

**THE DYNAMICS OF CYBERBULLYING IN GIRLS' AND BOYS' SCHOOLS:  
MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

**By**

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**RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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**FEBRUARY 2020**

# COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

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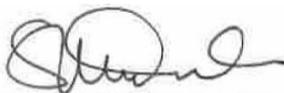
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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother, Alberta Vivienne Piliso, who was a pillar of strength and who encouraged me to be the best I can be and to be where I am today; to my son, Zuko Piliso, my daughter Piwe Vuyo Piliso, and my granddaughter Sive Booi, thank you so much for your understanding during the time I spent working on this thesis and for believing in me and encouraging me to complete this thesis.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to:

- My supervisor, Professor Sithabile Ntombela, for guiding, supporting, and encouraging me throughout the study. Thank you so much for your time and for always being there for me whenever I needed help and motivating me not to give up.
- The University of KwaZulu-Natal for giving me the opportunity to further my studies.
- DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development for funding this research.
- Professor Tuntufye Selemani Mwanwenda, for inspiring me to be fascinated about research and studying further.
- Dr Monica Nyachowe, Dr Berington Zanoxolo Gobingca and Mr Stanford Mandlenkosi Phehlukwayo, for assisting and encouraging me to continue with the study.
- My daughter, Piwe Vuyo Piliso, for suggesting that I undertake this kind of study.
- My family for encouraging me not to quit.
- The Principals for granting me permission to conduct the research.
- The Life Orientation Heads and LO teachers for their assistance and for taking part in this research.
- Lastly, to all Grade 8 learners for their participation in this research and for making this research a success.

## ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying in schools is an emerging phenomenon not yet well understood. Research shows that cyberbullying may cause psychological, emotional and social damage to victims. As cyberbullying increases in its prevalence, it is crucial to understand how it manifests itself, to identify its dangers, and to examine the behavioural and psychosocial factors associated with it. This study sought to explore the experiences and impact of cyberbullying amongst the Grade 8 learners at secondary school level in a Western School District of KwaZulu-Natal.

Quantitative data was collected from 316 learners using a survey questionnaire. Lessons on cyberbullying, focus group interviews comprising eight learners from each school, one-on-one interviews consisting of one learner from each school who also participated in the focus group interviews, and semi-structured interviews for Life Orientation (LO) teachers (three from the girls' school and four from the boys' school) were conducted to generate qualitative data.

The multiple instrumental case study design that employs mixed methods was utilised to achieve the objectives of this study. This allowed the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data and to explore the differences within and between cases. The instrumental approach enabled the researcher to gain insight into cyberbullying phenomenon amongst the learners and to scrutinise the context in which this occurs.

Descriptive statistics was used to describe, summarise and organise quantitative data using cross-tabulation, graphs and numerical data. Inferential statistics was employed to determine whether there was a significant association between variables. Thematic approach was utilised to analyse qualitative data and similar responses were coded and relevant themes and sub-themes were developed.

The theories underpinning the study were the Socio-ecological Theory (SET) and the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The SET suggests that human development is influenced by a series of interrelated systems within the environment and that the behaviour of children and that of the adolescents is shaped by a range of related systems such as the family, peers and the school environments. The SCT implies that cognitive, affective, biological and emotional factors such as peer support and stressful events can affect the development of an individual's behaviour.

The quantitative results revealed that 85.8% of learners have cell phones and 66.1% use the internet for entertainment on social media networks. The percentages of victims of direct and indirect bullying show that there is no significant difference between males and females. Cyberbullying experiences are not significantly different between males and females ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ).

LO teachers ensure that strict security measures are in place regarding the use of cell phones within schools. However, the qualitative results showed that cyberbullying experiences of learners in both schools were extremely serious and may have a psychological impact on the victims. Cyberbullying mostly happens on WhatsApp. The support given to the victims by their schools involves counselling and if identified, perpetrators are detained and parental intervention sought.

The results of the study also provide insights into the dynamics of cyberbullying in order to inform strategies for alleviating the impact of the cyberbullying phenomenon in schools. The findings indicate that cyberbullying is a growing problem since the youth use technology inappropriately leading to suffering psychologically after victimisation. Empathy training is crucial for teachers and policy makers in order to reduce cyberbullying incidents among learners. Schools need to promote the skills, provide safety to learners and increase awareness to learners so that they are morally engaged with the victims of cyberbullying.

It is, therefore, imperative to explore strategies which can be utilised to address the scourge of cyberbullying in the schools and to empower learners in order to avoid being victimised by cyberbullies. It is also crucial that stakeholders such as the Department of Education, principals, teachers, parents and young people work together to mitigate this global epidemic.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Bullying has been prevalent in schools since the existence of education, and it was considered to be part of children's development. Patchin and Hinduja (2010) maintain that bullying and peer harassment have, for a long time, been a matter of concern for teachers. Campbell (2005) defines bullying as aggressive behaviour that is intentional, harmful and repeated over time towards a person by means of force. Bullying may be physical and may include behaviours such as hitting, punching or kicking, spitting and seizing or damaging other people's belongings. It may involve verbal assault, that is, language that is intimidating, or threatening such as teasing, ridicule, accusations and disrespect (Campbell, 2005). In more recent years, policies and strategies have been created to prevent the presence of bullying. Before cyberbullying came into being, "safety was only a matter of protection from dangers of the tangible world" (Veenstra, 2009, p. 6).

The invention of the internet created a virtual space where people can interact and transact for different reasons on a daily basis, and the majority of people rely upon the internet for business and for personal recreation (Wiseman, 2011). Although the internet is used for getting information and communicating with friends, it also presents significant risks (Veenstra, 2009), especially to young people, since the majority own cell phones and personal computers and are engaged in numerous internet activities on a daily basis.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place on virtual spaces. It is different from face-to-face bullying and can become a threat to many web users as the web provides total anonymity to the aggressor or perpetrator (Lazarus, Barkoukis, Ourda & Tsorbatzoudis, 2013). Traditional bullying can be easily recognised by parents and teachers whereas cyberbullying is difficult for adults to understand since it remains invisible to them and also because they might never have experienced this form of attack.

The impact of cyberbullying among victims may cause psychological, emotional and social relationship problems (Junoven & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006) leading to some victims

becoming cyberbullies themselves (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Lack of supervision among youth and using technology inappropriately can expose young people to cyberbullying.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The internet has become an increasingly popular medium among young people (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012). Thus, the most common electronic devices that are used by the perpetrators of cyberbullying are personal computers and cell phones (Wong, Chan & Cheng, 2014). It is noteworthy that the advancement in media technology is making internet access very easy, and this access comes with benefits as it creates opportunities for social networking that can easily enhance the knowledge base of adolescents. According to the presentation on cyberbullying given by von Solms (2011) at the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention Roundtable discussion, young people acquire technological skills much faster than adults and they are quick to learn how technological gadgets like TV remotes, cell phones, computers, etc. work. However, children and adolescents have poor judgement about how the cyber world works, since they are unable to differentiate between reality and virtual reality (von Solms, 2011). Adults on the other hand have the ability to make more mature and logical decisions when using technology.

This advanced knowledge may result in young people being exposed to the dangers and risks of cyberspace. One of the dangers is exposure to cyberbullying. Bullies harass their victims online using numerous forms of text messages such as emails, instant messaging, chat rooms and websites. Text messages over cell phones and phone cameras have also become new modes of bullying (Campbell, 2005). Furthermore, Rivers and Noret (2010) cite Byrant, Sanders-Jackson and Smallwood (2006), who believe that, due to their increasing popularity and inexpensive nature, text messages via cell phones and online instant messaging are social networks and social interactions commonly used by young people. It is therefore necessary to investigate the extent and nature of cyberbullying and possible psychological effects it has on the young people. Breguet (2007) investigated the negative effects associated with cyberbullying. According to him, victims of cyberbullying are left lonely, insecure and humiliated. Patchin & Hinduja (2006) also added that the victims may suffer from low self-esteem, depression, feelings of hopelessness, withdrawal, frustration and anger. In addition, Garrett, Lord and Young (2016) stress that cyberbullying can accelerate mental health issues which include psychological and developmental problems.

The study conducted in Canada by Li (2010) confirmed that some learners were victims of cyberbullying and this adversely and psychologically affected their behaviour and attention span, resulting in poor academic performance. It is also noted in Canadian schools that more females become victims of cyberbullying than males (Faucher, Jackson & Cassidy, 2014). It appears that cyberbullying has long-term mental health disturbances on the part of the victim. From the researcher's point of view, measures to control the occurrence of cyberbullying are necessary as it is common and easy for children to have access to electronic devices.

It is critical to note that South African children are not immune to cyberbullying in this time of technological advancement, where the majority of learners have access to electronic devices for communication, socialisation and educational purposes. It should also be noted that as a result of being robbed of their rights by perpetrators, the normal functioning of learners in their schooling is likely to be adversely affected. On that note, Burton and Leoschut (2013) argued that once the schooling of children is negatively affected, the extensive health and economic costs of the country are also likely to be affected.

From my personal observation and educational experience, some learners' academic performances may be affected as they find themselves addicted to using electronic devices for non-educational gains. It is in the light of this backdrop that motivated me to explore boys' and girls' views about the effects of cyberbullying practices on their schooling as well as on their mental and social lives.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Two main factors drew the researcher to this topic, namely, theoretical and personal. At a theoretical level, as technology develops and gradually changes, young people who have access to the internet, cell phones and other electronic devices find themselves faced with serious problems. One of these serious problems is cyberbullying which includes cyber violence, harassment, bullying and aggression. Unlike traditional or face-to-face bullying that is well-known, cyberbullying is a new phenomenon that is not well understood. Cyberbullying is a social ill and as teachers, we are concerned about its harmful effects on learning and development, as well as the psycho-social wellbeing of learners. It is crucial for teachers or schools to understand why learners get involved in cyberbullying, so as to be able to teach them about alternative ways of dealing with conflict.

At a personal level, the researcher's interest was aroused by the stories she shared with her daughter. As an adolescent and a learner at that time, she used to tell stories of some learners who were victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. The researcher then sought to gain knowledge about cyberbullying from the media such as magazines, newspapers and the television. In addition, the researcher has read books, research articles, and other forms of research reports which deal with and emphasise the dangers and the consequences of cyberbullying.

Since the majority of the victims and perpetrators are young people at the adolescent stage, the researcher felt that there is need to inform them about the risks and dangers of cyberbullying which can have negative psychological and emotional impact. Victims tend to keep quiet about the harassment or to confide in their peers instead of reporting the incident to an adult like a parent or a teacher. Thus, this study aimed to acquaint the victims of cyberbullying with the various strategies that they can use to prevent further harassment. Non-victims should also be empowered to protect themselves if they come across cyber aggression. Perpetrators will also realise how harmful their behavior and actions can be towards the victims.

There are parents who know about the problem of cyberbullying, but they do not know how to supervise and monitor their children about internet and cell phone use. As a parent herself, the researcher hopes that this would enable her to assist parents who come across these challenges. In some schools, there are teachers who do not have the knowledge of modern technology including the use of the internet and cell phones. Parents and teachers therefore need to familiarise themselves and engage in the use of electronic media. This would enable them to educate and guide the young people regarding acceptable use of electronic media and behaviour, as well as provide adequate monitoring and supervision.

Regarding cyberbullying and the law, there are still gaps in the legal responses related to children involved in cyberbullying and sexting since legislation relies on remedies offered by criminal law or civil law. Therefore, laws associated with cyberbullying should be created to deal with cyberbullying in schools, as is the case in most states in the United States of America and some developed countries. Reyneke and Jacobs (2018) argue that, in the South African context, there are several challenging legislative and common law remedies available to victims. They also maintain that clear reference is made to bullying in the Children's Act only, and that the definition of bullying and cyberbullying is not provided.

## **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has both changed the way that individuals access information and the way they interact socially. Adolescents, in particular, now use the internet and other social networks to communicate with their peers on a daily basis. The cell phones as a result of their mobility also offer access to the internet (Serra & Venter, 2011). While this has opened new channels of communication for adolescents, it has also opened opportunities for the misuse of technology. As a result, cyberbullying is drastically increasing in prevalence.

It is crucial to note that stakeholders such as learners, parents, teachers, school governing bodies (SGBs), school management teams (SMTs) and the Department of Education (DoE) would benefit from this research. Learners would get the support they deserve by learning life skills to reflect on what is immoral and what inhibits them from having good academic progress. Parents would be empowered with programmes to assist them in identifying their children's behaviour either as victims or perpetrators in the early stages of cyberbullying. Engaging parents would help so that learners are not further involved in cyberbullying practices. The findings which emerged from data analysis would help teachers to be able to understand and handle victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying in order to promote the culture of learning and teaching as well as harmonious school climate. The SGBs and SMTs namely principals, deputy-principals and Heads of Departments could encounter less cases of violence in their schools when learners are free from cyberbullying practices. It is believed that the scholarship of learning and teaching would be improved in schools not having cyberbullying victimisation and perpetration. It is anticipated that the DoE would positively receive the recommendations and consider developing a policy framework dealing with cyberbullying to assist schools encountering cyberbullying practices among learners.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how cyberbullying manifests itself, to identify the dangers of cyberbullying among the young people and to examine the behavioural and psychosocial factors related to cyberbullying. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help learners to recognise the dangers associated with cyberbullying and assist parents and teachers to better understand and attend to this kind of problem taking place outside and inside schools.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore how boys and girls experience cyberbullying.
- To understand how cyberbullying manifests itself and how it affects victims.
- To examine why boys and girls engage in cyberbullying.
- To explore strategies that can be used to minimise the incidences and effects of cyberbullying.

## **1.6 CRITICAL QUESTIONS**

To achieve the objectives highlighted above, the following critical questions were used to investigate the phenomenon under study as they guided the process of data collection and analysis in the study:

- How do boys and girls experience cyberbullying?
- How does cyberbullying manifest itself and how does it affect victims?
- Why do boys and girls engage in cyberbullying?
- What strategies can be used to minimise the incidences and effects of cyberbullying?

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Maree (2011), one of the benefits of case studies is that they offer a multi-perspective analysis, whereby the researcher considers not just the views of one or two participants in a situation, but also the opinions of other relevant participants and the interaction between them. In this study, two case studies were identified, that is, boys' and girls' public high schools, within close proximity to each other, with the intention to see if there are any differences between boys and girls regarding cyberbullying or its impact. The case study approach was considered suitable for this study because it considered the views of the learners as well as those of the LO teachers in a school setting in order to come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of cyberbullying.

### **1.7.1 Research Paradigm**

The research paradigm relevant for this study is pragmatism which, according to Creswell (2003),

applies to mixed methods research, whereby researchers draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research. Furthermore, Terrell (2012), believes that the origins of mixed methods lie in the positivist paradigm which has historically been the cornerstone of social science research, and the interpretivist paradigm. Both paradigms have been utilised in this study.

## **1.7.2 Research Design**

A multiple instrumental case study design that employs mixed methods was used for the study and the purpose was to achieve the objectives of the study and provide the best understanding of the research problem. The procedure used in this study is the sequential data collection procedure which involves collecting data in stages (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). First a quantitative data collection method was utilised followed by a qualitative data collection method. The qualitative data helped the researcher in explaining or building upon the initial quantitative results.

### **1.7.2.1 Quantitative research method**

Questionnaires relating to cyberbullying were administered to all Grade 8 learners in the schools where the study was conducted. The participants' ages range from 12 to 16 years old. Furthermore, most questions were closed-ended, although there were few open-ended questions where participants were expected to expand their answers. These questions were based on the research questions listed above.

### **1.7.2.2 Qualitative research method**

Lessons on cyberbullying were introduced by the researcher to all Grade 8 learners with the Life Orientation (LO) Heads or LO teachers in attendance. The purpose was to find out what learners understood about cyberbullying and what their experiences were about cyberbullying. The information was useful as it highlighted similarities in how boys and girls came across cyberbullying. The lessons also helped to find out if learners had had any incidences of cyberbullying inside and outside school and through what media. Learners' responses were tape recorded and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Focus group interviews were conducted to eight Grade 8 learners in each of the schools under study. Two LO Heads and six LO teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews.

### **1.7.3 Sampling**

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 157), “purposive sampling is used to access ‘knowledgeable people’, that is, those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues” in specific contexts. In-depth data about the incidences of cyberbullying and attitudes towards cyberbullying were collected from eight Grade 8 learners from a girls’ high school and eight Grade 8 learners from a boys’ high school in the western part of Durban area. The selection of participants in this study was done with the assistance of the LO Heads in order to receive support from them in conducting the study. It is sufficient at this stage to point out that learners were selected on the basis that they had experienced cyberbullying. Moreover, there were certain qualities that I was looking for from the participants and that is why the purposive sampling was an ideal sampling technique instead of random sampling. In-depth data was also collected from LO Heads and LO teachers regarding their views about cyberbullying. A detailed discussion regarding the participants’ selection is provided in Chapter 4.

### **1.7.4 Data Analysis**

The two case studies were analysed together. The purpose was to explore differences within and between cases and to find out if there were similar results across cases.

Descriptive statistics in the form of tables and figures, and inferential statistics using chi-square tests were utilised to analyse the quantitative data in this study. The analysis is discussed in Chapter 5. On the other hand, the thematic approach was adopted to analyse the qualitative data in the study. Themes and sub-themes were developed. These are presented in detail in Chapter 6.

## **1.8 ETHICAL MEASURES**

The relevant gate keepers were approached, and relevant documentation was issued. The university where the study was registered examined and cleared the study proposal (Protocol

Reference Number HSS/1584/016D). Since the study involved learners who are minors and at high school, permission to undertake research was first sought from the DoE. Furthermore, access to the schools where the study took place was sought through relevant authorities, namely the Principals of the two schools. Consent was obtained from the parents of the learners who were to participate in the focus group interview as well as from the learners themselves. All participants were guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality as well as privacy and these issues were specified in the consent forms issued. Moreover, the names of the participants and the schools have not been revealed in this report. Instead, pseudonyms were used in order to ensure the issues raised cannot be linked to any participant. A detailed discussion regarding such issues is provided in Chapter 4.

## **1.9 VALIDITY AND RIGOUR**

Validity is enhanced when the qualitative phase has succeeded to build upon the quantitative phase. Data collected through quantitative method yielded objective and accurate information since it was collected using standardised (regulated) methods and analysed using statistical techniques. Data collected through qualitative method ensured that there is richness and complexity of human behavior and coding and thematic analysis were done.

Trustworthiness is very essential in qualitative research. The four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as suggested by Guba (1981) have been considered in this study. Before embarking on the research, the researcher first familiarised herself with the schools via consultations with appropriate documents and preliminary visits to the schools. This enabled the researcher to gain an adequate understanding of the schools and to establish a relationship of trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As far as transferability is concerned, the researcher has ensured that the results of the study are applied to a wider population. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that contextual information about the fieldwork sites are provided in order to make it easy for the reader to make such a transfer. They also stress how close credibility and dependability are to one another and argue that in practice the two criteria can be used for both focus group interview and individual or one-on-one interview. However, since this study used mixed methods research, questionnaires were administered during quantitative data collection, while the focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews were conducted during qualitative data collection. The concept of confirmability

was applied in this study. This means that the findings were considered as the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the characteristics of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). The validity of results was strengthened by using more than one method to study the same phenomenon. This triangulation is the main advantage of mixed method approach. Triangulation in this study includes presentation of lessons on cyberbullying in the schools under study, questionnaire administration, focus group interviews and going through the schools' policy documents regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying. However, triangulation can create problems when different sources yield different contradictory information. If this happens, disagreements would be considered in the context in which they occur.

#### **1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

One of the limitations is that the study is not representative of all South African schools as well as all racial groups in South Africa.

The time factor was another limitation. The time allocated for each lesson (55 minutes) was too short to cover the contents of lesson presentation by the researcher, group presentation by the learners and administration of questionnaires. Furthermore, learners had other subjects to attend. However, the available time was utilised optimally to generate adequate data for the study.

Openness was another limitation whereby some learners were unable to open up when asked about their experiences of cyberbullying during lesson presentation. As a result, it was difficult to find out the truth from these learners about what actually happened to them regarding cyberbullying.

Furthermore, the presence of the researcher and that of the LO Heads and LO teachers during data gathering is unavoidable since the learners are minors.

#### **1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

Chapter 1 provides an outline of the rationale, objectives, research questions as well as the methodology of the study. The chapter provides the background, the statement of the problem as well as the reasons why the study was conducted.

Chapter 2 discusses literature relevant to the study. Since there is limited literature on cyberbullying in the SA context, the review of literature focused more on the international contexts. Therefore, this study engages with, discusses and elaborates on literature dealing with the prevalence of cyberbullying, the benefits of ICTs and risks of cyberbullying, the causes of cyberbullying as well as the impact of cyberbullying.

In chapter 3, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks from which the research was approached are outlined. The concepts 'Bullying', 'Cyberbullying', 'Adolescents', 'Social Media' and 'Social Networks' are discussed, followed by the presentation of theories namely, Socio Ecological Theory (SET) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Chapter 4 deals with the discussion of research methodology. The researcher supports the use of multiple case study research design used, describes how data was collected, analysed and interpreted, and discusses the study's validity and rigour as well as its limitations.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 describe the developments the researcher undertook in her engagement with this study and its participants in the form of data analysis during the quantitative and qualitative phases.

Chapter 7 discusses the summary, conclusions of the study, the contribution of the study and recommendations that could assist schools, parents and learners to lessen the incidences of cyberbullying.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided a summary of the dynamics of cyberbullying in two secondary schools. This chapter presented the motivations for the study which are personal and theoretical in nature. Moreover, the purpose of the study, objectives and the critical questions guiding this study were also presented in the chapter. Furthermore, the chapter also introduced the research process through which the study was conducted. Underpinned by a mixed method design, the sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis methods employed for the study were also presented in this chapter. In addition, ethical measures, issues of validity and rigour/trustworthiness, as well as the limitations of the study were also discussed. The next chapter deals with review of literature relevant to the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Extensive research has been done all over the world about traditional, offline or face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying. Articles on bullying have been printed in magazines and newspapers and discussions have been broadcast on national and international televisions over the years. However, studies showing that cyberbullying exists in South Africa are limited (Badenhorst, 2011; Mienie, 2013), whereas it is not a new idea in some international contexts. In the United States, for example, Shariff (2008) mentions that bullying among learners was in existence for a very long time and systematic research on the topic was undertaken in the 1970s. This therefore indicates that the concept as well as studies on it are not very new. However, cyberbullying is a bit different from traditional bullying and there are people who are still not familiar with the term although it has received recent media attention (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2012).

The chapter reviews literature that reports on studies about the dynamics of cyberbullying among adolescent learners. Learners can either be victims or perpetrators and sometimes victims can end up being cyberbullies. Thus, the literature review will firstly discuss briefly what cyberbullying is, followed by the causes of cyberbullying. Subsequently, the impact of cyberbullying will be addressed. This will be followed by the prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying abroad and within South Africa. The similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying will be discussed followed by benefits of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and risks of cyberbullying. The characteristics of perpetrators or cyberbullies and the victims thereof will be mentioned. Cyberbullying and the law will be discussed briefly and lastly, possible remedies or solutions to cyberbullying will be explained in detail.

#### **2.2 WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?**

Slonje, Smith and Frisé (2013) cited Smith, Mahdavi, Carvelho, Russell and Tippett's (2008) definition of cyberbullying which involves an aggressive behavior which is carried out repeatedly using ICTs by a person or a group of people against an individual who is defenseless. According

to Slonje *et al.* (2013), the bullying involves the systematic abuse of power which takes place through the use of ICTs and the intention is to cause harm. This also includes repetition of bullying whereby a picture that has been uploaded online by a perpetrator can, at a later stage, be distributed by other people. This means that the victim may experience cyberbullying many times.

Vanderbosch and Van Cleemput (2008) also added that a vast knowledge of the ICTs and anonymity may contribute to a power imbalance. This means that learners who have a greater knowledge of the internet are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying through the internet and cell phones. This also means that the victims may not know who the perpetrator is and therefore may find it difficult to respond effectively. Dooley, Pyszalski and Cross (2009) suggest that since the material exists in cyberspace, it becomes difficult to remove or avoid it. As a result, the victim may feel more powerless.

### **2.3 CAUSES OF CYBERBULLYING**

Hoff and Mitchell (2009) conducted a qualitative/quantitative survey study involving 351 students in the USA. The purpose of the research was to examine the prevalence and causes of cyberbullying, the psychological effect on learners and the responses to cyberbullying from learners and administrators. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) found that cyberbullying emerges most commonly from relationship problems, that is, break-ups, envy, intolerance, and ganging up. Learners who were surveyed reported that romantic break-ups can cause feelings of rejection and anger and this may lead to retaliation and cyberbullying. The perpetrators can communicate using websites, text messages, email and blogs. Students also reported that cyberbullying stems from envy which emerges when people are romantically attracted to others who reject or ignore them or can happen when a person seeking a romantic relationship finds that the other person has a relationship with someone else (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). The perpetrator will then resort to cyberbullying in order to vent frustration. Another reason mentioned by the students is that of intolerance whereby perpetrators engage in cyberbullying in order to feel better about themselves, or are small minded, or they want the other person to be unhappy and have negative feelings that they themselves feel (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Ganging up on a person as a form of rejection and isolating the person from a group or putting down a person was reported as a way of helping cyberbullies to feel good about themselves and to establish their own place in the group. The

attacks on the victims of cyberbullying by the bullies can have long-lasting psychological and emotional effects which are discussed below.

## **2.4 IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING**

Although there are many benefits of using technology, there are also risks involved due to young people being exposed to high risk content and having contact with wrong people (Popovoc & Leoschut, 2012). Popovoc and Leoschut (2012) stress that lack of supervision can expose young people using cell phones and the internet to pornography, violence, harmful information, sexual predators, disturbing images and cyberbullying. They added that there is a huge increase in the use of cell phones, text messaging, emails, chat rooms and social networks as well as how these have changed people's social interactions. They also discovered that South Africans are one of the highest users of mobile technology compared to other African countries and that young people in South Africa rapidly acquire more technological skills than adults.

According to Juvonen and Gross (2008), bullying in the form of emotional or physical intimidation may cause mental health problems especially to the young people. With regard to online intimidation, the impact might be particularly upsetting since young people are also likely to deal with cyberbullying incidents at home and might be reluctant to tell their parents. The reason for such reluctance might be due to parents restricting the use of these increasingly popular forms of social contacts resulting in cyberbullying for longer periods of time (Junoven & Gross, 2008). Thus, Hinduja and Patchin (2011) believe that there are many negative consequences relating to cyberbullying, and that victims may experience psychological harms which include feeling depressed, sad, angry and frustrated and may have suicidal thoughts. These emotions may lead to young people developing low self-esteem, delinquent behaviour and violence. The consequences of cyberbullying or online bullying are similar to those found in offline or traditional bullying such as depression, impaired concentration, negative impact on social and peer networks, loneliness and suicidal thoughts.

Kupczynski, Mundy and Green (2013) agree with Campbell (2005) that the emotional distress caused by cyberbullying can lead to feelings of agitation, embarrassment and fear. They also concur with Parris, Varjas, Meyers and Cutts (2012) who state that cyberbullying can cause depression and problem behaviours. Kupczynski *et al.* (2013) also believe that cyberbullying has

more severe repercussions than face-to-face bullying since everyone can readily have access to it. Material such as email, text or pictures can be viewed worldwide and these can be circulated by both the perpetrator and anyone who has access (Campbell, 2005). The victim may find it difficult to remove the material (Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007). In addition, Kupczynski *et al.* (2013) insist that adults should not take cyberbullying lightly and dismiss it as a normal phase of growing up. They further believe that cyberbullying is a lot more complex, and therefore adults should not suggest that the adolescent victims should turn off their computers or cell phones, as there are tools that could be used to block access to content in email or instant messaging.

The study by Bauman, Toomey and Walker (2013) investigated the relationships among depression, suicidal behaviours and bullying and victimisation experiences among 1491 high school learners in the US. The results indicated that depression facilitated the link between victimisation and suicide attempts. However, this was different for both males and females.

Kowalski and Limber (2013) explored the relationship between children's and adolescents' cyberbullying experiences and traditional bullying experiences and psychological health, physical health and academic performance to 931 learners from Grade 6 to Grade 12 in South Carolina. The participants were grouped into cyber victims, cyberbullies, cyber bully/victims and those not engaged in cyberbullying. The same classification was done with traditional bullying. The results showed that bully/victims had the highest negative scores on most measures of psychological health, physical health and academic performance.

However, Samuels, Brown, Leoschut, Janjies and Burton (2013) maintain that the possibility of harm does not only lie in the act of online violence, but also in the outcomes that may result from it which include psychological harm and physical harm. Psychological harm as a result of cyberbullying includes isolation, depression, loss of appetite and the like, physical harm perpetrated by others may include physical bullying and assaults, and self-inflicted violence may include self-harm or suicide (Samuels *et al.*, 2013).

Since the impact of cyberbullying is challenging and damaging to the victims, it is therefore necessary and important to develop solutions to these challenges. Remedies mentioned below will help to find out the sort of support learners receive from school and from parents in dealing with cyberbullying including the safety measures that the youth can employ to prevent cyberbullying.

## **2.5 PREVALENCE OF CYBERBULLYING**

According to Shariff (2008), bullying began as an endearment and this happened in the 1700s. The term 'boolie' was used to refer to 'beloved' or one's brother and later to close friendship as between good buddies, companions and mates. This amiable or friendly relationship included teasing, cajoling and joking among friends, and later on the term 'bully' was used to refer to bullying as cowardice, weakness, tyranny and violence (Shariff, 2008).

Hinduja and Patchin (2011) state that cyberbullying takes place in various places and media in cyberspace and most often it occurs where young people meet, that is, in chat rooms, as well as in social networking sites like Facebook and video-sharing websites such as You Tube. They also note that internet instant messaging or short message services (SMSs) through cell phones with full computing, recording and internet capabilities can be used to harass others. Furthermore, adolescents tend to take pictures in places where privacy is expected such as bedrooms and bathrooms and post the photos online and recording of unauthorised videos of adolescents have been uploaded to be viewed world-wide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011).

Victims who have been bullied during their lifetime can be involved in cyberbullying others. This is indicated in the study by Hinduja and Patchin (2011) consisting of over 4 400 randomly selected learners in the USA whose ages range from 11 to 18 years old. It is noteworthy that 20% of these participants indicated that they had been victims of bullying before. The same percentage of students admitted to cyberbullying others.

Campbell (2005) asserted that cyberbullying is not prevalent only in the United States, but also in other technologically developed countries such as Canada, Japan, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom. Furthermore, Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) found that research on cyberbullying is relatively new as a result of the rapid increase of mobile technology and the internet. However, they added that more existing studies have concentrated on white populations and undertaken mainly in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom and a small amount of studies have been undertaken in the European countries. In addition, Popović-Ćitić, Djurić and Cvetković (2011) undertook a study among Serbian adolescents in Belgium. The study's purpose was to investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying of 387 middle school students from five state schools in Belgium. Emphasis was on gender differences with regard to different forms of cyberbullying and victimisation. The results indicated that the majority of the learners used the

internet daily and had their own cell phones. About 10% of the learners whose ages ranged from 10 to 15 years old were reported as perpetrators of cyberbullying and 20% were victims. The most common type of victimisation reported by Popović-Ćitić *et al.* (2011) was denigration, which is, creating profiles that make fun of another person and harassment. The participants reported that harassment was the most common form of cyberbullying. Regarding gender differences, males reported higher levels of cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation than females.

Also, Kowalski and Limber (2007) examined the incidence of electronic bullying among 3 767 primary school learners in Grades 6, 7 and 8 in the US and the purpose was to investigate the experiences of participants regarding electronic bullying as both victims and perpetrators. The results showed that 11% of the participants once had been victims of cyberbullying, 7% were bully/victims and 4% had once cyberbullied someone else. Victims and perpetrators indicated that bullying mostly involved the use of instant messaging, chat rooms and email and some bully/victims did not know who the perpetrator was.

The study conducted by Kupczynski *et al.* (2013) focused on assessing the prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents of various ethnic groups registered in public high schools in Texas. The findings revealed that ethnicity appears to have an influence on cyberbullying. They added that the most common media of cyberbullying were the use of emails to send threatening and harassing messages, instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, text messaging, websites created to harass victims and voting booths. Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols and Storch (2009) also noted an increase in the use of cyberspace as a social forum among young people in America. This created a new medium for the young people to become victims of peer aggression. A sample consisting of 1665 primary school learners was surveyed using factor analysis technique to find out whether survey questions concerning frequency of cyber victimization were different from questions about relational or overt victimization information. The goals of the study were to investigate the nature of peer victimisation on the internet and to explore its association with emotional and social factors. The results revealed a difference between cyber victimisation and overt or relational victimisation. Cyber victimisation experiences were also linked with symptoms of social anxiety and not depression. According to these scholars, future empirical and clinical research on cyber victimisation needs to be undertaken. Dempsey *et al.* (2009) suggest that as adolescents meet social challenges in the physical world, they also meet social challenges in the cyber world. The

same applies to victimisation taking place at school, which may also include teenagers being put in danger to victimisation online.

The study undertaken by Onditi (2018) investigated cell phones and internet access, use and potential risks among 778 Tanzanian secondary school adolescent learners (Form I to Form IV) aged between 14 and 18. Results revealed that Tanzanian adolescents had a notable knowledge of cell phones and internet technologies and 86% percent of learners reported having access to the internet. Results also showed that males and older adolescents seem to have higher level of internet access than females and younger adolescents. Although adolescents reported the benefits associated with using cell phones and the internet, such as socialising, academic and entertainment, some adolescents reported to have experienced online violence and risks including cyberbullying and online sexual exploitation.

Chiome (2014) explored the extent and forms of cyberbullying among 200 high school adolescent learners in Zimbabwean schools. Results showed that 76% of the respondents experienced some form cyberbullying such as sending pornographic materials, threatening messages, teasing, name calling and use of vulgar language. This experience had a negative effect on the social well-being of the victims.

Within the South African context, Samuels *et al.*, (2013), in their executive summary of the study conducted in 2012 by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) in partnership with UNICEF, indicated that the manner in which young people respond and deal with the online problems is largely unknown. The study explored young people's online experiences in South African schools. This followed the National School Violence Study (NSVS, 2012), which came after two major quantitative studies which were also undertaken in South Africa, that is, the CJCP pilot study conducted by Burton and Mutongwizo in 2009 and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) study conducted by de Lange and von Solms in 2011.

Moreover, Odora and Matoti (2015) examined the incidence of cyberbullying behaviours among South African high school learners and the extent to which the rights of learners are violated by such behaviours. The study comprised a sample of 346 Grade 11 and 12 learners from Limpopo and Free State who completed the questionnaire. Findings indicated that girls were more likely to be cybervictims than boys and that boys were more likely to be cyberbullies than girls.

The CJCP study consisted of 1 726 young people recruited from Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. The study found that 73.9% of the adolescents had access to the internet; 64% were using Mxit; 47.9% had internet access on their cell phones; 31.4% had profiles on Facebook, Myspace, Twitter or Hi5; and 30.4% took part in chat rooms online and also used instant messaging applications such as MSN and Yahoo chat. The study also found that cyberbullying occurs across various media such as voice calls and text messages via Mxit. According to Burton and Mutongwizo (2009), young people are unable to escape cyberbullying as they cannot do without their cellphones. Regarding gender differences, the study revealed that South African girls are somewhat more vulnerable to cyberbullying both at home (43,4%) and in the school environment (33,1%) than boys (42,4%) at home and (29,3%) at school.

The NMMU research involved 1 594 Grade 6-12 learners in six schools, three primary schools and three secondary schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay area. The objective of the study was to convey the trends in electronic use against children. Concerns and risks were also identified. The results showed a lack of formal education regarding e-Safety in South African schools. Consequently, De Lange and von Solms (2011) suggested a need for online safety among children and to make children aware of the dangers associated with the internet. The paper also proposed the execution of an extensive educational programme to promote awareness about e-Safety to learners in South African schools as well as to teachers and parents. The study also found that 90% of young people use social networking sites. Facebook and Mxit were the most preferred sites and 67% of learners had access on a daily basis. The research also showed that 36% of the participants had experienced cyberbullying on social network like SMS/MMS and close to 50% chose to keep quiet about the incident. The study undertaken by de Lange and von Solms (2011) is relevant here, since it emphasises the importance of e-Safety awareness in the South African schools, which could reduce the incidences of cyberbullying. Burton and Mutongwizo's (2009) study is also relevant, as it will help the researcher to investigate what social media learners use and for what purpose.

From the literature, it is clear that there are similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The next section thus discusses these.

## **2.6 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING**

Dooley *et al.* (2009) maintain that cyberbullying has recently been subjected to intense media attention due to incidences of teen suicides. Hinduja and Patchin (2010) argue that victims of cyberbullying may become more suicidal than victims of traditional bullying. This is because in cyberbullying, victims are being harassed and mistreated over the internet.

In their quantitative study consisting of 12 to 17-year old youth, Juvonen and Gross (2008) found some similarities between online bullying or cyberbullying and in-school or traditional bullying. Both types of bullying involve name calling or insults, with online bullying taking place through electronic communication such as instant messaging (IM) or emails. Both online bullying and in-school bullying experiences were independently associated with increased social anxiety (Juvonen & Cross, 2008).

