A new phenomenon of Learner-on-Educator-Violence: A case of two secondary schools in Umlazi Township, Durban

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to understand how learner-on-educator violence affects teacher efficacy in schools, particularly in light of recent outbreaks of teacher killings in schools. The study sample was two schools, and the participants were two life orientation teachers, two chairpersons of the school’s safety and security committee, and security guards. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and observation journals. The study’s findings indicated that teachers experienced varied levels of violence, ranging from loss of instructional time; to personal, physical, psychological, and teacher killings. Furthermore, the study found that learner-on-educator violence has become unmanageable.

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Introduction

Teachers are subjected to physical and psychological violence at schools where the majority of teachers plan to quit and others demand armed guards at schools. As such learner-on-educator violence has become a global common phenomenon and it continues to disrupt learning and teaching in schools. Recent studies revealed a spade of teacher killings by learners in schools. In 2022, a learner shot and wounded a teacher after he was reprimanded for making noise while matric pupils were writing an examination. Another learner shot and killed a teacher after receiving low marks. Another learner shot and killed a teacher after receiving low marks. This research seeks to understand how learner-on-educator violence affects teacher efficacy in schools, particularly in light of recent outbreaks of teacher killings in schools.

School violence is a global phenomenon (Yang et al., 2021; Lester et al., 2017). Given the 411 gang-related incidents reported by the Department of Basic Education in 2022, it is clear that schools have become a battleground (Van Zyl, 2022).

Educators battle to manage and control learner-on-educator violence (LOEV) in schools. Botha, (2021) contends that educators experienced different encounters of learner-on-educator violence ranging from slaps to gun killings. Ranging from aggression against property, verbal abuse of learners or teachers, physical bullying, to lethal rampages, school violence has a traumatic impact on all members of a school community (Lester et al., 2017; and Yang et al., 2021).

This study contends that school violence is no more a growing phenomenon but violence has become an unmanageable new phenomenon. In order to understand the new phenomenon of LOEV, the following questions were posed to the participants: How does learner-on-educator violence affect teacher efficacy in schools? In what ways does school violence interfere with the core business of the schools?

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I opted for a constructivist paradigm and employed qualitative methods to understand participants from their own frame of reference in the context of learner-on-educator violence. This study is underpinned by Frustration and aggression theory. The premise of the Frustration and aggression theory is that when people become frustrated, they respond aggressively. I opted for constructivist paradigm in order to use qualitative methodologies to investigate the reality of the participants. The study sample was two schools, and the participants were two Life orientation teachers, two chairpersons of the school’s safety and security committee, and security guards. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and observation journals.

The body of this article is divided into four sections. The first section presents a review of the literature on the effects of learner-on-educator-violence on teachers. Secondly, I discussed the theoretical framework applied in this study. Following which the 3rd section provides a methodology and research design. Finally, the results and conclusion of the study are presented.

**Literature Review**

The study will review the literature in local and international studies pertaining to this study. In this study literature reviewed include categories of categorisation of school violence typology, a myriad of teacher shootings with injuries and shootings with deaths, and aggressive behaviors in schools.

**Categorisation of Violence Typologies**

There is a wide range of operational definitions of “school violence” ranging from mild incidents to more serious crimes during school and within school premises. Akiba et al, (2002) define school violence as disrespect to teachers and administrators, theft, and physical assaults, while other studies (Hatzichristou et al., 2012; Burton 2007; Yang et al., 2021) have defined it as severe behaviours on school property such as rape, robbery, homicide, harassments, and assaults among learners and between learners and their teachers as well as learners.

