NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF BULLYING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT NORTH-WEST PROVINCE SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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2013
NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF BULLYING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT, NORTH-WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Dissertation (article format) submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree in Masters of Social Science in Research Psychology of the North West University

(Mafikeng Campus)

Supervisor: Professor E.S Idemudia
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DECLARATION

I, Kedibone Johanna Ramadie declare that this article for Masters Degree of Research Psychology at the North West University hereby submitted, is my own work, and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University. All the design and execution in this study is my own and all materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

Ramadie K.J
Signature............................
Date.................................
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my caring, loving and supportive husband, Titus and beloved son, Omphile who taught me that perseverance leads to success especially when one turns stumbling blocks into stepping stones.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude and appreciation go to the following individuals who made it possible for me to complete this study:

- Firstly, my unreserved gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. E.S Idemudia, for your guidance, support and understanding during my study, you took me from no way and lifts me up. Your experience and expertise was a great source of inspiration.

- To the respondents of this study, your participation is highly acknowledged.

- Prof. S.A. Awdetsy, my academic father, my friend for his invaluable academic professional guidance, encouragement, expert advice, untiring support and inspiration displayed throughout the duration of this study.

- Khumbudzo Leburu thank you for the assistance and support.

- My biological father, Mr M.J Monaisa, who showed great concern, patience and support during this tiring time.

- Many of my good friends in the Psychology Department, who assisted me in the distribution and collection of questionnaire in various schools.

- The North West Department of Education officials, starting from the Superintendent General's office to the regional and district level who gave me permission to conduct the field work at the schools falling under their jurisdiction.

- My loving husband, Titus and wonderful child, Omphile, for their understanding and support when study encroached on our leisure time.
• To my mom and three sisters, mother and father in-laws thank you for your support and encouragement to my studies.

• To my friend BoitumeloMacheoane, thanks for the encouragement and help you provided me throughout.

• Lastly, but most importantly, to God Almighty for giving me the wisdom, courage and good health to complete this immense task.
SUMMARY

The aim of the study is to examine the nature and prevalence of bullying among adolescent learners in NgakaModiriMolema District in the North-West Province, South Africa. The study was anchored on three hypotheses (1) to determine the significance of bullying victimization by gender differences (2) to determine the significance of bullying victimization by race differences and (3) to examine the impact of bullying victimization on learners’ school work.

The main tool used for the empirical study was standard which has 1-42 questionnaires. Question 1-6 contains demographic items. Question 7 includes family and question 8-12 contains whether the learner has experience the behaviour of bullying in any form. (500) participants who are in grade 11 were randomly selected. sampling of 100 from 5 different schools was selected in the NgakaModiriMolema district. North –West Province, South Africa with male= 250 and female=250. Age of participants ranged from 16-18 years.

Results of the study indicated that there was a significant association between Gender of victims and name calling, p< .01 with female learners scoring higher than males. Made fun, P< .005 with female learners scoring higher than male learners. Wrote bad things to me, P< .005 with male learners scoring higher than female learners. And lastly, Said mean things, P< .0001 with male learners scoring higher than female learners.

Results for hypothesis 2 showed a significant correlation between race of victims and name calling, P< .05 with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race. Nobody talk to me, P< .05 with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race.

The results also showed that, played jokes had a significant association with the learners’ school work performance, P< .05, of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Be part of
group, \( P < .05 \), of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Attacked me, \( P < .05 \), of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Lastly, said mean things, \( P < .05 \) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate.
PREFACE

Article format
For the purpose of this dissertation, as part of the requirements for the professional masters’ degree, the article format as described by General Regulation A.7.5.1.b of the North West University was chosen.

Selected Journal
The target journal for submission of the current manuscript is Journal of Social Sciences (JSS). For the purpose of examination, tables will be included in the text.

Letter of consent
The letter of consent from the co-author, in which they grant permission that the manuscript Nature and Prevalence of bullying in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, in North West Province,” may be submitted for purpose of thesis, is attached.

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In this thesis, page numbering will be from the first page to the last. For submission to the above mentioned journal, the manuscript will be numbered according to the requirements of JSS. Hence, all pages will be numbered consecutively. The reference section will also follow the requirements of JSS.
LETTER OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, hereby give consent that Kedibone Ramadie may submit the manuscript entitled "NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF BULLYING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN THE NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT, NORTH WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA" for the purpose of a thesis in fulfillment for the Masters of Research degree in Psychology.

..............................

Prof E.S.Idemudia

Supervisor
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NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF BULLYING IN THE NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT, NORTH WEST PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Objectives: The specific objectives of the study are identified as follows (1) to determine the significance of bullying victimization by gender differences (2) to determine the significance of bullying victimization by race differences and (3) to examine the impact of bullying victimization on learners' school work

Method: Data was collected from five hundred (500) participants randomly selected, using a table of random numbers of 'yes' or 'no' from 5 different schools around the area of Mafikeng, NgakaModiriMolema district, North West Province. All learners were (male= 250, female= 250). Age of participants ranged from 16-18 years, with mean age of 16.9 years. All statistical analyses were done by means of frequencies and cross-tabulations using the chi-square statistical test with race, gender and school work as independent variables.

Results: Results of the study indicated that there was a significant association between Gender of victims and name calling, \( p < .01 \) with female learners scoring higher than males. Made fun, \( p < .005 \) with female learners scoring higher than male learners. Wrote bad things to me, \( p < .005 \) with male learners scoring higher than female learners. And lastly, Said mean things, \( p < .0001 \) with male learners scoring higher than female learners.