Furthermore, Hoff and Mitchell (2009) also argue that cyberbullying and traditional bullying are often done intentionally and persistently. However, cyberbullying can be more upsetting because of its anonymity since the perpetrators use screen names and well-hidden internet protocol in order to hide their identities, leaving the victim vulnerable and disturbed (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). Cyberbullying is also seen as different from traditional bullying which still occurs regularly. According to Shariff (2008), traditional bullying occurs within or around the school buildings, in places like physical education classes, hallways, bathrooms or classes that require group work and/or after school activities. This may involve physical attacks. Usually a group of children will target one student who they consider to be different or strange and make life unbearable for him or her. Today's children are experiencing cyberbullying as a result of technological advancement such as cellular phones and the internet (Kowalski *et al.*, 2013). Cyberbullying can happen at any time and the messages or images can be circulated world-wide leading to the young person feeling helpless (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). To support these views, Ang, Huan and Florell (2013) state that bullying has moved from the physical to the virtual, and that the internet has become a new and popular platform for social interactions, which allow the adolescents to do things anonymously without being monitored by adults.

There are key differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. One of these is anonymity, whereby in traditional bullying the victim knows the bully, but this is not the case with

cyberbullying. Wong, Chan and Cheng (2014) maintain that cyberbullying significantly reduces the likelihood of being recognised by victims, since there is no physical contact. Usually victims do not know why they are being targeted (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011) and perpetrators can hide their identities behind a computer or cell phone and use anonymous and false screen names. Moreover, victims have no idea who cyberbullies them and they may suspect that cyberbullies are peers from school (Wong, *et al.*, 2014). This anonymity of the bully places further emotional stress to the victim.

Disinhibition is another difference. Suler (2004) identifies online disinhibition effect as another difference between the two types of bullying. This is a situation whereby people say and do things on the internet that they would not say or do in the face to face world. In addition, accessibility which is associated with lack of physical environment means that the cyberbully can follow the victim anywhere and anytime. Also, with traditional bullying, harassment mostly happens at school. Punitive fear means that traditional bullying and violence against young people often ends up not reported. The same applies to cyberbullying since young people fear that reporting the incident might result in their electronic devices being confiscated.

Hinduja and Patchin (2011) maintain that the hurtful actions of a perpetrator are viral, meaning that many people, all over the world, can attack the victim or can find out about the cyberbullying by accessing the incident on the internet. This is different from traditional bullying because cyberbullying takes place online and the perpetrator does not have to see the immediate response of the victim. Due to their age, adolescents might not recognise the seriousness of the harm they are causing to the victim since they cannot see how hurt the victim is.

Unlike traditional bullying which can be witnessed by other learners, cyberbullying can continue unnoticed for a long period of time (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Therefore, it can be very difficult for a victim to escape from traditional bullying since the harassment by the perpetrator is constantly happening at school. However, cyberspace offers victims some tools to choose from, in order to prevent further incidents from happening such as blocking screen names or restricting their friends' lists (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

In their study, Dempsey *et al.* (2009) refer to traditional bullying as overt or direct and relational or indirect aggression. Overt aggression involves physical acts (such as hitting, shoving), and verbal abuse (such as taunting, name-calling) of aggressive behaviour (Kowalski & Limber, 2007).

Relational aggression is intentional manipulation of harm to a victim's social status or relationship involving exclusion, rumour spreading, leading to interpersonal peer conflicts, and disclosing personal information. Dempsey *et al.* (2009) use the term 'cyber victimization' to refer to cyberbullying, which happens via cell phones and the internet. Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchán, Calmaestra and Vega (2009) assert that cyberbullying retains the same basic roles, that is, victim and perpetrator, and different levels of severity as found in traditional bullying, that is, occasional and severe. However, the emotional effects are different.

The information about similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying will be very useful in finding out about other similarities or differences between these two types of bullying that the learners themselves are aware of. In addition to the similarities and differences mentioned above, literature also discusses the benefits of using information and communication technologies as well as the risks involved in cyberbullying.

## **2.7 BENEFITS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTs) AND RISKS OF CYBERBULLYING**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has paved the way for people all over the world and for young people in particular to relate and interact socially. The use of the internet, cell phones and cyber technologies have opened a variety of opportunities and benefits for the young people in terms of learning, exploration and social and public engagement (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009). Thus, Samuels *et al.* (2013) maintain that social media such as the internet and cell phones are a good way for young people to connect and to remain connected. Therefore, ICTs have become an important part of South Africans' daily lives. Samuels *et al.*'s (2013) study paid particular attention to the young people in the South African schools and the purpose was to explore the online experiences and opportunities resulting from the widespread access to ICTs and a balanced number of new risks and dangers existing online. It came after the 2012 National School Violence Study (NSVS) which gathered more quantitative data on violence and cyberbullying.

However, there is a growing concern about the dangers and potential hazards of these technologies which take the form of cyberbullying especially among young people. For instance, Hinduja and Patchin (2011) noted that cyberbullying is a growing problem since there is an increasing number

of young people who are using computers and cell phones and have embraced interactions through these media. On a daily basis, many young people access the internet for various reasons such as school work, to communicate with their friends online, to play games online, to learn about celebrities and to share any other information that they consider important to them. In addition, Hinduja and Patchin (2011), Kowalski, Limber and Agatston (2008), and Patchin and Hinduja (2010) also noted that some learners use technology responsibly while others choose to use it carelessly and inappropriately in order to hurt, humiliate, embarrass and personally attack others.

Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) agree with Finkelhor (2008) that young people who are mostly at risk of traditional bullying and violence are also mostly at risk of online bullying and aggression. Consequently, Finkelhor (2008) argues that young people who are vulnerable to cyberbullying in one forum such as chat rooms, can also be most susceptible in other forums such as emails or instant messaging via internet and cell phones.

Similarly, studies have found that race is also connected with cyberbullying both at home and at school. In South Africa, for instance, Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) found that black adolescents reported the highest incidence of cyber aggression [49.1% at home and 39% at school], followed by white, coloured, Indian or Asian adolescents who reported the lowest incidence [20.5% at home and 12.6% at school]. It is noteworthy that Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) also noted evidence from international literature which suggests that those who experience traditional bullying are at increased risk of experiencing cyber aggression arising from physical bullying and continuing online. Alternatively, victims may experience cyber aggression, and this may lead them to engage in a similar behaviour.

From the foregoing, it is clear that cyberbullying manifests itself in various ways. The next section focuses on the characteristics and personalities of perpetrators and victims of bullying as well as gender differences, thereafter, a discussion of how cyber victims can turn cyberbullies will follow.

## **2.8 CHARACTERISTICS OF PERPETRATORS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES**

Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) found that there are a number of common characteristics in children who bully. A person typical of a bully is one who displays significant externalising behavior, has internalising symptoms, has challenges both socially and academically, has negative attitudes and beliefs about others, relates negatively to himself or herself.

Furthermore, he/she is unable to resolve problems with others, comes from a family environment full of conflict and lacking in parental supervision, is more likely to see negative atmosphere in his or her school, and tends to be negatively influenced by community factors as well as by his or her peers (Cook *et al.*, 2010).

Kiriakidis (2011) emphasised Li's (2006) report that more males than females were cyberbullies and that more females than males reported cyberbullying victimisation while more males than females were aware of cyberbullying. He also agreed with Li's (2006) findings that males were more likely to cyberbully others in contrast to females, and that there were similarities in cyber victimisation between males and females. Furthermore, Kiriakidis (2011) also concurred with Li's (2006) findings that females who experience cyberbullying were more likely to inform an adult in comparison to male cybervictims. On the other hand, Dooley *et al.* (2009) observed results from previous research that traditionally, males engage in more bullying behaviours than females (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, P., 2001), whereas females are more likely to communicate using text messaging and email in cyberbullying than males (Blair, 2003). This practice by girls of sending emails and text messaging may result in more opportunities to spread secrets online (Dooley *et al.*, 2009).

Wong, Chan and Cheng (2014) administered five psychometric measures to 1917 high school adolescents from seven schools to investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying in Hong Kong. Measures included self-efficacy, empathy level, feelings regarding a harmonious school, sense of belonging to the school and psychosocial wellbeing. Five scales regarding bullying experiences, that is, cyber- and traditional bullying perpetration and victimisation; reactions to cyberbullying victimisation were also administered. Findings revealed that boys were more likely to engage in cyberbullying and to be victims of cyberbullying. It was found that cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation were negatively related to the adolescents' psychological health and sense of belonging to school. Cyberbullying and traditional bullying were positively correlated. The results showed that males had a low sense of belonging to school, were involved in traditional bullying perpetration, were experiencing cyberbullying victimisation which was related to an increased tendency to cyberbully others.

## **2.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES**

Kowalski *et al.* (2012) state that children who are bullied typically fall into one of two general categories, that is, passive or submissive and those who are “provocative victims” or “bully/victims”. Passive or submissive victims are insecure and will not retaliate if victimised, whereas provocative victims or bully/victims are hot tempered and try to fight back when victimised. Children who are bullied may have problems, such as being withdrawn, depressed or anxious and may also show some externalising behaviour like being defiant and disruptive; may lack good social skills, have negative beliefs about themselves that is, self-respect, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and may have difficulty solving social problems (Cook *et al.*, 2010). Kowalski *et al.* (2012) also mention family variables which can contribute to a child becoming a victim of cyberbullying such as overprotection, maltreatment and domestic violence. Another group of children at greater risk of being bullied are those with learning disabilities; those who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD); those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), who are also likely to bully others; children with special health care needs or chronic diseases; obese children; as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender adolescents (Kowalski *et al.*, 2012).

With regard to gender differences in susceptibility to cyberbullying, Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) agreed with Hertz and David-Ferdon’s (2008) finding that girls are more susceptible to cyber victimisation than boys resulting in girls committing various forms of cyberbullying.

## **2.10 CYBERVICTIMS TURNED PERPETRATORS**

Rivitiso (2012) used the general strain theory to answer the question: Do victims of cyberbullying in turn cyberbully others? She mentioned that the strain theory shows that negative events in a person’s life generate strain. She further explained that some people resort to socially unacceptable behavior in response to such strain.

Oluminde, Adams and Amodu (2015) explored the prevalence and predictors of cyberbullying perpetration among 653 adolescent learners in Oyo State, Nigeria. Results indicated that all respondents owned cell phones and almost half had internet access. Results also revealed that 25% of learners who were involved in cyberbullying perpetration associated with the history of cyber victimisation and daily internet access. Similarly, Mathew, Kagwe and Tucholski (2019) explored the prevalence of cyberbullying and cyberbullying victimisation among 228 Nairobi adolescent

learners whose ages ranged between 13 and 18 years in the Westlands Sub County secondary schools, Kenya. The results indicated that cyberbullying participation among learners was 14% and cyber victimisation was 23%. The results found no association between cyberbullying behaviours and cyberbullying victimisation behaviours with compulsive internet usage. However, results revealed positive significant correlation between cyberbullying perpetration and cyber victimisation behaviours. This suggested that learners experiencing cyber victimisation could end up being perpetrators themselves.

Another twist as shared by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) is that some young people who experienced traditional bullying may use the internet to bully others, whilst those adolescents who had never been involved in traditional bullying sometimes use the internet to victimise or harass others, a behaviour that they would not display offline.

## **2.11 CYBERBULLYING AND THE LAW**

Badenhorst's (2011) paper explores cyberbullying and sexting in the South African situation and it examines the legal responses to these in the South African setting. The main focus is on the responses within the context of existing legislative framework and legal remedies existing in South Africa. The paper identifies some gaps and risks in the legal responses related to the young people who are involved in cyberbullying and sexting. It offers some suggestions to minimise the gaps and risks to young people. Badenhorst (2011) maintains that cyberbullying and sexting came into being as a consequence of the young people's constant access and use of the internet. Moreover, the technology used, and the aggressive nature of behavior are unfamiliar to adults.

Badenhorst (2011) states that there is no specific law dealing with cyberbullying, thus victims rely on solutions offered by the criminal law and/or civil law. According to Badenhorst (2011), the legal consequences and solutions are applicable to all perpetrators of cyberbullying and are available to all victims of cyberbullying. However, the age of both perpetrators and victims is not taken into consideration. With regard to criminal law, the perpetrators may be charged with the criminal offences such as *crimen iniuria*, assault, criminal defamation and extortion depending on the nature of the acts of cyberbullying. Civil law responses include the order to keep the peace and an interdict and a defamation claim.

According to Mienie (2013), most states in the USA have adopted laws associated with cyberbullying and this has paved the way for creating law and policy dealing with cyberbullying in schools. Mienie (2013) insists that South African schools have the responsibility to provide learners with a disciplined social environment and to provide quality education. She also insists that in order for the policies to work, the disruption caused by cyberbullying should be addressed separately and the new cyberbullying challenges should be taken into consideration. In South Africa, this may be possible for schools that are functional and have a positive school climate with the support of the SGBs. Similarly, Hinduja and Patchin (2011) stress that schools with healthy climates produce children who know what is appropriate behaviour and what is not, resulting in students behaving appropriately online and offline. However, Taiariol (2010) concurred with Demaray and Malecki (2003) and Morrison (2006) that poor school climate and increased number of bullying and victimisation are a result of low social support and the absence of school community members.

## **2.12 CYBERBULLYING REMEDIES**

Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) emphasise that cyberbullying is challenging to policy makers, parents, teachers as well as children and young people. Donegan (2012) who conducted a study on bullying and cyberbullying in America believes that, as technology progresses, anti-bullying policies and laws must continue to evolve and that the problems faced by the government regarding cyberbullying can be avoided through implementation processes to limit the effects of cyberbullying. Thus, Beger and Sinha (2012) suggest that there are procedures which must be considered when it comes to digital safety issues. They believe that the internet is not essentially dangerous, but that the offline human behaviour reflected online is to blame. Therefore, schools, parents, young people as well as the law enforcement agents have a role to play towards cyberbullying prevention.

Hence, Smith, Mahdavi, Carvelho, Russell and Tippett (2008) propose that adults should be more aware of the potential risks of cell phones and the internet. They suggest that bullying policies and anti-bullying materials be included at schools as well as the provision of guidance for children and young people. They also believe that although traditional methods for reducing bullying, such as curriculum work and peer support may be used for cyberbullying, there are some

interventions that could be used which include how to contact cell phone companies and internet service providers.

In a survey consisting of 12 to 15-year old South Korean young people, Park, Na and Kim (2014) explored the relationship between the amount and type of internet use, moral standards specific to the online environment, and how these factors include cyberbullying experiences and practice of cyberbullying. They found that South Korea provided a good case study as it is one of the countries with the highest broadband and mobile internet penetration in the world. They also emphasise that the time spent online increases the risks and opportunities encountered by adolescents. They suggest that limiting internet use may decrease the benefits as well as the dangers, and that there should be a proactive approach that equips the adolescents with the ability to filter and lessen the impact of negative content.

Park *et al.* (2014) propose that ‘moral disengagement’ which is a process of justifying misconduct and selectively applying moral norms should be exercised. According to Bandura (2002), moral disengagement serves as a mediator when a person’s moral values and conduct are not consistent. Park *et al.* (2014) also propose the concept of netiquette, which deals with morality and ethical values applied online. The concept recognises that the cyberspace has its own set of beliefs and standards used by the internet users as moral criteria (Freestone & Mitchell, 2004). Kumazaki, Suzuki, Katsura, Sakamoto and Kashibuchi (2011) believe that good netiquette, characterised by a higher awareness of desirable manners online, has an effect that can help control cyberbullying.

### **2.12.1 What schools can do to prevent cyberbullying**

Hoff and Mitchell (2009) point out that cyberbullying poses numerous challenges for school leaders since it can affect students’ ability to learn at school. In traditional bullying, teachers and administrators become aware of the bullying and respond to it easily, but cyberbullying is not easy for teachers to see due to lack of resources and lack of knowledge to investigate cyber-incidents. Moreover, the administrators’ intervention in solving the incident of cyberbullying may be in denial of their child’s involvement in online activity and may not welcome such intervention (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). However, Cassidy, Jackson and Brown (2009) suggest that since cyberbullying often begins at the school and continues at home, it is the school’s responsibility to deal with bullying behaviour, and to provide safety to students who are cyber victims. They also recommend

that the school should build relationships with parents, and discuss the problem with parents, students, justice personnel and internet providers. By so doing, the school would encourage stronger solutions that link the home, school and community.

Likewise, Patchin and Hinduja (2010) believe that it is important that school health professionals should intervene in cyberbullying incidents even if these happen away from school, as reluctance to do so could place students at risk of being victimised frequently. They suggest that school professionals can also help students who are cyberbullied by teaching the victims ways to deal with cyberbullying such as blocking harassing text messages, logging off when tempers start to flare and not respond to hurtful messages, and helping to develop high self-esteem in students. Again, some successful programmes which have been developed for traditional bullying, such as whole-school anti-bullying policy, and awareness-raising and curriculum-based activities, could also be extended to cyberbullying (Slonje *et al.*, 2013). Slonje *et al.* (2013) further recommend the Finland KiVa anti-bullying program, which is highly effective in reducing both traditional bullying and cyberbullying and includes computer-based classroom activities and support for victims from high status peers. Furthermore, Holladay (2011) recommends the Seattle Public School Districts' approach to prevent cyberbullying by launching a pilot curriculum in junior high and middle schools. The district created its own resources to make them easy to use and integrate into the existing curriculum. The prevention practices include exposing misperceptions about digital behaviour, building empathy and understanding, teaching online safety skills and equipping young people with strategies to eliminate digital abuse in their lives. The curriculum also includes engaging parents by offering take-home letters and activities. Teachers are also educated about cyberbullying and about the language they can share with learners through the curriculum. On the same note, Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) suggest that a cyberbullying prevention curriculum can be created for schools, as well as awareness campaigns and advertorials for the young people and guardians.

According to Popovac and Leoschut (2012), teachers have a critical role to play in teaching young people about the dangers of internet use, since bullying takes place at home and at school. Popovac and Leoschut (2012) thus stress that teachers need to inform learners about the potential negative effects of internet use, since learners spend a considerable amount of time at school. Schools are also regarded by Popovac and Leoschut (2012) as ideal entry point for prevention of violence,

since they have access to learners through educating them, and to parents through holding parental meetings. This enables the schools to have an impact on the communities they are serving.

Consequently, Laitano (2013) suggests that members of the school faculty, as ethical actors in society, have a moral obligation to stop and prevent cyberbullying. School faculty members should intervene, since students are unlikely to report incidents due to fear of being tormented further by the bullies or not believing that the adults can help. Therefore, policies, rules and regulations against cyberbullying should be put in place by the school as a way of encouraging students to report the problem (Laitano, 2013). In addition, Laitano (2013) suggests that the school can implement extracurricular activities to develop friendships, increase self-esteem and introduce teamwork and communication amongst students.

De Lange and von Solms (2011) also add that professional school counsellors are aware of the issues of cyberbullying and its dynamics within the school system. They therefore suggest that school counsellors should use the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program (MCGCP) to improve academic, personal/social, and career development of each student, whether the student is a victim, observer or a bully. As professionals, school counsellors should educate teachers and school administrators about the problem of cyberbullying in the form of in-service training, disseminating information about cyberbullying to the school staff and educating school personnel about the damaging effects of victimisation and should act as “agents of change” by opening a discussion about the problem (de Lange & von Solms, 2011).

Besides, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), dealing with the Bill of Rights, protects the rights of all people in South Africa. The Bill of Rights mentions amongst other rights, the right to human dignity, equality and freedom. With regard to human dignity, “everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected” (p. 6). Concerning equality, subsections 9(1) and 9(2) read: “Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken” (p. 6). In addition, Subsection 12(1) and (2) state that: “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person; and everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity” (p. 8).

Each year the schools under study produce and circulate to each learner the Code of Conduct for learners and parents to read and sign. The schools' Code of Conduct affirms that: "All learners are obliged to uphold the Code of Conduct with reference to the Bill of Rights as per the Constitution 108 of 1996" (p. 2). The Code of Conduct comprises the rights of the school, general school rules and school policies including the cell phone policy. Electronic equipment such as laptops, tablets and cell phones are banned during school hours. Punishment for being in possession of a cell phone, leads to the confiscation of the cell phone including the sim card for a period of six months. A learner found using a cell phone during examinations or class tests will not get marks. Parents and not the learner may then collect the cell phone after producing a valid identity document or card before the school starts, or immediately at the end of school. One of the rights of the learners regarding cyberbullying is that each learner has the right to be treated fairly and avoid being involved in any form of aggressive or abusive behaviour towards others. This means that cyberbullying is not allowed or any comments about learners are not allowed on any social network.

Like teachers, parents also have an important role to play and should be involved when their children experience victimisation due to cyberbullying.

### **2.12.2 What parents can do to protect their children from being bullied online**

It is imperative that there should be resources available for parents to guide and educate them about the real dangers and possible means of handling the technologies used by the young people (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009). This means that parents and guardians should be familiar with the technology and participate in the use of electronic media with their children in order to educate, guide, monitor and supervise them about how to use technology appropriately.

The study conducted by Tarapdar and Kellett (2011) in the United Kingdom found that the majority of young people felt that the home is where cyberbullying takes place and schools were seen as effective vehicles for change. According to the young people (study participants), schools acquire tips on self-protection and opportunities to participate in anti-bullying initiatives whereas the home does not. Therefore, young people require parents to be more active and have the knowledge about internet use in order to help them when they experience problems.

Kowalski *et al.* (2012) also state that previously, adults were not familiar with sites like MySpace and Facebook and had no profile on a social networking site. This led to a situation where the young people were frequently unsupervised and would create their online profiles. However, some adults are getting more concerned and are now using social networking sites and monitoring and supervising their children. Kowalski *et al.* (2012) suggest that parents' conversations with their children need to move beyond personal safety and should also avoid harmful content and to encourage their children to use the internet in a considerate and constructive manner. Parents should also discuss with their children how to treat others well online as well as the responsibilities of citizenship. These suggestions by these scholars are very important as parents tend to buy technology such as cell phones and computers for their children and fail to discuss how to use them appropriately.

Cast in this way, Chan and Chui (2012) argue that a healthy family, functioning and secure parent-child attachments are keys to reducing the tendency of the adolescents to engage in delinquent activities such as cyberbullying perpetration and for victims to be targeted by cyberbullies. In addition, they propose that adequate parental guidance and supervision in promoting self-control among adolescents are critical, especially before they reach adulthood. Parental supervision and guidance would demonstrate positive psychological outcomes in the long run (Chan & Chui, 2012). Thus, Laitano (2013) suggests that parents should assume the role of monitoring and educating their children's online behavior since they are the ones who provide internet access to the child. Parents should therefore play a big role in the prevention of cyberbullying by taking the responsibility of explaining the concepts of privacy, cause and effect and empathy towards others (Laitano, 2013). However, the school can assist those parents who lack knowledge about the internet. Consequently, de Lange and von Solms (2011) argue that it is very crucial that an extensive educational programme be implemented to bring about e-Safety awareness in various Southern African schools since many parents are not aware of the risks associated with the internet. E-Safety awareness can also assist learners and teachers.

### **2.12.3 What the youth can do to protect themselves from cyberbullying**

The study conducted by Kraft and Wang (2009) examined teenagers' perspectives on the effectiveness of a variety of cyberbullying prevention strategies. The following implications for

prevention of cyberbullying by offenders or perpetrators were suggested by the participants:

Firstly, clear rules with enforced penalties and ongoing prevention programmes were seen as effective. Secondly, the adolescents perceived that denying the perpetrators access to technology is an effective prevention measure, regardless of what role the perpetrators play in cyberbullying.

Therefore, in a study by Cassidy *et al.* (2009), students requested a site where they could report their experiences anonymously, without fear of retaliation from the bully as fear is the main reason students do not report being victimised. Students also proposed solutions that deal with anonymous reporting and punitive measures and further suggested long-term solutions about the school culture, students' self-esteem and modelling by adults to promote a safe and nurturing environment for all.

Samuels *et al.* (2013) suggest that there are safety strategies that learners could develop to prevent cyberbullying, that is, proactive safety strategies, responsive strategies and online and offline psycho-social support. Proactive safety strategies include utilising the resources that are built-in to the software whereby young people can block unknown or unwanted bullies and also manage securing setting on Facebook via their cell phones or computers to prevent risks from materialising. The youth can also use responsive strategies in order to block unwanted intrusions after they have started and these include logging off in case of online threats, leaving internet locations, reducing information shared, not paying attention to the person's calls or messages, or simply doing nothing (Samuels *et al.* 2013). With regard to online and offline psycho-social support, Samuels *et al.* (2013) also noted that there is very little support available for victims who experience online bullying. This gap is very important since there is increasing evidence emphasising the relationship between online victimisation and perpetration, and that the impact of cyberbullying is similar to traditional bullying which may negatively influence the psycho-social wellbeing of children.

The current study is the first to examine the dynamics of cyberbullying among adolescent learners in Grade 8, who are at a critical stage of human development, and whose wellbeing and learning have to be maintained as they transition from primary to secondary schools. This study is also different from the studies that have been reviewed above since most of them have used quantitative research. This study is a mixed method research and both quantitative and qualitative research have been combined.

### **2.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has discussed the realities of cyberbullying in countries abroad as well as in South Africa. Moreover, the chapter has illustrated the nature and extent of cyberbullying in the developed countries. The chapter has also discussed the causes of cyberbullying, the impact of cyberbullying on the victims and prevalence of traditional bullying and cyberbullying abroad as well as in South Africa. Similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying were also addressed. Furthermore, the benefits and the risks of cyberbullying were discussed. Again, the chapter also discussed the characteristics of perpetrators and those of the victims. Furthermore, it has also reviewed literature on the remedies and solutions to cyberbullying, emphasising the roles that the school, parents, youth and law enforcement agencies could play in preventing cyberbullying. The next chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter reviewed some relevant literature on the concept of bullying, particularly cyberbullying within the South African and international contexts. Issues about the prevalence of cyberbullying among the adolescents and necessary prevention strategies by the concerned agencies were discussed in the chapter as well. The present chapter shifts attention to the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the present study. Thus, the five concepts and the two theories that frame the present study are discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.2 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

There are five concepts that run through this thesis which were utilized in the conceptualization of the study as well as in its execution. These are bullying, cyberbullying, adolescents, social media and social networks. These concepts have helped the researcher in analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. ‘Bullying’ has helped to distinguish between direct and indirect bullying. ‘Cyberbullying’ has assisted in explaining the experiences and manifestation of cyberbullying among boys and girls. ‘Adolescents’ has helped to explain the period at which the youth can be involved in cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation. ‘Social media’ has assisted to find out from learners what social media they use to interact and engage with others. ‘Social networks’ has helped to portray what social networks learners utilise to communicate with others and how these networks can contribute to cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation.

##### **3.2.1 Bullying**

Olweus (1993) defined bullying as aggression that is intentionally carried out by one or more people and repeatedly directed at a person who cannot easily defend himself or herself. There are two factors which Olweus (1993) identified to differentiate between aggression and bullying. Aggression is a single act between two people who have the same power, whereas bullying refers to repeated acts by the perpetrator to the victim and an imbalance of power.

According to Campbell (2005), bullying is an abusive treatment and an aggressive behavior that is intentional, harmful and repeated over time towards a person by means of force. Bullying may be physical and include behaviours such as hitting, punching or kicking, spitting, and seizing or damaging other people's belongings, or it may involve verbal assault, that is, language that is intimidating, or threatening such as teasing, ridicule, accusations and disrespect (Campbell, 2005). It may also be relational, that is, leaving out one or more peers out of the group or it may be indirect, that is, spreading rumours or gossiping about someone (Olweus, 1993).

Bauman and Yoon (2014) maintain that bullying refers to aggression whereby a person with lessor power is repeatedly hurt or harmed by another person with more power. Nilan, Burgess, Hobbs, Threadgold and Alexander (2015) define bullying as behavior that is intentional and repeated in order to harm the victim who is defenseless.

Although the study deals with cyberbullying, traditional bullying has also been used to explain how it is similar to or different from cyberbullying.

### **3.2.2 Cyberbullying**

According to Cantone *et al.* (2015), there are several ways in which cyberbullying behaviour can be inflicted. These include flaming, harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, impersonation, outing, trickery and exclusion.

Flaming involves fights taking place online using messages with angry and vulgar language; harassment includes sending mean, insulting messages repeatedly; cyberstalking is repeated, intense harassment; denigration includes threats that are fearful and it comprises spreading rumours online or sending or posting messages with the intention of damaging an individual's reputation or friendships; impersonation involves pretending to be someone else, and sending or posting material in order to get that person in trouble or damage his/her reputation or friendships; outing is sharing a person's secrets, or images that are embarrassing online; trickery includes tricking someone into disclosing embarrassing information or secrets and then sharing them online; and exclusion is intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group (Cantone *et al.*, 2015).

Bauman and Yoon (2014) believe that cyberbullying is an additional weapon used by those whose

purpose is to harm others. Cyberbullying characteristics, according to Bauman and Yoon (2014), include perceived anonymity, online disinhibition effect inspiring added cruelty, absence of time limitations, huge size of possible audience, absence of nonverbal hints to message intent, and the permanence of content. Consequently, cyberbullying may be more serious than traditional bullying.

Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) state that cyberbullying involves harassing someone else persistently by making rude and nasty comments online. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) define cyberbullying as willful and repeated harm perpetrated through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. According to these authors, 'willful' means that the behaviour has to be purposeful, not accidental; 'repeated' means that bullying reflects a pattern of behaviour and not just one isolated incident; 'harm' means that the victim must feel that harm was inflicted; and 'computers, cell phones and other electronic devices' are what make cyberbullying different from traditional bullying.

Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) indicate in their study that the term 'cyberbullying' was first created and used by Willard (2003) who defined cyberbullying as the use of speech that is defamatory, which constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination, and the disclosure of personal information that is offensive, vulgar and derogatory. Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) have also highlighted numerous ways in which cyberbullying is carried out and these comprise, text messages, video clips via cell phone cameras, cell phone calls, email, chat rooms, instant messages, websites and blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and internet gaming.

According to Tokunaga (2010), there are a number of reasons which bring about differences and inconsistencies among the definitions of cyberbullying which lead researchers to come up with different phenomena on the same concept. Some definitions have been found to lack clarity due to the absence of some words like 'repeatedly' (Tokunaga, 2010; Kiriakidis, 2011). Other studies only consider repeated offences. This therefore limits the conclusions to the study and restricts other researchers from making cross-study comparisons. Tokunaga (2010, p. 227) therefore came up with a definition of cyberbullying which aims to unite the inconsistent definitions that appear in the literature:

“Cyberbullying is any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort to others.”

Tokunaga (2010, p. 227) added the following to the definition to clarify the meaning of cyberbullying:

“In cyberbullying experiences, the identity of the bully may or may not be known. Cyberbullying can occur through electronically-mediated communication at school; however, cyberbullying behaviors commonly occur outside the school as well”.

Tokunaga (2010) also noted that several definitions of cyberbullying have been derived from definitions of traditional or face-to-face bullying. According to Kiriakidis (2011), the definitions of bullying vary. Some earlier definitions of traditional bullying emphasise aggressive behaviour on the part of the students. Others stress mainly the expression of physical or verbal violence, which “leads to a conceptual shrinking, as there are not included the more covered and not easily visible forms of bullying like spreading of rumors or relational indirect gossiping” (Kiriakidis, 2011: 1). In this study, Tokunaga’s definition will be adopted as it unifies the inconsistencies found in other definitions.

### **3.2.3 Adolescents**

In their article Nilan *et al.* (2015) mention Buckingham’s (2013) reference to adolescents or young people as a “digital generation”, and also that young people use the internet as an extension of their face-to-face social activities, such as connecting with friends, gossiping, flirting, showing off, quarrelling, etc. This means that technology has changed the way young people think. Young people can make or break friendships online and offline (Nilan *et al.*, 2013). This interaction can turn into face-to-face bullying or cyberbullying.

### **3.2.4 Social media**

According to Wong, Chan and Chen (2014), personal computers and cell phones are the most commonly favoured electronic devices mostly used by young perpetrators to bully others. Popovac and Leoschut (2012) state that cyberbullying via cell phones may include sending mean or cruel messages or taking pictures and videos of someone, with the intention of circulating the

contents online or via cell phones. Phoón (2017) states that on one hand, social media has brought us many positive qualities and on the other hand, it has deprived people's ability to trust one another. Phoón (2017) further asserts that social media has created a virtual, hollow connection, which has replaced people's need for warm and supportive interaction, and most young people are unable to thrive in a physical and social interaction.

### **3.2.5 Social networks**

Faizi, Afi and Chiheb (2013) maintain that a social network is an online community where people with common interests, opinions, activities and experiences meet and share their news, photos, videos and event. A social network consists of a user's profile as well as his or her social contacts. These online communities also afford users means to interact with each other online, using social network sites or apps such as email, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, MySpace, SnapChat, YouTube, WhatsApp, and the like.

## **3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Grant and Osanloo (2014) refer to the theoretical framework as the "blueprint" for the entire study. They describe the theoretical framework as a guide on which to build and support the study and provide the structure on how to approach the study philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically. They also cite Eisenhart's definition of a theoretical framework as "a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory ... constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships" (1991, p. 205). According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), the theoretical framework is made up of the chosen theory or theories that guide the researcher's thinking on how to understand and plan the research topic including the concepts and definitions related to the topic.

This study is underpinned by two theoretical frameworks namely, Socio-Ecological Theory (SET) and Social Cognitive Theory (SGT).

### **3.3.1 Socio-Ecological Theory (SET)**

The SET evolved from Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory which was

introduced as an attempt to improve the field of developmental science. The Ecological Systems Theory involved conducting controlled laboratory experiments in naturally occurring environments such as schools. The Bioecological Systems Theory is an extension of the Ecological Systems theory and it was developed after recognising that the individual was overlooked in other theories of human development which were largely focused on the context of development, for example, the environment.

In the context of school bullying and peer victimisation, the SET suggests that human development is influenced by a series of interrelated systems acting within the environment (Espelage, 2014). The theory further suggests that young people's behaviour is shaped by a range of contextual systems which include the family, peers and the school environments. A child's direct contact with family, peers and schools comprises the microsystem. When a young person's behaviour is influenced by family or school environment, the interaction is referred to as the mesosystem. Parental involvement in their child's school is one of the examples of mesosystem. The exosystem is the social context which influences the child indirectly through the microsystem. The macrosystem includes influences such as the child's cultural values, customs and laws. The chronosystem relates directly to the child. This may be through external events (for example, death of a family member), or internal events (for example, puberty). Both external and internal events unexpectedly have a direct impact on the microsystem and mesosystem and impact those systems indirectly through the macrosystem. Cyberbullying can be related to the chronosystem's indirect influence on a child's bullying experiences due to the recent increase in social networking sites and the affordability of text messaging.

Regarding bullying, Espelage (2014) suggests that schools staff members should partake in professional development opportunities. This includes understanding bullying, recognising bullying and support youth. Espelage (2014) also proposes that staff members and learners should work together to gain more knowledge and skills, prevent and reduce bullying and promote prosocial behaviour. Furthermore, parents should be involved and work with staff members to ensure their children's protection. Newsletters and emails should be used by the school to communicate incidences of bullying with parents. Partnerships with community agencies should be formed to address bullying to ensure that learners and parents know where they can seek help (Espelage, 2014). These proposals or suggestions could also be applied to cyberbullying.

The researcher found the SET useful for this study because it would help to establish if learners who are victims of cyberbullying seek help from the family, peers and schools regarding their victimisation. The theory would also be helpful as it would assist in finding out if schools intervene and interact with learners who experience cyberbullying. As schools communicate incidences of bullying with parents, this theory will find out if schools interact and communicate incidences of cyberbullying with learners' parents to ensure their children's safety.

### **3.3.2 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

Swearer, Wang, Berry and Myers (2014) state that Bandura's (1977, 1986) SCT is an efficient and expanded version of social learning theory (SLT). Swearer *et al.* (2014) agree with Bandura (1977) that people learn through direct instruction and by observing others' behaviour as well as the consequences that follow. Nabi and Clark (2008) also noted Bandura's (1986) SCT which proposed that people learn mainly through observation.

The basic principle of the SLT is similar to that of the SCT in that if the results of a certain behaviour are more rewarding, individuals are more likely to be involved in such behaviours (Swearer, *et al.*, 2014). However, if the results of a particular behaviour are more severe and less rewarding, individuals will abstain from participating in that behaviour (Swearer, *et al.*, 2014). The only difference between the two theories is that the SCT emphasises the role of cognitions to determine individuals' behaviours (Bandura, 1986).

The SCT identifies human functioning as an interaction of personal, behavioural and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). The theory suggests that personal factors such as cognitive, affective, biological and environmental factors such as peer support and stressful environment can influence the development of a person's behaviour. It also emphasises that there is a constant interaction between the social environment (for example, observing other people's behaviours), internal stimuli (for example, cognitions and feelings) and behaviours (Swearer, *et al.*, 2014).

