

**THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON TEACHERS' JOB  
PRACTICES AND WELL-BEING IN A WESTERN CAPE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

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Signed



Date: 28 August 2024

## **ABSTRACT**

Violence, primarily in schools, appears to be an expanding epidemic in South Africa. Despite the establishment of many scholastic rules and strategies to avoid school violence, the DBE (Department of Basic Education) continues to disappoint teachers. In fact, teachers are often more prone than pupils to be victims of school violence, as they are at the frontline of responding to violent individuals. This circumstance provides several issues to the teaching profession, as teachers can no longer feel safe and carry out their academic functions. Thus, this qualitative phenomenological study solicits the participation of four intermediate-phase teachers. Data collected from participants, through semi-structured interviewing, helped the researcher understand how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. The data collected explored the possible problems teachers experience when working in non-conducive violent learning environments. Data was analysed using thematic analysis; thus, common themes were categorized, and similarities and differences were identified. Participants voluntarily participated in this study.

Therefore, with learner-to-teacher violence on the rise, this study concluded that: Teachers' experience of violence influences their practice and well-being as, the unexpected possibility of classroom violence ultimately leaves teachers discouraged, unhappy, and experience burnout both physically and emotionally. Additionally, teachers commonly experience verbal violence rather than physical violence, as teachers who participated in the study reported that verbal abuse is much more rampant and pervasive within the classroom, leaving them with mental trauma, uncertainty, stress, and reduced self-esteem. Consequently, physical violence was the second most common form of violence experienced by teachers in this study. Some teachers had mentioned feeling stressed when violence erupted amongst learners, as they did not know how to deal with the situation. Lastly, resilience was prominent in the participants' narrations, as the theme enabled teachers to persist in the school where they had witnessed violence. Therefore, violent experiences were found to influence teachers' resilience in their teaching and overall well-being.

**Key words:** abuse, physical, school violence, South Africa, verbal, well-being

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## DEDICATION

To each teacher trying to improve the lives of children.

*“Teachers are unique problem solvers by character, temperament, and resilience. Teachers cannot be manufactured.”*

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## **GLOSSARY**

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education

CJCP – Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE – Department of Education

IP – Intermediate Phase

PBIS – Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support

SACE – South African Council for Educators

SBV – School-Based Violence

SMT – School Management Team

SRGBV – School-Related Gender-Based Violence

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WCED – Western Cape Education Department

WHO – World Health Organization

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **MOTIVATION**

This research study was motivated by a personal agenda on violence against teachers, particularly in the South African setting, and by the emerging concern that school-based violence pervasively affects teachers' well-being and practice. As a teacher of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a specialist within the intermediate phase, who has previously been at the forefront of violent student behaviour, I am particularly impelled to shed light and acknowledgement on teachers' experiences of school-based violence.

School-based violence takes up many forms and affects many individuals in various ways. This phenomenon often provokes negative feelings and grim evocations in many teachers. With the current literature in mind, it is clear that many researchers do not discern the negative effects school violence has on teachers (Grobler, 2018). Rather, many scholars often examine the psychological impact of school violence on pupils (Christina , 2022). Whereby researchers frequently deem teachers as a repository for insight into student behaviour, or as practitioners of preventative programs, but rarely as victims (Galand & Lecocq, 2007).

I believe that this literature hole demands closure, as teachers in violent environments are most likely to succumb to 'teacher burnout'. With first-hand experience and unfortunate media displays of learner-against-teacher violence, I feel that many novice teachers, as well as senior teachers, are often left demotivated and challenged, as many teachers find themselves subjected to lawless classroom behaviour. Unfortunately, teachers are generally given the short end of the stick, as most government laws are more protective of students. As an individual in the current teaching profession, I am certain that many teachers feel helpless when dealing with violent or disrespectful students. For example, violent student behaviour can progressively affect both students and teachers, making the classroom setting not conducive to effective learning and teaching. Burdick-Will (2013) supported this claim as he asserted that by enabling

school violence, an elevated degree of student aggression will be established. Thus, reducing effective teaching and learning performance.

According to researchers Cordova and Berlanda (2019), studies have found that the phenomenon of student aggression toward teachers can be an arduous work-related stressor, as it potentially diminishes vocational well-being. Alzyoud and Al-Ali (2016) further asserted that the present condition in many South African schools is unacceptable, as teachers' psychological state and instructional efficacy suffer because of aggression. Hence, the primary motive for doing this study was the anticipation that its results may assist the DBE in improving schooling environments for both teachers and pupils (Govender, 2015).

While working in numerous schools as a teacher, I have come to realise that the value of maintaining quality education for pupils, is by addressing the demands of teachers, who are the custodians of competent teaching in our schools. Therefore, by performing this research study, I intend to uncover how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. In addition, I would also like to know how these experiences of violence shape their resilience towards their practice and wellbeing.

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Violence, particularly in schools, looks to be on the rise in South Africa (Boran & Taskan, 2021). Despite the implementation of several scholastic norms and initiatives to prevent school violence, the DBE continues to disappoint teachers (Van Zyl, 2021). Before delving further into this unique phenomenon, it is imperative to properly define the phrase 'school-based violence'. According to Kreifels and Warton (2016), school-based violence can be defined as any occurrence of violence committed within a learning facility, while commuting to and from school. Such forms of violence within educational settings can be both bodily and non-bodily, as they can cause physiological or cognitive injury to the victim be it pupil or adult.