Results for hypothesis 2 showed a significant correlation between race of victims and name calling, \( p < .05 \) with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race. Nobody talk to me, \( p < .05 \) with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race. The third hypothesis expected bullying victims to report high levels of poor performance in their school work. The results showed that, played jokes had a significant association with the learners' school work performance, \( p < .05 \), of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Be part of
group, $P < .05$, of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Attacked me, $P < .05$, of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Lastly, said mean things, $P < .05$ of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. In addition, there were no significant results for called me names, made fun, do bad things, broke my things, nobody talk to me, wrote bad things and pushed and shoved, respectively.

**Recommendations:** The empirical study has clearly indicated that there is poor parental involvement in the education of learners. Parental leave the total responsibility of education of their children on the shoulders of school and educators. Educators need constant support from the parents to impart knowledge as well as to mold the character and behavior of the learners. Continuous monitoring by parents on the academic progress of their children, through regular communication with the educators is extremely important to achieve the desired outcome. Parents are the first ones to notice any change in the behavior of their children. When signs of any behavioural change are noted, parents need to communicate with the educators so that remedial measures can be employed before the problem gets worse.

**Keywords:** nature/ prevalence/ bullying/ NgakaModiriMolema District/ North West Province/ South Africa
Introduction and problem statement

Although bullying is defined in some studies as a form of aggression intended to offend, harm or embarrass the victim (Smith & Sharps, 2010), it is difficult to give a concrete definition due to the fact that the act of bullying can be perceived differently by whoever is experiencing the aggression. Some research regards bullying as a form of victimization, especially in schools. Thus, bullying is a major concern at all levels of local, provincial and national governments (Rude & Mandate, 2010) and needs great introspection and intervention. It has become a worldwide phenomenon which impacts negatively on learners and their educators (Batsche & Knoff, 2009). Bullying has also been identified as a major problem that hinders the smooth functioning of schools, and preventing learners and educators from accomplishing their goal that is, teaching and learning. It is also severely affecting the emotional and academic performance of learners (Smith & Sharps, 2010).

Bullying is a problem that occurs every day in almost every school globally (Rude & Mandate, 2010) and affects thousands of learners either as bullies or victims. In most countries, both developed and developing, schools are becoming breeding centres of bullying. South Africa is no exception to this global phenomenon (Smith & Sharps, 2010). In a South African study of grade eight and nine learners, researchers found that 71 percent of learners were bullied by peers (Rude & Mandate, 2010). This could be because children are exposed to violence in the society or due to some psychological problems faced by the bullies. Studies have also shown that 40 percent of learners in South African schools are victims of bullying (RSA, 2000). In a study conducted in the Free State, the majority of learners and educators pointed out that their schools were faced with bullying challenges and cases everyday (Rude & Mandate, 2010).
Approximately one-third of school children report some level of victimization (Dinkes et al., 2006; Rober et al., 2010), and approximately 13% report involvement in bullying as perpetrators (e.g., saying or doing unpleasant things to others, teasing others repeatedly (Nansel et al., 2001) at school during the first 6-months period, or academic term of schooling. While bullying has become a nation-wide epidemic, consideration must be given to characteristics that place students at increased risk for involvement. A survey conducted by Mandate (2010) on bullying schools and families, one third of 14-19 year olds said that they had been bullied at schools and that their parents were not able to prevent or stop the problem. Rude and Mandate (2010) also discovered that the highest prevalence rates of bullying were verbal abuse followed by the physical abuse in most schools. It is a worldwide epidemic in schools and everywhere, also in South Africa. Virtually everyone has seen or experienced bullying in their school days and with technological advances, bullying is even now hitting the internet, and this type of bullying is referred to as cyberbullying. Cyber bullying is defined as bullying through e-mail, instant messaging (IMing), chat room exchanges, Website posts, or digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant (PDA) (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008).

Bullies mostly show their personality character in schools and in classrooms regardless of whether class is in session or not. In many incidences, most bullies depend on an audience of their schoolmates to dominate over a particular learner who is the victim (Moore, 2008). Bullying is an act that can feature in different ways such as physical and non-physical acts. The physical act of bullying includes hitting, tripping and hands-off spitting while non-physical acts can include verbal or non-verbal actions. Non-verbal bullying can further be categorized as direct non-verbal bullying, which includes rude gestures and mean faces, while indirect non-verbal bullying includes manipulation of friendships, social relations and reputation (Moore, 2008).
Verkroost, Meijerink and Veen (2008) indicate that there are many reasons why learners bully others. Learners who lack social skills turn to bullying as it is seen as an achievement because bullies are mostly poor academic performers. Bullies have an uncanny sense in picking out weak attributes in other learners. This is asserted by Olweus (2008) who states that bullies gain self-esteem by embarrassing other learners and making them feel inferior while, on the other hand, bullies themselves may have low self-esteem and therefore gain confidence through embarrassing others. Gender also may determine forms of bullying. Boys and girls generally bully in different ways; male learners can be more physical while female learners resort to verbal or non-verbal bullying (Verkroost, Meijerink and Veen 2008).

Bullying destabilizes the emotions and social standing of individuals that are bullied. It easily becomes an act of violence which destroys the individual physically or emotionally or both (Moore, 2008). A secured learning environment is essential for learners of all ages. Without it, learners are unable to focus on learning the skills needed for a successful education for their future. Almost 30 percent of teens are estimated to be involved in school bullying as either the bully or a target of teen bullying or both (Rude & Mandate, 2010). In a recent national survey in Europe, 13 percent of learners in grades 6 to 10, reported bullying others, 11 percent reported being the target of school bullies and another 6 percent said they bullied others and were bullied themselves (Kim & Leventhal, 2008).