Bandura (1986) also proposes that individuals' beliefs and how they deal with threatening situations influences how much stress and depression they feel in such situations. On one hand, there are people who believe they can control possible threats and therefore do not establish

thoughts that are horrible and upsetting in their minds. On the other hand, there are those individuals who believe that they cannot effectively deal with potential threats and as a result become extremely stressed and anxious.

Since the SCT has been applied to predict traditional bullying and aggressive behaviours, Swearer *et al.* (2014) believe that the theory can be related to the study of bullying, since individuals learn bullying through observational learning and reinforcement. With regard to cognitions, there is a possibility that positive consequences will influence the young people to bully others (Swearer *et al.*, 2014). Bauman and Yoon (2014) maintain that some individuals tend to make self-blaming attributions and believe that their mistakes are the cause of external events, whereas others may have a hostile attribution bias, that is, seeing others as being hostile towards them and as a result respond aggressively. According to Bauman and Yoon (2014), cognitive-behavioural programme components in the form of cognitive-behavioural therapy can be applied to help the young people recognise and correct their way of thinking.

Xiao and Wang's (2013) study is about cyberbullying behaviour among university students in Hong Kong. The study focuses on the social cognitive theory and its relationship to university students. It hypothesises that the empirical tests and effects of personal and environmental factors have a probability for university students to perform cyberbullying behavior. Results revealed that personal factors such as internet self-efficacy (people's judgement of their ability to accomplish tasks on internet), motivations (power, attention and acceptance as drivers of cyberbullying behaviour) and cyber-victimisation experiences, demographics (age and gender), and environmental factors strongly predict university students' cyberbullying behaviour.

Bandura (1986) maintained that the external environment contributes to the acquisition and continuation of aggression and other dangerous behaviours, and that the development of aggression and abnormal behavior are considered to be the outcome of being exposed to socially deviant role models and inappropriate reinforcement of maladaptive behaviours. A perpetrator may receive support from others and this reinforcement will more likely make him/her continue his/her bullying behavior (Espelage, Rao & Craven, 2013).

In addition, media can influence people's thoughts and aggressive behaviour. Zhou, Tang and Tian (2013) and Mark and Ratliffe (2011) found that people who spend more time using ICTs are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying. When using ICTs, individuals feel free and less

controlled and are encouraged to behave aggressively (Espelage *et al.*, (2013). The reinforcement that the individual gets may serve the same type of function in cyberspace. For example, being involved in cyberbullying on social media might also provide reinforcement for such behaviours by others liking a post (Espelage *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, in this study, media exposure, personal factors and environmental factors are three main categories that explain cyberbullying.

Swearer *et al.* (2014) noted that the SCT has been criticised as far as cognitions are concerned since there is evidence which suggests that young people who feel that the behaviours are unacceptable are less likely to engage in bullying behaviour.

The role of moral disengagement is one of the aspects that predicts traditional bullying and cyberbullying behaviours among the youth. Moral disengagement was introduced by Bandura (1986) in his social-cognitive theory of the moral self. Perren and Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger (2012) maintain that individual's moral standards are used in a self-regulatory process to assess whether to undertake the intended behaviour or not. This may involve guilt. If the individual anticipates guilt, the behaviour is not undertaken. Individuals, however, can perform behaviours that are against their moral standards without feeling guilty. Studies dealing with bullying behaviours have indicated that young people with higher levels of moral disengagement tend to be more involved in traditional bullying or cyberbullying or both, either as perpetrators or as victims (Bauman & Pero, 2011; Pornari & Wood, 2010). Pornari and Wood (2010) believe that the individuals may validate their violent behaviour by loosening their inner self-regulatory mechanisms which are guided by feelings of guilt and shame. Regarding moral disengagement, feelings of guilt and shame are not displayed, and this increases the likelihood of harmful behaviour. This is what happens with some adolescents who shamelessly hurt others online. Therefore, any efforts to stop cyberbullying behaviour in schools should consider individual differences in moral disengagement, and thus promote the skills and increase awareness, so that learners are more morally engaged with the victims of cyberbullying (Bauman, 2010).

Empathy is an essential characteristic of human behaviour which assists people to socialise and communicate their emotions and feelings more efficiently (Davis, 1983). Empathy is defined as the person's ability to recognise and understand the emotional states of other people in order to shape or change their behavioural reactions accordingly (Preston & de Waal, 2002).

Loudin, Loukas and Robinson (2003) state that empathy is a stable attribute that can be shaped by a person's character and affect different types of social behaviours. According to Jolliffe and Farrington (2006), low levels of empathy are strongly related to higher levels of aggression and bullying incidents in the school environment (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). In relation to cyberbullying, Ang and Goh (2010) revealed that adolescent males and females with lower empathy levels scored higher in cyberbullying behaviour. Ang and Goh (2010) therefore, proposed incorporating empathy training into the programme of teachers and policy makers interested in lessening cyberbullying incidents and behaviour.

This study therefore investigated from Grade 8 learners, LO Heads and LO teachers what the causes of cyberbullying are or why people bully others online. This information was obtained from learners' responses during lesson presentation and focus group interviews and from LO Heads' and LO teachers' utterances during semi-structured interviews. This study also sought to find out from LO Heads and LO teachers and learners what steps could be taken to ensure that learners are morally engaged and empathise with the victims of cyberbullying. The study further examined the strategies used by the schools to bring some awareness about the incidences of cyberbullying.

Both the SET and SCT are relevant to this study. The theories would assist the stakeholders involved in the education system to familiarise themselves about the importance of identifying learners affected by cyberbullying and provide the necessary support to the learners throughout their development. This would help enhance learners' self-esteem and boost their self-confidence for total development.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

The concepts of bullying, cyberbullying, adolescents, social media and social network have been defined and discussed as well as the SET and SCT and their relevance to the study. The SET emphasises that the development of an adolescent is shaped by a series of influential systems such as the family, peers and the general environment, and that learners, staff members in school, parents and the community should work together to reduce bullying and cyberbullying. The SCT stresses that personal factors and environmental factors can affect the individual's behavioural development. The theory has been applied to both traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

Cognitions concerning the likelihood of positive consequences may lead to young people bullying others. Adolescents who are morally disengaged are more likely to be involved in being bullied or bullying others. Therefore, empathy training should be introduced in schools in order to reduce cyberbullying incidences. The next chapter presents the methodology process that underpinned this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design and methodology that underpinned the process of data collection and analysis for this study. The chapter also describes the context in which the research study took place and criteria for participant selection. The instruments for data collection are described according to their purpose, and the ethical considerations and their association to the study are explained as well. Finally, validity and issues of trustworthiness as well as the limitations of the study are discussed in the chapter.

#### 4.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in two schools in the western part of Durban area, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. The names of the schools where the study was conducted are Sizakala<sup>1</sup> Girls' High School, a girls-only school, and Phumelele<sup>2</sup> Boys' High School, a boys-only school, both situated in one of the suburbs in the west of Durban. Both schools strive for excellence academically. LO is one of the subjects taught in the schools from Grade 8 to Grade 12. At Sizakala Girls' High School, five LO teachers teach the subject and at Phumelele Boys' High School, there are seven teachers teaching the subject. All LO teachers are dedicated and qualified in this field.

#### 4.3 ACCESSING AND SELECTING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In order for this study to take place, it was important to seek the assistance of the LO Heads in the two schools. Firstly, the researcher approached the receptionists and asked for appointments to meet the principals in order to ask for permission to conduct the study in their schools. The researcher explained the details of the study and the type of participants she needed for the study.

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym of the girls' high school

<sup>2</sup> Pseudonym of the boys' high school

Letters of request to undertake the study, accompanied by the consent forms were then issued to the principals for their approval and signatures This was at the beginning of April 2017.

After the principals had granted permission to conduct the study, the researcher then made appointments to see the LO Heads. Within a few days, the researcher received calls from the schools’ receptionists, indicating that the LO Heads at Sizakala High School and Phumelele High School had agreed to meet her on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 10<sup>th</sup> April respectively. On meeting the LO Heads, the researcher introduced herself and explained the reason why she came to see them. Then she explained the details of the study and the type of participants that she would need for the study. Furthermore, the researcher requested the LO Heads to participate in the study and to ask the LO teachers to take part as well. The researcher also asked to bring information sheets and consent letters for the parents of the learners to participate in the study as well as the participants’ information sheets and consent letters. The next meeting at Sizakala Girls’ High School was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2017, and the meeting at Phumelele Boys’ High School took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. At these meetings, the LO Heads suggested to give the parents’ and learners’ information sheets and consent letters to the participants during the LO lessons. The LO Heads also provided the researcher with the LO timetables and arranged dates for the researcher to conduct lessons on cyberbullying and administer questionnaires to all grade 8 learners. The following dates were set for the two schools under study:

**Table 4.1: Dates for Sizakala Girls’ High School**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Day and Time</b>      |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 16 May 2017 | Tuesday: 7h50 – 8h45     |
| 16 May 2017 | Tuesday: 13h45 – 14h35   |
| 17 May 2017 | Wednesday: 8h45 – 9h40   |
| 17 May 2017 | Wednesday: 11h30 – 12h25 |
| 17 May 2017 | Wednesday: 12h55 – 13h45 |
| 18 May 2017 | Thursday: 13h45 – 14h35  |
| 19 May 2017 | Friday: 12h25 – 13h20    |
| 29 May 2017 | Monday: 10h35 – 11h30    |

**Table 4.2: Dates for Phumelele Boys' High School**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Day and Time</b>      |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 22 May 2017 | Monday: 8h00 – 8h55      |
| 22 May 2017 | Monday: 8h55 – 9h50      |
| 22 May 2017 | Monday: 11h25 – 12h20    |
| 23 May 2017 | Tuesday: 8h55 – 9h50     |
| 23 May 2017 | Tuesday: 10h30 – 11h25   |
| 24 May 2017 | Wednesday: 13h40 – 14h35 |

The LO Heads suggested that the information sheets and consent letters should be given to the participants during LO lessons. They also reassured the researcher that they would ensure that the signed consent letters were returned by the learners to the school to be collected by her prior to the commencement of the lessons. The letters were available for collection from both schools on the second week of May.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

In this study, pragmatism, which relates to mixed methods research, represents both positivist and interpretivist paradigms. A positivist researcher, according to Aliyu, Bello, Kasim and Martin (2014), regards positivism as a research strategy and approach that is entrenched on the ontological principle and doctrine that truth and reality is free and independent of the viewer and observer. Furthermore, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007), cite Creswell (2003), who maintains that in quantitative research or positivism, the researcher collects information based on measures completed by the participants or observations recorded by the researcher. In this study, questionnaires have been used to collect data from learners. Being objective is a very essential aspect of competent inquiry. Positivism means that an individual begins with a theory, collects data that either supports or refutes the theory, and then makes necessary revisions before additional tests are conducted (Creswell, 2003).

With regard to qualitative research, an interpretivist believes that there is no world-wide and universal truth (Aliyu, *et al.*, 2014). An interpretivist understands, comprehends and interprets

from his or her own outline of orientation and reference (Aliyu, *et al.*, 2014). Johnson *et al.* (2007) stress that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work, and subjective meanings of the individuals' experiences are developed and directed towards certain objects or things. Researchers look for complexity of views rather than narrowing varied and multiple meanings into a few ideas. The goal of research, according to Johnson *et al.* (2007), is to rely on participants' views of the situation being studied. Questions which are open-ended become broad and general, and enable participants to create meaning of the situation to discussions or interactions with other persons, as well as enabling the researcher to listen carefully to what people say or do in their life settings (Johnson *et al.*, 2007).

In this study, the qualitative method makes use of epistemological assumptions guided by an interpretive paradigm characterized by a concern for the individual. This means that the study is subjective, that is, it is based on people's subjective experiences on how they construct the social world by sharing meaning. Interpretive researchers, therefore, begin with the individuals and set out to understand the interpretations of the world around them (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The study has used research tools such as, lessons on cyberbullying and interviews and has focused on the dynamics of cyberbullying in girls' and boy's secondary schools.

Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima and Haider (2011) argue that qualitative research is used to help understand how people feel and why they feel the way they do. In this study, emphasis has been on learners' cyberbullying experiences, how cyberbullying manifests itself, the causes of cyberbullying and strategies that schools, parents and learners can use to alleviate cyberbullying. The views of the LO Heads and LO teachers also helped to understand further how important their intervention and support are in mitigating cyberbullying among learners.

#### **4.5 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A mixed method research approach was used and a sequential data collection procedure, which involves collecting data in stages (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) was utilised. A mixed method research is associated with pragmatism which is considered as the best worldview. Its focus is on the outcomes of research and the importance of the questions asked, and the various methods used to collect data to inform the problems under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

## 4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design used for the study is a multiple instrumental case study design that employs mixed methods. According to Yin (2003), a multiple case study allows the researcher to investigate differences within and between cases. The purpose is to replicate findings across cases. It is therefore crucial that the researcher chooses the cases carefully in order to predict similar results (a literal replication) across cases or contrasting results (a theoretical replication) based on a theory (Yin, 2003).

A mixed method research is defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). This definition is similar to Ivankova, Creswell and Stick’s (2006) definition which considers mixed methods as a procedure for collecting, analysing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in order to gain a better understanding of the research problem. In this study, a research strategy employing more than one type of research method was applied, meaning that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to collect data within a single research project (Brannen, J. in Bergman, 2008).

The study as a whole covers two schools, which have been included in the same case study research. Each school is the subject of an individual case study (Yin, 2014, p. 56). The study has also followed a replication design, that is, questionnaires were administered to learners in both schools, to find out if the two schools have different or similar cyberbullying experiences. Focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews were also conducted to explore an in-depth understanding of learners’ use of social media and their cyberbullying experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out how LO teachers in two schools view learners’ experiences of cyberbullying and what steps are being taken by the schools to prevent cyberbullying.

Zainal (2007) maintains that a researcher using case study method closely examines the data within a specific context. He also states that in most cases, a small or a very limited number of individuals are selected as the subjects of the study. In this study, less than ten Grade 8 learners from each school were selected as participants in the focus group interviews.

Furthermore, Zainal (2007) mentions that case studies observe the data at the micro-level. This is not the case with the quantitative analysis, which observes the data at the macro-level based on the frequency of occurrence of the phenomena being studied.

Regarding the definition of case studies, Zainal (2007) referenced Stake's (1995) distinction between three types of case studies namely, intrinsic, instrumental and collective. The intrinsic case study is about examining the case for its own sake. The instrumental case study involves selecting a small group of participants in order for the researcher to study a certain behaviour. In this study, a small group of learners were selected from a boys' and girls' high schools to examine their cyberbullying experiences. The collective case study includes organising data from several different sources such as schools or individuals. In this study, data was collected from different sources such as questionnaires, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews and policy documents.

## **4.7 PARTICIPANTS**

### **4.7.1 Quantitative phase**

The LO Heads and LO teachers assisted the researcher with setting up for the presentation of lessons on cyberbullying to all Grade 8 learners. They also helped with assigning learners in each class into groups of no more than five for group presentations. The purpose of presenting lessons on cyberbullying was to find out if learners understood what cyberbullying is about, and if they had come across any incidences of cyberbullying in the past. Lessons and group presentations enabled learners to complete the questionnaires.

The researcher administered questionnaires relating to cyberbullying to three hundred and sixty-four learners. Three hundred and sixteen questionnaires were returned. This implies that the response rate for this study was 87%. Having more than 50% of response rate in a study helps to reduce chances of errors in accessing meaningful findings.

### **4.7.2 Qualitative phase**

Subsequent to lesson presentation and questionnaire administration, the LO Heads assisted the researcher with the selection of learners to participate in interviews during the second phase of the

study. The LO Heads were considered as ideal people to assist since they also teach LO. A purposive sampling technique was used, and according to Maree (2011), sampling in qualitative research means that a portion of the population is selected for the study. Cohen *et al.* (2011) state that purposive sampling is a technique that is used by the researcher in selecting the type of participants with certain qualities. In this case eight Grade 8 learners whose ages ranged from 13 to 15 were chosen from each school to provide an in-depth information about their cyberbullying experiences. The participants indicated in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 below have been given pseudonyms.

**Table 4. 3: Selection of Participants at Sizakala Girls’ High School**

| <b>Learners’ Names<sup>3</sup></b> |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Victims</b>                     |    |
| Nomso                              | 14 |
| Lisa                               | 13 |
| Phila                              | 13 |
| Helen                              | 14 |
| Zinhle                             | 15 |
| Verushka                           | 14 |
| Julie                              | 15 |
| Vinotha                            | 14 |
| <b>Perpetrators</b>                |    |
| Zinhle                             | 15 |
| Lisa                               | 13 |

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<sup>3</sup> The names used for learners in the girls’ school are pseudonyms

**Table 4.4: Selection of Participants at Phumelele Boys’ High School**

| <b>Learners’ Names<sup>4</sup></b> | <b>Age</b> |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Victims</b>                     |            |
| John                               | 15         |
| Duma                               | 14         |
| Rokham                             | 14         |
| Phindile                           | 13         |
| Phillip                            | 13         |
| Xola                               | 14         |
| Jack                               | 14         |
| Adam                               | 13         |
| <b>Perpetrator</b>                 |            |
| Duma                               | 14         |

The purpose of selecting eight learners in each school was to enable each participant to have sufficient time to talk in the group, hence in-depth descriptions and thick data, since all participants had a great deal to share about the topic under study based on their experiences. The participants were also chosen to represent only their schools and not all the schools in the area. Two LO Heads and six LO teachers were also requested to provide in-depth information about their views regarding cyberbullying.

#### **4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Maree (2011, p. 145) defines quantitative research as “a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied”. In Maree’s (2011) definition, the elements of objectivity or positivism, numerical data and generalisability are mentioned.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), quantitative research involves choosing a sample of individuals to represent a population in order for results to be generalised to a population. This

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<sup>4</sup> The names used for learners in the boys’ school are pseudonyms

includes selecting the population and then choosing a sample from the population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Qualitative research, according to Maree (2011), involves studying people in their natural settings, observing and working with them in their natural surroundings. Emphasis is on the quality and depth of information. Qualitative research is subjective, and this constructivist approach is concerned with the uniqueness of each particular situation (Maree, 2011).

#### **4.8.1 Quantitative data collection**

For quantitative data collection, this study employed the questionnaires. According to Zohrabi (2013), questionnaires are one of the research tools that can be used to collect data in any research undertaking. Therefore, researchers should ensure that they administer questionnaires that are valid, reliable, and unambiguous. Zohrabi (2013) also mentions three types of questionnaires, that is, closed-ended, open-ended, and questionnaires that consist of both open-ended and closed ended questions. He suggests that any questionnaire should include both closed-ended and open-ended questions in order to complement each other.

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) identify three types of questionnaires, that is, the mail survey, the group-administered questionnaire and the household drop-off survey. According to them, the mail survey is commonly used, however, the response rate is very low. Regarding the drop-off survey, the questionnaire is hand-delivered to a known household member and collected later. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) consider the group-administered questionnaire as an extremely convenient tool for data collection. They also gave an example from their own research whereby they collected data from students attending a lecture.

##### **4.8.1.1 Questionnaire administration**

In this study, questionnaires on cyberbullying (see Appendix 6) were administered to eight classes at Sizakala Girls' High School and six classes at Phumelele Boys' High School. This took place immediately after lesson presentation during the LO periods. Most of the questions asked were closed-ended statements where the respondents were given a chance to choose from the answers that the researcher had provided. There were sixteen open-ended questions (from item 21 to item 36) where participants were required to expand their answers in respect to the problem under study.

Closed-ended questions provided the researcher with quantitative or numerical data and open-ended questions presented the inquirer with qualitative or text information (Zohrabi, 2013). All the information that was collected from the questionnaire in the section comprising open-ended statements was analysed together with the interviews.

#### **4.8.2 Qualitative data collection**

Qualitative data collection consisted of lessons on cyberbullying, open-ended statements from questionnaires, focus group interviews (see Appendix 7) for learners as well as semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 8) for LO Heads and LO teachers. The purpose of having two types of interviews was to obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. The focus group interviews helped to probe more on what had come up from the learners' utterances. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to establish teachers' views on how victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying could be assisted in order to alleviate cyberbullying. All the questions were open-ended and the researcher's aim was for participants to provide information based on the key research questions (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

##### **4.8.2.1 Lessons on cyberbullying**

Lessons on cyberbullying were conducted by the researcher during LO periods in the presence of LO Heads or LO teachers. Both LO Heads and LO teachers were very welcoming. The LO Heads first helped to set up for the lessons and then introduced the researcher to the learners. The researcher explained the purpose of conducting lessons and the purpose of the study as indicated in the learner information sheet (see Appendix 5). Lessons were conducted to find out what the learners understood about cyberbullying and what their experiences were about cyberbullying. The information was useful in highlighting similarities or differences in how boys and girls experience cyberbullying. The lessons helped to find out if learners had had any incidences of cyberbullying inside and outside school and through what media. LO Heads ensured that in their absence, one of the LO teachers sat in class for the duration of the lesson. LO Heads and LO teachers also assisted the researcher with group work, that is, organising learners into groups and ensuring that chosen speakers make presentation of what had been taught. Eight lessons were presented at Sizakala Girls' High School and six lessons were conducted at Phumelele Boys' High

School. During the presentation of lessons, learners were asked questions and their responses were audio-recorded. Group presentations were also tape recorded.

#### **4.8.2.2 Focus Group Interviews**

Focus group interviews were adopted as another data collection method in this study. Zohrabi (2013) opines that interviews are one of the second main type of data to be collected in the mixed method design. He also believes that interviews can be conducted in two forms, that is, person to person and group or collective formats. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), focus groups are a form of group interview between the interviewer and the respondents and the interview relies on the interaction within the group who discusses the topic presented by the researcher. The group is expected to yield a collective rather than an individual view. The promotion of self-disclosure among the participants is very crucial (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2011) so that the researcher knows what people really think and feel. This makes participants' interaction with each other possible for their views to emerge and for the data to emerge from the interaction of the group.

Maree (2011) stresses that group interaction during the focus group interview can be valuable in spreading the variety of responses, stimulating details of experience that have been forgotten and discharging information that the participants may be unwilling to disclose. De Vos *et al.* (2011) also emphasise that focus group interviews are useful when multiple responses are required on a specific topic. Since focus group interviews involve learning and listening to people, lines of communication are created and this makes it possible for continual communication between the researcher and the participants and among the participants themselves (de Vos, *et al.*, 2011). Maree (2011) stresses that full participation among respondents should be encouraged and that probing should be used to ensure that discussions are properly managed and aspects clarified.

On the basis of their responses during lesson presentation, eight participants from each school were identified and approached for further participation. The LO Heads assisted in identifying learners to participate in the focus group interviews. LO Heads were allowed to sit in and observe, as it was hoped that if there were issues that require further attention, they would be able to address them during LO lessons.

The focus group interview at Phumelele Boys' High School took place in the LO Head's classroom on the 25th October 2017. At Sizakala Girls' High School, the focus group interview was held in the Counselling Room on the 30th October 2017. Since the researcher had already met the learners during the lesson presentations, there was no need to introduce herself anymore. However, the researcher explained the purpose of her second visit as indicated in the information sheet (see Appendix 5). Before the interviews started, the researcher first checked among the participants who were victims and/or perpetrators of cyberbullying. At Phumelele Boys' High School, all eight participants stated that they had experienced being bullied electronically in the past and one participant, Duma, indicated that he once cyberbullied someone in the past. At Sizakala Girls' High School, two participants, Zinhle and Lisa indicated that they were victims of cyberbullying who were once involved in bullying others online. The other six participants were victims of cyberbullying.

With regards to responding to interview questions, the researcher explained to the participants that she would require them to answer the questions to the best of their ability and to share their experiences and exchange ideas about their cyberbullying experiences. The questions asked were about the participants' understanding of bullying and how bullying is different from cyberbullying. Participants were also required to think of instances where they or their acquaintances were cyberbullied and what actually happened, how did that experience make them or their acquaintance feel, and what did they or their acquaintance do to avoid being cyberbullied again. In both schools, the three participants who indicated their involvement in cyberbullying others indicated that they felt uncomfortable to share their stories with the groups. The researcher decided to continue with the focus group interview sessions and conduct individual interviews with them immediately thereafter. During the focus group interviews, the participants were also required to share information as to why people cyberbully others. On the prevention of cyberbullying, participants were asked what they thought schools should do to prevent cyberbullying among learners and what parents should do to protect their children from being bullied online. The last question was about what steps learners should take to avoid being cyberbullied. The responses to the questions were audio recorded. The researcher also wrote some notes to assist with clarification where participants' answers were not clear. Each focus group interview session took about 40 minutes to complete. The researcher then summarised the responses in the presence of the participants to

find out if some information were omitted. Nobody wanted to add more information and the researcher thanked the participants for their time and for taking part in the focus group interviews.

After the groups had dispersed, the researcher arranged to hold one-on-one interviews with the perpetrators who had felt uncomfortable sharing their stories with the groups. Duma and Zinhle availed themselves for this session but Lisa had a change of mind and did not participate. Since this was unplanned, the same questions used during the focus group interview were posed to the individual learners. The responses of the participants were recorded on tape and each interview took about fifteen minutes. Having these one-on-one interviews was useful for understanding these learners' views and experiences of cyberbullying and, like focus group interview method, it involves an extensive knowledge and skill of the interviewer.

According to de Vos *et al.* (2011), one-on-one interviews enable the researcher to follow up particular interesting avenues that arise in the interview and the participant is able to give a fuller picture. Cohen *et al.* (2011) state that individual or one-on-one interview may be valuable with children. They cite Eder and Fingerson's (2003) report that one-on-one interviews about sensitive issues like relationships, family, body issues, sexuality and love may be valuable with adolescents.

#### **4.8.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with LO Heads and LO teachers in both schools. A set of pre-determined questions were asked, and these were based on the critical research questions. A semi-structured interview, according to Maree (2011), does not take long although the researcher is allowed to probe and explore new emerging lines of inquiry. The expected responses from the teachers were mainly about their views about learners' cyberbullying incidences and what steps are taken to prevent cyberbullying among the youth. The responses of the participants were audio recorded and notes were taken.

The semi-structured interviews at Sizakala Girls' High School were conducted in the LO Counselling Room on the 30th October 2017. The LO Head and two LO teachers were interviewed. At Phumelele Boys' High School, the semi-structured interview with the LO Head took place in his office on the 25th October 2017. Interviews with the four LO teachers were conducted in the LO classroom on the 3rd of November 2017. The responses given were recorded on tape and notes were taken. Probing was used to ensure that all answers were written down and

clear on tape. The duration of the interviews varied depending on the responses given by each teacher. However, interviews took no more than twenty minutes to answer eight questions. The researcher thanked the participants for their time and for participating in the interviews. She also thanked the LO Heads for organising the interviews with the learners and the LO teachers and promised to share the final report with the school after everything had been finalised.

## **4.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.9.1 Quantitative data analysis**

In Chapter 5, statistical analysis has been employed to assist with quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics in the form of tables and figures have been used. Inferential statistics consisting of chi-square tests has been utilised to determine whether there is a significant association between the two variables or not. The interpretation of the chi-square test results depends mainly on the probability value (p-value). A chi-square test is deemed to be significant if the p-value is less than 5% ( $<0.05$ ), that is, if we were testing at the 5% significance level. All tests in this study were at the 5% level of significance.

### **4.9.2 Qualitative data analysis**

Thematic approach has been adopted in this study to analyse the qualitative data. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017, p. 2) cite Braun and Clarke (2006) who explain thematic analysis as “a qualitative research method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing and reporting themes found within a data set”. Nowell *et al* (2017, p. 2) also noted the following advantages of thematic analysis mentioned by Braun and Clarke (2006) that:

Thematic analysis is useful for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences and generating unanticipated insights.

Thematic analysis is useful for summarizing key features of a large set of data. It forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handling data, helping to produce a clear and organized final report.

In this study, similar responses were coded under well thought and relevant themes for meaningful data analysis and identification as well as discussion of findings. The exercise of coding the similar

responses led to three themes and twenty sub-themes. The account of themes is discussed in Chapter 6.

#### **4.10 ETHICAL MEASURES**

Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008) believe that ethics is very crucial for conducting effective and meaningful research and that each researcher must be responsible for ethical issues when conducting research. As researchers are expected to engage in systematic inquiry, they should take into consideration the safety of participants and ensure that they have obtained their consent and cooperation (Drew *et al.*, 2008). Cohen *et al.*, (2011) also emphasise the necessity of obtaining the consent of participants to assist in research and of significant others in institutions or organisations to provide the research facilities. Obtaining consent is considered very crucial if the respondents/participants are going to experience stress, pain or invasion of privacy. In this study, participants' consents and cooperation were obtained.

Firstly, the researcher sought permission from the DoE to conduct research at the two schools of her choice. As soon as permission was granted (see Appendix 1), the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the institution where she is registered in order to conduct research on a selected topic. As soon as the research was granted full approval by the Ethics Committee (see Appendix 2), the researcher approached the principals of the schools where the research was to be conducted to seek permission in order to undertake research. Information letters explaining what the research is about and signed by the researcher, the researcher's supervisor, as well as the HSSREC Research Officer were presented for the principals' approval (see Appendix 3). Attached to the information sheets were consent forms requiring the principals' signatures and the school stamps. After being granted permission by the principals, the researcher arranged with the LO Heads regarding Phase 1 and Phase 2 of data collection. Phase 1 involved lesson presentations and questionnaire administration during LO periods. Phase 2 entailed interviewing participants on the days and times that would be convenient, and which would not interfere with the smooth running of the school.

Learners at high school are still minors. Therefore, information letters explaining the purpose of the research, and consent forms requesting parents to allow their children to take part in the study were given to the learners (see Appendices 4). This was done with the help of LO Heads. Learners were to take the information letters and consent forms home to their parents and return them later

with the parents' signatures. The participants were also given information sheets and consent forms to sign (see Appendix 5). It was made clear to them that participation was voluntary, and that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained at all times. It was also indicated that the participants' names would not be mentioned in the study. Instead, pseudonyms would be used. Also, the names of the schools would not be revealed. As earlier stated, none of the participants' real names was mentioned in this study, instead pseudonyms were used.

#### **4.11 VALIDITY AND RIGOUR**

Underpinned by an explanatory design, this study has enhanced validity by building the qualitative phase upon the quantitative phase. Data that were collected through quantitative method have yielded objective and accurate information, since they were collected using standardised method and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Data collected through qualitative method have ensured that there is richness and complexity of human behavior.

Trustworthiness is very important in qualitative research. The four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, as suggested by Guba (1981), have been considered in this study. Before embarking on the research, the researcher firstly familiarised herself with the schools via consultations with appropriate documents, one of which is the Code of Conduct of the schools, and through the preliminary visits to the schools. This enabled the researcher to gain an adequate understanding of the schools and to establish a relationship of trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As far as transferability is concerned, the researcher ensured that the results of the study can be applied to a wider population. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the investigator should ensure that the background information and the fieldwork sites are provided in order to make it easy for the reader to make such a transfer. They also stress how close credibility and dependability are to one another and that in practice the two criteria can be used for focus group interview. However, since this study used the mixed methods research, lessons and questionnaires were utilised as research tools during the quantitative phase. Focus group interview and semi-structured interviews were conducted during the qualitative phase. The concept of confirmability was as well applied in this study. This means that the findings were considered as the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). More than one method was used to study the same phenomenon, and

this strengthened the validity of the results. This triangulation is the main advantage of the mixed-method approach and it ensured the trustworthiness of this study. Triangulation in this study included the presentation of lessons on cyberbullying, questionnaire administration, interviews and going through the schools' policy documents regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying.

#### **4.12 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

One of the limitations is that the study is not representative of all South African schools as well as all racial groups in South Africa. To address this limitation the researcher sampled two schools consisting of four racial groups for purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the study.

The time factor was another limitation. The time allocated for data collection was insufficient because this was done during LO periods and learners had other lessons to attend. However, all the respondents were contacted within the limited timeframe. This means that the researcher successfully utilised the time allocated to generate sufficient data for the study.

Another limitation was lack of openness. During lesson presentation, some learners mentioned that they were bullied online, but they did not open up and tell the truth about what actually happened to them regarding cyberbullying. Group discussions and group presentations helped to address this limitation, as learners were able to discuss their experiences in groups.

Furthermore, the presence of the researcher, the LO Heads and LO teachers during data gathering is unavoidable since the learners are minors. Therefore, this can affect the participants' responses. However, the researcher tried to engage the learners and probe more for answers to the questions asked during lesson presentations and interviews.

#### **4.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the methodological orientation that underpinned this present study. Underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, the mixed method research approach and case study design, this chapter has discussed in detail the stages and processes involved in collecting and analysing data for this study. It has also discussed the context of the study together with the criteria for selecting the study participants. The ethical considerations, validity and rigour and limitations of the study were also discussed in this chapter. The next two chapters deal with data analysis.

Chapter 5 examines quantitative data analysis and chapter 6 discusses qualitative data analysis in the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the findings drawn from data gathered from the questionnaires administered to Grade 8 learners in the schools under study. Data is analysed based on the learners' bullying experiences. This means that the questionnaire was designed to respond only to the first research question, that is, "How do boys and girls experience cyberbullying?" In respect of the qualitative data analysis, all four research questions are covered and are analysed using the thematic approach.

Before analysing boys' and girls' cyberbullying experiences, it is important to first present the demographic profile of the research participants; distribution of participants by age, gender and race; cell phone usage and access to the internet; usage of the internet/SMS's; internet links; and effects of gender on direct and indirect bullying.

#### **5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

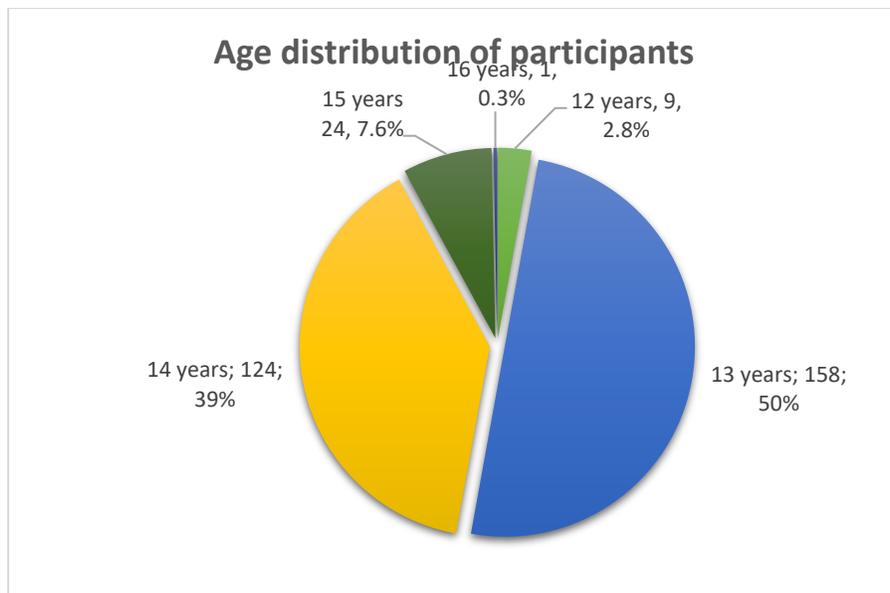
The demographic profile of the research participants is as given in Table 5.1 below. The majority of the participants were in the 13-year old category (50%), with the 14-year olds making the second largest (39.2%). Females dominated the research sample (60.1%), with the males making up 39.9%. The majority were Africans (83.9%), while the Coloureds were 9.8%, the Indians were 3.8%, and the Whites and other racial groups made up up 1.3%. In short, the study was dominated by African females between 13 and 14 years of age.

**Table 5.1 Demographic profile of research participants**

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Age                  | 12 years | 9         | 2.8%       |
|                      | 13 years | 158       | 50.0%      |
|                      | 14 years | 124       | 39.2%      |
|                      | 15 years | 24        | 7.6%       |
|                      | 16 years | 1         | 0.3%       |
| Gender               | Female   | 190       | 60.1%      |
|                      | Male     | 126       | 39.9%      |
| Race                 | African  | 265       | 83.9%      |
|                      | Coloured | 31        | 9.8%       |
|                      | Indian   | 12        | 3.8%       |
|                      | White    | 4         | 1.3%       |
|                      | Other    | 4         | 1.3%       |

**5.2.1 Distribution of participants by age, gender and race**

The age distribution of the research participants is shown in Figure 5.1 below. There is only one participant aged 16 and this individual is combined with those in the 15 years age group.



**Figure 5.1. Age distribution of participants**

It is crucial to note that gender distribution is displayed in Figure 5.2 below. There are 60.1% of females and 40% males. It is evident that females outweighed males in this research. This implies that females were dominant in this study.

