms bullying and disruptive behaviour, may mean different things to different individuals. This is because each one has a different value system. It may be argued that it must also be considered that perceptions are influenced by culture, value system, society and, most importantly, personal experience.

2.5. Teachers' perceptions of bullying and disruptive behaviour

Teachers may vary in their perceptions of, and approach to, bullying. Research reveals that teachers identify a wide range of bullying behaviour. A significant number of them, however, are of the opinion that threatening people verbally supersedes ostracizing others (Boulton cited in Craig, Henderick and Murphy, 2000). Boulton's study found that teachers view verbal threats and physical assault as bullying, while name calling, malicious gossip, or menacing looks were not. He also points out that, generally, teachers expressed negative attitudes towards bullying and bullies.

According to James (2010), while new teachers were generally sympathetic towards victims, the seasoned educators seemed less empathetic based on their increased length of service. Regardless of length of service, teachers expressed their lack of confidence in their ability to deal with bullying. Of the educators interviewed in the study, at least 87% of the sample sought more training. This majority articulated a lack of confidence in handling cases of bullying, leaving them feeling responsible for not preventing bullying in the classroom and playground. According to James (2010), teachers give the impression that they arbitrate in most cases of bullying, while pupils report otherwise.

Allen (2010) believes learner behaviour is viewed in a continuum, looking at the humanistic and the behaviouristic characteristics of the behaviour. The author advocates that behavioural patterns of learners influence the teachers' perceptions of learners. As a result, these perceptions influence the discipline strategies the teacher may employ to obtain order. The humanistic end recognizes misbehavior as opportunities to learn, while the behavioristic end exercises coercion, punishment and reward. Thus, the teachers' assumptions about learners influence the strategies he/she employs to manage learner behaviour (Allen, 2010).

Boulton cited in Craig *et. al.,*(2000) found that teachers tended to see behaviour such as physical assault and verbal threats as bullying, but did not consider name calling, spreading mean gossip, or intimidating looks as bullying. Bauman and Del Rio (cited in Allen, 2010) reveal that pre-service teachers placed very little emphasis on relational bullying in comparison to other forms of verbal and physical bullying. Allen (2010) highlights the discrepancy between teacher perception and reality by noting the observations of pupils on the playground. The study found that teachers were able to identify disruptive learners in the classroom based on the learners' aggression and inability to manage frustration. The teachers' perception of the model learner was, however, tainted when the outcome of the observation found that these learners, although not aggressive, displayed cruel behaviour. Teachers were convinced that these well-behaved learners were not problematic based on their upstanding classroom behaviour.

Mangope *et. al.,* (2012), asserts that teachers' perceptions are governed by their awareness of the prevalence of bullying, or the lack of it. It may occur that learners do not trust that teachers will keep the information to themselves once the learner confides in them. Alternatively, it may happen that teachers are cognizant of the bullying. However, they lack the knowledge or the skill to deal with such incidences.

Bassett (2007) interrogates the idea that the teachers' personal experience with bullying either as a victim or bully, may dictate or influence the manner in which he/ she deals with instances of bullying. There are contradicting views on how bullies or disruptive learners should be managed. Nelson (cited in Maphosa and Mammen, 2011) advocates the implementation of positive discipline strategies, refraining from corporal punishment. The author argues that physical punishment will only create negative feelings of resentment, rebellion and revenge within the offenders. Self–efficacy should be instilled in learners to encourage good behaviour. While this suggestion to manage disruptive behaviour and bullying seems to be a healthier option, the sustainability of the method and whether it will work is questionable?

2.6. The impact of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour on teacher morale

Regardless of length of service, teachers expressed their lack of confidence in their ability to deal with bullying. Of the educators interviewed in the study conducted by James (2010), at least 87% of the sample sought more training. This majority articulated a lack of confidence in handling cases of bullying, leaving them feeling responsible for not preventing bullying in the classroom and playground. According to James (2010), teachers give the impression that they arbitrate in most instances of bullying.

Teachers facing daily challenges with bullying and disruptive behaviour can be exhausted, leaving them feeling inadequate about their ability to maintain discipline in the classroom. Fayne and Matthews (2010) suggest that teachers in urban schools displayed a persistent, protective outlook, with the intention to instill a positive attitude in learners. They had a desire to improve the learners' sense of self

and to accept human flaws, preventing self-exhaustion. Allen (2010), states that a study in the United Kingdom found that teachers were being bullied by learners. The study also found that the teachers responded by bullying the learners as well. This unstable association between learner and teacher can destroy the professionalism in the relationship. Teachers' perceptions of teaching may alter and their attitude to their work may become negative. The author states that continuous disruptive behaviour in a classroom can demolish a teachers' morale. Bester and du Plessis (2010), highlight the plight of some educators since 1999 who have received no support from the Department of Education. The study found that the majority of its respondents exhibited signs of trauma based on the level of violence and negative behaviour they are exposed to. Teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with the community support with regard to discipline. In my interaction with my colleagues at my work place, I found that many of them felt despondent about their jobs. The general feeling of negativity and low morale were based on their experiences with disrespectful, disruptive learners.

2.7. Factors which promote bullying in South African schools

The burning question is: what are the underlying causes of bullying and disruptive behaviour? Is it an emotional reaction or simply part of growing up? The researchers have conflicting views regarding bullying and disruptive behaviour. In my opinion there seems to be the question of whether behaviour is merely a part of growing up as opposed to deep-rooted problems.

2.7.1. Societal expectations

Mangope *et. al.*, (2012) assert that boys were seen as courageous if they displayed characteristics of a bully and instilled fear in their peers. Such behaviour was not viewed as problematic as it was considered to be part of the growing up process, referred to as 'a rite of passage'. This attitude became ingrained in society, accepting that boys should be aggressive and not passive. As a result, the bullied remained silent for fear of being ridiculed by their families and peers (Mangope et*. al*, 2012, p.

65). The study acknowledges that bullying is part of Botswana's culture, asserting that bullying among boys is acceptable and part of the growing process. The victim does not receive support or comfort and therefore quietly endures the harassment.

At the tender age of 6-9, the learner is developing a sense of self. The learner feels the need to conform to societal expectations and these pressures result in an internal, emotional conflict taking place. Erickson cited in Marais and Meier (2010), highlights the varying stages in the Foundation Phase learners' development. The author advances that this phase results in conflict underlined by industry versus inferiority. This contributes negatively to the learners' feeling of competence and self-esteem. The demands made by society towards attaining mastery of life, related to laws of the country; community rules and relationships contribute towards the learner feeling unworthy, inferior or inadequate of his/ her ability (Gordon and Browne, 2004).

In the South African context, the highly skewed economical inequalities, under the umbrella of 'hidden rules' of the classroom hinging on middle class morals and values of society, contribute to different forms of bullying (Marais and Meier, 2010) . Gootman (1997, p. 108) concurs with the class distinction, arguing that:

> When learners come from disadvantaged environments such as living in squatter camps, on the streets or in abusive family scenarios, where language is coarse and loud and where stealing is a way of surviving, they need to be taught what is expected of them in the classroom. Making rules clear and explaining with the aid of concrete examples can help relieve their ignorance.

According to Marais and Meier (2010), disruptive behaviour based on feelings of inferiority and inadequacies as a result of post-apartheid inequalities of race in South Africa are not uncommon. The authors' asserts that "learners are not treated equally since white teachers are prejudiced against black learners as a result of stereotyped perceptions that they have internalized. The authors' (Marais and Meier, 2010) insists that these perceptions are derived from mainstream society's invalidation of African culture.

According to Fourie (cited in Marais and Meier, 2010), South Africa's historical racial segregation of schools resulted in black and white learners studying separately. Anti-social behaviour is now evident based on the discrepancy in English proficiency among black learners expected to master English as a medium of learning. This contributes to behavioural problems when the black learners underperform resulting in low self-esteem associated with under achievement. This forms a platform for disruptive behaviour. Since South Africa has a long history of racial intolerance, the under- privileged races have had to deal with deep-seated resentment which children have inherited from their parents in the home setting.

Fayne *et. al.* (2010) believe that in order for the learner to receive adequate support, the teacher needs to be familiar with the community and its culture. Consideration must be given to the challenges, personal history, prejudices and inequalities experienced by the society. A connection can be drawn between behavioural challenges and social problems and the experiences of the past. Teachers need to be context sensitive when they deal with behavioural and social problems in the classroom. In the United States children experienced discrimination and prejudices which impacted on individuals' beliefs, behaviour and self-esteem.

Wolke *et.al.* (2001) investigated the impact of bullying in a Foundation Phase school and the findings indicate that 8 – 46 percent of the learners experienced being bullied. The learners experienced emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and low self - esteem. The findings also illustrate that victims presented with high absenteeism and common health problems such as tummy cramps, headaches and sleep disorders. The study advocates that direct and relational bullying behaviour was prevalent among learners of the 6- 9 year range.

Maines and Robinson (2008) highlight the devastating school shooting which took place in the United States as a result of bullying. Shocking statistics indicate that approximately 30 percent of American teens engage in bullying each year. The concern in this regard is that bullying seems to have reached a detrimental height in schools resulting in irreparable damage to society.

2.7.2. Poverty

Fayne *et.al* (2010) draw a distinction between the urban and rural schools, highlighting the economic differences between the two communities. The rural community does not have many schools and therefore service a large community which differs ethnically, religiously, racially, linguistically. On the other hand, the urban learner is spoilt for choice as there are many larger schools available and learners are mobile and can therefore choose a school of their choice. Fayne *et.al.* (2010) further highlight that teachers who have little knowledge of the community and the challenges it faces may experience great difficulty managing social problems which manifest themselves in behavioural problems in the schools. In my experience I found that the phenomenon of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour is not confined to the poverty stricken but, such behaviour is prevalent among the affluent learners as well.

2.7.3. Poor parenting

Home life plays an integral part in molding a child's personality and the parent is the first and most important person to execute this task. Failing to do so results in the child behaving poorly unknowingly, unless reprimanded and corrected. Pienaar (2003) asserts that poor parenting or the lack of parental warmth may lead to the child feeling worthless and unloved, leading to attention seeking behaviour which is categorized as disruptive. Emotionally unstable home environments, for example, divorced or single parent households, may result in persistent misbehavior in middle childhood and adolescence.

Rayment (2006) supports the view that poor parenting and dysfunctional families result in learners displaying similar aggressive, disruptive behaviour at school. The authors' study reveals that 10% of its respondents witnessed their parents physically or verbally fighting. This could explain why children may take these types of experiences with them to school. According to learners, the absence of parental involvement is among major causes of disciplinary problems (Wolhuter and Oosthuizen cited in Marais and Meier, 2010). It could be explained that a lack of attention may contribute to children feeling inadequate, concerning appropriate

conduct and attitude in a social setting, including school. Similarly, Gootman (1997) points out that children feel such inadequacy because they are in a position of powerlessness in the home setting, which is transferred to the school environment.

Such an environment has the propensity to spawn group violence. In this context both physical and emotional bullying by a group can take place over a period of time. Such groups comprise of "leaders, hangers-on and regular onlookers who do nothing to protect their victim, and their inaction only serves to condone bullying" (Cowie cited in Reid *et. al.,* 2004, p. 247). The culture of silence regarding bullying is evident in such settings.

> Children may indicate support for bullying either passively, via not intervening, remaining friends with the bully or gossiping about the incident, or actively, via providing verbal encouragement, holding the victim or adopting the rule of look out (Reid *et. al.*, 2004, p. 247).

In my experience many victims or onlookers were too afraid to intervene or stand up against a bully for fear of becoming the next victim.

Experiences of both the victim and bully might be reflected in the media as well, thereby negatively influencing the child's disposition to violence and disruptive behaviour, based on what they watch (Marais and Meier, 2010). Modeling such behaviour can be partially attributed to pervasive media influence, with unsupervised children spending many hours daily, watching media depicting gang violence.

Allen (2010) advocates that parenting styles contribute to a child's development. The author asserts that authoritative parenting develops learners who are less likely to bully others, while authoritarian or passive parenting may create bullies. The authoritarian parent does not listen to reason and wants his/her way. While the passive parent does respond or react and therefore does not encourage their child either. The type of parenting style which is practiced creates a context and a culture which can either encourage or discourage bullying.

2.7.4. The physical environment

Allen (2010) is of the view that an environment that is disconnected and lacks administrative structure; is chaotic and uncaring, promotes a bullying, antisocial and violent culture within the school. Allen (2010), further states that bullying is complicated and can be resolved by developing the social environment of the class, school, home and society. Allen (2010) encourages data gathering by the teacher so as to develop an understanding of the structural challenges the learners and teachers face.

Oosthuizen and van Staden, (cited in Marais and Meier, (2010) concur that there are other contributory factors associated with the physical environment, namely overcrowded classrooms and run- down school buildings. The two authors also have the same opinion that disruptive behaviour is influenced by negative external factors such as inexperienced or de-motivated teachers and a poorly structured organization with mediocre managerial skills. The sets of authors also correspond that the behavioural problems are inherent in individual learners but are also determined by the broader societal context.

2.8. Intervention strategies to address learner bullying and disruptive behaviour in schools.

In order for interventions to be successful, it is imperative that all stakeholders work cohesively towards eradicating this universal problem. Olweus *et.al.* (2010) suggest interventions which could be used by the school, class or individual level. Fayne *et.al.* (2010) assert that before assumptions are made about learner behaviour, the teachers need to make a concerted effort to inquire about and develop an understanding of the learner's background and home life. This requires the teacher to move outside into unfamiliar settings, acquiring knowledge about the culture, history and beliefs of the community. In this way the teacher may develop a better understanding of the community and learner behaviour, and can therefore provide experiences to stimulate the learner.

The information gathered from all stakeholders should inform and support the intervention programme for the school. The needs of each school needs are unique and should therefore be designed accordingly (O' Moore and Minton, 2004). While the intervention program me needs to be guided by the international programmes, the whole school approach seems to be very promising in the prevention of school bullying and violence (Olweus, 2010). This would engage all stakeholders ensuring that the entire school is involved in the intervention and prevention of bullying and disruptive behaviour. Olweus (2010) is convinced that the earlier an intervention programme is introduced into a school, the more effective it is. The author also advocates that a whole school approach in targeting bullying and disruptive behaviour is more effective. Regular evaluation of the programme will assist the school to improve and adjust its policies.

2.8.1. Cultural wisdom

Fayne *et.al*. (2010) believe that in order for the learner to receive adequate support, the teacher needs to be familiar with the community and its culture. Consideration must be given to the challenges, the personal history, prejudices and inequalities experienced by the society. A connection can be drawn between behavioural challenges and social problems and the experiences of the past. Teachers need to be context sensitive when they deal with behavioural and social problems in the classroom. Bester and Du Plessis (2010) suggest that humor can prevent violence by creating a less tense atmosphere, while 'cultural wisdom' contributes to preventing violence in schools. The teachers are cautioned, however, against using sarcasm. Sarcasm is negative and this can therefore aggravate behaviour rather than pacify it. A learner who feels mocked or teased by a teacher may feel the need to retaliate (Bester & Du Plessis, 2010, p. 226).