Harber (2004) pointed out that no universally accepted typology of violence exists and that no two researchers use the same definition. Salmi, (2000); Harber (2004); Yang et al., 2021) and Shabangu (2021) provided a useful categorisation of four types of violence that can be applied to schools, these are:

i. Direct violence – deliberate injury to the integrity of human life. This includes murder, massacre, genocide, torture, rape, maltreatment, forced resettlement, kidnapping, forced labour and slavery.

ii. Indirect violence is the indirect violation of the right to survival. Indirect violence has got two sub-categories, that is, violence by omission, and mediated violence. Violence by omission or lack of protection against poverty, hunger, disease and accidents or catastrophes is mediated through harmful modifications to the environment. Whilst mediated violence happens in a passive way. Mediated violence is the result of deliberate human interventions in the natural or social environment whose harmful effects are felt in an indirect and sometimes delayed manner. Examples of mediated violence are all forms of ecocide involving acts of destruction or damage against natural environment, natural catastrophes, or harmful modifications to the environment. The use of deadly pesticides by US and Soviet armies, to destroy crops in enemy territory, has caused genetic malformations among babies in the infected areas and cancer among veterans.

iii. Repressive violence is the deprivation of fundamental human rights such as freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, right to a fair trial, equality before the law, freedom of movement and the freedom to vote.

iv. Alienating violence or the deprivation higher rights consists of alienating working conditions, racism (and presumably sexism), social ostracism, cultural repression and living in fear.

All four kinds of violence can be found in formal schooling indirect, repressive, and alienating violence as defined above contribute to a context that increases the possibility and occurrence of direct forms of violence in schools. In terms of types of behaviours, spreading of rumours, social exclusion, making fun of someone, hitting and even killings were the most frequently reported (Hatzichristou et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2021; and Botha, 2021).

Wilson (2006) added that there are various forms of violence that are understood and expressed within a framework of heterosexual gender relations. These gender relations will be better conceptualised in this study by untangling the concepts of explicit and implicit gender violence.

Teacher killings have been reported widely in South African schools and elsewhere. The below section will look into the recent spate of teacher shooting with injuries and with deaths in South African schools.

**Myriad of Teacher Shootings with Injuries and Shootings with Deaths in SA Schools**

Myriad teacher killings have been reported through media houses in South African schools and elsewhere. In this section, this study will only focus on recently reported teacher killings in the 2021-22 school calendar years.

A range of teacher killings has been reported in South African schools in less than 24 months. The 53-year-old teacher from one of the Cape Town schools in South Africa was killed while sitting in his car on the premises of the school in the gang-riddled hit (Stoltz, 2022). A frightened witness said, “we heard gunshots while approaching the school with children, so we had to run”. She added that most of the learners were still traumatised by the incident. “Still today, we have children coming to school crying” (Stoltz, 2022).
South Africans started the year 2022 with a high shock when a horrific teacher killing took place in one of the Gauteng high schools in Tembisa where a 50-year-old deputy principal female teacher was shot dead while driving out of the school gate (Mahlokwane, 2022). It was reported that “three gunmen suddenly appeared and shot her three times through the passenger window. Subsequently, she got out of her car trying to evade the hailstorm of bullets, but she fell just beside her car” (Solomons, 2022). Another primary school teacher in Pietermaritzburg was brutally shot in front of pupils while driving home from school on Friday afternoon (Makhanya, 2022). In October 2022, just less than two weeks before matric exams start, a 21-year-old Grade 12 pupil stabbed to death his physical science teacher in one of the Free State high schools (Pillay, 2022). The 45-year-old teacher in one of the North West primary schools in Geelhout Park area, South Africa was also shot by unknown gunmen while she was sitting in her car outside the school gate (Khumalo, 2022). On the same day, another female teacher was ruthlessly shot dead when she arrived at school in Rustenburg, North West (Sefularo, 2022). The above scourge of teacher killings in South African schools suggests that schools have become soft targets for criminals to catch their victims. Teacher killings in schools are not isolated incidents for South African schools, teacher killings have been reported globally in 2021 and 2022 respectively. In 2021, two teenagers were charged with first-degree murder in connection with the death of their 66 year old Spanish teacher at Fairfield High School. These two teenagers were accused of murdering their high school Spanish teacher with a baseball bat because of a low grade he received in Spanish class that lowered his overall pass rate (PEOPLE's free True Crime newsletter, 02 November 2022). In California on the 5th of November 2022, another teacher was shot dead by criminals while trying to protect school children from being shot (CNN affiliate KSDK). This caring teacher took a bullet for her children and died on the spot. Police in California reported that “it was a least the 67th shooting in year 2022 on US school grounds.”