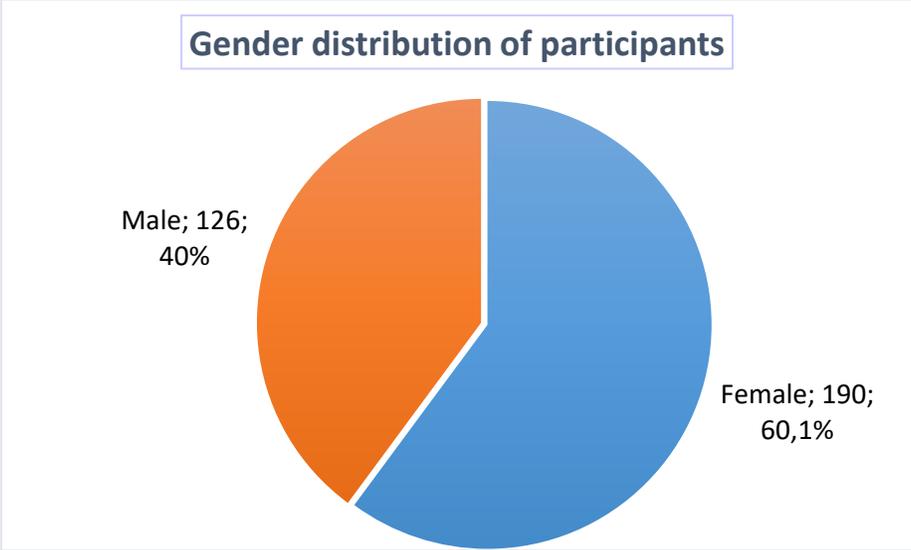


Figure 5.2. Gender distribution of participants

Figure 5.3 below shows the race distribution of respondents. It is reflected that there were 84% Africans, 10% Coloureds, 12.4% were Indians, 4.1% consisted of Whites, and others formed the remaining 4.1%.

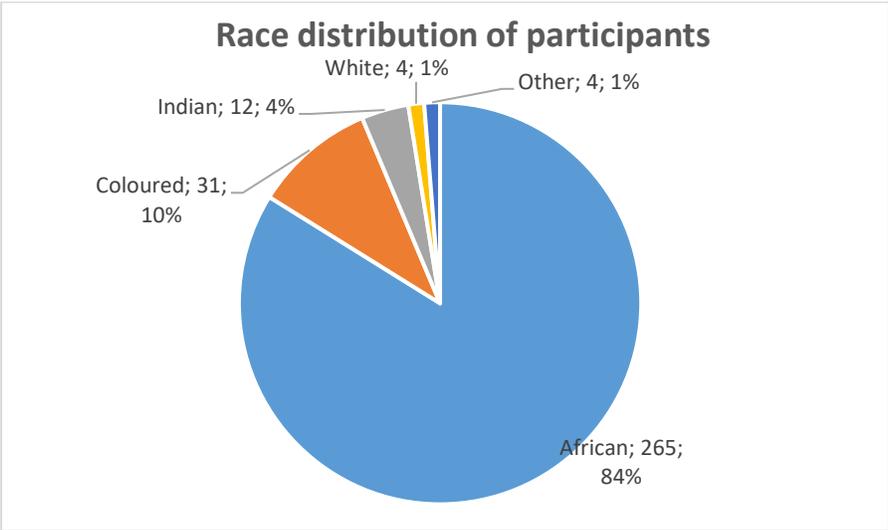


Figure 5.3. Race distribution of participants

### 5.3 CELL PHONE USAGE AND ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

The results presented in the following sections outline the access and usage of the internet through computers and cell phones. The results presented in Table 5.2 show that most of the respondents owned a cell phone (85.8%) with 40.5% indicating that they have computers linked to the internet in their homes and 24.1% actually having computers linked to the internet in their rooms and 32.3% having such connections in the living room. The results also show that 67.1% have access to the internet outside their home.

**Table 5.2: Cell phone usage and access to the internet**

| Cell phone usage and access to the internet                        | Yes | No  | % Yes |
|--|-----|-----|-------|
| Q4. Do you have a cell phone                                       | 271 | 45  | 85.8% |
| Q5. Do you have any computers linked to the internet in your home? | 128 | 188 | 40.5% |
| Q5a. I have a computer linked to the internet in my room.          | 76  | 240 | 24.1% |
| Q5b. I have a computer linked to the internet in the living room.  | 102 | 214 | 32.3% |
| Q6. Do you have access to the internet outside your home?          | 212 | 104 | 67.1% |

#### 5.3.1 Cell phone usage and access to the internet by age

Since there was only one research participant who was 16 years old, the 15 and 16 year age groups were combined. The results in Table 5.3 show that age is not a significant factor in the ownership of a cell phone (Chi-square=3.450, df=3, p-value=0.327). For all the questions that address internet connection in various locations, age was also found not to have any significant effect (all p-values>0.05).

**Table 5.3: Cell phone usage and access to the internet by age**

| Cell phone usage and internet access                               |                           | Age (years)  |              |              |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                           | 12           | 13           | 14           | 15&16        | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q4. Do you have a cellphone  | No                        | 1            | 27           | 16           | 1            | 3.450            | 3  | 0.327   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 8            | 131          | 108          | 23           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>88.9%</b> | <b>82.9%</b> | <b>87.1%</b> | <b>80.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5. Do you have any computers linked to the internet in your home? | No                        | 3            | 90           | 77           | 18           | 4.947            | 3  | 0.176   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 6            | 68           | 47           | 7            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>66.7%</b> | <b>43.0%</b> | <b>37.9%</b> | <b>28.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5a. I have a computer linked to the internet in my room.          | No                        | 7            | 118          | 96           | 19           | 0.302            | 3  | 0.960   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 2            | 40           | 28           | 6            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>22.2%</b> | <b>25.3%</b> | <b>22.6%</b> | <b>24.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5b. I have a computer linked to the internet in the living room.  | No                        | 7            | 114          | 76           | 17           | 4.182            | 3  | 0.242   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 2            | 44           | 48           | 8            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>22.2%</b> | <b>27.8%</b> | <b>38.7%</b> | <b>32.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q6. Do you have access to the internet outside your home?          | No                        | 5            | 53           | 34           | 12           | 6.390            | 3  | 0.094   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 4            | 105          | 90           | 13           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>44.4%</b> | <b>66.5%</b> | <b>72.6%</b> | <b>52.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.3.2 Cell phone usage and access to the internet by gender

The results in Table 5.4 show that gender is not a significant factor in the ownership of a cell phone (Chi-square=0.096, df=1, p-value=0.757). The results also show that gender has no effect on whether one has a computer linked to the internet in their home (Chi-square=1.390, df=1, p-value=0.238). However, the results indicate that having a computer linked to the internet in one's own room significantly depends on gender (Chi-square=5.465, df=1, p-value=0.019). The results show that a significantly higher percentage of males (31.0%) have computers linked to the internet in their own rooms when compared to the females (19.5%). Table 5.4 also indicates that a high percentage of both males and females own a cell phone and a high percentage of both males and females have access to the internet outside their homes.

**Table 5.4: Cell phone usage and access to the internet by gender**

| Cell phone usage and internet access                              |                        | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|---|------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|   |                        | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq           | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q4. Do you have a cell phone                                      | No                     | 28           | 17           | 0.096            | 1  | 0.757   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                    | 162          | 109          |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>85.3%</b> | <b>86.5%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5. Do you have a computer linked to the internet in your home?   | No                     | 108          | 80           | 1.390            | 1  | 0.238   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                    | 82           | 46           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>43.2%</b> | <b>36.5%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q.5a. I have a computer linked to the internet in my room.        | No                     | 153          | 87           | 5.465            | 1  | 0.019   | Significant     |
|   | Yes                    | 37           | 39           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>19.5%</b> | <b>31.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5b. I have a computer linked to the internet in the living room. | No                     | 133          | 81           | 1.132            | 1  | 0.287   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                    | 57           | 45           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>30.0%</b> | <b>35.7%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q6. Do you have access to the internet outside your home?         | No                     | 69           | 35           | 2.501            | 1  | 0.114   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                    | 121          | 91           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>63.7%</b> | <b>72.2%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.3.3 Cell phone usage and access to the internet by race

Results in Table 5.1 show that most of the research participants were Africans (265) with all other racial groups contributing only 51 participants. This necessitated the combining of other racial groups into just one group (others) with the Africans forming their own group. The results in Table 5.5 show that race is not a significant factor affecting cell phone usage and internet access (all p-values > 0.05).

**Table 5.5: Cell phone usage and access to the internet by race**

| Cell phone usage and internet access                              |                     | Race    |        | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|---|---------------------|---------|--------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|   |                     | African | Others | Chi-sq           | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q4. Do you have a cellphone                                       | No                  | 38      | 7      | 0.013            | 1  | 0.909   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                 | 227     | 44     |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | % Yes in race group | 85.7%   | 86.3%  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5. Do you have a computer linked to the internet in your home?   | No                  | 153     | 35     | 2.105            | 1  | 0.147   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                 | 112     | 16     |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | % Yes in race group | 42.3%   | 31.4%  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5a. I have a computer linked to the internet in my room.         | No                  | 205     | 35     | 1.785            | 1  | 0.182   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                 | 60      | 16     |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | % Yes in race group | 22.6%   | 31.4%  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q5b. I have a computer linked to the internet in the living room. | No                  | 182     | 32     | 0.689            | 1  | 0.407   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                 | 83      | 19     |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | % Yes in race group | 31.3%   | 37.3%  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q6. Do you have access to the internet outside your home?         | No                  | 85      | 19     | 0.520            | 1  | 0.471   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                 | 180     | 32     |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | % Yes in race group | 67.9%   | 62.7%  |                  |    |         |                 |

#### 5.4 USAGE OF THE INTERNET/SMS'S

The results in Table 5.6 show that most of the respondents use the internet for Homework or research (82.6%). The results also indicate that 66.1% use the internet for social media. Only 5.1% use the internet for email.

**Table 5.6: Usage of the internet/SMS's**

| Usage of the internet/SMS's                            | Yes | No  | % Yes |
|--|-----|-----|-------|
| Q8a. Do you use the internet for Homework or research? | 261 | 55  | 82.6% |
| Q8b. Do you use the internet for Email?                | 16  | 300 | 5.1%  |
| Q8c. Do you use the internet for Social Media?         | 209 | 107 | 66.1% |
| Q9. Do you send SMS's to others?                       | 24  | 292 | 7.6%  |
| Q10. Do you receive SMS's from others?                 | 153 | 163 | 48.4% |

### 5.4.1 Usage of the internet/SMS's by age

The results in Table 5.7 show that age only has an effect on whether one receives SMS's from others (Chi-square=14.466, df=3, p-value=0.002). The 12-year (66.7%) and the 14-year (60.5%) age groups have higher SMS receipt rates than the 13-year (39.2%) and 15 and 16-year (40.0%) age groups.

**Table 5.7: Usage of the internet/SMS's by age**

| Usage of the internet/SMS's                            |                           | Age          |              |              |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                           | 12           | 13           | 14           | 15&16        | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q8a. Do you use the internet for Homework or research? | No                        | 2            | 25           | 23           | 5            | 0.650            | 3  | 0.885   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 7            | 133          | 101          | 20           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>77.8%</b> | <b>84.2%</b> | <b>81.5%</b> | <b>80.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8b. Do you use the internet for Email?                | No                        | 8            | 152          | 117          | 23           | 1.747            | 3  | 0.626   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 1            | 6            | 7            | 2            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>11.1%</b> | <b>3.8%</b>  | <b>5.6%</b>  | <b>8.0%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8c. Do you use the internet for Social Media?         | No                        | 3            | 54           | 42           | 8            | 0.047            | 3  | 0.997   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 6            | 104          | 82           | 17           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in age group</b> | <b>66.7%</b> | <b>65.8%</b> | <b>66.1%</b> | <b>68.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q9. Do you send SMS's to others?                       | No                        | 8            | 150          | 112          | 22           | 3.059            | 3  | 0.383   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                       | 1            | 8            | 12           | 3            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b>              | <b>11.1%</b> | <b>5.1%</b>  | <b>9.7%</b>  | <b>12.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q10. Do you receive SMS's from others?                 | No                        | 3            | 96           | 49           | 15           | 14.466           | 3  | 0.002   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                       | 6            | 62           | 75           | 10           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b>              | <b>66.7%</b> | <b>39.2%</b> | <b>60.5%</b> | <b>40.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.4.2 Usage of the internet/SMS's by gender

The results in Table 5.8 show that gender significantly affects whether one sends SMS's to others or not (Chi-square=7.777, df=1, p-value=0.005). Boys have a significantly higher percentage of those who send SMS's to others (12.7%) compared to girls (4.2%).

**Table 5.8: Usage of the internet/SMS's by gender**

| Usage of the internet/SMS's                            |              | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |              | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q8a. Do you use the internet for Homework or research? | No           | 31           | 24           | 0.393            | 1  | 0.531   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 159          | 102          |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>83.7%</b> | <b>81.0%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8b. Do you use the internet for Email?                | No           | 184          | 116          | 3.599            | 1  | 0.058   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 6            | 10           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>3.2%</b>  | <b>7.9%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8c. Do you use the internet for Social Media?         | No           | 72           | 35           | 3.462            | 1  | 0.063   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 118          | 91           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>62.1%</b> | <b>72.2%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q9. Do you send SMS's to others?                       | No           | 182          | 110          | 7.777            | 1  | 0.005   | Significant     |
|  | Yes          | 8            | 16           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>4.2%</b>  | <b>12.7%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q10. Do you receive SMS's from others?                 | No           | 99           | 64           | 0.052            | 1  | 0.819   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 91           | 62           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>47.9%</b> | <b>49.2%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.4.3 Usage of the internet/SMS's by race

The results in Table 5.9 show that race is not a significant factor affecting usage of the internet/SMS's (all p-values>0.05)

**Table 5.9: Usage of the internet/SMS's by race**

| Usage of the internet/SMS's                            |              | Race         |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |              | African      | Others       | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q8a. Do you use the internet for Homework or research? | No           | 44           | 11           | 0.733            | 1  | 0.392   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 221          | 40           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>83.4%</b> | <b>78.4%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8b. Do you use the internet for Email?                | No           | 251          | 49           | 0.165            | 1  | 0.685   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 14           | 2            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>5.3%</b>  | <b>3.9%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q8c. Do you use the internet for Social Media?         | No           | 92           | 15           | 0.538            | 1  | 0.463   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 173          | 36           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>65.3%</b> | <b>70.6%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q9. Do you send SMS's to others?                       | No           | 244          | 48           | 0.254            | 1  | 0.614   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 21           | 3            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>7.9%</b>  | <b>5.9%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q10. Do you receive SMS's from others?                 | No           | 135          | 28           | 0.268            | 1  | 0.604   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes          | 130          | 23           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes</b> | <b>49.1%</b> | <b>45.1%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |

## 5.5 INTERNET LINKS

The results in Table 5.10 show that most of the respondents indicated their parents' bedroom (27.5%) as another alternative location for computer links to the internet. A high percentage of respondents (61.8%) indicated the library as the place where they have access to the internet.

**Table 5.10: Internet links and location**

| Access to the Internet   | Category                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Q5c. I have any computers linked to the internet elsewhere.</b>     | Brother/sister/uncle's room | 3         | 7.5%       |
|  | Cell phone                  | 6         | 15.0%      |
|  | Garage/spare room           | 5         | 12.5%      |
|  | Laptop                      | 5         | 12.5%      |
|  | Parents' bedroom            | 11        | 27.5%      |
|  | Parents' office             | 3         | 7.5%       |
|  | Study                       | 7         | 17.5%      |
| <b>Q6a. Where do you have access to the internet outside your home</b> | Cell phone                  | 21        | 9.9%       |
|  | Library                     | 131       | 61.8%      |
|  | Friend's or Family's place  | 27        | 12.7%      |
|  | Internet café               | 16        | 7.5%       |
|  | Parent's work               | 5         | 2.4%       |
|  | wifi hotspots               | 12        | 5.7%       |
| <b>Q7. How often do you use the internet?</b>                          | Never                       | 3         | 0.9%       |
|  | Rarely                      | 93        | 29.4%      |
|  | 1-3 times a week            | 60        | 19.0%      |
|  | 4-6 times a week            | 21        | 6.6%       |
|  | Almost everyday             | 85        | 26.9%      |
|  | Everyday                    | 54        | 17.1%      |

## 5.6 EFFECTS OF GENDER ON EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING

This section outlines the general prevalent forms of bullying and inferences on how gender influences these experiences. Bullying is split into two categories, that is, direct bullying (questions 11-15) and indirect bullying (questions 16-20). Cyberbullying category (questions 21-35) is analysed in section 5.8 below

### 5.6.1 Direct bullying

Direct bullying is considered and analysed in this section under incidence, feelings and reaction.

#### 5.6.1.1 Incidence of direct bullying

The results in Table 5.11 show that the percentages of those who have been directly bullied are not significantly different between males and females (Chi-square=0.102, df=1, p-value=0.750). However, the frequency of bullying is significantly different between males and females (Chi-square=9.411, df=3, p-value=0.024). On those who were bullied for several times a week or more, females had a higher percentage (21.7%) compared to males (9.5%).

**Table 5.11: Incidence of direct bullying (victim)**

| Incidence of Bullying (victim)                   |                              | Gender        |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                              | Female        | Male         | Ch-Squ           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q11. Have you ever been directly bullied before? | No                           | 75            | 52           | 0.102            | 1  | 0.750   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                          | 115           | 74           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b>       | <b>60.5%</b>  | <b>58.7%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q11a. How often have you been directly bullied?  | Once or twice                | 64<br>(55.7%) | 46 (62.2%)   | 9.411            | 3  | 0.024   | Significant     |
|  | Once a week                  | 5<br>(4.3%)   | 10 (13.5%)   |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Several times a week or more | 25<br>(21.7%) | 7<br>(9.5%)  |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Two or three times a month   | 21<br>(18.3%) | 11 (14.9%)   |                  |    |         |                 |

The results in Table 5.12 show that the percentages of those who have directly bullied others (perpetrators) are significantly different between males and females (Chi-square=27.667, df=1, p-value<0.001). Males, with 53.2%, have a significantly higher percentage of bullying others than females (24.2%). However, the frequency of bullying is not significantly different between males and females (Chi-square=1.433, df=3, p-value=0.698).

**Table 5.12: Incidence of direct bullying (perpetrator)**

| Incidence of Bullying (perpetrator)   |                              | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|   |                              | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq           | Df | P-value | Comment         |
| Q13. Have you directly bullied someone in the past?                             | No                           | 144          | 59           | 27.667           | 1  | <0.001  | Significant     |
|   | Yes                          | 46           | 67           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b>       | <b>24.2%</b> | <b>53.2%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q13a. Have you directly bullied someone in the past, how often did this happen? | Once or twice                | 26           | 40           | 1.433            | 3  | 0.698   | Not Significant |
|   | Once a week                  | 7            | 8            |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Several times a week or more | 8            | 8            |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Two or three times a month   | 5            | 11           |                  |    |         |                 |

Table 5.13 presents the results for the incidence of direct bullying where the respondent is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, that is, the respondent was just a bystander. The results show that there are no significant differences between males and females on whether they have seen anyone else being bullied (Chi-square=0.551, df=1, p-value=0.458). The percentages of those who witness bullying are high and not significantly different for males (89.7%) and females (92.1%).

**Table 5.13: Incidence of direct bullying (bystander)**

| Incidence of Bullying (Others)   |                              | Sex          |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                              | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq           | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q14. Have you seen or heard of anyone else being bullied in the past?            | No                           | 15           | 13           | 0.551            | 1  | 0.458   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                          | 175          | 113          |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b>       | <b>92.1%</b> | <b>89.7%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q14a. How often have you seen or heard of anyone else being bullied in the past? | Once or twice                | 44           | 38           | 3.784            | 3  | 0.286   | Not Significant |
|  | Once a week                  | 17           | 9            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Several times a week or more | 93           | 49           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Two or three times a month   | 21           | 17           |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.6.1.2 Feelings of direct bullying

Table 5.14 presents an analysis of the feelings of direct bullying. The results show that most of the

feelings caused by direct bullying are not significantly different between males and females ( $p$ -values $>0.05$ ), except for those feeling lonely (Chi-square=4.811,  $df=1$ ,  $p$ -value=0.028). A significantly higher percentage of females (13.2%) feel lonely when compared to males (only 5.6%).

**Table 5.14: Feelings of direct bullying**

| Feelings of direct bullying<br>How did you feel when someone directly bullied you? |                        | Gender       |              |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                        | Female       | Male         | % Yes (both) | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q12a. I have not been bullied before   | No                     | 115          | 73           | 40.5%        | 0.211            | 1  | 0.646   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 75           | 53           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>39.5%</b> | <b>42.1%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12b. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel embarrassed?                 | No                     | 140          | 95           | 25.4%        | 0.070            | 1  | 0.792   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 49           | 31           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>25.9%</b> | <b>24.6%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12c. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Worried?                     | No                     | 176          | 111          | 9.2%         | 1.870            | 1  | 0.171   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 14           | 15           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>7.4%</b>  | <b>11.9%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12d. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Upset?                       | No                     | 139          | 98           | 25.0%        | 0.862            | 1  | 0.353   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 51           | 28           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>26.8%</b> | <b>22.2%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12e. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Afraid?                      | No                     | 155          | 103          | 18.4%        | 0.001            | 1  | 0.970   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 35           | 23           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>18.4%</b> | <b>18.3%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12f. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Lonely?                      | No                     | 165          | 119          | 10.1%        | 4.811            | 1  | 0.028   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 25           | 7            |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>13.2%</b> | <b>5.6%</b>  |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12g. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Depressed?                   | No                     | 161          | 113          | 13.3%        | 1.608            | 1  | 0.205   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 29           | 13           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>15.3%</b> | <b>10.3%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12h. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Stressed?                    | No                     | 163          | 113          | 12.7%        | 1.039            | 1  | 0.308   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 27           | 13           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>14.2%</b> | <b>10.3%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q12i. When someone directly bullied you, did you feel Anger?                       | No                     | 111          | 77           | 40.6%        | 0.227            | 1  | 0.633   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 79           | 49           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>41.6%</b> | <b>38.9%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |

The most common feeling of direct bullying for both males and females is the feeling of anger (40.6%) followed by embarrassment (25.4%), feeling upset (25.1%), feeling afraid (18.4%), feeling depressed (13.3%), feeling stressed (12.7%), feeling lonely (10.2%) and lastly feeling worried (9.2%). These feelings may have an impact on the learners' academic performance, health and self-esteem. Junoven and Gross (2008) mentioned that physical and emotional bullying intimidation may cause mental health problems to the youth. Hinduja and Patchin (2011) pointed out that victims of bullying and cyberbullying may experience psychological harms such as depression, sadness, anger and frustration which may lead to the victim to have suicidal thoughts or develop low self-esteem, delinquent behavior and violence.

### 5.6.1.3 Reactions to someone being bullied directly

As far as reactions to someone being bullied is concerned, the results presented in Table 5.15 show that gender significantly affects whether one completely ignored the bullying or not (Chi-square=3.965, df=1, p-value=0.046), with the males being more inclined to ignore the bullying (19.0%) than the females (11.1%). The results also show that gender significantly affects whether one tried to stop the bully or not (Chi-square=5.255, df=1, p-value=0.022), with the males being more inclined to stop the bully (39.7%) than the females (27.4%). Gender also significantly affects whether one comforted the person being bullied or not (Chi-square=5.426, df=1, p-value=0.020), with the females being more compassionate (32.6%) than the males (20.6%). Females are also significantly more likely to tell an adult about the bullying than males (Chi-square=6.569, df=1, p-value=0.010). About 32.1% of the females indicated that they told an adult about the bullying as compared to 19.0% males who did the same.

**Table 5.15: Reactions to someone being bullied directly**

| When I saw or heard about someone being bullied in the past -  |                        | Gender       |              |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                        | Female       | Male         | % Yes (both) | Chi-sq           | df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q15a. I have not seen or heard of any bullying in the past?    | No                     | 175          | 113          | <b>8.9%</b>  | 0.551            | 1  | 0.458   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 15           | 13           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>7.9%</b>  | <b>10.3%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15b. I completely ignored the bullying.                       | No                     | 169          | 102          | <b>14.2%</b> | 3.965            | 1  | 0.046   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 21           | 24           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>11.1%</b> | <b>19.0%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15c. I tried to get a friend to help the person being bullied | No                     | 139          | 96           | <b>25.6%</b> | 0.365            | 1  | 0.545   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 51           | 30           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>26.8%</b> | <b>23.8%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15d. I tried to stop the bully                                | No                     | 138          | 76           | <b>32.3%</b> | 5.255            | 1  | 0.022   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 52           | 50           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>27.4%</b> | <b>39.7%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15e. I comforted the person being bullied                     | No                     | 128          | 100          | <b>27.8%</b> | 5.426            | 1  | 0.020   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 62           | 26           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>32.6%</b> | <b>20.6%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15f. I told an adult about the bullying                       | No                     | 129          | 102          | <b>26.9%</b> | 6.569            | 1  | 0.010   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 61           | 24           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>32.1%</b> | <b>19.0%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15g. I made fun of the person being bullied                   | No                     | 188          | 122          | <b>1.9%</b>  | 1.831            | 1  | 0.176   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 2            | 4            |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>1.1%</b>  | <b>3.2%</b>  |              |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q15h. I watched but did not do anything                        | No                     | 164          | 113          | <b>12.3%</b> | 0.794            | 1  | 0.373   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 26           | 13           |              |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>13.7%</b> | <b>10.3%</b> |              |                  |    |         |                 |

When males and females are combined, the most common reaction to someone being bullied by both males and females is trying to stop the bully (32.3%), followed by comforting the victim (27.8%), telling an adult (26.9%), getting help from a friend (25.6%), ignoring the bullying as if it is normal (14.2%), not doing anything about it (12.3%), while 8.9% have not witnessed any bullying and 1.9% made fun of the victim.

## 5.6.2 Indirect bullying

In this section, indirect bullying is considered and analysed under incidence, feelings and reaction.

### 5.6.2.1 Incidence of indirect bullying

The results in Table 5.16 show that there is no significant difference in the incidence of indirect bullying between males and females (Chi-square=0.306, df=1, p-value=0.580). However, there is a significant difference in the frequency of indirect bullying between males and females (Chi-square=9.878, df=3, p-value=0.020).

**Table 5.16: Incidence of indirect bullying (victim)**

| Incidence of indirect bullying (victim)                       |                              | Gender        |               | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|   |                              | Female        | Male          | Chi-sq           | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q16. Have you been indirectly bullied in the past?            | No                           | 95            | 67            | 0.306            | 1  | 0.580   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                          | 95            | 59            |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b>       | <b>50.0%</b>  | <b>46.8%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q16a. How often have you been indirectly bullied in the past? | Once or twice                | 41<br>(43.2%) | 38<br>(64.4%) | 9.878            | 3  | 0.020   | Significant     |
|   | Once a week                  | 11<br>(11.6%) | 7<br>(11.9%)  |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Several times a week or more | 29<br>(30.5%) | 6<br>(10.2%)  |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Two or three times a month   | 14<br>(14.7%) | 8<br>(13.6%)  |                  |    |         |                 |

The results in Table 5.17 show that there is no significant difference in the incidence of indirect bullying between males and females (Chi-square=3.474, df=1, p-value=0.062). The same applies to the frequency of indirect bullying between males and females (Chi-square=0.793, df=3, p-value 0.851).

**Table 5.17: Incidence of indirect bullying (perpetrator)**

| Incidence of indirect bullying (perpetrator)                     |                              | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests |    |         | Comment         |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                              | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq           | df | p-value |                 |
| Q18. Have you indirectly bullied someone in the past?            | No                           | 138          | 79           | 3.474            | 1  | 0.062   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                          | 52           | 47           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in agender</b>      | <b>27.4%</b> | <b>37.3%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q18a. How often have you indirectly bullied someone in the past? | Once or twice                | 28           | 25           | 0.793            | 3  | 0.851   | Not Significant |
|  | Once a week                  | 5            | 7            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Several times a week or more | 11           | 8            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | Two or three times a month   | 8            | 7            |                  |    |         |                 |

Table 5.18 presents the results for the incidence of indirect bullying where the respondent is a bystander. The results show that there are no significant differences between males and females on whether they have seen anyone else being bullied (Chi-square=2.550, df=1, p-value=0.110).

**Table 5.18: Incidence of indirect bullying (bystander)**

| Incidence of indirect bullying (bystander)  |                              | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests |    |         | Comment         |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|   |                              | Female       | Male         | Ch-sq            | df | p-value |                 |
| Q19. Have you seen or heard of anyone else being indirectly bullied in the past?            | No                           | 56           | 48           | 2.550            | 1  | 0.110   | Not Significant |
|   | Yes                          | 134          | 7            |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | <b>% Yes in gender</b>       | <b>70.5%</b> | <b>61.9%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q19a. How often have you seen or heard of anyone else being indirectly bullied in the past? | Once or twice                | 48           | 24           | 4.638            | 3  | 0.200   | Not Significant |
|   | Once a week                  | 14           | 11           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Several times a week or more | 57           | 27           |                  |    |         |                 |
|   | Two or three times a month   | 15           | 16           |                  |    |         |                 |

### 5.6.2.2 Feelings to indirect bullying

The results in Table 5.19 show that most of the feelings to indirect bullying are not significantly different between males and females (p-values>0.05) except for feeling worried and stressed (Chi-square=6.627, df=1, p-value=0.010). A significantly higher percentage of females (13.7%) felt worried and stressed when compared to males (only 4.8%).

**Table 5.19: Feelings to indirect bullying**

| Feelings to indirect bullying<br>How did you feel when someone indirectly bullied you? |                        | Gender       |              |       | Chi-square tests   |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|--------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                        | Female       | Male         | Both  | Chi-sq             | Df | P-value | Comment         |
| Q17a. I have not been indirectly bullied before.                                       | No                     | 95           | 59           | 51.3% | 0.306              | 1  | 0.580   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 95           | 67           |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>50.0%</b> | <b>53.2%</b> |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17b. Embarrassed.   | No                     | 158          | 107          | 15.8% | 0.099              | 1  | 0.753   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 31           | 19           |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>16.3%</b> | <b>15.1%</b> |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17c. Worried.   | No                     | 164          | 120          | 10.1% | 6.627              | 1  | 0.010   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 26           | 6            |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>13.7%</b> | <b>4.8%</b>  |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17d. Upset.   | No                     | 153          | 106          | 18.0% | 0.664              | 1  | 0.415   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 37           | 20           |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>19.5%</b> | <b>15.9%</b> |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17e. Afraid.  | No                     | 176          | 119          | 6.6%  | 0.401              | 1  | 0.526   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 14           | 7            |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>7.4%</b>  | <b>5.6%</b>  |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17f. Lonely.  | No                     | 174          | 121          | 6.6%  | 2.421 <sup>a</sup> | 1  | 0.120   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 16           | 5            |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>8.4%</b>  | <b>4.0%</b>  |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17g. Depressed.   | No                     | 174          | 116          | 8.2%  | .024 <sup>b</sup>  | 1  | 0.878   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 16           | 10           |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>8.4%</b>  | <b>7.9%</b>  |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17h. Stressed   | No                     | 164          | 120          | 10.1% | 6.627              | 1  | 0.010   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 26           | 6            |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>13.7%</b> | <b>4.8%</b>  |       |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q17i. Angry  | No                     | 136          | 92           | 27.8% | 0.078              | 1  | 0.780   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 54           | 34           |       |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>28.4%</b> | <b>27.0%</b> |       |                    |    |         |                 |

The most common feeling to indirect bullying for both males and females is feeling angry (27.8%), followed by feeling upset (18.0%), feeling embarrassed (15.8%), feeling stressed (10.1%), feeling worried (10.1), feeling depressed (8.2%), feeling lonely (6.6%) and lastly feeling afraid (6.6%). Indirect bullying, like direct bullying, may affect learners' academic performance, health and self-esteem. Like direct bullying, indirect bullying may cause both mental health and psychological problems to the young person.

### 5.6.2.3 Reactions to someone being bullied indirectly

As far as reactions to someone being bullied is concerned, the results presented in Table 5.20 show that gender significantly affects whether one comforted the person being indirectly bullied or not (Chi-square=7.323, df=1, p-value=0.007) with the females more inclined to comfort the victim (22.1%) than the males (10.3%).

**Table 5.20: Reactions to someone being bullied indirectly**

| When I saw or heard about, someone being indirectly bullied...             | Gender                 |              |              | Chi-square tests |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  | Female                 | Male         | both         | Chi-sq           | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q20a. I have not heard about someone being indirectly bullied in the past. | No                     | 133          | 78           | 2.238            | 1  | 0.135   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 57           | 48           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>30.0%</b> | <b>38.1%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20b. I completely ignored the indirect bullying.                          | No                     | 164          | 108          | 0.023            | 1  | 0.880   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 26           | 18           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>13.7%</b> | <b>14.3%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20c. I tried to get a friend to help the person being indirectly bullied. | No                     | 161          | 115          | 2.925            | 1  | 0.087   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 29           | 11           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>15.3%</b> | <b>8.7%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20d. I tried to stop the bully.   | No                     | 149          | 96           | 0.216            | 1  | 0.642   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 41           | 30           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>21.6%</b> | <b>23.8%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20e. I comforted the person being indirectly bullied.                     | No                     | 148          | 113          | 7.323            | 1  | 0.007   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 42           | 13           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>22.1%</b> | <b>10.3%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20f. I told the adult about the indirect bullying.                        | No                     | 152          | 109          | 2.232            | 1  | 0.135   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 38           | 17           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>20.0%</b> | <b>13.5%</b> |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20g. I made fun of the person being indirectly bullied.                   | No                     | 187          | 122          | 0.890            | 1  | 0.345   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 3            | 4            |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>1.6%</b>  | <b>3.2%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |
| Q20h. I watched but did not do anything.                                   | No                     | 168          | 114          | 0.333            | 1  | 0.564   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 22           | 12           |                  |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>11.6%</b> | <b>9.5%</b>  |                  |    |         |                 |

When males and females are combined, the most common reaction to someone being bullied by both males and females is trying to stop the bully (22.5%), followed by telling an adult (17.4%), comforting the victim (17.4%), ignoring the bullying as if it is normal (13.9%) getting help from a friend (12.7%), not doing anything about it (10.8%), and 2.2% made fun of the victim.

## 5.7 BOYS' AND GIRLS' CYBERBULLYING EXPERIENCES

Cyberbullying in this section is firstly considered under experiences and secondly under prevalent forms of cyberbullying.

### 5.7.1 Experiences of cyberbullying

The results in Table 5.21 show that most of the experiences of cyberbullying are not significantly different between males and females ( $p$ -values $>0.05$ ). However, there is a significant difference with regard to someone circulating a cell-phone picture without permission (Chi-square=7.069,  $df=1$ ,  $p$ -value=0.008) and being ignored by someone on the internet (Chi-square=8.151,  $df=1$ ,  $p$ -

value=0.004). A significantly higher percentage of females (38.4%) have had their cell phone pictures of themselves taken without permission. This is in comparison to males (24.6%) who have had their cell phone pictures of themselves taken without permission. Furthermore, a significantly higher percentage of females (54.7%) have experienced someone ignoring or not talking to them on the internet while chatting to others compared to males (38.9%).

**Table 5.21: Cyberbullying experiences of boys and girls**

| Cyberbullying experiences  |                        | Gender       |              | Chi-square tests   |    |         |                 |
|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|----|---------|-----------------|
|  |                        | Female       | Male         | Chi-sq             | Df | p-value | Comment         |
| Q21. Has someone lied or spread rumours about you online?  | No                     | 109          | 77           | 0.438              | 1  | 0.508   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 81           | 49           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>42.6%</b> | <b>38.9%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q22. Has someone called you names on the internet such as in an email or on Facebook to embarrass you? | No                     | 143          | 91           | 0.365              | 1  | 0.546   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 47           | 35           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>24.7%</b> | <b>27.8%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q23. Has someone circulated your email which was supposed to be confidential?                          | No                     | 176          | 118          | 0.121              | 1  | 0.727   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 14           | 8            |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>7.4%</b>  | <b>6.3%</b>  |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q24. Has someone taken and circulated cell phone picture of yourself without your permission           | No                     | 114          | 95           | 7.069              | 1  | 0.008   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 73           | 31           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>38.4%</b> | <b>24.6%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q25. Has someone said something sexual and offensive about you on the internet?                        | No                     | 156          | 109          | 0.892              | 1  | 0.345   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 33           | 17           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>17.4%</b> | <b>13.5%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q26. Has someone sent you a threatening anonymous SMS message?   | No                     | 149          | 95           | 0.394              | 1  | 0.530   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 41           | 31           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>21.6%</b> | <b>24.6%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q27. Has someone ignored you on the internet or not talked to you while chatting to others?            | No                     | 84           | 77           | 8.151              | 1  | 0.004   | Significant     |
|  | Yes                    | 104          | 49           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>54.7%</b> | <b>38.9%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q28. Have you lied or spread rumours about someone online?   | No                     | 167          | 109          | 0.132              | 1  | 0.717   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 23           | 17           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>12.1%</b> | <b>13.5%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q29. Have you called someone names on the internet such as in an email or Facebook to embarrass them?  | No                     | 161          | 100          | 1.803              | 1  | 0.179   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 28           | 26           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>14.7%</b> | <b>20.6%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q30. Have you circulated someone's email which was supposed to be confidential?                        | No                     | 177          | 118          | 0.033              | 1  | 0.856   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 11           | 8            |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>5.8%</b>  | <b>6.3%</b>  |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q31. Have you taken a cell phone picture of someone without permission?                                | No                     | 138          | 98           | 0.643              | 1  | 0.423   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 49           | 28           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>25.8%</b> | <b>22.2%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q32. Have you sent someone threatening anonymous SMS messages?   | No                     | 176          | 115          | 0.368              | 1  | 0.544   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 13           | 11           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>6.8%</b>  | <b>8.7%</b>  |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q33. Have you said something sexual and offensive about someone on the internet?                       | No                     | 181          | 118          | 1.738              | 1  | 0.187   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 6            | 8            |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>3.2%</b>  | <b>6.3%</b>  |                    |    |         |                 |
| Q34. Have you ignored or not talk to someone while chatting to others?                                 | No                     | 75           | 64           | 3.188 <sup>a</sup> | 1  | 0.074   | Not Significant |
|  | Yes                    | 110          | 62           |                    |    |         |                 |
|  | <b>% Yes in gender</b> | <b>57.9%</b> | <b>49.2%</b> |                    |    |         |                 |

### 5.7.2 Prevalent forms of cyberbullying

Figure 5.4 shows that, when males and females are combined, the most common prevalent form of cyberbullying is ignoring or not talking to someone while chatting to others on the internet (54.4%), followed by being ignored or not being talked to by others (48.4%). The least common prevalent form of cyberbullying is saying something sexual and offensive about someone on the internet (4.4%).

