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LECTURERS’ EXPERIENCE OF AGGRESSION IN A FACULTY AT A UNIVERSITY

by
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Dissertation

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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in

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in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Supervisor: Prof CPH Myburgh
Co-Supervisor: Prof M Poggenpoel

MAY 2014
DECLARATION

This serves to confirm that I, Rika Ronél Toerien, declare that my academic work is in line with the Plagiarism Policy of the University of Johannesburg which I am familiar with.

I further declare that this dissertation is authentic and original and that all sources contained in this dissertation have been accurately reported and acknowledged. This document has not previously, either in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

Signed at ________________ on this __ day of ________________ 20 ___.

DEDICATION

To our Almighty God, my Guiding Light and Saviour, all glory! “All things are possible to him who believes”... Mark 9:23

This study is dedicated to all educators, mentors and tutors who since primary school believed in me and invested in my abilities and skills to help me become the person I am today.

My late father, Johannes Lodewicus Kriel, an extremely hard and dedicated worker; a strong and honest man who encouraged us to believe in ourselves and succeed to the best of our potential.

My Mother, Vera Kriel, an intelligent and sophisticated lady, the quiet supporter, admirer and driving force who is a true educator shaped through real life knowledge and experience.

Robert Swart, my dear husband who patiently and lovingly supported me through my Honours studies and this dissertation, and inspired me to not give up and be the best I can.

My whole family; who are always there for each other, always stand together, and a force to be reckoned with.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous people have contributed on a professional level to make this dissertation possible. I would like to acknowledge the following people:

Professor C Myburgh, my supervisor, for his objectivity, guidance and expertise and for keeping me focussed, cognizant and motivated, and ensuring me of an enriching learning experience throughout the research process.

Professor M Poggenpoel, my experienced co-supervisor, in guiding this research with ultimate wisdom, professionalism, and perfection, but never disregarding the personal and emotional indicators on this journey.

Each participant, for sharing his/her experiences with me and for entrusting me with your personal views and information, making it possible to explore the phenomena of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university.

The Faculty for granting me permission and the opportunity to conduct this study in the Faculty and for all the staff members’ encouragement and support.

Doctor D Minnaar, independent coder for the amazing and insightful assistance.
In this qualitative study lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university was explored and described. The literature reviewed, closely match the findings. With this study, we expect to contribute to higher education by describing guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression against lecturers as part of mental health awareness. Ample research exists on aggression in the workplace and in school, but comparatively little research has been done on lecturers’ experience of aggression in higher education as well as the contributing factors towards aggression experienced by higher education lecturers. This is the gap that this research address.

The research design for this study is an explorative, descriptive and contextual qualitative study. The researcher employed a phenomenological research design and methodology to realize the objectives of this study; namely, to gain understanding into and increase knowledge on lecturer’s experiences of aggression. A qualitative research approach was applied in order to obtain meaning through words and accurately describe the phenomenon within the context it is taking place.

This phenomenological research method was implemented in two phases. In phase one, lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university was explored and described through phenomenological interviews using a purposively selected sample of lecturers in a faculty at a university, as well as observations made during the interviews, field notes compiled after conclusion of the interviews and naïve sketches provided by participants. A literature control was used to verify the findings after data analysis. In phase two, collected, transcribed, coded and analyzed data from phase one were used for interpreting and describing guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression as part of lecturers’ mental health. A literature control was implemented to validate the interpretations and explanations made.
Scientific values/beliefs: Ethical considerations were adhered to, to protect the identity of participants and to ensure confidentiality in order to ensure the integrity of the data.

After the data analyses, three themes emerged reflecting lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. The research findings have revealed that, one, lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration, from levels below, above and at the peer level; two, lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers and three, that the constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies.

The experience of aggression has considerable effects on individuals, faculty and the university, since individuals are likely to be less productive and experience psychological distress which could lead to despondency, absenteeism and turnover. The guidelines proposed in the study aims at facilitating the constructive management of aggression as part of lecturers’ mental health, to enable lecturers; faculty and the university to adopt and implement a preventative approach towards aggression in the workplace. The support that faculty has to provide to lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university, should positively contribute to the constructive facilitation of the mental health of lecturers in a faculty at a university. This support offered by faculty should be an inclusive, open and holistic process contributing to a positive faculty culture and collegiality. Applying a positive organizational culture as well as effective and clear communication and management systems would benefit lecturers, faculty and the university. Lecturers’ resourcefulness and innovation can further be improved by coaching and mentoring.
SUMMARY

Aggressive behaviour are true realities of people’s daily lives as is clearly evident in radio, television and printed media reports such as “Angry learners at Noncedo Public School in Thornpark, East London, have burnt the school to the ground because they were upset that their teachers preferred to watch soapies on television instead of teaching them” (City Press, 22 August 2012), “Strikes rage out of control” (Mail and Guardian, 5 October 2012) and “Teachers face charges of discrimination, misconduct - Beeld reported on Tuesday that the charges include complaints of discrimination against people with HIV, corporal punishment, sexual misconduct with pupils, and nepotism” (Sunday Times Online newspaper, 9 October 2012). Reality television programmes such as “The Kardasians” and “The Real Housewives of Manhatten” glamorise meanness, victimisation, vindictive and aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse in such a manner that it becomes an acceptable social norm.

The changes in the South African education system after democracy contribute to inclusivity and diversity, challenging the traditional approaches to teaching and learning. Educators and learners’ aggression and bullying increased in schools and a vast number of research studies exist on this phenomena. According to Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2009:61) in South Africa 10 research studies were done between 2002 and 2007 within the project “Aggression in secondary schools, a National Research Foundation of South Africa funded project”.

Higher Education is the ultimate dream and goal of many! University of choice, place of learning, academic distinction, learning together, meaningful engagement and mutual respect are words and phrases universities use to describe themselves and what they stand for.

However, flip the coin and see the sometimes unfortunate reality and sad scenarios of intimidation, victimisation, disrespect and passive aggressive behaviour to name but a few.
Against the background of these educational and institutional changes, the need arose to explore if lecturers experience any form of aggression. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore and describe lecturers’ own experiences of aggression and antisocial behaviour, describe the contributing factors and explore the influence this may have on their mental health, teaching and possibly students’ learning experiences. Based on the above, guidelines were described to facilitate the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as part of their mental health. An exploratory, descriptive, contextual and qualitative design was used to explore the experiences of lecturers.

During phase one data were collected and since a qualitative inquiry was used, the data needed to be rich in description of the phenomenon under study to ensure understanding of the phenomenon (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). Therefore in-depth phenomenological interviews were used for data collection in this study. The data were analysed by means of open coding. The results were supported by literature. Three themes were identified: (1) Lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration, from levels from below, above and at the peer level; (2) Lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers; and (3) The constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies.

The data collected in phase one shaped the underpinning of guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health for lecturers who experience aggression.
Ethical guidelines served as the basis on which the researcher evaluated her conduct during data collection and these guidelines were followed and adhered to. Measures to ensure trustworthiness were applied throughout the research process to ensure rigour of the research.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate by exploring and describing lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university and to describe guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health.

This chapter provides a background and rationale for the study to put the problem statement in context. The problem statement precedes the objectives that are formulated for this study. The paradigmatic perspective, research design and research methods that were implemented, are also discussed. The qualitative study was conducted among a selected group of participants in a faculty at a university. Frequently used concepts in this study are defined and explained to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters included in this dissertation and a summary.

1.2 Background to the study

The past 18 years signified a substantial change in South African history after the first democratic elections in 1994 and the implementation of the new democratic Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996a). The Education and Training White Paper published in Cape Town on 15 March 1995 (DoE, 1995) represented the first steps on the road to restructuring education; subsequently contributing to a more inclusive and diverse education system. Schools also implemented the new Outcomes Based Education (OBE) System. Unfortunately OBE proved to be challenging and was adapted in mid-2010.

Furthermore, a huge gap between high school and Higher Education is experienced (See Figure 1.1).
Higher Education was also affected by the newly elected democratic government’s visionary change of reconstructing education (South Africa, 2004). From 2003 specific universities and technikons were incorporated evolving into universities of technology and comprehensive universities, with a wide range of academic programmes. These institutional changes created major academic, structure and stature changes and challenges.

Another reality of Higher Education consists of a shift in student demographics. According to Skopek and Schuhmann (2008:1) more adults are seeking education opportunities and this fundamental shift in student demographics changed the face of Higher Education. University classrooms now have a combination of traditional age students, full-time Higher Education students who enrol after completing high school, and adult learners (Gravett, 2005:6-11) being older, more mature students who have life experience, who enrol at university part-time and are employed full-time.
Due to the Higher Education restructuring and changes in the university lecture halls demographics, inclusivity and cultural diversity, lecturers are faced with an additional workload resulting in underlying factors which may increase their experience of aggression, may influence their endurance levels and cause frustration, stress and conflict. Thus the pending question is whether these changes in education and Higher Education institutions in South Africa influence lecturers’ ability to manage the current situation they operate and function in, and influence their code of conduct and mental health. Lecturers in Higher Education’s traditional role of teaching and learning changed dramatically since they must now also act as mentors and providers of softer skills to a new previously disadvantaged generation, and teaching and learning now has to also be all accommodating and inclusive (DoE, 2001).

Each day in the lecture halls presents new challenges due to the sometimes uncontrollable large classes and a wide range of age groups. Furthermore lecturers also teach the millennial generation who according to Codrington and Grant-Marshal (2004:63), is technologically highly advanced and informed and much more outspoken and demand intention and justification (Codrington & Grant-Marshal, 2004:63). These are all factors that may contribute to feelings of incompetency, lack of authority and insecurity.

In addition the Higher Education restructuring and institutional culture may also contribute to feelings that provoke anger and frustration that could lead to aggression. This frustration and anger is appropriately captured in William Blake’s poem (1794) on anger titled: *A Poison Tree*.

*I was angry with my friend;*  
*I told my wrath, my wrath did end.*  
*I was angry with my foe;*  
*I told it not, my wrath did grow.*
And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with a smile,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see,
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Lecturers grapple with complex and multiple demands and might sometimes feel overwhelmed and have feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and anger. Lecturers often mention that they are confronted with aggression from undergraduates.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996a), includes the right of equality indicating that “no person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language”. According to the Bill of Rights everyone has the right to human dignity (South Africa, 1996b). Are lecturers in Higher Education protected by the number of fundamental human rights captured in the Bill of Rights that is also enforced by law?
Research has been conducted on aggression in the workplace, such as, “Aggression at the workplace – Psychological consequences of abusive encounter with co-workers and clients” (Merecz, Drabek & Mościcka, 2009: 243-260) and “Prevalence of workplace bullying of South African Employees” by Cunniff and Mostert (2012:1-15). Furthermore, research was conducted on aggression in schools, such as “Learners’ experience of educators’ aggression in a secondary school in Gauteng”; and “Meta-synthesis on learners’ experience of aggression in secondary schools in South Africa” (Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009).

The reality of this phenomenon in schools is impressively captured in the poem “Four o’clock Friday” by John Foster (1991:1)

Four o’clock Friday, I’m home at last,
Time to forget the week that’s past.
On Monday, in break they stole my ball,
And threw it over the playground wall.
On Tuesday afternoon, in games,
They threw mud at me and called me names.
On Wednesday, they trampled my books on the floor,
So Miss kept me in because I swore.
On Thursday, they laughed after the test,
‘Cause my marks were lower than the rest.
Four o’clock Friday, at last I’m free,
For two whole days they can’t get at me.

However, comparatively little research has been done on lecturers’ experience of aggression in Higher Education or the factors contributing towards aggression experienced by Higher Education lecturers. This is the gap that was addressed by this research.
1.3 Rationale for the study

A rationale is an argument to explain a context within which the study will be conducted and also suggests why conducting this study is valuable (Providing a Rationale, www.masterpapers.com 2013:1). Creswell (2012:135) further argues that a rationale is not the finding of new components but rather the increasing of cognisance of experience, which has been forgotten and disregarded.

This in depth qualitative study is important and necessary since aggressive behaviour is experienced by people on many levels in South Africa and globally. This is a true reality of people’s daily lives as is clearly evident in radio, television and printed media reports such as: “Angry learners at Noncedo Public School in Thornpark, East London, have burnt the school to the ground because they were upset that their teachers preferred to watch soap box series on television instead of teaching them” (City Press, 22 August 2012); “Strikes rage out of control” (Mail and Guardian, 5 October 2012); and “Teachers face charges of discrimination, misconduct - Beeld reported on Tuesday that the charges include complaints of discrimination against people with HIV, corporal punishment, sexual misconduct with pupils, and nepotism” (Sunday Times Online newspaper, 9 October 2012). Moreover, reality television programmes, for example “The Kardasians” and “The Real Housewives of Manhatten” glamorise meanness, victimisation, vindictive and aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse in such a manner that it becomes an acceptable social norm.

Besides this, the column, “Have you been bullied at work?” by Tara Parker-Pope (The New York Times, 2008) points out that bullying in the workplace is extremely common and that a recent survey suggested that more than one-third of employees have been bullied on the job.

Now, Higher Education teaching and learning is the ultimate dream and goal of many people. University of choice, place of learning, academic distinction, learning together, meaningful engagement and mutual respect are words and
phrases universities use to describe their brand. However, flip the coin and see the sometimes unfortunate reality and sad scenarios of intimidation, victimisation, disrespect and passive aggressive behaviour to name but a few. One of the top priorities for any Higher Education institution to prosper and grow in a fast changing and highly competitive market is to ensure staff happiness and mental health through good company culture and practice. Thus any form of aggression or abuse must not be tolerated. In Naicker (2009:6), and Johnson (2003:284; 2007:8), aggressive behaviour involves expressing thoughts, feelings and opinions in a way that violates other’s rights to be treated with respect and dignity.

Consequently, one of the main issues in the rationale for this study was to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Hopefully, through increasing awareness and creating discourse on lecturers’ experience of aggression in higher education, the study can lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon. This awareness could lead to a possible description of guidelines to facilitate constructive management of the aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health.

1.4 Research problem statement

The research problem statement is fundamental and the core motivation for any research. The research problem statement focusses the research process so that conclusions can be drawn (Explorable.com (ed), n.d.). Jorgensen (1989:33) also argues that the problem statement should be sufficiently broad for inclusion of the principal questions and concerns yet narrow enough in scope to serve as a guide for data collection.

The central problem in this study is to determine how lecturers in a faculty at a university experience aggression. In view of the changes in basic and higher education in South Africa and the frequent media releases on aggression and bullying, as well as the researcher enrolling for an honours degree, after 28 years of not studying, and observing certain aggressive behaviour from lecturers and
tutors, the researcher became interested in the phenomenon of lecturers’ experience of aggression in Higher Education. The researcher is also a member of a faculty management committee (MANCO) and learned of a range of lecturer frustrations being highlighted in meetings.

Comparatively little literature is available on lecturers’ experience of aggression in Higher Education institutions in South Africa. A gap was identified that may contribute both academically and practically within the Higher Education context. Firstly, to explore and describe how lecturers’ experience of aggression manifests itself in their work and in their workplace. Secondly, to describe guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression experienced by lecturers as integral part of their mental health.

Based on the above the findings and recommendations of this study could empower lecturers to find positive and healthy ways to address the various types of aggression, thus supporting lecturers in understanding and coping with daily emotional and social interaction, confrontation and relationships at a university, therefore enhancing their mental health.

Against the above account these subsequent research questions were framed:

- What are lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university?
- What guidelines can be described to facilitate the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health?

1.5 Research purpose statement and objectives

Creswell (2009:99) argues that research purpose statement constructs the approach for the research. Creswell (2009:99) cites Locke, Spriduso and
Silverman arguing that the purpose statement specifies the reason why a study is done and what is intended to be achieved.

1.5.1 Purpose statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university as well as to describe guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as integral part of lecturers’ mental health.

1.5.2 Objectives

Currently, various research studies address aggression in schools, aggression in the workplace, aggressions and incivilities in the classroom but not many studies focus specifically on lecturers in higher education’s experience of aggression. In the light of this, the dual research questions shaped two research objectives:

- To explore and describe lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university.

- To describe guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health.

1.6 Paradigmatic perspectives

Lincoln and Guba (1985:15) refer to a paradigm as a structural plan of ideas that includes a logical set of beliefs as well as supporting methods in research. Myburgh and Strauss (2013:16) note that a researcher’s paradigmatic perspective is the manner in which a researcher looks at the world and also the research problem. They further argue that the statements of the paradigmatic perspective and assumptions of the researcher in an inductive-qualitative
approach are significant in the search for reliability and validity because the researcher is the key instrument of research (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:17).

In view of the above, a paradigm therefore refers to a researcher’s viewpoints about a specific phenomenon and outlines how the phenomenon is approached in terms of theory and methodology (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:17). Thus, researchers function within the context of specific paradigms and these paradigms determine the selection of a specific topic as well as the research design, how data are collected and analysed and how the results are described.

The researcher in this study became interested in the phenomenon of lecturers’ experience of aggression in Higher Education after enrolling for an honours degree, after 28 years of not studying, and observing certain aggressive behaviour from lecturers and tutors as well as other university staff. The researcher is also a member of a Faculty Management Committee (MANCO) and observed many lecturer frustrations being highlighted at meetings. Thus, the researcher embarked on this study with a number of assumptions. But, there is a need to point out however, that these assumptions did not influence the findings at all since during the inquiry the researcher bracket personal assumptions and bias as well as consistently applied an acceptable and tested theoretical basis for the research (See Chapter Two).

Three viewpoints of the researcher’s paradigm that directed this research’s researchable topic and research conduct are of importance namely, meta-theoretical, theoretical and methodological; and these will now be discussed.

1.6.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions

Meta-theoretical assumptions signify what researchers believe. These beliefs are often at the core of the researchers’ humanity; are not debatable and fall within the context of their world (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:16; Mouton, 1996:16). Meta-theoretical assumptions are researchers’ interpretations of their own beliefs and
conceptions of the nature of the reality of human beings and their world. Thus meta-theoretical assumptions are researchers’ views about humans and their environments and how they interact with internal and external influences. According to Myburgh and Strauss (2013:1) as well as Mouton (1996:16) these paradigmatic beliefs and perceptions are fundamental to the human existence, and in qualitative research these are important for reliability and validity since the researcher is the main instrument of the research. The following meta-theoretical assumptions will be defined as they apply within the context of this study:

1.6.1.1 Lecturers

The Free Online Dictionary (www.thefreedictionary.com/lecturer, n.d.) defines a lecturer as a person who lectures professionally and is a member of the faculty at a college or university, having qualified status to teach. The Collins English Dictionary (1983:838) defines a lecturer firstly, as a person who lectures and secondly, as a teacher in Higher Education.

According to the researcher's beliefs as well as her interpretation of the world, lecturers are educated and knowledgeable human beings, men and women of different ages and races, shaping the thoughts and minds of students and thus also the future workforce. These individuals are from a wide social and cultural background, with their own beliefs, needs, emotions and experiences. Lecturers form part of a faculty community, a university community; thus an overall Higher Education community responsible for students’ teaching and learning preparing them with skills for life and the workplace. Lecturers have to adopt different roles for the demands of students, colleagues, parents, communities and the institution.