Recent shootings at schools around the country have resulted in widespread fear and panic among both learners, parents, and community at large, prompting a myriad of responses to make schools safer. In USA schools, the number of school shootings with casualties reported in 2020-21 was 93. This included 43 school shootings with deaths and 50 school shootings with injuries only (Irwin, Wang, Cui & Thompson, 2022). This study has recorded a wide rampage of teacher killings in South African schools in 2021-22. This included three (3) shootings with deaths in KZN schools and one (1) shooting with injuries, one (1) in Cape Town schools, one (1) in Gauteng schools, one (1) in North West, and one (1) in Bloemfontein.

Aggressive behaviours among learners towards their teachers are on the rise, where some teachers have been stabbed or shot and killed or shot with injuries.

Aggressive Behaviours in Schools

Aggressive behaviour is known to be at best within matured males, but surveys have revealed a new trend of aggressive behaviours among children. In England, evidence on violence in schools in UK comes from surveys by government departments, teachers’ unions, and independent academic researchers. Some national surveys are repeated annually, enabling trends to be detected. Other data comes from interviews with teachers, pupils, and parents (Williams 2009). In a similar study by Williams (2009) trends show some serious behaviours increasing, for example, pushing and shoving a teacher, teachers witnessing a pupil in possession of a weapon in school, or sexual assault on a teacher. 11.6% of teachers reported unwanted physical contact weekly in 2008, 2.9% schools reported a member of staff hit with a weapon or other object, stabbed or slashed, and 18.7% reported teachers hit punched or kicked in the last school year. Fourteen children aged five or under are suspended from primary schools in England every day for violence against teachers or pupils (Williams 2009). Primary schools children are increasingly aggressive towards the school authorities and/or school structures. Ten children aged 4 and 12 were suspended for ‘sexual misconduct’. A survey by the Association for Teachers and Lecturers found that more than three-quarters of primary teachers believed pupils were becoming more aggressive at an earlier age (Williams, 2009). In 2008-9, police were called to arson attacks in schools almost 3,000 times (Lipsett 2009), and over 7,000 times to deal with violence in schools. This will be not the full extent, as schools do not always report to the police, and not all police forces respond. It is not just pupils: more than a third of teachers (39%) have been confronted by an aggressive parent or guardian, and members of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) told of receiving death threats from families.

Pupil-based self-report surveys present another perspective. A research study conducted by Williams (2009) revealed that 51% of mainstream pupils and 61% of excluded pupils had been a victim of ‘crime’ in the last 12 months (although this may include bullying and physical violence between pupils).