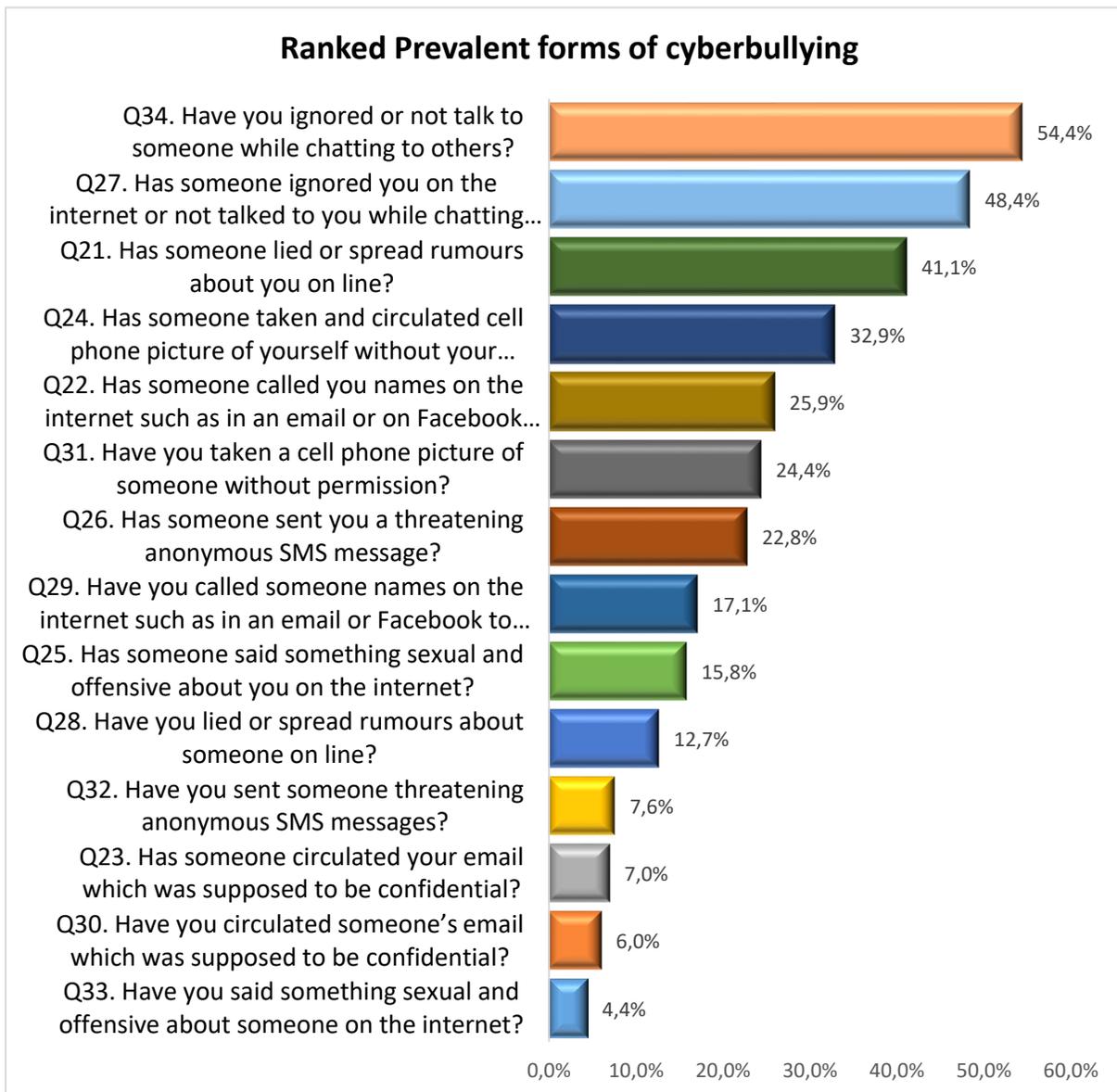


Figure 5.4. Ranked prevalent forms of cyberbullying

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has analysed the quantitative data in this study. The demographic profile of the research participants and the distribution of participants by age, gender and race have been presented. Access and usage of the internet through computers and cell phones have been discussed as well. Usage of the internet and its purpose have been indicated. The location of computer links to the internet have been mentioned. Data about direct and indirect bullying has been analysed as well as boys and girls cyberbullying experiences. It was found that the feelings of direct and indirect bullying may have an impact on learners' academic performance, mental health and self-esteem. Most cyberbullying experiences are not significantly different between boys and girls. The next chapter deals with qualitative data analysis.

## CHAPTER 6

### QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the research findings from data collected during the cyberbullying lessons. Lessons were conducted to find out if learners understood what cyberbullying is and to investigate if learners had come across any incidences of cyberbullying in their lives. Few questions were asked during lesson presentations and thereafter learners discussed in groups what they had learned and selected speakers to present in class. Learners' responses to questions asked and group presentations were recorded on tape. These are analysed and discussed in detail in this chapter. The chapter also examines and analyses learners' open-ended responses dealing with bullying through the internet. The responses were collected from the questionnaires administered. Data collected during focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews which were tape recorded are also analysed in this chapter. The responses of the participants are based on the key research questions and the interpretation of these responses relate to literature and underpinning theoretical framework.

#### 6.2 BOYS' AND GIRLS' CYBERBULLYING EXPERIENCES

The researcher first shared with the learners the definitions of bullying by Olweus (1993), Campbell (2005), Bauman and Yoon (2014) and Nilan *et al.* (2015) mentioned in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1. This was done to enable learners to be able to discuss in groups and present in class and to answer the section of the questionnaire dealing with direct and indirect bullying. The participants who were selected to participate in the focus group interviews were required to indicate their understanding of bullying and how it differs from cyberbullying. They were also asked to give a detailed account of an instance where they or their acquaintances were cyberbullied and the consequences of cyberbullying. They were expected to respond to the research question: 'How do boys and girls experience cyberbullying?' Participants were further required to state how they got involved in cyberbullying others and why. The participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews were required to state what they understood about cyberbullying.

### 6.2.1 Learners' understanding of bullying

According to Olweus (1993), bullying is aggression intentionally performed repeatedly by one or more individuals towards a person who is defenseless. This means that there is power imbalance between the bully and the victim. Campbell (2005) defines bullying as an intentional and repeated abusive treatment and aggressive behaviour towards a person by means of force. Bullying may be physical or it may involve verbal assaults.

When asked about what they understood about bullying (interview question 1), the focus group participants at Sizakala Girls' High School gave the following responses:

Lisa: *"Bullying includes physical and emotional bullying. When you bully someone, you bully them directly or indirectly."*

Nomso: *"Bullying is when someone is angry about something but instead of seeking help, the person starts beating you or swears at you and do other bad things to you, meaning that the person needs help."*

Helen: *"Bullying can either be physical, that is, someone can hit or punch you, or it can be emotional, that is, when someone tells you nasty things like telling you that you are ugly."*

Julie: *"Bullying is more physical and more aggressive because I can come to you and hit you, you know."*

Zinhle: *"Bullying someone face-to-face is also called traditional bullying."*

Phumelele Boys' High School focus group participants mentioned the following:

Phillip: *"Bullying is when someone who is treated badly at home takes his frustrations to other people who he is jealous of their lives, that is, learners at school."*

Xola: *"Bullying is teasing someone face-to-face and trying to make them feel bad about themselves, for example, commenting negatively about their looks."*

Lihle: *"Bullying is when someone is bullied physically like punching, kicking, tripping, stabbing, etc."*

John: *"Bullying happens because the bully might be going through a relationship breakup or there are bad things happening at home. The person may end up bullying others physically."*

Duma: *“I think bullying is taking advantage of someone and having power over someone. Bullying can happen face-to-face or physically or directly like punching, spitting or kicking someone. It can also happen indirectly. For example, I could say something bad about someone behind their back to make people laugh about whatever I say about that person.”*

The responses given by the participants show that they indeed understood what bullying is about. They mentioned physical or direct bullying and emotional or indirect bullying. Helen and Duma explained the difference between the two. The participants’ responses can also be linked to the role of moral disengagement introduced by Bandura (1986) in his SCT, whereby perpetrators engage in bullying someone shamelessly.

### **6.2.2 Difference between bullying and cyberbullying**

One of the differences between bullying and cyberbullying is that in cyberbullying, there is no physical contact with the victim. According to Ybarra and Mitchell (2004), cyberbullying involves purposeful harassment of someone else, that is, making rude and nasty comments of someone online. Tokunaga (2010) defines cyberbullying as any behaviour carried out through electronic media by individuals who repeatedly communicate messages that are disturbing and intentionally harmful to others. Tokunaga (2010) also adds that the identity of the perpetrator may or may not be known since cyberbullying can occur through electronic devices at school or outside school.

During lesson presentation and group presentations, some learners mentioned that cyberbullying is bullying someone via social media using the internet or cell phone. Others distinguished between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School stated as follows:

Learner 1:

*“Cyberbullying involves harassing or teasing someone on social media. This includes commenting negatively about pictures posted online, teasing or making fun of someone on social media and using strong language to make someone feel bad about himself or herself. An example of cyberbullying is that of a learner who is constantly teased online as a result of having failed a class.”*

This indicates that cyberbullying is a pattern of behavior and not just one single incident.

Learner 2:

*“Cyberbullying has many risks and it means sharing or posting of images online can lead to cyberbullying. Traditional bullying involves physical bullying which*

*may lead to being hurt physically and emotionally. This may lead to cyberbullying others. Cyberbullying is bullying using technology, for example, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.”*

This can be related to Dempsey *et al.*'s (2009) belief that adolescents meet social challenges both in the physical world and in the cyber world. The same applies to victimisation taking place at school, which may also include teenagers being subjected to victimisation online. This can also be associated with what Hinduja and Patchin (2011) believe, that adolescents tend to take pictures in places of privacy like bedrooms and bathrooms and post the photos online. This exposure by adolescents may result in them being bullied online.

Learner 3:

*“Traditional bullying happens when someone hits you and spits at you and that jealous people can spread nasty rumours online about a specific person and that is cyberbullying. People who cyberbully may disturb someone emotionally and spiritually, and this can make someone feel insecure, resulting in someone’s social life and academic performance being messed up and leading to someone committing suicide.”*

The learner’s response can be related to the study conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2013) which explored the relationship between cyberbullying experiences of children and adolescents as well as their traditional bullying and psychological health, physical health and academic performance.

Learner 4 alluded as follows:

*“Cyberbullying is a form of bullying taking place via social media, using technology like cellphones and the internet. Bullies often feel superior to the victim because they might be having problems at home. People with relationship problems or relationship breakups, may decide to cyberbully others.”*

The learner also gave an example of a bully who has been rejected by someone and starts posting bad things in order to feel good and to make the victim feel bad. This can be related to Hoff and Mitchell (2009) who found that cyberbullying usually arises from relationship problems such as break-ups, envy, intolerance, and ganging up. Learners who were surveyed reported that romantic break-ups can cause feelings of rejection and anger, and this may lead to retaliation and cyberbullying (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). This can also be associated with the role of moral disengagement which is part of Bandura’s (1986) SCT of moral self, where an individual performs a behaviour that is against his or her moral standards without feeling any guilt.

At Phumelele Boys' High School, learners responded as follows:

Learner 5:

*“Cyberbullying is when you are in a group of friends and they spread rumours about you online and sometimes post ugly pics of you on social media through cellphones, computers, tablets and other electronic devices, resulting in you feeling isolated and lonely. Cyberbullying experiences could be exposure to sexual remarks and catfishing, that is, when people steal your identity to do certain things via social media and without your knowledge.”*

Learner 6:

*“Cyberbullying involves hurting someone with words through social media and traditional bullying means that the bully is physically present. Cyberbullying may discourage someone and may make someone have low self-esteem and lose respect.”*

Learner 7:

*“People who cyberbully others may have been bullied before and are now retaliating. Bullies bully someone because of the way they look or act and this is not fair since no one is perfect.”*

Learner 8 declared as follows:

*“Both traditional bullying and cyberbullying could ruin a person's life and that both are not a fun thing to experience. Cyberbullying may affect a person's self-esteem and the person may experience depression.”*

Hinduja and Patchin (2011) believe that the negative emotions associated with cyberbullying may lead to youth developing low self-esteem, delinquent behaviour and violence.

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) suggest that school counsellors can also help students who are bullied online by teaching them ways to deal with cyberbullying such as blocking harassing text messages, logging off and not responding to hurtful messages, and help to develop high self-esteem in students.

Samuels *et al.* (2013) suggest that young people can use responsive strategies in order to block unwanted interruptions after they have started and these include logging off in case of threats, leaving internet locations, reducing information shared and not paying attention to the person's calls or messages. Popović-Ćitić *et al.* (2011) believe that denigration which involves creating profiles that make fun of another person, and harassment as the most common types of victimisation.

Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) describe numerous ways in which online bullying can be carried out. These include, text messages, picture/video clips via cell phone cameras, cell phone calls, email, chat rooms, instant messages, websites and blogs, social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and internet gaming to harass others. When asked what social media networks they are using and for what purpose, most learners answered that they use WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Myspace, Messenger, BBM, Musical, Omega, WeChat, Mxit, Tinder, Skype and Email. Learners stated that they use these social media networks to do research, to download music, to advertise, to post pictures, to look for pictures and comment about pictures posted, to meet new people and communicate with other people or loved ones like family or friends, to follow celebrities and to see what is trending around the world.

In this study, WhatsApp seemed to be the most common social media network used by the majority of the learners. In one class some learners mentioned that they use WhatsApp only. When asked about why they do not use other social media websites like Facebook, one learner stated that Facebook is full of stalkers and that there are people who photoshop pictures.

In Chapter 5, section 5.5, the majority of learners responded that they use the internet for homework and research as well as for entertainment, that is, communicating with others on social media. Communicating via social media means that learners use social network sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Most learners also indicated that they receive SMS's from others. Table 5.5 indicates that less than 50% of learners aged 13 and 15/16 years had received threatening anonymous SMS's from others.

The focus group participants were asked to reflect on the difference between bullying and cyberbullying (interview question 2). The participants at Sizakala Girls' High School responded as follows:

Lisa: *“Cyberbullying is bullying via internet and social networks like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc.”*

Nomso: *“Cyberbullying is when someone plays with your feelings through social media or using technology like cellphones, internet and other electronic devices to harass you.”*

Helen: *“Cyberbullying is bullying someone through social media, for example, sending nasty pictures or making rude comments about someone online.”*

Julie: *“Cyberbullying is, I can’t really be physical with you. I can only say hurtful things about you on social media.”*

Zinhle: *“In cyberbullying you use the internet like maybe Facebook or WhatsApp or Twitter to bully others.”*

Phumelele Boys’ High School stated:

Lihle: *“Cyberbullying is used to hurt people with words through social media, for example, fights with friends.”*

Xola: *“You can tease a person online and this is cyberbullying which includes social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc.”*

Phillip: *“Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs through social media like Instagram, WhatsApp, BBM, Snapchat, etc.”*

John: *“Cyberbullying is hurting someone through social media.”*

Duma: *“Cyberbullying has to do with something like saying some bad or mean things online about someone. With cyberbullying you can have a lot of people seeing the bullying than face-to-face bullying. Like if you say something about someone on Facebook, a lot of people will read and comment about the message and it may become viral.”*

From my observation, both boys and girls seem to understand what bullying is all about and how it is different from cyberbullying.

### **6.2.3 Teachers’ understanding of cyberbullying**

The LO Head and LO teachers at Sizakala Girls’ High School mentioned the following concerning their understanding of cyberbullying (interview question 1) in the course of semi-structured interviews:

LO Head: *“Cyberbullying is on internet via Facebook, Twitter. So, it’s all social media.”*

Mrs Jones: *“Basically it’s when you use social media to cause harm to another person, for example, a learner will take a picture of an unpopular girl and this picture may go viral. Then other learners will comment about the picture and the girl gets victimized and is laughed at and this is not nice.”*

Mrs Black: *“It is bullying over the internet or any kind of technology.”*

Phumelele Boys’ High School participants stated:

LO Head: *“When a learner or a boy or a girl goes on to social media and another learner tries to blackmail them or tries to do something bad to them or hold a grudge against another person when it comes to talking to them on social media.”*

Mr Fraser: *“It is bullying through social media, through internet basically anything to do with social media.”*

Mr Barnes: *“Cyberbullying is bullying that happens in terms of the internet or using some kind of electronic media. It’s got to do with social networks, Twitter, Facebook, sometimes WhatsApp, chat groups, where learners expose other learners, or they say something or ganging up on somebody online and the word they like to use now is troll, where they troll people and they really make their lives a misery online. So, my understanding of cyberbullying is anything in the cyberspace that is attacking one individual to bullying into cyberspace.”*

Mr Barnes used the word ‘troll’ to describe an attack by others online. Case and King (2018) used Fichman and Sanfilippo’s (2016) definition of online trolling which is a repetitive disruptive online deviant behaviour by an individual toward other individuals or groups, as well as Moreau (2017) who describes the internet troll as a perpetrator who tries to disrupt or generally causes trouble within the community by posting certain comments, photos, videos or other forms of online content.

Mr Davis: *“It’s bullying that takes place online or internet or social media.”*

Mr Holmes: *“Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which obviously takes place on internet where people taunt, degrade and hurt people online via text messages or pictures or videos.”*

Some of the answers given by the LO teaching staff were brief. However, their responses to the question show that the participants indeed understood what cyberbullying is all about.

#### **6.2.4 Cyberbullying experiences**

Literature in Chapter 2 indicates that the ICTs have created opportunities and benefits for people all over the world and for the young people, in particular, to relate and interact. Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) state that the use of the internet, cell phones and cyber technologies has opened a variety of opportunities and benefits for the young people. Access to ICTs has given young people an opportunity to learn, explore and engage socially and publicly. However, young

people are at a high risk of online bullying due to the dangers and potential hazards of these technologies. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2011), cyberbullying is a growing problem, since there is an increase in the number of young people interacting through computers and cell phones. Hinduja and Patchin (2012), Kowalski *et al.* (2008) and Patchin and Hinduja (2010) have observed that there are students who use technology responsibly as well as others who use it inappropriately in order to harass, humiliate, embarrass and hurt others.

In the course of the lesson presentations at Sizakala Girls' High School, the learners shared the following cyberbullying stories:

Learner 9:

*"It happened on Instagram. I posted a picture just like comments on images or whatever and these girls who I know still today said nasty things and it was my intention to tell them to like stuff off, ja, but I did not, ja, and I got into very big trouble. My stepsister screenshotted everything. Ja, it started getting verbal and them coming to me at school and ja, but now the bullying has stopped."*

This clearly shows that the bullies' violent and aggressive behaviour both online and offline affected the learner emotionally. It is, therefore, important for the victim who has gone through such harmful attacks to seek counselling even if the bullying has stopped. According to the SET, this direct contact with the family member comprises the microsystem.

Learner 10:

*"For me it happened on Facebook. I posted a picture of me and my cousin, then my Facebook people that I usually invite, they started commenting that I'm ugly and that people should block me and they turned my whole class against me to block me. I told my teacher and the bullying has stopped."*

This behaviour can be linked to the belief that adolescents with higher levels of moral disengagement are more likely to be involved in either traditional bullying or cyberbullying or both (Bauman & Pero, 2011 and Ponari & Wood, 2010). This means that the cyberbullying behaviour was against the perpetrators' moral standards. In other words, the perpetrators were morally disengaged. It seems the LO Head had received empathy training because she was able to intervene and help the learner from being attacked emotionally. This intervention prevented a further incident of cyberbullying. Bauman (2010) suggests that attempts should be made to prevent cyberbullying in schools in order to increase awareness and to ensure that learners are morally engaged with the victims of cyberbullying. The bullying that the two learners (Learners 9 and 10)

experienced can also be linked to Jolliffe and Farrington's (2006) emphasis that low levels of empathy are strongly associated with higher levels of aggression and bullying incidents in the school setting. Ang and Goh (2010) thus suggest that empathy training should be one of the topics discussed by teachers and policy makers.

Learner 11:

*"I got a message on WhatsApp from my friend. She said she is tired of me asking for airtime. This had never happened. She said she would screenshot messages for me. I did not believe her. Then I found out that she screenshotted the messages and pretended to be me."*

In this case, the bully showed lack of empathy and aggression towards the victim.

Learner 12:

*"I received a call from a man who I thought was three years older than me and we became friends. The friendship developed into an online relationship on WhatsApp and Facebook for some months. The man then decided to tell the truth about who he really was, that he and my friend were brother and sister, and that he was 14 years old and two years younger than his sister. He apologised for catfishing."*

The friend's brother justified his behaviour by showing feelings of shame and guilt. This also indicates that the perpetrator realised that what he had done was wrong.

At Phumelele Boys' High School, learners came up with the following stories:

Learner 13:

*"I received a message on WhatsApp saying that I am ugly. I told my mother who advised me to block the number."*

Learner 14:

*"I posted a video and someone commented on how bad I looked. That hurt me very much. I sort of ignored the message. The bullying didn't happen again because that person was only trying to make me feel bad and angry."*

Learner 15:

*"I posted a picture of myself on WhatsApp saying that I am a black belt. Some learners started making fun of me. I decided to exit that particular WhatsApp group."*

Learner 16:

*"My sister and her friends sent me a WhatsApp message that my grandmother had suffered a stroke. Later on, they told me that they were joking. This happened on the 1<sup>st</sup> April which is an April Fool's Day. This made me very annoyed. I told my mother. My mother promised to punish my sister."*

The stories told by the learners show how aggressive the perpetrators were towards them and how these attacks had an effect on their emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Bandura (1986) mentioned in his SCT that on one hand, there are people who are not afraid of being threatened and have the ability to control potential threats, and on the other hand, there are people who cannot effectively deal with potential threats resulting in them experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. The learners in both schools show how stressful and anxious they felt when cyberbullied, and some of them relied on their families for assistance. This direct contact with family is, according to the SET, referred to as the microsystem. The stories also indicate lack of empathy and moral disengagement on the part of the perpetrators.

The stories stated further indicate that adolescents these days meet social challenges in the physical world as well as social challenges on the internet (Dempsey *et al.*, 2009). Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) assert that it is difficult for young people to escape being bullied online since they always carry their cell phones.

One learner at Phumelele Boy's High School was involved in cyberbullying someone as follows:

Learner 17:

*"I saw a video of a man dancing and dressed like a hobo online. I circulated the video to my WhatsApp group. What followed were negative comments about the video from the whole group."*

In his SCT, Bandura (1986) argued that the external environment contributes to the acquisition and maintenance of aggression which results in exposure to inappropriate reinforcement of maladaptive behaviour. Learner 17 decided to circulate the video to his WhatsApp group who made fun of it. The story told by the learner also relates to the statement made by Zhou *et al.* (2013) and Mark and Ratliffe (2011) that individuals who spend more time in cyberspace are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying. Espelage *et al.* (2013) also point out that when using ICTs, individuals feel less restrained and as a result can be encouraged to behave aggressively. The learner's negative comments about the video encouraged other learners to do the same.

The last questionnaire item (Question 36) required learners to write stories about cyberbullying. Four learners at Sizakala Girls' High School wrote the following stories:

*“I’ve heard of a girl who committed suicide because an old man was threatening her and making her send sexual pictures. That shows how powerful bullies can be.”*

*“A 14-year old girl was bullied for spreading rumours. She was threatened by her friends for doing that. When I found out about it, I tried to help her out.”*

*“My friend was once cyberbullied. Someone asked her if she was naked and also asked her to send naked pictures of herself.”*

*“I heard that a 14 or 15-year old girl sent an unpleasant video to her boyfriend and then her boyfriend posted the video on Facebook.”*

Six Phumelele Boys’ High School learners came up with the following stories:

*“A girl sent me an SMS telling me how sexy she is, and a video showing her nude body. I tried to delete the number but she kept on texting me and sending me the video. I changed my sim card and she kept texting the message on my WhatsApp group.”*

*“I was cyberbullied before like, for example, a person called me names on my cellphone and I told my parents about it and they called that person and reported the cyberbullying to the police.”*

*“My friend was cyberbullied shortly after attempted suicide but was stopped and a week after he ran away from home. They found him and is now in rehab because he was taking cocaine.”*

*“I was once told that a teenage girl in the USA committed suicide because her boyfriend dumped and embarrassed her on Instagram by sending messages to her friends and her friends made fun of her.”*

*“My friend was cyberbullied last year. She couldn’t go out without covering her face. Now she is less afraid.”*

During focus group interviews, participants at Sizakala Girls’ High School were required to reflect on their cyberbullying experiences or those of their acquaintances (interview question 3). Phila stated:

*“I was cyberbullied before. It was actually a threat. I had a friend who had my number. She took my number and gave it to someone (a guy) and she also sent my pictures to this guy. The guy used my pics and told people that I am his wife. When I found out I sat down with the guy and we talked and sorted this out. Then this guy threatened me that if I tell someone else, something bad will happen to me.”*

Vinotha: *“I have been cyberbullied. Actually, it happened at school but what happened is that someone at school got hold of my cell number from another guy I met in my*

community. The next thing someone threatened me that I shouldn't have told my teacher about the drugs that are being sold at school and they will catch me. This happened on WhatsApp.

Nomso: *"I had a friend who was in grade 9, and we used to talk and then a bunch of girls in her grade created a group and added me in the group. Then they started threatening me. This was during the June holidays. They told me that schools are about to re-open and I must back off from my friend. They also told me that my friend's girl friends are psychos and they can kill me. I told them that we are only friends, and then they started threatening me that if I don't block her or if my friend doesn't block me, something bad will happen to me when schools reopen. This happened on WhatsApp.*

Helen: *"Our classmate's brother sent me and Zinhle a WhatsApp message threatening us that he would do something very bad to us."*

Lisa: *"I have a friend who went through cyberbullying. A person kept sending her rude SMSs asking if she is a virgin, where they can meet or what is she wearing, can she send him naked pics of herself.*

Verushka: *"For me it happened on Facebook. I posted a picture of me and my cousin, then my Facebook people that I usually invite, started commenting that I'm ugly and that people should block me and they turned the whole class against me to block me."*

Julie: *"My friend gave my number to one of her friends without my permission. This friend invited me on WhatsApp and asked if I could send my pictures. I accepted the invitation and later sent my pictures. I found out after a few days that this person was a man and he had used my pictures and told everyone that I am his girlfriend and soon we would be married."*

Zinhle: *"A friend of mine was cyberbullied by this other girl who was in the same grade as we were because they like the same boy. So, this girl would post nasty things about my friend on Facebook but would not mention her name, but then we knew that what she posted was about my friend."*

Learners at Phumelele Boy's High School reported the following experiences:

Lihle: *"I posted a video of myself and someone commented on how bad I looked. One learner who is my friend had dreadlocks which he later cut off. Before my friend cut his hair, some learners would tease him on WhatsApp calling him Rastafarian and that he should go back to the bushes to smoke weed."*

Xola: *"I posted a picture of myself on WhatsApp and then I received an SMS from a private number saying that I am ugly and that I should go back to my country."*

John: *"My friends and I got into a big fight on WhatsApp. It was like a group thing. My friends ganged up on me and I ganged up on them with my other friends. One of the guys apologized for ganging up on me."*

Rokham: *“I was sitting at home watching television and this guy sends me a message and he was dissing me for some reason.”*

Phindile: *“I was at a party. Then a friend of mine took my phone and said he was going to play games and I didn't know that he was uploading his own numbers on my phone. When I reached home, I received a text saying that I am going to die within six hours.”*

Phillip: *“Learners called my friend a blackistan because of his dark complexion. This happened on WhatsApp. My friend used to receive photos of ugly people and animals like baboons and a message that the animals are his relatives.”*

Jack: *“I received an SMS from strangers who insulted my parents and telling me that I won't have anyone taking care of me. The strangers also told me that they know my parents and that they want us to meet. I replied telling them to back off. Then they started swearing at me and told me all kinds of stuff.”*

In response to a question regarding their involvement in bullying someone online and how they did it and why (interview question 6), Zinhle and Duma responded as follows:

Zinhle: *“Okay, it was this girl I was talking about. We did the same to her because she was making my friend sad with the things she was saying about her, so we decided to just get revenge and also said bad things about her on Facebook, even though we didn't write lots about her. She knew that the message was about her and everyone knew that it was about her.”*

Duma: *“Someone posted a picture on Facebook and I made fun of that picture. I said that they were ugly, and they shouldn't have posted the picture. I did this so that I could be famous and to get more people following me on Facebook and have more friends.”*

Some of the focus group participants suffered emotionally as a result of the aggressive and violent attacks from the perpetrators. Duma and Zinhle also behaved aggressively towards the victims and their intentions were to hurt the victims emotionally.

Bandura's (1986) SCT theory is again relevant to the stories told by the learners above, that is, the external environment may contribute to the acquisition and maintenance of aggression resulting in exposure to unacceptable reinforcement of maladaptive behaviour. As a result of having access to the internet, the perpetrators decided to engage in unacceptable behaviour in order to harass the victims. The stories also show that the perpetrators lack empathy and perform behaviours that are against their moral standards without feeling guilty.

The cyberbullying experiences of the above participants are more or less the same. The same applies to direct and indirect bullying experiences in Chapter 5, Tables 5.11 and 5.16, which show almost the same percentages of boys and girls who were victims, as well as Table 5.17 which demonstrates almost the same percentages of boys and girls who bullied others indirectly. However, Table 5.12 indicates a big difference in the percentages of learners who directly bullied others, with boys having a significantly higher percentage of bullying others.

### 6.2.5 Impact of Cyberbullying

One of the learners cited the effects of cyberbullying, that is, how cyberbullying may lower people's self-esteem during group presentations. She gave an example of someone bullied online. In this case, the bully will feel better and the victim will feel angry, sad and rejected. She also mentioned that when you are cyberbullied, it seems everyone is out to get you. She added that some people tend to bunk school because of the bad treatment from peers.

During focus group interviews, the participants at Sizakala Girls' High School expressed the following regarding how cyberbullying made them, or their acquaintance feel (interview question 4):

Julie: *"The experience made me feel uncomfortable and I decided not to just give out my number to anyone and I also decided to make sure what type of people I am dealing with before giving my number to them because there are really dangerous people out there. They can use your number and your identity and tell lies about you."*

Helen: *"I felt very uncomfortable and scared that a person would send me and Zinhle messages and threaten us on WhatsApp and say things that we haven't said. We were also uncomfortable that we would meet him outside school and get beaten up."*

Nomso: *"I started being scared to have friends and felt like keeping only one friend who is my dear and best friend since from day one she was my friend. I ended up being scared to have other friends because I would say I have friends and then when I am outside the school gate I would end up being beaten because these other girls are in grade 11 now but we sorted this problem out."*

Vinotha: *"I felt uncomfortable and scared. It's like the guy who threatened us is my classmate's friend, but she is still in our class like we don't talk to each other. This was all over Boys' school. Our classmate used to wait for us by the school gate with the suppliers of drugs from the boys' school and they used to beat us up saying that we grade 8's, are telling the teachers that learners are doing drugs and we are*

*destroying their business. They also threatened that they would inform former learners to come and beat us up.”*

Vinotha’s experience can be linked to what Nilan *et al.* (2015) suggest about peer conflict that starts on social media and spread into face-to-face bullying or physical bullying at school. Others alluded as follows:

Verushka: *“I felt very unhappy and also thought of dropping out of school.”*

Lisa: *“My friend felt very insecure and was always afraid to walk alone. She always made sure that she had someone to go with to wherever she wanted to go.”*

Phila: *“I started having a problem trusting people including my friends. I even decided to stop using WhatsApp for months.”*

Zinhle: *“It made us very angry because even though she didn’t write my friend’s name but then we knew that she was talking about her and everyone knew that she was talking about my friend.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, the participants affirmed as follows:

Xola *“The bullying hurt me a lot.”*

Lihle: *“I was hurt very much. I sort of ignored the message. My friend who was called a Rastafarian felt very embarrassed and decided to cut off his hair.”*

Rokham: *“I felt very bad and promised to beat him up and he apologized”*

Phillip: *“My friend became very upset and unhappy because the teasing continued for a long time.”*

Jack: *“I felt very scared for myself and for my family because I didn’t know what would happen next.”*

John: *“The experience made me feel good because I won, and this did not happen again.”*

Phindile: *“I was very scared, and I told my mom and started crying. My mom said she was going to report this to the police. Then my friend called and apologized saying it was only a joke.”*

From the responses explained above, only John felt good since he had won and was never bullied again. The other participants felt uncomfortable, scared, unhappy and upset.

Bandura's (1986) SCT proposes that there are people who believe that they cannot successfully deal with potential threats and as a result feel very anxious and stressed. This is what happened to the participants when they came across cyberbullying except John who felt good about the situation.

Junoven and Gross (2008) believe that young people who experience emotional and physical bullying may end up having mental health problems. The impact of cyberbullying might be more distressing for young people as they might be reluctant to tell their parents when confronted with cyberbullying incidents. According to Junoven and Gross (2008), this reluctance might be due to parents restricting the use of ICTs and this may result in cyberbullying for longer periods of time.

According to Hinduja and Patchin (2011), victims of cyberbullying may suffer psychologically, and may feel depressed, sad, angry and frustrated and may have suicidal thoughts resulting in young people developing low self-esteem, delinquent behaviour and violence. Kupczynski *et al.* (2013) also believe that cyberbullying has more severe consequences than face-to-face bullying and concur with Campbell (2005) that emotional distress caused by cyberbullying can lead to feelings of agitation, embarrassment and fear.

In response to the question concerning how bullying others online made them feel (interview question 7), both Zinhle and Duma at first felt good about cyberbullying someone. This can be related to what Swearer *et al.* (2014) believe, that cognitions regarding the likelihood of positive consequences affect the likelihood that young people will bully others. Bauman and Yoon (2014) also state that individuals may see others as being hostile towards them resulting in them responding aggressively. However, Zinhle and Duma later on regretted their actions. They responded as follows:

Zinhle: *“At first it made us feel like satisfied because we were getting her back for bullying my friend in the first place, but then later on it made us feel bad because it was bad of us to talk about her and say all those nasty things about her.”*

Duma: *“It made me feel good about myself because I made fun of that picture and it made people laugh, but later on I felt bad because I made someone feel bad and told myself that I shouldn't have posted the picture in the first place.”*

Zinhle and Duma's utterances can be related to Swearer *et al.* (2014) who noted the basic principle of SCT which suggests that if the consequences of a particular behaviour are more rewarding, individuals are more likely to engage in such behaviours. Espelage *et al.* (2013) further stress that engaging in cyberbullying might provide support of such behaviour by others liking a post.

When asked what made them to stop if they are no longer cyberbullying others (interview question 8), Zinhle and Duma declared as follows:

Zinhle            *We realised that what we did was wrong and that instead we should have confronted this girl face to face. We did not like what we did and how it made us feel."*

Duma:            *I came to the realisation that online bullying makes someone feel small. They don't feel comfortable and they lose confidence. It's not how I want people to feel."*

Both participants felt empathy and were able to recognise and understand the victims' emotional states leading to them changing their behavior accordingly (Preston & de Waal, 2002).

### **6.2.6 Steps taken to avoid further cyberbullying**

To answer the question regarding what the participants or their acquaintances did to avoid being cyberbullied again (interview question 5), the focus group participants at Sizakala Girls' High School responded as follows:

Helen:            *"What we did we went for counselling here at school. Talking about the incident made us feel better."*

Others added:

Nomso:            *"I got rid of the people who were close to me. I stopped giving people my number. I didn't like getting closer to people or have other friends. I just stopped having more friends."*

Julie:            *"I decided to go for school counselling."*

Lisa:            *"My friend told our teacher who gave her counselling in order to overcome the bullying experience."*

Verushka:        *"Talking about my experience with my best friend and going for counselling at school helped me."*

Phila:            *"After months of not using WhatsApp, the guy did not bother me again."*

Five participants decided to go for counselling, and this shows that the LO Head's door is always open for learners who need assistance with any kind of problem including cyberbullying. According to the SET, having direct contact with family, peers and the school environment comprises the microsystem. In this case, the participants chose to go for school counselling, that is, they interacted with LO Head in order to ease the pain and overcome the bullying experience. This interaction is referred to as the mesosystem.