After the first democratic elections in 1994 lecturers’ professional roles as educators became more complex, multi-faceted and demanding because of the changes in South Africa and in the education system. In addition lecturers are
challenged with the quality of students due to the ever widening gap between high school qualification output and Higher Education requirements.

1.6.1.2 Mental health

Mental health refers to mental and emotional wellbeing. The researcher views good mental health as the ability to reach your full potential, have good self-esteem, to be confident and able to deal with life positively and productively on a daily basis (World Health Organisation, 2007:1). A person with good mental health interacts and works well with other people, forms positive relationships and is able to handle and manage change and uncertainty (www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au, n.d.).

1.6.1.3 Psycho-education

Psycho-education can be described as specialised education which assists people to understand and learn about the effects of emotional and behavioural problems, resulting in people having more control over undesirable and unacceptable social behaviours. Psycho-education as a form of specialised education, can therefore equip people with skills, tools and strategies to manage their emotional and behavioural issues (The free encyclopaedia, n.d.).

1.6.1.4 Environment

The university environment is not only a place of academic stature where students learn and lecturers teach. It is also an academic environment where people function together on multiple and diverse levels of interaction, communication and knowledge sharing, and gain work and life skills important for personal development.
1.6.2 Theoretical assumptions and concepts captured

Theoretical assumptions form the basis of researchers’ conceptual frameworks, and refer to the theories that they adhere to, and are explanations of what they are thinking (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:16). These assumptions can be confirmed against existing and recognised theory applicable to the specific discipline which is being researched (Mouton, 1996:123). In this research the specific discipline was the Psycho-educational guidelines described to facilitate the constructive management of the aggression by lecturers as integral part of mental health.

The researcher did not influence or guide the participants’ expression of their lived experience and information sharing and as a result the trustworthiness and empirical data were not threatened. During the research process the researcher also remained sensitive to her own biased assumptions, life, and social distinctiveness, and how these might impact the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:2). Therefore it is important to note that the researcher bracket personal assumptions and bias as well as consistently applied an acceptable and tested theoretical basis for the research.

The researcher’s position on concepts in this investigation will now be clarified and supported by citing sourced definitions and viewpoints to define theoretical assumptions used in this study (See Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Research concepts captured

[Figure showing concepts: Experience, Aggression, Faculty, University, Guidelines]
1.6.2.1 Experience

In the Dictionary.com (www.dictionary.reference.com, n.d.) experience is defined as knowledge or real-world understanding because of what a person has witnessed, faced, or experienced and also has to learn by experience. Huxley’s (1932) quote on experience (www.goodreads.com/quotes/92753, 2014:1) states that experience is not what befalls a person but, it is how a person manages what befalls him or her. Likewise, Lark (n.d.) states that the makings of experience are, the ‘whats’ that are experience and the situations of experience are the ‘hows’ that are experience. Lark further describes experience as actions that create, generate, and discover knowledge for influence upon the future. Similarly, all experiences impact on one’s life and future, for better or worse (Dewey, n.d.).

1.6.2.2 Aggression

Aggression is conduct that is characterised by strong self-affirmation with aggressive or hurtful tendencies (www.localhealth, 2013). The South African Student’s Dictionary (1996:22) defines aggression as violent behaviour or being offensive towards others without reason. It further defines aggression as the “emotional force in you that makes you behave in a competitive, dominant or hostile manner towards others”.

Correspondingly, Berkowitz (1993:3) argues that aggression is behaviour that causes any form of physical or psychological harm to somebody. Aggression can also be described as any form of undesirable, destructive behaviour that intentionally tries to harm or injure another person, has a specific aim in mind, and affects another person’s happiness or accomplishments. (Baron & Richardson, 1994:7; Berkowitz, 1993:20; Green, 1990:4).

The researcher will generally describe aggression as behaviour with a definite purpose, to accomplish a specific result or goal. Additionally, the researcher will view aggression as a form of socially unacceptable and undesirable behaviour
that impacts negatively on people, causing harm, whether emotional or physical. The researcher further believes that aggression can take on many forms.

1.6.2.3 Faculty

A faculty in academic terms is a division of learning at a university including administrative staff members as well as all the academic staff within such a division.

The Wikipedia, free encyclopaedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faculty[division], n.d.) defines a faculty as a division within a university comprising one subject area, or a number of related subject areas and it can also refer to academic staff. The South African Student’s Dictionary (1996:337) defines faculty at a university as a collection of departments teaching subject-related programmes.

1.6.2.4 University

The South African Student’s Dictionary (1996:1084) defines university as a place of learning where students go to study after finishing secondary school, and where they study to obtain a higher education qualification. A university is defined in the Oxford Dictionaries (Oxford Dictionaries - Language matters, n.d) as an academic institution intended for teaching and learning as well as assessment of students in many programmes of higher learning, awarding degrees in various faculties.

A university is a higher learning institution with resources for teaching and research and is authorized to grant academic degrees in undergraduate studies and also postgraduate master’s degrees and doctorates (Merriam-Webster Online: Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2013).
1.6.2.5 Guidelines

The Free Online Dictionary (The Free Dictionary, n.d) defines a guideline as, firstly: a strategy or process to determine the direction of action, secondly: a code to set standards or determine the direction of action, thirdly: a guide or suggestion for the direction of future action, and fourthly: a comprehensive plan or description to guide people in setting standards or determining the direction of action. Additionally, a guideline is defined as a regulation or code guiding appropriate behaviour (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d). Another definition for a guideline is that it is any document aiming at streamlining specific processes according to a reputable routine and that by definition, adhering to a guideline is never obligatory (AskDefine, n.d). Therefore, guidelines in this study aim at enabling and supporting lecturers to constructively manage aggression as integral part of their mental health.

1.6.3 Methodological assumptions

Methodological assumptions reflect the researcher’s principles of firstly, the research design and secondly, the selection of the most appropriate methods to be used in the specific research study. The postmodern view was that the practice of applying scientific reasoning and validation to the research process is essential (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:16). The nature of the research problem and the research objectives of the problem determine the most suitable research method in the research process (Creswell, 2012:11).

Thus, in this study the researcher adopted an inductive-qualitative research design with an interpretivist research paradigm to ensure in-depth meaning and understanding of lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university (Burns & Grove, 1997:67). The research methodology underpins the research approach and scientifically explores and describes lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university and is also functional in describing guidelines that could be used to facilitate constructive management of aggression.
as integral part of mental health within that context. Ethical principles (Medical
Research Council, 2002; Gliner & Morgan, 2000:31-40) and measures to ensure
trustworthiness, logic and justification, are adhered to for rigour of the qualitative
research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290; Krefting, 1991:215). In this study credibility
is related to truth value, transferability is essential for applicability, dependability
is critical for consistency and confirmability necessitates neutrality.

1.7 Research design and method

In this section the methodological approach, research design and research
method will be discussed briefly. This research study is qualitative in nature and
will require careful description and evaluation of data. It involves
phenomenological interviews with lecturers in a faculty at a university
supplemented by a literature control based on primary and secondary sources.

1.7.1 Research design

The disposition of the research question, namely to understand lecturers’
experience of aggression in a faculty at a university, determined a qualitative,
exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design in order to get rich and
in-depth descriptions from lecturers concerning their experiences (Creswell,
2009). Nemvumoni (2009:11) argues that qualitative research studies a situation
communicated in the participants’ own words. Thus, qualitative research has to
do with qualities rather than quantities and statistics. Qualitative research
therefore, describes types, styles and similarities in order to understand the
phenomenon under investigation in its entirety.

According to de Vos (2002:75) a qualitative study is characterised by some of the
following:

- It is conducted in a natural setting and the researcher is the key data
collection instrument.
• It is concerned with process rather than with outcomes.

• It is analysed inductively and abstractions are built as the particulars are grouped.

These aspects of the study will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two. The purpose of this study was to firstly explore, understand and describe the lecturers’ experience of aggression in their faculty at a university and to secondly describe guidelines for constructive management of the aggression experienced. These guidelines were based on the data analysis of the feedback of the individuals who took part in the interviews. In Table 1.1 the main sections of the qualitative research methodology applied in this study are summarised to establish the logical flow of the research process.

Table 1.1 The main sections of the qualitative research methodology applied in this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN SECTIONS</th>
<th>PHASE ONE AND/OR PHASE TWO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Autonomy</td>
<td>- Beneficence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Non-maleficence</td>
<td>- Justice, fairness and Objectivity</td>
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The purpose of the research and the findings of the research will be available to the participants and the authorities (Faculty and University) on request.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Truth value</td>
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<td>- Consistency</td>
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<td>- Applicability</td>
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<td>- Neutrality</td>
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<th>RESEARCH SAMPLING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Description of the target population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Description of the purposive sampling method used (Babbie &amp; Mouton, 2002:166,288; De Vos, et al., 2002:79-81, 120,207).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA COLLECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Description of the technique applied (De Vos, et al. 2002:120).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Phenomenological interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews were recorded</td>
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<td>- Observation during interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Field notes – after interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation of data collected through the interviews.</td>
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## DATA ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase One</th>
<th>Phase Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Systematic data analysis using the open-coding method of Tesch (1990)</td>
<td>- Literature control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Independent coder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literature control</td>
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The research objectives in this study were achievable by implementing a qualitative research design, since qualitative research is the most appropriate method to address a research problem where the researcher needs to explore and interpret a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012:16).

### 1.7.2 Research method

The research method was phenomenological in order to study real life human experience described by people who are involved in the specific phenomenon (Qualitative research design, n.d). Leedy and Ormrod (2010:141) referred to a phenomenological study as a study that attempts to understand how people think, view, and understand a specific situation. Qualitative methods give a detailed perspective of the experiences of a small sample group. It allows the participants to relay their own opinions and it places the participants’ experiences in context. Qualitative research explores a problem with unknown variables and develops a comprehensive understanding of a significant phenomenon: having the literature control play a minor but significant part in the validation of the findings (Creswell, 2009).
The research method was implemented in two phases. In **phase one**, lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university was explored and described through in-depth phenomenological interviews using a purposively selected sample of lecturers in a faculty at a university, as well as observations made during the interviews, field notes compiled after conclusion of the interviews and naïve sketches provided by participants. A literature control was used to verify the findings after data analysis. In **phase two**, collected, transcribed, coded and analysed data from phase one were used for interpreting and describing guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health. The researcher implemented a literature control to validate the interpretations and explanations made.

The main components of the research methodology followed and complied with in this study and referred to in Table 1.1 will now be discussed (De Vos, et.al. 2002:120-121).

1.7.2.1 Ethical Principles

Babbie and Mouton (2002:69), and Polit and Beck refer to research ethics as a structure of moral values that is concerned with “the degree to which research procedures adhere to professional, legal and sociological obligations to the study participants” (Polit & Beck, 2004:717). Ethical principles are very important in any form of research, as research involves human beings, and ethical principles need to be adhered to for the protection of the participants as well as the feasibility of the study. Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2000:95) argue that during the research process there is constant tension between the research aims that may contribute to the good of other people, and the participants’ rights to privacy. They further argue that ethics refer to doing good and avoiding harm and that in applying ethical principles in the research process, harm can be limited or prevented. Thus, human participants must be protected at all cost.
In addition, the Medical Research Council (2002:5) described research ethics as a science including criteria as well as norms and values for human acts and behaviour. They further state that research ethics reflect and analyse morals and whether human acts and behaviour are good or bad in the quest for knowledge. In conclusion, they also express the importance of research ethics to ensure human dignity and equality as well as justice, truth and trust, thus, morality. There are four primary ethical principles in qualitative human participant research (Medical Research Council, 2002:5-6). The four ethical principles will now be discussed briefly.

a) Autonomy

The first ethical principal is autonomy, which respects and protects the participant’s human rights to act purposely, with comprehension and no guiding influences.

b) Non-maleficence

The second ethical principle of non-maleficence is defined as the principal to avoid harm to any participants.

c) Beneficence

The third ethical principal is beneficence and refers to the promotion of people’s welfare and interests.

d) Justice

The fourth ethical principle of justice refers to equal share and fairness.

According to Gliner and Morgan (2000:34), the Belmont Report (National Commission, 1978) stipulates three aspects of informed consent that are very
important in research namely; information, comprehension and voluntariness. The issue of informed consent: voluntary participation and the non-affliction of harm to participants, is captured and explained extensively by the Medical Research Council (2002:12-15), also in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996): “Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without their informed consent”.

A research proposal was submitted to the Faculty and the University Academic Research Committee followed by a request for ethical clearance to conduct this research. Informed consent to conduct the research was given by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee in which the researcher was enrolled as a postgraduate student as well as by the University where the study was conducted (Annexure A).

The executive dean in consultation with the management committee of the identified Faculty in which the research was conducted granted permission to conduct this study involving the Faculty’s lecturers (Annexure B). The researcher abstained from revealing the names and interview information of the participants to people who were not directly involved in the study. The researcher further undertook to give feedback of this dissertation to the Faculty where the study was conducted as well as to the participants in the study for them to completely understand the research.

The researcher will now debate the ethical codes of conduct in this research as captured in the Guidelines on Ethics for Medical Research: General Principles, Table 1.1 (Medical Research Council, 2002). Primarily, the researcher’s concern was the autonomy, anonymity and safety of the participants. Autonomy refers to the researcher’s obligation to respect the participants as human beings capable of making informed decisions to participate in the study (University of Washington, 1998).
The researcher gave the participants a detailed document about the research project and explained in clear and comprehensible communication the research question, the purpose of the research as well as the demarcation of the researcher and the participant’s role in the research. The participants understood the study and could make an informed decision to participate or not. Based on the above, the researcher obtained informed, written consent from each of the lecturers who voluntarily participated in the study (Gliner & Morgan, 2000:34-6). Informed consent in this study indicates that participants had sufficient information regarding the research, understood the information and had the freedom of choice, thus enabling them to consent or decline participation in the research (Polit & Beck, 2004:151). The participants were given the choice to withdraw from the research at any given point.

The researcher also respected the participants by not imposing on their teaching schedules, and therefore also valued the code of conduct of the Departments and the Faculty involved in this inquiry. The participating lecturers’ anonymity was further respected by referring to them as participant one to participant eight during the data capturing and data management as well as abstaining from discussing the participants’ identities and responses with others, thus protecting their confidentiality.

Additionally, the researcher respected the confidentiality and sensitivity of the data such as audiotapes, transcriptions and field notes and all data were secured and seen as strictly personal and confidential.

In conclusion, the ethics of justice, fairness and objectivity were applied during the research process by respecting the participants’ basic human rights and dignity as well as their emotional and cultural values. The ethical principles of the faculties and university were adhered to throughout the process of the research and the researcher was open and honest about the purpose and content of the research (www.open.ac.uk/research-ethics, n.d.).
1.7.2.2 Phase one

*Exploration and description of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university*

a) Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) posit that the main aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to evaluate the study’s worth. This qualitative study was framed in an interpretive paradigm and therefore the notion of qualitative research objectivity in this study was found in terms of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:289). Guba’s (1981) model identifies four criteria for trustworthiness: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality relevant to the assessment of any research.

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985:289) studies further describe four strategies under the criteria to increase the trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Table 1.2). Some of the tabulated strategies are addressed in the study design phase, while others are applied during data collection and after data interpretation (Krefting, 1991:217). The strategies to ensure trustworthiness will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this study.
### Table 1.2  Measures to increase trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Truth value</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
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</table>

Lincoln and Guba’s translation of terms

b)  Population and sampling

According to Myburgh and Strauss (2013:73) the population of a study is a reachable, well-defined group of people the researcher identified for a specific study. Gliner and Morgan (2000:144-147) state that sampling is the selection process of a portion of a larger group of participants, also that in sampling the researcher extrapolate from the smaller group, called the sample, to the population, the larger group. In other words, a sample is studied to explain the population they come from. Thus, the participants in this inquiry were selected using purposive sampling and included lecturers in a Faculty at a university who has been with the Faculty for more than three years, but not more than five years.
This purposive sampling selection criterion of, more than three years, to ensure that the participants are fully inducted and familiar with the Faculty and University’s policies as well as all operations and responsibilities. Not more than five years, to attempt to ensure that participants have not been influenced too much by other staff members’ perceptions and opinions.

The applied research sampling is justified by Creswell (2007:125) stating that purposive sampling is used in qualitative research where the researcher selects participants and settings for study, to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon of the study. The selection criteria for the participants will be discussed in Chapter Two.

c) Data collection

Data were collected by means of individual in-depth phenomenological interviews focusing on the individual’s personal lived experiences, field notes and literature control.

- Individual in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with participants. The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection.

- The researcher posed one open ended question at each interview, namely; “How is aggression for you in your faculty?” since the main aim of the research was to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university.

- The interviews were audiotaped to ensure truth value and credibility.

- The researcher made field notes whilst listening to and observing the participants to capture and ensure reflections, accuracy and recovery of the data collected.
d) Data analysis

A systematic data analysis process of the data collected was conducted. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure the credibility of the research (De Vos, et al. 2002:305,273) and finally, the interviews were analysed using Tesch’s (1990) systematic open coding approach to data analysis (Creswell, 2009:184; Henning, 2004:104).

e) Literature control

A researcher in a qualitative inquiry applies literature control to validate and confirm data collected and the results of the data analysed in the empirical study (Myburgh & Strauss, 2013:32). In this study the literature control was conducted only after data collection and data analysis to prevent bias of data collection and findings due to the influence of existing views and research findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:67).

1.7.2.3 Phase two

Guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health

After the data analysis a literature review was completed and the data collected from the phenomenological interviews were interpreted. The researcher then described guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health for lecturers who experience aggression in their faculty. The guidelines are aimed at supporting lecturers to understand and constructively manage the aggression they experience and also to provide the lecturers with possible skills and strategies to deal with and manage these issues.
1.8 Division of the chapters

This study, which explored and described lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university, is divided into four chapters and an appendix section.

The chapters were divided as follows:

**Chapter One** provides a general introduction to the study in terms of a background and rationale for the study as well as the problem statement, the research objectives, a clarification of concepts as well as an outline of the chapters of the study.

**Chapter Two** demarcates the research design; methods and techniques of phase one including the ethical aspects.

**Chapter Three** provides a description of the demographics of the sample and the method of data analysis. There is a discussion of findings on lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university, divided into three themes with concurrent categories. Finally, it also includes a discussion of the literature control, field notes and a concluding summary.

**Chapter Four** outlines guidelines, limitations, recommendations and a concluding summary of the research study.

1.9 Summary

This chapter presents the rationale and overview of the research study, and underpins the research problem as well as the research objectives that engaged with lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. The research problem and research objectives were defined.
Higher Education lecturers work under conditions outside the historical teaching norm. These conditions include student overcrowding in lecture halls and often poor resources and support systems. Lecturers also have to teach students who include first generation students as well as the new technologically informed generations and a variety of age groups in the class. Consequently, these factors may influence and affect lecturers’ experience of aggression and mental health.

In Chapter Two the emphasis will be on the research design and research methodology.
CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the emphasis is on the research design and research method applied in this study. According to Henning, et al. (2004:141) there must be research design reasoning, demonstrating the rationale for the epistemology, the research questions and the enquiry techniques applied. Henning, et al. (2010:21) also states that the interpretive paradigm provides descriptive analyses that underline a deep and explanatory understanding of a specific social phenomenon.