A healthy learning environment accommodates the needs of learners. It is characterized by the human and caring environment which is free from bullying, discrimination and intolerance (Rude & Mandate, 2010). A learner cannot acquire knowledge from an educator without trust and respect from other learners.
Bullying has become an increasing problem with a higher tendency in secondary schools than in primary schools. The most common types of bullying are verbal, physical and indirect bullying. The South African Human Rights Commission identified physical and psychological violence as taking the lead regarding negative behaviour in secondary schools. Baily (2010), also indicates that school-based bullying in South Africa takes various forms, manifesting itself in many forms depending on the context in which it arises, and mostly, it is a learner bullying another learner. Most bullying victims are targeted by bullies in taxis, toilets, on the way home or to schools, and this has become a pandemic issue in the school population. Due to this fact, most learners have revealed some aggressive behaviour like shooting and stabbing in order to resolve conflicts or as a source of self-defence. Rude and Mandate (2010) states that although studies have been conducted on bullying, less focus have been on its prevalence in specific schools. On the other hand, Lee and Alexeye (2008) argue that there has been an increasing awareness of bullying in schools recently which prompts for more studies. This research is therefore concerned about the problem of bullying in schools, specifically bullying victimization by gender and race, as well as the impact that bullying has on the school work of learners by investigating its nature and prevalence in secondary schools in the NgakaMolema District in the North-West province of South Africa.

Policies related to curriculum development and teacher capacity in carrying out (teaching - learning process) are required to build up learners' good character and behaviour in schools. At the same time, the role of parents in controlling children's behaviour during home hours is extremely important. This is a balancing control between home and school in order to create a supportive academic atmosphere for learners to learn. According to Smith & Sharps (2010), safety in schools has become a current academic concern in South African schools. In recent years, the
occurrence of bullying and other acts of school violence among learners, youth and adolescents, have been disrupting academic stability in most schools, particularly in the urban areas. In many circumstances, such cases have been captured by local and national media. In 2011, for example, the story of a 14 year old Phatsima high school student that was forced to leave school due to repeated episodes of violence including kicking and hitting, briefly made headlines in the Star, Newspaper. Another case that grabbed the spotlight in 2008 was a 17 year old who died from severe beating carried out repeatedly under the euphemism of hazing (The Citizen, Newspaper). In 2008, the news headlines featured some cases of girl gangster violence in secondary and high schools where their actions were deliberately filmed while they were fighting. The Citizen Newspaper (In Press, 2007) also states that, a 17 year old was severely injured after being beaten repeatedly under the euphemism of bullying during new learners’ academic orientation in a school in the Free State.

Beyond these individual stories that get media attention, there is increasing evidence that bullying and other violent aggression might be widespread in South African schools, and that it might be the most under-reported safety problem in schools. Recent international studies suggest that bullying is one manifestation of a broader context of violence since it involves different types of bullying (Smith & Sharps, 2010).

There are a lot of reasons why people bully (Smith & Sharps, 2010). They may see it as a way of being popular or to seem as though they are in charge of their school environment. Some bullies do it to get attention or to take other learners’ efforts off their school work, or to make other learners afraid of them. Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying or they may have been bullied themselves. Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behaviour is and how
it makes their fellow learners feel. They fail to see these acts as having a very negative impact on academic performance.

**Bullying victimization by gender:**

Research on the prevalence of school bullying has occurred in diverse settings, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Spain, Italy, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Japan, Canada, South Africa and the United States (Greeff, 2004). The prevalence of victimisation in grades one to five varies from a low of 11.3 percent in a sample of learners in Finland (Olafsen & Viemrō, 2000) to a high of 49.8 percent in a nationwide sample in Ireland (Dake, Price & Telljohann, 2003). In Zimbabwe, Zindi (1994) reported that 16 percent of learners were bullied *now and then*, and 18 percent were bullied *weekly or more often*. Researchers in Canada indicate that one in twenty (5%) boys were victimised by others *sometimes or very often*. According to the same research findings, one in fourteen girls is victimised (7%) (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1999).

In a 1990 South African study of 1073 grade one and two learners, researchers found that 38 percent of learners were being bullied by peers (Richter, Palmary & de Wet, 2000). According to (Richter, Palmary & de Wet, 2000) the majority of the bullies in schools, as identified by victims, are boys. And most bullies, boys or girls, are picking on someone of the same gender. This obvious tendency for same-gender bullying makes sense when we consider the patterns of children and adolescents’ friendships. Peer relationships are predominantly same-gender anyway, and this large amount of contact time could mean more chances for conflicts to occur. The traditional gender roles played by males and females may also partially account for this finding. Boys are expected to be strong and are not supposed to hurt girls, while girls tend to be brought up to defer to boys. It is therefore not surprising to find more boys bullying other boys and girls bullying less and mainly other girls.
Early research suggests that boys are more likely to be involved in bullying, but later studies, which include indirect forms of bullying, show less of a gender difference (Craig, 1998; Stassen Berger, 2007). Girls are more involved in verbal and relational bullying, and boys in physical (Reid et al, 2004; Stassen Berger, 2007). In contrast, Baldry and Farrington (1999) in their study found that boys were more likely to be bullied by older children than girls and by students in the same year but in another class. Neither boys nor girls tended to be bullied by younger children. Approximately 18% of girls and 20% of boys indicated being bullied by both girls and boys.