The participants at Phumelele Boys' High school responded as follows:

Xola: *"I told my parents. My parents told me to stop using WhatsApp and concentrate on my studies."*

Jack: *"I just blocked the number and the bullying stopped."*

Rokham: *"After threatening to beat him up, he stopped bothering me."*

Lihle: *"I sort of ignored the message because that person was trying to make me feel angry and bad. The bullying didn't happen again."*

Phillip: *"My friend did nothing and later on the bullying stopped."*

Phindile: *"I did nothing because he apologized, but we stopped being friends."*

Only Xola decided to report the bullying incident to his parents. Jack decided to block the perpetrator's number. Rokham threatened to beat up the perpetrator, and Lihle, Phillip and Phindile did nothing about the bullying. This can be connected to Li's (2010) study which states that a large percentage of students would do nothing if cyberbullied and a small percentage would inform adults. It seems males tend to ignore the bullying instead of reporting it, whereas females opt for counselling or talk to someone.

### **6.2.7 Support given to learners who are victims of cyberbullying**

The LO Head and LO teachers at Sizakala Girls' High School stated as follows regarding support given to learners who are victims of cyberbullying (interview question 3):

LO Head: *"In our school, first of all, our school Code of Conduct says that bullying is not accepted. So, from a discipline side, we punish the people that are involved in bullying by detention, calling their parents and things like that. With regard to cyberbullying itself, we give counselling to the learners, we explain, we actually have meetings with the perpetrator as well as the victim and we try and resolve the issue. So, it's not just about punishment and listening to the one side, but we actually make sure that everything is resolved."*

Mrs Jones: *“Obviously, one can talk to learners and you’ve got to speak to the group of learners that are involved in bullying and tell them that what they are doing to the learner is unacceptable and may have disastrous effects for the victim.”*

Mrs Black: *“It’s very difficult to know who they are unless they come and tell you. So, I’ve not had experience of anyone coming to tell me about cyberbullying particularly. Whenever we’ve spoken about bullying, then they would say this one said this, so they had this sorted but they had never come to ask for help.”*

At Sizakala Girls’ High School, the LO Head ensures that she has a meeting with both the victim and the perpetrator in order to resolve the cyberbullying issue. Counselling is also provided to the victims.

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, the LO Head stated that although the school discourages learners not to go to social media, he does offer the victims some comfort and assist the victims by referring them to an experienced professional.

LO Head: *“It’s very difficult because it’s not really in the school system. Cellphones are banned at school and the internet is controlled at our school, so learners aren’t really allowed to go on to social media. So, it would have to be a learner coming to me to speak about the problem. In terms of comfort, I can try and assist them in terms of speaking to the person who is doing the bullying. I can comfort the learner that’s being bullied and if it’s completely out of my control perhaps recommend a counsellor or someone more experienced in dealing with the situation.”*

The LO teachers responded as follows:

Mr Fraser: *General guidance. We will have a chat and find out what’s going on. Obviously if I can try to solve it, I would try and solve it, and just try to find out all the details, because a lot of times cyberbullying is due to the fact that people are lashing out in a public forum for whatever reason that they have. There is always a way to solve it, and that is to have this blocked and try to slow it down.*

Mr Barnes: *“In our school terms, we still haven’t really got ahead with cyberbullying. We follow the process with regard to bullying, which is a bullying policy, which is actually dealing with the case of bullying and we discipline bullying in the school. But it’s very difficult to get a true handle on cyberbullying. So, I’ve had a case somewhere in the year with a couple of my Grade 11’s, where they were communicating with each other via WhatsApp groups and saying certain things, and one of the simplest ways was to get both learners into the room together and discussing the issue with the learners and this was most effective. To be honest with you, it doesn’t get reported often, so it’s difficult to deal with. One thing that we have done in the past is actually to have people in, talking about bullying on a cell in its totality, and they talk about cyberbullying in terms of bullying. It is different in its nature but in essence, it is still bullying. That’s how we deal with it, we use the policy which is in our Code of Conduct.”*

Mr Davis: *“They don’t really discuss that with me. So, they are not like, they don’t say to me ‘Sir, yesterday on Facebook, someone told me this’. No, they don’t tell me things like that.”*

Mr Holmes: *“Counselling is the most important one. Reassuring them of maybe in cases of low self-esteem and reassuring them of who they are and discussing and counselling them about how they feel and what is it that’s making them feel affected.”*

As the Bullying policy is one of the policies mentioned in the Code of Conduct, it is easy for teachers to deal with bullying since it often takes place at school. Cyberbullying is difficult to handle since it takes place on social media.

The SET refers to this interaction between the LO Heads and the learners as the mesosystem which means that the child’s behaviour is influenced by family or school climate. The LO Heads and some LO teachers in both schools are concerned about the seriousness of cyberbullying and are prepared to assist learners who experience cyberbullying.

### **6.2.8 Disciplining learners who are perpetrators**

Regarding disciplining learners who are perpetrators (interview question 4), the LO Head at Sizakala Girls High School emphasised the importance of the Code of Conduct and the rules to be observed by both parents and learners. The LO teachers stated that finding out what the problem is and talking to the learners could help sort out the problem. If this does not work, teachers could ask other staff members to intervene or refer the learner to the LO Head for counselling.

LO Head: *“First of all, parents get called and we remind parents of the Code of Conduct. The next thing is that we have a structure, which we call an Internal Tribunal or Internal Discipline. So, what happens there, depending on the severity of the issue, if it is just at level 1, they go to management detention. That would be management, parent and learner. If it’s quite severe, which is level 2, then it’s External Tribunal, which is management, school governing body member, parent as well as learner.”*

Mrs Jones: *“I know that with kids that bully, there is a problem that’s perhaps happening at home and they have some issues and sometimes they want to take their frustrations out to the other kids. So instead of disciplining the child, you need to talk to them and get to know them and gain their trust as to why they are doing what they are doing. You can also help the child and talk to them and monitor their behaviour during break just to see how they are coping, and if all else fails, you can always go and seek help from other staff members and maybe they can investigate further.”*

Mrs Black: *“Well basically, I just talk to them, just get them on their own and talk to them and ask, ‘what is the problem’ and ‘why are you doing this’. They then come up with all sorts of excuses ‘It wasn’t me, it’s not me’, but then I just try to talk to them. If it gets so bad, I would refer them to the Life Orientation Head.”*

The LO Head at Phumelele Boys’ School stressed that more remedial action is taken instead of punishment. Mr Fraser stated the difficulty experienced by teachers regarding dealing with cyberbullying. Mr Barnes mentioned the Code of Conduct and the stages involved in dealing with the bullying. Mr Holmes explained the procedure followed when learners are caught using cell phones.

LO Head: *“I think disciplining comes with finding out what’s the problem first. So, if they’ve done something serious, obviously, they’ve got to face the consequences. But as I’ve said before, the issue of cyberbullying tends to stem from something that’s happened to the bully and so, I feel that I’ll need to find out the root cause of why the bullying is taking place and more remedial action as opposed to punishment.”*

Mr Fraser: *“It depends because in our situation at school like this, it is very difficult to discipline somebody who has done cyberbullying as cyberbullying has got nothing to do with the school. If it is linked to the school, yes hundred percent will then fall under the sanctions of the school. Obviously, this is a personal thing and we cannot go through disciplinary hearing issue when it comes to bullies. We can just guide learners on what to do and what not to do. We can just help the victims unfortunately because only if it was happening at school. I can say yes, we could assist them. We could call parents and let them know about it, but that’s as far as we probably could go.”*

Mr Barnes: *“We have a Code of Conduct. In the Code of Conduct, bullying is a level 2 offence. What happens with level 2 offence is that the learner is called. We firstly investigate the substance of the bullying and then we investigate the other side. Usually when there is a case of bullying, if it’s something that is continuous, we can pick it up. We investigate both sides and find out what exactly is happening. Once we have got a clear understanding of what is happening, we then go to the next stage which is, we call the parents and tell them that ‘listen, this learner has been caught bullying another learner and he would be getting a detention on a Friday’. In the whole process, our policy states that what we want to do is we want to have a restoration between the two learners.”*

Mr Davis: *“They don’t really discuss that with me. So, they are not like, they don’t say to me ‘Sir, yesterday on Facebook, someone told me this’. No, they don’t tell me things like that.”*

Mr Holmes: *“It starts first with a disciplinary hearing and then obviously taking away the cellphones and so forth and then stuff like detentions, expulsion and suspension.”*

Both schools ensure that learners and parents have read and signed the Code of Conduct which spells out the rules of the school. The schools also ensure that parents are called to come to school in cases of severe bullying, and this interaction of the school with the family is, according to the SET, an example of the mesosystem. Teachers also talk to the learners who are victims and perpetrators and try and sort out their bullying-related problems.

### **6.3 MANIFESTATION OF CYBERBULLYING AND ITS EFFECTS ON VICTIMS**

The researcher wanted to solicit the forms of manifestation of cyberbullying and its effects on the victims. On that note, the participants were asked to respond to this question: ‘How does cyberbullying manifest itself and how does it affect the victims?’

Cyberbullying manifests itself in many forms. In this study, these forms include: lying and spreading rumours about someone online; calling someone names on the internet; circulating an email supposed to be confidential; taking and circulating a cell phone picture of someone else online without permission; saying something sexual and offensive about someone on the internet; sending someone a threatening anonymous SMS; and ignoring or not talking to someone while talking to others on the internet. Learners were required to write on the questionnaire open ended responses to fourteen questions (from question 21 to question 34). Learners were also required to state on the questionnaire what they fear most about cyberbullying (question 35). The fears expressed by the learners show that cyberbullying does exist and should be taken seriously.

#### **6.3.1 Lying and spreading rumours about someone online**

In Chapter 5, Table 5.21 indicates that there is no significant difference in the percentages of males and females who are victims and perpetrators with regard to lying and spreading rumours about someone online. In response to how they felt when lies or rumours were spread about them online, some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School wrote the following:

*“I was depressed and felt I was the wrong person and no one trusted me at the time.” “I was furious and felt like killing the person who spread rumours.” “I felt upset and sad but I told my mom who helped me sort out the problem.” “I was sad and embarrassed of what people were thinking about me.” “I was angry and I did not even want to go to school anymore.” “I felt like committing suicide.” “I was upset that my best friend would do something like that.” “I was angry and*

*tempted to confront the person and beat them up.” “I felt like I had nowhere to go and felt like confronting the person who did it.” “I was angry and scared and did not know if the person would do it again.” “I was worried and angry but at the same time, I had to let it go.” “I was very angry, and I immediately confronted the person.” “I was angry, and this ruined my self-image and it took time for some people to accept me.” “I felt sad and did not want to talk about it to anyone.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, some learners’ responses were as follows:

*“I felt angry and I just ignored that person and I blocked her.” “It made me feel embarrassed and I decided not to speak to that person again.” “I was very angry and wanted to see that person suffer as I did.” “I first felt angry, so I told my mom and she said what they say is not true, so I ignored them, and they left me alone.” “It made me feel sad and at the same time I just kept quiet to see what people would say or do to me.” “It made me upset and angry and it made me not to trust this person.”*

Other learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School stated the following reasons why they felt the way they did:

*“I was worried because someone did this using my phone.” “I felt sad because what the person spread was not true, but I ignored the rumour.” “I was worried and mad because I knew it was not true.” “I was worried and angry because people would believe the rumours and see me differently.” “I was angry and wanted to hit the person but stopped because this person told her friends that I always cheat in class.” “I felt stressed, unhappy, lonely and depressed because it was like everyone believed the rumour.” “I felt lonely and depressed because my relationship with my friend had broken.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School the reasons were:

*“It made me feel angry because it is so frustrating when someone gossips about you online or say nasty things.” “I felt sad because everyone would know about the rumours and start laughing at me.” “It made me very uncomfortable because these were lies.” “It made me feel upset because my friend said I will be bald when I am older.” “It made me feel embarrassed because it made the people around me not trust me.”*

The learners’ responses can be associated with Bandura’s (1986) SCT which suggests that people may find that they are unable to deal effectively with potential threats and therefore may experience high levels of stress and anxiety. In both schools, learners were affected when lies and rumours were spread about them online.

Bandura's (1986) SCT also suggests that there are people who believe they can control and deal with possible threats and as a result become fearless and unshaken. Few learners in both schools indicated that the spreading of lies and rumours did not affect them. They stated as follows:

*"I ignored the rumours." "I did not care because the rumours did not mean anything to me." "I did not really entertain the rumours and I told the person to stop." "I did not mind them because their opinion about me doesn't matter." "I was not upset or depressed. I was fine with it because it was a friend playing a joke on WhatsApp."*

In both schools, learners who were involved in lying and spreading rumours about others on the internet responded that they did it for the following reasons:

*"They were teasing me and making fun of me." "That person once tried to boss me around and I refused, and she used to hate me." "I wanted the person to feel bad." "I was angry and disappointed with that person." "I was upset with them about things they have said behind my back." "I wanted the person to feel the pain that I felt." "She spread rumours about me too." "The person was mean, and this made me very angry." "I was trying to fit in." "I wanted revenge for something the other person had done." "I was going through a phase but also we had a fight and competition to see who can get that girl." "It's because I hated her."*

The above statements indicate that the learners performed behaviours that were against their moral standards. In other words, they got involved in cyberbullying as perpetrators (Bauman & Pero, 2011; Pornari & Wood, 2010).

The victims' reactions after lies and rumours were spread about them online show how hurt they felt emotionally when they were attacked aggressively and violently by the perpetrators. The bullies' reasons for lying and spreading rumours about someone online indicate a lack of emotion towards the victims resulting in aggressive behaviour.

Two learners displayed feelings of guilt and shame after hurting the victims. They wrote as follows:

*"I was angry but wished that I had not done what I did." "It was because they were spreading rumours about my family, but I learned from my mistakes."*

One learner wrote:

*"It was a prank and everyone knew that, so the person was cool with it."*

With regard to what they fear most about lying and spreading rumours on social media, some learners in both schools wrote the following:

*“It could spread all over the world, and I could have a bad record, and my mom would even know about this and it could kill me.” “Everyone can see that, and you can feel embarrassed, scared and there will be no one to support you.” “Someone may stalk me online and maybe tell nasty things about me and say things that may convince people that I am a bad person and end up having a bad reputation.” “Social networks are very dangerous, and people might be sending fake information about you.” “Someone will say something mean and horrible and pass it on to other people as a rumour, then everyone will turn against me and I will end up not having friends because of something that is not true.” “Someone close to you bullies you on social media anonymously and spreads rumours about you and tells people things about you that are personal and confidential.” “I fear about my reaction as I am very short tempered and emotional. I would feel offended about the bad things people would say about me.” That frightens me because this person might be stalking me, and I knew nothing about it.” “People posting my confidential information to bring me down, judging and picking on me and talking about my life behind my back.” “Everyone will know your secrets and make fun of you.” “Your personal information is circulated, and people disrespect you.” “Someone can say bad stuff about a person and not caring what the victim is going through.” “People would hate me after seeing or reading what has been written or posted about me.” “Feeling hurt and ashamed of what people say about you on the internet.” “That I will be scared and might be afraid to go out in public because someone spread rumours about me.” “That people might spread false information about myself.”*

### **6.3.2 Calling someone names on the internet**

Table 5.21 again indicates that there is no significant difference in the percentages of boys and girls relating to calling someone names on the internet. Some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High school responded that when someone called them names, they ignored or deleted the messages and blocked the numbers. These are some of their responses:

*“I deleted the comment and ignored the person.” “I did not pay attention to it.” “I just ignored them and carried on with my life.” “I just ignored the message and blocked the person.” “I didn’t take it to heart and I just ignored them because I did not want to entertain them.” “Firstly, I laughed at that person even though I was hurt and ignored it because the message was not true and I blocked that person.” “I just let it go because I knew that it is not true and really did not have time to entertain the insults.”*

According to Bauman and Pero (2011) and Pornari and Wood (2010), adolescents with high levels of moral disengagement are more likely to engage in traditional bullying or cyberbullying or both. In this case, learners showed that they were morally engaged since they decided not to fight back.

One of the learners responded as follows:

*“I ignored it because I was the cause of it. I commented on an old lady’s picture and she started calling me names. I even cancelled Facebook.”*

Perren and Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger (2012) point out that the individual may decide whether to undertake the intended behaviour or not depending on his or her moral standards. The learner felt guilty and decided to ignore the old lady’s confrontation.

Two learners responded:

*“I did nothing because I knew I would get into trouble if I had said something.” “I tried to ignore it although I was depressed. I haven’t talked to anyone about this because I am afraid.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School some learners also chose not to fight back. This is how they reacted:

*“I ignored the person calling me names that I am funny and ugly.” “I just blocked that person.” “I just kept quiet and laughed because it was funny.” “It was just a joke, so I really didn’t get angry or worked up.” “I left Facebook. If the people who saw the rumours and made fun of me are my friends, then they are not real friends.” “I just shut my mouth because there was nothing I could do about it.” “I thanked them and told them that I am beautiful in my own way.” “I deleted the message and the persons.” “I ignored him and he got irritated and stopped because he could see I was doing nothing about it.” “I was angry but I did nothing.”*

In both schools some victims knew who the bullies were since most bullying took place on WhatsApp group. As a result, they reacted as follows:

*“I told him to stop spreading bad things about me on WhatsApp and promised to hit him if he continues.” “I told them to stop what they were doing, or I was going to block them.” “I had a serious fight with the person and I almost killed him, but they stopped me.” “I called him and told him that I would tell my parents to confront him. He was scared and he apologised and we became friends.” “I told them to stop then said something to make them scared.” “I just told everyone that he is stupid and just trying to get attention.” “I tried to tell that person to stop, he swore at me and I did the same and blocked him.” “I sent an anonymous message*

*to this person asking them to meet up at a shop and I confronted them.” “I made fun of the person and encouraged others to do the same.” “I confronted the girl and told her to stay out of my life.” “I told them how I felt and that I was going to do something bad to them too.” “I told them that I did not care about what they said. They were just jealous of me. They wanted to be like me but they could not, so they chose to call me names.” “I told them that they can make fun of me all they want because I know that I am not what they said I am.”*

Few learners in both schools decided to contact their families and teachers in order to ease the pain that they felt and to sort out their bullying experiences. They wrote as follows:

*“I ignored it but my mom phoned the person and shouted at her.” “I told my mom and sister and they sorted it out.” “I told the bully to back off, then I told my teacher.” “I told my parents and my teachers.” “I told my mother and the bully also told her mother. A meeting took place at school and the matter was resolved. The bully and I are now friends.” “I asked my older brothers to sort him up.” “I told my parents and they told me to ignore it.”*

This contact with families and teachers can be related to the SET, which states that when children experience a problem, they decide to have a direct contact with the structures that comprise the microsystem, that is, family, peers and school.

Some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School responded that they called someone names online because they were irritating and mean and they made them feel bad, upset and angry. They wrote as follows:

*“That person did not want to leave me alone and he was sending me sexual pictures.” “I did not know the person and he kept sending bad messages.” “I was angry because they had posted a nasty picture of myself online for everyone to see.” “The person was full of themselves and was being racist and this offended me because I am mixed race (half South African, half European).” “He was making me very angry because he always liked interfering into people’s businesses, and to stop him I thought it would be a good thing to call him names.” “He said something bad about my parents and insulted me about my lifestyle.” “They were ruining the fun in the group by correcting the slang and this was annoying.” “He broke my friend’s heart, and as a group we insulted him.” “That person made me angry that day so I just started calling them names.”*

At Phumelele Boys High School, learners’ reasons for calling people names included the following:

*“He had recently angered me.” “We were calling each other names because of our breakup.” “The person was spreading lies about me.” “Because she dumped me.” “I wanted to be cool and make other people laugh.” “I wanted revenge*

*because of what she said to me.” “He started swearing at me and we ended up swearing at each other.”*

Being called names on the internet disturbed some learners who felt emotionally offended by the bullies’ aggressive behaviour. In both schools, learners engaged in abnormal behaviour which created pressure for corrective action. Patchin and Hinduja (2010) point out that bullying others is one such corrective action.

With regard to fears about being called names, some learners mentioned the following:

*“I fear people saying nasty things about me which may affect the way I feel about myself.” “I fear the bad comments these people write about others and continue hurting others.”*

### **6.3.3 Circulating an email supposed to be confidential**

The majority of learners in both schools pointed out that they do not use the email to communicate to others. This is confirmed in Table 5.21 which shows a small percentage of boys and girls who use the email. Learners indicated how helpless they felt when their emails which were supposed to be confidential were circulated. They wrote as follows:

*“I felt alone, scared, not knowing what I had done.” “I was just angry and I could not confront them since they were anonymous.” “I asked them how they got hold of my email address and then told my mom and she sorted it out.” “I tried to tell them to stop.” “I felt angry and sad because the person who I sent the email to violated my trust.” “I felt bad but I told them I did not care because they were not supposed to read it anyway.” “It affected my reputation at school.” “It made me feel embarrassed and people laughed when they saw me.” “I couldn’t sleep thinking about this.” “I was angry, but the person was very apologetic, so I forgave them.” “I had no self-esteem for quite a while after that incident. I was depressed”.*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, one learner responded:

*“It didn’t have much of an effect because most people knew about it.”*

In response as to why they circulated an email supposed to be confidential, few learners in both schools wrote:

*“I wanted everyone to see what type of a person she was and that she was mean.” “I wanted to share the message with a very close friend.” “Because I thought they were gossiping about me.” “Because she was not telling me what I wanted to know about her boyfriend.” “I wanted revenge for all the bullying that I got from that”*

*person.” “I wanted revenge because that person keeps haunting me every day of my life.” “I wanted to see if she was cheating on me or not.” “I wanted my friend to know what they had said about him.” “I was very curious about what they were hiding.”*

This shows that learners circulated someone’s emails out of curiosity and revenge. In other words, learners acted immorally without feeling any guilt. It is also clear that the intention of the perpetrators’ aggressive behaviour was to hurt the victims emotionally. Only one learner expressed that he felt guilty for circulating someone’s email and he wrote:

*“Curiosity made me do it but it was wrong of me to do so.”*

#### **6.3.4 Taking and circulating a cell phone picture of someone else online without permission**

Table 5.21 shows that more females than males had their cell phone pictures taken and circulated without their permission.

Some learners wrote the following fears relating to their pictures being posted online:

*“When someone posts my pictures to people that I do not know.” “People posting photos of myself and calling me names.” “When someone takes my picture while I am half-naked and sends it to everyone.” “When people circulate confidential information about you or circulate a photo they took of you without your permission.” “Sometimes older people lie about their age and send you airtime and ask you to send them pictures of yourself half-naked. These pictures can be circulated around the world.” “Getting negative comments from someone for the world to see after posting a picture of myself.” “I fear the part where bullies post embarrassing and unappealing photos on the internet.” “When someone forces you to do things you don’t want like telling you to send naked pictures.” “I fear some editing or photoshopping of my picture and posting it on the internet. You can’t undo it and you can’t delete it from other people’s phones.” “When your boyfriend asks you to send him inappropriate picture of yourself and posts it on social media and tells your parents about it.”*

The responses of learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School show how upset they were, and they handled the situation as follows:

*“I told them to stop because it is not cool taking people’s pictures without asking.” “I told her that she had no right and I told my mother and she was told to never do it again.” “I did the same with their pictures.” “I personally deleted my picture from their cell phone.” “I confronted them and told them that if they do it again, I would ask my mom to open a case.” “I ignored it at first but later I was so angry that I deleted my WhatsApp.” “I just took the most embarrassing picture of them and did the same thing.” “I phoned and confronted the person. He said he would*

*never do it again.” “I asked them nicely to delete the picture.” “I told the person to delete my photo and to stop putting it as his profile picture on WhatsApp.” “It was my cousin, so I am safe because he is family, but I scolded him and I don’t think he will ever do it again.” “I stopped posting photos of myself”. “I told them to stop because they wouldn’t like it if I did the same to them.” “I confronted the person although I did not have a problem with the picture because I looked good” “I tried to stop the person but they did not listen and carried on.” “I confronted the person because I did not like what she was doing. She was sending my pictures to all her friends.” “I told the person to stop interfering in my privacy and I told my older sister” “I told my mum and she sorted it out, but I still don’t feel good.”*

Some learners at Phumelele Boys’ High School also were not happy that their pictures were taken without their permission and this is how they reacted:

*“I told him to delete it and he posted the pic on Facebook then I blocked him.” “I yelled at that person and told her not to do that again.” “I threatened to beat him.” “I deleted the pictures.” “I got angry and told him never to touch my phone ever again though he sent a video of me.” “I told that person to never touch my phone and then after that I put a password on my phone.” “I got angry for a while with the person but I forgave that person.” “My friend told me and there was nothing I could do because I did not know the person who did it.”*

The anger expressed by some learners created a desire for revenge, motivated action and lowered the victims’ inhibitions (Froggio, 2007). Some learners became angry and confrontational and ordered the bullies to delete the pictures. Others decided to do what the bullies had done to them. This means that they behaved aggressively and became emotionally violent towards the bullies.

In both schools, some learners did not mind having their pictures circulated online for the following reasons:

*“I did nothing because I looked pretty in that picture.” “I did nothing because it was my boyfriend.” “I was fine with it because the picture was appropriate.” “Nothing, it was not a bad picture and the girl was my friend.” “At first I felt quite mad, but it was nothing serious because it was not an inappropriate or nude picture.” “At first I did not know what picture it was and when I found out it was not such a bad picture I calmed down.” “I just walked away from that girl.” “It didn’t bother me that much. I told her not to do that again.” “I just ignored it because in social media it’s a norm these days.” “I did nothing because my pictures are just pictures that I take with my family.” “There wasn’t any problem because she wrote a good comment about it.” “I first wanted to punch him but I couldn’t because he was my best friend and I knew he was doing a joke on me.”*

This shows that the learners were not bothered as long as the pictures were taken by friends and family and were appropriate.

In the schools under study some learners responded that they took the cell phone pictures because they liked how the person looked. Others took the pictures to show off, for fun and for attention. Others mentioned that they thought it would not be a problem taking someone's picture. They wrote as follows:

*"I liked the picture and decided to save it." "I did it because I wanted to see the look on their face and I just put them as my display picture on WhatsApp. It was nothing serious." "It was a nice picture and when I asked him he said no, so I stole his phone and sent his picture to my phone via Share It." "It was just a random picture and when I showed that person after a few weeks, she said there was no problem." "It was my friend's picture and I liked it. My friend did not mind because I did not post it online." "I just took the picture of that person because I wanted to put them as my profile picture since their birthday was coming up." "It was my friend's picture and I wanted to show off about what a beautiful friend I have. It was not a nasty picture." "I saw her that day and I took the cell phone picture in order to send it to her." "We were joking so it was not a private picture." "I was just fooling around but I did not post it on social media. I deleted it." "It was taken on their birthday." "I did it because the person did not want to send me her picture." "I was admiring her but she did not like it." "I did it in case they liked it, but I never posted it online." "It was a pretty picture and I saved it as a profile picture on my cellphone." "I am obsessed with the girl, so I wanted a pic of her." "I was just playing with him. It was nothing bad." "Because I wanted to get that person's attention." "A friend asked me to do so." "I like attention and I was bored." "I needed more pictures." "It was a beautiful girl, so I wanted to take a picture of her. She found out but she was cool with it." "I did it to have a good laugh because the situation he was in was quite hilarious but I never posted it on social networks. I deleted it."*

Table 5.21 also shows no significant difference in percentages of boys and girls who took and circulated cell phone pictures of others online. Few learners took and circulated the cell phone pictures for revenge and they responded as follows:

*"I just wanted to take a picture of someone as payback because they did it to me." "I was irritated about the bad treatment I received from her at school." "They did it to me before. So, I took a picture of them to show what they did was wrong."*

This type of behaviour can be related to the role of moral disengagement introduced by Bandura (1986) in his SCT theory. In this case, adolescents have higher levels of moral disengagement and are more likely to engage in cyberbullying others (Bauman & Pero, 2011; Pornari & Wood, 2010).

Few learners expressed the following fears relating to someone taking and circulating a cellphone picture of themselves online:

*“People sending embarrassing images of me.” “Someone hacking into my Instagram account and posting nude pics.” “If someone posts a bad picture of myself on the internet.”*

### **6.3.5 Saying something sexual and offensive about someone on the internet**

Again, Table 5.21 indicates low percentages of boys and girls who were affected when someone said something sexual and offensive about them online. Some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School responded as follows when someone said something sexual and offensive about them on the internet:

*“It made me feel uncomfortable and sad.” “I was shocked because it had never happened to me before.” “I felt very uncomfortable and I blocked the person and confided to my friend.” “I felt disgusted, dirty, angry and sad.” “I found it kind of funny because this person knew I could block them and deny them access to my phone.” “I felt angry and tempted to confront the person and beat them up.” “I felt like a prostitute.” “I was angry and confronted them.” “I did the same.” “It made me feel embarrassed to be seen as a sexual object.” “I felt angry because he was asking me to send him naked pictures of myself.” “It made me feel unsure about my sexuality.” “I felt lonely and thought maybe I had a wrong body and my image was somehow not good enough.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, learners responded as follows:

*“I felt upset because they said I’m gay and I told the teacher.” “I felt a bit angry and lonely.” “I felt scared because I didn’t know who it was.” “I told my parents and the police.” “It made me feel unsafe and weak towards other people.” “It was a girl saying that I look sexy and she just wants to eat me, that made me feel insecure and scared.” “It made me feel lonely, I actually did not trust myself.” “I was very angry and disappointed.” “It made me feel angry but I got over it quickly.” “I really felt lost about that issue.”*

The responses given by the learners above indicate how emotionally and deeply affected they became as a result of the aggressive behaviour from the perpetrators. According to Bauman and Yoon (2014), cyberbullying is an additional weapon used by the perpetrators as it includes anonymity, increased online cruelty, huge size of potential audience and the permanence of content.

Few learners said something sexual and offensive to others out of revenge and anger. The low percentages in Table 5.21 of boys and girls who said something sexual and offensive to others online support this. Three learners responded as follows:

*“I don’t like that person and they need to know.” “I did it out of revenge because they had angered me and called me names.” “I was angry and wanted to embarrass them.”*

This kind of reaction can be associated with Ang and Goh’s (2010) belief that male and female adolescents who lack empathy score higher in cyberbullying behaviour.

Few learners stated the following fears concerning someone saying something sexual and offensive online:

*“Someone saying something sexual and offensive online and that staying for a long time online and the person who has been offended ending up committing suicide.” “When people send you sexual horrifying or bad messages through cellphones or social media.”*

### **6.3.6 Sending someone a threatening anonymous SMS**

During lesson presentation, some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School mentioned that they had received threatening anonymous SMS’s before, but could not tell what they were about. Others shared the following experiences:

Learner 18:

*“I received an SMS that says like ‘searchsearch@privatephoto’. I told my mom and she said I should block the number and I did, but somehow, somewhere, they got my number on WhatsApp. That person showed a picture of me and I am naked, and I am like I didn’t do that, but then that person photoshopped me and took everything. My mom and I went to the police. The person was found guilty and was sent to a juvenile prison. He did not stay that long because he was 14 years old.”*

Learner 19:

*“I received an SMS with a lot of swearing and strong language from an anonymous person. I replied to the message hoping the swearing would stop but it continued. I then decided to block the number.”*

Learner 20:

*“My friend used to receive upsetting SMS’s from a stranger asking her if she was still a virgin, and if so, should they meet. Even though my friend blocked the stranger’s number, she kept receiving the nasty messages.”*

At Phumelele Boys' High School, learners disclosed the following experiences:

Learner 21:

*"I posted a video of myself on WhatsApp and someone sent me an SMS commenting about how bad I looked. This hurt me so much that I decided to ignore the message. The bullying later on stopped."*

Learner 22:

*"I posted a photo of myself on WhatsApp and received an SMS from a private number saying that I am ugly and that I should go back to my country. This hurt me a lot and I blocked the number. I told my parents who advised me to stop using WhatsApp and concentrate on my studies."*

Learner 23:

*"I received an upsetting SMS from my ex-girlfriend who wanted to end the relationship. This made me very sad. I shared this information with my mother who told me to distance myself from my ex-girlfriend."*

Learner 24:

*"My friend received an SMS from one of his friends saying that his best friend had been involved in a car accident. The friend made things worse by sending the picture of an injured person. My friend showed the picture to his father who decided to give his son's friend a call to find out what had happened. The friend responded that he was joking, and this made everyone very angry."*

In Chapter 5, Table 5.2 shows that 22.8% boys and girls had received threatening anonymous SMS's from others and 7.6% had sent threatening SMS's to others. In both schools, some learners responded that they ignored, blocked and deleted the threatening anonymous SMS's. They wrote as follows:

*"I ignored it. I actually did not care and I was not afraid." "I blocked her and I know for sure it was a girl and never made contact with her ever again." "I blocked them and carried on with my life." "I ignored the person and blocked them." "I immediately blocked them and deleted the message." "I did nothing. If I had retaliated the matter would've become worse." "I didn't take it seriously." "I did not do anything. I ignored the person."*

Others were affected by the threatening SMS's and they decided to do something in order to lessen the pain caused by cyberbullying. They responded as follows:

*"I responded back in a mean way." "I told my older sister and she advised me that if I know the person I should report him or her." "I got scared and deleted the number." "I told my mom and she called the person and told him to leave me alone." "I told my mother and she downloaded an app that can block SMS messages." "I told my grandmother who told me to ignore it." "I showed my*

*friends and my cousin and they found out who that person was and they got into deep trouble.” “I fought back and the person could not handle me anymore.” “I asked my mum to help me and we went to the police station to trace the number and the person was found.” “I told my mother and my mother advised me to block the number.” “I told her to back off and leave me alone.” “I told a teacher at school because I knew that it was someone from school.” “I told the person to stop threatening me and that I am not scared.” “I told my parents because I was so afraid.” “I told my mom and she took my cellphone.” “I told my parents and they went to the police station to report it.” “I alerted my parents about it because I did not know where the message came from.” “I told my parents about it and we hired a professional investigator to look into the problem. The investigator found the person and we confronted them and excluded them from our WhatsApp group at school.” “I told him I’m ready to be threatened and promised to hit him so bad.”*

The threatening messages were bothersome to the learners and most of them contacted their families, teachers and peers in order to stop the aggressive behaviour and to ease the pain of being hurt emotionally. According to Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) SET, this direct contact comprises the microsystem and the interaction of learners with family and teachers comprises the mesosystem.

Learners in both schools responded that they sent the threatening anonymous SMS for revenge and as a joke. They wrote as follows:

*“He was bullying my friend.” “She was annoying and thinking that she is better than other people.” “They were threatening me so I had to reply.” “They made my relative feel small, so I decided to send them a threatening message to show how dangerous I am.” “I was upset and I was not thinking.” “I wanted to make them feel bad.” “I wanted to see what that person would have done.” “Because he was spreading rumours about me.” “It was just a prank” “I was feeling so bored and just wanted to have fun, so I sent the threatening message to make the person feel frightened.”*

The above responses show that learners were morally disengaged and this means that they performed behaviours that were against their moral standards without shame.

The fears expressed by few learners when someone sends them threatening anonymous SMSs included the following:

*“Constantly receiving threatening and nasty messages from someone I do not know.” “That someone can hack on to your phone and send nasty threats and say things that are not true.” “An anonymous person sending you threats or unpleasant pictures.”*

### 6.3.7 Ignoring or not talking to someone on the internet while chatting with others

In Chapter, Table 5.21 indicates that more females than males were ignored or not talked to by

someone on the internet. The feelings expressed by some learners at Sizakala Girls' High School when someone ignored or not talked to them on the internet were anger, pain, frustration, loneliness, depression, stress, sadness, rejection, neglect, powerlessness, uselessness and embarrassment. Others mentioned that they felt worried, upset, bad, left out, unimportant, unwanted, non-existent, small, less special, miserable, not good enough, ugly and unpopular. Some learners stated as follows:

*"I felt bad because I was never ignored in my life. So, I was depressed for weeks."*  
*"I was annoyed because they were still online and kept ignoring me."* *"It made me feel sad, neglected and lonely and I thought they were jealous of me."* *"I felt unwanted by that person because I thought we were friends."* *"It was painful because it was someone I really love."* *"I felt lonely and thought that maybe I wasn't treating that person properly."* *"It made me think that the person was not my true friend and that she did not like me."* *"I thought she did not want to talk to me."* *"I felt as if she did not like me or I was annoying."* *"I was really angry because I was trying to communicate with the person."*

The above responses show how emotionally affected and extremely hurt these learners were when they were ignored on the internet. Other learners mentioned that being ignored on the internet did not affect them. They responded as follows:

*"I did the same and when he talked to me two weeks later, I ignored him for two months."* *"I did not mind because I had someone to chat with."* *"I did not worry because I knew that the person was going to talk to me when done talking to others."* *"I did not care. I did not need the person to chat with me because I have lots of friends."* *"I didn't care, and I chatted to someone else."* *"I did not care, and I blocked the person."* *"I was not angry because I thought he did it on purpose."*

Some learners at Phumelele Boys' High School expressed feelings similar to those expressed by Sizakala Girls High School learners. These included feeling embarrassed, angry, confused, sad, lonely, worried, upset, rejected, unloved, unwanted, forgotten, stressed, left out, depressed, disrespected, neglected, betrayed, mad and terrible. Others mentioned the following:

*"I felt sad, but I moved on with my life."* *"It made me feel left out for a while then after that I didn't care."* *"My girlfriend ignored me on WhatsApp, and I felt like I don't want to have a girlfriend again."* *"I felt depressed because I lost that someone or that someone hates me."* *"It made me upset because people said bad things*

*about me.” “I felt curious as to what I had done wrong.” “It made me feel like that person and I were not friends.”*

Four learners were not affected for being ignored by others on the internet and they responded as follows:

*“I didn’t really care unless what I had to say was important.” “I was chilled because I practically didn’t care about the person.” “I was relieved because he was always a pain in my neck.” “It was ok because I do that sometimes.”*

Being ignored or not talked to by others online can be associated with Joliffe & Farrington’s (2006) belief that low empathy levels are strongly linked to higher levels of aggression and bullying incidents in the school setting. The suggestion by Ang and Goh (2010) that empathy training be included in the agenda of teachers and policy makers interested in reducing the incidences of online behaviour should be considered.