Therefore the researcher will clarify the application of a qualitative research strategy as this study is positioned within an interpretivist research paradigm exploring experience and meaning to gain an in depth understanding of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Ethical compliance and the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study will also be discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Research design

According to Mouton (2001:55) the research design functions as a strategy or plan of how the researcher proposes to conduct the research to solve the research problem and to maximise the "validity of the findings”. Creswell (2014:3) similarly states that research designs are plans and the processes for research that extend from general assumptions to detailed data-gathering methods, data analysis and data interpretation. Lastly, in choosing the appropriate research design, the nature of the research question is important and directs the type of research design (De Vos, et.al. 2002:391).
The research design for this study is qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual. A qualitative research approach was applied in order to obtain meaning through words and accurately describe the phenomenon within its context.

2.2.1 Qualitative study

Qualitative research does not rely on statistical methods of enquiry and analysis but non-statistical methods of enquiry and analysis of a social phenomenon (McRoy, n.d.). He also posits that it is an inductive process in which themes and categories emerge through the data analysis after the data collection. Further, he states that samples are often small and also purposively selected according to pre-set criteria, and that qualitative research uses detailed descriptions from participants’ viewpoints to study the specific questions and problems in the study. Creswell (2012:16) adds that qualitative research is relevant in addressing a research problem in which a researcher needs to explore.

Qualitative researchers agree that qualitative research aims to gain new perspectives of participants’ experiences in context; that a qualitative study is an inquiry to explore and understand a human problem through a holistic, multifaceted, complex, in-depth description and interpretation of the voices and perspectives of the people involved; and that the researcher, as main instrument in the study, should be influenced as little as possible by any views and prejudice they may have (Marshall & Rosman, 2006:2-3; Creswell, 2012:11-16; Creswell, 2014:4; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:135).

The researcher in this study was interested in exploring and understanding the social phenomenon of aggression experienced by lecturers in a faculty at a university. This research was conducted in a natural setting and the researcher spent substantial time in this social setting with direct interaction and discussions with the participants to understand the phenomenon of aggression from their experiences. The researcher also bracketed her own views and prejudice about
the phenomenon to understand and interpret it through the voices of the participants. Thus, although the researcher’s prior knowledge, personal experiences and responses cannot be put aside completely while conducting research, the researcher stayed objective and a non-participating observer during the study. The researchers did not guide or influence the participants’ opinions during the interviews to gain immediate and lived experiences insight into the phenomenon under study.

2.2.2 Exploratory nature of the study

Grove, Burns and Gray (2012) define exploratory research as research conducted to gain new understanding, discover new concepts and/or develop new knowledge of a phenomenon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that exploratory research should investigate social phenomena with minimal expectations in order to develop explanations of these phenomena. Since the nature and objective of an exploratory method is to discover new ideas and insight, exploratory research design has to be flexible to allow for consideration of various aspects of the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher selected the exploratory method to discover new ideas, knowledge and insights, of the phenomenon aggression, as experienced by lecturers in a faculty at a university (De Vos, et al. 2002:214,357).

The researcher also entered the inquiry from the point of not knowing what the findings may be and to provide new data regarding the phenomenon (Burns & Grove, 2012; Creswell, 1994).

2.2.3 Descriptive nature of the study

Qualitative methods provide rich descriptions of complex phenomena. Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Cohen and Crabtree (2008) posit that rich description in qualitative research is a means to achieve external validity. Also, that by describing a phenomenon in acceptable detail a researcher can compare and
evaluate if the conclusions that are drawn from the detailed description can be reallocated to other times, situations, conditions, and people.

This exploration led to a rich description of the phenomenon and a descriptive analysis of the results obtained from exploring the deeper meaning of aggression that lecturers experience. Finally, the researcher also described guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health. Thus, this study’s descriptive nature led to a deep understanding of the experienced social phenomenon (Henning, et al. 2010:21).

2.2.4 Contextual nature of the study

In qualitative research the aim is to explore, describe and understand a phenomenon and events within the actual and natural context in which it occurs (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:272). In qualitative studies the reliability and validity of the study is dependent on the social context in which the data are collected. Qualitative research is naturalistic; it attempts to study the everyday life and phenomena of different groups of people and communities in their natural setting: qualitative research is an interpretive, naturalistic approach and it attempts to make sense of, or to understand phenomena through the meaning people give to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

This study was contextual in nature; as the phenomenon of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university, was explored and described within the context of their own lives and world. The researcher gained in-depth insight into the participants’ lives and world experiences through individual interaction and interviews with the same general question posed to all participants. These audio recorded interviews of the participants’ personal experiences and meanings of aggression in a faculty at a university were analysed and interpreted.
2.3 Research method and techniques

In selecting a research methodology, Guba (1981:76) suggests that a researcher must choose a paradigm or assumption that will be best met by the phenomenon that is investigated. Additionally, Auriacombe (in Jarbandhan, 2012:14), further posits that the first step in any research includes an in depth study of the problem and what is known about the problem. She further states that it is important to know what other researchers who studied a similar problem have learned. In conclusion Auriacombe argues that this in-depth study of the research problem and what is known about the problem will uncover different answers, contradictory results and various thoughts.

The main focus of this research was the exploration and description of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. In this study methodology thus refers to how the research was done and its logical sequence. The research methodology in this study was phenomenological in order to study human experience as described by the people involved (Qualitative research design, 2013:172). Thus, phenomenological research simply means the attempt to understand participants’ viewpoints and interpretations of social realities and is therefore the description of something that exists as part of the world people live in (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:108). Phenomena may be happenings, situations, experiences or concepts. This gap in understanding and knowledge can be explored and be beneficial in raising awareness and understanding when explained.

The research method in this study was divided into two phases. In phase one, lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university was explored. In phase two, guidelines were described to facilitate the constructive management of aggression as integral part of lecturers’ mental health.
2.3.1  Phase one

The exploration of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university

A phenomenological approach to explore and understand the specific phenomena under study in this research was utilised in Phase One. The researcher conducted an extensive exploration of factors that influence and interact with the specific social phenomenon: lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Data were collected through in-depth phenomenological interviews supported by observation and field notes. The data were analysed using the systematic open ended coding strategy (Tesch, 1990). The findings of the data collected were followed by a literature control of appropriate literature.

2.3.1.1  Ethical aspects

The ethical considerations, morals and rules of research behaviour that need to be anticipated are extensive and were adhered to and reflected throughout the research process of this study (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:522; De Vos, et al., 2002:56-64; Medical Research Council, 2002:5-6). Ethical principles were consistently implemented throughout the research process as described in detail in Chapter One paragraph 1.7.2.1. Research and ethical clearance were obtained from all authorities and participants. Participants were volunteers, their privacy and confidentiality was protected and there was no interference in any tuition at the university. The findings of this study are available to all authorities and participants on request (Burns & Grove, 1997:201). See Annexure C the consent letter used in this study.

2.3.1.2  Measures to ensure trustworthiness

In this study Guba’s (Krefting, 1991:214-222; Guba, 1981:75-91) measures to ensure trustworthiness in a qualitative study criteria, namely: truth value,
applicability, consistency and neutrality, were applied. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba’s strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were applied to reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm more correctly (Krefting, 1991:214-222; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290-327). See Table 2.1 for a summary of the strategies applied in this qualitative study to ensure trustworthiness to increase its worth.

Table 2.1 Summary of the strategies with which trustworthiness was established

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Confirmation of the accuracy of the findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Prolonged engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spending sufficient time in the field to understand the culture, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social setting and the phenomenon of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data saturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In-depth phenomenological interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Triangulation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data collection methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent coder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literature control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflexivity**

- Field journal
- Observations

**Structural coherence**

- Focus on lecturers' experience of aggression in a faculty at a university

**Transferability**

Findings are applicable in other contexts

**Demographics**

- Dense description of:
  - Participants' background information
  - Research context and setting

**Dense description**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependability</th>
<th>Of results supported by participants’ verbatim quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of the researcher</td>
<td>Purposive sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>Primary collector and interpreter of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of findings</td>
<td>Role of the researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dense description of the research method</td>
<td>Exact methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Independent coder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection methods:</td>
<td>Literature control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-recode process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consensus between researcher and independent coder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data analysis protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confirm or refine identified themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor to uncover taken for granted biases and assumptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confirmability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings are shaped by the participants and not researcher partiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confirmability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Detailed record of raw data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comparable conclusions using the same data and research context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflexivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Awareness of researcher's influence on data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Data collection methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent coder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source adapted from Krefting, 1991:217 – 222).

a) Truth value confirmed by the strategy of credibility

Credibility refers to the match between how participants construct reality and how it is presented in the study. Lincoln and Guba (Shenton, 2003:64) argue that one of the most important aspects in developing trustworthiness is to confirm credibility. Lewis (2009:4) agrees that credibility focuses on internal validity, emphasising the truthfulness of what the researcher reports.

The researcher is responsible for enforcing and explaining what was explored and observed and why it was being explored and observed occurred naturally. Krefting (1991:215) affirms that the truth value of a qualitative inquiry lies in the lived and perceived experiences of the participants and that truth value is subject-orientated and not defined “a priori” by the researcher.

The researcher collected data from individual lecturers in an identified faculty at a specific university on lecturers’ experience of aggression in this context. The researcher’s descriptions of the metatheoretical, theoretical and methodological assumptions were provided to clarify the researcher’s bias, recognizing the
researchers’ preconceptions, motivations, and ways of seeing that may shape the qualitative research process. This was done to increase the truth value of this study.

In-depth description of the data derived from the setting was provided (De Vos, et.al. 2011:351-352). The researcher also applied Lincoln and Guba’s (1985:301) activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, reflexivity and triangulation to ensure that findings and interpretations produced are more credible.

Discussion of the techniques and processes that were applied in this study follows.

- **Prolonged engagement in the field**

Prolonged engagement in the field refers to the researcher spending sufficient time in the field to understand the social setting and the phenomenon of interest, which is the lecturers’ experience of aggression. Cohen and Crabtree (2008) comment that the researcher should spend adequate time to: one, become orientated with the situation to appreciate and understand the context; two, detect and interpret misrepresentations that might be in the data; three, to rise above the researcher’s own preconceptions; fourth, ensure data saturation; and fifth, to build trust. Krefting (1991:218) concludes that although a close researcher-participant relationship is important in a qualitative inquiry, the strategy of reflexivity can ensure that over-involvement does not happen.

- **Reflexivity**

Second, reflexivity is systematically attending to the framework of knowledge construction, especially the influence the researcher has, at every step of the research process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008:333). Cohen and Crabtree cite Malterud’s (2001) notion that any researcher’s background and locus will
influence what a researcher will investigate, the approach of the investigation, the methods a researcher finds most adequate for the purpose, the findings reflected as most appropriate, and the framing and discussion of conclusions. This does not mean that there must be barring of assumptions, but that qualitative researchers must recognise their thoughts as contributing factors that may guide their interpretation (Qualitative Inquiry-Personal, n.d.). Consequently, once the researcher is aware of these biases, the researcher may adjust the way data are collected or the methodology for data analysis to improve the credibility of the study.

The researcher used field notes to describe and reflect on participants’ behaviour, observations and experiences during the research process. These field notes supported the researcher in reflecting on how these experiences and observations may influence data collection, data analysis and data interpretation (De Vos, et.al. 2002:304; Cohen & Crabtree, 2008:333). The researcher subsequently became aware of the biases that may occur, and made use of the rich variety of data collected in the field notes to identify any information that will assist in making analytical sense of the data collected for this study.

- **Triangulation**

Third, triangulation according to Cohen and Crabtree (2008:335) includes the application of multiple data sources in an investigation to create understanding. Thus, qualitative researchers largely use this technique to ensure that a description is rich, deep, comprehensive and well-developed. Triangulation is a powerful strategy for enhancing the quality of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277; Krefting, 1991:219; Shenton, 2004:65-69; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:305). The function of triangulation is to explore, discover and describe the understanding of the phenomenon in a study through different phases of the practical reality (Denzin, 1978:294-307).
The researcher compared the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods. Data were collected through phenomenological interviews, observations during the interview process and making field notes during the interviews. The researcher obtained documents of the university’s cultural surveys to provide the researcher with a better understanding of the setting and culture of the university in total. These documents were not implemented in this study. The phenomenological interviews, observations and field notes were supported by a literature control.

Additionally, the individual interviews were transcribed where after the researcher listened to the recordings again to ensure that the transcriptions were correct and verbatim. The data collected were triangulated by observations made during the interviews and recorded in the field notes. The researcher then used the systematic open coding method (Creswell, 1994:153-155) to analyse the transcribed interviews. Concurrently, an independent coder coded the data to enhance the themes and categories identified by the researcher and a discussion and consensus session took place to verify and refine findings to ensure triangulation during the data analysis phase. The last method of triangulation was a literature control to verify the findings and to access the degree of correspondence with other studies.

- Interview technique

A fourth strategy to enhance credibility is the use of numerous in-depth phenomenological interviews to construct and explore the participants’ responses to the question (Seidman, 2006:15), thus permitting the researcher to identify the occurrence of the phenomenon. Phenomenology allowed the researcher to be close to the participants and view the world from their own viewpoint (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:33). Seidman (2006:14) further proposes that interviewing as a method of inquiry assists people to make sense of their lived experience by using language and communication. The researcher conducted phenomenological interviews and posed only one question to all participants and used repetition of
the general question as well as reflective commentary and a reframing of the general question to motivate more personal responses.

- **Structural coherence**

Finally, the credibility of the argument was enhanced by structural coherence. Krefting (1991:220) posits that structural coherence is the insurance that there are no inexplicable contradictions between the data and the analyses.

b) **Applicability confirmed by the strategy of transferability**

According to Finlay (2009:8) transferability replaces the concept of external validity, and instead of the researcher aiming for random sampling and possibility reasoning, the qualitative researcher must provide a detailed description of the setting in which the research is conducted. Transferability, thus refers to the extent to which findings can be applied in other settings and is seen as trustworthy by using rich descriptions and purposive sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:277).

Lewis (2009:5) stresses that external validity refers to the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other settings. Krefting (1991:216), similarly argues that findings from a specific research phenomenon or experience can only be referred to but not generalised to other settings. Lincoln and Guba (1985:290), further propose that it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the research is provided to assist the readers in making such transfers.

Krefting (1991:220), in conclusion argues that a specific group studied might not relate to other groups and therefore conclusions may not be transferable. Also, important in the transferability of the data, are the participants of the studied group.
Demographics

A dense description was given of the demographic information of the participants.

Rich description of results with supporting direct quotations from participants

Babbie and Mouton (2002:277), refer to rich transcriptions and purposive sampling as strategies for transferability in a qualitative inquiry. The researcher applied both these strategies in this study. Merriam (2001:211) states that ample and detailed description of the data in context has to be provided and reported in detail to allow readers to determine if the research context, lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university, is transferable. Thus, it is important for the researcher to provide a dense description of background information about the participants and the research context to allow assessment of transferability of the findings to others.

In this research the researcher considered the participants as well as the data as transferability strategies by inclusion of a rich description of the purposive sampling processes, criteria for selection of and inclusion into the sample. The researcher also included verbatim quotations derived from the phenomenological interviews to emphasise the perspectives of the participants as they have described their experiences of aggression. Thus a holistic picture of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university was communicated through a rich, in-depth description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1994:169).

c) Consistency confirmed by the strategy of dependability

Dependability refers to the fact that if a study was repeated in similar context with similar participants, the responses would be similar (Shenton, 2003:71).
Shenton (2003:71) further states that Lincoln and Guba stress the close relationship between credibility and dependability, arguing that the former strongly ensure the latter.

The researcher tried to account for changing conditions of the phenomenon in this study as well as changes to the design, shaped by a developed understanding of the context. The techniques to establish dependability, namely dense description of the research method, triangulation and the code-recode process, were employed in this research.

- **Dense description of the research method**

The researcher explained the research design and its implementation by describing what was planned and implemented. The researcher also addressed what was done in the field describing full and exact methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation, and evaluated the effectiveness of the process of inquiry. To establish suitability of the methods used to generate data and the methodological approaches applied, related references from literature were used as evidence.

- **Triangulation**

Botha (2004:33) cites Lincoln and Guba (1985:318) stating that a single audit, if done properly, can be used to conclude dependability and confirmability at the same time. Krefting (1991:221) cites Guba’s (1981) argument that the data collection method, analysis and interpretation are important factors in qualitative research. Krefting (1991:221) adds that triangulation enhances dependability by ensuring that the weakness of one data collection method is compensated for by using alternative data collection methods.

Triangulation methods applied in this study to ensure its dependability include:
• data collection through phenomenological interviews;

• observations and field notes;

• transcriptions of the raw data;

• open-ended coding of the transcriptions; and

• data coded and verified by an independent coder.

• **Code-recode process**

All qualitative research applies coding techniques to organise and analyse the vast amounts of data that are often collected during qualitative research and the coding process focuses data to empirically reveal answers to the research question (Coding Qualitative Data, n.d.).

Data analysis protocol was followed and the Tesch method of systematic open coding (Creswell, 1994:154-155; Tesch, 1990:92) was used to systematically analyse the transcribed interviews and field notes. The researcher focussed and labelled the raw data, and developed a coded list. The codes were re-examined and refocused to develop major and minor categories and themes. An independent coder recoded the same interviews and refined the categories and themes. Lastly, the researcher and the independent coder met to discuss the individual coding findings and to reach consensus on data saturation as well as refined and verified themes.

• **Peer examination**

Lincoln and Guba (1985:308) define peer examination as a process of exposing oneself to a peer in an investigative session and for the purpose of exploring characteristics of the inquiry that might then remain only within the inquirer’s
mind. The researcher had discussions with her supervisor and co-supervisor, who are both established researchers and experts in qualitative methods, as well as the independent coder regarding the research. The discussions were to uncover the researcher’s taken for granted biases and assumptions, become aware of her position on the data and data analysis and to establish credibility and dependability in the study.

d) Neutrality confirmed by the strategy of confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985:319) state that the most important criterion for establishing confirmability is the confirmability audit trail. Confirmability then refers to the fact that the findings of the research are shaped by the participants and not the researcher’s partiality or prejudice.

- **Audit trail**

Confirmability in this study was constantly established through a confirmability audit trail that included: the steps taken from the start of the research project; the reporting and findings; confirmed by detailed records that were kept (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:278; Cohen & Crabtree, 2008:332). The researcher reflected on the six categories for reporting information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:319-320) to be included in an audit trail. The six categories that were adhered to are summarised in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Six categories for reporting information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>MEASURES APPLIED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw data</td>
<td>• Audio recordings of interviews – raw data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written field notes:</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observational notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodological notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/reflective notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data reduction and analysis products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write-up of field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written notes on observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field journal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data reconstruction and synthesis products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of themes, definitions and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings and conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report with connections to existing literature and an integration of concepts, relationships, and interpretations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the data reduction process, selection of themes and analysis, the researcher focused on attaining insight into the voice and concerns of the participants by drawing on what they brought to the interview besides the question posited. During the research process the researcher was aware of the influence of her own views and biases and therefore cautious not to allow this to impact on the data collection and data analysis process. The methodological

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process notes</th>
<th>Methodological notes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical procedures notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audit trail notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials relating to intentions and dispositions</td>
<td>Inquiry proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal notes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher as information development instrument</td>
<td>Clarifying questions in interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 2.2 adapted from Cohen & Crabtree, 2008)
process notes and reflections on the researcher as data collection instrument (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:174-178) allowed for consideration if researcher was sufficiently focused yet open enough to bring the participants’ experience of aggression to the fore. In addition, the methodological process notes allowed the researcher to reflect on whether she had spoken to the participants with the most in-depth experience of aggression and if sufficient data had been obtained for a comprehensive discussion.