Teachers and learners in schools alike are exposed to school violence in one way or other. In a study by Rossouw (2008), revealed that teachers have been subjected to physical and psychological violence at schools in South African schools. In one incident a pregnant teacher was kicked and injured in by learners, in Cape schools, the school head was allegedly beaten up by a parent (Rossouw, 2008). In November 2022, a learner shot and wounded a 30-year-old teacher after he reprimanded him for making noise while matric pupils were writing an exam (Ndawonde, 2022). A statement done by SAPS revealed that a learner apparently shot a 30-year-old teacher after he reprimanded him for making noise while matric pupils were writing an exam. It is alleged that after being reprimanded, the pupil then threatened the teacher and told him that he would shoot him once the school was out, which he allegedly did (Ndawonde, 2022). In spite of the attempts to protect the interests of teachers through the Employment of Teachers Act 76 of 1998, teachers don’t feel safe in schools. Teachers Union (SADTU) is suggesting that teachers should be paid a danger allowance because some learners go to school carrying weapons. The union argues that teachers work in dangerous situations like the police (Mncube & Madzikela-Madiya, 2017).
Additionally, Cosgrove, (2000, pp. 117-118) contends that if a teacher is suffering, the children in his or her care will suffer. For example, teachers hampered by stress and unable to give of their best will continue to short-change the pupils through no fault of their own...one way for an individual to cope with stress is to take it out on other people. We have all known the ‘kick the cat’ syndrome, when is frustration and anger a person lashes out at the nearest available target...Place a person under stress in a classroom with small children and the consequences will certainly be unpleasant and could be awful. Fortunately, physical attacks on children are uncommon, but the daily classroom experiences for a child whose teacher is under stress will certainly be less than positive. Shouting, verbal put-downs, short temper, poor quality assignments, poorly planned, unimaginative lessons, work not marked, and so on. The study done in Peru suggests that school violence in K-12 school settings is a common, worldwide problem that has been associated with adverse consequences on teacher professional engagement (e.g. work-related stress and burnout, decreased teaching effectiveness, disengagement from teaching, and turnover), (Yang et al., 2021). Learner-violence-on-educators is unmanageable despite measures that are put in place by Department of Basic Education through Schools’ Act. A study by Chetty (2020), provides an example of violence against teachers. Pupils’ slap, stab, threaten and throw chairs at teachers. Teacher’s fight schoolboys over schoolgirls, while female teachers are sexually harassed by boys they teach, the same boys who have had sex with other women teachers. These boys sometimes don’t understand why a female teacher refuses when approached. Teachers resist and fight back. Things are getting out of hand. It’s the survival of the fittest. It’s the law of the jungle out here,” said one (2020, p6).

School Violence as a Barrier to Learning

A range of needs exists among learners and within the education system which must all be met if effective learning and development is to be provided and sustained in schools (Department of Education, 1997; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2017; Botha, 2021). In recognising this, it follows that the education system must be structured and function in such a way that it can accommodate a diversity of learner needs and system needs. It is argued that it is when the education system fails to provide for and accommodate such diversity that learning breakdown takes place and learners are excluded. It is further argued that a complex and dynamic relationship exists between the learner, the centre of learning, the broader education system, and the social, political, and economic context of which they are all part. The key barriers to learning and development occur when learners “drop-out” of the system or when excluded from education. Barriers may also arise during the learning process and are seen as transitory in nature (pp.11-12).

This study argues that another key barrier to learning occurs when the school lost a teacher through school violence. Loss of instructional time occurs in various stages; including, grieving, and counselling time for both teachers and learners, during the investigation period where some teachers and/or learners become a witness of the state, and during the process of replacing the deceased teacher. A research project undertaken in the Western Cape Province depicted that school violence has severe deleterious consequences for curriculum delivery, where violence has a serious impact on learning, as educators are often absent because they need time off for trauma counselling and debriefing (Maphalala & Mabunda, 2018). School violence results in serious long-standing physical, emotional and psychological implications for both teachers and learners, these include reduced self-esteem, distress, risk of depression and suicide, reduced school attendance, impaired concentration, increased risk of teenage pregnancy, the transmission of HIV/Aids virus, fear and diminished ability to learn, community disintegration, academic underperformance, even school drop-out (Harber & Mncube, 2012; Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya, 2017). Additionally, crime and violence is a severe threat to the weak democracy, peace and economic stability in South Africa. It corrupts social fabric of communities and the nation as a whole and endangers the health of both children and adults. Violence further deepens gender and social inequalities and reduces the overall quality of life” (Harber & Mcube, 2012; Irwin et al., 2022). The number of shootings with injuries, and shootings with deaths between 2015 and 2021 as recorded by (Irwin, et al., 2022) showed an alarming increase for both shootings with injuries and shootings with deaths. The record of these shootings is depicted in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Records of Teacher School Shootings with Deaths Between 2015 and 2021

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The above graph provides a wide picture of school shootings with injuries, and shootings with deaths that recorded in USA schools between 2015 and 2021 academic years. In this graph, school shootings include all incidents in which a gun is brandished or fired or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims. The trends of both shootings with injuries and shootings with are unfortunately growing on a yearly basis, with exception of the years 2019 and 2020, where shootings with injuries decreased from 33 in 2019 to 27 in the year 2020.