School violence is a serious issue that often causes fear and triggers emotional distress and negative memories for both pupils and teachers (Ohsako, 2000).

This phenomenon imbibes multiple manifestations, encompassing behavioural challenges, bullying, obscene, discrimination, and chauvinism among students and teachers (Sibisi, 2021). Some individuals perceive violence as a normal and temporary phase of childhood and teenage development, that all youths must experience. However, many studies have found that violent mindsets and actions developed at a young age in pupils, tend to linger and be maintained (Ohsako, 2000). Supporting this notion, Cohen, Groves, and Kracke (2021) asserted that repeated exposure to violence during childhood is linked to greater reliance on health and mental health services, as well as a higher likelihood of becoming involved with child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Cohen, Elena; Groves, Betsy McAlister; Kracke, Kristen, 2021). Additionally, these findings have indicated that violent youths are an at-risk population, as they have a greater chance of becoming juvenile offenders and adult malefactors, than less aggressive pupils (Healy & Valente, 2020). This reality raises severe political and social challenges for governments, teachers, and the public (Mthiyane, 2013).

With the current literature in mind, it is clear that many researchers do not discern the negative effects school violence has on teachers (Grobler, 2018). Rather, many scholars often examine the psychological impact of school violence on pupils (Christina , 2022). Begattini (2019) supported this claim, as she stated that given their maturity and cognitive stage, pupils are generally characterized as a more dependent demographic than teachers, as they continue to build on their psychological management, interpersonal abilities, and dispute resolution (Bagattini, 2019). Similarly, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) asserted that it is a teacher's obligation to safeguard the welfare and well-being of all pupils under their supervision (UNESCO, 2017). As a result, researchers frequently deem teachers as a repository for insight into student behaviour, or as practitioners of preventative programs, but rarely as victims (Galand & Lecocq, 2007). This literature cavity demands pervasion, as teachers in violent environments are most likely to succumb to 'teacher burnout'. According to Cordova and Berlanda (2019) the phenomena of student aggression towards teachers can be an arduous work-related stressor, as it potentially diminishes vocational well-being (De Cordova & Berlanda, 2019). Alzyoud and

Al-Ali (2016) further asserted that the present condition in many South African schools is unacceptable, as teachers' psychological state and instructional efficacy suffer as a result of aggression.

Therefore, as South African schools are presently plagued by school violence, the well-being of teachers cannot be overstated (De Cordova & Berlanda, 2019). With learner-to-teacher violence on the rise, this study aims to investigate teachers' experiences in primary schools, and how school violence influences teachers' practice and wellbeing. Considering the aim of this study, a qualitative research approach will therefore be adopted.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

Violence in South African schools is a grave enigma that affects pupils, teachers, households, and stakeholders within the educational realm. This worldwide phenomenon assimilates multiple manifestations, which include behavioural difficulties, bullying, obscene language, prejudice, and brute discrimination among students and teachers (Fakude, 2022). Teise (2015) stated that in order for educating and learning to be feasible, the school atmosphere must be secure, hygienic, and regimented (Teise, 2015). However, incidences of verbal and physical assault, substance abuse as well and external influences typically impede many South African schools, making it not conducive to learning. Gopal and Collings (2017) supported this claim, as they stated that student dissent impairs appropriate instruction and learning, which lowers school safety. According to a study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2013), youthful individuals who encounter violence are more likely to have an array of sentimental, cognitive, and academic challenges that will shape them throughout their life. Ngidi (2018) further contended that violence in schooling institutions may prompt substantial, long-term physical, sentimental, and mental obstacles for students, such as low self-esteem, decreased school presence, deficient focus, lowered capacity to study, mood disorders, and suicide.

On the other hand, in its pursuit of compelling headlines, the press gravitates to fixate on the precise nature of violence inside an academic setting and the repercussions of these occurrences on the students. However, the media

displays relatively low consideration of teachers' vulnerability and danger from school violence. According to Makhasane and Mthembu (2019) teachers do not feel safe, as school violence is frequently found at their doorsteps. Sibsi (2021) supported this claim, as she asserted that teachers are often left to address violent incidents among pupils, which often originate in neighbouring school communities. These severe degrees of school violence harm teachers' well-being as well (Ngidi, 2018). Such indications may surface abruptly or progressively over time (Bester & Du Plessis, 2010). In addition, school violence has produced a sharp rise in the number of teachers departing from their positions, as many teachers experience elevated rates of stress and despair, which impacts their well-being and functionality (Grobler, 2018). With these references in mind, it is evident that school violence continues to be a serious societal scourge for learners and teachers in South Africa.