2.8.2. Parental awareness

Teacher - parent meeting days can be used as a platform to workshop parents of the problem of bullying (Olweus and Limber, 2010). Marais and Meier (2010) are of the view that lack of parental care and absence of good role models contributes to disruptive behaviour. The schools need to therefore educate parents and caregivers

on the importance of instilling good values and morals in learners. Correct conduct and values which are taught at school can be communicated via newsletters to parents to ensure consistency between school and home. In my opinion teachers can use the information they obtain from the parents to adjust and review the manner in which the discipline and interact with learners who are exhibiting disruptive and /or bullying behaviour. In doing so they are able to reflect on the on the techniques being used in establishing whether they are successful or whether the techniques need to be adjusted in order to bring about a positive change.

2.8.3. The proactive teacher

Craig *et al.* (2000a) are of the view that teachers need to acquire comprehensive education on the diversity of bullying behaviors in a bid to improve their capacity to recognize and detect bullying. This knowledge will hold them in good stead when they are faced with learners who confide incidence of bullying to them. Olweus and Limber (2010) advocate that there should be individualized interventions with the victims and bullies in order to discuss their behavioural flaws or weaknesses as well as methods to rectify this problem. There should be group activities allowing learners to interact and to participate freely. The playgrounds need to have increased adult supervision at lunch time to discourage bullying behaviour. Allen (2010) recommends that teachers should teach the learners social skills to assist them in dealing with interpersonal conflict situations.

Teachers need to develop an awareness of the prevalence of bullying in the classroom in order to deal effectively with the issue (Allen, 2010). Teachers must have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and know how to manage the problem. Their perceptions of bullying will therefore influence the manner in which they deal with the problem. The ability to identify social and relational bullying as well as physical and verbal bullying is central to dealing with the phenomenon of bullying and disruptive behaviour. This study encourages teachers to deal with incidences of bullying with caution, thereby, ensuring that trust and confidence is not breached. The focus is to resolve the problem so as to obtain a

positive outcome. Reid *et. al.* (2004) encourages the use of anti- bullying videos, drama and suggests displaying a list of various types of bullying in the classroom in order to enhance the learners' awareness of bullying and disruptive behaviour.

Bott (2004) suggests that stories about bullying should be read to learners, to help them better understand the phenomena of bullying. Learners can be encouraged to list words which hurt them and these can be categorized as verbal bullying using name – calling. Bott (2004, p. 9) recommends the "name it, claim it, stop it strategy". Name it: the teacher repeats what the bully said to the victim; claim it: the teacher explains the disruptive behaviour and reprimands the bully; stop it: the teacher firmly dictates that such language needs to stop (Bott, 2004, p, 11). Learners become conscious of their language practice and are weary not to use negative, hurtful comments on their peers and others. This strategy contributes to a harmonious, pleasant environment which is conducive to teaching and learning.

2.8.4. Classroom management

Reid *et.al.* (2004) encourage the use of anti- bullying videos, drama and suggests displaying a list of various types of bullying in the classroom in order to enhance the learners' awareness of bullying and disruptive behaviour. Role playing is an excellent means to educate the learners as well. Disruptive behaviour can be averted if the teacher ensures that he/she is well prepared for the lesson. Lessons should be interesting and joyful, catering for the needs of the Foundation Phase learners. While learners enjoy fun lessons, their behaviour can easily become disruptive. It is for this reason that Rayment (2006) and Olweus *et.al.* (2010), agree that the presence of classroom rules will prevent this.

2.8.5. Rules

Disruptive behaviour can be averted if the teacher ensures that he/ she is well prepared for the lesson. Lessons should be interesting, and joyful, catering for the needs of the Foundation Phase learners. While learners enjoy fun lessons their behaviour can easily become disruptive, therefore Rayment (2006) is of the view that the presence of classroom rules will prevent this. These rules guide learners towards

displaying behaviour which is socially acceptable and informs them of the expectations of the school as well. Rules should be displayed on walls and passages and they should be read aloud daily. Teachers must also be vigilant in applying the rules when necessary. Learners should be encouraged to draw up their own anti-bullying posters, class discussions and group projects will also develop awareness among learners.

2.8.6. Develop teacher skills

Craig *et al.* (2000a) are of the view that teachers need to acquire comprehensive education on the diversity of bullying behaviors in a bid to improve their capacity to recognize and detect bullying. Maphosa and Mammen (2010) propose that teachers participate in staff development workshops to equip teachers with skills to deal with discipline issues in the classroom. The authors also suggest teachers attend compulsory short courses on classroom management.

Teacher discrepancies regarding the seriousness between female and male bullies vary and it is therefore recommended that teacher intervention programmes include gender differences in bullying behaviour (Craig et. al., 2000a). This knowledge will support and assist teachers with managing bullying and disruptive behaviour. It is essential that all stakeholders be concerned with managing bullying and disruptive behaviour at schools. Intervention programmes and goal setting should be done collaboratively, aspiring to eradicate hurdles. This knowledge will hold them in good stead when they are faced with learners who confide incidence of bullying to them. According to Reid *et. al.,* (2004) children lose faith in a teachers' ability to protect a victim of bullying if teachers have inadequate knowledge of the various forms of bullying.

Smit (2003) insists that it is imperative that teachers receive adequate training in order for them to make a positive impact in curbing bullying and disruptive behaviour. This can be attained by ensuring that Pre- service and in- service training is offered to teachers. The author believes that teachers are in the forefront of bullying at schools and they need to understand the extent of their commitment to an anti – bullying programme. The lack of commitment is usually due to their inability to deal with such behavioural problems. Therefore in order to gain competence in this area

of prevention and intervention strategies, the author asserts that a module on school bullying should be included in the initial teacher education programme.

In 2002, the then Chief Director, Palisa Tyobeka from the National Department of Education stated that the department intended to restore the public confidence in their ability to protect the children (The Citizen, 20 February, 2002). Ms. Tyobeka guaranteed that teachers would be receiving special training to ensure that they were adequately prepared to deal with issues on human rights, gender sensitivity, and ethics in the teaching profession and educators as caregivers.

2.8.7. Policy

Mangope *et.al.* (2012) state that schools in Botswana do not have the support of clear policies to assist them when dealing with bullying and disruptive behaviour. They assert that the institutions, having no effective measures in place to deal with bullying, appear to be accommodating and encouraging such behaviour.

James (2010) asserts that schools in England are legally required to have an anti-bullying policy which supports teachers by outlining the procedures to follow and sanctions for bullying. These policies assist teachers in confidently making an informed decision.

Legislation such as the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) and the South African Schools Act (1996) have ensured that corporal punishment is outlawed. There has been some negative response to this stating that poor discipline has escalated since. The South African Government launched a national project in 2000, focusing on discipline in South Africa. A book entitled *Alternatives to corporal punishment: the learning experience* was made available to South African teachers in 2001. The booklet contained guidelines aiming to assist teachers with managing discipline in the classroom (Marais and Meier, 2010).

According to Bester and Du Plessis (2010), the Department of Education (DoE, 2002) understands that the core role of schools is to educate learners and therefore support the initiative by engaging in a zero - tolerance policy towards bullying, disruptive behaviour and violence in school. Reid *et.al.* (2004), state that all

stakeholders of the school need to have a sound knowledge of the guidelines and that everyone should take responsibility for implementing the policy. The policy should include a collective understanding of bullying and recommendations on how to deal with bullying incidents.

Prinsloo (2005) indicates that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa protects its citizens. The legislation protects the human dignity of the citizens. According to Prinsloo (2005), the Bill of Rights clearly outlines the equality principle. Dlamini, cited in Prinsloo (2005), states that " a nation's struggle to raise its living standards, strengthen its democracy and build a sustainable human rights culture is first and foremost in the classroom" (Prinsloo,2005, p. 24). In saying this, the author advocates the practice of good values and behaviour ensuring that human rights are promoted at all times. The author insists that it is imperative that learners are respected and a human rights culture should be created among the teachers and learners. This will ensure that a safe school environment is created and this will form the platform for good discipline and conduct. Prinsloo (2005) makes reference to chapter eight of the legislation which interrogates the code of conduct at schools. In terms of Section 8 of the Schools Act, the primary role of the school governing body is to develop a code of conduct for learners at the school, which includes policies dealing with school discipline and safety. Squelch, cited in Prinsloo (2005) states that a code of conduct, highlights the expectations and standards which learners are required to follow in order to protect all learners at the school.

Prinsloo asserts that the Child Care Act 1983 (Act 74 of 1983) and the Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (Act 116 of 1998) protects the rights of the children. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher to act in *loco parentis* and to be proactive in order to avert any dangers that children may face. The author highlights that Section 24 of the Constitution encourages a safe environment therefore insisting that the school provides an environment which is safe and conducive for teaching and learning to take place.

2.9. Psychological intervention as Preventative measures against bullying

In my opinion learners who are victims of bullying should have access to school guidance counselors whom they can trust and confide in. Both the victims and bullies need to be advised to consult with a psychologist to discuss the behavioural flaws. Teachers can support the learners by being trustworthy and by being good listeners (Mangope, *et.al.* 2012). The Director, Ms. Tyobeka (The Citizen, 20 February, 2002) in an interview, assured the community that teachers and learners would receive face- to- face counseling in the event of them experiencing any form of abuse and these cases would be treated with confidence and with the sensitivity it requires. In saying this, the right of the individuals and confidentiality of each incident was also assured.

2.9.1. Parenting styles

Allen (2010) suggests that parenting styles impact learners' behaviour. The author distinguishes between three types of/ parenting styles to explain the adverse effects authoritarian and passive parenting styles resulting in the learner developing either bullying or victim traits. The authoritative parent style however, seems to have a positive impact on the learner. The authoritative parent takes charge and guides the child's decisions, while the authoritarian parent will make the decision for the child with no discussion. The passive parent on the other hand does not engage with the child and is not very involved. Marais and Meier (2010) are of the view that lack of parental care and absence of good role models contributes to disruptive behaviour. The schools need to therefore educate parents and caregivers on the importance of instilling good values and morals in learners. Correct conduct and values which are taught at school can be communicated via newsletters to parents to ensure consistency between school and home. Marais (2010) is of the view that lack of parental care and absence of good role models contributes to disruptive behaviour.

2.9.2. School environment

Mangope *et.al. (*2012) are of the belief that learners should share a positive relationship with their teacher, trusting that the teachers will protect them. This will allow learners to engage enthusiastically and positively in learning, despite the fact that they are in a bullying environment. Sharing an interpersonal relationship with the teacher positively influences the learners' academic performance. The author asserts that a safe, supportive and caring school environment will promote the learners academic performance and attitude towards schooling as well.

2.9.3. Develop teachers' morale

While a good knowledge of bullying is imperative for the success of teaching and learning, it can also be argued that every situation is different and should therefore be analyzed in its context. Naong (2007) states that the teacher needs to look at the behaviour of the learner within its context and to "come to an understanding of the forces that shape the life of the learner" (Naong, 2007, pg. 290). He further explains that the learners' experiences both external and internal (emotional and psychological), shape the learners behaviour.

Maphosa and Mammen (2011) recommend that the teachers attend workshops to equip themselves with the necessary skills to cope with learner indiscipline in the classroom. Teachers may possess good listening skills which favor the learner who may be distressed. Failing to listen to, or to support learners, could adversely affect the learner and the classroom situation (Mangope *et. al.,* 2012). An incident which is poorly managed can cause emotional stress in the learner, leading up to various negative health conditions. O' Moore and Minton, (2004) insist that teachers need to attend an in- service training programme to enhance their ability and confidence to deal with incidence of bullying. The authors also assert that in doing so the teachers can create a teacher resource/ support group to assist other teachers with incidence of bullying. According to Allen (2010) teachers learn best from their own life experiences, by reading material and attending workshops about intervention programmes for bullying. A teacher may acquire knowledge on the subject of bullying from the schools bullying prevention programme. This knowledge develops the teachers' confidence in the area of discipline. Teachers feel less distressed, but

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rather confident in their ability to resolve bullying and disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Allen (2010) asserts that the ability to identify social and relational bullying as well as physical and verbal bullying is central to dealing with the phenomenon bullying and disruptive behaviour. This study encourages teachers to deal with incidence of bullying with caution, thereby, ensuring that trust and confidence is not breached. The focus is to resolve the problem in order to obtain a positive outcome. The challenge for all South African teachers is to therefore become sensitive and conversant on the subject of culture and learners needs, which vary with regard to culture and family structure (Marais and Meier, 2010).

2.10. Conclusion

The phenomenon of bullying and disruptive behaviour is highly controversial, and is plaguing many schools.

The study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the stresses and anxieties that teachers experience as a result of bullying and disruptive behaviour in the Foundation Phase. While developing the learners' life skills to cope with conflict is part of the teaching and learning process, the mediation process can be time consuming. These conflicts have become common-place in the classroom, on the playgrounds and in the toilets. Bullying manifests itself in many forms, namely: teasing; physical and emotional abuse; extortion; stealing; intimidation; name-calling; disrespecting the teacher and disrupting lessons. Teachers are spending more time on correcting disorderly behaviour rather than focusing on the academic syllabus. Teachers' frustrations include limited time and knowing that the bullying phenomenon is impacting negatively on their academic deliverance.

The increasing incidents of bullying require the teachers' repetitive intervention and counseling, but this impedes on the completion of the academic syllabus. This process is time-consuming and it interrupts the teaching and learning programme. The study aims to understand how such disorderly behaviour impacts on the teachers' morale as well as their performance in classes where some learners are as young as 6-9 years of age. The study aims to establish if there are ways to control or

eradicate such behaviour which affects teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase at the Primary School.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of this study, the experiential theory and the eco-systemic theory. Kolb's four stage model of experiential theory are clarified in detail and how it applies to this study. The chapter further illustrates the benefits of applied experiential theory in action. The main themes highlighted by the theorists in which, experience and reflection is discussed and linked to the study and explained in detail. The chapter further illustrates the benefits of applied experiential theory in action. The study discusses the contributions of the founder, as well as the views of those who built upon it. The study focuses on Kolb, cited in Miettinen (2000) who adapted the experiential learning theory which was founded by John Dewey. The study also focuses on Bronfenbrenner (2005), the founder of the eco-systemic theory. The chapter demonstrates the role the eco- systemic theory plays in this study. Both the theories are discussed in relation to the topic of this study which is the teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour.

3.2. Background on the founders of experiential theory

This study interrogates teachers' experiences with bullying and disruptive behavior. The theory is considered "experiential" in that it brings together the work of different experts. The work comprises mainly of Dewey's pragmatic viewpoints and Lewin's (Forsyth, 2010) application of social dynamics. Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000) talks about knowledge or skill gained from 'on the job experience' than what educational training teachers receive.

Lewin, a German – American psychologist, speaks of the impact of group dynamics to highlight multifaceted and intricate processes among group members (Forsyth, 2010). The intricacy lies in actions, processes, and change, resulting from their group interaction. Lewin cited in Forsyth (2010), advocates working in groups is more beneficial in that through synergy, collective efforts yield varied perspectives which could either accomplish rewarding or disappointing results. The author emphasizes the relation between personal qualities and the environment which impact on behavior. Lewin cited in (Forsyth, 2010) links basic and applied research towards action research that identifies ways to resolve social problems.

3.3. Experiential learning: Kolb's four stage model

The use of this theory highlights the possible positive changes an individual can make to his /her career. For the purpose of this study the individual referred to would be the teacher. The foundation of the experiential learning theory is based on four phases namely; action/ doing, sensing, observing reflecting, thinking and finally planning. Each phase deals with a particular learning style. People vary in their learning styles and therefore will have different learning experiences (Sharlanova, 2004).