**Theoretical Framework: Frustration and Aggression Theory**

This study is underpinned the theory of frustration and aggression by Dollard et al., (1939). These are group of psychologists at Yale University. This theory originated by Freud (1915). The premise of the Frustration and aggression theory is that when people become frustrated (i.e. when their goals are thwarted), they respond aggressively. Eron (1994), defined aggression as “an act whose goal-response is an injury to an organism. This definition implies an intent to injure.

In psychology, aggression is considered to be instinctual in nature and inherent in human beings as it is in other animal species. Pleasure-seeking and pain avoidance are basic mechanisms of mental functioning, frustration occurred when these activities are blocked (Eron, 1994). This theory is applied in this study specifically to explore how perpetrators of violence react to organisms, in this study, the teachers when their goals and activities are blocked. This theory is relevant to the study to explore the outbreak killings of teachers through various forms of aggression applied to teachers.

This theory is relevant to this study since it will assist the school authorities, the department of education, and the department of safety and security to identify potential aggressors, becoming familiar with most important causes of teacher killings, and mitigating aggressive behaviors of aggressors/perpetrators of violence before such behaviours affect teachers in schools.

**Research Questions:**

i. How does learner-on-educator violence affect teacher efficacy in schools?

ii. In what ways does school violence interfere with the core business of the schools?

**Research Design and Methodology**

The study is located within the interpretive or constructivist paradigm. Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members’ descriptions and understanding of the situations (Denscombe, 2010).

Graham, 2018; Carrasco & Clark, (2020), argued that interviews are the primary data collection instrument, which may be utilized in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other approaches. In this study, semi-structured interviews and observation journals are used to collect data on learner-on-educator-violence’s effects on teacher efficacy in performing their core business of teaching in secondary schools.

To preserve confidentiality the two secondary schools were given fictitious names. In this study, we used a descriptive case study approach since it allowed us to acquire an in-depth insight into the scenarios and their significance for the participating individuals concerned. This is consistent with Atkins & Duckworth's (2019) claim that a case study approach allows for a comprehensive knowledge of the perspectives and ideas of the research participants.

Various ethical issues were considered in this study. An ethical clearance was granted in order to collect data. The confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy of participants were protected. Permission was granted by both schools. In this study and following criteria for judging the quality of data were applied, namely authenticity, trustworthiness and credibility. Validity is concerned with the accuracy of the questions asked when data is being collected and the explanations offered (Mertens, 2015). To increase the validity and reliability of the research findings, this study employed multiple data collection methods, which are semi-structured interviews and observation journals.

**Sampling Plan**

In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the study sample and its population. Two secondary schools were selected as a study population sample from Umlazi District in Umlazi location, in Durban. The criteria for the selection of secondary schools was based on anecdotal evidence of violence incidences. The anecdotal evidence includes various media reports and conversations with critical friends. In this study, critical friends are teachers, principals, ward managers, and school governors.

The participants of this study were one Life orientation teacher, one chairperson of the school’s discipline safety and security committee (SDSSC), and one security guard from each secondary school. In total there were ten (8) participants. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant at least once for an hour. In observing the teachers, I employed various strategies, for example, following the teachers in the various LO class periods for a whole day or week to see their behaviour with different learners; or observing a class at different time points. I also ‘hung around’ with teachers outside the classrooms during break times, where possible talks about school violence emerged; such talks elicted different perspectives on the events.