### **1.3 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education

CJCP – Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE – Department of Education

IP – Intermediate Phase

PBIS – Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support

SACE – South African Council for Educators

SBV – School-Based Violence

SMT – School Management Team

SRGBV – School-Related Gender-Based Violence

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WCED – Western Cape Education Department

WHO – World Health Organization

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

School violence has become a prominent concern that has gained considerable public scrutiny, emphasising its increasing prevalence and ramifications it has on the educational realm (Christina , 2022). South African schools are not immune



to school-based violence as it is a pervasive phenomenon (Fakude, 2022). Today, teachers have a key position, in determining the nation's future by offering quality education to their learners. However, with learner-to-teacher violence on the rise, teachers can no longer feel safe and carry out their academic function (Sibisi, 2021). In recent decades, acts of violence on school premises have been periodically publicised and depicted in media outlets. In one of the contemporary instances of school violence, a grade 12 learner was charged with the stabbing of his Free State teacher, which led to her death (Monama, 2022). Similarly, in Jan de Klerk High School located in Johannesburg, a learner was caught on video, jumping on his teacher's back, in an attempt to hold his teacher in a choked grip (Dayimani, 2022). In Cape Town, a grade 6 learner from Harmony Primary, was caught on camera attacking a teacher following the confiscation of a soccer ball (Vuso, 2021). The aforementioned, represent a few of the occurrences that have happened since the peroration of 2021, demonstrating the severity and scope of violent misconduct in South African schools. Fakude (2022) highlights that teachers encounter learner aggression in schools in an array of shapes, which include verbal violence, bodily assault, and sexual misconduct (Fakude, 2022).

Burton and Leoschut (2013) contend that, while the discussion of school violence is primarily focused on the psychological well-being of pupils, the adverse effects of school aggression on teachers and other personnel should not be disregarded (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). In that respect, criminality and aggression may lead to a high rate of teacher turnover, adversely impacting their capacity to impart knowledge and causing interactions between pupils and teachers to be strained (Çetin & Danacı, 2020). Despite the suggestions given by different researchers on school violence, there continue to be allegations of school aggression in South Africa (Fakude, 2022). Given the reality that the research on the repercussions of school violence on teachers is limited, these literary openings demand acknowledgment (Sibisi, 2021). Therefore, to examine how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being, this study was performed in a chosen quintile 5 primary school in the Western Cape's Southern Suburbs. The purpose of this study was to determine how teachers' experience

of violence influences their practice and well-being in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape.

**Research Title:**

- The influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school

**Main Question**

- The influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school

**Sub-Question**

- What types of school violence do teachers experience in a Western Cape primary school?
- How do teachers' experiences of school violence affect their job practices and overall well-being?

**1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To explore how school violence influences teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school.
- To identify the types of school violence experienced by teachers in a Western Cape primary school.
- To investigate how teachers' experiences of violence impact their job practices.
- To examine how teachers' experiences of violence affect their overall well-being.

**1.6 CONTEXT OF STUDY**

The public institution utilised in this investigation is situated in Cape Town's southern suburbs. It is a school for the community that serves children and households from an array of societal backgrounds in Cape Town. Attending pupils are often from the area or are neighbouring the community. It is a quintile 5 school; this means that it serves a richer neighbourhood and receives less

financial support from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) than lower quintile schools. Parents and carers are often required to pay for school fees and other educational expenditures. The building is old, as it was established in the year 1978. The intermediate phase classrooms are at the forefront of the building, catering for about 15 intermediate classrooms which is separated from the foundation phase.

### **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Overall, this research study will show the ubiquity and severity of school violence among South African teachers. Although numerous investigations have delved into the roots and repercussions of school aggression, few have investigated teachers' perspectives and experiences in violent educational settings and how it affects their practice and well-being (Berlanda, et al., 2019). These shortcomings are critical as it impedes current knowledge of viable preventative measures that teachers may employ in violent schools. Additionally, this body of research may contribute key discernment to the influence school aggression has on teachers, as it could shape strategies and methods that promote teachers' protection and mental well-being (De Cordova & Berlanda, 2019).

Given the hidden burden that school violence places on teachers, this study stresses the critical need for proactive institutional reforms such as educational initiatives, stronger disciplinary action protocols, emotional support frameworks, and professional development workshops that provide teachers with coping strategies. Furthermore, this research might serve as an initial basis for larger national programs targeted at preserving the teaching staff and creating safer, more supportive educational settings throughout South Africa.

### **1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

Four intermediate-phase teachers participated in the interviewing of this research study. Data collected was sourced exclusively from one primary school's intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape's southern suburbs. As a result, this research study may not be relevant to other intermediate phases within a school as it may portray a subjective perspective of participants' experience.

## **1.9 ASSUMPTIONS OF STUDY**

Considering the institution included in the research is a public government school, it is generally portrayed as an under resourced and poverty-stricken environment. It can be assumed that the school is community orientated.

## **1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

**Chapter 1** is the opening chapter in which the research problem is stated. It evaluates the problem's formation, meaning, and context. The fundamental ideas are clarified, as well as the relevance, presumptions, and constraints.

**Chapter 2** presents the literature review of the research problem stated. It also discusses the theoretical viewpoints on which the literature concentrates in relation to how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. This theoretical framework is centred on Angar's (2011) Social Ecology Perspective on Resilience.

**Chapter 3** will describe the study's research methodology and procedures on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practise and well-being. The analytical components will be characterised. It will further present an outline of the research's qualitative approach. Data collecting tools and data analysis strategies will be brought forward, as well as ethical procedures to increase the study's credibility and trustworthiness.