Kolb's theory (Sharlanova,2004), has been acknowledged as one which provides an opportunity to learn independently through action, work- based learning and problem – based learning. Kolb's (2004) advocates that teachers become reflexive and develop their teaching skills when they put into practice the experiential learning theory .

According to Dewey, cited in Saltmarsh (1996), reflection on an experience may result in the individual distinguishing between his/her attitude and the objects towards which they sustain the attitude. People are faced with challenges and opportunities daily, be it in their personal lives or at the work place. In order to live a successful life, individuals need to adapt and learn (Kolb and Yeganeh, 2011). Experiential learning theory focusses on lifelong learning advocating that the the individual is responsible for managing and directing his/her learning (Kolb *et.al*. 2011). Transformation is possible with learning and the process can be intrinsically

rewarding, allowing the individual to feel empowered. This theory advocates that life's experiences should be approached with a learning attitude. This process, according to Kolb *et. al.* (2011) require quiet reflection and the desire to make a change. In relation to the phenomenon under discussion, the focus is on the teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour and its impacts thereof. It is my view that teachers would benefit tremendously if they were to apply the experiential learning theory to their experiences.

On analyzing Dewey's theory cited in Miettinen (2000), Kolb (2005) advocated that learning occurs through experience and reflection. In the process, Kolb (2005) explores four stages of experiential theory as shown in Figure 3.1. The chapter then discusses Kolb's four-stage model of experiential theory. The four stages are:

1) Concrete experience (doing),
2) Observations and reflections (observing),
3) Conceptualizing (thinking), and
4) Experimenting (planning).

This model demonstrates the benefits of applied experiential theory in action. Attitudinal coupled with behavioural changes result in positive outcomes in the teaching and learning environment .The approach is geared towards developing a teacher's ability to adjust and adapt to the situation.

Kolb (2005) presents an eclectic approach of analyzing the work of Dewey and Kolb's experiential learning style theory is typically represented by a four stage learning cycle in which teachers interrogate all four stages. The first stage is a concrete experience whereby the individual encounters an experience which is interpreted either as a new experience or a re-interpretation of the existing experience related to bullying and disruptive behaviour. The perceived benefits of expected changes will also be discussed to highlight the relevance of the approaches, presenting an environment conducive to teaching and learning, rather than one, in which bullying and disruptive behavior thrive. This chapter concludes by discussing the advantages of applying various aspects of this theory in altering negative behavior to one that is positive.

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Closely allied to this is the second stage which is the reflective observation stage, which is of particular importance since it differentiates between any inconsistencies between experience and understanding (Kolb, 2005). This stage may also yield varied understandings based on each individual's perceptions of morals and values in respective societies. The third stage comprises of the abstract conceptualization which requires the individual to modify or transform the experience or create one that is new in the context of bullying and disruptive conduct (Kolb, 2005). The fourth stage relates to the active experimentation by the teachers in the above context. Effective learning is seen when an individual progresses through a cycle of all four stages (Kolb, 2005).

Figure 3.1
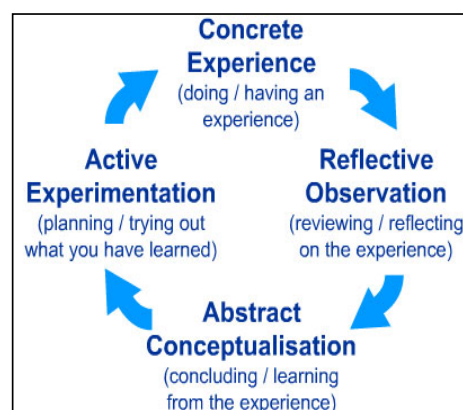
Kolb's four stage model, extracted from Kolb, 1984, p. 21

It can be said that reflection on experiences can bring about the required change when it comes to bullying and disruptive behaviour in schools. Kolb (1984, 1999, and 2005) believes that the role of learning from experience can benefit the teachers. Through the theory the author attempts to persuade teachers to examine their classroom experiences associated with bullying and disruptive behaviour and design intervention programmes. Such action requires teachers' to reflect on the experience with a view not only to learning from them, but also, venturing further to make the necessary adjustment.

Such action allows teachers to be involved in the experience by using analytical skills to reflect on the experience. In so doing the teacher gains a better understanding of the new knowledge in the hope that changes will be implemented. Kolb (2005) is of the conviction that experiential activities are the most influential tools available in the teaching and learning arena. This process, however, calls for self-initiative, with an intention to learn on an on-going basis. He also advocates that the process of learning involves the creation of knowledge through the transformation experiences (Kolb, 2005). Moon (2004) supports this view, stating the experiential learning processes, assists the individual in making the required decisions. The areas she refers to are the same as Kolb's: reflective learning, action oriented learning, as well as learning through feedback. However, Kolb (2005) is of the view that these stages do not function in isolation but are inter-dependent, calling for a logical sequence. He argues that the individual needs to execute all stages for learning to be successful.

3.4 Learning styles

Figure 3.2

Fig.1 Experiential Learning Cycle
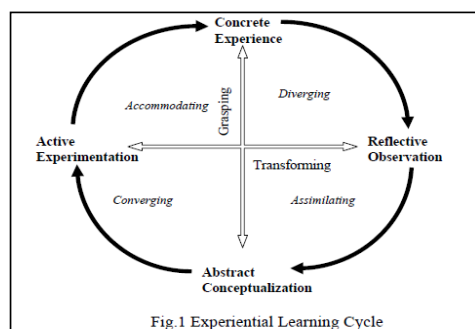
(Extracted from A.Y Kolb and D.A. Kolb, 2005, p.6)

According to Boyatzis *et. a*l. (2000); Kolb and Mainemelis (2001), people have different learning styles. They define these styles in four categories and these are based on the four- stage learning cycle. Learning styles or preferences may be influenced by experiences such as social, environmental, educational, or simply the cognitive structure of the individual. Kolb's illustration effectively demonstrates the

choices presented as line axis called the Processing Continuum (one's approach to the task) and Perception Continuum (one's emotional response). The authors are of the belief that an individual is incapable of performing two variables at one time, namely: thinking and feeling. The four learning styles illustrated in the diagram highlight the following variables: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. The cycle according to Kolb (2005) can be entered at any point; however, he maintains that the phase must be followed sequentially. This process allows for feedback which then forms a base for a new action (Kolb, 2005).

3.4.1　Concrete experience

This is the first phase where the teacher 'does' the task. This process does not involve any reflection (Sharlanova, 2004).

The following variables: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, tend to determine the learning style the teachers adopt in the classroom situation. 'Concrete experience' entails feeling and experiencing the acquired emotion based on watching the situation unfold (Boyatzis *et. al*., 2000). Observation of the situation elicits certain emotions in specific individuals rather than a blanket response. While many individuals may observe the same phenomenon, each one's experience may vary.

Boyatzis *et.al (*2000), assert that some individuals who are sensitive by nature prefer to observe rather than respond since they tend to analyse concrete situations through different angles. The authors labelled this method as 'diverging' based on cultural preferences, leaning towards individuals who have the tendency to be perfectionists with regard to them obtaining a variety of perspectives before taking action. Such people are apt to be overly analytical based on their imaginative or emotional traits. These individuals are inclined to prefer group work where they can listen with an open mind, as well as receive feedback (Boyatzis et al, 1999). In relation to bullying, such teachers who display passive personality traits may become easy victims to the dominating, assertive learners.

3.4.2.   Reflective observation

This is the second phase which involves reflection by returning to the beginning point of the task. According to Sharlanova (2004), the teacher then reviews what has been done as well as the new methods and techniques used. The decision to change or adjust an experience is strongly influenced by ones values and beliefs (Sharlanova, 2004). Techniques such as: listening, applying new ideas, finding new solutions, sharing experiences and ideas with others.

Reflective observation includes an individual watching and thinking concurrently in a concise, logical way based on ideas and concepts that are deemed more important than the actual people under discussion. According to Boyatzis *et.al (*2000), individuals prefer to get clarity in the explanation they are receiving rather than undergoing the specific experience under scrutiny. These over analytical individuals base their responses on understanding diverse information organized in a logical format. Such individuals tend to display an academic approach which permits them to excel in science and information careers. Their learning preferences tend to lean towards reading, exploring analytical models and spending time questioning tentative results. Within the context of bullying, these teachers may have negative experiences such as name calling; being teased and mocked and intimidation. In my view these teachers may experience difficulty commanding control and respect in the classroom and this weakness can contribute to some of the stress in a teachers' life. Such individuals do not make adjustments to their situation but merely accept the challenges with little or no intention of making a positive change.

3.4.3. Abstract conceptualization

According to Sharlanova (2004), this is the third phase and it involves the process of interpreting the results by gaining a better understanding of the experience. The author asserts that the adjustments, beliefs and values also have an influence on the analysis of the results. This phase involves the process of reflection using critical questioning of the previous experience in order to obtain logical answers. According

to Kolb, (2005), the learning process involves more "logic and ideas than feelings of understanding the problems or situation".

In this phase the hypotheses for the experience are formed, the conclusions and generalizations are also formed. Abstract conceptualization describes the activity through which pragmatic individuals focus on doing and thinking. In Boyatzis *et.al* (2000) such individuals have been defined as having the ability to find resolutions to experiences and are likely to apply their learning to identifying practical solutions to challenges under discussion. They have a preference towards technical tasks as opposed to people and interpersonal associations. Their learning style leans towards varying viewpoints linked to application of theories of a technical nature. Such people are akin to experimenting with new ideas with an eye on practical applications. In relation to the study, such teachers rarely fall victim to bullying or disruptive behavior, as they have the ability adapt to the situations they find themselves in. In my opinion such teachers will be command respect in the classroom and will have the confidence to take charge in the classroom.

3.4.4. Active experimentation

This is the fourth phase and it involves the process of understanding the situation well and having the ability to predict future incidence/ actions. Sharlanova (2004) believes that this phase also looks at what actions can be taken to improve the manner in which teachers approach a task. Kolb (2005) asserts that teachers need to adopt a practical approach to the situation, focusing on what is working.

Active experimentation encompasses experiences, emotions and acting on them. Boyatzis *et. al.* (1999) defines such individuals as those who prefer logic and a hand's on approach rather than intuition. These individuals draw from others' analysis based on a pragmatic, experiential approach. The above individuals are captivated by innovative challenges and fresh experiences, as well as executing strategies. Individuals with accommodative tendencies are often dependent on results from others' experiences, rather than to find solution themselves. Such mindsets are prevalent among the majority of the general population. In association

with 'bullying', these individuals may be in control of the situation. They are able to apply their knowledge of Life Skills to their experiences.

The educational implications of using Kolb's (2005) learning stages and learning styles may prove instrumental in permitting the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities available to learners. Furthermore, teachers should avail opportunities which allow learners to engage in a manner suitable to an array of individual learners' styles. All four learning styles, namely: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation though different, have specific strengths. Each should be acknowledged by applying them to benefit specific individuals in different contextual settings. A sound knowledge of all four diverse learning styles by the teacher may ensure the successful application of the experiential learning theory in the classroom setting to the advantage of both the learner and teacher.

3.5. Teachers' use of experiential theory in the school context

The above theory is suitable for my study as it allows the teacher and the learner the opportunity to reflect and correct their behaviour in the area of bullying and disruptive behaviour on the part of the learner. In my opinion, there are many factors that impact on both the teachers and learners behaviour based on the ability of the teacher to adapt teaching styles and behaviours, towards influencing a positive outcome. Such actions form the basis of experience and reflection, something critical to modifying behaviour that is best suited to a more conducive learning environment. Reflections of this nature allow the teacher to change disciplinary methods or techniques in order to yield better results with regard to classroom atmosphere in particular and the school in general. In the process teacher-learner relations may improve, impacting positively on the academic performance of the learners.

The observation and reflection process allows the teacher to evaluate what works and does not work in the above respect, consequently effecting the required change. The cycle of observation and reflection is on-going, thereby assisting the teacher in

obtaining acceptable attitudinal and behavioural changes in favour of positive learning.

There are different ways to achieve the required effect in response to bullying and disruptive behaviour, observation and reflection being among them. Kolb (2005) advocates that the teacher should explore the experience reflect on it and learn in the process, which brings together "a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour" (Kolb, 2005, p.21). Consequently, teachers' may expand their ability to deal with related disputes, thereby improving classroom management and teaching skills. Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000), explains that each reflective thought nurtures and supports each other, inculcating reformed behaviour and attitudes. Experiential learning and the process of reflection is hence constant and advances with time.

Teachers' experiences and reflections may serve as a decisive factor with respect to their perceptions of classroom management and teaching ability. It can be said that while a teacher is trained to deliver the core curriculum, it can never prepare them for the entire spectrum of challenges they are likely to face in the classroom or school setting. A few of the challenges include bullying, teasing, name-calling and interruption of lessons. Academic deliverance as well as the teachers' morale could be hampered resulting in teachers feeling incompetent about their classroom management abilities. Learners' academic performance may also be adversely affected in the process.

In a classroom or school setting it is imperative that the teacher takes charge at all times, in the process setting the tone for teaching and learning to take place. Failure to do this may result in many disciplinary problems on the part of the learners who lack self-efficacy by virtue of bullying or being bullied as well as disruptive behaviour. Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000), asserts that the learner must be responsible and accountable for his/her behaviour. The attitude of the learner therefore determines the quantity and the quality of learning that takes place. The author does, however, identify a credible flaw in his argument in that it diminishes the role of the teacher and the content by transferring responsibility to the child.

The curriculum is of fundamental importance, as teachers find themselves held responsible to the academic outcome. Hence the teacher should exercise greater

influence on a positive outcome rather than the converse, especially with regard to placing most of the responsibility of learning on the child. It is arguable that equal emphasis on content, learner attitude and teachers' performance each play a critical role in deliverance in education. As much as experiential learning is related to freedom of choice regarding learning experiences, it cannot be considered synonymous with what Kolb (2005) enumerates as follows: learning through educational experiences which include adventure, free choice, co-operative and service learning. The above author also advocates for learning through reflection as opposed to didactic or rote learning. These concepts which may be part of the Life Skills and Religious Education curricular at the school is of no consequence if the learners are not applying the process of observation and reflection to effect positive changes in behaviour. If teachers and learners can both be persuaded to employ the experiential theory in the school context, the move could advance acceptable attitude and behaviour in a significant manner.

Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000) advocates that reflection is mandatory in the experiential learning practice, and can occur independently or through facilitation. Either process or both create a platform for further learning and reflection of the experiences. Despite the challenges of successfully facilitating reflection, the use of correct questions can guide new thinking about the experience. Supporting this view, Jacobson and Ruddy (2004) simplified Kolb's Experiential Learning Model by creating a simple 5 Question Model advancing critical reflection in experiential learning. Some of the questions suggested include:

- Why did that happen?
- Does that happen in life?
- Why does that happen?
- How can you use that?

These questions were adapted in the interview schedule to suit the study in progress - (Cf appendix one). The teacher can use the above questions when engaging in self - reflection and this assists the teacher in identifying and understanding his/her strengths or weaknesses. The use of Kolb's (1984, 2005) learning stages and learning styles by teachers promote identification of the individual's less preferred

learning styles. In so doing, such action allows the individual to strengthen the weaker learning styles through the application of the experiential learning cycle.

In my opinion, the Experiential Learning Theory can easily be integrated in a teachers' method of teaching. The process of reflection can be used to identify reasons for disruptive behaviour or to deal with learner bullying. Using the process of reflection, necessary adjustments can be made to the experience. Once teachers' have reflected on their experience, they can review new teaching methods to ensure that a positive learning experience for the learners is created.