According to Chee Wan and Annie (2008) there are a few differences, mainly where gender is concerned, in the way school learners are bullied. Firstly, more boys than girls are bullied in primary schools. Secondly, although girls generally prefer to bully more covertly, the type of relational bullying used are different. Some school girls are more inclined to bully others by terminating friendships with their victims or by excluding them from a group, whereas other school girls prefer to spread rumours about their victims. This could be because the other school girls lack the necessary social and cognitive skills needed to engage in (presumably) more advanced forms of victimization like rumour spreading (Chee Wan & Annie, 2008).

Past studies of bullying among learners often excluded girls from sample groups (Crick & Rose, 2001) and have defined bullying as being overtly physical or verbal, but have failed to consider more subtle, covert forms of bullying. More recent research challenges these general beliefs surrounding the gender of bullies. The literature confirms that boys are more likely than girls to be involved in direct physical bullying or victimized (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, 2001; Natvig, Albrektsen & Qvarnstrom, 2001; Sourander, Helstelä, Helenius & Piha, 2000) and that boys and girls are equally involved in direct verbal
bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). However, the latest research on the gender of school bullies suggests that there is little consensus regarding the gender of perpetrators of indirect bullying such as social exclusion and subject of rumours (Nansel et al., 2001; Natvig et al., 2001; Sourander et al., 2000).

Similarly, studies investigating the gender of victims of bullying have yielded the same contradictory results. Some researchers reported that girls and boys were equally harassed regarding severity and prevalence (Graham, 1998 in Lerner & Lerner, 2001), while others have found that boys are victims of more direct forms of bullying and girls were more likely to be victims of indirect or relational bullying (van der Wal, de Wit & Hirasing, 2003; Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield & Karstadt, 2001). In both genders, the most frequent type of bullying was reported to be teasing and name calling, followed by hitting and kicking and other threats (Richter et al., 2000; Seals & Young, 2003; Zindt, 1994).

While verbal means of harassment are the most common forms of bullying for both boys and girls, Olweus (1995) observed that boys are generally more violent and destructive (overtly aggressive) in their bullying than girls are, making greater use of direct physical means of bullying. Common physical traits of bullying include the following: actions causing physical injury (hitting, kicking, punching, tripping); taking money, lunch or homework; taking or damaging belongings of others and engaging in extortion (Selekman & Vessey, 2004). Girls tend to use more indirect and subtle forms of harassment, including rumour-spreading, malicious gossip, manipulation of friendships (e.g. depriving another girl of her best friend), name-calling and social exclusion (Selekman & Vessey, 2004). This type of bullying has been termed relational aggression and is defined by behaviours that are intended to significantly damage another child’s friendships or feelings of inclusion by the peer group (Crick & Grootpeter, 1995). Although this form of bullying
has been widely accepted to be more prevalent among girls (Crick, 1996), Rys and Bear (1997), replicating Crick and Grootpeter's 1995 study of relational aggression, found that, even though boys were more overtly aggressive than girls, and girls were more prosocial than boys, no sex differences on relational aggression were found. No literature has been located that investigates differences in the nature of bullying behaviours among various ethnic groups.

**Bullying victimization by race:**

In a study conducted by Greeff (2004) it was found that black learners reported experiencing racial bullying significantly more than white learners. Black boys reported experiencing racist bullying more than black girls did. Both girls and boys indicated being bullied most by learners in their own class, with boys also being bullied by learners from higher grades. White learners indicated being bullied most by learners in the same class, whereas black learners reported being bullied equally by learners from the same class and learners from a higher grade. The study also yielded a much higher rate of bullying (56.4%) than those cited in previous South African as well as international research.

When comparing the prevalence of bullying or victimization amongst different racial or ethnic groups, studies in the United Kingdom found no significant differences (Dake et al., 2003). Craig and Pepler’s (1997) study found that learners who bully do not discriminate between ethnic groups. In 59 percent of the episodes, learners who bullied and learners who were bullied were from the same ethnic group, and in 41 percent of the episodes they were from different ethnic groups. Two of the largest national studies done on bullying in the United States supported these findings and found no significant differences in the prevalence of victimization or bullying behaviours among white, Hispanic and African American learners (Nansel et al., 2001). However, a third study done in the United States yielded contradictory results. This study, conducted in California, investigated
bullying in a school where the minority of learners were white and the majority African American. The results of a study conducted by Graham and Juvonen in 2002 indicated that White students were significantly more likely than African American learners to be victimised (Dake et al., 2003). In support of this, a cross-sectional study with both German and English learners found a significant relationship between ethnicity and bullying in that learners whom belonged to ethnic minorities were more likely to become victims of bullying than learners who belonged to the ethnic majority (Wolke et al., 2001).

**Bullying victimization on learners’ school work:**

Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer (2003) reiterated that an alarming 37% of secondary students in California report they experienced some form of harassment or bullying at school. Victims of physical or emotional cruelty feel less safe and connected at school, are more frequently absent, and do less well academically than their non-victimized peers. Bullying can account for up to an average 1.5 letter grade decrease in an academic subject across the middle school years. Evidence indicates these compromised academic outcomes are related to the emotional distress and even somatic problems that result from being bullied or witnessing it at school. Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer (2003) found that peer harassment, i.e. bullying, is negatively related to connection to school and academic achievement. The authors point out that students who are bullied are more likely to miss school which in turn adds to being disconnected and missing educational opportunities.

Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) reviewed the literature on bullying and interventions and concluded, “Bullying is a serious threat not only to those involved, but also to the entire school environment...” They also found that, “Bullying creates short- and long-term consequences for
both the victim and the bully. Victims may suffer from low self-esteem, loneliness, depression, anxiety, absenteeism, and academic difficulties.”

Faith, Kenya and Malcom (2008) discuss the long-term negative effects of peer victimization, i.e. bullying. Bullying in elementary school is associated with a variety of negative outcomes. According to the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) (cited in Juvonen, Wang & Espinoza, 2009), it also appears that the percentage of students in schools being bullied is greater than in national estimates. For example, recent national statistics showed that 28% of 12- to 18-year-old students reported having been bullied at school. Bullying victimization is highest in middle schools, where its prevalence is 43% in seventh grade. Although reports of victimization decline in eleventh grade, it is still relatively high at 31%. Prevalence rates are even higher when students are asked if they experienced specific forms of physical or verbal harassment. Among seventh graders, 44% report being pushed, shoved, or hit, and 42%-49% had mean rumors or lies spread about them, or have been made fun of because of their looks or speech.

A recent meta-analysis of 33 studies concluded that students who are bullied are more likely to earn lower grades and scores on standardized achievement tests (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2009). This association is very robust across grade levels and samples. The few studies that have examined the causal effects over time indicate that peer victimization increases the risk of lower achievement (Schwartz et al., 2005). Recent analyses in California further suggest that bullying can account for up to an average 1.5 letter grade decrease in one academic subject (e.g., math) across the three years of middle school (Juvonen, Wang & Espinoza, 2009). The connection between bullying victimization and low academic achievement has also been observed with school-level data, as reported in California Healthy Students Research Project (CHSRP) Brief No.
1. CHKS data show that schools with high Academic Performance Index (API) scores have significantly lower rates of bullying than schools with low API scores, even after adjusting for socioeconomic and other school characteristics. Depending on the grade level examined, the number of students reporting rates of bullying victimization is 22-33 percentage points higher at the schools in the bottom API quintile than it is at schools in the top API quintile (Hanson, Austin & Zheng, 2010). Statistical modeling and other research on the mechanisms that explain this connection indicate that bullying experiences are related to psychological or behavioral difficulties, which in turn negatively impact students’ sense of safety and connectedness, attendance, and academic achievement.

Studies have shown that emotional distress, somatic problems, depressive symptoms, and poor academic engagement are, in fact, part of the explanation for the connection between experiencing harassment and academic difficulties. In one study, emotional problems associated with being bullied compromised academic performance as early as elementary school (Schwartz et al., 2005). Consistent with the research summarized above, students who have been bullied compared to their peers who have not report lower rates of school safety and connectedness, and higher rates of truancy. They are more likely to experience a wide range of psychosocial, behavioral, and emotional problems, such as incapacitating sadness or hopelessness, that are barriers to learning (CHKS Factsheets 4 and 10).
Theoretical background:

While bullying victimization is hypothesized as having a negative impact on the psycho-social life of teenagers at schools, the study employed the Ecological System Theory by Bronfenbrenner which focuses on the mesosystem and is regarded to be developed by one of the world’s leading scholars (Carey, 2008). A mesosystem refers to relations between Microsystems and connections between contexts. Examples are the relation of family experience to school experiences to church experiences, and family experiences to peer experiences. For example, children whose parents have rejected them may have difficulty developing positive relations with others. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory indicates that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems, and it identifies five environmental systems that an individual interacts with. These include the individual, school, neighbourhood, church, their family and peers.

Human beings are seen as the perpetrators of significant portions of bullying amongst young people. Data from the South African Police Protection Unit (Carey, 2008) suggests that young people under the age of 18 are responsible for approximately 30 percent of bullying against other youth. Besag (2009) believes that individuals of the age group 12-20 years are most prone to committing violent acts. This age group is going through a period of life requiring a great deal of adjustment to fit into a complex environment. Adolescent years are often filled with intense emotional struggle, sexual interest, gender identification and relationships.

There are various reasons for the violent, deviant and disruptive behaviour of learners in the secondary schools. One of the major reasons is the fact that the learners at secondary schools are
adolescents. The impact of the physiological, psychological and emotional changes happening to adolescents at their age contributes greatly to the behaviour of these learners (Troha, 2007).

A fundamentally different, even if not competing view, of the very same phenomenon is central to Belsky’s differential susceptibility hypothesis and Liang, Flisher and Lombard (2009) related notion of biological sensitivity to context stating that individuals do not simply vary in the degree to which they are vulnerable to the negative effects of adverse experience but more generally in their developmental plasticity. More malleable individuals are more susceptible than others to environmental influences in a for-better-or-for-worse manner, that is, to both the adverse developmental sequel associated with negative environments and the positive developmental consequences of supportive ones. Less susceptible individuals, in contrast, are less affected by rearing conditions, be they presumptively supportive or undermining of well-being. The dimensions of power and cohesion have been found to be useful in describing family systems Kelley (2009) indicates that family may also be predictive of children who will bully others or be victimized themselves.

The study also used adolescent development theory which states that adolescents have an intense desire to belong (Whitted and Dupper, 2000). Their social development is characterized by an increasing interest in and an involvement with the peer group. This interaction provides interpersonal contact beyond family relationships and plays an important role in the adolescent’s psychosocial development. The peer group not only contributes to the emotional needs, but also serves as an important source of information and opportunities for socialization.