**Chapter 4** will address the outcomes of the study on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practise and well-being. This is carried out through the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with four intermediate-phase teachers at a primary school in the Western Cape's southern suburbs. The data collected was evaluated using thematic content analysis.

**Chapter 5** unveils the ramifications of how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practise and well-being. It also presents recommendations on how these experiences shape their resilience towards teaching and wellbeing.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 addresses the rationale for the study on how teachers' experience of violence influences their practice and well-being. It provides a brief summary of the present conditions of school violence in South African school settings. Its problem statement, goals, and objectives have been given. In addition, the context as well as the connection to violence had been outlined. As for the terms used in this study, it has been explicated. The relevance of the study is emphasized, in order to show the ubiquity and severity of school violence on South African teachers. Thus, the study's shortcomings and assumptions are highlighted.

This study aims to add to the small amount of research conducted empirically on school-based violence, and its influence on teachers in the South African school setting. Considering it has an intended aim, this master thesis seeks to raise consciousness about negative influences on teachers' practice and well-being, when teaching in a negative classroom environment. The results may lead to additional recommendations for enhancement and encouragement to teachers overall.

Thus, chapter 1 is the opening chapter in which the research problem is stated. It evaluates the problem's formation, meaning, and context. The fundamental ideas are clarified, as well as the relevance, presumptions, and constraints.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will review supporting literature, which aims to supply synthesising insight into how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. Given the significant rate of criminality and violence on school grounds, the cause and degree of school violence will be explored from both a local and international perspective. Therefore, the present study will consequently examine what defines school violence, the types of school violence, and the nature of school violence, as well as the possible causes of school violence and how it affects teachers' well-being and practice.

#### **2.2 DEFINING SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Violence can be described as any purposeful or malicious activity in which an individual or a collection of people adversely impacts or seeks to injure another, whether physically, emotionally, or psychologically (Makhasane & Mthembu, 2019). An important aspect of violence is the presence of an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim (Olweus, 2010). Therefore, violence can manifest in numerous ways and settings, depending on the context and actors involved.

School violence can be comprehended more clearly within the context of an overall understanding of violence. Many researchers have maintained that the term 'school violence' can be multidimensional, as it takes on numerous shapes and includes diverse conditions (Enyinnaya, 2015). According to Grobler (2018), school violence can denote belligerent activities among pupils, facilities, and teachers that can occur at any given moment within the school premises. Similarly, Le Mottee and Kelly (2017) characterise school violence as a person, body, or consortium demonstrating power over individuals within the school context. Likewise, Prinsloo (2007) deems school violence as any consciously direct or indirect act that results in somatic or psychological assault on an individual while under the jurisdiction of an educational facility.

Thus, while violence is a broader societal phenomenon that can occur in any environment, school violence refers specifically to acts of aggression or harm occurring within educational settings. This distinguishing characteristic allows both terms to be related, but the specific focus of this study will be on school violence directed towards teachers.

## **2.3 FORMS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE AFFECTING TEACHERS AND LEARNERS**

Arguably the most apparent kind of violence involving teachers and pupils is aggression in schools. It encompasses bodily and non-bodily assaults caused by variables involving sexuality and societal standards, as well as environmental elements such as financial disparity, destitution, alienation, and war (Ferrara & Franceschini, 2019).

### **2.3.1 Physical violence**

The prime forms of physical aggression against victims are intentionally bumping, stomping, hitting, property damaging, cutting, shooting, and murdering. These forms of violence are commonly seen in acts of abuse, assault, bullying, corporal punishment, gangsterism, gender-based violence, and harassment (Power, 2012). Various studies around the world have acclaimed the fatalities linked to these acts of aggression (Christina, 2022). For example, American scholars, Ferrara and Franceschini (2019) described corporal punishment as any damnation that employs violent restraint. This form of violence is frequently applied by teachers to penalise inferior academic performance or address bad behaviour. On the other hand, Norwegian researcher Olweus (2010) defined bullying as a type of assault that is characterised by a string of violent actions, instead of a singular act. Meanwhile, South African researchers Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) regard it as any deliberate bodily or nonphysical (verbal) incident or action that causes physiological or indirect harm to the receiver of the misconduct whilst the recipient remains under the care and supervision of an educational institution.

Similarly, Sazelo and Sibisi (2021) stated that gender-based violence (GBV) in academic settings, pertains to any pretence of violence against students on

school grounds. Thus, this act is generally based on an individual's gender, as perpetrators are often prompted by the victim's sex. Therefore, teachers and pupils, are more likely to encounter violence, due to their gender (Mkhize & Sibisi, 2021). Cordova and Berlanda (2019) supported this claim, as 70% of their female participants had been exposed to school violence. Similarly, gender-based violence has increased in South Africa, due to the power disparity between men and women, primarily in poor economies (Parkes, 2016). Bester and Du Plessis (2010) accentuated this claim as patriarchal culture and conceded the notion of men's hostile behaviour towards women. The approbation of this behaviour by several South African men, has proven to be detrimental, as the use of aggressiveness by male students in the educational setting can be harmful to female teachers and learners. According to Edwards, Fyles, and Kundu (2019), GBV produces dangerous and hostile environments for teachers in academic establishments and educational settings. The continuance of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) impairs educational quality by denying students a legal entitlement to an education and prohibiting teachers from functioning to their full potential. Consequently, GBV can lead to absenteeism, poor scholastic performance, inadequate self-worth, mental trauma, anxiety, and emotional turmoil among teachers and students. There is a need to develop an organised policy structure and tighter student regulations to combat GBV on campus (Samakao & Manda, 2023). Therefore, due to several academic scholars, the occurrence of GVB, frequently worsens over time, if not appropriately confronted (Burton & Leoschut, 2013).