3.6 The link between experiential theory and Life skills education

It is important that a child has the ability to cope with and deal with demands and challenges of daily life. The school and its curriculum are therefore an integral part of the learner's schooling. The necessary skills are developed during the Life Skills lesson. According to WHO (1993), life skills are valuable in the process of empowering people to engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges. In developing societies like South Africa, this is even more important. Life Skills encourages psychosocial aptitude and ensures the individual is socially, emotionally, and physically well adjusted. This develops self confidence in the individual as well. WHO (1993) explains that the core of the Life Skills programme at all schools intends to promote skills such as: decision-making, problem - solving, critical thinking, self- awareness, coping with stress and emotions. Life Skills is part of the South African curriculum and its' fundamental goal is child development. The learning area aims to develop some of the following skills in the learner: augment the feeling of self-worth and embrace their differences, to communicate and interact respectfully with people, to engage in self-reflection, to engage in decision – making and the ability to evaluate career options and set long term goals. The teacher is instrumental in developing and shaping these skills in learners (Department of Education, 1997).

The perceptions regarding the contribution of experience to education vary and it is vital to the growth of individuals in general and to education. It is a widely accepted

perception that reflection should be part of every teacher education program. What does it mean to be reflective? Is reflection a "teachable" skill? Hatton & Smith (1994, p.9) concur that though there are no simple answers to these questions, "a powerful strategy for fostering reflective action is to engage with another person in a way which encourages talking with, questioning, and even confronting the trusted other…" Teachers can play a powerful role in exercising reflective thinking in candidates as well as by modelling reflection   As Weiner (2006) stated, the ability to reflect is "valuable for all teachers but it is essential for urban teachers, who are faced with the most morally and politically complex decisions" (Weiner, 2006, p. 19).

The experiential theory designed by Kolb (2005) adequately outlines the learning stages and the learning cycle, suggesting that teachers could benefit if the theory was applied critically to evaluate the learning methods used at the school. In order to ensure that each learner benefits from the education provided, the teacher should design the curriculum to benefit the different needs and learning styles of each learner. Teachers employing the theory may assist and guide learners to identify and to develop their lesser preferred learning styles. This may be possible if the teacher designed activities from every stage of the experiential learning theory to guide the learners' development through the process.

In my opinion the application of the theory will enhance the teachers' ability to adapt and adjust behaviour patterns to one that is socially responsible and acceptable. In doing this the teacher is also engaging in self-efficacy with the intention to improve an experience or a situation. A sound understanding of one's learning style will assist the individual in identifying the areas of weakness and strengths, therefore allowing the opportunity to improve on these areas.

3.7. The eco-systemic theory

There is interdependence and associations between individuals and their physical environment. The associations are seen as a whole, with each part being equally important in order to sustain the cycle. The perception of balance is a fundamental ecological concept. As Marais and Meier (2010) put it, a system is a group of

interrelated, interdependent and interacting elements that form a coherent whole. When there is a major discord or disturbance, the relationships and interdependence may become so distorted that recovery as a whole is threatened. For the purpose of the study the Bronfenbrenners' ecological theory will focus on the teachers' experiences and in order for this to be adequately interrogated, the theory will also examine the Childs' development.

The theory advocates that a break in relationships within the micro-system, could deny children a stable, shared relationship with key adults which is necessary for development. Bronfenbrenner (2005) sees this as detrimental to the child's development. Such experiences results in learners not attaining the tools necessary for exploring other situations. The consequences of poor development present themselves in adolescence in the form of discipline problems, anti-social behaviour and the failure to offer self- direction (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). The challenges the children experience, may in turn affect their psychological well-being. Bronfenbrenner as cited in Paquette and Ryan (2001) alleges that:

> the primary care-giver is the one who can provide children with stable, long-term relationships that is meant to last a lifetime, and although schools and teachers fulfil an important secondary role, they cannot provide the complexity of interaction that can be provided by primary adults, is unfortunate and demoralising. (Paquette and Ryan, 2001, p. 3).

Paquette and Ryan (2001), maintain that knowledge of these deficiencies in the children's homes, allows the educational system to provide the stability lacking in the child's life. This study therefore looks at the child's development in the social context and the teachers' response to such development.

According to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate micro-system break down, the individual will not have the tools to explore other parts of the environment. Paquette and Ryan (2001), state that knowledge about the deficiencies or breakdown occurring within children's homes, make it possible for our educational system to make up for these deficiencies. From my experience, the teacher acts in 'loco-parentis' and provides the child with the necessary support and guidance for development. It is therefore necessary for schools and teachers to provide stable, long-term relationships. It is imperative that schools, teachers and therapist work

together to maintain the primary relationship and to create an environment that nurtures and welcomes families.

Bronfenbrenner (2005), believes that unquestioning relationship with children are the most influential force in positive development of the child. In my opinion it serves as an excellent opportunity for the teacher to gain a better understanding of the learners' background. He advocates that in order for the child to develop emotionally, socially, morally and intellectually, a child must be supported by a caring adult. Negative experiences such domestic violence, unemployment, poverty; HIV and AIDS are some of the situations which are harmful to a child's development. These impact on their behaviour and I believe, that a teacher who has an understanding of his/her learners' background, will be able to cope with the challenges which present themselves as behavioural problems in the classroom. The teachers' experiences may vary and may be interpreted depending on his/ her personality traits, values and beliefs (Donald *et.al*, 2002).
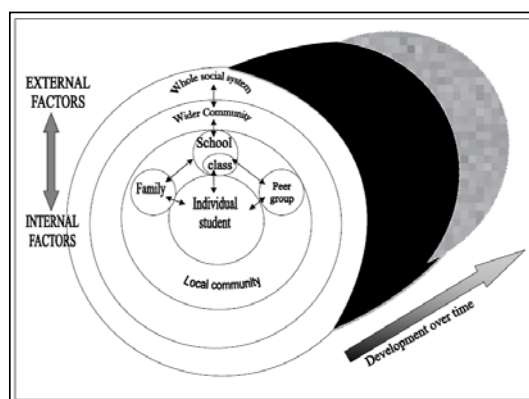
 Figure 3.3:   Levels of Systems related to the Education Process

(Adapted from Donald et al., 2002, p.55).

The eco-systemic theory is based on the essence of the Systems Theory. Schools and families are seen as 'wholes', whose operation is reliant on the interaction between parts (Donald *et al.*, 2002, p. 47). Donald *et al.,* (2002), debate that in a bid to understand the whole, we need to scrutinize the relationship between all parts of the system. Thus, the above diagram illustrates the various parts which comprise

the whole (gestalt), and how they work together with each to extend the holistic development of an individual. Donald *et al.*, (2002), assert that the primary thinking, in terms of systems, is that cause and effect relationships occur in cycles as well as in one direction. Due to the interaction and interrelationship between the parts, actions can be perceived as activating and affecting one another in a mutual way. According to Donald *et.al.*,(2002) the core of the systems theory is that social problems like HIV and AIDS, violence, bullying and drug abuse must be viewed in relation to the cause of the problem as being located in family, community, religious organisations, rather than blaming the individual.

Schools and families are seen as individual parts, whose functioning is dependent on the interaction between each part (Donald *et al.*, 2002, p. 47). Donald *et al.,* (2002), argue that in order to understand the ecosystems theory fully, we need to study the relationship between all parts of the system. The author further elaborates this by using the school as an example of a structure with different parts, consisting of its workforce, its students, its programme of study, and its administration. There needs to be a sound understanding of the relationship between the different parts, as each part is exclusively different from the other. It is imperative that schools, teachers and counsellors work cooperatively to maintain the primary relationship and to create a surrounding that welcomes and cares for families. The type of relationships will ensure that balance is restored in the individuals' life.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) clarifies that there are four nested systems namely the micro, meso-, exo- and macro-systems. The theorist believes that the ecological system is a dynamic system continuously developing. The micro-system alters each time the individual acquires or releases a new life experience. These changes are essential to the child's development process. The experiences and changes that may take place progressively with time are called chrono-system. According to Berk (2007), most of life's changes are imposed by external forces, as well as internally. Internal changes occur because individuals opt to construct and modify their own environment perceptions. Much of the understanding is based on the individuals' age, surroundings, behaviour, their ability to rationalize and their physical characteristics. Berks (2007), therefore insists that people and the environment share a reciprocal relationship.

3.7.1. The micro- system

Bronfenbrenner (2005), states that the micro - system is setting comprising of set activities, roles, interpersonal relationships and experiences of the individual with another individual. Bronfenbrenner (2005) asserts that relations and activities within the individuals immediate environment, form part of the micro- system. The family, community, and child care facilities are examples of structures within a micro-system. Berk (2007) highlights the relationships with the bi-directional influence which occur within the micro- system, having a two- fold effect on the individual. Such an experience can result in the child having an influence on the parent and vice versa (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). The relationships can either be stable and supportive or unstable and unpredictable. Parents play a pivotal role in the child's life in attempting to provide a stable home as well as long term relationships. The teachers share equal responsibility in ensuring that the learner has a stable, safe environment in which teaching and learning can take place.

3.7.2. The meso-system

Bronfenbrenner classifies the meso-system as the connecting of the structures of the microsystem (Berk, 2007, p.24). The child's environment links the child with its immediate surroundings. An example of the meso-system is the fact that a child's education and learning not only depends upon the teachers' knowledge, but also the parents of the child, as they have an equal responsibility to assist the child in learning and education. Parents have the role of supporting the child with their education as learning, education and knowledge must be "carried over into the home" (Berk, 2007, p.24). An adults' relationship as spouse and as a parent, depends largely upon the effects of relationship in their workplace. Individuals in a family have their own experiences and this somehow impacts on how they interact with each other and the community at large. It can therefore be stated that just as the home life and relationships impact on the learners' behaviour, the same can be said about the teachers' life and his/her performance in the classroom. The teachers' personal values, beliefs may influence the manner in which he/ she addresses behavioural problems such as learner bullying and disruptive behaviour.

3.7.3. The macro-system

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) macro-system is the outer stage of the structure. This stage or level is influenced by a variety of factors such as law, resources and cultural values. Bronfenbrenner (2005) suggests that this stage comprises of a group of people sharing similar values, beliefs, lifestyles and resources within a social structure or culture are part of a macro-system. The macro-system encases the systems that are remaining, having an influence on them as well. The macro-system affects the exo-system, meso-system and micro-system. The school has rules and regulations and the people share similar values and beliefs. In my opinion the teachers are responsible for enforcing discipline and ensuring acceptable behavioural patterns are exercised by the learners. In this study, I believe that the teachers' reaction or response to a negative experience can be greatly influenced by personal beliefs and values.

3.7.4. The exo-system

This level is defined by Bronfenbrenner (2005) as being the outer shell, which encircles both the meso-system and micro-system. The exo-system comprises of the social setting which affect the development of an individual (Berk, 2007). The exo-system includes both the formal and informal setting. In this study the exo-system would be referring to the external support the teacher receives namely his/her colleagues or the department of education. The school community need to work cohesively in order to support the teacher/s that needs support. In my opinion, the staff at the school, management team, learners and teachers needs to work co-operatively to ensure that the school regulations regarding discipline are carried out. This will alleviate the stress the affected teacher experiences.

3.8. Conclusion

According to Piaget and Erikson (Bender, 2010), the use of the ecological model encourage that the social settings and contextual factors are viewed as part of the individuals developmental process. This process highlights the fact that social and cultural factors in the environment affect the young child's biological, behavioural and developmental process. The authors advocate that a sound understanding of the

interrelationships between certain issues that create weakness or opportunities for delinquency and changed behavioural patterns.

The use of this theory may benefit the teachers, who gain a better understanding of the different stages which impact on a child's development. Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) illustrates this in the ecological model which emphasising the role players in the child's life and how their interaction, interrelationships and interdependence with each other, affect and impact on development. Bender (2010) maintains that the school functions as a whole with the support of the different parts. Each part has its own distinguishing pattern. The communities are therefore unique and have their own individual needs and concerns. The school and all the stake holders, need to ensure that the needs of the school and children are met, based on the social and cultural composition of the school.

Dawson and Singh-Dhesi (2010), see the benefits of using this theory in stating that the child must be seen in the context of the environment, school and the community. The authors' advocate that in order for the child to receive assistance and support from educational psychologists, the child must be understood in his/her context. It is my view that the experiential theory and eco-systems theory are predisposed by external and internal factors which in turn influence ones actions. In my opinion the two theories, experiential theory and ecosystem theory, are complementary. While the former looks at how teachers use self–reflection in dealing with bullying, the latter gives us a holistic view of the matter as a societal issue.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

Chapter three focused on the experiential theory. The theoretical framework chapter highlighted the factors which contribute to the phenomenon under study. It also discussed in detail the link between daily experiences and the experiential theory. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used in this study. The chapter comprises many different areas which will be discussed in detail so as to give the reader greater insight into the study. The methodology of the study is discussed and the aspects of Qualitative research methodology are explained in detail, ensuring that the reader is well orientated with the study. The interpretivist paradigm employed in this stud highlights the ontological and epistemological source and its relevance to the study.

The intention of the study was to interpret and to make sense of the phenomenon from the perspective of the people (Denzin, 2005). Therefore, the real-life experiences of teachers regarding bullying and disruptive behaviour in the Foundation Phase needs to be researched. Their degree of understanding with regard to their experiences and the causes of bullying and disruptive behavior, needed to be documented as well.

This study engaged a case study as a method of research design. This chapter explains in detail what a case study is and how it is relevant to this study. The various data generation techniques are discussed. The first technique which is the semi-structured interview looked at the study in its context. The second technique was document analysis which explains how the technique was applied to this study.

The third technique I used was the observation method. This technique gave me practical/ concrete data about the respondents and their views or perceptions of the phenomenon being researched.

This chapter then discusses the purposeful sampling and the reasoning for using the method. Data analysis refers to the different phases that are used to investigate the data. Trustworthiness is the 'validity' of the study. Trustworthiness is discussed with regard to its relevance to the study. The limitations of the study are also discussed in this chapter. The research questions are analyzed in relation to the study.

4.2. Nature of Qualitative Research

The study was conducted using the qualitative approach. This approach involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach and it is an appropriate method for this study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), the design of qualitative research often emerges as the research progresses. The approach is motivated by an inquiry to study a particular phenomenon in its natural setting. This approach concerns itself with a social inquiry which requires a comprehension of the societal or human difficulties experienced. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2006), qualitative research is an inquiry process in which the researchers generate data by relating face - to - face with the participants in their setting which in this case was their place of work, their school. I interacted with the participants and then interpreted the data which was collected through interviews, taking into account the general observations made during the interview. Documentation regarding parent - teacher communication and the misdemeanor record files were also analyzed before a holistic interpretation was constructed (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

The phenomenon researched in this study was the Foundation Phase school teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour. The teachers' experiences were looked at in relation to the school at which they were employed. The participants opted to be interviewed in their natural surroundings, which in this case was the school at which they worked. Qualitative research views the phenomena through the experiences of the participants. This allowed me to gain a

better understanding of the participants' social relations, perceptions, beliefs and opinions. The perception that the participants apportion to the phenomena was interpreted. In this study I interpreted the responses that the participants gave about their experiences that they had with bullying and disruptive behaviour at their school.