2.3.1.3 Sampling

a) Sampling population

Qualitative sampling usually requires a flexible, pragmatic approach. Also, purposive sampling is applied in a qualitative inquiry for a specific purpose, where particular characteristics are required, and to increase the significance of information obtained from a small sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:146-147; Cohen, et al. 2011:156-157).

The target population in this study included lecturers in a faculty at a university who have been with the faculty for more than three years, but not more than five years. The accessible population, called the sampling frame (Gliner & Morgan, 2000:146) to which the researcher had access was lecturers in a specific faculty identified by the researcher. The researcher's choice of faculty was based on access, and approval for research to be conducted.

b) Sampling criteria

Several criteria the researcher needed to consider in selecting participants are posited by Babbie and Mouton (2002:288), and include: complete enculturation, current involvement, and adequate time.
The following selection criteria, for the selected sample for this study, were adhered to:

- lecturers who work at the identified faculty and university;

- lecturers who came from the population of lecturers in the faculty at the identified university who have been with the faculty for at least three years, but not more than five years. This purposive sampling selection criterion of, more than three years, to ensure that the participants are fully inducted and familiar with the Faculty and University’s policies as well as all operations and responsibilities. Not more than five years, to attempt to ensure that participants have not been influenced too much by other staff members’ perceptions and opinions;

- a diverse group of lecturers in terms of gender, race, backgrounds and cultures, and of any age;

- lecturers who were willing and voluntary and also gave informed consent to participate in the study until data was saturated;

- lecturers who could conduct the interviews in English; and

- lecturers who agreed that the interviews could be audiotaped and transcribed.

The researcher used a pilot interview to orientate herself with the phenomenological inquiry and proceeded with the research when she had confidence in the design, methodology, interviewing skills and her role. Lincoln and Guba (1985:202) state that sampling will be terminated when no new information is discovered from new sampled participants. Sampling in this study was terminated when sufficient data saturation was reached after interviewing eight lecturers and experiences of lecturers started repeating. Eventually, no new
themes or categories emerged indicating the in-depth and detailed information given by the participants.

2.3.1.4 Data collection

In a qualitative inquiry the data collected need to be rich in description of the phenomenon under study to ensure understanding of the phenomenon (De Vos 1998:253). In-depth phenomenological interviews were used for data collection in this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Consistent with the purpose of the study, in-depth open interviews were used to better understand the phenomenon and allow for the participants to express themselves and learn from the experience (Seidman, 2006:9).

The researcher also made field notes of participants’ responses, setting and participants’ behaviour; as well as her own experiences, observations and reflections of the interview. The researcher was the main data collection instrument and played the major role in conducting the interviews without support.

The two methods of data collection will now be discussed, beginning with the in-depth phenomenological interviews:

a) Phenomenological interviews

The phenomenological research approach was the most suitable to the purpose of the study, which was to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Seidman (2006:15) describes in-depth phenomenological interviews as a method combining life-history and in-depth focussed interviews, focussed by principles drawn from phenomenology.
Phenomenological interviews are efforts to understand the participants’ world from their point of view, to give meaning to their lived experiences and to discover their world before scientific explanation (Botha, 2004; Cohen, et al., 2011:411). Phenomenology enabled the researcher to be close to the participants and view the world from their perspectives (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:33; Cohen, et al., 2011:409).

In this study the researcher used in-depth phenomenological interviews. The participants were interviewed individually and the interviews were conducted in quiet offices, free from distraction. The participants chose the offices they wanted the interviews to be conducted in. The interviews did not interfere with lecturers’ daily tasks and lectures. On arrival at the selected venue, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and willingness to participate, thus creating an honest atmosphere and relationship. Further, the researcher informed the participants that they could withdraw from the interview and research at any point of time should they want to and also requested permission to audio record the interview. Following this, the participants gave written consent for the study to be conducted (Creswell, 1998:123) and completed a biographical information sheet.

The researcher adhered to all ethical measures in research as discussed earlier. One general question was asked to each of the participants, namely:

“How is aggression for you in your faculty?”

The researcher was sensitive to each participant's individuality throughout the interviews. Since the topic and interview could be emotional, the researcher approached the participants with empathetic understanding (Holloay & Wheeler, 1996).

The researcher applied interviewing techniques and skills to maximise participant response and have the participants reconstruct their experiences within the
phenomenon being studied (De Vos et al., 2002:293-295; Seidman, 2006:95-111; Cohen, et al., 2011:422). The interviewing techniques and skills included:

- open and honest communication skills,
- clarification,
- good listening skills,
- giving only minimal responses,
- paraphrasing,
- reflection, and
- reflective summarising.

The second data collection method, namely, field notes will now be discussed.

b) Observational and field notes

As previously discussed, qualitative data collected needs to be rich in description of the phenomenon being studied to ensure understanding of the phenomenon (De Vos, 1998:253). To understand how aggression is experienced by lecturers in a faculty at a university the researcher had to understand the setting and context of the phenomenon. Thus, to supplement and support the primary data collection through the interviewing process, and to minimise loss of any data, the researcher also used field notes as a secondary data storage method as well as a data collection and data analysing tool in this qualitative study.

Field notes were used as a written account of what the researcher heard, saw and experienced, and her thoughts on the interviews which enabled her to be
more accurately informed and to visualise how lecturers experience aggression; she therefore obtained information through observation (De Vos, et al., 2002: 304, 317). The researcher recorded these observations, experiences and reflections as comprehensively as possible, subsequent to each interview, without bias, for example: what happened, what was involved, who was involved, where did it happen, why did it happen, and how did it happen?

In addition the researcher also used the field notes to identify relationships within the data. The following four types of field notes were used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:281):

- **Observational notes**

  These are the notes made by the researcher on what was heard, seen, experienced and considered during the interviewing process (De Vos, et al., 2002:318,304). Researcher observations were also recorded.

- **Theoretical notes**

  The researcher’s deliberate efforts to derive meaning from the notes as she reflects on experiences (De Vos, et.al. 1998:286).

- **Methodological notes**

  The researcher made these notes during data collection as reminders, guidelines to be followed and critical remarks for personal consumption (De Vos, et.al. 2002:305).
• Personal/reflexive notes

The researcher’s reflection on feelings and experiences during the interviews (Creswell, 1994:152). These reflections guide the researcher’s own bias and influence on the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:281).

2.3.1.5 Data analysis

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:152-153) states that in qualitative inquiry, data analysis and interpretation are interlinked and both are often intertwined with data collection. Qualitative data analysis therefore involves the researcher in organising, accounting for and explaining the data (Cohen, et al., 2011:537). In brief, the researcher makes sense of the data collected in terms of the participants’ descriptions of the phenomenon and records the patterns, themes, categories and consistencies. Leedy and Ormond (2010:153) posit the data analysis spiral (Creswell, 1998) as an applicable approach to data analysis in a qualitative inquiry. In applying this approach the researcher works through the data several times following these steps:

• Organise the raw data.

• Peruse the complete set of data several times to understand what it comprises.

• Identify categories and themes and classify data accordingly.

• Integrate and summarize the data for the final report.

An exploratory data analysis approach best describes the process followed in this study. The data consisted of transcribed phenomenological interviews and written field notes.
The researcher used Tesch’s method of descriptive analysis (Creswell, 1994:154-155 & 2009:184; Tesch, 1990). The eight steps of the Tesch systematic open coding method for data analysis that the researcher applied during the data analysis process are as follows:

1. The researcher understood the whole by carefully reading all transcriptions. The researcher noted general ideas as well as the tone of what was being said.

2. The researcher carefully read one selected interview again, orientating herself on what it is about and what information is significant and of value. The researcher noted her thoughts in the margins of the transcriptions.

3. The researcher compiled a list of the topics emerging from the transcriptions and arranged topics in groups.

4. The researcher abbreviated the identified topics as codes, writing them next to the comparative section of the text and then identified new themes or categories which emerged.

5. The researcher found the most descriptive phrasing for the topics and turned them into categories, then reduced the number of categories to related topics.

6. The researcher put the codes in alphabetical order.

7. The researcher arranged the data into groups and performed an initial analysis.

8. The researcher requested coding for all interviews from an independent coder.
By using these steps and the systematic open coding process, the researcher focused on identifying themes derived from the interview data. Through identifying themes, the researcher was able to code the data, for example; (1) counterproductive work behaviour; and (2) tension between full-time and part-time lecturers. Also, by using various sources of data such as, interviews, field notes and observations, the researcher was able to identify repetition in the data, or supporting evidence or differences from the various sources of data. Subsequently, an independent coder verified the findings based on the agreed procedure. The researcher and independent coder reached consensus on confirmed themes and categories as well as refined themes and categories.

To conclude, findings were described using verbatim quotations of the participants’ descriptions of their personal experiences of aggression.

2.3.1.6 Literature control

Henning, et.al. (2004) posit that the literature review firstly, supports the researcher in contextualising the study to argue a case and identify a gap to be addressed; and secondly, to illustrate the relevance of your findings in relation to existing studies during the data analysis process. Creswell (2009:27) also states that a literature control, when presented at the end of the study, forms the foundation for comparing and contrasting findings in a qualitative research, and that this approach is the most appropriate for the inductive process of the qualitative study.

The literature control does not influence and direct the study, but supports identified categories and themes. The researcher conducted a literature review to frame the problem in the introduction of the study and then conducted a literature control after data collection and analysis to support, confirm and contrast the findings of this study. By following this process, the researcher compared and combined the findings from this study with existing studies on this phenomenon and enhanced trustworthiness of the study.
2.3.2 Phase two

Description of guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of mental health

The data collected in phase one shaped the underpinning of guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health for lecturers who experience aggression. Subsequently, the guidelines in this study were developed according to the themes and categories that emerged during the data analysis process as well as from data obtained through relevant literature during the literature control phase.

2.4 Summary

The researcher in Chapter Two explained the research process that was followed including the research design and research methodology chosen, as well as the essential ethical measures that were followed and the measures adhered to, to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

The researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and the researcher took an inductive phenomenological approach immersed in a natural setting applying phenomenological interviews. Also discussed, were the research activities, including the sampling method, fieldwork, data collection, and data analysis techniques.

In Chapter Three the researcher will describe lecturers' experience of aggression in a faculty at a university as discovered through this research. This will be followed by an in-depth data analysis, discussion and interpretation of the research findings.
3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two covered the research methodology applied in this inquiry. In this chapter the focus is on the data analyses and findings or results of the research study obtained from the interviews and field notes. The findings are presented and discussed in accordance with the information attained through the research design and methodology. In order to explore and describe lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university, open coding was applied to identify themes, categories and sub-categories through the analysis of the data.

3.2 Description of the sample

The sample in this study consisted of purposively selected lecturers who have been appointed in their faculty for at least three years, but not more than five years. The notion of lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university was investigated in order to derive towards guidelines that could contribute in order for lecturers to constructively manage this phenomenon and mental health.

The sample consisted of eight participants biographically divided as follows:

- Two white females, 42 and 31 years of age and who have been in the faculty for five and four years respectively.
- Two black males, one being 41 years old and in the faculty for three and a half years and the other 47 years old and in the faculty for three years.
- A 46 year old Indian female at the university for almost four years.
- An Indian male in his thirties at the university, for three years.

- A coloured female, 44 years old, and a white male, 25 years old both teaching for three years.

See Table 3.1 for the demographics of the participants who participated in this study and whose raw data were used in the data analysis, research findings and guidelines.

**Table 3.1 Biographical information of actual sample of the study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>RACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Coloured</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>Black</td>
</tr>
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</table>

3.3 Data collection and analysis

In-depth phenomenological interviews were used for data collection in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Consistent with the purpose of the study, in-depth open interviews were used to better understand the phenomenon and
allow the participants to express themselves and learn from the experience (Seidman, 2006:9).

The researcher also wrote field notes of participants’ responses, setting and behaviour as well as her own experiences, observations and reflections of the interviews. The researcher was the main data collection instrument and played a major role in conducting the interviews without support. One central question was posed to all participants, namely:

“How is aggression for you in your faculty?”

All the interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were as close to the original meaning as possible of what was described by the participants during the interviews, to ensure the trustworthiness of this research study.

Subsequently the researcher analysed the transcriptions implementing the systematic open-coding method of Tesch (Creswell, 1994:155; 2009:184). Furthermore, an independent professional coder was used. Consensus was reached regarding the themes, categories and sub-categories by the researcher and independent coder. The size of the sample was guided by data saturation.

3.4 Discussion of findings

Lincoln and Guba (Creswell, 2009:200) state that to capture the essence of the findings or results interpretation is important and it can be applied by asking: “What were the lessons learned?” Creswell (2009:200) posits that the lessons learned could be the researcher’s personal interpretation due to understanding from a personal context, or meaning derived from a comparison of findings with general literature on the phenomenon.
The findings in this study will be discussed in detail according to the identified themes and categories. Verbatim quotations from the interviews in support of the findings will be used then the findings will be validated by applicable literature once each category has been argued and described. Additionally, the findings of this study will be argued and interpreted according to Table 3.2 that provides a summary of the themes and categories identified from the transcribed interviews and field notes.

Table 3.2 Schematic summary of identified themes and categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME ONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration, from levels below, above and at the peer level</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers’ experience of frustration at a peer level</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME TWO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to</td>
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</table>
control aggression due to their position as lecturers

**CATEGORIES**

- Lecturers experience a high demand for personal development that contributes positivity to intrapersonal level
- Lecturers experience a high demand for personal development that displays at interpersonal level

**THEME THREE**

The constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies

**CATEGORY**

- Lecturers experience ineffective coping strategies
- Lecturers experience effective coping strategies
- Lecturers experience needs to address and manage aggression
Three themes emerged from the data analysis reflecting lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university.

- Theme one reflected lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration from levels below, above and at the peer level.

- Theme two reflected that they experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their positions as lecturers.

- Theme three reflected that the constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies.

The themes and the underlying categories of each theme will be discussed in detail and supported by direct verbatim quotations of the participants during the interviews. Each theme will be supported by literature control. A discussion on the first theme will now follow.

**3.4.1 Theme one: Lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration, from levels below, above and at the peer level**

The participants expressed themselves as not experiencing aggression but rather frustration in the faculty and university. None of them expanded on explicit aggression but emphasised the frustration they experience. They identified the experience of frustration on three levels, namely, levels below, above and the peer level. As the participants experience aggression, hidden as frustration, from levels below, above and at the peer level, they simultaneously control and manage themselves.
“... aggression come, can come from below you, can come from above you can also come from someone who is actually at your own level”

“I would say there is more frustration, than aggression in the faculty”

“I don’t have any experience of aggression. I would actually be surprised if I ever experience it in the university”

“I think maybe it is just, because we are mature enough to deal with our aggression”

A review of relevant literature established that the concept “aggression” is not easily or simplistically defined or understood. Aggression is often associated with negative emotions and actions such as anger, verbal abuse, bullying and violence (Government of Western Australia, Department of Commerce, Code of practice, 2010; Berkowitz, 1993:3; Neuman and Baron, 1998:3; Botha, 2004:47).

Thus, lecturers may not be aware of the fact that they act aggressively or experience aggression, since they regard their experiences as frustration. This description of aggression as frustration by the lecturers could be because there are various different meanings, vagueness and inaccuracies in describing and defining aggression in ordinary language.

The following evidence shows that participating lecturers do experience aggression politely referred to as frustration in a faculty at a university.

3.4.1.1 Category one: Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels below

The participants described many experiences in the teaching and learning environment, thus, from levels below, leading to frustration. First, participants experienced disrespect and back-chat from students, demanding self-control,
and they also found it hard to understand the new generation of students as well as the new democratic environment in education.

“… I don’t know if it is confident or arrogant … it must have been once or twice where it feels like scolding them or when they talk back”.

“The culture of students in this new environment, this democratic environment, where pupils just speak their mind, one has to get used to it. One has to have a lot of tolerance”.

“… but there is no respect for lecturers, there is no respect in class for fellow students”.

“I just think back in the days when we were still students we feared our lecturers, they were gods to us. I think that situation has changed and why it has changed perhaps is the reason or the characteristic of generation Y, this current generation Y”.

“… all of a sudden this guy who has disrupt everybody else has a right to be there.”

“… sometimes they can argue with a staff member, some of the things are not really with me but I have seen it with the other staff member and the actual staff member have to call security services to handle the situation”.

From the literature it is clear that student aggression in the classroom and impolite, uncivil students are definitely not new to higher education (Morrissette, 2001:1). Bart (2010:1) outlines different student profile types in the classroom and on campus that may cause aggression and call these profile types “The Unmagnified Seven”. The seven profile types of student include:
• The “Sherman Tank”, a student who loves confrontation and wants to prove he/she is right all the time.

• The “Sniper”, is the stirrer who criticizes lecturers behind their backs and wants to cause chaos.

• The “Exploder”, shows mood swings and makes aggressive and insulting remarks.

• The “Complainer”, constantly moans and complains.

• The “Negativist”, is very draining since he/she is constantly unhappy and wants others to also feel miserable.

• The “Bulldozer”, a student who tries to overwhelm with facts and figures since he/she thinks that only his/her opinion counts, disregarding other’s peoples knowledge and viewpoints.

• “The Clam”, the unresponsive, disengaged and silent student who can be unhappy or frustrated, but does not communicate problems.

The participants’ perception of students as being arrogant and disrespectful is described in the literature as a tension between generations, which results from generational dissimilarities that exist because of conflicting values. Individuals make choices and decisions based on their value systems, and conflicting values often lead to misunderstandings and misconception. Moreover, generation Y believes that respect must be earned; it is not spontaneously granted based on the age, authority or title of a person (Codrington, 2008).
The participants stated that large classes, noisiness in class, students who are late for classes and walking in and out of the lecture hall, cause disruption and frustration.

“… we have these large classes... and it really takes a lot of emotional maturity to control your aggression there”

“… you always have students talking among each other, they are always talking and they are always chatting”

“I was not coping too well with it so they gave me a smaller class”

“… but my frustration was the students walk in and out of class”

Codrington and Grant-Marshal (2004:111) confirm that teaching in this day and age is undoubtedly tougher than before, focusing on different intelligences extending from spatial to music and emotional. They also reason that everything will be challenged and that the classroom will be noisy.

Lecturers further expressed that there is a gap between the schooling and higher educational systems and therefore students are more demanding, sometimes have unrealistic expectations, and are not used to the heavy workload at university level.

“So their input is so much less and what they expect from the lecturers is so much more”.

“… students now deem that when they pay for their degree then they earned it, so there is no studying around it…”.
“Students come here with expectations, we come here with our own expectations and if there is some inconsistencies it becomes an issue”.