On the other hand, violence within schools may take place at any point in the educational process, including the intermediate phase. Ferrara and Franceschini (2019) highlight that physical violence in the school intermediate phase may induce psychological despair, fatal bodily harm, and permanent emotional problems for both teachers and learners. Approximately one billion minors ranging from the ages of 2-17 years have endured physical school-based violence worldwide (Smiley, et al., 2021). In previous studies on physical school violence, Burton and Leoschut's (2009) study involving 4391 pupils revealed that educational institutions tend to be an apprehensive setting, with 10.2% of participants expressing feeling unsafe at school and 9.9% naming a specific spot



at school they were afraid of. Furthermore, 13.6% of the students polled were afraid about getting to and from school, and criminals were linked to the greatest proportion of terror (47.2%), illustrating the degree to which community criminality has infiltrated South African schools, resulting in schools being sites of stress and worry instead of shelter for many learners (Mthiyane, 2013). In addition, an investigation concerning school violence within the intermediate phase, encompassing about 12,794 students, 521 teachers, and 264 principals, found that 15.3% were considered a victim of school aggression and brutality (Kreifels & Warton, 2016). Correspondingly, the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) study on school violence, which involved 5939 intermediate phase students, 121 administrators, and 239 instructors from nine South African provinces, found that the Free State reported the largest incidence of physical abuse (30.4%), followed by the Western Cape (28.7%) and Limpopo (25.2%). Meanwhile, the Northern Cape faces the greatest prevalence of sexual assault (11.2%) (The Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2013).

Therefore, physical school violence may have significant ramifications on teachers' well-being and resilience in the classroom. De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, and Fraizzoli, (2019) highlight that teachers who are subjected to or witness physical violence may experience mental frustration, such as worry, nervousness, and even manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Sibsi (2021) further states that prolonged encounters with violence can decrease job fulfilment as teachers may feel uneasy and abandoned in their positions, resulting in a drop in general happiness. Furthermore, the stress and worry caused by physical violence can have bodily implications which include tension headaches insomnia, and numerous other stress-related disorders (Bozkus, 2022). Teachers are prone to burnout because of this elevated stress, which manifests in the form of tiredness, detachment, and a lessened feeling of success (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). Notably, the mental strain of physical violence transcends beyond the educational setting, affecting teachers' private lives, social interactions, and general well-being (Ribeiro & Martins, 2022). On the other hand, teachers who are victims of physical assault may have difficulty recovering from hardship (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Frequent bombardment with dangers or violent situations might decrease

teachers' resilience in dealing with the day-to-day demands of teaching. When confronted with physical aggression, teachers may question their vocational competence, thus compromising their optimism in creating a safe and accommodating learning space (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019).

### **2.3.2 Verbal school-based abuse**

Verbal school-based violence is not physically invasive, but degrading, disparaging, intimidating, and scorning to individuals (Ferrara & Franceschini, 2019). Gordan (2022) states that verbal abuse is a form of psychological abuse, whereby individuals employ their words to abuse, control, belittle, and influence or demean another individual's mental health. It is believed that many teachers and students worldwide are involved in the social conundrum of verbal violence in educational environments. According to Christina (2022), labelling and stereotyping can exert an adverse effect on a person's well-being in both subtle and explicit manners. Teachers and fellow pupils often name or utter derogatory remarks to other pupils', which could lead to aggressive conduct if an individual misunderstands the behaviour. In addition, the impact of verbal abuse on teachers and learners, are similar to conventional bullying repercussions. As non-physical aggression has a variety of consequences for an individual, which include, mental trauma, uncertainty, stress, alienation, despair, rage, reduced self-esteem, and suicidal ideation (Woudstra & Van Rensburg, 2018).

Additionally, verbal school violence in South Africa, as in numerous other parts of the world, may have serious consequences for both students and teachers within the intermediate phase. Khumalo (2019) states it has been discovered that fear of verbal victimisation hinders learners' and teachers' scholastic and emotional growth. According to De Wet and Jacobs's (2006) study on school violence, intermediate and secondary teachers reported experiencing a variety of learner-on-teacher intimidation no fewer than twice a month in the forms of verbal abuse (18.4%), personal belongings destruction (7.3%), and inappropriate conduct (6.2%). Furthermore, Wei, Hayden, Kutcher, Zygmunt, and McGrath's (2013) study on learner-on-teacher violence, involving 4731 preschool and middle school teachers in America, uncovered that 7.87% and 38.86% of the

respondents were submitted to both physical and mental school abuse. Verbal school violence has a notable influence on teachers' well-being and resilience in the classroom (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). According to Radell (2021), the lasting implications of verbal abuse transcend above the initial emotional discomfort it causes, instilling emotions of unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and worry via regular exposure to unpleasant and abusive language. Persistent contact with school verbal violence may potentially foster mental health problems such as stress, sadness, and exhaustion (Petso, 2021). Furthermore, verbal aggression can steadily weaken teachers' resilience as time passes, rendering it progressively complicated for them to recover from setbacks. According to De Cordova and Berlanda (2019), teachers who are subjected to adverse verbal encounters may consider it increasingly challenging to preserve their capacity to overcome adversity. In addition, the mental burden incurred by verbal school violence may impact the teacher-student relationship, causing teachers to appear more cautious or less trustworthy, impeding initiatives to build strong relationships with their pupils (Grobler, 2018).