McMillan *et al*. (2006), state that qualitative research is based on the hypothesis that reality has many dimensions. The authors assert that the individuals are engaged in joint social experiences and communication. Reality to these individuals is therefore a social construction of events, where the individuals make meaning of their experiences. In this study the participants discuss their experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour within the primary school. McMillan *et al*. (2006) explain that the intention of a qualitative research is to recognize the social phenomena from the participants view point. In this study the participants through the means of an interview, highlight their personal experiences with the phenomena being researched. I had access to the misdemeanor records as well as records of written communication between the teacher and the parents, which were maintained by the teachers. This information was analyzed in addition to the information gathered during the interviews.

Srivastava *et al.* (2009) assert that there are two types of qualitative research techniques. The 'natural loci' which is the observation method is the first type, while the second type is the non- observational technique. The second technique involves interviews and discussions. This study utilized the interview method. In the process of generating data, I maintained a neutral position and did not interfere with the daily operation of the school activities. Researchers engaged in qualitative research become easily immersed in the situation and the phenomena being investigated (McMillian et al, 2006).

4.3 Interpretivist Paradigm

This study was located in the interpretivist paradigm. The paradigm investigates the why and how of a phenomenon or study. The interpretivist paradigm aims to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in its context, which is, teachers' experiences of

bullying and disruptive behaviour at the primary school. Srivastava *et al.* (2009), advocates that the interpretivist paradigm investigates how the participants internalize their experiences thereby constructing realities which become characteristically personal or subjective. The participants could relate to this study with this approach as they were able to make meaning of their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour in the Primary School. This paradigm is underpinned by phenology, concerning itself with the individuals' personal experiences and their perceptions of their world in relation to their societal interactions (Mack, 2010). The phenomena in this study looked at the teachers' experiences and the consequences of such experiences. These experiences differ and vary in each individual and they become social constructions of one's reality.

The theoretical keystone of this paradigm looked at the ontological hypothesis as reality being socially constructed. Reality experienced by individuals was interpreted in different ways by the individuals. This in turn results in varying opinions on occurrences or events. Each individual makes his own meaning of the events (Mack, 2010). In this study the participants had their own view points on their experiences with the phenomena being researched at their place of employment.

The primary belief is that research cannot be impartially viewed from an external stance. The researcher needs to locate him/herself within, to observe the phenomena through the lens of the participants. Using this paradigm, the researcher has to recognize and interpret the social reality of the diverse participants. In this study I interviewed the teachers and thereafter I analyzed the various records maintained by them.

Mack (2010) insists that although the ontological beliefs of this paradigm are subjective, researchers should position themselves within the interpretivist paradigm. This allows them to take an objective viewpoint whilst analyzing the data they have generated. The interpretivist paradigm has a few limitations. The first is that it vacates scientific processes of confirmations; hence the outcomes cannot be generalized to other events. The ontological assumption is subjective and not objective; however Mack (2010) argues that researchers who position themselves within the interpretivist paradigm take an objective standpoint when they analyze the data that was generated.

4.4 Case Study

The six participants in this study were from the same school which, according to Dooley (2002), categorizes such a study as a case study. This research was based on a particular story at a work place, focusing on a few events. Yin (1994) concurs, stating that a case study has well defined steps which are; design the study and generate the data, analyze and interpret the data, and finally to disseminate the data. With reference to the study, this technique was suitable as the research was based on understanding the phenomena of bullying and disruptive behaviour in a primary school, in its context.

According to McMillian *et al.* (2006), a case study provides descriptive, diagnostic and pragmatic summaries of the study. The authors believe that the focal point of a case study would be a single, key phenomenon. Dooley (2002) agrees that a case study concerns itself with an explicit phenomenon, achieving complete representation of certain practices, occurrences or processes. Such a study does not progress to predicative or worldwide research. In this case study the phenomenon was represented by the teachers' experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour. This study was conducted at one research site using the responses of six participants. McMillian *et al.* (2006) are of the view that a case study investigates matters about which very little or no research has been conducted.

Dooley (2002) states that case studies may make use of different data generation or collection techniques. In this study the six teachers were interviewed by the researcher. Teacher records were also analyzed in order to obtain a holistic view of the phenomenon being researched. The intention of a case study research according to Dooley (2002) is to obtain original information using academic as well as investigative analysis. The aim of this study was to generate new knowledge on the teachers' experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour.

4.5 Sampling and sampling procedures

This study engaged the method of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is carried out to amplify the importance of the information gathered from small samples

(Kane, 1985). A sample is selected for a study as it is impractical and time consuming to study everyone. Kane believes that a sample is a portion of the universe or population. The sample should therefore reflect, with reasonable accuracy, views, opinions and attitudes of the entire group (Kane, 1985, p90). The six participants in the study were teachers from the foundation Phase of the Primary school in the urban setting. All participants had contact with the learners in the Foundation Phase. The participants varied in age, race, years of teaching experience and gender. The participants comprised of five females and one male. Their ages ranged from 25 years to 41 years. The Indian male teacher, 25 years old with six months of teaching experience taught physical education to the learners. He has a bachelor of sports science degree. The female white teacher, 27 years old, has three years of teaching experience. She holds a Bachelor of education degree. The next teacher was an Indian female and she is 26 years old. She has four years of teaching experience. She has a Bachelor of Education-Honors in inclusive education. The next female teacher aged 40 years, has ten years of teaching experience and she graduated with a Higher Education- Junior Primary Diploma in teaching. The white female teacher was 59 years old and she has twenty - two years of teaching experience. She has a Higher Education, Pre-Primary Diploma. The final participant was 41 years old with sixteen years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Bachelor of Education-degree. These participants were chosen because they were well knowledgeable on the topic of bullying and disruptive behaviour, based on their own experiences at the Primary School. The participants provided a wealth of information about their personal experiences on the phenomenon being researched. The teachers' records supplemented the data which was generated via semi-structured interviews. The participants' names were used during the recorded interviews; however alphabets were used to replace the names in the transcripts to ensure anonymity of the participants.

4.6 Research Instrument - Interview

An interview schedule was used to collect data. The schedule incorporated all the questions that the researcher wanted to pose, leaving space for the responses. The questions listed in the interview schedule were directly related to the aims of the study. These questions were asked with appropriate probing. The interview took the

form of a semi-structured interview. The semi- structured interview strategy was appropriate for collecting the data for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six participants. These semi- structured interviews permitted me to obtain 'rich and in-depth experiential' feed -back from the participants (Al-Saggaf & Williamson, 2004, p.1). This method was appropriate to generate data from the participants. The face – to - face interviews allowed me to observe facial expressions, which was integral to the interview process. Facial expression, body language, gestures and speech, added value to the interview. The interviews provided good evidence of the participant's responses. Interviews were semi-structured allowing for probing of initial responses. Use of a voice recorder saved time and involved less note taking allowing for time for observation and capturing of the actual dialogue. This allowed for time to interact with the participants.

McMillan *et al.* (2006) support the view that semi-structured interviews have open – ended questions and therefore allow the participants' to respond easily. The questions were also very were detailed and relatable to the study. Such questions allowed the participant to elaborate with the use of examples. The interviews were based on the participants' perceptions and experiences with regard to bullying and disruptive behaviour. The research drew on the responses of teachers to add value to the study. The records of the learners' misdemeanors, which were recorded by the teacher, formed part of the source for data analysis. All forms of communication between the teacher and the parents, namely letters to parents; telephone records and parent teacher interviews, formed part of the resources for data analysis. Analysis of the above documents did not require planned meetings with the participants and therefore saved time during the analysis process (Watkins, 2012). There is, however, a flaw in this process as missing information results in gaps with the findings which impacts on the analysis of the data.

4.7 Stages of data production

There were four stages to data production in the study conducted. Obtaining the principals' consent to conduct the study at the site was the first stage. The generation of data took place in stage two. In this stage I had to forge a relationship

with the participant. In stage three, I had to consider the observations that were made during the interview. The teachers' records included a misdemeanor record book which records learners' defaults for the entire year. The teachers' misdemeanor records as well as the written and telephonic correspondence between the participant and the parent was also analyzed.

This misdemeanor book is signed by the Head of the Department as well. This book is referred to when parent - teacher conferences take place regarding behavioural defaults. The code of conduct is consulted to determine the type of punishment based on the level of misdemeanor. These guidelines assist the teacher and the management team to deal effectively with repetitive defaulters. Stage four involved the closing data generation once all the relevant questions were asked.

4.8 Validity and reliability and trustworthiness

Validity of this study was based on the trustworthiness of the participants' responses. Krefting cited in Cresswell, (2013) describes trustworthiness according to Guba's model, as comprising of four facets. The first facet which is truth - value, makes reference to the researchers' satisfaction with the authenticity of the information that is furnished by the participant. The qualitative research method gathers the truth through the investigation of individuals' experiences and their perceptions of their experiences. This contributes to the credibility of the study. Truth - value was achieved by interviewing the participants and ensuring that their perceptions, opinions and beliefs regarding their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour were documented.

The second aspect related to applicability which makes reference to the outcomes of the study and the probability that they may be applied to other groups of people and different circumstances. With regards to this study the outcomes are not applicable to other studies as all responses differ from individual - to - individual and school – to - school. School dynamics and demography vary as well, making it difficult to apply the outcomes of this study to other studies.

In qualitative research, the consistency of the data is vital to the study. It is through consistency that I was able to understand the participants' experiences. This aspect of consistency emphasizes the exclusiveness of the study as being different from other studies. This study looked at the experiences of teachers with respect to bullying and disruptive behaviour and their responses allowing me to understand what the implications were due to these experiences. This aspect of consistency therefore contributed to the trustworthiness of my study.

Neutrality is the fourth aspect of such a research. This required all findings to be obtained from the participant only. With reference to my study, the teachers from the Foundation Phase at the Primary School provided the information about their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour. Denzin (2005) explains that the use of triangulation can be used to develop the researchers' confidence in the study and its findings. Triangulation according to Denzin (2005) can be used to enhance the credibility of the study. Triangulation was achieved through the analysis of the semi- structured interviews, participants' misdemeanor records of learners, telephone call records to parents and participants' reports of bullying and disruptive behaviour to the Head of Department. All these resources were consulted in order to form triangulation of the data.

Trustworthiness was established by using a Dictaphone to record the responses of the respondents. These responses were transcribed and the respondents were allowed to read the transcripts to verify its authenticity. Establishing such a relationship of trustworthiness, ensures that the findings are of quality and very authentic. The data that is captured convinces the reader that the information is worthy of their attention (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch & Westmorland, 1998, p.8). According to Sinkovics, Penz Ghauri (2008, p.699), participants' responses should match that of the researcher in order for it to be credible. In my study the six participants were interviewed to ascertain their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour. These participants were teachers who interacted with learners daily and were therefore rich with knowledge. The transcriptions of the interview are included in the dissertation. Trustworthiness was also established by using the interviews and transcribing the responses in direct quotes in the study.

Comment [T2]: Reference?

4.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical values, according to Denscombe (2002), refer to moral responsibility and moral principles. This ethical perspective is put to the test, when the researcher needs to conduct the research without judging the participant. The Principal at the school was consulted in order to gain gatekeeper's consent. I obtained ethical clearance from the University of Kwa Zulu- Natal – Edgewood before I began my research. Consent was thereafter obtained from the participants. The participants in my study were all adults. Each interview began with a statement of informing the participant of the purpose of the study, and provided an assurance of confidentiality and a guarantee that there were no right or wrong answers. The consent forms indicated that pseudonyms will be used for the study. The name of the school was also not disclosed as this assisted with maintaining anonymity. From the outset the participants were informed that they were not compelled to continue with the interview if they didn't want to. I was aware of the participants' state of mind, emotions and feelings. The participants were encouraged to engage in open discussions regarding their views about the interview process.

4.10. Conclusion

The methodology used in this study was appropriate to the study, as the participants were at ease and were able to volunteer information regarding their experiences. This study utilized the qualitative research methodology exploring a specific phenomenon. This research was therefore conducted within the interpretivist paradigm. The experiences of teachers with bullying and disruptive behaviour were explored. The research was conducted at a specific school, interviewing the teachers at that school. This study was therefore a case study of a selected group of teachers within a specific school.

> **Comment [T3]:** This chapter dealt with methodology, not data.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter the four common themes which emerged during the interviews will be discussed. This method of analysis is called thematic analysis. This technique, according to Boyatzis *et.al.* (2000), creates a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. Themes will be categorized accordingly. Drawing from the research findings in this study, data were generated from the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' understandings of bullying and disruptive behaviour?
2. How does bullying and disruptive behaviour affect teaching and learning?
3. In what ways does such behaviour impact on teachers' morale and confidence?
4. How do schools deal with such behavioral problems?

The six participants were interviewed and their responses were recorded on a Dictaphone. The participants were teachers from the Foundation Phase expressed their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour. The aim of this study was to establish teachers' understandings of the phenomenon; to investigate the impact of the phenomenon on teaching and learning in the classroom as well as its impact on teacher morale. Boyatzis *et. al*. (2000) emphasize that the thematic analysis approach is used widely in qualitative research. This method analyses the diverse themes within the data. Themes always provide an accurate understanding of the

phenomenon being researched. This study focuses on the human experiences. This method according to Boyatzis *et. al.* (2000) can be associated with phenomenology which allows the participants to talk about or explain their experiences in their own words. This approach permits the participants' perceptions, feelings and experiences to be recognized as a key aspect of the study.

Boyatzis *et.al.* (2000), insist that this method of analysis requires the data to be well structured and vivid. This type of examination is preferred by many researchers. This technique requires the transcripts to be analyzed thoroughly, themes to be identified and finally similarities and differences to be determined. This study uses the inductive approach because the themes are strongly linked with the data and the inferences made thereof are based on the data.

5.2. Data analysis

5.2.1 Theme one: The teachers' understandings of bullying and disruptive behaviour.

Teachers one to six seem to be of the same opinion that bullying and disruptive behaviour is fuelled by various forces. They concur that in most cases the home life and support have an influence on the type of behaviour the learners display.

The respondents agree that discipline is neglected at home and has become the responsibility of the teacher. Participant 5 highlights that "*Bullying is something that has to do with trying to have power over the next person*". **Participant 2** agrees with this statement saying that bullying "*targets an individual".* Olweus and Limber (2010) insist that bullying is repeated aggressive behaviour which occurs over a period of time. The authors also assert that it is an imbalance of power.

Participant 1 makes a differentiation between bullying and disruptive behaviour. She says "*Well I wouldn't classify the two as the same thing. Bullying I find there's varying degrees of it. You've got things like verbal bullying where children are*

teased by other children. And then there is the physical side of it where they actually use their hands or body parts to actually hurt the other child. Disruptive behaviour is anything that can be done by tapping of the feet or getting out of your chair anything to interrupt anything that's being taught at the time."

Participant 2 says *"Well to me bullying means when another child intimidates a learner or uses either their size or maybe their seniority to threaten another child, that's bullying. Disruptive behaviour on the other hand is when there is a learner who is obviously interrupting a lesson so that you cannot continue with it. Tends to you know get up to mischief while you are teaching and interrupts your lessons basically."*

Participant 3 believes that bullying is "*more a form of venting. More their way of letting out what they can't let out either at home or be it with their friends outside of school and they come there and they let it out either on their teachers or on their fellow peers."* In my experience as a teacher, these learners are merely reaching out for help and are seeking attention*.* **Participant 4** on the other hand believes that bullying is a deliberate act with the intent to "*hurt someone on purpose whether it's physical, verbal or emotional*" She states that , "*Bullying is when one or more people threaten or hurt someone on purpose whether it's physical, emotional or verbal. Disruptive behaviour is anything from talking, making silly noises, fiddling, giggling anything that interrupts a lesson*."