“… they don’t concentrate for long periods of time”.

“… when it comes to test they want you to be more lenient on them in a standard that is a fearful situation”.

“… we have to literally baby the first years”.

Literature (Trout, 1998) confirms that the educational high school system produces more and more students that are academically not ready but also aggressive to the rigors and demands of Higher Education. In addition, some students act impolitely to challenge the lecturer, to stretch their own intellectual and academic knowledge and skills, or to show off to peers (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004:63). Some students may also challenge authority, where the students may be older, adult learners and have significant work and life experience and knowledge themselves.

The above is supported in the statement that students increasingly challenge their teachers and are cynical about the education system (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004:111&114).

Moreover, they described frustration due to students’ poor work ethics and not showing up for class or showing up for class unprepared and then having unrealistic demands regarding their academic performance.

“… we try to accommodate them but at some point we are busy spoon feeding them”.

“… they don’t prepare for class they expect to be spoon fed.”
“… but they don’t access the information and they don’t work with the information unless you sit them down and you make them do it”.

“… you know they don’t seem to look at the study material”.

“You ask them something straight from the textbook and they can’t tell you because at that particular moment they were perhaps playing on their cell phone or something”.

“… I mean I sat with the students as well so often and yet they actually still don’t perform”.

“… and then again there’s those frustrating chancers…one student who never pitched up to class…now before exams you want to come and all of a sudden gain entrance into the exam”.

“… not seeming to recognise their poor work even the poor work ethic, because they don’t pitch up at class and still got the audacity to ask you why I got poor marks”.

In an article by Jaschik (2010) a professor stated that the new generation of students have a sense of entitlement to receive high grades, cannot work independently and are unable to think for themselves. Another professor responded in the same article, emphasising that the current students at university do not attend class, do not study and expect to receive distinctions. These statements confirm the participants’ frustration due to students’ poor work ethics and not showing up for class or showing up unprepared for class and then having unrealistic demand regarding their performance and achievements.
The participants described logistical matters, resources, and issues with finances, media and administration staff causing frustration and thus interfering with proper teaching practices.

“… to get it through the payment system. That is a very long arduous and frustrating process”.

“… the ovens need to be serviced but until it is through procurement and it is through the processes, it is not worth going through that schlep”.

“… and everyone is saying technology, technology, why haven’t we all got iPads, why doesn’t all the students have iPads”.

“… they do struggle to find or obtain classes”.

“… we booked the venue and then we booked media and media never shows up to bring a projector and that class does not have a projector”.

"I am struggling a little bit with sharing my time between the two campuses, because I have got to travel there, and I have to travel back”.

Bakker, Demerouti and Euwema (2005) confirm that important variables causing frustration in education include weak support by administrators, unreasonable caseloads, large class size and a lack of supplies, materials and resources.

Contrary, to the above accounts of frustration experienced in the teaching and learning environment two participants also experienced the teaching and learning environment as a positive environment where aggression could be managed.
“… the students are the least frustrating part of my job, because I think the learning curve is alive and well, they grow and they change and they do become better at what they do”.

“Lecturer-student interaction. I have had a very wonderful experience in terms of this”.

“So have seen aggressiveness or aggression in terms of students being upset about certain things, but we play a big buffering role in a sense here. Those students kind of calm down when they leave here”.

Literature (The Institute on Community Integration, College of Education, University of Minnesota, 1995; Positive Classroom Environment and Student-Teacher Rapport, n.d.) confirms that aggression in the classroom can be managed with through positive interventions for challenging behaviour. Evidence in support of this position states that aggression prevention techniques and strategies can stop behaviour before it starts and that aggression intervention techniques and strategies can stop the behaviour if it had already started (Goldstein, Harootunian & Conoley, 1994).

The participants in this study did not only experience frustration from levels below, their students, but also from their management or leadership, which will now be discussed.

3.4.1.2 Category two: Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels above

Some of the participants in this study further expressed that they experience frustration caused by management and leadership in three areas leading to the experience of frustration. The three areas are:
First, participants indicated that the lack of transparent systems from management and the abuse of authority cause disempowerment and frustration.

“I just think we operate here on a very unfair and a very biased system”.

“The management is poor, there is no fair and transparent process with regards to staff and with regards to staff development and growing in the department and there is no future”.

“... so he is allowed to get away with these things and although we are not childish going to follow his example, we were wondering why the faculty tolerates him”.

“At the faculty level now, I see aggression more taking the course of power play”.

“... and then the supervisor actually upped the marks without actually discussing it with me”

Secondly, the participants experienced frustration due to a lack of communication between leadership and lecturers, the often unclear communication and the manner of communication were unacceptable and leading to uncertainty and hidden aggression.

“... I mean you have to be very subtle and polite in the way you direct a conversation without stifling it”.

“I hold this particular important position in faculty therefore what I say should be law and nobody can question it”.

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“... where some people who are actually at the top level of this faculty talk down on other people”.

“... because there is no form of communicating to some higher presence to consider or take into consideration our queries as well”.

Thirdly, participants to some extent, felt despondent and discouraged due to the lack of clear job and responsibility specifications. They feel that they are overloaded with additional tasks and responsibilities and that some staff members shift their responsibilities onto other lecturers, and that this non-clarity and inability to take action by management often leads to perceived unfair treatment and frustration.

“... we are not too sure which jobs or which job descriptions actually belong to us and which actually belongs to the faculty”.

“There are no checks and balances and because you are here you end up carrying more and more, because there is no one else to do it”.

“... and the faculty expects too much from us in terms of the workload”.

“... but it is always the same ones who pick up the flack and who carry the can”.

“... just someone coercing you to do something that you shouldn’t do and you may end up doing it”.

“... I find that we are doing a lot more paperwork and we have got deadlines, we are aggressive about deadlines”.
The findings in category two indicated that;

1. the lack of transparent systems from management and the abuse of authority cause lecturers to feel disempowered and experiencing frustration,

2. the experienced frustration, due to a lack of communication between departmental leadership and lecturers, the often unclear communication as well as the manner of communication, are often unacceptable and thus leading to lecturers’ uncertainty and hidden experiences of aggression,

3. lecturers felt despondent and discouraged due to the lack of clear job and responsibility specifications, and

4. non-clarity and inability to take action by management often leads to perceived unfair treatment and frustration.

The above is confirmed by literature as seen in “Bullying of Academics in Higher Education” (bulliedacademics.blogspot.com, n.d.) states that workplace bullying is complicated and devastating and these power games can be difficult to prove to people who have not experienced the actions. What makes the problem worse is that the bully is often a manager and therefore has the power to manipulate the situation. Keashly and Neuman (2010:55) substantiate the finding that lecturers may experience aggression from levels above and that this frustration and aggression are often associated with perceptions of unfair or belligerent treatment. They also state that in a study of 452 employees from various businesses, 21% of these indicated frustration with the degree of respect and fair treatment they received from their managers.
Literature surveys further confirmed that employees often experience frustration due to passive aggressive managers (blog.brazencareerist.com/.../5-signs-of-passive-aggressive-management, n.d.), who cause employees to often feel disempowered due to:

- little to no feedback on performance;
- vague or unnecessary rules and guidelines;
- absence of professional development and sharing of expertise; and
- unclear or no communication.

Finally, literature also revealed that people experience frustration in education because of work overload, unrealistic expectations and the changing environment (Naylor, 2001:7).

Category three of theme one, which describes lecturers’ experience of aggression at a peer level, will now be discussed.

3.4.1.3 Category three: Lecturers’ experience of frustration at a peer level

During the interviews, the participants described incidences of colleagues acting aggressively in a variety of conduct and interaction situations. They experience aggression in meetings at a departmental level where colleagues treated each other unprofessionally and with disrespect, do not show up for meetings and the inappropriate manner in which colleagues sometimes address and treat each other.

“... I mean the bitching and moaning at meetings”.
“… I have seen people getting a bit agitated with each other in department meetings”.

“… well a lot of things get raised at meetings”.

“so he does not show up for departmental meetings, he does not come to faculty board, he does not come to graduation”.

“… people just don’t show up at all for a meeting without making any excuses”.

“… there was quite a few colleagues shouting at one another”.

“… they started shouting at one another and everyone wanted to prove their own point”.

“… they use grapevine or the group talk or group gossip”.

“… colleagues tend to speak behind colleagues’ backs”.

There were participants in this study who expressed tension between the staff from the different campuses owing to the different campus cultures and also between full-time and part-time lecturers where the part-time lecturers do not perform and other colleagues have to perform their tasks.

“… the different cultural background so it is quite a challenge to unify”.

“… maybe the reminiscence of the old systems are still there”.

“… some of the colleagues on the one campus will deem it unfair that at this campus you have to work hard and you have to perform
and on that other campus everything is so laid back and much more relaxed”.

Further aggression experienced by the participants on a peer level was because of email correspondence; either the tone of the email received or non-response on emails sent. The non-response to emails indicated slow performance response if information is required from another colleague.

“… or sometimes I just don’t respond to an email”.

“… they don’t just respond to emails”

“… and she got angry. I have proof of the emails”.

“… cannot get hold of the other person that you actually need to help you with this and that create a bit of tension”.

In conclusion of Category Three of Theme One, participants described colleagues’ counterproductive work behaviour regarding conduct and support. They stated that they had to wait unreasonably long times for feedback on papers and the type of feedback is often deconstructive. This counterproductive work behaviour generated negative feelings.

“… she has refused to come and assist us and come and help anybody with edulink process”

“Well I didn’t expect that level of childishness from someone who is appointed as a consultant … there is pressure to put those papers out and send it”.

“… I got feedback and one particular person’s feedback really caught me, took me aback”.

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“… give you feedback where they will simply dismiss your argument and your paper”.

“… they just take it and put it away and only look at it after a month”.

A substantial amount of evidence verifies the above findings in Category Three of Theme One. Björkqvist, Österman and Hjelt-Bäck (1994:173,175) posit that an individual’s self-image largely depends on how he or she is treated daily by fellow staff members and when the individual is exposed to escalating aggression it can lead to a “loss of self-esteem and gradually increase mental stress”.

At the same time, studies conducted by Baron and Neuman (1998), as well as Geddes and Baron (Ramirez-Melgoza & Cox, 2006:3) associated with aggression in the workplace, have identified three important types of aggression in relation to the nature and frequency of aggression in the workplace:

- Communication of hostility in various ways such as gestures, body language, facial expressions and verbal harassment; isolation such as being ignored deliberately and hostile comments such as cynicism, gossip and insult;

- Sabotage, by means of hindering staff members to perform their everyday activities such as leaving the workplace when needed, refuting paperwork and workplace sabotage; and

- Covert and overt aggression, which is related to serious forms of aggression, for instance, property damage and theft (overt) and when individuals at work sabotage colleagues’ work (covert).

According to Fox, Spector and Miles (2001:2) individuals can also sabotage colleagues’ work by means of counterproductive work behaviour, which is
behaviour that is intended to have an unfavourable effect on the organisation and its members. It can include overt acts such as organizational aggression or more passive acts, such as purposely failing to follow instructions, doing work incorrectly or not at all.

Keashly and Neuman (2010:53) validate the findings that aggressive behaviours most often cited in academia involve threats to professional status, isolation and instructional behaviour, such as obstructing lecturers in achieving important objectives. Keashly and Neuman (2010:53) also state that the above discussed findings fit, given the importance placed in the academic world on personal accomplishments, scholarly precision, and standing.

Thus, if one lecturer wished to harm another lecturer in this environment, the one lecturer might use behaviour to undermine the professional standing, authority, and competence of the other lecturer. Similarly, one person might obstruct access to important resources for the other person to fulfil their work sufficiently and effectively.

The second theme that was identified during the data analysis process of this study describes the findings that lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers.

3.4.2 Theme two: Lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers

A strong theme that emerged in this study is that lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers. A Cornerstone Faculty Member (www.clarke.edu/..., n.d.) states that teaching is definitely a noble profession. Not a noble profession noble as in superiority, the rich and for the upper classes, but noble in possessing or
displaying high moral character. The participants experience a high demand for personal development on an intrapersonal and interpersonal level as contributors for managing aggression. The first category denotes lecturers’ personal development that contributes positively to intrapersonal level.

3.4.2.1 Category one: Lecturers experience a high demand for personal development that contributes positively to intrapersonal level

During the interviews, the participants stated aspects of personal development that contributes positively to the intrapersonal level of managing aggression they may experience. Some of the participants stated that due to their age, level of maturity and life experience they can guide their emotional reaction when presented with aggressive behaviour.

“... I guess one would be age and the other one might be life exposure or life experience”.

“... some staff members who are not as mature”.

“... Correlation between your level of personal development and the way you accept or reject aggression”.

“... I think maybe it is just, because we are mature enough to deal with our aggression”.

“... every average individual has the ability to get angry... but the emotion the mature individual is somebody who deals with it ... we all have the ability to control it as well”.

There is wide support in literature (Morningside, 2011; Plant, 2012; Newton, 2011) for personal development that contributes positively to the intrapersonal level of managing aggression. What matters most in the personal development
to contribute to the intrapersonal level of managing aggression is intrapersonal intelligence (Intrapersonal Intelligence, n.d.). People with intrapersonal intelligence are defined as having the following characteristics (Intrapersonal Intelligence, n.d.):

- They have a well-developed self-understanding, defined as having an accurate awareness of their visions, goals, strengths, limitations, disposition, anxieties, needs, and inspiration.

- They have the ability to act on the basis of self-understanding, guiding their behaviour, and making decisions based on an accurate depiction of self.

- People with intrapersonal intelligence are not forced to do things they do not want to. They make choices based on what is real and true for them and they hold a strong sense of responsibility, individuality and determination.

The participants further indicated that owing to their positions as lecturers at a university a public display of aggression is unacceptable and they have to exhibit a higher level of self-discipline and cognitive control.

“… and also it also has to do with I mean your position in the public space and your position in the place of work”.

“… but in a work situation and certainly when other people are involved, as a grownup and as an emotionally mature person you should be able to deal with your aggression”.

“… but really I don’t expect us to have that kind of behaviour at institutions of higher learning”.
“… expected not to be shouting at one another across doorways and hallways and everything”.

“… people don’t want to see themselves being uncivilised”.

Keashly and Neuman (2010:53) argue that due to specific standards of academic interactions, dialogue and collegiality among academics, aggressive behaviour is unlikely to be communicated by insults, foul language, shouting, or threats of physical injury, that would agreeably contradict and breach such standards and lead to possible exclusion from colleagues.

The participants stated that personality, emotional intelligence and coping skills are important to manage aggression, one can choose to reciprocate, or appropriately handle the aggressive behaviour in a specific situation.

“… managing aggression in the workplace, it needs a softer skill and for this, how do you manage it”.

“… look, personality plays an important role in aggression, the way you were brought up”.

“… academics are by nature well advanced into their careers. So at that age people are very much in control of their emotions, they are emotionally intelligent”.

“… I don’t know, teaching yourself to become more emotional intelligent”.

Evidence in the literature (Newton, 2011) indicates that personality and emotional intelligence are predictors of how individuals will experience and manage aggression. Literature also indicates that “If a person’s ultimate aim is to understand an identified variable - such as aggression or problem behaviour -
understanding the personality system as a whole can help link Emotional Intelligence with other relevant parts of personality” (Emotional Intelligence, n.d.).

Morningside (2011) further claims that intrapersonal skills include an individual's state of mind as well as his or her behavioural stability as measured by the individual’s emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four branch model of emotional intelligence defines emotional intelligence as the abilities to:

1. accurately observe emotions in oneself and others;
2. use emotions to enable clear thinking;
3. understand emotional connotations; and
4. control and manage emotions.

Finally, Plant (2012:1) posits that intrapersonal skills are fundamental for a successful career and that intrapersonal skills include emotional intelligence, and the ability to manage your own emotions and therefore own behaviour.

The Second Category in Theme Two describes personal development that lecturers display at interpersonal level to manage and control aggression.

3.4.2.2 Category two: Lecturers experience a high demand for personal development that displays at interpersonal level

Equally significant aspects of a demand for personal development that displays at interpersonal level emerged during the data analysis process. Some participants referred to interpersonal skills as soft skills and life skills.

“… you sort of have an understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and how to the soft management skills”. 
“… you empower yourself through personal development”.

“… managing aggression in the workplace, it needs a softer skill”.

According to the literature survey ((National Career Service, 2012; Glomb & Liao, 2003; Mind Tools, 1996-2014), interpersonal skills are the life skills used every day to interact and communicate with people on an individual basis or in a group. Also, interpersonal skills, also called ‘soft skills’, are important in the workplace as well as in an individual’s personal and social life. Good interpersonal skills will also lead to better understanding and relationships if people pay attention to how they interact with others. People can improve their interpersonal skills with practice (Skillsyouneed.com, 2011-2014). The National Career Service (2012) states that ‘soft skills’ are transferable and that these skills are personal qualities and attributes that can be applied in different types of jobs to the benefit of the organisation as well as assist a person to work well with others.

The participants further proposed the importance of interpersonal skills such as effective communication and conflict resolution skills to manage aggression. Participants discussing effective communication and good conflict resolution skills came across as calm and confident.

“I listen and I am able to respond”.

“… he will say there is a problem here, how do we resolve it, how do we overcome this”.

“… firmly stated their point of view and this is what they felt and I had to calm them down first”.

“… managing aggression in the workplace is something also that I mean one can agree that’s something that can be learned”.
Literature is also clear about the importance of good communication skills and conflict resolution in the workplace (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Good communication starts with good interpersonal skills, when a person can express himself or herself freely and efficiently as part of personal empowerment and considering the rights of others (Helpguide.org, n.d.). People who communicate well get on well with colleagues, listen well, understand better, and can argue their views and opinions without being aggressive (National Career Service, n.d.).

Participants expressed understanding and interaction with other people as significant in aggression management, and identified an appreciation of fellow staff members and students as human beings, to be important in managing aggression and conflict.

“… human relationship is very important, interpersonal relationship is very important, understanding issues surrounding cultural values are very important”.

“We are in a fortunate position that we have a good understanding between colleagues”.

“Obviously we don’t want someone whose students don’t feel comfortable coming to and talking to”.

“If a student comes here and they are uptight and aggressive and I recognised it, the first thing I will say is, listen I am going to have a cup of tea or coffee would you join me”.

“… everybody kind of look after each other”.

“… because for me it’s also it’s quite important the people that I actually work with”.

Literature (Interpersonal Intelligence, n.d.; Johnson, 2003) published on positive work relations and people skills confirm the importance of building positive work relations, communication and interaction. Freifeld (2013:1) believes that one of the most intense involvements people can have is the relationship people have with other people; positive and supportive relationships will lead to good mental and physical health. Freifeld (2013:1) further proposes that a huge challenge in relationships is that people are all different and that people can see life and the world in many different ways. Thus, to prevent the experience of negative work relations people must accept and embrace diversity (Helpguide.org, n.d.). In addition, the manner in which people communicate at work or at home is driven by emotions and people often understand, react, communicate and make decisions because of what they feel and not what they think. (Gamble & Gamble, 2013).

Hence, emotional awareness provides one with the capacity needed to understand both oneself and other people, as well as the actual messages they are conveying.

In the third and final theme of the research findings, it is apparent that the constant pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to them adopting various coping strategies. Theme three will now be discussed.