### **2.3.3 Bullying as a Form of School Violence**

Bullying is widely recognized as a form of violence that encompasses verbal, psychological, emotional, physical, and cyber forms of aggression. Importantly, bullying is distinguished by a deliberate intention to harm, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. According to Olweus (1993), bullying is defined as repeated negative actions by one or more individuals directed at a person who has difficulty defending themselves, highlighting the critical element of power imbalance.

Within schooling institutions, bullying remains a persistent global issue. Menesini (2017) characterizes conventional bullying as repeated actions intended to cause bodily or psychological harm to another individual, through physical assault, verbal abuse, or social exclusion. Alarming, bullying is sometimes mistakenly regarded as an unavoidable part of youth development. However, Boulton et al. (2017) argue that such experiences hinder young individuals from developing into flourishing adults. In South Africa, Harrington (2023) reported that approximately

3.2 million pupils are negatively affected by bullying annually. Similarly, UNESCO (2017) found that globally, 32% of young people reported being bullied at school.

Cyberbullying, as a form of bullying, occurs through electronic communication channels such as social media, text messages, or emails. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying often allows perpetrators to remain anonymous, intensifying the psychological harm for victims (Baek, 2015). Victims of cyberbullying tend to experience more severe mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, and social isolation compared to those subjected to traditional bullying (Myers & Cowie, 2019).

Teachers, too, are not immune to bullying. Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012) reported that teachers often face indirect bullying from learners through mocking, disrespectful gestures, or imitating personal traits, contributing significantly to teacher anxiety. Furthermore, Kõiv's (2020) study found that among 393 teachers surveyed, 77 reported being bullied by students, while 49 experienced bullying from both students and colleagues.

Both traditional and cyberbullying are profound illustrations of school violence that severely affect the psychological well-being and professional resilience of teachers. Turanovic and Siennick (2022) highlighted that teachers managing bullying incidents experience heightened stress, frustration, and emotional fatigue. The persistent and often anonymous nature of cyberbullying compounds these challenges, leaving teachers drained and demotivated. De Luca et al. (2019) concluded that repeated exposure to bullying situations increases the risk of emotional exhaustion and burnout, ultimately reducing job satisfaction and undermining teachers' efforts to create a safe learning environment (Menesini, 2017).

## **2.4 SCHOOL VIOLENCE THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL LENS**

On a worldwide scale, school violence remains on the agenda, as it is ubiquitous in both developed and developing countries (Makhasane, 2022). It is, therefore, imperative to evaluate this phenomenon through an international lens. Benbenishty and Astor (2005) supported this claim, as they asserted that various

individuals with various diversities are disturbed by heinous acts of irrational violence in schools. Turanovic and Siennick (2022) stated that particular components of school violence may be distinguished to a certain civilisation and cultural milieu. Given today's internet access, violent occurrences in one part of the world can have far-reaching consequences for people all over the world (Astor & Benbenishty, 2005).

Throughout the last two decades, school shootings in the United States have received a considerable number of press coverage, provoking several school safety precautions. According to Rigney and Jeter (2022), media coverage of violence in American schools has contributed to societal opinions of these incidences. Katsiyannis (2023) stated that gun violence is more widespread in American schooling institutions than in other parts of the world. This is evident, as school gun violence has steadily risen from 269 in 2013 to 611 in 2020 (Katsiyannis, 2023). Similarly, Ndibalema (2013) thoroughly examined the perceptions of bullying in Tanzanian schooling environments. She found that 64.7% of pupils indulged in emotional bullying. The survey also indicated that bullying continues to be a prevalent issue amongst Tanzanian adolescents, resulting in difficulties such as absenteeism, failure, and school dropouts (Ndibalema, 2013). In addition, Brazil, a country with an acutely disadvantaged socioeconomic history, has unambiguously noted a rise in school violence involving both teachers and pupils. According to a study conducted by Simões and Cardoso (2022), 50.5% of its teacher participants had experienced, physical, and verbal aggression in their schooling institution (Simões & Cardoso, 2022). Correspondingly, Soares and Machado's (2014) study on violence against teachers, uncovered that the southeast division of Brazil had the second most prevalent rate of physical violence against teachers, generating 37.5% of all occurrences. Meanwhile, 44.70% of public Brazilian schooling institutions had the most severe rate of school violence (Soares & Machado, 2014).