Participant 5 asserts that to be a bully one needs to *"be confident to do what they want to do. It's not a child that is not confident. It is a child that is confident enough to know that I am doing the wrong thing and I can still do it because my character is strong enough to do it. But really it is a negative behaviour, it is, bullying is a negative thing."* She further explains that, *"bullying may not be necessarily something physical".*

Participant 6 believes that *"Disruptive behaviour is more when a kid does not listen or chooses not to listen and acts out very disruptively. Does other things rather than what they are supposed to do. Bullying is something that has to do with trying to have like power over the next person or a few individuals in class or school or so forth."*

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Another interesting fact that emerged was that bullying also extended to name calling and teasing.

5.2.1.1. Teasing and disrespect towards peers

According to a few of the participants, disparaging name calling prejudiced language, swearing, teasing and disrespectful statements are a daily occurrence in the classroom. Some of the study participants concur that the use of hateful name calling and teasing are commonly used by the Foundation Phase learners to communicate their judgment, fury and frustrations. Some of the respondents believe that learners imitate their parents and /or their peers behaviour, as well as behaviour they watch on television.

Participant 1 pointed out that she has noticed teasing of learners. She says "*Currently I've picked up on some bullying in the form teasing other children. Just because they come from a different background, they've got a different family life, they may not be from South Africa or they look different. I have picked up on that which is quite strange for Grade 1's.*"

Participant 1 adds that "*it's culture, name calling, I am not too familiar with it because I mean I haven't been exposed to it. But according to parents that have come in to complain have used words that I am not familiar with, I don't even know what language they are, but just words that they call children from a different culture.*"

Participant 5 finds that the learners engage in name calling and use harsh words. She adds that they use a negative tone when they speak to their peers.

She says, "*definitely, name calling is one of them because the moment they find that a child is not confident to basically fight back then the name calling continues. So that is actually very ugly behaviour because that affects children emotionally, definitely emotionally as well.*"

5.2.1.2. Fighting

The participants are of the view that learner aggression manifests itself in the form of kicking, pushing, slapping and aggressive play. **Participant 1** states that the physical form of bullying she has witnessed is "*pinching and pushing others*".

She says "*the common thing I find with bullying in Grade 1 is physical; they're still learning how to use their hands and how to express themselves. So often they will lash out and push somebody or pinch them or hurt them in some way using their hands. And it's their way of expressing themselves unfortunately, but often when somebody is nasty to another one they will retaliate by using their hands and that I find is where the bullying stems from in my class.*"

Participant 4 concurs adding that tripping other learners as well as punching is common practice by some learners. According to the participant, such behaviour which was commonly found on the playground has now become a daily occurrence in the classroom. **Participant 2** states that she has not witnessed bullying however she has experienced disruptive behaviour.

Participant 3 remarks that learners "*just out of the blue slap each other or they push each other*". She also comments that she has had a few experiences such as "*hitting, kicking in the classroom out of the blue. Pencil stabbing…*"

Participant 6 maintains that, "*In the JP it's mainly pushing, shoving, a little bit of punching, but the thing is – not punching as in knocking out somebody or something, it's just trying to get that power.*"

5.2.1.3. Disruptive behaviour

The participants in the study experience disruptive learners. The respondents all agree that the disruptions in the class was the biggest challenge as the behaviour persists even after learners have been reprimanded. Both **participant 1** and **2** agree that disruptive behaviour is an interruption of the lesson by the learner.

Participant 2 says "*Well, there's always learners who want to speak out while the lesson is going on. There are learners who make funny sounds while you're teaching. Getting up out of their places and interrupting the lesson, those kinds of issues.* She adds that disruptive behaviour "is *when a learner who is obviously interrupting a lesson so that you cannot continue with the lesson".*

According to **Participants 2** and **4** the learners talk while the teacher is teaching the content and while doing their written work.

Participant 4 stresses that "*they talk all the time".* She says "*they tend to find – well yes, you try, but their disruptive behaviour tends to overtake their learning. And some of them are really – you find that the most intelligent children are the most disruptive ones."* She believes that "*the learners are seeking attention"*

Participant 4 also adds that "*some of them make funny noises, and the fiddling, they cannot sit still without fiddling with a pencil or a ruler or tapping their foot against a chair".*

Participant 5 agrees that "*learners can't sit still and they don't want to follow rules.*

Both **participant 5** and **participant 6** are of the same view that disruptive behaviour also involves learners disrespect and obstinate attitude.

Participant 3 believes bullying and disruptive behaviour is a case of when **"***children react with their anger",* and states it is "*a form of venting*" as a result of their home experiences. This particular participant discussed her experiences with a learner who demanded attention and disturbed her lessons. She stated that she had a learner "*who wanted to be the class clown and he wanted to be everywhere. He wanted more attention from the other children than he wanted to learn. So he would roll on the floor and find any way possible, throwing his stationery, goodness, there are so many things that he used to do that causes that lack of concentration for the others because of all my attention focusing on him and his disruptive behaviour. And what else, you tend to get the ones who just out of the blue slap as well. And especially in our junior primary, they just out of the blue they slap each other or they push each other and they find the shoving no big deal.'*

Participant 5 further explains that learners are selective about which teachers they want to disrespect. **Participant 5** also added that a disruptive learner is one who constantly interrupts a lesson by answering questions continuously without waiting his/ her turn. She defines a disruptive learner as one who " *can't sit, I don't want to follow the rules. I don't want to follow the rules; I want to do as I please. So basically there is no boundaries there because disruptive behaviour comes from no boundaries."*

Participant 6 states that the "*kid does not listen or chooses not to listen and acts out very disruptively*". **Participant 3** stated that she had a learner who "*wanted to be the class clown*".

5.**2.1.4. Disrespect towards teachers**

Disrespect towards teachers is a different type of disruptive behaviour. Some of the participants expressed their shock at the manner in which learners conduct themselves now, compared to when they were younger.

Participant 2 felt that learners were not afraid to *"challenge a teacher."* She also went on to say *"when we went to school there was no major discipline issues, we never ever challenged a teacher. And yet today I feel like the children that are – even in the foundation phase, I mean it happens more I suppose in the senior primary, but even in the foundation phase, as they grow older, when you come to the Grade 3 level they've already developed an attitude, they have their own thoughts, their own ideas. And they feel that they can go ahead and they can challenge a teacher. You know they actually like lack respect for the teachers. And the way they behave sometimes it's like you just wonder really have they ever learnt any kind of morals and respect at home."*

Participant 3 believes that children mimic the parents' behaviour and she found that some of her learners displayed an arrogant attitude towards her and other learners.

Participant 5 believes that a bully is "*blatantly naughty" and "seeks attention by forcing others to do what he/she wants"*. She also adds that such a learner is *"one*

who lacks respect". She says *", they respect some teachers and they don't respect others. But that can only be stopped with the teacher themselves because I can't mold you to be a person who commands respect, you have to create that on your own. It's a common respect between pupil and teacher as well. So that is why certain children respect some teachers and don't respect the others. It depends what the ground rules were, how you went about it you know."*

Marais and Meier (2010) assert that since the abolition of corporal punishment in South Africa (Department of Education, 1996), the learners have become uncontrollable in the area of discipline. Teachers feel powerless against learners who constantly challenge their authority. There is a dire need for intervention strategies to be implemented.

5.3. Theme two: Socialization

5.3.1. Home environment

I strongly believe that learners home life and home environment plays a very important role in the manner in which he/she behaves. Participants in this study discuss their views on how a negative home environment and lifestyle can affect learners' behaviour at school.

Participant 1 says "*A lot of it I think stems from the home situation. The bullying I find is definitely stuff that they may be experiencing at home or experiencing from their environment where they come from. The disruptive behaviour also stems from home. I mean they may not be getting the attention they're seeking at home and they're looking for that attention somewhere else and that maybe their way of seeking the attention.*

Participant 2 points out that "*lots of time you will find that those children that are bullies are actually children that have a problem at home with their family lives. Where maybe their parents are very authoritarian and they do the same with the children. So it's kind of like an acting out."*

She spoke about a disruptive learner in her class. She says *"We're not really sure what the problem is, he obviously has a problematic background and lots of family issues. And we've spoken to the guardian at the moment who's been taking care of him. And you know it's actually quite sad because sometimes you don't realise this child is acting up and you really don't know the situation that they're in or how it is impacting on them and that is why maybe that they are acting up. But the thing is to deal with it is a difficult situation in the classroom.*

Participant 3 agreed that learners witness their parents fighting and learn to mimic the same behaviour. She makes reference to a learner whose behaviour deteriorated in the classroom because of the kind of company she kept at home. She adds "its behaviour that they learn on the taxi when they're going home".

Participant 5 stated that a *"disruptive unstable environment at home" may be the reason for learners seeking attention at school".* She also adds that learners' behaviour may be an *"imitation of his parents' behaviour at home".*

She agrees with **participant 2** who stated that learners have no values or respect. Lewin (2010) asserts that the environment impacts on ones behaviour and states that through collective efforts, social problems can be resolved.

Participant 4 believes that learners who are bullied at home and feel bad and as a result "*they want to make other people feel bad".*

Participant 6 says *"I think with bullying it could be household issues or from the environment the social … [indistinct] could happen to the individual. But we can see it from the way their parents treat each other. For instance a father could overpower a mother and that's how he gets his way with the mother or vice versa. Disruptive behaviour will dwell on that also because of experiencing those issues so they can go hand in hand together or it could be an instance of peer pressure, there are many socio economic issues, lots of things."*

Participant 1 and **2** agree that bullying and disruptive behaviour was almost non-existent when they were younger. **Participant 1** commented that "*parents' are just*

not ready to be parents and they kind of push the parenting part of it aside and forget how to discipline their kids".

Participant 2 *agreed with* ***participant 1*** *adding that you question whether the learner "ever learnt any morals or values at home".*

Bronfenbrenner (2005) advocates the need for adult support in a child's life in order for them to develop emotionally, socially, morally and intellectually .The author is of the opinion that such interest in the child's development will impact positively in the child's development.

Participant 4 was of the view that the problem begins at home as a result of *"single parent families".*

 Participant 3 stated that it is a result of "*the lack of time that parents have for their children".*

Participant 5 explains that learners don't get any attention from their parents and are sometimes left at school *"until 8 o'clock at night".*

Pienaar (2003) states that poor parenting or the lack of parental warmth is a factor which contributes to the learner feeling worthless and unloved. This leads to attention seeking behaviour which is categorized as disruptive. **Participant 3** asserted that "If you don't have that glue between home and school it doesn't stick I think to the child". She adds that parental involvement is also important. **Participant 3** needed support from the parents, "If I needed anything more I would have really needed the parents support".

Participant 4 believed that support from parents is necessary however, states that "they are actually not supportive at all". Lewin, a German – American psychologist, speaks of the impact of group dynamics to highlight multifaceted and intricate processes among group members (Forsyth, 2010). The difficulty lies in actions, process, and change which are a result group interaction.

Participant 3 asserts that bullying and disruptive behaviour is "learned behaviour. It's behaviour that they learn on the taxi when they're going home. It's the behaviour

that they learn with people they hang out with when their parents are not around after school and because they are unsupervised. They are left un-supervised; they don't have what we had when we were kids. We had parents to go home to and grandparents to go home to. And some of them are left so unattended that they don't know what the right thing is to do. So they end up doing the wrong thing instead of the right thing."

5.3.2. School environment

Teachers in this study express their feelings and views about their experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour in the classroom and the school environment. They discuss the various forms of behavioural problems they face daily in the classroom, and attempt to make sense of the reasons learners act in such a way. Some of the challenges they face include lessons being disrupted, stealing, fighting and disrespect towards teachers.

Participant 2 said "*Well, basically I would think it has to do with the child and maybe the background of the child. Because lots of times if you look at the learners that are disrupting the lessons they are usually the ones that are maybe at the lower end, which are the weaker learners. Probably they don't have that attention span to pay attention to the entire lesson so after a few minutes they become distracted or maybe bored and they tend to interfere with things and other children and disrupt lessons.*"

Participant 3 says "*You find that the older children have quite a – how do I put it, quite a resound influence on the smaller kids. They see the bigger children doing it and they automatically think that it's the right thing to do.*" She believes that the parental support at school level is necessary. She insists on the need for *"more teacher – parent contact".*

Participant 5 shared her experience –*"last week I had a child take somebody else's lunch and eat it".* This is a form of bullying she retorted.

The response of the teacher to bullies and the bullied is very important according to **participant 5**. She believes that the teacher needs to be weary of bullying behaviour and to correct it ensuring that the child understands what he/ she have done wrong. She strongly asserts that neglect on the part of the parent and the teacher aggravates the problem. Teachers' tend to favor some children and this affects learners who are also trying very hard for teachers' attention.

Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000) believes that reflection is compulsory in the experiential learning practice. The author asserts that it can occur autonomously or through facilitation. This process creates a platform for further learning and reflection of the experiences. Teachers need to develop skills to deal with bullying (Fekkes et al., 2004).

5.4.   Theme three:

The effects of bullying and disruptive behaviour on teacher morale

It is a teacher's responsibility to ensure that the curriculum is taught. This study revealed that most of the participants were experiencing a low morale and self – esteem because of many negative experiences with disruptive learners. Bullying and disruptive behaviour disturbed the lessons and posed many challenges for the teachers at the school. Some even considered leaving the profession.

Participant 1 said that disruptive or bullying behaviour interrupts the lesson and therefore "prevents you from enjoying your job". She also states that "*you need to reflect on what you have done"* and maybe change the disciplining methods. Kolb (1999, 2005) promotes self-reflection. This technique allows the teacher to explore the experience, reflect on it and learn in the process. Consequently, teachers develop their ability to deal with challenges thereby improving classroom management and teaching skills.

Participant 1 says *"As a teacher your intention is not to go into a classroom and discipline all the time. You want to – you teach because you enjoy it and when you're constantly stopped because of disruptive behaviour because of bullying*

because of whatever behaviour is happening in the classroom, that whatever negative behaviour is happening. It prevents you from enjoying your job and it stops there, I mean you can't express any enjoyment to the children for what you're doing because you're not enjoying it. So I mean it definitely has a very negative affect on me as a teacher for wanting to go back into my classroom and carry on teaching enjoyable lessons."

Participant 2 says "*With regards to our experience as a teacher it makes it quite frustrating. Especially when you have a disruptive learner because the thing is you plan yourself for the day, you plan your lessons, you want to go into the class and you have certain goals that you want to achieve. And then you have a child that comes in of course there are – ja, we were saying you have a learner that just comes in disrupts the entire flow of your lesson. It actually can be very frustrating because many times you know you want to go and get your point across and you want to get used to the learners and then you have this one learner that continuously interrupts the lesson. And you really feel like you haven't achieved anything by the end of that lesson. So you really need – you know these interruptions become quite a problem because the flow of the lesson is disrupted, the lesson isn't completed in time and children end up actually at a disadvantage as a result."*

She adds "*some days you go into a classroom and then you're having a bad day because learners are disrupting and you can't get your work done and you feel, you actually feel very – you have a low morale because you feel like you haven't achieved what you set out to achieve. So it does affect you in a way because you end up feeling that you're not competent enough. And especially if you feel like the children aren't performing and it may not always be the teacher's issue, it may just be the children, the fact that they're not paying attention. But it actually gives you a lower self - esteem because you feel you're not good enough with the learners.*"

Participant 2 is of the view that disruptive learners' disturb the progress of the lesson, and the teacher develops a *"low morale"* because they feel they haven't achieved what you set out to achieve. She states that learners' who don't pay attention in class imply that the teacher is not effective and this affects the teachers' self-esteem. The observation and reflection practice, according to Kolb (1999), allows the teacher to assess what works and does not work in the above respect,

hence effecting the necessary change. This cycle is ongoing and therefore assists the teacher in attaining change in learners' attitudes and behaviour in favor of positive learning. There are different ways to achieve the required effect in response to bullying and disruptive behaviour, observation and reflection being among them.