3.4.3 Theme three: The constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies

An analysis of the data revealed that the constant pressure and unfulfilled needs of the participants lead to the application of various coping strategies to manage the experience of frustration. Firstly, Category One will reveal the ineffective coping strategies participants apply when experiencing aggression hidden as frustration, and secondly, the effective coping strategies the participants apply to
manage frustration will be discussed in Category Two. Thirdly, in Category Three the lecturers’ needs to address and manage aggressive behaviour more efficiently will be explored and discussed.

Turning to literature, a variety of good (effective) and bad (ineffective) coping strategies to handle aggression and other negative situations are described. Coping skill refers to a tool that people use to counterbalance or overcome difficulty, weakness, or debility (Mind Tools, 1996-2014). Essentially, it is the tool people use to deal with tough circumstances such as aggression in the workplace (Psychologiques.wordpress.com, n.d.). Also, while some workplace stress is normal, unnecessary stress can affect an individual’s productivity and impact on an individual’s physical and emotional health. Also, a person’s skill to cope can mean the difference between achievement and failure (Helpguide, n.d.).

3.4.3.1 Category one: Lecturers experience ineffective coping strategies

The participants in this study identified many frustrations related to their work and mentioned ineffective coping skills to manage these frustrations. First, the participants applied non-confrontation and avoidance by bottling up their frustration, resulting in complete withdrawal from confrontation and colleagues.

“… the thing is I think sometimes I also tend to keep quiet about a lot of things”.

“… or just to keep your job, by keeping quiet, or to be at peace with the people”.

“… let me swallow it, just lay down the peace”.

“… some people withdrew to their offices and locked the doors”.

“… I guess it is one way of coping, get self-absorb”.

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Some participants stated that they often use and experience passive aggression as an empowerment tool and also avoid confrontation by suppressing their own aggression.

“So if you don’t want to shout at them, the students, to express your aggression there are other ways to do it so instance you would want to punish them by making the test harder”.

“… hidden aggression or what you may call it, passive aggression”.

“… so they try to keep their aggression hidden although it is deep down in their heart, it is buried down in their heart”.

“… creates anger towards the colleagues firstly, secondly it creates distrust”.

It is significant that participants projected their aggression. They might be frustrated at work and then the frustration and stress was carried over to the home.

“I think I bottle up my aggression at work and go and display it at home”.

“… I am not scared to be aggressive with my children”.

The findings that indicate participants’ ineffective use of coping skills to manage their experiences of aggression are verified in literature by various authors on coping and dealing with anger, conflict, aggression and stress in the workplace (UCLA Dual Diagnosis Program, 2014; Frydenberg, n.d.; The Duke University Talent Identification Program, 2014). Frydenberg (n.d.) states that non-productive coping describes negative approaches individuals use to manage their lives and
workplace (The Duke University Talent Identification Program, n.d.). These ineffective coping strategies include the following:

- Individuals revert to worry and wishful thinking and hope for the best without taking steps to ensure that the problem is resolved.

- Individuals decide not to cope and do nothing about the problem or give up. Not coping, doing nothing about a problem or giving up may lead to physical and/or psychological symptoms and problems.

- Individuals consciously ignore the problem, block out the problem or pretend that it does not exist.

- Individuals try to suppress tension and attempt to feel better by engaging in negative behaviours (substance abuse, taking anger out on relatives and friends).

- Individuals keep to themselves, withdraw from others, refuse to communicate with others and do not express their concerns and feelings.

- Individuals blame themselves and believe they are responsible for the problem.

Besides the above, communication is often the core problem in the experience of aggression (Hogan, 2000), since individuals revert to ineffective communication or not communicating at all, but not communicating is not an option (Grossman, 2011). The harder people try not to communicate, the more they do. By not communicating people still communicate something: it may show that a person is shy, angry or sulking, maybe that the person is too busy or not interested. Ignoring somebody communicates, not by telling somebody, but through non-verbal communication it is apparent (Skillsyouneed.com, n.d.).
Gulanick (n.d.) describes the defining characteristics of a person who uses ineffective coping strategies. These characteristics include: individuals who cannot verbalise their inability to cope, who are to make decisions and to ask for help, and who use inappropriate defence mechanisms.

Some of the participants in this study also described effective coping strategies used in managing frustration, which will be discussed in category two of theme one.

3.4.3.2 Category two: Lecturers experience effective coping strategies

Some of the lecturers stated that aggression is a universal phenomenon and that it can be applied as a positive driving force in your personal development and achievement.

“… aggression is just something that is universal”.

“… I think aggression is something that drives all of us, but if you can, use your aggression as a positive energy”.

“… aggression is about pushing the boundaries … what can we do better… use it for a positive thing”.

Some of the participants also stated that they use effective coping skills in the faculty through focussing on personal and career goals instead of focussing on aggression and frustration.

“… it is easier to overcome it when you have got you own personal goals”.

“… push myself forward”.
“… being able to explore [the lecturer is able to build own career].”

“… make sure that I will finish my PhD”.

Evidence in literature indicates that adopting effective coping skills and strategies towards aggression contributes to job satisfaction and performance. Frydenberg (n.d.) states that productive coping describes positive approaches to coping and that individuals can successfully work to resolve problems such as the experience of aggression by implementing the following strategies:

- Focussing on solving the problem by looking at different ways to handle and solve it;
- Keeping fit and healthy;
- Finding and developing stress relieving interests and activities;
- Working hard, demonstrating commitment and concentrating on success;
- Focussing on the positive side of situations and outcomes.

Additionally, Craftyron (2011) lists the following as effective coping skills:

1. the ability to recognize and express feelings;

2. the skill to solve problems;

3. having a positive attitude, the ability to set limits/boundaries, having healthy relationships and possessing assertive skills;

4. to be able to give rational responses; and
5. the ability to implement relaxation methods and to use energy to solve problems.

The last category of Theme Three will now be discussed and describes the needs of lecturers in order to address and manage aggression.

3.4.3.3 Category three: Lecturers experience needs to address and manage aggression

It is imperative for a faculty at a university to ensure a productive and supportive environment for lecturers to operate in. The participants’ experiences of frustration or aggression in the workplace impacts on their personal development, identity and mental health. Through the data analysis of the interviews the following needs of lecturers were identified as indicated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Needs experienced by lecturers to address and manage aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTIFIED NEEDS EXPERIENCED</th>
<th>CITED PROOF OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills development workshops</td>
<td>“… you start shadowing people, then actually getting involved in certain activities”.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“… staff development and growing in the department and there is no future”.

“… I am not going anywhere”.

“No, I am bored”.

“… we can only do it if we are socially mature and socially advanced”.

“… empower yourself through personal development”.

Effective and transparent leadership

“ The management is poor there is no fair and transparent process”.

“… they don't always understand what is going on”.

“… having a leader who is empathetic, who is fair”.

“… like the balance of power between the subordinator and the leader”.

“… I think it needs also leadership skills to uncover aggression”.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities to ventilate feelings</th>
<th>“… there is no form of communication to some higher presence to consider or take into consideration our queries”. “… it was not formal, but it was a get together sit for a cup of coffee…tell us what you experienced this week and sometimes that was an experience I experienced and we share and talk about it”.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear job specifications</td>
<td>“… we are not sure which jobs or jobs descriptions actually belongs to us and which belongs to the faculty”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to rely on colleagues</td>
<td>“… two lecturers taking up one course but the fulltime lecturer ends up doing the majority of the work”. “… and you cannot get hold of the other person that you actually need to help you with this”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems in place to assist lecturers in managing disruptive students</td>
<td>“There is no system in place that can actually help us or help us remove that student”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors for new lecturers</td>
<td>“… I am being mentored”. “… especially my HOD I think it is because he has been my mentor”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support of senior lecturers</td>
<td>“… we’ve got a very senior academic so the problems also get raised by him and he speaks for the young ones”.</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“… the more senior lecturers, they have always looked out for us”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“… we have the support of our senior staff in anything and everything”.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Reasonable workload</th>
<th>“… our lecturers are forced to take more subjects, they are forced to take more portfolios upon themselves”.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“… we cannot fill our positions and that causes frustration and once again leads to workloads or the current lecturer having to compromise for those workloads”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“… lecturers were actually just thrown into lecturing two, three modules in one semester”.</td>
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</table>

The importance of staff’s experience for needs analysis in the workplace to address and manage aggression is evident in literature such as the article; *The Effects of Individual Differences and Charismatic Leadership on Workplace Aggression* (Hepworth & Towler, 2004). Hepworth and Towler (2004) found that the influences of individuals’ differences such as; anger, self-control, can be important in controlling aggression in the workplace and needs to be explored in the workplace. Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane & Ferreira, (2011:112) further stated
that there is an important relationship between job satisfaction and emotional attachment with the organisation as well as “affective and normative commitment variables”. Some of these variables may include pay, promotion, supervision and communication. According to the literature, aspects to look at in a workplace which need analysis, include among others:

1. training, career development and management; (Perry & Associates, 2010);
2. promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace (Ricky, 1999);
3. mentoring and coaching (Abbajay, n.d.).

The sentiment expressed in the literature is that a general and generic needs analysis cannot address individual needs. Each lecturer’s needs analysis to address and manage aggression has to be personalised and focussed on the individual. The faculty and university can implement generic guidelines to manage aggression.

3.5 Discussion of the field notes

The researcher in this study used phenomenological in-depth interviewing to better understand how the participants in this inquiry would formulate the meaning of their own experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university. In addition, observational, theoretical, methodological and personal field notes were made to minimize the loss of data during data capturing. As a researcher, who is also a staff member in the faculty of the target population, it was important to accept my role as the researcher and be aware of my own prejudices and particular perspectives of the world throughout this inquiry. As a result, the researcher maintained honest boundaries between the participants’ experiences and views and personal interpretations and experiences.
All of the participants were willing and open to participate in the interviews since they found the topic interesting and current. The phenomenological interviews provided the participants with an opportunity to reflect on and share their lived experiences. Based on the data collected from the interviews the participants shared many experiences of aggression hidden as frustration. The participants’ discussions revealed coping mechanisms for each individual that proved to be unique in some cases and similar for others. This research created an opportunity to describe guidelines for lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university.

One of the participants was extremely positive and managed to change the challenge of the student aggression into building relationships with them and inspiring them. Some of the participants indeed experienced great job satisfaction while some of the others’ morale seems to have taken a serious knock.

All of the participants shared the challenges they face concerning the students’ conduct and how students are more outspoken and demanding than before. Situations where a more experienced lecturer guides a new lecturer seem to be very constructive and motivating. The participants’ own career development was mentioned, as well as the great interest in this research topic and they stated that they would like to be given feedback.

3.6 Summary

This chapter provided an exploration of lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. Through the data collection process of phenomenological interviews with eight lecturers and the data analysis process, three main themes emerged. The main themes and categories under each of the themes, were described and reveals how lecturers experience aggression in a faculty at a university. A literature control was conducted to verify the findings of this research. The researcher included the field notes captured during and after the
interviews. The identified themes referred to lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university and the need for guidelines to support the lecturers.

Consequently, the themes and their specific categories will be signified in Chapter Four in describing guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression of lecturers as part of mental health. Turning to Chapter Four, the guidelines, recommendations, limitations, as well as conclusions and summary of the study will be discussed.
Chapter 4: GUIDELINES, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three focussed on the findings, discussion of the findings supported by a relevant literature control, where possible, to validate the findings. The primary purpose of the present study was to examine lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. This was done to describe guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health. This phenomenological study was designed to explore and describe lecturers’ lived experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university.

In this chapter guidelines will be presented to assist lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university to facilitate constructive management of aggression as integral part of mental health. These guidelines are concluded from the three main themes and underlying categories of each theme, that emerged in the findings of this inquiry as discussed in Chapter Three, to support lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university. Additionally, the guidelines will be followed by recommendations and limitations of the study as well as a conclusion and summary. In some descriptions new information is added to the chapter to provide supplementary academic context to the conclusion.

Researchers have strived to understand the nature and developing processes of aggression from a diversity of perspectives and to study individual and related indicators that may be involved in aggression advancement. According to Sharma (2013:626) there are many different views of the causes of aggression. Freud (1920) in Erwin (2002) argued that human aggression originates from our people redirecting toward others the energy of a primitive death urge.

According to Dollard et al. (Sharma, 2013:626) aggression always stems from some kind of frustration, may it be a recent, relevant frustration or a previous
frustration. Additionally, Sharma (2013:626) cites McDavid and Harari arguing that according to the social learning theory aggression is learned behaviour.

Literature (Skills You Need, n.d.; www.tip.duke.edu/node/773; Frydenberg, n.d.; NICE public health guidance 22, 2009) revealed the importance of stress management, effective coping strategies, open communication and the prevention of frustration leading to aggression as part of a healthy organisational culture, as vital in the constructive management of aggression by lecturers as part of mental health awareness. Thus, the present study was undertaken to explore lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. The results of the present study describe and support guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression of lecturers as integral part mental health. The results very well indicate that lecturers do experience aggression in a faculty at a university.

4.2 Guidelines to support lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university to constructively manage the aggression as integral part of their mental health.

The guidelines suggested are derived from the findings of phase one and are based on themes and categories identified from the transcribed interviews, as presented in Table 3.1 as well as observations and field notes taken. A literature control was conducted to validate the findings of this inquiry. (Chapter Three) Three main themes emerged through data analysis describing lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university. The guidelines suggested are to assist lecturers to address and manage aggression in a faculty at a university. These guidelines can also assist lecturers to constructively manage their mental health.

Briefly, theme one revealed that lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration from levels from below, above and at the peer level. The findings revealed that lecturers did not expand on explicit aggression but emphasized the
experience of aggression rather as the experience of frustration. As the lecturers experience frustration from levels below, above and peers, they simultaneously control and manage their behaviour and response when exposed to aggression. They seldom open up about it and they want to adhere to their own as well as the institution’s values regarding mature and expected behaviour. The need to manage sometimes unruly, non-performing students, as well as the diversity in the classroom and new generation students bringing more challenging behaviours into the classroom, is vital to junior faculty who is new to Higher Education teaching and learning.

Theme two described that lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers. The lecturers reflected on the experience of personal development that contributes positively to the intrapersonal level and the experience of personal development that displays at interpersonal level.

Theme three indicates that the constant pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers leads to the experience of various coping strategies: namely, ineffective coping strategies and effective coping strategies to manage frustration and aggressive behaviour. Lecturers also stated their needs experienced to address and manage frustration and aggression in a faculty at a university.

As the second objective of this inquiry was to describe guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as integral part of mental health, guidelines were generated through data collection in phase one and through interpretation and reduction in phase two. According to the findings of this study, the suggested guidelines will include social skills development, conflict resolution and effective techniques to modify or avoid aggressive behaviour (Berkowitz, 1993:362). According to Demerica (2010) social skills in the workplace are essential for success. Also, social skills training and the ability to effectively interact with others are vital to ensure people do not experience unnecessary difficult situations. Psycho-education involves mental and social skills and
knowledge to support individuals to better understand and cope with emotional and behavioural challenges in their lives. The support presented to lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university, should be a holistic process and also implemented to facilitate constructive management of aggression as integral part of mental health.

The researcher holds the view that the guidelines described can promote a work environment conducive to Higher Education teaching and learning where lecturers will feel secure and safe (See Table 4.1 for suggested guidelines).

**Table 4.1  Guidelines to support lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES AND CATEGORIES</th>
<th>GUIDELINES THAT COULD ASSIST LECTURERS TO CONSTRUCTIVELY MANAGE AGGRESSION AS INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme one: Lecturers experience aggression, hidden in frustration from levels from below, above and at the peer level</td>
<td>➢ Managing change and training on the various generations in the lecture hall is important to improve and support lecturers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category one: Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels below</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Category two: Lecturers’ experience of frustration from levels above</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Clear guidelines and policy for student conduct and student discipline to be addressed and discussed with lecturers at a formal forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Workshop on transparent and effective communication skills as well as organisational culture and accepted code of conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Workshop on faculty and university vision also clear guidelines and guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Develop and implement a discipline system for all staff in line with the faculty and university rules and regulations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Facilitating awareness of and respectful interactions between staff members</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Workshop on effective communication skills</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Category three: Lecturers’ experience of frustration at a peer level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open forum: to discuss unfair distribution of lecturers’ workload and preventative measures for frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating collegiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme two: Lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their position as lecturers**

**Category one: Lecturers experience a high demand for personal development that contributes positivity to intrapersonal level**

- Enhance a positive self-concept of the lecturer, through facilitation of self-awareness, self-identity, self-knowledge and self-discovery
- Take responsibility for own behaviour, internal locus of control
- Exhibit constant behaviour patterns (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2009:80; Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009:457)
- Developing and mastering of interpersonal skills (listening, clear verbal and non-verbal)

**Category two: Lecturers experience a high demand for personal**
development that displays at interpersonal level
communication skills and attitudes such as respect and unconditional acceptance of other people)

- Management of aggression, conflict and frustration
- Maintaining constructive and healthy interpersonal relations (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2009:80; Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2009:457)

Theme three: The constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of lecturers lead to the experience of various coping strategies

Category one: Lecturers experience ineffective coping strategies

Category two: Lecturers experience effective coping strategies

- Interventions to promote healthy behaviour to promote mental health
- Promoting effective coping skills and mental health
- Needs analysis to be done by faculty and departments to empower lecturers to facilitate constructive mental health
Category three: Lecturers experience needs to address and manage aggression

- Individual and personal focussed needs analysis for all lecturers, done by each lecturer and discussed with line manager
- Clear faculty and university needs analysis for implementing guidelines and policy for managing aggression as part of mental health

4.2.1 Managing change and training on the various generations in the classroom as part of guidelines for theme one, category one

It is vitally important for lecturers to better understand their students and colleagues since this can influence behaviour, experience of behaviour, teaching and learning, and also relationships. Codrington (2008:1) argues that if people understand the characteristics of the different generations they will understand how they function better and be able to apply this knowledge in all areas of life. Lecturers may experience frustration in the classroom and with colleagues due to people’s different value systems. Lecturers must not see this as a threat but as a challenge to embrace cultural diversity and accept others in a multicultural environment such as a University.
4.2.7 Develop and implement a discipline system in line with the faculty and university rules and regulations as part of guidelines for theme one, category one

According to Merriam-Webster Online (Merriam-webster.com, 2013) discipline is conduct that is evaluated on how well it follows a set of rules or guidelines. Further, it defines self-discipline as the ability people have to control and motivate themselves. Lecturers’ code of conduct in the classroom and behaviour towards students and colleagues plays a crucial role in the prevention of undesirable behaviour. Humphreys (1998:163) suggests the following questions to address and ensure a fair discipline system:

- Do educators effectively and positively manage the discipline and accountable behaviours of students and colleagues?
- Do educators make an effort to communicate with and connect to students and their colleagues?
- Do educators make use of effective teaching?

Furthermore, lecturers can implement the university’s student charter (www.uj.ac.za, n.d.) to enhance discipline. This student charter puts forward the rights students have as well as the responsibilities students have. Another tool to enhance discipline is promoting the faculty’s characteristics which a student and staff member must have, namely:

- acts ethically with integrity / Understands her/himself and her/his impact;
- fulfils her/his functional role effectively;
- achieves with people;
• actualizes a desirable future;

• acts at the appropriate level of complexity; and

• engages constructively with content with agility and responsibility.