From a local perspective, South Africa has roughly twelve million government schools with pupils who frequent nearly 27 000 institutions (Sterne, 2021). Given the multiple recorded incidents of violence, South African schools have been described as warfare (Makhasane, 2022). This jeopardising development of

violence in South African schools has left a multitude of individuals befuddled, anxious, and alarmed. According to the DBE, it has recently proven difficult to gather a precise number of violent occurrences in South African schools, since there has been a significant increase in documented incidences of school aggression (Siebritz, 2022). In addition, reports in various networks such as television broadcastings, news outlets, periodicals, and social networking sites, implying that the plague of violence has reached an unsettling proportion (Khumalo, 2019) Grobler (2018) highlights that many South African schools are situated in communities with high levels of criminal activity and brutality, exposing both learners and teachers to violence on a continual basis. Similarly, Taole (2016) supports this claim, as he highlights those elevated degrees of violence in South African neighbourhoods making its route into educational institutions. For example, schools found in high-crime or gang-infested areas are likely to experience problems when violence from the outside spills inside the school (Mkhize & Sibisi, 2021). This example provides a clear indication that high-crime communities affect many schools' security and influence the well-being of learners and school staff members.

From a historical perspective, during the South African apartheid era, violence was once employed as an oppressive weapon (Davids & Waghid, 2016). As a result, political and ethical disputes remain in societal realms, including education. In prior years, communal violence in South Africa was strongly linked to politics, which had a catastrophic influence on both children and adults (Power, 2012). Due to the turmoil experienced during the apartheid era, a tenor of violence became strongly ingrained in many South Africans (Mkhize & Sibisi, 2021). Burton (2007) describes this phenomenon as an inherited ethos from the past apartheid regime. Considering South Africa's rate of aggressive crimes, violence in the lives of youths is pervasive (Burton, 2007). It is therefore perturbing to recognise that, regardless of the value of educational institutions, schools are not impervious to brutality or its consequences. As modern-day educational facilities have become lawless, students and teachers remain uneasy, as their safety cannot be assured in schools (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013).

Considering these alarming media accounts and deplorable circumstances in certain South African schools, teachers befittingly fear for their safety, since some have been wounded, attacked, burglarised, and verbally disrespected during schooling hours (Tshabalala, 2023). With these statistics in mind, it is apparent that school aggression knows no geographical limitations, as it is a worldwide phenomenon, with South Africa being no distinction. According to UNESCO (2017), violence in schooling institutions disrupts over 246 million learners worldwide, per year (UNESCO, 2017). On an international scale, youths are raised in circumstances that feature parental separation, poverty, a high degree of narcotise addictions, and endemic violence (Schoeman, 2010). As a result, many youths are bereft of proactive role models in their lives. Therefore, this worldwide dilemma attracts individual attention from administrators and policy makers globally (Schoeman, 2010).

## **2.5 THE NATURE OF VIOLENCE DIRECTED AGAINST TEACHERS**

Throughout the last decade, ample studies on school violence in South African schools have been accomplished; however, relatively little research has shed light on learner-against-teacher violence (Botha & Zwane, 2021). According to De Wet (2021), school violence is firmly ingrained with learner-against-teacher violence. In many cases, teachers are subjected to physical assaults by students. This subcategory of school violence can take various forms, with the explicit intention of causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm.

According to Sibisi (2021), many teachers have been victims of school violence at some point in their profession, and the prospect of novice teachers being targeted is particularly alarming. In line with the broader definition of violence discussed earlier, the forms of violence that teachers most commonly encounter include arguing, back-chatting, refusing to obey orders, and, in more severe instances, violent assault (Fakude, 2022).

### **2.5.1 Teacher victimisation**

Aggression targeting teachers can be direct and indirect. Direct victimisation may include any physical force including striking, biting, pushing, unwanted contact, and violent calls and text messages. Whereas indirect, may be verbal

harassment, including the use of sexually aggressive remarks, racist slurs, disparaging statements towards teachers, and intimidation (Fakude, 2022). Due to socio-economic factors and belligerent behaviour, teachers who are perceived as rigid, meaning those who strictly enforce rules and discipline with little flexibility, are more likely to become targets of school violence. According to De Wet (2010), teachers who consistently attempt to assert authority in challenging environments may unintentionally provoke resistance or aggression from learners. Bozkus (2022) further emphasise that teachers who become victims of school aggression, experience dread and distress. Therefore, forcing them to perceive the classroom atmosphere, as an emotionally stressful setting to be in, which ultimately prevents teachers from performing competently. Consequently, students are fully cognizant of their liberties, and teachers are limited in their ability to impose discipline. Mkhize and Sibsi (2021) affirm this claim, as they contend that the concept of giving pupils power without teaching them accountability has garnered traction, as they are more informed about their liberties but less conscious of their duties. For example, some pupils purposefully cause a commotion because they are aware of their rights, which has a deleterious effect on the classroom climate (Baysal & Ocak, 2021).

According to Woudstra and Rensburg's (2018) empirical study, victimisation was common in a secondary school in Gauteng, as a substantial portion of teachers experienced direct and indirect victimisation in multiple forms. The most common kinds of victimisation included being given crude names, experiencing threats of harm, receiving sexual remarks, and having goods taken or destroyed. Woudstra and Rensburg (2018), found that 10% of teachers faced physical harassment, while a fraction of teachers was cognizant of threats made by their students. Additionally, the vast 49.3% of teachers reported being harassed on school grounds and 39.9% throughout class time.