Participant 3 states that she experiences problems with behaviour but she wasn't sure whether this was because she was a younger teacher on the staff. She says, "*I don't know if it's my age or if it's the children of this era because when I was at school I never thought not even the thought of raising my voice at my teacher or talking out of turn ever crossed my mind. I knew that when I went home I would get a rapping on the knuckles for doing that*"

She sounds dejected when she says "*you actually feel like you're not getting anywhere. You feel like you haven't achieved much with that child. You tend to feel despondent and disheartened because you're not getting across the work, they're not producing it in their book so it's hard to deal with. Emotionally it becomes a personal attack on yourself. You start to feel – so it tends to make you feel like you haven't achieved much in a year. Although you have with the other children you feel at some point demoralized by the behaviour because you feel not respected. You wonder if they only have respect for their parents and they tend not to have respect for any other adult at all. But you start questioning yourself. Questioning whether you're actually doing a good job, whether you actually are at that maturity level to handle children.*"

Participant 3 adds "*There are so many things that go through your head. You question whether you are in the right profession or not. Well, those are the things I questioned. Last year when I had that Sibiya case it was hard for me, it was hard to pull through and you don't have the support of those parents. They tend to victimize you more than they tend to help you in these situations. Like with the mum blaming me for being too young, maybe he sees me as too young and he wants to play with me more like a friend than he does want to respect me as a teacher. So I think it's not just me, I think it's lots of teachers who feel that way. And you get to a point where you just want to take a break sometimes.*"

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She states that she told her Principal "*I don't know what to do. I am at a loss*". She comments that she is aware that "you need to change your methods" when dealing with difficult children.

Participant 3 insists that she tried many methods to obtain discipline in her classroom. She speaks of an incident "*I had a situation last year where I had a child that just did not want to listen. So although I follow procedure of finding a way to reward him, it didn't work. Calling in his parents didn't work. Although they tried, they said that he didn't display that behaviour at home; he only displayed it at school. They also blamed it on my being a young teacher. But we tend to see that this year, although he's with another teacher still displaying the same behaviour. After all of that not working we had to resort to sending him to the HOD's classroom every now and again for him to complete tasks that he should have actually been doing in class here, but to give the other children a break and allow them to do their work as well as their tests, we had to send him to the H.OD, in order for him to feel the pinch of not being in the classroom.*"

Participant 4 replied regretfully "there are days when you think, what am I doing here?" She says *"you feel as if you're cross all the time, you don't have fun anymore*". She also responds positively "as frustrated as you get there is usually a bright spark somewhere that *"makes you smile and you think okay we'll try again tomorrow".*

Participant 5 indicated that as a manager she has encountered teachers who "*broke down crying"* as they felt helpless due to disruptive and poorly behaved learners. She says, "*It does affect their moral because they are human. And then like one or two of the educators they broke down crying because they felt like this, they are doing everything to help these kinds of children and it's not reciprocal. So what can they do, I've done this, I am lost now, the child doesn't want to listen, he's still doing this. And let me tell you another form of bullying is bullying the teacher. You're bullying the teacher into doing what you want. You're bullying the teacher into just accepting your bad behaviour. So it's not good for the adult and neither is it good for the child as well. So basically a lot of the teachers do come to me with a lot of the issues which are put in place."* This statement can be related to Foucault's theory of

power dynamics, which claims that the reverse may occur and the learner bullies the teacher (Allen 2010, p12).

Participant 6 said that "*you find yourself getting irritated and trying to work your passion of teaching towards a set of learners where you have a handful of learners trying to disrupt the whole class. So most of the time because they all are virtually the same age, they all tend to start doing the same thing. And if you find one learner who they see he gets the better of you then all of them feel that they can get the better of you. So when you find yourself in a position where the kids are getting the better of you then that's when your morale takes a blow.*"

 Kolb *et.al (1999)* using the 'diverging' method, explain that a passive, sensitive individual who is a perfectionist and displays passive personality traits, may become easy victims to the dominating, assertive learners. According to Kolb *et.al.* (1999) accommodating includes experiences, emotions and acting on them. Kolb *et. al.* (1999) defines such individuals as those who prefer logic and a hand's on approach rather than intuition. These individuals draw from others' analysis based on a practical, experiential approach. The above individuals are fascinated by inventive challenges and fresh experiences as well as executing strategies. Individuals with accommodative tendencies are often dependent on results from others' experiences, rather than to find solution themselves. Such mindsets are rampant among majority of the general population. In association with the topic bullying, these individuals may be in control of the situation. They are able to apply their knowledge of Life skills to their experiences.

5.4.1. The effects of bullying and disruptive behaviour on academic deliverance and learner performance

The 'stop and start' type of lessons as one participant stated, frustrated many of the participants and hindered the progress of the lesson. Learners who were keen to learn also struggle as their learning is affected when the teacher has to constantly reprimand or

counsel disruptive learners during instruction time.

Participant 1 said that the victim *"When the children are bullied in class they kind of close off to the things that are being taught. I had a child who didn't want to come to school after being bullied and that also causes them – they don't enjoy the learning experience in the classroom. So it kind of prevents them from hearing and understanding what is being taught. So it is a disruptive behaviour so children are missing out on what is being taught."*

She says *"Well, for me it is very disruptive because you've got to stop what you're doing and you've got to deal with the issue at hand if it's something that is taking place during your lesson. And it sets you off, puts you off what you're teaching."*

Participant 2 agrees that disruptive behaviour has "*a negative impact on our teaching*" as the *"continuity"* of the lesson is broken. **Participant 2** stated that disruptive behaviour can be frustrating because it disturbs the "*entire flow of the lesson"*. She strongly believes that the learners are at a disadvantage because the flow of the lesson is disrupted and the lessons need to be re-taught.

She says that lots of times "*we are getting children that are disrupting our lessons. And it really does have a negative impact on our teaching because many times we are interrupted with our lessons, we cannot carry on, the monotony is or should I say the continuity is broken. So we have to like restart a lesson or re- teaches lessons because of the disruptive behaviour with learners."*

Participant 3 says "*With teaching it tends to stop and start your lessons. You find yourself disciplining more during teaching time than you get the concept through that needs to be taught for the day. It's trying to get them more settled than you are actually able to teach the concept. You are doing more of the parenting than you are doing the teaching that you're supposed to be doing."*

She adds *"My view is that we have a major problem with behaviour currently, a huge problem. And it's starting to impact the results of the children. You're tending to see that in their subjects they are not putting in the best effort that they can. They're not going home and practicing what they need to practice. Although they have the work with them, they*

don't put their best foot forward."

Fekkes *et.al*, (2004) focus on the impact of bullying on teachers' experiences with academic deliverance.

Participant 4 supported participant 3's view and adds that "*you have got to keep repeating yourself".* She feels that disruptions affect "*the learners' following instructions"* and "*they get confused"* because of the interruptions. She deals with the disruptions and incomplete work by keeping the learners in *"to make them finish their work".* She says it's *"Just frustrating. It's very frustrating because I keep telling the things that we could do in ten minutes are taking half an hour. So it's actually a lot of time wasted."*

She believes that children who need attention *"tend to become disruptive as well with that behaviour around them, it affects their learning. It does affect their learning. When they are distracted or they find that their teacher's concentration is not on them, but on the child who is bullying others and who's disruptive, it affects their learning."*

Participant 5 stated that disruptive and bullying *"can affect teaching and learning"* because more times is spent on *"disciplining, so you are not teaching".* She adds that this is time consuming as well. She also believes that the constant interruptions by disruptive learners may result in the quieter learner losing his/her confidence. Dewey cited in Miettinen (2000) talks about knowledge or skill gained from 'on the job experience' than what educational training teachers receive.

Participant 5 is of the view that some learners want to dominate the lesson as well. *"So the other children who know their work and would probably have the most fantastic answers are not able to give their input. Because there you've got little Johnny keep picking his hand up or shouting out without even waiting for somebody else to answer. So basically it's also a sign of selfishness. So that could affect teaching and learning because it could spoil your lesson for one. It could spoil the other kids in the class their confidence level now because they're not getting a chance to answer. So it's also a point of frustration for them as well."* She adds *"So definitely teaching and learning gets affected there. Because you are also remember going to spend your time disciplining, so you are not teaching*."

Participant 6 says *"You find yourself spending quite a bit of time trying to get the kids in*

order so you can give them instruction of what needs to be done and how it needs to be done. When kids are continuously being disruptive and there are constant complaints of bullying, then you have – you're spending a lot of time trying to get the kid or kids to stop that."

5.5. Theme four:

School- based interventions to curb bullying and disruptive behaviour used by teachers.

The participants in this study are of the belief that while this phenomenon is spiraling out of control, it can be managed provided proper intervention strategies and support structures are put into place to assist not only the teachers, but the parents and students themselves.

Participant 1 says **"Depending** *on what degree the behaviour is, you usually separate the behaviour from the classroom. If it's something minor where it's just they're chatting in class, you just ask them to stop, stand up and leave it at that. Take the attention away from them because that's what they're seeking. If it's something a little bit more serious we usually take the child away from that situation, move them away from that let them think about what it is that they've done. And at a later stage when you've finished teaching your lesson, you've got the rest of the class busy with something else and there is no more attention focused on this child. Go back to them and speak to them about their behaviour and find out the cause of it, why they reacted that way."* She adds, *"the HOD she is usually called in with serious matters and deals with it depending on the seriousness of the behaviour. There is either a letter written to the parents or the parent is called in to discuss.*

She insists that discipline methods sometimes don't work and therefore *"you will find that your method at the time didn't work. That it didn't stop the behaviour, it was only momentary and then they carried on doing it. So you need to reflect on what you have done, maybe it did work, maybe you would like to try that out with another child. For me when I do reflect on these things I often have to go back and think of who the child is and their personality. Lots of children don't take to the type of discipline methods you would*

have set for your classroom and you've got to change it for each child."

Participant 2 confidently responds with "*Basically with the behaviour problems there is a protocol that we have to follow. So obviously we have to reprimand the learner. In the classroom itself techniques that I use are things like timeout or maybe get them to sit in front of the classroom, away from the learners, you know that sort of thing that we can do immediately. And of course if it continues then we obviously write to the parents, we inform the parents of their behaviour. And if they do it likes about three times or more then we send them to the HOD who then takes it up and if it's a continuous problem they have to call the parent in and then there is a discipline procedure at school which they follow."*

She explains further "*at the end of every day you know you just live through the day and then you reflect, you think about how your day was, whether your lessons were successful, where you fell short, what were the problems that you encountered. And you actually look through that and then you try and find different ways. Obviously you know if you feel that the children are getting bored or if you feel for some reason you're not getting through to them. You have to look for other techniques and other methods of working so that you can get their attention or something different in fact you know, just to sustain their attention. Because that actually is a very big problem, is sustaining their attention in the classroom and getting them involved in the lessons. So you have to keep trying new ideas and new methods and new things, variation basically are what you need to do."*

She believes strongly that teachers "*really need to network with other teachers in the school as well. So it's nice to have the support of your peers where you can share your experiences, share your problems, they can give your ideas. You know you can work out situations and see how you can help each other and how you may share ideas. So you also need to the support of educators and peers as well in the school. The department, well I really don't see how they're going to come into helping us as an individual. But obviously they could just minimize the admin work that would really make a difference to us and how much we can put into the work that you know we are doing with the children. We'll have all that extra time to really plan better."*

Participant 1 and **Participant 2** and **3** declared that they exercise reflection after an incident to establish if the techniques they are using are correct or it they to be adjusted.

Participant 1 says "*often you will find that your method at the time didn't work*" so she needs "*to reflect*" on the success of the lesson. She believes that if children are "*bored*" then they are not focusing on the lesson.

 Participant 2 exercised *"timeout*" or isolated the learner from the others, and if behaviour persists then the parents are informed. Kolb (2005) advocates that the teacher should explore the experience reflect on it and learn from it. In doing this teachers' will be able to increase their skill to deal with disagreements and therefore improve their management skills.

Participant 3 employed the exclusion method by keeping the learner at her table. She also scares them by telling them that "*they were going to go back to the next grade*". She also calls the parents in for support. She employs the reward system by allowing good behaviour privileges example permission to go on excursion with the others and handing out stars.

Participant 3 states "*Well, exclusion, excluding them from the entire class and putting them at my table. They tend to feel alone and on their own. So when they try and pull themselves towards themselves. The other options were giving them a little fright and telling them that they were going to go back to the next grade. So not that that really is going to happen, but it scares them a little. Calling their parents in, getting them to help and enforce what's happening at school at home. So if a do a reward system at school, getting them to also have a reward system at home. If I say no excursion the parents agreeing with me and not still sending the child on excursion and saying well you will go. The other things that have worked are giving them their own individual picture to colour in, also another reward system. And getting the child to have a star every time they do something good. Not just for the certain behaviour class related, but individually related to that child*

Participant 3 believes support from the following structures are very important, *"Our HOD's, our principals, her motivating the children, her encouraging them, her inviting the little ones that aren't doing so well to her office or even the HOD's getting them to mix with the children who are intellectually stimulated. Giving them an opportunity to spend time with them and maybe doing certain fun things at school that are educationally based. That would encourage them to see how education can be fun. I know that we have done certain*

things which are fun like the little book."

Participant 4 supports participant 3's method of a reward system. **Participant 4** reprimands and warns the learner. She also asks them to stand up and "*stretch"* or learners are *"given extra homework"* as punishment. Letters are sent home to parents informing them of the misdemeanor. Participant 4 said that one method of disciplining doesn't work for all children, "*you would have to change your discipline*". This is because the learners are changing all the time. Kolb (2005) is of the opinion that the role of learning from experience can benefit the teachers.

The author attempts to convince teachers to scrutinize their classroom experiences associated with bullying and disruptive behaviour and to design intervention programmes. **Participant 6** said the best way is to deal with discipline problems is to "*pull out the individuals, sometimes shout at the individual*". He also suggests an alternative like addressing them calmly at times or he tries to "*look at that individual to get his or her attention".*

Participant 5 engages with the parents and if the bad behaviour persists, then professional help is sought. She states that sometimes psychologists recommend the use of Ritalin, a medication that regulates behaviour. She also recommends that the teacher gets to know her class very well. Fayne (2010) emphasizes the need for teachers to make a concerted effort to be aware of the learner's background and home life in order to control them successfully and efficiently.

 Participant 5 also pointed out that the curriculum could be used to correct behaviour. Subjects such as religious education allow the teacher to counsel troubled or troublesome learners. She promotes the use of Religious education "*as a form of healing for these kids".*

Participant 1 believed that parents should receive support in the form of workshops and meetings to advise them on how to deal with their troublesome children. **Participant 2** believed that while the support of the parents' are necessary it is equally important to get support from your peers. She states that teachers must "*network with other teachers in the school".* She is of the opinion that the Department of Education could assist and support by "*minimize the admin work*". This will allow teachers more time to work with the children.