At Sizakala Girls’ High School, some learners indicated that they ignored or not talked to someone on the internet for the following reasons:

*“He talked to me when he liked.” “That person was annoying me and always saying silly things and childish things” “I did it to avoid conflict and being threatened.” “It was because that person just likes talking too much and saying bad things about other people.” “I wanted them to feel worried and beg me to chat with them.” “I was busy talking to others and the person would understand.” “I did it on purpose because she said something to make me angry.” “That person would get so annoying and would not leave me alone.” “If I am angry at someone, I ignore them and block them and when I don’t feel any anger, I reply back to them.” “They were annoying me, and they were talking about stuff that I was not interested in.” “We were best friends and then she got new friends and left me, but when those friends left her, she wanted to be my friend again.” “I was busy looking for information for my school work but would answer them afterwards.” “This happened after we had an argument at school which led to a disagreement regarding a certain topic.” “I did not like the person.” “They ganged up on me and bullied me.” “They are just gossiping and spreading rumours.” “Because they spread rumours about me but they did not know I knew.” “The person is not my close friend.” “I tend to ignore someone if we do not talk a lot.” “I was very angry and did not like the person.” “They asked for my pictures and this annoyed me.” “I was busy with others and it was not my intention.” “I had a fight with them and did not feel like talking to them.” “I did it because I did not know how to respond.” “They irritated me and if I talked to them I would have said something I would regret.” “I did not want to talk to that person, she had been gossiping about me saying bad things.” “The person was irritating asking for my nude pictures.” “It is because some people think that they are the only ones we must talk to which is why it’s better to ignore them and don’t give them attention.” “Because she was*

*talking badly about my friend.” “That person asked me a lot of questions and it’s the same questions everyday so I thought ignoring would be better.” “It was someone I didn’t know.” “He was annoying because he was busy saying that he loves me and can’t stop loving me.” “I didn’t have time for that person.”*

Learners at Phumelele Boys’ High School indicated that they felt irritable, betrayed, angry, annoyed, bored, and some did it for revenge. Their responses were as follows:

*“He also ignored me.” “They were annoying me on WhatsApp sending me lots of messages.” “We just did not get along.” “I did it because that person had said something offensive to me.” “That person had made me angry and also he had insulted my family members.” “He wasn’t my friend so I ignored him.” “She kept on talking about adult stuff which I thought wasn’t suitable for young people like us.” “That person irritated me, so I just decided to ignore him.” “They told my best friend that I was stupid and I blocked that person.” “They had bullied me on that day, so I decided to block them on the WhatsApp group.” “She was being forward.” “I had family problems and my mind was somewhere else.” “This person was a very rude person, so I ignored him.” “Because I was chatting to my mom or my other friends.” “They were irritating so I ignored them.” “I just didn’t feel like talking to her.” “The person treated me in an unfair manner.” “Those people sometimes give you a hard time or lie to you or you are not interested in them anymore.” “They were annoying because they kept asking me who I like or who I’m dating.”*

Some of the responses given above by learners in both schools seem to be logical since they were trying to avoid further bullying.

The responses indicated below show that cyberbullying can affect the victims’ self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect. In this regard, learners wrote as follows:

*“Cyberbullying can lower your self-esteem and make you feel less important.” “Cyberbullying can make you feel less confident and bad about yourself and it can affect your participation at school and leave a scar on our life.” “Losing my self-respect and ending up being alone.” “I can lose my self-respect and brutal people with no care of other human feeling can take it away from me and turn me into a joke.” “Losing my self-respect and ending up being alone.” “Your personal information is circulated, and people disrespect you.” “I fear people saying nasty things about me which may affect the way I feel about myself.”*

Cyberbullying may also lead to victims attempting or committing suicide, especially if the bullying persists and the messages become viral. The victim may keep quiet about the bullying instead of seeking help. Some learners mentioned the following fears regarding suicide:

*“Victims may have suicidal thoughts and may end up committing suicide.” “I fear making wrong decisions like hurting someone or committing suicide.” “People might ruin my reputation and this may lead me to killing myself.” “People can attack you out of jealousy. Victims may kill themselves.” “I fear being uncomfortable and having a low self-esteem and end up killing myself.” “I fear doing something I might regret like attempting suicide.” “I fear being` victimised and my privacy invaded and thinking about committing suicide.” “That the bullies might push you to the point that will make you commit suicide or could make you feel miserable and depressed.” “Bullies may use your past and hurt you. Some victims may commit suicide.” “People looking at me differently and being afraid and chances are I may commit suicide.” “People who are very sensitive may attempt or commit suicide.” “Being depressed and wanting to commit suicide.”*

#### **6.4 CAUSES OF CYBERBULLYING**

Hoff and Mitchell (2009) mentioned relationship problems, that is, break-ups, envy, intolerance, and ganging up as some of the causes of cyberbullying. Their study involved a survey on students who stated that romantic break-ups can cause feelings of rejection, envy and anger, and this may lead into retaliation and cyberbullying. The perpetrators can communicate using websites, text messages, email and blogs. Students also reported that cyberbullying stems from envy which develops when individuals are romantically attracted to others who reject them; intolerance whereby perpetrators resort to cyberbullying to vent frustration in order to feel better about themselves and ganging up on a person as a form of rejection and isolating the person from a group. The intention is to make the victim feel unhappy and have negative feelings. Ganging up on a person enables perpetrators to establish their own place in the group.

During group presentations, learners were asked to indicate what they thought were the causes of cyberbullying. Again, the participants who took part in the focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews were asked to point out what the causes of cyberbullying are and to respond to the research question: “Why do boys and girls engage in cyberbullying?”

During group presentations, three learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School mentioned the following causes of cyberbullying:

Learner 25:

*“Bullies bully because they feel depressed or angry and may decide to hurt others.”*

Learner 26:

*“Cyberbullying may occur as a result of a relationship breakup and this may lower the victim’s self-esteem and may lead to the victim committing suicide.”*

Learner 27:

*“People bully others through the internet because they want to embarrass or hurt their feelings. Another reason why people bully might be that they are jealous and angry at someone for what they have and might take out all that anger to someone else or have an argument with someone else. A person may, after arguing with a best friend decide to go to social media and post all the bad things that the best friend had said about other people, some of which may not be true.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, one learner mentioned the following causes of cyberbullying:

Learner 28:

*“Romantic breakups and fights with friends may cause individuals to get angry and say bad things about someone through social media, and other people may join and add comments. Also sending SMS’s that are insulting or hurtful may cause a person a lot of stress and anxiety.”*

Sizakala Girls’ High School focus group participants mentioned jealousy, anger, entertainment, envy, being scared of others who had bullied them before, being neglected by their families and revenge as reasons why people cyberbully others (interview question 9).

Nomso:

*“The bullies are scared to show true selves to others, they are hiding behind computers or whatever device they are using to hurt someone’s feelings, or maybe it may be out of jealousy or anger or something that someone might have done to them. Maybe now they have forgotten about it or they still remember because what they did might have hurt them so much that they come back for revenge.”*

Vinotha:

*“They are scared to come face-to-face with the person they cyberbully. They are scared of the person and they see social network as a better way of bullying.”*

Helen:

*“People bully others online because the same has happened to them and they let their anger out to someone else. Also, when they feel they are not needed like they are not special, they become aggressive and make other people feel small and insecure and this makes them feel better.”*

Lisa:

*“I think some people cyberbully because they do not get attention from their families, so they think of using social media to cyberbully others.”*

Verushka:

*“People who are envious of others’ relationships or have had relationship breakups or people who are depressed and stressed may decide to cyberbully others.”*

Zinhle: *“Sometimes it is entertaining to just say nasty things about someone when you know that nothing is gonna happen because it is happening online. Also, people who are jealous of someone for something they have, and they don’t have may decide to cyberbully that person.”*

Phila added: *“Some do it just to keep their friends. For example, your friend may be threatened or cyberbullied. Then you decide to get involved to help your friend. Your friend tells others, then you become this popular person just because you have helped your friend. You then decide to fight back and cyberbully this person just to keep the friendship.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, the focus group participants responded as follows:

Xola: *“Maybe because they are jealous of being dumped. And they also try to harm others or to break them down. So, the bully will try to put another person down in order to feel stronger.”*

Jack *“People bully in order to feel better about themselves.”*

Phillip: *“People cyberbully others because they themselves have been bullied and they retaliate.”*

Phindile: *“They bully because they are depressed and angry or maybe they are experiencing bullying at home.”*

Duma: *“People want to be famous and they want to be followed.”*

The LO Head at Sizakala Girls’ High School mentioned anonymity as one of the causes (interview question 2), since there is no face-to-face communication or real emotion in cyberbullying.

LO Head: *“I think it’s because there is no personal communication as in face-to-face, so there is no real emotion. So, bullies create rules on their own. So, when they are communicating to each other, they can say whatever they want, because they don’t have to face the person.”*

Mrs Jones mentioned lack of empathy on the part of the perpetrators as another cause of cyberbullying:

*“I think they know who they target and it’s normally a reserved child who doesn’t speak up, so they look at the qualities of that particular learner and they target them. You will have lots of popular kids ganging up on not so popular kids and victimizing them whether it’s before school, after school or during break. They know that that child won’t say anything because she is so quiet.”*

Mrs Black emphasised anonymity and accessibility as well as jealousy, envy and cowardice as causes of cyberbullying:

*“Cyberbullying happens because children have access to these devices. They probably would be bullies anyway although cyberbullying, I think it can be more anonymous. You don’t have to say who you are and I think a lot of people are jealous, they are envious, they are cowards, all of those reasons that they use bullying and these ones particularly who use devices they are cowards.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ High School, the LO Head mentioned that the bully might be exposed to abuse resulting in bullying others.

LO Head: *“I think it stems from the actual person who is doing the bullying being exposed to some sort of abuse themselves and the abuse tends to come out of that person as a form of bullying through and to other learners.”*

The LO teachers responded:

Mr Fraser: *“Jealousy and peer pressure.”*

Mr Barnes: *“One of the causes of cyberbullying is accessibility of information that is out there, so learners are able to access information by internet in a very fast way. Another cause of cyberbullying is anonymity, the ability to be in a space that you feel that you can say anything. Another cause is watching on what other people are doing in some ways and getting away with it. Low self-esteem is another cause. People usually bully others because they themselves have a low self-esteem. So, they feel that if they can pick up somebody on the internet, they feel that they might feel better about themselves. People are living in their own bubbles in terms of their own information or their own worldview, because if the whole world is on the internet, then everything that they perceive on the internet is true. So therefore, that’s another reason why people feel like it’s ok to bully others and also some people feel like it’s ok to be bullied on the internet. There is a point where the victim also feels like because it’s on the internet, it’s not real bullying whereas in actual fact it is.”*

Mr Davis: *“The causes are maybe revenge, sometimes maybe just playing around, messing around.”*

Mr Holmes: *“I think the causes of cyberbullying amongst learners is probably they themselves are being bullied, maybe they have low self-esteem, poor relationships at home or low self-image.”*

The causes of cyberbullying mentioned by the participants can be linked to the role of moral disengagement and lack of empathy on the part of the perpetrators who perform behaviours that are against their moral values without remorse.

## **6.5 STRATEGIES TO ADOPT IN CURBING CYBERBULLYING AND ITS EFFECTS ON VICTIMS**

The participants were afforded an opportunity to divulge the tentative strategies that can be adopted as a means to reduce or curb cyberbullying and its effects on victims. They were asked to respond to the question: ‘What strategies could be used to reduce the incidences of cyberbullying and its effects on victims?’ Item No. 36 of the questionnaire required learners to write comments and suggestions about cyberbullying. Participants who took part in the focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews were also required to respond to questions dealing with the strategies that can be used to reduce cyberbullying incidences.

### **6.5.1 Comments about cyberbullying**

In the course of group presentations, learners in both schools made the following comments:

*“Cyberbullies enjoy bullying others, making them feel smaller and weaker. Cyberbullies believe that they are superior to the victim. Cyberbullying is wrong because it hurts someone emotionally and this could lead the bully to attempt suicide. Sometimes people post stuff on Facebook and say ‘you are ugly, why don’t you kill yourself?’ The victim may take this personally and decide to take his or her own life, and nobody would come forward and take responsibility for killing someone.”*

*“Cyberbullying is disrespecting other young individuals on the internet and that this form of bullying has caused many teens to commit suicide.”*

*“It is usually people that have issues at home who cyberbully others in order to feel good about themselves and become superior and more powerful. Bullies could post nasty comments about a person and turn others against that person. This can make the bully feel good, knowing that nobody likes the victim. A person may seek a relationship with someone else who refuses. The rejected person will feel bad and may end up sending anonymous and threatening messages online.”*

*“People who use social media could become victims on WhatsApp or Facebook. As a victim, you might be involved in being catfished. Catfishing is where a person fakes identity on a social network account for criminal purpose.”*

*“Cyberbullying is bullying someone on social platforms, intentionally and more than once. In my group no one had experienced cyberbullying. If you have been cyberbullied, you are most likely to get angry and hurt and feel pain.”*

*“Most of the people in my group had been cyberbullied before and what they felt was pain and betrayal.”*

*“Traditional bullying and cyberbullying are not right since they hurt people’s feelings. Cyberbullying may destroy a person’s self-esteem and the victim may become defenseless and have suicidal thoughts. It is very easy for cyberbullies to get access to people and their information and those people may become victims.”*

*“Negative remarks and rude and nasty comments made by cyberbullies about a person on social media include calling people names and discriminating against a person repeatedly. Cyberbullies may be having fun doing bad things, but to the victim, being cyberbullied is not funny.”*

*“Cyberbullies need help because they may have issues at home and their self-esteem may be very low.”*

*“It hurts a lot when people tell you or send you messages on social media that make you lose your self-confidence. Cyberbullying might affect people and discourage them because of the bad things that the bullies say about them online. Bullies might be the people you know as well as people you do not know.”*

*“Both traditional bullying and cyberbullying can be very painful and can make the victim feel very sad and embarrassed. Bullies enjoy seeing other people hurt and unhappy. Victims may have a very low self-esteem, and this may lead them to commit suicide. Cyberbullies make victims feel like they have nothing to achieve.”*

The first and last comments can be related to the study by Bauman, Toomey and Walker (2013) which investigated the associations among depression, suicidal behaviours and bullying and victimisation experiences among high school students. Results revealed that depression mediated the relationship between victimisation and suicide attempts.

Some learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School wrote the following comments in response to question 36 of the questionnaire:

*“Cyberbullying is very painful, and I do not wish this to happen to anyone in the world.”*

*“Cyberbullying hurts a person emotionally. A person may feel stressed and would not know what to do.”*

*“I don’t like cyberbullying because it is scary. You know nothing about that person but they already know so much about you.”*

*“If there was an age restriction for cellphones or no cell phones and no social media, things would be much better.”*

*“Bullies are people who come from a negative background and might have been bullied at home. So, they make others feel bad in order to make themselves feel better.”*

*“Cyberbullying can hurt people. Bullies do not care, and they just enjoy making fun of others.”*

*“People who bully are cowards because they can’t man up and say what they want to say to someone. Instead they hide behind a computer or cell phone.”*

*“People who cyberbully think about themselves and do not care about the victim.”*

*“People often hide what they feel and instead of talking to someone who listens, they take it out on social media. Not all cyberbullies are bad, they just need to be loved and they need someone to talk to.”*

Few learners at Phumelele Boys’ High School commented as follows:

*“Cyberbullying is bad because it may happen to children who can’t fight back.”*

*“Cyberbullying is very bad and can ruin someone’s life.”*

*“Cyberbullying is really hurtful, but you’ll get over it.”*

The above comments show how concerned learners are about the dangers associated with cyberbullying. However, Beger and Sinha (2012) believe that the offline human behaviour reflected online is to blame and the internet is not really dangerous. Therefore, Beger and Sinha propose that schools, parents, the young people as well as law enforcement agencies have a role to play in stopping cyberbullying.

### **6.5.2 Suggestions about cyberbullying**

The following suggestions were made during group presentations:

*“Learners should not use Facebook because it is full of stalkers who seek the attention of young people. If someone experiences cyberbullying, they should talk about it and not keep it inside.”*

*“If someone is sending you a message that is insulting on social media, do not respond. Just ignore the message.”*

*“Victims of cyberbullying should report the cyberbullying to a teacher to avoid being isolated and lonely, as this might help instead of bottling things up. Bottling things up may lead the victim to think that he or she is not good enough and end up either committing suicide or becoming a cyberbully. Furthermore, the victim may become very aggressive and find himself or herself in an awkward situation. At the same time, the victim may be scared and unable to respond to people who are trying to be nice to him or her.*”

*“Teenagers should start finding ways to stop cyberbullying and that it is unethical for the world to stand on the sideline and watch this. It is up to the youth to stop cyberbullying as the youth are the future leaders of South Africa.”*

*“People must be careful how they present themselves on social media.”*

*“Victims should tell an adult when they experience cyberbullying in order to reduce the pain.*”

The above suggestions can be associated with Kupczynski *et al.* (2013) who insist that adults should take cyberbullying very seriously and should not dismiss it as a normal phase of growing up. Since cyberbullying can be very complicated, adults should not suggest that the adolescent victims should turn off their electronic devices, as there are tools that could be used to block access to content in email or instant messaging (Kupczynski *et al.* (2013).

Learners at Sizakala Girls’ High School came up with the following suggestions in response to question 36 of the questionnaire:

*“Cyberbullying needs to stop as this may lead to depression and loneliness and may lead people to commit suicide.”*

*“I believe that if a child is on social media, they should allow their parents to monitor them and check for cyberbullies and report any wrong-doing.”*

*“Young people must not talk to people they do not know. They must report the cyberbullying if it continues.”*

*“We must stop cyberbullying because it hurts people and teenagers may be depressed and commit suicide.”*

*“Cyberbullying is very bad and I think it should be reported to an adult, police station, parent, counsellor, etc.”*

*“I suggest we stop sending horrible messages to people and commenting negatively about people’s pictures.”*

*“I suggest that victims seek help. The bullies should be helped because they also have problems in their lives. They bully others so that they can feel better about themselves.”*

*“Parents should only give their children access to the internet when they are ready to face challenges.”*

*“If people are being cyberbullied they should inform an adult or someone they trust and deal with the situation instantly and not ignore it or leave it for later.”*

*“Don’t post pictures of yourself because you are putting yourself in danger and if you post pictures of your family you are putting them at risk too.”*

*“Don’t take matters into your own hands because it does not help starting a fight. Don’t keep cyberbullying a secret.”*

*“Be careful what you post and don’t post inappropriate pictures. Don’t talk to strangers and don’t reply to horrible texts.”*

*“If you are being cyberbullied speak out and maybe form an anti-bullying group to help you and other people.”*

*“I think cyberbullying is something stupid to do. If you have problems don’t take them out on somebody else. Rather get counselling.”*

*“Don’t take cyberbullying to heart.”*

*“Parents must check their children’s cellphones because having a cellphone can be dangerous.”*

*“If you have nothing nice to say don’t say it at all. Cyberbullying is for haters and people who feel bad about themselves.”*

Phumelele Boys’s High School learners wrote the following suggestions:

*“I think parents should step in and talk about this situation and come up with a solution.”*

*“Don’t mind the bullies. If you ignore them, they get bored because all they are looking for is attention.”*

*“People need to retaliate against cyberbullying but make sure it doesn’t hurt anyone or you’ll be more wrong than the person starting it.”*

*“We can stop cyberbullying by tracing the people who bully others online.”*

*“The person who is being bullied must stay away from social media so that the bully can see that the person doesn’t care about what they say.”*

*“I suggest that if you have been cyberbullied, you must just block the person.”*

*“Parents have to keep track of what their kids are doing on the social media sites that they are on.”*

*“People should stop bullying because they hurt others emotionally.”*

*“Cyberbullying is bad because it may affect people’s feelings and may lower a person’s self-esteem.”*

*“People should stop what they are doing. If they are caught doing it they should be arrested.”*

*“I think this should be stopped because it is wrong and unpleasant to the victims who feel bad about themselves.”*

*“Cyberbullying needs to stop. We all have rights. I may be young but I know my rights and we need to make this world a better place.”*

*“We must stop it in order for youth to respect one another.”*

*“Stop doing cyberbullying. It is not funny and it shows you don’t respect yourself and other people.”*

*“It is wrong, if you think you are a superhero you are actually a coward so stop cyberbullying.”*

*“I think cyberbullying is worse than traditional bullying and should be stopped.”*

The above suggestions from the learners indicate how acute cyberbullying is to the victims. Consequently, Park *et al.* (2014) suggest that there should be a proactive approach that the adolescents can use to screen and reduce the impact of negative content.

### **6.5.3 What schools can do to prevent cyberbullying among learners**

Literature shows that the schools have a critical role to play. For example, Cassidy *et al.* (2009) suggest that as cyberbullying starts at school and continues at home, the school has the responsibility to provide safety to learners who are victims of cyberbullying. They also propose that the school should work together with the parents, students, justice personnel and internet providers in order to encourage solving the cyberbullying problem that links the home, school and community.

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) stress that school health professionals should help the victims by teaching them ways to deal with cyberbullying. This includes blocking harassing messages, logging off and not respond to messages that are hurtful. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) believe that cyberbullying is not easy for teachers to see as they do not have resources to deal with cyberbullying and possibly lack knowledge to investigate cyberbullying incidents.

De Lange and von Solms (2011) propose that school counsellors should give in-service training to teachers and school administrators about the problem of cyberbullying, disseminate information about cyberbullying, and educate school personnel about the damaging effects of victimisation.

Sizakala Girls' High School focus group participants suggested the following regarding what schools should do to prevent cyberbullying among learners (interview question 10):

Julie: *"I am not sure but I think schools should talk to the learners' parents about finding ways to prevent their children from being cyberbullied."*

Zinhle: *"I think like maybe during LO, teachers should teach children the effects of cyberbullying and you know, maybe show them the extreme cases of people who have been cyberbullied and how it has hurt them. Maybe that will discourage people cyberbullying each other."*

Learners at Phumelele Boys' School responded as follows:

Phindile: *"Schools should encourage learners to speak up about cyberbullying."*

Rokham: *"Schools should create a suggestion box and learners can write down some comments and put them into a suggestion box."*

Lihle: *"Schools can create a website and invite learners who have been cyberbullied to join and to recover their self-esteem."*

Duma: *"I suggest schools should have a bullying box where pupils can write something like A is bullying B. Then it would be easier for the school to get to know who is bullying who and try to solve the problem."*

The above responses from learners show that schools need to do something about the problem of cyberbullying. According to Espelage (2014), staff members and learners should work together to gain more knowledge and skills, thereby reducing bullying and promote prosocial behaviour.

In response to the question concerning what the school is doing to prevent cyberbullying, the LO Head and LO teachers at Sizakala Girls' High School asserted as follows (interview question 5):

LO Head: *"We have quite a lot of programmes involved. In the beginning of the year, an organisation called 'The Guardian' comes in every year and explain what cyberbullying is, the emotional consequences, as well as legal consequences. We've got signs around saying something about bullying not being accepted and this is a bully free-zone. So, we continue communicating as information changes, so we inform the learners."*

Mrs Jones: *"Our LO Head is really good, and she takes charge. She talks to learners and learners approach her if there is a problem. She and management would get*

*together and try and investigate and see what they can do to solve the problem. It takes more than one person to solve the problem.”*

Mrs Black: *“The school is trying its best like the rest of the world, and all you can really do is to make the children aware that this bullying happens and that they don’t have to stand for it. So, via posters or advertising or Life Orientation lessons or whatever, you just need to try and make them aware and then give them some help in terms of, if it happens to you, do this or go there. Otherwise, there is not much you can do besides that.”*

Participants at Phumelele Boys’ High School expressed the following:

LO Head: *“Cellphones are not allowed at school. There are very strict security measures when it comes to use of internet and so some bullying at school definitely cannot take place. If it is happening it’s happening outside of school times, but again we discourage the use of cellphones and we have a school Code of Conduct that doesn’t allow these sort of things to take place. But in our lessons, we’re consistently talking about bullying since it is part of our Life Orientation curriculum. So, Life Orientation teachers speak to it in terms of textbooks and their own experiences of how to deal with it.”*

Mr Fraser: *“There are campaigns and there are posters that are up. As a Life Orientation Department, we do discussions and that’s every teacher does it themselves generally and nothing over the top but obviously on our own Facebook sites and our own websites etc. we have information going up there for learners.”*

Mr Barnes: *“One thing we are trying to do is for us the bigger issue is we see bullying a lot and it’s easier to see. So, there are three points that we deal with bullying as opposed to cyberbullying. The first point is actually, we discipline. For us this is a short-term basis. The medium-term basis is that we try to talk to the learners and there will be people coming in to speak to the learners or speak to groups of learners. We also have workshops working through the grades. We had a survey done at the school, looking at the prevalence of bullying, where bullying is happening and why bullying is happening. So, we’ve got a bullying policy in place. We discipline learners but we teach about bullying in our LO curriculum. We have counselling in the school, so we have teachers that do counselling in the school, and we also work with the external group (open door crisis centre). So, if we have severe cases we would then refer them to the open-door or to a trained psychologist. We also have a social worker who is now aligned with our school as well, so that these cases can be forwarded to her.”*

Mr Davis: *“We are covering a little bit, but the pupils don’t really discuss it with us much, but because obviously cellphones are bad, you know, we don’t discuss too many things about online. It’s not like a topic we cover too much. We try and cover face-to-face bullying rather than online.”*

Mr Holmes: *“The school does have a social media policy in place and that policy also governs the use of that media. The school is also making people aware of bullying and consequences of bullying and also encouraging the school as a bullying free zone.*

Concerning the use of internet by learners during computer lessons, the schools ensure that strict security measures are in place to ensure that cyberbullying does not happen. The responses of LO head and LO teachers show that bullying is easy to handle since it often happens in school. Moreover, bullying is covered in the LO curriculum. LO teaching staff have a problem dealing with cyberbullying since it takes place on social media and is not included in the LO curriculum. Furthermore, both schools have a cell phone policy which specifies that learners are not allowed to use cell phones during school hours.

Concerning strategies that schools can use to bring some awareness about the incidences of cyberbullying and to prevent cyberbullying among learners (interview question 6), the LO Head and LO teachers at Sizakala Girls’ High School proposed as follows:

LO Head: *“First thing that all schools should do is to have an open-door policy with regards to cyberbullying, because what’s offensive to me is not offensive to you. So, we can’t level cyberbullying because when you are dealing with somebody’s emotions it’s different. So, the first thing is to have an open-door policy to say, ‘This is an issue, I am offended, I feel very disturbed and hurt’, and that’s for parents as well as learners. The second thing is to deal with each one in its own merit, because we can say ‘cyberbullying is not so severe, don’t worry about it’, next thing we’ve got a learner who has committed suicide because of that. So, at schools it’s important to make people aware that cyberbullying is more severe because people say harsh things and it’s your perception because you read it, so therefore that’s the problem. So, I think for us at our school, that’s what we do. Each case is separate, and it’s weighed on how the learner reacts to that.”*

Mrs Jones: *“LO is a very nice subject because it teaches learners about life-skills. So, it is the teachers’ responsibilities to educate learners about bullying and cyberbullying and also to plan some activities, create posters because some kids do not know what cyberbullying is. They’ve experienced it but they don’t know what it is. So, create posters and put them around the school. Then each teacher can have a poster and each classroom can have a poster. You know, in assemblies as well, just don’t talk about it in one assembly, just make sure that you talk about it in every assembly. We need to try and solve the problem.”*

Mrs Black: *“I think there should be, you know, like you have a 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse, maybe once a term or twice a year schools can have like an awareness week where we have posters around the school, we have talks at assembly. I would even go as far as we have a “Name Your Perpetrator Day”, and learners have freedom because everyone else is doing it so they don’t feel so singled out and alone, and they realise there are more people than they thought, and then*

*they go and put the name to the person and then that rules it. All we have to do is, people should stop because these are bullies, we know who they are, so that we can watch out for it and be more proactive in preventing this because otherwise they operate like rapists, because we are too scared to speak, so they get away with it.”*

At Phumelele Boy’s High School, the LO Head and LO teachers suggested as follows:

LO Head: *“The schools need to understand what it is first, so I think getting speakers in the hall and perhaps an expert to come in and explain exactly what cyberbullying is, because it is to an extent very unknown especially amongst older people. It’s very common amongst the youth and amongst the school kids, so the older people don’t tend to understand exactly how it works and the ins and outs of cyberbullying itself, so it has to be an expert coming in and explain on how to deal with it.”*

Mr Fraser: *“If cyberbullying comes from the school situation, we have to run campaigns, we have to run a show about marketing the fact that it’s actually wrong what it is doing to people. We need to have general talks and have people in to come to discuss it and show them what it is. It’s a very difficult thing since in our schools we don’t allow cell phones and we don’t allow computer technologies at school that is not part of a school system, so it’s quite difficult to actually show learners what they are doing without actually knowing individually what is happening.”*

Mr Barnes: *“Making it a campaign that is using social media itself. I think there are boys right now who are living their lives in social media. They struggle to interact one-on-one, but they will interact using social media. I think a strategy in terms of making it available, is to make sure that it is already part of the curriculum, but actually making it something that is relevant to learners online. So, some kind of a system may be a Facebook campaign or a campaign that the learners are able to engage in. I think the next thing is we need support from the Department of Education. I think they need to take a stand and they need to sow some resources into these types of initiatives. Where they have people going around and talking about it and making it relevant to people. The nature of bullying first and then cyberbullying, because I don’t think you can divorce the two. The reality is that there need to be campaigns done by non-profit organisations, but the Department must sanction this type of work and the non-profit organisations rolls it out across areas. The funding for that type of initiative must be continuous. It must be a five-year programme, assessment before and assessment after. Then you can see if something is effective.”*

Mr Davis: *“Anything, posters, we can make a project, ask learners to do a cyberbullying assignment or just talk about it during assemblies, just talk about it more out there so that they understand it and know what goes on and things like that.”*

Mr Holmes: *“The school does have a social media policy in place and that policy discourages the use of social media in degrading or bullying other individuals, and also making people aware of bullying and the consequences of bullying and also encouraging the school as a bullying free zone and also not endorsing bullying at school. I think*

*a good strategy would be to inform the kids, to show them by means of presentations and examples where bullying has taken place and then in terms where bullying has taken place to intervene and to discourage those who are bullying.”*

The participants' responses showed their concerns about the seriousness of cyberbullying and proposed some strategies to bring awareness to the learners regarding cyberbullying incidences and to prevent learners from being cyberbullied. Bauman (2010) also proposes that teachers should, in their attempts to prevent cyberbullying behaviour, consider individual differences in moral disengagement. By so doing, this could promote the skills and increase awareness among learners to become morally engaged with the victims of cyberbullying.

#### **6.5.4 What parents can do to protect their children from being cyberbullied**

Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) suggest that resources should be made available to provide support for parents and guardians to educate them about the real dangers of cyberbullying and how young people can manage the technologies that they use. Therefore, parents and guardians should be familiar with the technology and participate in the use of electronic media in order to educate, monitor and supervise their children.

Kowalski *et al.* (2012) propose that parents' conversations with their children need to move beyond personal safety and parents should discuss with their children how to treat others well online. This means that parents should discuss with their children how to use the internet in a considerate and constructive manner. They also suggest that parents should discuss with their children how to treat others well online and should advise their children about the responsibilities of citizenship. These suggestions are very important as parents tend to buy cell phones and computers for their children and fail to discuss how to use them appropriately.

Chan and Chui (2012) propose that adequate guidance and supervision by parents in fostering young people's self-control are crucial, especially before the adolescent reaches adulthood, as this would demonstrate positive psychological outcomes in the long run.

According to de Lange and von Solms (2011), a broad educational programme needs to be implemented to bring about e-Safety awareness in various Southern African schools and to bring awareness to parents about the dangers associated with the internet. Laitano (2013) proposes that parents need to explain to their children the concepts of privacy, cause and effect and empathy towards others.

Learners at Sizakala Girls' High School suggested the following strategies parents should use to protect their children from being bullied electronically (interview question 11):

Vinotha: *"I think from time to time, parents should check their children's cell phones, because you could be cyberbullied and be too scared to tell your parents."*

Phila: *"Parents should sit down with their child and talk to them and try to convince the child to open up to them so that they can know if they are experiencing cyberbullying or not."*

Nomso: *"There should be communication between the parent and child. It is also important to ask your child how her day was at school and other minor things. Maybe the child may end up telling the parent even her deepest secrets and this can help."*

Zinhle: *"I think parents should maybe tell their children to wait a bit before getting involved in social media and if their children are already involved in social media and if they get cyberbullied they should tell them to just deactivate their accounts and stop exposing themselves to those people."*

Phumelele Boys' High School learners suggested as follows:

Jack: *"Parents should inform their children about cyberbullying before giving them phones."*

Phillip: *"Keep a tab on the child's phone that is, go to the child's phone like every week to see what's going on and who the child is talking to and how they communicate."*

Xola: *"Parents should take turns to check the child's phone to see if their child is bullied or involved in bullying others."*

Duma: *"Parents should have access to their kids' Facebook and other accounts so that they can tell if there is anything wrong or if their kids need help."*

The LO Head and LO teachers at Sizakala Girls' High School mentioned the following strategies that parents could adopt to protect their children from cyberbullying (interview question 7):

LO Head: *"Parents have changed. Before parents would say: 'Oh, it's just bullying, deal with it'. Now parents have become quite vigilant in the sense that they are saying: 'You cannot do this', they actually are laying charges. We encourage laying charges, because we feel that it's something that learners need to know and people in general need to know that there is a consequence for what you're saying. Parents are more vocal and I think it's brilliant."*

Mrs Jones: *"Parents need to monitor the child's cellphone and see what is going on. If the child has nothing to hide, they will be more than willing to give the phone to the parent. Parents need to check what social media the child is on because if they don't check they wouldn't know who the child is talking to."*

Mrs Black: *“They need to talk with their children, they need to be aware of what’s happening at school, they need to know who their children’s friends are, they need to pay attention when the children become withdrawn or go off their food or crying a lot. Look for the signs and then follow up.”*

At Phumelele Boys’ School the LO Head and LO teachers’ responses were as follows:

LO Head *“Well, software is needed on computers or some sort of controlling system where internet use can be monitored. Cellphone use needs to be limited and cellphones need to be looked at by the parents and not just given to the child and just say ‘There is your cellphone, go ahead and do your own thing.’ Parents should also know how to look for signs and know how to be able to be a part of a child’s life in terms of the child not hiding anything from the parent.*

Mr Fraser: *“First of all, growing up, children should have cellphones during scheduled times. Parents need to block certain things, not allow children to be so open on Facebook and on Instagram.”*

Mr Barnes: *“Parents actually need to know what their rights are. A child in your home should not have a password on their phone if you allow them to have a phone. You should be able to access everything that they are accessing. You should be a friend of theirs on all their groups and all their sites so that you know what is happening on their cyberspace, because it is as detrimental as bullying in the school or bullying in the street. Parents need to be able to talk to their kids and kids must be able to talk to their parents. They need to be able to have honest conversations with their kids. The reasons why we have these problems of children being kidnapped is because parents don’t know what’s going on, on cyberspace. The reason why we have issues where even children become suicidal is because, parents themselves don’t know. Parents shift the responsibility for their own child to the school or to the church or somewhere else but they themselves don’t know what’s going on.”*

Mr Davis: *“Parents actually should be more involved by speaking to the kids. If a parent just tells the child ‘take your cell phone, do what you want’, then they don’t have any interaction and they don’t know what’s going on. I think most of the time they don’t. They give their child the phone and the child does what they want with it and that’s it. They don’t really know exactly what the children are doing on their phones. Maybe if they are more involved, then they just need to be more involved and speak to them about it.”*

Mr Holmes: *“I think parents should govern social media accounts and the usage of cellphones and obviously computer-based applications and educating the kids on what it is, on how bullying can take place and how effective it is, so that children are not exposed to this at a young age. So, kids can use social media websites at an age where they understand what is happening on the media, so that they are informed about what steps to take to prevent this.”*

The participants stress that parents need to communicate, guide and monitor their children on the proper use of cell phones and the internet so as to protect them from being bullied online. This

influence of a child's behaviour by family or interaction is, according to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) SET, referred to as mesosystem.