The evaluation and implementation of the disciplinary system will enable all stakeholders to sufficiently and effectively meet their aims and objectives, and support planning, execution and accountability. Therefore, lecturers must be provided with sufficient training to learn how to proactively identify aggressive behaviour, manage aggressive behaviour from students and colleagues, and respond appropriately.

4.2.8 Development and enhancement of the internal locus of control of lecturers as part of guidelines for theme three, categories one and category two

Lecturers who experience aggression need to establish if they have control over the outcomes or if they believe that they are simply at the hands the faculty and university. If lecturers believe that they have control over what happens, they have an internal locus of control. But, if they believe that they have no control over what happens and that external inconsistencies are to blame, they function on an external locus of control (Cherry 2014). Cherry (2014) states that people with an internal locus of control:

• Take responsibility for their actions easier;

• Are less influenced by other people’s people opinions;

• Usually have a strong sense of self-effectiveness;

• Work hard to achieve what they want;
• Are confident when faced by challenges; and

• Often achieve more success in the workplace.

Lecturers need to, as part of their internal locus of control, learn effective coping strategies instead of using ineffective coping strategies to address and manage the experience of aggression. Lecturers who experience aggression often withdraw, internalize the frustration and aggression and take out their aggression at home, as seen in the following quotation from one of the participants:

“I think I bottle up my aggression at work and go and display it at home”.

Instead of using these ineffective coping strategies lecturers need to develop skills to manage these emotions more effectively. Baron and Richardson (1994:15) suggest that people who experience aggression must turn to effective dialogue and express their feelings effectively. Le Roux and De Klerk (2003:106-107) state that people need to acknowledge their feelings, what and why they feel it, before they will be able to cope with their feelings. It is important for lecturers to clearly differentiate between reason and feelings. Berkowitz (1993:356) emphasises the usefulness to confide in other people they trust to achieve better insight. If lecturers understand the difference between reason and feelings better it can lead to better self-control. Self-control relates to the capability to apply restraint or control over your feelings, emotions and reactions. Thus, self-control simply explained, is willpower.

Duckworth (n.d.) states that self-control is one of the most researched concepts in the social sciences. Also, that self-control may lead to better decision-making and individual wellbeing as well as improve the wellbeing of a wider group. Duckworth (n.d.) also states that self-control is the notion of intentional directing of the self by the self. The above shows an individual with an internal locus of control. These people with self-control are more skilful at controlling their
behavioural, emotional, and responsive drives to achieve long term goals, than impulsive people.

As stated by Berkowitz (1993) self-control and self-understanding can assist individuals to refrain from hostile and aggressive impulses activated by negative feelings such as anger. Therefore, lecturers should take control of their lives, feelings and emotions to ensure mental health and satisfaction. Lecturers must also grow their capacity for introspection and the ability to recognize themselves as an individual distinct from the surroundings and other persons. In the view of Berkowitz (1993) lecturers can accomplish this:

- through introspection, through realising and acknowledging who they are;
- by knowing who they are, since response and behaviour often show a person’s inner feelings;
- by explaining their feelings, experiences, perceptions and reactions to occurrences to another person which can support change, improvement and an increase in self-understanding;
- by becoming self-aware by comparison to other individuals;
- by interacting and communicating with and understanding a wide and diverse audience of people;
- by asking for feedback on how people perceive them personally as well as observing behaviours and reaction to themselves.

Above all, as confirmed in the literature, opportunities and safe spaces for self-reflection have to be created for lecturers to participate in discourse in a more insightful and serious manner to open up about their feelings and therefore reduce their frustration or tension.
Further, lecturers need to adopt a healthy life-style through healthy eating habits, exercising, relaxation and sleeping patterns. To contribute to their overall wellbeing, lecturers must develop, master and maintain constructive relationships, manage aggression and discipline, to improve and build up their internal locus of control (Botha, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2013).

4.2.4 **Develop, master and maintain constructive interpersonal relationships with faculty and the university: students, management and colleagues**

According to Johnson (2003:6) a person can only improve inter-personal effectiveness and self-actualisation through engaging in constructive relationships. The Management Study Guide (management.com, 2014) clarifies interpersonal relationship as a strong relationship among employees either working together in the same group or same organization.

It is vital for these employees to get along well for a positive and healthy environment in the workplace. Therefore, lecturers have to develop social skills and control techniques to manage aggression to avoid aggressive interaction with others and to improve their relationships with all stakeholders in the faculty and university. Lecturers need to assess and understand their interpersonal communication skills and motives. In the words of Carl Jung (www.quotationspage.com, n.d.), when two personalities meet it is like the contact of two chemical substances, both personalities can be transformed if there is any reaction.

The faculty and university compilation is growing more diverse, and there is a shared need for people with effective interpersonal communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) who can function and interact with different types of people to form constructive interpersonal relationships. The webpage (www.pearsonhighered.com) describes, among others, the following factors
individuals must be aware of and can employ to better their interpersonal communication and relationship:

1. interpersonal communication that can affect social skill development;

2. increased awareness;

3. increased adaptability; and

4. an understanding of motives for communication.

Besides effective communication skills, lecturers need to develop awareness and understanding of power and control, as core social motives (Fiske, 2010). Simpson, Farrell, Oriña, and Rothman (2014) cite Raven (1995) and refer to the researcher's specification of six major bases (sources) of power. Knowledge of these sources of power can assist lecturers in understanding power and control. They further argue that each power source is thought to be associated with the use of different encouragement approaches and procedures, each of which in turn has distinctive effects on the people or situations targeted. The six power sources are listed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Six power sources as core social motives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reward power</td>
<td>To be associated with the use of positive reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive power</td>
<td>To be associated with threats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legitimate power  
To be associated with respect of position or role

Referent power  
To be associated with admiration

Expert power  
To be associated with special or unique knowledge that is valuable to another

Informational power  
To be associated with cooperation and value add

(Table 4.2 adapted from Raven 2008)

Hocker and Burton (1985) posit that some individuals may take a positive view of power, and associate it with self-control, personality, administrative skill, or managing others, while other individuals may take negative views of power, viewing it as aggression. Lecturers have to be assertive and proactive in managing power and control positively, through clear communication of needs with faculty and university.

In summary, dealing with aggression can be emotionally difficult, therefore it is crucial for lecturers to build and maintain functional and positive interpersonal relations to facilitate constructive mental health.

4.2.5 Develop effective coping strategies

Coping skills are the views, approaches and actions people implement in managing happenings and concerns in their daily lives
There are many coping styles and strategies, some may prove to be more effective than others, it depends on the nature of the situation and the person who engage with them. Literature confirms various techniques that will be helpful to lecturers who have to manage aggression in the course their careers. Some of these coping strategies that may be useful include:

- Try not to take aggressive behaviour personally; you may just be the person in the wrong place at the wrong time.

- Be aware of your personal reactions to aggression and try to remain focussed on the real issue at hand. Lecturers’ aggressive response will only reinforce the other person’s behaviour.

- Try to recognise, avert or when needed defuse the aggression as early as possible by showing understanding.

Lecturers must be aware of their non-verbal behaviour to help defuse aggression, listen to what the other person has to say and accept, recognise and highlight positive aspects of what is being said. They should show respect through polite formalities, try and avoid any expression of power and control, and encourage the antagonist to take accountability for his/her own behaviour and to use it for more creative or positive outcomes. This for example may include a written complaint, rather than verbally criticising a person or the institution.

Effective coping mechanisms (UCLA Dual Diagnosis Program, 2014) also include that:

1. lecturers have to anticipate that in fact various scenarios have various outcomes and they have to adjust their expectations accordingly;
2. denial and withdrawal are not conducive to the experience of aggression or lecturers’ mental health;

3. self-blame will only lead to a low esteem and possibly other illnesses; and

4. venting if in moderation and seeking support, relaxation and exercise can be effective ways of maintaining lecturers’ mental health.

In addition, according to information on a webpage (www.tip.duke.edu/node/773, n.d.) individuals can implement the following strategies to solve problems and work towards productive and positive coping:

- Individuals must focus on solving the problem by incorporating different techniques and resolutions;

- Individuals must keep fit and healthy by incorporating physical recreation;

- Individuals must incorporate interests and activities that will relieve their stress

- Individuals must be committed to their job, concentrate on the results; and

- Individuals must focus on the positive, rather than the negative.

In conclusion lecturers must be aware that active and effective coping strategies involve the aggressive person, followed by trying to prevent, reduce or defuse a negative outcome.
4.2.6 Implementation of training, development, coaching and mentorship practices

Coaching and mentoring are increasingly used mainly for professional development, to direct a positive change in individuals and to inspire the transfer of knowledge from the coach or mentor to the individual. Coaching and mentoring can be highly beneficial for the career growth of employees. Therefore, coaching and mentoring is applied in organisational practices. Also, the importance of coaching and mentoring is that the results spread generally from the coach or mentor to the learner and the organization as a whole (Kelchner, 2014). According to Tobin (1998) the mentor offers direction and opportunities for training while the coach makes observations and analyses the individual's performance and provides the individual with an external perspective on the individual's skills.

Martin (2006) posits that strategies to develop the competencies of staff are an important part of any organisation's corporate strategy. Focussing on lecturers, Martin (2006) states that skills training alone may not achieve competence and development and for new competencies to be confirmed, training and development needs to be followed by training, coaching and support when the individual is back in the workplace. Also, important is feedback on the lecturers' performance. Lecturers must take responsibility for their own personal development and specific skills development by putting forward a personal development plan to their line managers and a request for coaching.

Faculty can also start a coaching programme where senior lecturers are assigned to junior lecturers, to work on their strengths. Therefore according to Tobin (1998), coaching helps employees to discover answers for themselves. It unlocks employees' potential to make the most of their own performance, thus, they learn instead of being taught. The outcomes for lecturers may include improved professional knowledge and skills, improved basic social skills, such as: effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative, planning and categorising
tasks, self-management, and greater motivation and morale, and improved clarity about career direction (Martin, 2006).

In addition, Martin (2006) defines mentoring as a ‘role relationship’ where the mentor offers support, direction, information and reassurance to another person in order to foster their career and expertise development. Obviously, lecturers have to identify their professional needs clearly to management for management and faculty to determine and establish a structured coaching or mentoring program approach that is appropriate to the faculty and university culture and strategy. Thus both the lecturers and faculty can benefit from structured coaching and mentoring programmes.

Martin (2006:6) describes the following benefits of a proper implemented coaching or mentoring programme:

- sustainable development and succession planning;
- improved induction and socialisation in order to improve retention;
- improved opportunities for previously disadvantaged people, such as gender and race;
- the transfer of knowledge from experts near retirement to younger employees;
- focused towards a particular objective;
- planned and organised rather than ad hoc;
- will provide training, structure and support to all lecturers;
- will monitor progress, successful development and skills training.
4.3 Limitations of the study

Recognising the limitations of a study gives an understanding of the range of the study and assist in assessing the discussion of the findings. The limitations in this study are primarily derived from the fact that lecturers may have been sensitive concerning the privacy of their opinions and this may potentially have prevent the participants from being completely open and or honest about their experiences of aggression in their faculty.

4.4 Recommendations for further research

This exploratory, descriptive and phenomenological study focused on a purposive selected sample of lecturers that experienced aggression in a faculty at a university. Further research can be conducted on:

- (Quantitative study), lecturers’ experience of aggression in a faculty at a university (including all academic staff as the population);

- (Quantitative study), lecturers’ experience of aggression at a university (including all faculty staff at a university as the population);

- the effectiveness of strategies used to combat lecturers’ experience of aggression in faculties at university;

- a comparative deductive study of lecturers’ experience of aggression at various universities in South Africa;

- a comparative deductive study of lectures’ experience of aggression in a South African context versus international.
The iceberg model / metaphor underpins possible recommendations that can be made for further research building on this research (Kendra, 2014; Baron & Neuman, 1998 & www.dadlos.org). The top of the iceberg that can be seen reflects on the findings of this study, where lecturers soften their experiences of aggression as frustration. The reality may be that more aggression is hidden under the surface of the water and not visible and expressed. Finally, the base of the iceberg that is not at all visible could be influencers of the experience of aggression, such as individuals’ values, beliefs and culture (See Figure 4.1).
Figure 4.1  Recommendation for further studies on aggression – Iceberg Model

The tip of the iceberg represents the current study’s explored and identified experience of aggression described as frustration, rather than aggression.

Below the waterline:
Aggression hidden under the surface and not expressed.

The base of the iceberg:
Influencers of experience of aggression, such as individuals’ values, beliefs and culture.
4.5 Conclusion

The research question in this study shaped two research objectives:

- To explore and describe lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university.

- To describe guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression by lecturers as integral part of their mental health.

Data were collected by means of individual phenomenological interviews focussing on the eight participants’ personal experiences and the researcher’s field notes. Through the use of qualitative methodology and the data analysis using the Tesch (1990:148) process meaning was discovered in the participants’ spoken narratives that provided understanding of the phenomenon under study and the participants’ lived experiences. All ethical measures were adhered to and consistently implemented throughout the research process, since ethical considerations, morals and rules of research behaviour that need to be anticipated, are extensive and reflected throughout the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:522; De Vos, et al. 2002:64; Medical Research Council, 2002:5-6).

In view of the themes that emerged which indicated how lecturers experience aggression in a faculty at a university, a literature control was conducted to verify the findings of the study.

Theme one reflected lecturers’ experience of aggression, hidden in frustration from levels below, above and at the peer level. Participants expressed themselves as not experiencing aggression but rather frustration. None of them expanded on explicit aggression but emphasised frustration. They also indicated that they simultaneously control and manage themselves when exposed to aggression.
Theme two reflected that lecturers experience a high demand on themselves and their colleagues to control aggression due to their positions as lecturers. They referred to the fact that they experience a high demand for personal development on an intrapersonal and interpersonal level as contributors to manage aggression.

In the third theme analysis of the data revealed that the constant experience of frustration, pressure and unfulfilled needs of the lecturers lead to the application of various coping strategies to address and manage aggression. Participants expressed their experiences in implementing ineffective coping strategies as well as effective coping strategies to address and manage aggression.

In conclusion, workplace aggression has considerable effects on individuals and organisations and exposure to aggression may lead to negative consequences for lecturers, such as to decrease emotional and mental wellbeing in the faculty and university such as reduced affective commitment and absenteeism. The support that faculty will provide to lecturers who experience aggression in a faculty at a university, should contribute to the constructive facilitation of the mental health of lecturers in a faculty at a university, and should be an inclusive, open and holistic process contributing to a positive faculty culture and collegiality.
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APPENDIX A

MAY 2013
NEELS FOURIE, HEAD: INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING UNIT, INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING, EVALUATION AND MONITORING, UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I Rika Ronél Toerien, would like to request permission to conduct research project entitled “Lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university” as a requirement for a degree of Magister Education in Psychology of Education. The study will be done under the supervision of Professor CPH Myburgh of the Department of Educational Psychology and Professor M Poggenpoel, Department of Nursing Science, at the University of Johannesburg.

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore and describe lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty in higher education.
- To describe guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression as part of mental health.

After obtaining your permission, phenomenological in depth interviews will be conducted with purposefully chosen lecturers with their consent, for 45 to 60 minutes, where they will describe experiences of aggression. Only one open ended question will be asked during the interview, namely: “Tell me how is aggression for you in your faculty?” This interview will be audio-taped with the permission of the participant and transcribed verbatim and the analysed by using Tesch’s (Creswell, 2009) open coding approach to data analysis. Existing literature will be used for comparison and contrasting of the findings of the study. The audio-tapes will be kept under lock and key, only my supervisors and I will have access to them. The audio-tapes will be destroyed two years after the study has been published.

Arrangements will be made with each lecturer once permission has been granted by you, as to the place where the interviews will be conducted at a place convenient to participants. Research findings will be made available to you and the participants on request.
Participation in this study is voluntary and even during the course of the interview the lecturer can terminate the interview without any penalty. The lecturers will not be paid for participation in the study.

In order to protect the lecturer’s identity, I will undertake the following:

- To omit or disguise the lecturer’s name when discussing the information pertaining to the study
- To leave my contact details with the participants in case the lecturer need to contact me and see me in connection with any matter arising from the study.

The lecturers’ participation in this study has the potential of benefiting other lecturers who find themselves in similar situations. The direct benefit to the lecturer will be that during the interview the lecturers will have the opportunity to verbalise their experiences of aggression in a faculty.

My Address
(Insert here)

My contact number is (Insert here).

R. RONÉL TOERIEN
MEd (Educational Psychology) Student

____________________________________

C.P.H. MYBURGH BSC Hons; MComm; D. Ed. HED
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

____________________________________

M POGGENPOEL RN; PhD
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE
APPENDIX B

MAY 2013

PROFESSOR XXXX, EXECUTIVE DEAN: FACULTY OF XXXX, UNIVERSITY OF XXXX

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

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My Address
(Insert here)

My contact number is (Insert here).

___________________________________
R. RONÉL TOERIEN
MEd (Educational Psychology) Student

___________________________________
C.P.H. MYBURGH BSc Hons; MComm; D. Ed. HED
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

___________________________________
M POGGENPOEL RN; PhD
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE
APPENDIX C

Ethics Clearance Application – Faculty of Education

I, Rika Ronel Toerien hereby confirm that:

1. The information provided in this ethics clearance application to undertake research with human participants is accurate to the best of my knowledge;
2. I understand the principles of conducting ethical research;
3. I will endeavor to conduct all the research in an ethical manner as prescribed by Faculty and University rules; and
4. I will inform the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee of any substantive changes to the project that might impact on the ethical clearance of the project.

Signature

13 March 2015

If this is a student project, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the Department for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

Signature - Supervisor

If this research project will be undertaken under the auspices of UJICE, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the UJICE Management for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

Signature - UJICE Management
Research Design

Please supply the relevant information.

1. Data Collection Types
   - ☑ Qualitative
   - □ Quantitative
   - □ Mixed Methods

2. Research Methodologies/Approaches
   - □ Biographical
   - □ Phenomenological
   - □ Grounded Theory
   - □ Ethnographical
   - □ Case Study
   - □ Design Experiment
   - □ Action Research
   - □ Survey
   - □ Other (please provide details)

3. Research Instruments/Methods
   - □ Document analyses
   - □ Questionnaires
   - □ Surveys
   - ☑ Individual interviews
   - □ Group interviews
   - □ Observations
   - □ Other (please provide details)

4. Sampling
   - □ Random
   - □ Targeted
   - ☑ Purposeful
   - □ Snowballing
   - □ Other (please provide details)

Participant selection will be based on easy availability and/or accessibility. The study will investigate lecturers in a faculty (Faculty of Management) in higher education (University of Johannesburg) who have been in the Faculty for at least three years but not more than five years of employment.