Participant 4 supports the same view. **Participant 5** believed that the teacher "*needs to know how to help*" the learner. She asserts that there are other options of support namely *"parental involvement, departmental involvement".* She also comments on the use of site services for more severe cases.

Participant 6 shares **3** methods which he usually uses "*I pull out the individuals, sometimes shout at the individual or you just try to look at that individual and try to get his or her attention. And there is also the – you try to phrase it in a question to them in a calm way to try and make them see whether they understand that what they were doing is wrong."*

He continues *"you've got to at the same time pull out the rotten apples and you've got to discipline, you've got to keep your discipline methods quite strict. If you don't keep those discipline methods quite strict that's when you really get walked over."*

5.6. Conclusion

While recent studies give attention to the different concepts of bullying and disruptive behaviour and its impact on learners and their performance in the classroom, not much has been discussed about the impact on the welfare of the teacher. This phenomenon has not been interrogated widely with regard to its impact on teachers' health, teachers' morale, and reasons for teacher absenteeism. This study focuses on the teachers' experiences and their feelings about dealing with this challenge in a classroom setting. Their anxieties are brought to the fore and their suggestions and need for support are documented in this study. The existing disparities among learners' are likely to create anxiety and conflict exacerbating an already volatile situation. Teachers are now expected to adjust to the change in varying dynamics. They have to integrate various life skills and values within the curriculum which they are teaching. There is therefore the assumption that the teacher is adaptable, with regard to curriculum. The teacher is expected to exercise extreme patience and it is very clear from the responses that this is not a pleasant experience.

The teachers' hands are tied when it comes to disciplining learners as methods vary from home. The departmental and school policy also regulates against corporal punishment

meted out by parents and teachers'. The learner bully takes advantage of the powerlessness of the teacher in the discipline measures knowing full well there will be no repercussions similar to parent chastisement.

The next chapter focuses on the recommendations made based on the findings in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study was conducted to determine the impact of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour on teaching and learning, as well as on teacher morale in the Foundation Phase in a primary school. It engaged a qualitative methodology within an interpretivist paradigm. Semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted. The data was analyzed using a thematic approach and yielded 4 themes. This chapter is the concluding chapter of this thesis. The findings of this study are discussed in the light of the research questions that guided this study. This is followed by the concluding discussion and the limitations of this study. The recommendations of this study conclude this chapter.

6.2. Findings from the literature study

The following issues were discussed in the literature study:

1. Teachers perceptions of bullying and disruptive behaviour;

2. Factors which promote bullying in schools;

3. The impact of bullying on teachers performance in the classroom; and

4. School-based intervention strategies.

The purpose of the literature study was to investigate the negative impact learner bullying and disruptive behaviour have on teachers. The content of the literature review highlights the factors which contribute to such behaviour. The literature review also points out the challenges the teachers experience due to such behaviour. The analysis of the literature study found that there are many factors which contribute to bullying and disruptive behavior. It also highlights the effects thereof. The experiences of the teacher, as well as the learners', are discussed in the chapter to emphasize the impact bullying and disruptive behaviour can have on an individual.

6.3. Main findings

The research conducted in chapter 4 was analyzed in chapter 5. The research questions were:

1. What are teachers' understandings of bullying and disruptive behaviour?

2. How does bullying and disruptive behaviour affect teaching and learning?

3. In what ways does such behaviour impact on teachers' morale and

    confidence?

4. How do schools deal with such behavioural problems?

Participants were able to differentiate between bullying and disruptive behaviour. Some study participants listed examples to elaborate on their responses to the interview questions. They made statements such as power imbalance, the intent to hurt someone physically or verbally (cf.par 5.2.1). Olweus and Limber (2010) defines bullying as aggressive behaviour which can either be physical, verbal or psychological, causing intentional harm. Banks (1997) is of the opinion that bullies appear to gain pleasure from causing either physical or emotional pain on others. The participants experienced either bullying or disruptive behaviour, or both. The phenomenon seems to have become common place in the Foundation Phase and is rapidly increasing among the learners. All the participants admitted to experiencing

disruptive behaviour on a daily basis. Only two study participants pointed out that they did not experience bullying in their classroom and, this they believe, is due to their experience and their skill to maintain order. Of these two study participants, one participant, being the Head of Department stated that she has had to counsel, mentor and advice teachers who were distressed by the phenomenon.

Participants were aware of the various types of bullying and disruptive behaviour which were present in their classroom. The impact this has on teaching and learning was also highlighted by the participants (cf. par 5.5.). Mangope *et.al.* (2012) affirm that teachers' perceptions are governed by their awareness of the occurrence of bullying, or the lack of it. Many of the participants' experienced low morale and little or no confidence in their ability as teachers (cf. par 5.4.). The participants stated that the lessons were interrupted and hence had to be re-taught. This affects the learners who are willing to learn and some are also distracted by the indiscipline. This, unfortunately, affects their performance.

They also indicated what measures were taken to eliminate or minimize the negative effects of the phenomenon (cf. par 5.6). Some participants concur that their methods of reprimand and discipline changed after they reflected and reviewed the successes or failures thereof. James (2010) argues that seasoned teachers with many years of service and experience were less compassionate, while new teachers were sympathetic towards victims. Many of the study participants stated that they used the reward system to encourage good behaviour, while some stated that they dealt with repeated misdemeanors by excluding them. The participants also employed time-out; exclusion from fun activities; extra homework; detention at lunch time and letters to parents to curb bullying and disruptive behaviour in their classroom

6.4 Discussion

In light of the data generated, it may be concluded that the teachers who experienced bullying and disruptive behaviour at the school have had many negative experiences. One participant, however, stated that, while the experiences were challenging, there were times when a learner would do something special and that would make you smile. This makes one realize that, while the teachers' experiences

may be unpleasant and stressful, they did enjoy their jobs. They were, however, finding themselves in a predicament that seemed to spiraling out of control and increasing on a daily basis. Many of the participants who engaged with the bullying or disruptive learner stated that they found that they adapted their methods of disciplining and reprimand to suit the situation. They used words like 'reflection' to indicate that they looked back on the incident which took place and the methods that were used to deal with it. Jacobson and Ruddy (2004) simplified Kolb's Experiential Learning Model by constructing a simple 5 Question Model that encourage critical reflection in experiential learning. Some of the questions suggested include:

- Why did that happen?
- Does that happen in life?
- Why does that happen?
- How can you use that?

This method enabled teachers to rethink and retry methods of disciplining based on its successes or failures. Kolb (1999, 2005) supports the theory self-reflection. The author believes that in so doing the teacher discovers the experience, reflects on it and learns in the process. As a result, teachers expand their ability to deal with challenges, in that way improving classroom management and teaching skills.

6.5 Limitations

This study is limited only to the 6 teachers at a specific school. The data generated can by no means be regarded as a representation of all Foundation Phase teachers. This data is a representation of teachers at a certain point in time, at a specific school, and in an urban area. The findings cannot be generalized to all primary school teachers' experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour in Kwa Zulu - Natal, as these findings are representation of a specific school. The study must therefore be simplified in the context under which it was conducted. This limitation leads to the aspect of trustworthiness. The use of purposive sampling, however, ensured that people selected were knowledgeable and yielded trustworthy data.

6.6. Recommendations and contributions of the study

6.6.1. Guidelines for teachers

The teachers act in '*loco parentis'* in the absence of the parent and it is therefore the teachers' responsibility at school to take the necessary measures to diffuse bullying and/ or disruptive behaviour. The teachers need to therefore be very aware and pro-active in the school environment.

- Marais and Meier (2010) assert that lack of parental guidance and support results in disruptive behaviour. The responsibility therefore lies on the teacher to instill good values at school in order to correct conduct;
- The school environment must be conducive to teaching and learning. Mangope *et.al.* (2012) insist that learners should share a positive relationship with their teachers in the knowledge that their teachers will protect them. The author affirms that a safe, compassionate and caring school environment will promote the learners academic performance and attitude towards schooling. This indicates that the teacher must be objective, compassionate and alert to his/ her environment.
- Teachers need to be knowledgeable about their learners and their background in order to gain a better understanding about their behaviour at school. Naong (2007) argues that teachers need to "come to an understanding of the forces that shape the life of the learner" (Naong, 2007, pg. 290). This statement encourages the teacher to look at the learners' behaviour in its context;
- Teachers need to empower themselves by attending workshops which will equip them to deal will indiscipline in the classroom. Maphosa and Mammen (2011) advocate the need for teachers to attain the necessary skills to ensure that they are equipped to deal with difficult learners. O' Moore and Minton (2004) believe that teachers should attend an in- service training programme to augment their skill and confidence to deal with incidences of bullying. Allen (2010) supports this view, adding that teachers' learn best from their own life experiences, and by expanding their knowledge by reading material and attending workshops about intervention programmes for bullying;
- There is a need for a school anti-violence policy; and,

- The curriculum can be used effectively to include many lessons about socially correct conduct and value systems according to social norms. At this specific school, the religious education lesson, as well as the Life Skills lesson, can incorporate these important values.

6.7. Recommendations for further research

This study provides valuable evidence that clearly reveal that learner bullying and disruptive behaviour at the primary school used as a research site in this study is a crisis teachers experience on day to day basis. What seems to stand out, however, is that the research is confined to a specific school. It is thus recommended that further research be conducted on this phenomenon with a larger sample size to enhance the study and broaden its findings. Additional research could consider, for example, including learners and parents, including teachers, as study participants. Such research would offer a triangulation of data findings which, in the process, enhances the validity and trustworthiness of the findings and a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. Such research could further enhance community's understanding of the phenomenon and empower members to contribute in tackling the challenge.

6.8. Conclusion

The phenomenon of bullying and disruptive behaviour is both a national and international challenge requiring urgent attention. It negatively impacts on the teachers' morale, confidence, professional identity and performance. The teachers' disappointment and frustrations may result in them lashing out in the form of aggression towards learners or total disregard for the quality of their academic responsibility. Teacher criticism on the phenomenon of learner bullying and disruptive behaviour is currently under the microscope. With regard to this phenomenon, teachers' welfare needs to be given much more consideration with an objective to implement policies which provide necessary support structures within which they can operate.

The findings in this study highlight the need for teacher support from structures such as, the Department of Education; the management of the school; the staff at the school; the community as well as the parents of learners. While counselling and psychological services are necessary, they very rarely visit schools. Much study has been conducted on the impact of bullying and disruptive behaviour on learners; it is my recommendation that the physical and mental health of the teacher receive more attention with regard to the topic bullying and disruptive behaviour. Such a phenomenon not only plagues the learners, it is affects the morale of the teacher as well. This study advocates that while these learners are minors and they need to be nurtured, it is very evident that their bad behaviour impacts negatively on the teacher in the class. The study found that there is a need for moral support, departmental policies and development workshops to be put into place, to assist and support teachers facing this phenomenon.

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ADDENDUM   A: Letter to the director

<div align="right">

P.O. Box 491

New Germany

Pinetown

3620

</div>

Kwa Zulu - Natal Department of Education

The District Director

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A SCHOOL IN THE DURBAN –
UMLAZI DISTRICT

I am a M.Ed. student at UKZN interested in what teachers say about bullying and
disruptive behaviour in the classroom. As part of my Masters dissertation I would like
to conduct discussions with specifically selected teachers at St .Anthony's' Catholic
Primary School. I will have two meetings with the focus group. Each discussion will
take approximately 15 minutes. The participants will be asked to talk about their
experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour and how this impacts on teaching
and learning in the classroom. The interviews will be recorded using a Dictaphone.
The responses will then be transcribed.   The data generated from the interviews will
only be used for the purpose of my study and will not be used for any other purpose
without the consent of all participants. The participants are not obliged to participate
and may withdraw at any time. This decision to withdraw will not disadvantage the
participants. The name of the school and the participants will be given pseudonyms
and confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be maintained at all times.
Every effort will be made to ensure the anonymity of your school and the
participants, including the confidentiality of the study will be respected always. All

data generated will be disposed of after 5 years. The recordings will be incinerated and the documents will be shredded.

If you require any further information please contact me, Nalini Singh on

082 9250 452 or my supervisor, Dr. Ntombela,   on 031 260 1342 and Ms. P Ximba on 031- 260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

_____   _____

Mrs Nalini Singh   Date

ADDENDUM   B: PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Dear_____

I am a M.Ed. student at UKZN conducting a research on bullying and disruptive behaviour in the classroom. As part of my research I would like to interview selected teachers at your school. I will schedule two meetings with the focus group. Each discussion will take approximately 20 minutes. I have been granted permission by the Department of Education to conduct such a study and to interview teachers. The interviews will be conducted during the teachers 'lunch break' or free periods so that lessons are not interrupted.

If you require any further information please contact me, Nalini Singh on

 082 9250 452 or my supervisor, Dr. Ntombela, on 031 260 1342 and Ms. P Ximba on 031- 260 3587.

 Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely

_____   _____

Mrs Nalini Singh   Date

_____   _____

Principal signature   **Date**

ADDENDUM   C:

DECLARATION

I _____ agree to allow the study to take place at my school. I understand that my schools' real name and the anonymity of the participants will not be used in any write – up and that their responses will be treated with confidentiality. I also understand that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time and that this will not result in any form of disadvantage. I consent / do not consent to the participants interviews being recorded using a Dictaphone.

_____   _____

Principal   Date

ADDENDUM D: TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Dear _____

I am a   M.Ed. student at UKZN interested in what you as teachers have to say about your experiences with bullying and disruptive behaviour. As my masters' dissertation, I would like to discuss with you, your "views on bullying and disruptive behaviour and how this impacts on the learner's academic performance." The discussion will take 30 minutes and I will require one session in order to generate sufficient data. You will have access to the interview questions prior to the interview. The interview will be recorded using a Dictaphone. It will then be transcribed. You will have access to the transcription in order to verify transcriptions. Data generated from these interviews will only be used for my study and will not be used for any other purpose without your consent. You are not obliged to participate and may feel free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to participate will not disadvantage you in any way. No real names will be used in any of the data that is generated. The data will only be used for the purpose of my study. Every effort will be made to keep your responses and the data confidential. Please be assured that your anonymity and confidentiality of the study will be respected always. All data generated will be disposed of after 5 years. The recordings will be incinerated and the documents will be shredded.

If you have any enquiries please feel free to contact me. Nalini Singh, on 082 9250 452 or my supervisor, Dr. Ntombela on 031 260 1342 and Ms. P Ximba on 031- 260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely

_____   _____

Mrs Nalini Singh   Date

_____   _____

Teacher signature   Date

ADDENDUM E: Interview schedule

Research questions are:

1.	What are teachers' understandings of bullying and disruptive behaviour?

2.	How does bullying and disruptive behaviour affect teaching and learning?

3.	In what ways does such behaviour impact on teachers' morale and

	confidence?

4.	How does the school deal with such behavioural problems?

ADDENDUM F: Ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF ™
K'WAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

21 October 2013

Mrs Nalini Singh (203506750)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0771/013M
Project title: Primary School teachers' experiences of learner bullying and disruptive behavior: A case study

Dear Mrs Singh,

Expedited Approval

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Mr Henry Muribwathoho
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr MN Davids
cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

ADDENDUM G: turn- it- in report