The theoretical perspective of this investigation takes into account the study of human development because the most significant changes in an individual’s development take place from
infancy through adolescence. Erick Erickson’s Psychosocial Theory gives rise to the term “identity crises”. Erickson was the first to propose “stages” of human development for our entire lives, including childhood. His ideas influence the study of personality development, especially in adolescence and adulthood (Whitted&Dupper, 2008). Young people form their identities as they resolve three major issues: the choice of occupation, the adoption of values to live by, and the development of satisfying sexual identity. The skills that children acquire during middle childhood for success, adolescents need to find ways to use these skills.

In addition, behaviorism as a learning theory, is based on a change in knowledge through controlled stimulus/response conditioning. This type of learner is dependent upon an instructor for acquisition of knowledge. The instructor must demonstrate factual knowledge, then observe, measure, and modify behavioral changes in specified direction. This type of learning is a conditioned response or rote memorization of facts, assertions, rules, laws, and terminology. The correct response is achieved through stimulation of senses. The focus of intelligence development is visual/spatial, musical/rhythmic, and bodily/kinesthetic intelligence. The purpose in education is to help a learner build initial schema by adopting knowledge from an instructor through use of the learner’s senses. This learning goal is the lowest order learning: factual knowledge, skill development, and training. Watson believed that theorizing thoughts, intentions or other subjective experiences was unscientific and insisted that psychology must focus on measurable behaviors. For behaviorism, learning is the acquisition of a new behavior through conditioning. Behaviorists view the learning process as a change in behavior, and will arrange the environment to elicit desired responses through such devices as behavioral objectives, competency-based learning, and skill development and training. Educational approaches such as applied behavior analysis, curriculum-based measurement, and direct instruction have emerged from this model.
Lastly, Piaget’s cognitive theory states that adolescents enter the highest level of cognition development which is called formal operations. Formal operations give them a more flexible way to manipulate information. They can think in terms of what might be, what the possibilities are, and can form as well as test this hypothesis (Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2009). Piaget proposed the existence of four major stages, or periods, during which children and adolescents master the ability to use symbols in abstract ways. In relation to bullying, the power that the peer group feels in the early stages of secondary school is such that although learners may feel uncomfortable about what is happening to one of their classmates, they do not have power, skill or sense of responsibility to intervene (Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2009). Adolescents go through changes in various cognitions. The way they process ideas may change, and they also learn to reason and think in different ways. Piaget’s theory of formal operational thought is based on the idea that adolescents are motivated to understand their world because doing so is biologically adaptive (Slee, 2011).

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the nature and prevalence of bullying among adolescent learners in NgakaModiriMolema District in the North- West Province, South Africa.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are identified as follows:

- To determine the significance of bullying victimization by gender differences
- To determine the significance of bullying victimization by race differences
- To examine the impact of bullying victimization on learners’ school work
Significance of the study

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. Although the literature on bullying is available, this study will further add to the literature available in South Africa.

It will also contribute to the theoretical understanding of the development of the intervention programmes for bullying. The results of this study will hopefully, inform the direction of the intervention programmes to be implemented in all areas of education. Results of this study will be communicated to the relevant health policy makers to assist in developing programmes for bullying intervention and modify existing ones. The negative effects of bullying in any educational institution can hardly be over emphasized (Smiths & Sharps, 2010). This research on bullying, it is hoped, will contribute significantly to the establishment of conducive and safe learning environment in schools. School administrators will be made aware of not only the causes but also the negative effects of bullying on learners (psychologically, emotionally, etc). They also may take steps to deal decisively with the phenomenon as soon as it raises its ugly head.

The researcher also hopes that the study will contribute significantly by adding to the literature on challenges facing school governance, especially in the area of discipline, conducive learning environment and peace in schools and, more specifically, in the schools of Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North West Province.

The study, it is also hoped, will also provide an in-depth knowledge to school personnel to be able to detect actions of learners regarding bullying which may affect the effective performance of learners. Knowing the causes of bullying can easily help teachers and after school personnel to identify learner actions which may contribute to school violence. Purposeful action by education
authorities based on research, this researcher believes, is always needed to enhance effective functioning of schools, and this research hopes to fill that void.

Hypotheses

- male learners will significantly have a higher incidence of bullying victimization than female learners
- Black learners will significantly have a higher incidence of bullying victimization than other races
- Learners will significantly report poor performance rate on their school work

Methodology

Design

This study was conducted to acquire descriptive information regarding the nature and prevalence of bullying in schools. Data was collected from the five hundred (500) participants randomly selected, using a table of random numbers of 'yes' or 'no' from 5 different schools around the area of Mafikeng, Ngaka Modiri Molema district, North West Province. All learners were (male=250, female=250). Age of participants ranged from 16-18 years and their multiracial description is as follows: Black, White, Asian, Indian and coloureds. All statistical analyses were done by means of frequencies and cross-tabulations using the chi-square statistical test with race, gender and school work as independent variables.
Sample

Probability sampling was used to gather a sample of 500 respondents (=500) for the study where the researcher knows the population of the school and that each pupil who is within the age of 16-18, has a specifiable probability of being selected. Cluster sampling under probability was used to select respondents from Grade 11 and who fall within the ages of 16-18, and random selection was used to obtain clusters of 100 respondents from Grade 11 in 5 different schools. Learners came from multiracial groups, i.e., Blacks, Whites, Asians, Indians and Colours. The sample of 500(n=500) was obtained from a total of 5 schools, where 100 respondents were gathered at each school, randomly selecting a cluster of 100 respondents from Grade 11 to make a total of the 500(n=500) respondents.