The participants were asked: How does learner-on-educator violence affect teacher efficacy in schools? In what ways does school violence interfere with the core business of the schools?
Research Methods

Atkins & Duckworth (2019) argue that data generation methods widely used by constructivist researchers to collect data are semi-structured interviews, photo voice, and field notes. Thus in this study, data was generated using interactive and qualitative methods that include semi-structured interviews and observation journal. The observation journal was used to triangulate the outcomes of the main research tool, which was the semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos et al., 2010). Henning, van Rensberg, and Smit, 2010). It is also a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process that does not proceed in a linear fashion but in a spiral format and it is not tidy (de Vos et al., 2010). In this paper, qualitative data consisted of transcripts and notes taken during the interviews and observation schedules conducted for the purposes of this study. Data were transcribed and analysed according to de Vos et al., (2010)

Findings and Discussion

The participants were asked:

i. How does learner-on-educator violence affect teacher efficacy in schools?

ii. In what ways does school violence interfere with the core business of the schools?

These questions were answered by LO teachers, SDSSC chairpersons and other security guards from each participating secondary school. The majority of the participants felt unsafe at school and this kind of fear was mainly attributed to learners’ acts of violence and violence that emanate from the surrounding community.

An LO teacher from Scooby Secondary asserted:

*When learners are fighting, teachers lose a lot of time; learners lose concentration and become excited about nothing. Teachers spend more time controlling the class instead teaching after each fight. The other issue which is affecting the school and the teachers indirectly is the issue of burglary which takes place almost daily in this school. If the school had purchased any equipment, the very same night will be stolen. One day they broke to my office and stole all the DVDs for which I paid more than a R1000 from my own pocket.***

An LO teacher from Lioness secondary asserted:

*...learners’ performance dropped out, and teachers were also beaten by the learners, during the era of violence. The root cause for such beating was drugged and of course other issues.....*

Another respondent who is an SDSSC chair from Scooby mentioned:

*...for example, if a learner is not behaving well – unruly, I take an initiative to discipline that learner. Although one has to be very careful when I punish them using corporal punishment because it it’s illegal to use, but we have to use it because it’s the only way which is assisting us to maintain order. Before I punish the learner by using a stick, I have to ask the learner, does he prefer to take 4 strokes or call a parent? Then I will write down his choice and punish him if he agreed to that or wait for a parent.***

Other participants who are security guards in both schools are also aware of the drug trafficking and fighting within the school, they posited:

The security guard from Lioness Secondary said:

*Previously some of the learners were involved in drugs and they will end up fighting and doing all sorts of violence. Even now it is still happening, there are learners who have just joined the school and are doing drugs. Actually, they are taking us back to where we were before because we had cleaned the school but now here they are again. Even now, once they are high on drugs they disrespect teachers inside the classroom, even females they do drugs. Last year I was in court due to the issues of drugs at this school, the case will be finalised soon***

Another security guard from Scooby asserted:

*Learners normally fight within school premises. Crime is very high in this school which involves vandalism and stealing. In most cases, burglary and vandalism took place whenever there is new equipment bought and delivered to the school. So the way I perceive stealing I think it is instigated by our own learners and they team up with people from the community. This is so because the school is always under attack each night the new equipment has been delivered. I was once hurt by a learner who stabbed me in the head and I suspect that he was involved in drugs. When I asked why he is acting the way he did, he just said “I hate you” This particular learner was expelled from school for his violent behavior and that is how the incident was resolved.***

The effects of violence among teachers were supported by informal conversations with other teachers and these conversations were recorded in the observation book. During the informal conversation with the LO teacher and the principal both from Scooby
secondary it emerged that among other effects of school violence, the notable one was mounting depression among the staff members. It was further reported that other teachers were affected by school violence as a result they have been away for medical treatment. For example, there was an teacher who was diagnosed with depression after she had witnessed the hijacking incident which occurred at Scooby secondary. Another example of the effects of violence or depression is also evident in a form of miscarriages. The acting deputy principal was away from school due to her baby’s miscarriage as the principal had reported that the deputy principal suffered from depression. Research studies have revealed that teachers and learners in schools alike are exposed to school violence in one way or other. In a study done by Rossouw (2008), revealed that teachers have been subjected to physical and psychological violence at schools in South African schools where majority of teachers plan to quit and others demand armed guards at schools.