### 6.5.5 What learners can do to avoid being bullied online

Samuels *et al.* (2013) suggest safety strategies that learners could develop to prevent cyberbullying, that is, proactive safety strategies, responsive strategies and online and offline psycho-social support. Proactive safety strategies include utilising the resources that are built-in to the software whereby young people can block unknown or unwanted bullies and also manage securing setting on Facebook via their cell phones or computers to prevent risks from materialising. The young people can also use responsive strategies in order to block unwanted intrusions after they have started. Samuels *et al.* (2013) also note that with regard to online and offline psycho-social support, there is very little support available for victims who experience online bullying. This gap is very important since there is growing evidence highlighting the relationship between online victimisation and perpetration and that the impact of cyberbullying is similar to traditional bullying which may impact negatively on the psycho-social wellbeing of children.

At Sizakala Girls' High School, the focus group participants made the following suggestions regarding what learners should do to avoid being cyberbullied (interview question 12):

Lisa: *"I think we should stop being jealous of others and always know that everyone is equal, and everyone is beautiful. Do not let your friends bring you down and always know that you are unique. Always put yourself first instead of putting others before you. Know that you come first in life. You can be in trouble for cyberbullying someone and there will be no one to help you. Always tell someone face-to-face when you have a problem with that person instead of going behind their backs to spread rumours about that person."*

Nomso: *"Learners should start thinking about themselves first. Think about your future, not other people's futures. Don't accept anyone into your life or just let someone into your life. Be careful who you choose as your friends or who to trust about the life's secrets."*

Helen: *"If you use other social media networks like Facebook, be careful of who you accept as your friends. In Instagram you can put a privacy code."*

Vinotha: *"You should be careful of what you post. Certain pictures may cause people to cyberbully you."*

Verushka: *"Don't send pictures to people you don't know."*

Phila: *“Be careful of what you send to your boyfriend. Your boyfriend could be a cause of cyberbullying. You will think that your boyfriend loves you, but he is using you for something, and you start sending him pictures that are inappropriate or nude. Once the relationship is over or your boyfriend does not like you anymore, he can use those photos to get revenge. When your parents find out, they will think you are the one who posted the pictures.”*

Julie added: *“Some boyfriends will pretend that they love you and persuade you to sleep with them. While sleeping they take pictures and make a video and then post the video for everyone to see. This may affect your reputation at school and people may start blaming you and think that you like the video and that you were responsible for posting it.”*

Zinhle: *“If learners are getting cyberbullied, if it is someone they know maybe they can approach that person and tell them that they don’t like what they’re doing, and also they should have their accounts on Facebook put on private setting and block or delete anyone who is saying those nasty things behind their backs.”*

The participants at Phumelele Boys’ High School stated:

John: *“Learners should keep the words they want to say to another person on social media to themselves.”*

Xola: *“Don’t provoke anyone on social media.”*

Jack: *“Learners should stay away from the potential bullies.”*

Lihle: *“They should be careful who they communicate with on social media.”*

Phillip: *“They must not be friends to people who bully them.”*

Duma: *“Learners should stay away from social media like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, and if they can’t, they should just have their friends only on their social media accounts.”*

At Sizakala Girls’ High School, the LO Head and LO teachers suggested the following strategies learners should use to avoid being bullied online (interview question 8):

LO Head: *“It’s a really something to be avoided in the sense that a bully is a person that needs to always overpower somebody else. So, I think one suggestion would be that learners start to realise who the bully is, and whether or not they are feeling uncomfortable. If they are feeling uncomfortable, stop being friends, block the person and do not communicate. Do not retaliate because it’s literally like the bully gets bigger and bigger if you retaliate because the bully has more power.”*

Mrs Jones: *“Children need to notify their parents or teacher or someone they can trust to sort the problem there and then before pictures posted, for example, become viral”.*

Mrs Black: *“This is what I say to the learners, some bullying online is actually easier to deal with in my opinion than bullying face-to-face because you can delete, just delete.”*

*With face-to-face bullying, you've got to come to school every day and look at the bully and this makes the victim feel bad. But you know, sometimes they don't delete, because the internet or WhatsApp is all their life and they don't want to get rid of it even if it's causing pain."*

Mrs Black had a different opinion about what learners should do to avoid being bullied on line indicating that cyberbullying is easy to get rid of than traditional bullying.

At Phumelele Boys' High School, the LO Head and LO teachers came up with the following suggestions:

LO Head: *"Don't put themselves out there to be bullied. Don't make the mistake of, for example, sexting leading to blackmail in the end. Follow social norms or standards when it comes to being a good person on the internet and on social platforms. Don't expose yourself and don't lend yourself to bad things on the internet."*

Mr Fraser: *"To avoid it, not post pictures of themselves and obviously not to be upfront and comment general things on social media and don't be stupid on social media."*

Mr Barnes: *"Unfortunately, there is nothing learners can do physically. However, they should know what their lives are and how they should be treated. If I am in a conversation with somebody and somebody uses bad language, I have a right to stop the conversation there and then, stop being friends with that person and that's a key thing. Learners don't know what's acceptable and unacceptable. So, the first thing is to realise what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in a public space, in a private space and even in cyberspace. Learners also need to be open and communicate effectively with people around them, and I think a lot of cyberbullying happens because of this perception of 'I am all alone', and also them understanding that 'I am not alone' and that is not right. So, I think that's where the balance comes in."*

Mr Davis: *"With all the things like Facebook, for example, make your profile very private. You can be very private so that no one can access your accounts. If you are moderately private, some people or friends can access your accounts, then you can be open to anyone. Obviously if you are on the open setting, anyone can come and try and bully you. Like for example, even on Facebook, my profile is very private, and I don't get random messages from anyone. You can't message me if you are not my friend on Facebook. So, with all the profiles and things like that, they just need to increase the privacy and be more private."*

Mr Holmes: *"To avoid being bullied online, they should keep an anonymous profile, not to put everything online, because I think as soon as they open themselves up to who they are, what they are doing, the personal profile opens up to an attack. It's rather to keep some things personal, not to open yourself up."*

The suggestions mentioned by participants concerning what learners should do to avoid being bullied electronically are varied and could help reduce the incidences of cyberbullying among

learners. Bauman and Yoon (2014) also suggest that cognitive-behavioural therapy can be used to help young people recognise and correct their way of thinking.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 6 has presented and analysed the qualitative data generated in this study. Open-ended responses about cyberbullying incidences have been discussed. More females than males indicated cyberbullying tendencies that they had taken cell phone pictures of someone without their permission and ignored or not talked to someone online while chatting to others. Learners showed their understanding of bullying and how it differs from cyberbullying and LO staff indicated their understanding of cyberbullying. Some learners were able to give an account of their cyberbullying experiences and how being cyberbullied affected them. Others told their stories about how they cyberbullied others and empathised with the victims. The chapter has also discussed the reasons why people cyberbully others. Learners indicated that people cyberbully because of envy, jealousy, entertainment, anger and depression, cowardice, lack of attention, revenge, and to keep the friendship and to be famous. Two LO teachers mentioned accessibility and anonymity as causes of cyberbullying. The LO staff members also mentioned that talking to the learners instead of punishing them is what is done by the schools. However, finding learners in possession of cell phones during scheduled school hours leads to the confiscation of these devices. The chapter concluded by indicating the role that the parents, the schools and the youth could play in mitigating cyberbullying among learners.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY, SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of the study and offers summary, contribution of the study, recommendations as well as concluding thoughts for this study. The purpose is to determine whether the aims of the research have been achieved and the research questions have been answered. The recommendations indicate the value and the importance of this study. The contribution of the study is about the new information that the learners and teachers shared with the researcher. The chapter also indicates what has been learned and the processes the researcher has gone through in conducting this study.

#### **7.2 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

From this study it has emerged that cyberbullying, like bullying, is a form of violence perpetuated through social networks which can be both safe and unsafe spaces, depending on the motive of the users. Although social networks break the distance and make communication easier, this study has shown that they can be unsafe platforms. They are unsafe when they are manipulated by “faceless” people to cause emotional harm and/or reputational damage to others. It was interesting to note that there were no significant differences between boys and girls with regard to their cyberbullying victimisation and cyberbullying perpetration.

In view of the theory of socio-ecological theory, one is led to conclude that those who use cyberbullying have higher levels of moral disengagement and lack empathy. Empathy is an important characteristic in social interactions, enabling people to communicate emotions and feelings more effectively and low levels of empathy are associated with higher levels of aggression and bullying incidents in the school environment

The findings suggest that it is crucial that the LO curriculum includes cyberbullying as one of the topics to be treated since the existing policy takes into consideration only traditional or face-to-

face bullying. This inclusion could contribute towards effective learning and overall empowerment of learners. As learners develop physically and mentally, they also need to learn skills such as empathy, self-discipline, respect for self and others and responsibility which include how to communicate appropriately online. The development of these skills needs to be facilitated through the primary and secondary school curricula as cellphone users are getting younger and younger.

Regarding the strategies that can be used by schools to reduce cyberbullying, it became clear from the learners' responses that schools have a critical role to play. This includes involving and assisting parents in the fight against cyberbullying; teaching learners about the effects of cyberbullying during LO lessons; encouraging learners to speak up about their cyberbullying experiences; creating a school website dealing with cyberbullying, as well as the development of a suggestion box to enable learners to share their cyberbullying experiences. Although Hoff and Mitchell (2009) emphasised the difficulties experienced by schools in dealing with cyberbullying incidents, there is a need for school counsellors to educate and conduct in-service training about the problem of cyberbullying and the damaging effects of victimisation to teachers and school administrators as suggested by De Lange and von Solms (2011).

### **7.3 SUMMARY**

In Chapter 1, the background and rationale of the study have been deliberated. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks and their relevance to the study have been highlighted. The research approach, which includes the key research questions, aims of the study and a mixed method research have been discussed in detail. The chapter has also highlighted the sampling technique, the ethical measures, validity and rigour, the limitations of the study as well as the structure of the thesis.

The literature in Chapter 2 has reviewed the prevalence of cyberbullying within South Africa and overseas, followed by the similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The benefits of ICTs and the risks of cyberbullying, the causes of cyberbullying, gender differences and the characteristics of perpetrators and victims, the impact of cyberbullying as well as possible remedies of cyberbullying have been explained in detail including the role that the school, the parents and the youth should play in mitigating cyberbullying. Literature has also reviewed how law could assist learners experiencing cyberbullying.

Five concepts were defined and discussed in Chapter 3, namely, ‘bullying’, ‘cyberbullying’, ‘adolescents’, ‘social media’ and social network’. The theoretical framework, consisting of two related theories, that is, Socio-Ecological Theory (SET) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was also tabled in chapter 3. The SET stresses the significance of victims’ direct contact with family, peers and the school when experiencing cyberbullying as well as parents’ involvement to ensure their children’s protection from cyberbullying. The SCT highlights the role of moral disengagement, which was later employed by Bauman and Pero (2011) and Pornari and Wood (2010), who believed that adolescents with higher levels of moral disengagement may be involved in traditional bullying or cyberbullying or both.

In Chapter 4, the research design and methodology have been outlined. The description of the context of the study has been given as well as how the research participants were assessed and selected, followed by the definition of the participants’ roles. The chapter has also brought to light as to how the case study approach has been adopted and has also explained the purpose and design of the study. The ethical considerations as well as the limitations of the research design have been cited.

Chapter 5 has presented findings based on the data gathered from the survey questionnaires. The participants’ responses have been highlighted and related to literature. Descriptive statistics comprising of the demographic profile of the study sample, cell phone and internet usage, direct and indirect bullying, and incidences of cyberbullying have been discussed in detail based on the first key research question. The results revealed that almost all incidences of cyberbullying are not significantly different between males and females.

In Chapter 6, the results based on the data collected from lesson presentations, focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews have been analysed. The responses of the participants regarding bullying through the internet are based on the four key research questions and have been drawn up and linked to literature and theoretical framework. The cyberbullying experiences of learners as perpetrators and victims as well as the views of the LO teachers regarding cyberbullying have been examined and discussed. The results show that there are no differences between males and females with regard to their cyberbullying experiences. The suggestions from learners and LO teachers concerning how schools can handle cyberbullying among learners and how parents can prevent their children from being cyberbullied have been mentioned as well as the steps young

people can take to avoid being bullied electronically. The results of the study have also provided insights into the dynamics of cyberbullying to inform strategies for alleviating the impact of the cyberbullying phenomenon in schools.

#### **7.4 WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN FOR SCHOOLS, PARENTS AND LEARNERS?**

Cyberbullying, like bullying, is a form of violence because the intention is to cause harm to the victim. It poses a serious threat to schools' social dynamics as it has potential to cause serious emotional harm to young people (both victims and perpetrators) who may not be mature enough to understand the impact of their actions or who may be vulnerable and unable to deal with the emotional trauma of being victimised. The reality though is that it will not be easy to prevent cyberbullying in schools since it happens on virtual social spaces. Therefore, focus should be on education in an attempt to raise awareness and consciousness about the importance of maintaining healthy communication with friends and enemies alike.

Being targeted by bullies or cyberbullies can be very distressing and worrying to the victim. Victims may feel hurt emotionally and may develop mental health problems like depression, low self-esteem and anxiety. Therefore, it is important for victims to take steps in order to cope with the problem. This may include reassessing technology use and spending less time on social media and more time interacting with real people. This can help victims to distance themselves from online bullying and can reduce depression and feelings of loneliness.

Cyberbullying should be treated as another form of bullying which should be included in the schools' anti bullying policy. Cyberbullying is a new phenomenon which means that parents have a critical role to play in combating this new type bullying. Online bullying can be particularly damaging and upsetting to learners as it is usually anonymous, hard to control and difficult to trace. Therefore, cyberbullying should be addressed collectively by schools, families, learners and society. Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings or results of this study, the following are the recommendations:

##### **7.4.1 Schools**

- There is need to address the inclusion of cyberbullying in the LO curriculum and this should be brought up with the DoE.

- The schools should keep parents informed about cyberbullying to enable them to recognise that cyberbullying, like traditional bullying, does exist and that it is dangerous to their children's safety.
- Schools should insist that surveys conducted should include both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. In addition, workshops could be organised in order to provide more information about cyberbullying.
- The idea of old learners mentoring new learners is a good one and could be revisited as it could help learners especially those experiencing cyberbullying.
- Although learners are not allowed to use their electronic devices during school hours, at least teaching and guiding the learners on how to use the devices could be helpful. Therefore, teachers should work with parents and ensure that learners use the internet and cell phones more appropriately.
- It is important for schools to teach learners about their rights and responsibilities online and to bring awareness to the learners that the internet is not a private place. The schools need to develop and promote a safe and respectful environment for learners and create and promote an atmosphere where inappropriate conduct is not entertained. The LO teachers, therefore, need to promote positive use of technology, discuss and inform learners about personal safety and netiquette. They must also encourage learners to make friends and also to report cyberbullying, thereby promoting positive and supportive atmosphere in the school.

#### **7.4.2 Parents**

- Parents need to encourage their children to open up about any problem they are having including online victimisation. They must help their children to heal and this may bring about a restored self-respect and a regained sense of dignity on the part of the child (Hills, 2017).
- Parents should keep pace with technology as it evolves and understand how learners communicate and how cyberbullying occurs. With regard to the prevention of their children from cyberbullying, parents must teach their children how to place password restrictions on their online devices (Hills, 2017).
- It is the responsibility of the parents to tell their children about the risks and dangers of cyberbullying.

- Parents need to teach their children to be empathetic to learners experiencing bullying and cyberbullying.
- Hills (2017) emphasises that parents should educate their children and make sure that they know what cyberbullying is, and what warning signs their children may show indicating that they are victims.
- Parents need to know that more than one perspective is needed, that is, a child's account of what happened online is likely to be completely sincere. However, what the child says has taken place may not necessarily be true. Therefore, parents need to get other perspectives and be open minded as to what actually happened (Hills, 2017).

### **7.4.3 Learners**

- Learners should know that it is not their fault that they have been cyberbullied, as no one deserves to be treated in an unfair and cruel manner (Hills, 2017).
- During focus group interviews, some learners reported that they did not tell their teachers or parents about online bullying. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to report the incidents of cyberbullying to teachers and parents or any adult they can trust.
- Learners should not respond or retaliate as this is what the bully or aggressor is looking for (Hills, 2017). Responding gives the bully power over the victim. Retaliating means that the victim has turned into a bully.
- As learners are the key group in fighting cyberbullying, they need to learn to be responsible with regard to the use of technology (Li, 2010).
- Learners should be aware of the dangers and consequences of misuse of technology in order to promote responsible behaviours at an early age.
- When reporting incidents, learners need to understand that they might need to be persistent and ensure that adults recognise the seriousness of the cyberbullying incident, including asking the adults what their plans are with regard to solving the problem (Li, 2010).

During semi-structured interviews, the LO teachers proposed as follows:

- Learners should realise who the bully is and should stop the friendship if they feel uncomfortable.

- Learners should notify their parents, teachers or someone they can trust immediately and sort out the problem.
- Learners should follow the social norms and standards on the internet and on social platforms and should not expose themselves badly on the internet.
- Learners should know what their lives are about and how they should be treated online.
- Learners should not post pictures of themselves online and should not be upfront and comment about general things on social media.
- Learners should know what is acceptable and not acceptable in a public space, private space and in cyberspace and must know that they are not alone.
- Learners should make their profiles more private and should not open up about their lives.

## 7.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore the dynamics of cyberbullying in girls' and boys' secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This section considers what the researcher has learned from the study and the conclusions that were drawn.

It is clear that cyberbullying is a growing problem since more and more young people are interacting through computers and cell phones (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). The findings also show that some students use technology inappropriately with the intention to harass, humiliate, embarrass and hurt others. The social media website mostly used by the learners is WhatsApp utilised for entertainment with loved ones, friends and family as well as socialising with people. The cyberbullying experiences of victims in the schools under study put together are very serious. In section 6.2.4 dealing with cyberbullying experiences, cyberbullying took place mostly on WhatsApp, which is the social networking site learners use for schoolwork and to communicate with one another.

Regarding the impact of cyberbullying, it is evident that victims may suffer psychologically after victimisation. Learners mentioned that they felt uncomfortable, scared, unhappy, insecure upset, and experienced difficulty in trusting others after they were cyberbullied. This confirms Kupczynski *et al.*, (2013) observation that the consequences of cyberbullying are more severe than traditional or face-to-face bullying. The findings also concur with Campbell (2005) who mentions that emotional distress caused by cyberbullying can lead to feelings of agitation, embarrassment

and fear. The majority of learners expressed the following fears: Spreading of rumours on social media, pictures posted online and having suicidal thoughts or committing suicide.

The fact that cyberbullying is anonymous makes it very difficult to monitor and/or control. The experiences of cyberbullying by both boys and girls point to the need for empathy training. This suggestion is supported by Ang and Goh (2010) who maintains that empathy training should be incorporated in the programme of teachers and policy makers involved in lessening the incidents of cyberbullying behaviour. Listening and reading these young people's experiences as both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying convinced the researcher that teachers need to learn how to facilitate the development of empathy amongst learners to reduce cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation.

Literature revealed that cyberbullying emerges mostly from relationship problems, that is, break-ups, envy, intolerance, and ganging up (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009), which confirms that it is a form of violence. As such, the LO curriculum should teach learners healthy ways of dealing with conflict. Bauman and Pero (2011) and Pornari and Wood (2010) believe that adolescents with higher levels of moral disengagement are more likely to be involved in traditional bullying or cyberbullying or both, either as perpetrators or as victims. The likelihood of harmful behaviour is increased and the adolescents shamelessly hurt others online since they do not display feelings of guilt and shame. Bauman (2010) suggests that schools should consider individual differences in moral disengagement, and accordingly promote the skills and increase awareness so that learners are morally engaged with the victims of cyberbullying.

Literature also showed that although cyberbullying starts at school and continues at home, the school has a responsibility to provide safety to learners who are victims of cyberbullying (Cassidy *et al*, 2009). This idea is supported by Popovac and Leoschut (2012) who stress that teachers have a critical role to play in teaching young people about risks of internet use since bullying occurs at home and at school. Laitano (2013) further suggests the need to implement extracurricular activities by schools to develop friendships, increase self-esteem and introduce teamwork and communication amongst students. Depending on the severity of bullying, findings indicate that even in less severe cases of bullying learners need support from LO Heads or teachers which includes counselling to both victims and perpetrators. This also involves talking or counselling to learners who are victims and speaking to the groups of learners involved in bullying and making

them aware of their unacceptable behaviour. In severe cases, it is necessary that learners who are perpetrators are detained and parents asked to intervene in order to sort out the problem. These findings are supported by De Lange and von Solms (2011) who propose that school counsellors should give in-service training to teachers and school administrators about the problem of cyberbullying, disseminate information about cyberbullying, and educate school personnel about the damaging effects of victimisation.

Findings further revealed that there is need for schools to invite organisations to explain what cyberbullying is all about, as well as emotional and legal consequences of cyberbullying in order to alleviate cyberbullying among learners. This suggestion was raised by one of the LO teachers who mentioned the need for campaigns undertaken by non-profit organisations and sanctioned by the DoE.

In their concluding remarks, Odora and Matoti (2015) emphasise that the emergence of cyberbullying needs to be seen as a distinct phenomenon that has an impact on the young people, families and communities. Odora and Matoti (2015) are also concerned that ignoring cyberbullying could lead to unfavourable crisis levels which could have a negative impact on the society as a whole.

Bullying and cyberbullying do exist in the schools under study and the help that is offered by the LO teachers is limited. Secondly, reporting cyberbullying incidents to the school might be very difficult for the learners, since cyberbullying incidents mostly occur outside the school. It is crucial that a policy framework dealing with cyberbullying practices affecting learners is developed by the DoE as a means to curb cyberbullying. This could assist higher education institutions offering teacher education programmes to re-design their LO curriculum for their teacher-trainees so that when they graduate, they have adequate skills to screen, identify and support learners who are victims of cyberbullying, and promote a harmonious environment that is free of violence. It is imperative, therefore, that stakeholders such as the DoE, principals, teachers, parents and young people should work together in order to combat and mitigate cyberbullying.

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## Appendix 1



# education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Enquiries: Phindile Duma  
Ref.:2/4/8/903

Tel: 033 392 1004

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Ms BB Piliso  
University of KwaZulu-Natal: Edgewood Campus  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605

Dear Ms Piliso

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“THE DYNAMICS OF CYBERBULLYING IN GIRLS’ AND BOYS’ SCHOOLS: MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Teachers, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 25 August 2016 to 26 March 2018.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Teachers, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.

*...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future*

8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.



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**Adv. MB Masuku**  
**Acting Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 02 September 2016**

## Appendix 2



2 December 2016

Ms Blossom B Piliso 205521114  
School of  
Education  
Edgewood  
Campus

Dear Ms Piliso

Protocol reference number: HSS/1584/016D

Project title: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls' and boys' schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Full Approval — Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 23 September 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol 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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully



.....  
**Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)**

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr S Ntombela cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza cc  
School Administrators: Mrs B Mnguni, Ms T Khumalo, Ms M Ngcobo & Ms P  
Ncayiyana

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [xjmüQ@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:xjmüQ@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za) /

[mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za) Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

1910 2010

YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Camra•ses

Edgewood

Howard

Schod

Pietermaritzbura

Westville

### **Appendix 3**

8 March 2017

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL**

I, Blossom Piliso (Student No. 205521114), a PhD student under the supervision of Professor Sithabile Ntombela, request to conduct research in your school. My research topic is: “The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal”. The research will involve giving lessons on cyberbullying to all Grade 8 learners. Lessons will be audio-taped. This will be followed by the administration of questionnaires (see the attached questionnaire). Later on focus group interviews will be conducted to a selected number of learners and semi-structured interviews will be carried out with the teachers offering Life Orientation (see the attached interview schedules). Both focus group and semi-structured interviews will be recorded on tape. I am interested in finding out if learners understand what cyberbullying is about and whether they have had any incidences of cyberbullying.

I shall do my best to conduct the research efficiently, without disturbing the functioning of the school. I will also ensure that the times scheduled for research will be arranged and are in agreement with the participants (Life Orientation teachers and learners).

Please find attached a consent letter for your signature, as well as information sheets and consent letters to the parents of Grade 8 learners, Life Orientation teachers and Grade 8 learners.

I would be happy if you could allow me to conduct research in your school.

If you need any further information about this research, my contact details, my supervisor’s details as well as the details of the official in the research office are given below.

I look forward to your favourable response to my request.

Yours faithfully

BB Piliso (Researcher)

Cell: 083 403 4755

Email: [bbpiliso56@gmail.com](mailto:bbpiliso56@gmail.com)

**Professor S Ntombela (Supervisor)**

Cell: 074 100 8689

Email: [ntombs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ntombs@unisa.ac.za)

**Mr P Mohum (HSSREC Research Office)**

Tel. 031 260 4557

Email: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

**Research topic: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools:  
Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

**Consent Letter**

I hereby agree for my school to be used as a site for your research study. I understand that the participation of our Life Orientation teachers and learners is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. I also understand that privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be assured at all times and that the dignity of all participants would be respected at all times. I am assured by your commitment to ensure that the general functioning of the school will not be compromised. Permission has been granted.

Principal (print name): .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Name of School: .....

School stamp

## Appendix 4

### **Research topic: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

Dear Parent

My name is Blossom Piliso. I am a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal currently collecting data for my thesis under the guidance of Professor Sithabile Ntombela. My research topic is: “The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal”. I am interested in finding out if learners know what cyberbullying is about and whether they have had any incidences of cyberbullying.

I would appreciate if you could allow your child to take part in this research. A Life Orientation lesson on cyberbullying will be conducted in class. The lesson will be audio-recorded. Subsequent to the lesson, your child will be required to complete a questionnaire and may be requested to participate in a focus group interview. The interview will be conducted at school and will take about an hour.

I promise that:

- Your child’s confidentiality will be protected as she will be referred to as participant. Your child’s real name will not be revealed.
- The information will not be divulged to anyone, except to Professor Ntombela who is my supervisor, and
- The data collection process will not disrupt the teaching and learning process at school.

Kindly find attached a letter of consent to be signed by you, the parent.

If you need any further information about this research, my contact details, my supervisor’s details as well as the official in the research office, are given below.

I look forward to your favourable response to my request.

Yours faithfully

BB Piliso (Researcher)

Cell: 083 403 4755

Email: [bbpiliso56@gmail.com](mailto:bbpiliso56@gmail.com)

**Professor S Ntombela (Supervisor)**

Cell: 074 100 8689

Email: [ntombs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ntombs@unisa.ac.za)

**Mr P Mohum (HSSREC Research Office)**

Tel. 031 260 4557

Email: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

**Research topic: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools:  
Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

**Parent Consent Letter**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby allow my child to participate in the above research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that my child may change his/her mind and withdraw at any time. I understand that some of the answers/responses may be directly quoted in the text of the final thesis and subsequent publications.

With this understanding, I hereby allow my child to participate in the above research study.

Parent's name: .....

Parent's signature: .....

Date: .....

Researcher: BB Piliso

Date: .....

## Appendix 5

### **Research topic: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

Dear Participant

#### **Permission to conduct a study to Grade 8 learners**

My name is Blossom Piliso. I am a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal currently collecting data for my thesis under the supervision of Professor Sithabile Ntombela. My research topic is: “The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools: Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal”. I am interested in finding out if learners know what cyberbullying is about and whether they have had any incidences of cyberbullying.

A Life Orientation lesson on cyberbullying will be conducted in class. The lesson will be audio-recorded. Subsequent to the lesson, you will be required to complete a questionnaire and you may be requested to participate in a focus group interview. The interview will be conducted at your school and will take about an hour.

I would appreciate it if you could take part in this study.

I promise that:

- Your confidentiality will be protected as you will be referred to as participant. This means that your name
- will not be used.
- The information will not be revealed to anyone except to Professor Ntombela who is my supervisor, and
- the data collection process will not disrupt the teaching and learning process at your school.

Kindly find attached a letter of consent to be signed by you.

If you need any further information about this research, my contact details, my supervisor’s details as well as the details of the official in the research office are given below:

I look forward to your favourable response to my request.

Yours faithfully

BB Piliso (Researcher)

Cell: 083 403 4755: Email: [bbpiliso56@gmail.com](mailto:bbpiliso56@gmail.com)

**Professor S Ntombela (Supervisor)**

Cell: 074 100 8689: Email: [ntombs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ntombs@unisa.ac.za)

**Mr P Mohun (HSSREC Research Office)**

Tel. 031 260 4557: Email: [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

**Research topic: The dynamics of cyberbullying in girls-only and boys-only schools:  
Multiple case studies of secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

**Learner Consent Letter**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to participate in the above research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and withdraw at any time. I understand that some of the answers/responses may be directly quoted in the text of the final thesis and subsequent publications.

./.

***Declaration of consent: I hereby consent/do not consent to have this interview recorded.***

Participant's name: .....

Participant's signature: .....

Date: .....

Researcher: BB Piliso

Date: .....

**Appendix 6**

**QUESTIONNAIRE RELATING TO CYBERBULLYING**

- *This questionnaire is confidential and no one in your school will know what you have answered.*
- *Please note that your answers are anonymous. Therefore, do not put your name on this paper*
- *You do not have to complete the questionnaire if you do not want to, and you can withdraw your data at any time.*

**Please answer the following questions as truthfully as you can.**

1. AGE: .....

2. Gender: .....

3. RACE:

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| African  |  |
| Coloured |  |
| Indian   |  |
| White    |  |
| Other    |  |

**The questions below are about cell phones and access to the internet:**

4. Do you have a cell phone?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

5. Do you have any computers linked to the internet in your home? (For this question you can tick several answers)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| No, we do not have a computer linked to the internet in our home |  |
| Yes, in my room  |  |
| Yes, in the living room  |  |

If elsewhere, where? (Please write here) .....

6. Do you have access to the internet outside your home?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, can you tell us where? (Please write here) .....

7. How often do you use the internet?

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Never              |  |
| Rarely             |  |
| 1 – 3 times a week |  |
| 4 – 6 times a week |  |
| Almost everyday    |  |
| Everyday           |  |

8. What do you use the internet for? **You can tick several answers**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Homework or research                            |  |
| Email   |  |
| To chat with friends                            |  |
| Instant messaging                               |  |
| Chatting on facebook or other socializing sites |  |

9. Do you send SMS's to others?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

10. Do you receive SMS's from others?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

**The statements below are about bullying and cyberbullying experiences that might have happened to you. Please tick what is relevant to you. It is also important to explain what the following words mean:**

**Bullying** is behaviour carried out by an individual, or a group, which is repeated over time to hurt, threaten or frighten another individual with the intention to cause distress. It is different from other aggressive behavior because it involves an imbalance of power which leaves the victim defenseless.

**Cyberbullying** is a new form of bullying which involves the use of cell phones (SMS's, calls, video clips) or the internet (email, instant messaging, websites) or other forms of information and communication technology to deliberately and repeatedly harass, threaten, or intimidate someone.

Firstly, you are required to answer the next questions about **direct forms of bullying** which include hitting, tripping up, taking belongings, name calling and teasing (perhaps about race, gender, sexuality or disability) someone face-to-face.

11. Have you ever been directly bullied before?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

12. How did you feel when someone directly bullied you? (**You can tick several answers**)

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Have not been bullied before |  |
| Embarrassed                  |  |
| Worried                      |  |
| Upset                        |  |
| Afraid                       |  |
| Lonely                       |  |
| Depressed                    |  |
| Stressed                     |  |
| Angry                        |  |

Other (Please write here): .....

13. Have you directly bullied someone in the past?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

14. Have you seen or heard of anyone else being bullied in the past?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

15. What did you do when you saw or heard about, someone being bullied in the past? **You can tick the first answer:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| I have not seen or heard of any bullying in the past |  |
|--|--|

**Or you can tick several answers:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| I completely ignored the bullying                        |  |
| I tried to get a friend to help the person being bullied |  |
| I tried to stop the bully                                |  |
| I comforted the person being bullied                     |  |
| I told the adult about the bullying                      |  |
| I made fun of the person being bullied                   |  |
| I watched but did not do anything                        |  |

Other (Please write here) .....

The next questions are about **indirect forms of bullying** which include telling lies or spreading false rumours about someone behind their back, sending mean notes or try and make someone disliked, or excluding someone from a social group on purpose.

16. Have you been indirectly bullied in the past?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

17. How did you feel when someone indirectly bullied you? (**You can tick several answers**)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Have not been indirectly bullied before |  |
| Embarrassed                             |  |
| Worried                                 |  |
| Upset                                   |  |
| Afraid                                  |  |
| Lonely                                  |  |
| Depressed                               |  |
| Stressed                                |  |
| Angry                                   |  |

Other (Please write here): .....

18. Have you indirectly bullied someone in the past?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

19. Have you seen or heard of anyone else being indirectly bullied in the past?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how often did this happen?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Once or twice                |  |
| Once a week                  |  |
| Several times a week or more |  |
| Two or three times a month   |  |

20. What did you do when you saw, or heard about, someone being indirectly bullied in the past? **You can tick the first answer:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| I have not heard of any indirect bullying in the past |  |
|---|--|

**Or you can tick several answers:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| I completely ignored the indirect bullying                          |  |
| I tried to get a friend to help the person being indirectly bullied |  |
| I tried to stop the bully   |  |
| I comforted the person being indirectly bullied                     |  |
| I told the adult about the indirect bullying                        |  |
| I made fun of the person being indirectly bullied                   |  |
| I watched but did not do anything                                   |  |

Other (Please write here) .....

The next questions are about your experiences of **cyberbullying**. These include bullying through cell phone use and bullying using the internet.

**Examples of bullying using a cell phone are:**

- Sending or receiving upsetting phone calls
- Taking, sending or receiving unpleasant photos and/or videos using cell phones
- Sending or receiving abusive text SMS's through cell phones

**Examples of bullying through the internet are:**

- Threatening emails directly to you or about you to others
- Abusive instant messages
- Websites where secret or personal details are revealed in an abusive way or where unpleasant comments are being made on social networking websites, for example, Facebook.

21. Has someone lied or spread rumours about you online?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what did this make you feel?

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

22. Has someone called you names on the internet such as in an email or on Facebook to embarrass you?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how did you handle this?

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

23. Has someone circulated your email which was supposed to be confidential?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how did this affect you?

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

24. Has someone taken and circulated cell phone picture of yourself without your permission?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what did you do?

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

25. Has someone said something sexual and offensive about you on the internet?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how did this make you feel?

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

26. Has someone sent you a threatening anonymous SMS message?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what did you do?

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

27. Has someone ignored you on the internet or not talked to you while chatting to others?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, how did this make you feel?

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

28. Have you lied or spread rumours about someone online?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, why did you do so?

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

29. Have you called someone names on the internet such as in an email or Facebook to embarrass them?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what made you do so?

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

30. Have you circulated someone's email which was supposed to be confidential?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what made you do so?

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

31. Have you taken a cell phone picture of someone without permission?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, what made you do so?

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

32. Have you sent someone threatening anonymous SMS messages?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, why did you do so?

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

33. Have you said something sexual and offensive about someone on the internet?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, why did you do so?

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

34. Have you ignored or not talk to someone while chatting to others?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes, why did you do so?

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

35. What do you fear most about cyberbullying?//

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

**36. Comments**

Do you have any comments or suggestions or stories about cyberbullying? (Please write here)

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

**Thank you for taking part.**

## **Appendix 7**

Thank you for taking part in this interview

All that is discussed here should not be discussed outside of this meeting. Your answers are anonymous and your names will not be published. Please give others a chance to speak, do not laugh at what other people are saying.

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS RELATING TO CYBERBULLYING**

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand about bullying?
2. How is bullying different from cyberbullying?
3. Think of an instance where you or your acquaintance was cyberbullied. What actually happened?
4. How did that experience make you or your acquaintance feel?
5. What did you/your acquaintance do to avoid being cyberbullied again?
6. If you were involved in bullying someone online, how did you do it and why?
7. How did bullying someone online make you feel?
8. If you are no longer bullying people online, what made you stop?
9. Why do you think people cyberbully others?

10. What do you think schools should do to prevent cyberbullying among learners?
11. What should parents do to protect their children from being cyberbullied?
12. What steps should learners take to avoid being cyberbullied?

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## **Appendix 8**

Thank you for taking part in the interview

All that is discussed here should not be discussed outside of this meeting. Your answers are anonymous and your name will not be published.

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS RELATING TO CYBERBULLYING**

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand about cyberbullying?
  2. What do you think are the causes of cyberbullying among learners?
  3. What kind of support do you give learners who are victims of cyberbullying?
  4. How do you discipline learners who are perpetrators?
  5. What is the school doing to prevent cyberbullying?
  6. What strategies do you think schools can use to bring some awareness about the incidences of cyberbullying and to prevent cyberbullying among learners?
  7. What do you think parents should do to protect their children from being bullied electronically?
  8. What do you suggest learners should do to avoid being bullied online?
-