5. Sample size
   - ☑ < 11
   - □ 11-50
   - □ > 50
   - □ Other (please provide details)

Interviews will be conducted until data is saturated

6. Age of participants
   - □ < 14
   - □ 14-17
   - ☑ > 17

Please provide the name and designation of an adult who will protect the rights of the child who has neither parents nor a guardian, or who is younger than 14 years of age.
Faculty of Education - Research Project Information

Background to the study
I became interested in exploring how lecturers experience aggression in a faculty in higher education after enrolling for an honours degree, after 28 years of not studying, and observing certain aggressive and antisocial behaviour from lecturers and tutors and institution. I am also a member of a Faculty Management Committee (MANCO) and observed many lecturer frustrations being highlighted at these meetings.

Aggressive and antisocial behaviour is true realities of our daily life as is clearly evident in radio, television and printed media reports such as “Angry learners at Nanceko Public School in Thornpark, East London, have burnt the school to the ground because they were upset that their teachers preferred to watch soapies on television instead of teaching them” (City Press, 22 August 2012), “Strikes rage out of control” (Mail and Guardian, 5 October 2012) and “Teachers face multiple charges of abuse” (City Press, 9 October 2012).

The past 18 years signified a substantial change in South African (SA) history after the first democratic elections in 1994 and the implementation of a new democratic Constitution (1996). The White Paper of Education and Training published in Cape Town on 15 March 1995 represented the first steps on the road to restructuring education in SA subsequently contributing to a more inclusive and diverse education system, including previously disadvantaged and handicapped learners. Furthermore schools also implemented the new Outcomes Based Education (OBE) System challenging the traditional approaches to teaching and learning. Unfortunately OBE proofed to be a gross mistake and failure and was dropped in mid-2010. These changes in the education system led to a huge gap between high school qualifications and higher education.

Higher education was also one of the areas most affected by the newly elected democratic government’s visionary change of reconstrcuting education (Council on Higher Education, August 2004). From 2003 specific universities and technikons were incorporated evolving into universities of technology and comprehensive universities, with a wide range of academic programmes including Diplomas, National Diplomas, BTech, BA and BCom Degrees. These institutional changes created major academic, structure and stature changes and challenges.

Another reality of higher education consists of a shift in student demographics. According to Skopek and Schuhmann (2008) more adults are seeking education opportunities and this fundamental shift in student demographics changed the face of higher education. University classrooms now have a combination of traditional age students (full-time higher education students who enrol after completing high school) and adult learners (Gravett, 2001) older, more mature students who enroll at university part-time and are employed full-time.

Due to the higher education restructuring and changes in the university classroom demographics, inclusivity and cultural diversity, lecturers are faced with many challenges and additional workload resulting in underlying factors which may increase lecturers’ experience of aggression, may influence their endurance levels and cause frustration, stress and conflict. Thus the pending question is if these changes in education and higher education institutions in South Africa influence lecturers’ ability to manage the current situation they operate and function in and influence their code of conduct and mental health.

Against the background of these educational and institutional changes, the need arose to determine if lecturers experience and participate in any form of aggression and antisocial behaviour. The purpose of this research study will be to explore if these changes in education and higher education institutions in South Africa influence lecturers’ ability to manage the current situation they operate and function in, and to explore and describe lecturers own experience of aggression and antisocial behavior, describe the contributing factors and explore the influence this may have on their mental health, teaching and possibly students’ learning experience.
Intention of the project
Research associated with this project attempts to:
determine lecturers own experience of aggression and antisocial behavior, describe the contributing factors
and explore the influence this may have on their mental health, teaching and possibly students' learning
experience. In order to achieve this aim I will set the following objectives:
• to explore and describe how lecturers experience aggression in a faculty in higher education;
• to describe guidelines to facilitate constructive management of aggression as part of mental health.

Procedures involved in the research
The sampling in this study will be purposeful. I will conduct interviews with individual lecturers who will
be purposively selected (appointed for three years already, but not more than five years) to investigate the
notion of lecturers' aggression in a faculty in higher education until data is saturated and in order to derive
guidelines on how lecturers and the university could contribute to manage this phenomenon. If individuals
agree in writing to take part in this interview, it will take up no longer than 45 minutes. Interviews will be
recorded, transcribed and analysed professionally. All raw data will be destroyed after the completion of
the study and required storage time.

Potential Risks
Possibly psychological discomfort. Participants will be referred to PsyCAD.

Potential Benefits
This study should lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon of lecturers' experience of aggression in
higher education and possible guidelines on how lecturers and the university could contribute to manage
this phenomenon. This may lead to a transformation of teaching practice and learning experience.

Confidentiality
Every effort will be made to protect (guarantee) your confidentiality and privacy. I will not use your name
or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, we are often identifiable through the
stories we tell. Furthermore, if information you have provided is requested by legal authorities then I may
be required to reveal it. In addition, all data collected will be anonymous and only the researchers will have
access to the collected data that will be securely stored for no longer than 2 years after publication of
research reports, or papers. Thereafter, all collected data will be destroyed.

Participation and withdrawal
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate in the project at
any time during the project. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences for you. Your
decision whether or not to participate in the study will not affect your continuing access to any services that
might be part of this study.

Future interest and feedback
You may contact me (see below) at any time for additional information, or if you have questions related to
the findings of the study.

R. Ronel Toerien
rtoerien@uj.ac.za
+27 (0)11 559 4141

Professor Chris Myburgh
chrism@uj.ac.za
+27 (0)11 559 2680
Informed Consent/Assent Form

Project Title:
Lecturers’ Experience of Aggression in a Faculty in Higher Education

Investigator:
Rika Ronel Teerien

Date:
18 March 2015

I hereby:
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as an observer to protect the rights of:
  ☐ Children younger than 14 years of age;
  ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable*; and/or
  ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age that are part of a child-headed family.
☐ Agree that my child, ________________ may participate in the above research project.
☐ Agree that my staff may be involved in the above research project as participants.

I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project and understand the nature of the research and my role in it. In addition, I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

☐ Please allow me to review the report prior to publication.

Name:

Phone or Cell number:

e-mail address:

Signature:

If applicable:
☐ I consent/assent to audio recording of my/the participant’s contributions.
☐ I consent/assent to video recording of my/the participant’s contributions.

Signature:

* Vulnerable children refer to individuals at risk of exposure to harm (physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual).
APPENDIX D
MAY 2013
INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR INVITATION TO BE INTERVIEWED

Dear prospective participant

I Rika Ronél Toerien, invite you to participate in a research project entitled “Lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university” as a requirement for a degree of Magister Education in Psychology of Education. The study will be done under the supervision of Professor CPH Myburgh of the Department of Educational Psychology and Professor M Poggenpoel, Department of Nursing Science, at the University of Johannesburg.

The objectives of the study are:

- To explore and describe lecturers’ experiences of aggression in a faculty at a university.
- To describe guidelines to facilitate the constructive management of aggression as part of mental health.

After obtaining your permission, phenomenological in depth interviews will be conducted with purposefully chosen lecturers with their consent, for 45 to 60 minutes, where they will describe experiences of aggression. Only one open ended question will be asked during the interview, namely: “Tell me how is aggression for you in your faculty?” I request your permission to audio-taped the interview. The audio-tapes will be kept under lock and key, only my supervisors and I will have access to them. The audio-tapes will be destroyed two years after the study has been published.

Arrangements will be made with you once permission has been granted by you, as to the place where the interviews will be conducted at a place convenient to participants. Research findings will be made available to you on request.

Participation in this study is voluntary and even during the course of the interview you can terminate the interview without any penalty. You will not be paid for participation in the study.
In order to protect your identity, I will undertake the following:

- To omit or disguise your name when discussing the information pertaining to the study
- To leave my contact details with you in case you need to contact me or see me in connection with any matter arising from the study.

Your participation in this study has the potential of benefiting other lecturers who find themselves in similar situations. The direct benefit to you will be that during the interview you will have the opportunity to verbalise your experiences of aggression in your faculty.

My contact number is. (insert here)

___________________________________
R. RONÉL TOERIEN
MEd (Educational Psychology) Student

___________________________________
C.P.H. MYBURGH BSc Hons; MComm; D. Ed. HED
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

___________________________________
M POGGENPOEL RN; Phd
PROFESSOR: DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

LECTURERS’ EXPERIENCES OF AGGRESSION IN A FACULTY AT A UNIVERSITY

I ___________________________ herewith give my permission to participate in the research study.

______________________________
PARTICIPANT

______________________________
RESEARCHER
INTERVIEW – PARTICIPANT 4 MB

INTERVIEWER: Hallo (participant name taken out for confidentiality and anonymity), baie dankie dat jy bereid is om met my te gesels. Sal jy omgee as ons die onderhoud is engels voer?

INTERVIEWEE: Geen probleem nie

INTERVIEWER: Then happiness and thank you. I really appreciate you being here and supporting my studies. The first question or the only question that I am going to ask you and from there we will take is as the discussion develops. How is aggression for you in the faculty?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I am going to answer according to three terms, if I can say the faculty, class and the colleagues. In terms of the faculty I think there is a, from departmental point of view we feel that lots of the work gets passed to the department and the faculty expects so much from us in terms of the work load and administration. Whereas from a lecturing point of view or from the departmental point of view we are not too sure which jobs or which job descriptions actually belongs to us and which actually belong to the faculty. So many time you will find that the faculty has administrative task and it overlaps with our task, so I don’t think the is a clear definition and I don’t think that create a significant amount of aggression. Since people, or since lecturers don’t know what is expected from them and the faculty, we cannot explain to them this is our difficulty because there is no form of communicating to some higher presence to consider or take into consideration our queries as well. Then from a faculty point of view I think they have a similar situation and that they also don’t really know what is expected of us and what do they actually, I think the majority of things that are expected of us, they reason that it is expected of us and not necessarily of them and I think that is where discrepancy come into play that job descriptions and job specification should be outlined and then we can work from there on
INTERVIEWER: Tell me more about what is expected of the faculty as you said it? What is expected of the faculty?

INTERVIEWEE: Well our understanding of the faculty is that they basically control our administrative tasks. We are referring to student numbers, student queries beyond what the department can actually have and such as registration queries, enquiring about registration and then we send them to the faculty and they just get send back to us and we have to sort out those registration which make it really difficult because it is not part of our administrative task or we don’t have the resources let’s just say we cannot log into the registration database and sort these problems out.

INTERVIEWER: Who is the we you are talking about? We cannot log in and we don’t really know how to handle it?

INTERVIEWEE: Specifically all lecturers in the department even HOD don’t necessarily have the programs or computer programs to log into the database.

INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned that you don’t know what is expected of departments. What is expected of departments?

INTERVIEWEE: As a lecturer our main priority is actually contrary to what you believe, it is not lecturing it is research and we try and focus on research as much as possible. Some department being under staffed we take it upon ourselves more lecturing duties as we actually should and then out research output gets a bit lower than what it should. That is one of the issues and that is a minor issue, in essence I think our main two priorities are research and lecturing in departments and we sit with portfolios that we also have to manage and student queries and administrative task and I think that just contributes to the burden, the overall burden or our jobs and the overall satisfaction.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the portfolios
INTERVIEWEE: Well especially fulltime lecturers have portfolios within the department. It is either a marketing portfolio or PR portfolio, research portfolio with a fulltime employment or fulltime employees they have to have at least one portfolio. The problem is we are understaffed and the faculty cannot always afford those positions because they have to be equity position and our lecturers are forced to take more subject, they are forced to take more portfolios upon themselves, and as I was saying that leads to stress and dissatisfaction

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little more about the equity

INTERVIEWEE: Well we had a candidate or colleagues that had finally been appointed as fulltime employment or fulltime bases that struggle with the equity, this employee made the grade. She had the research output and she was turned down about two times based on equity that they could not employ her. Now if we sit with twenty five candidates and out of that twenty five candidates only two actually made the requirements, have at least a master’s degree and these two candidates was studying towards a doctorate degree and based on the fact that their racial or racially discriminated against because they are white. We had to turn down the two candidates that actually qualified for the position and then obviously we could not employ or even consider the other twenty three candidates because they were either equality biased, meaning they didn’t really classify, they were internationals, or they did not make the grades. They only had matric and applied for a fulltime position as a lecturer. So we had to turn them down as well and then that means we cannot fill our positions and that causes frustration and once again it leads to workloads or the current lecturer having to compromise for those workloads

INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned that you would like to speak about the faculty. Is there anything else about the faculty or department the aggression, before we move to the other two points that you mentioned?

INTERVIEWEE: Not that I can think of at this moment, but as it arises I will included it
INTERVIEWEE: In terms of the class I am especially referring to the students and the admin regarding the classes and organizing the classes. We are program co-coordinators that actually take head of the classes, they do struggle to find or obtain classes. There is no help or no resources that actually allows them to obtain these classes and to obtain these time slots and everything so that is a great struggle, but I do think every department and every faculty struggles with this. Perhaps if we can just clarify that issue into who is to take control of it and that just have more information on the classes itself. And students back than versus students now, I think and this is my own perception but students are completely different. In that they expect more from the lecturers and are willing to put in less. So their input is so much less and what they expect from the lecturers is so much more. In terms of tutoring for instance that we have to have tutors for these student because they demand it. A fellow colleague of mine told me the other day that students now deem that when they pay for their degrees then they earned it, so there is no studying around it and that is literally the problem what we have with students. A lecturer cannot during class say, because we have quite a bunch of noisy students and you try to quite them down for the cycle, everybody in the class, but a lecturer cannot pinpoint a student and say step out of my class, because these student actually feel that they have a right to education and they don’t listen and they just keep on and on they are doing what they are doing. The student are much more difficult, they say especially the first year and we do try to accommodate them but at some point we are busy spoon feeding them and because we are spoon feeding them we really get tired. Nobody wants to take the first years anymore because it is such a drag to take the first years, because you have these first year orientation, you have first year tutor session that is a must and everything that is for the first years. Extra documentation and first years experiences and everything like that stand
from a mark point of view that you want to attract the first years and just help them, guide them everything they come to class and you really want to take care of them like they are babies and you spoon feed them. Student get quite angry if you don’t provide them with a breakdown, if you don’t tell them please study the first five chapters in the book. I think the gap between schooling system and educational system is too big, students are not used to these amounts of work, that they have to study and students also need start balancing their time. They have no sense of time in managing their own time

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that first year students are much more difficult, tell me more about that

INTERVIEWEE: They query everything, in a sense that will you help us with this, the tutor can he help us with this and they literally wants you to give them a breakdown. They will have a whole bunch of excuses when it comes to assignment time and you say this is the assignment, they want either the deadline to be extended, when it comes to test they want you to be more lenient on them in a standard that is a fearful situation, but at some point you have to draw the line, that if you are not willing to put in time of the effort to study we cannot accommodate you further that we are already accommodating you. I think the majority of stress that is caused is the fact that we have all these first years experiences and we have to literally baby the first years which add so much more admin and so much more work

INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned that there is a whilst difference between past and current students, explain that to me

INTERVIEWEE: I just think back in the days when we were still students we feared our lecturer, they were gods to us. I think that situation has change and why it has changed perhaps is the reason or the characteristic of generation why this current generations why, but there is no respect for lecturers, there is no respect in class for fellow students and that is why they keep on talking in class and really being disruptive. If we are trying to take action against it then we are
to blame or we sit with a disciplinary if you want to chase somebody out, all of a sudden this guy who has disrupt everybody else has a right to be there. There is no system in place that can actually help us or help us remove that student so from a course or from a class or a disciplinary action against students like that

INTERVIEWER: Now that is very interesting and I think you as a lecturer experience that a little bit intensively. Is there anything about the classes, the lecturers, anything else that you would like to mention, aggression experienced

INTERVIEWEE: Let’s say aggression in terms of frustration, we do have that when we get there and the media is not right or you have to phone for media. There is a certain class that I have for media in the past, well last year and this year it is exactly the same, we booked the venue and then we booked media and media never shows up to bring a projector and that class does not have projector. The worst of it all is that class is actually next to media, so it is fifty steps to the class just to bring a projector to that class. I think from a technological point of view, I think we are bettering it but then again is it frustrating not having that on time and majority of situations will have to cover two to three chapters and lecture, and when covering those chapters we cannot afford to start late and then sometimes when media eventually show up they show up ten to fifteen minutes later, so it already takes time from my lectures

INTERVIEW – PARTICIPANT 2 CR
INTERVIEWER: (name of participant removed for confidentiality and anonymity), thank you so much for seeing me for this research. I really appreciate it. I am going to ask you one question only, and the question is, how is aggression for you in your faculty?

INTERVIEWEE: Aggression? The experience with staff members, students or non-academic?

INTERVIEWER: Any aggression in the faculty
INTERVIEWEE: Just in general?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you are welcome to discuss any aggression in your faculty. What is your experience and how is aggression in your faculty?

INTERVIEWEE: I don’t actually have any experience of, I would be surprised actually if I ever experience in the university. I know in the private sector people are highly driven and ambitious, in project environments, you know where you need to deliver on a project and where you need to deliver and there is an income at stake. You know with clients and sales and stuff like that, but in the university environment, I have not really experienced much aggression. Although I must admit I teach part time students in the evenings, very mature students and these days students are very, I don’t know if it is confident or arrogant, you know they pitch up in class fifteen minutes into the lecture, walk out half an hour, it must have been one or twice where it feels like scolding them or when they talk back, you know when you scold them.

INTERVIEWER: Collin, I hear you say that in the private industry there is a lot of aggression because of achievement and goals that they need to reach. Don’t you feel there is that in the university as well?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes definitely, I mean one works harder at the university strangely than the private sector, because each paper you write it is very intense, whereas in the private sector you work within a team, but that is where I think aggression can happen. You know, you interpersonal skills, if that is not ideally

INTERVIEWER: Tell me more about that, tell me more about the interpersonal skills

INTERVIEWEE: You see in a team you are interacting with people and you are interacting a lot with clients, and at the university your clients are largely your students, and when you write, generally you write as an individual, I mean you do get research projects were you work in teams. I have not been in that situation
up to now, maybe that is probably why I have not experienced much aggression in a project team, because I have heard of cases where colleagues, you write a paper and you give it to a coauthor to return it to you and he takes months to return it and that affects your performance and your promotion and people get upset. I understand if you are working in a team or if you have got coauthors, there might be some chances of aggression to sort of manifest itself.

INTERVIEWER: I also hear that you say you work with mature students and that they are different. Tell me more about that.

INTERVIEWEE: The culture that at least I am exposed to, as a former university student or high school student is that we are really respectful of our teachers and our lecturers, that we are on time, that we would put out hand up to talk. These days it is very different, I can understand those guys are very good at what they do, but I mean I get all sort of emails even from guys who don't do their work properly. Why did I get this mark, not seeming to understand or not seeming to recognize their poor work even the poor work ethic, because they don't pitch up at class and still got the audacity to ask you why I got a poor mark. The culture of students in this new environment, this democratic environment, where pupils just speak their mind, one has to get used to it. One has to have a lot of tolerance, but I think the older you get, I guess one of the reasons why I don't have a lot of experience of aggression is that I am able to control it as well. I think when you are in your forties you sort of have an understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and how to the soft management skills and how to manage others I guess. So maybe I guess, I don't know if you are thinking about research one thing you might have to control for is maybe age, probably you might find a lecturer who has just finishes undergrad and I am sure you get staff member who just come into academia straight out of studies. Speaking to someone like that who has not been exposed to a whole lot of experiences and ups and downs, their coping skills might be a bit different as appose to a forty six year old.