**Discussion**

The discussion on the effects of school violence is aligned with the research studies which revealed that if a teacher is suffering, the children in his or her care will suffer. For example, Cosgrove, (2000) asserts that teachers hampered by stress and unable to give of their best will continue to short-change the pupils through no fault of their own…one way for an individual to cope with stress is to take it out on other people. Research has shown that violence directed toward teachers has reached concerning levels (Yang et al., 2021). For example a nationwide survey in the U.S., researchers reported that 80% of the experienced at least one of 11 different forms of violence during the past year. This study contends that in the 2021 and 2022 school calendars, teachers have experienced worse forms of violence where teachers are mainly killed either by strangers or by learners within the school premises. Studies done elsewhere argued that principals reported that their teachers have suffered some type of violence from learners, such as victimisation, intimidation or verbal abuse, and even killing (Yang et al., 2021).

The majority of participants exhibited varying effects of violence ranging from issues which loss of instructional time to one which personally or physically affects the teachers. Teachers felt that they usually lose a lot of instructional time due to learners who fight and course disorder in class. At Lioness Secondary, teachers were once beaten by learners which resulted in a temporary closure of the school. At Scooby Secondary, the majority of participants fear violent learners, especially those who do drugs, and are also affected by a spate of burglaries where community thieves are involved in stealing the school property including 18 doors that were stripped from all classrooms at once. A high level of stress among teachers at school Scooby Secondary was also reported as an effect of school violence, where female teachers were on treatment due to depression and at worst had a miscarriage. At Lioness Secondary, participants also feared for their lives against learners who do drugs as they at times become violent after taking drugs. It also emerged that teachers did not only fear learners because they are drug addicts or they carry weapons but learners were also feared because of their masculinity and their unfriendly looks. One learner was so feared in such a way that teachers didn’t call him by his real name, but he was classified as Mr. X. Furthermore, some teachers mentioned some learners simply disrespect their learning by disappearing from classes if a strict teacher will be in class.

We have all known the ‘kick the cat’ syndrome, when frustrated and angry a person lashes out at the nearest available target… Place a person under stress in a classroom with small children and the consequences will certainly be unpleasant and could be awful…Fortunately, physical attacks on children are uncommon, but the daily classroom experiences for a child whose teacher is under stress will certainly be less than positive. Shouting, verbal put-downs, short temper, poor quality assessments, unimaginative lessons, work not marked, are some of the symptoms of depression among teachers (Cosgrove, 2000; and Irwin, et al., 2022).

**Conclusions**

In this article, I performed a systematic literature review to reveal the spade of violence experienced by teachers. Recent shootings at schools across South African schools in less than 24 months have resulted in widespread fear and panic among learners, parents, and the community at large, prompting a myriad of responses to make schools safer. Department of Education has since made a plea to the police to make the killing of teachers a priority case just like the killing of politicians. Immediate future research is required urgently to establish the reason for these rampage killer shootings in schools. Based on the recent phenomenon of rampage teacher killings in schools, the school communities and the department are now more frightened and fearful to be in and around schools. To curb this scourge of teacher killings, the Western Cape Department created a value-driven organisation that aims at eradicating school violence against teachers. This paper contends that more of similar initiatives are needed across all South African schools.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) declares all schools as drug-free zones. SASA clearly states that no person may bring a dangerous object or illegal drug onto school premises or have such object or drug in his or her possession on school premises or during any school activity. This study further recommends that the application of search and seizure legislation should be revived in a meaningful way by involving SAPS to do the actual search and seizure. Against the backdrop of leaner search and seizure of drugs and dangerous weaponry, Independent School SASA (ISASA), has adopted another piece of legislation that requires staff to do the vetting. Vetting emphasises that there is a need to vet all staff members who come into contact with children. Immediate research is required to monitor and report on the implementation and successes/failures of ISASA vetting as a means to enhance learner safety in schools.
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I declare that this article is our own work and that all the sources that are used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This paper has never been published and sent to another journal. The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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