Instruments and psychometric properties

Prevalence of bullying: Prevalence of bullying was be measured with the an eight(8) items scale developed by Department of Psychology (North West University, Mafikeng campus South Africa,2011). The scale measures how often, if at all, have the following things been done to you by another learner. Never, 1=1-2 times, 2=3-5times, 4=6+times. Sum the scores for the eight (8) items. The higher the score indicates high extent of bullying.

Nature of bullying: Nature of bullying will be measured the scale of three(3) items developed by the Department of Psychology (North West University, Mafikeng campus South Africa,2011). The scale measures how often, if at all, have the following things been done to you by another learner. The response patterns ranged from 0=Never, 1=1-2 times, 2=3-5 times, 4=6+times. Sum the scores for the three items. The reliability of the scale among the present sample was alpha of 0.88.
Procedure

The Questionnaire was approved by North-West University ethics committee and approval was sought from Department of Education. After the consent was obtained from the Department of education and the school authority, days of data collection were communicated to all institutions concerned. On these dates, all grade 11 learners from 5 schools in the Mafikeng area were chosen to participate in the study. From 12h00-14h30, administration of the questionnaire took place during regular classes under the supervision of the student psychologist and life orientation teacher due to the sensitivity of the research subject. Questionnaires were thoroughly explained by the researcher. Learners completed the questionnaires anonymously and without any discussion or interpretations. The questionnaires were filled voluntarily by the learners.

Results

Results are presented below. The first hypothesis stated that male learners will significantly report high level of bullying victimization than female learners, while hypothesis two (2) expected black learners to report higher incidences of bullying victimization than other races. Hypothesis three (3) expected bullying victims to report poor performance rate on their school work.

Table 1: Cross tabulation of gender of victims and nature of victimization

Results on (table 1) below showed that there was a significant association between Gender of victims and name calling. $X^2 = 7.78$, $p<.01$ with female learners scoring higher than males 154(55.6%) versus 123(44.4%) for “yes” and 96(43.0%) versus 127(57.0%) for “No”. Made fun, $X^2 = 5.41$, $p<.005$ with female learners scoring higher than male learners 142(55.0%) versus 116(45.0%) for “yes” and 134(44.6%) versus 108(55.6%). for “no”. Wrote bad things to me, $X^2 = 5.32$, $p<.005$ with male learners scoring higher than female learners 50(61.7%) versus 31(38.3%)
for “yes” and 200(47.7%) versus 219(52.3%) for “no”. And lastly, Said mean things, $X^2 = 30.44$, $P < .0001$ with male learners scoring higher than female learners 137(64.3%) versus 76(35.7%) for “yes” and 113(39.4%) versus 174(60.6%) for “No”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Victimization</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Called me names</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(55.6)</td>
<td>(44.4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(43.0)</td>
<td>(57.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Made fun</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(55.0)</td>
<td>(45.0)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(44.6)</td>
<td>(55.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do bad things</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(51.3)</td>
<td>(48.7)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(49.6)</td>
<td>(50.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Played jokes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(51.9)</td>
<td>(48.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(48.1)</td>
<td>(51.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Be part of group</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>217</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(45.8)</td>
<td>(54.2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.7)</td>
<td>(49.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(47.9)</td>
<td>(52.1)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(50.5)</td>
<td>(49.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Attacked me</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.020*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(49.1)</td>
<td>(50.9)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(50.1)</td>
<td>(49.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nobody talk to me</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.248</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>227</td>
<td>214</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(39.0)</td>
<td>(61.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(51.5)</td>
<td>(48.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Wrote bad things to me</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.318</td>
<td>.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>(38.3)</td>
<td>(61.7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(52.3)</td>
<td>(47.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Said mean things</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>30.435</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(35.7)</td>
<td>(64.3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(52.3)</td>
<td>(47.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Pushed and shoved</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(49.5)</td>
<td>(50.5)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: *p<.005, **p<.01, ***p.0001

Table 2: cross tabulation of race and nature of victimization

The multiracial group of participants comprised of blacks, whites, Asians, Indians and coloureds.

The results showed a significant correlation between race of victims and name calling $X^2=10.17$, $P<.05$ with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race 209(75.5%) versus 6(2.2%), 5(1.8%), 46(16.6%) and 11(4.0%). Nobody talk to me, $X^2=10.02$, $P<.05$ with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other races 41(69.5%) versus 1(1.7%), 0(0.0%), 12(20.3%) and 5(8.5%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Victimization</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
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<td>1. Called me names</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>(86.5)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(2.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Made fun</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>(80.6)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
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<td>3. Do bad things</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>12</td>
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41
Table 3: Cross tabulation of school work victimization and nature of victimization

The third hypothesis expected bullying victims to report high levels of poor performance in their school work. The results showed that, played jokes had a significant association with the learners' school work performance, $X^2 = 25.73$, P < .05, 80(33.2%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Be part of group, $X^2 = 23.96$, P < .05, 21(35.6%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Attacked me, $X^2 = 19.40$, P < .05, with 23(41.8%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Lastly, said mean things, $X^2 = 14.33$, P < .05 with 76(35.7%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate.

In addition, there were no significant results for called me names, made fun, do bad things, broke my things, nobody talk to me, wrote bad things and pushed and shoved, respectively.
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Note: *P < .05

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Conclusion and discussion

In summary, the study was anchored on three hypotheses (1) male learners will significantly have a higher incidence of bullying victimization than female learners (2) Black learners will significantly have a higher incidence of bullying victimization than other races and (3) Learners will significantly report poor performance rate on their school work.

Results of the study indicated that there was a significant association between Gender of victims and name calling, $X^2 = 7.78$, $p<.01$ with female learners scoring higher than males 154(55.6%) versus 123(44.4%) for “yes” and 96(43.0%) versus 127(57.0%) for “No”. Made fun, $X^2 = 5.41$, $p<.005$ with female learners scoring higher than male learners 142(55.0%) versus 116(45.0%) for “yes” and 134(44.6%) versus 108(55.6%). for “no”. Wrote bad things to me, $X^2 = 5.32$, $p<.005$ with male learners scoring higher than female learners 50(61.7%) versus 31(38.3%) for “yes” and 200(47.7%) versus 219(52.3%) for “no”. And lastly, Said mean things, $X^2 = 30.44$, $p<.0001$ with male learners scoring higher than female learners 137(64.3%) versus 76(35.7%) for “yes” and 113(39.4%) versus 174(60.6%) for “No”.

Results for hypothesis 2 showed a significant correlation between race of victims and name calling $X^2 = 10.17$, $p<.05$ with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other race 209(75.5%) versus 6(2.2%), 5(1.8%), 46(16.6%) and 11(4.0%). Nobody talk to me, $X^2 = 10.02$, $p<.05$ with black learners reporting higher levels of victimization than other races 41(69.5%) versus 1(1.7%), 0(0.0%), 12(20.3%) and 5(8.5%).

The third hypothesis expected bullying victims to report high levels of poor performance in their school work. The results showed that, played jokes had a significant association with the learners’ school work performance, $X^2 = 25.73$, $p<.05$, 80(33.2%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of
performance rate. Be part of group, $X^2 = 23.96, P<.05, 21(35.6\%)$ of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Attacked me, $X^2 = 19.40, P<.05$, with 23(41.8%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. Lastly, said mean things, $X^2 = 14.33, P<.05$ with 76(35.7%) of learners reporting between 50-59% of performance rate. In addition, there were no significant results for called me names, made fun, do bad things, broke my things, nobody talk to me, wrote bad things and pushed and shoved, respectively.

This study has shown through literature and different theories that the phenomenon of bullying is extremely intricate with perpetration and victimization rarely occurring in isolation of other behaviours or social reinforcers. Overall, the act of bullying is based on complex interactions between individuals, families, peer groups, schools, communities, and cultures (Smith, 2004; Swearer & Espelage, 2004). Swearer and Espelage’s (2004) Social-Ecological framework for Bullying/Victimization suggests that an infinite number of variables can influence the interactions between the individual and environmental and personal factors. Based on this framework, the act of bullying is a social construct, and socializing behaviours and influences.

More specifically, when positive behaviour supports are successfully implemented, they serve as a vehicle to decrease problem behaviour and increase academic achievement (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). Unfortunately, educators often lack the appropriate training to address moderate levels of problem behaviours within their classrooms, making behavioural interventions one of the most prevailing issues facing the educational system (Baker, 2005; Johnson & Fullwood, 2006).

One of the most common and pervasive behaviour problems in the school setting is bully perpetration and victimization (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Based on the high level of youth involvement in the bullying phenomena, research on bullying victimization has increased over the
past decade. Evidence suggests that between 28% and 32% of children experience some level of victimization at school during the first 6-month period of entering school (Dinkes, Cataldi, Kena, & Baum, 2006; Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2010). However, when the bullying dynamic is considered holistically, where consideration is to the role of the bystander, involvement in bullying includes the majority of the student population (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). These statistics demonstrate how pervasive the problem of bullying has become within the nation’s schools.

In conclusion, most of the findings of the present study were similar or somewhat similar to international literature regarding the topic of bullying. However, some of the findings were in sharp contrast to what has been found elsewhere in the world, and should be taken note of. These results should, however, serve as a foundation for future studies on bullying in South Africa. The current study has contributed to the under-explored field of school bullying in a South African context. The findings may be employed as base-line data for future research in the field. They could also serve as supplementary information for psychologists, school counsellors and teachers to assist them in understanding the problems learners may experience at school. Finally, they may also be used to construct and/or adjust programmes aimed at reducing and preventing school bullying to lessen the deleterious effects of bullying on the learners’ school careers, both of the bullies and their victims.

Recommendations

- The literature on bullying includes several definitions of bullying, and it might be helpful for future researchers to come to consensus on this matter.
- Research indicates a strong link between bully victimization poor academic performance, poor social adjustment and poor psychological well being. The negative consequences of
school bullying affect all victims and therefore, further research on this topic should be conducted in South Africa.

- The high prevalence also serves as warning to school educators that their bullying prevention might not be as effective as hoped.

- Future research could focus on refining measures of bullying to ensure that what is being measured is in fact bullying.

- While the present study include only learners perspectives on bullying, It might be valuable to learn more about teachers and parent’s perspectives on bullying.

- Future researchers could study parents alone, or compare their experiences with those of learners or teachers to provide greater understanding of how parents view their children’s experiences with bullying in schools.

- The literature on bullying generally include large samples of students who are given a standard questionnaire, and this method was also adopted for the present study, but other approaches to understanding students experiences would be a valuable contribution.
Acknowledgements

The authors are very thankful to all those that participated in this study and the management of Department of education in NgakaModiriMolema District in North-West Province.

Declarations

The authors have no financial disclosures or conflicts of interest to report.
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Craig, W., & Pepler, D. (1997). Naturalistic observations of bullying and victimisation on the