## **2.6 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS**

Considering school violence is a multifaceted, multi-systemic dispute, recommendations offering facile and rigid interpretations for its origins are inherently insufficient (Grobler, 2018). According to Burton (2007), an array of interconnected elements shape young individuals in various manners, including



one of which is the practice of violent activities towards others. To fully comprehend the underlying reasons of aggression, one should reflect attentively on the larger environment in which the educational institution and individual are located. According to Christina (2022), multiple variables associated with pupils' origins and the general school setting might influence the prevalence and amount of violence in an educational setting. For example, many learners in the country are affected by unstable home environments, unemployment, substance abuse, and community violence. As a result, many youths are not exposed to positive role models throughout their lives (Schoeman, 2010).

### **2.6.1 Indiscipline**

According to Krishnan (2009) 'discipline' is derived from the Latin term 'discipulus', meaning learner, and disciplina, meaning instruction. To be disciplined means to abide by the law and comply with rules. Indiscipline in the classroom might emerge as breaking established regulations (Khatun, 2018). According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), lack of discipline is among the most severe challenges plaguing schools today. Christina (2022) supported this claim, as lack of discipline renders the educational and instructional environment unsuitable for many. For example, indiscipline may lead to dubiety and a lack of time, making meaningful teaching and development impossible. Ndamani (2008) further contended, that malfeasance is not entirely self-inflicted, but often the product of engagement. Namely, many households' situations impact children's temperament. When parents spend minimal time at home, some children may pursue improper social interactions, which can have serious effects (Shaikhmag & Naidoo, 2021). However, when families are present, parent-child engagement may be discourteous, which ultimately could extend to the educational setting (Kapetanovic & Skoog, 2019). Annulment, destitution, and both physical and non-physical aggression can all have an influence on a child's capacity to operate correctly in the classroom (Grover, 2014).

### **2.6.2 Enabling culture among parents**

According to Bamidele (2022), the term "enabler" refers to an individual who consistently acts in an enabling manner, rationalising or implicitly encouraging another person's conceivably adverse behaviour. Flanaga (2019) highlighted that

parents are often considered enablers of bad behaviour. Grover (2014) supports this claim, as she states that families often nurture an absence of discipline, in their children, by interfering with what teachers are mediating and instilling in the classroom environment. It is, therefore, crucial, for families to play an integral role, in how their children are disciplined (Ndamani, 2008). When student guardians and school institutions, disagree on discipline, pupils rapidly assume they can abscond the consequences or persist in their indiscipline (Kapetanovic & Skoog, 2019). These contradictory signals from the institutions and the parents, frequently result in a tense relationship between parents and teachers (Frijns, 2020). Once this occurs, teachers receive the short end of the stick, as pupils feel entitled and protected by their parents (Figueiredo & Dias, 2012).

### **2.6.3 Community violence**

The environment that exists as a child grows, has a substantial impact on his or her behaviour (Saracho, 2023). In South Africa, community-based violence remains a prominent development. It has existed for a relatively long period and was most visible throughout the political conflicts opposing the apartheid regime. According to Mkhize and Sibsi (2021), community-based violence is characterised as a constant and recurrent presence of the abuse of firearms, blades, substances, and sporadic occurrences of violence. Yaacoub (2017) asserts that being poor represents one of the primary determinants of criminality and aggression in communities. Pupils steal from other individuals since they lack basic needs. Some learners might freely and violently grab other pupils' possessions. Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) support this claim, as they assert that inequality constitutes one of the leading causes of school violence in poor communities. Christina further advocates that schools rife with violence, are indeed the result of aggressive communities and localities. Sibsi (2021) contends that features such as lack of employment, a shortage of academic opportunities, pessimism, and proximity to violence all discourage young individuals and promote the act of school violence. According to Breetzke Breetzke, Fabris-Rotelli, Modiba, and Edelstein (2019), aggression is more widespread in township academic institutions, as schools encounter higher incidents of brutality than school environments in other areas. Sitoyi (2020) states that pupils

residing and attending township schools face significant obstacles such as brutality both inside and outside the classroom setting.

Fredricks and Weiner (2016) contend that community schools that are considered dependable, meaning schools that consistently provide stable, supportive, and safe learning environments, offer an unparalleled opportunity for pupils who have been neglected by the government and broader society. The core obligation of institutions is to safeguard the students they educate. Educational institutions may employ their resources to prevent violence on school grounds and to prepare pupils to manage their engagement with substance abuse in their neighbourhood. According to Sitoyi (2020), a large percentage of township schools do not offer extracurricular activities. As a result, pupils are released early to go home. Some of these pupils return home to vacant households as their unemployed relatives have deserted them, or their parents remain at work. Mncube (2014) highlights the perils of allowing youths to stay alone at home, considering the extreme potential for abuse, criminality, and coercion in neighbourhoods with limited employment.

#### **2.6.4 Gangsterism**

Gangsterism is considered the establishment of organisations with the intent of engaging in aggression and criminality. Gangsters use force and criminality, to transcend direct defence, against rival organisations (Hlatshwayo, 2018). According to Magidi and Schenk (2016), gangs maintain dominance of areas by instilling anxiety and terror in residence. Therefore, terror is a constant element across residents, who live in gang-inundated communities and school environments. Sibsi (2021) stated that schools positioned in high-crime or gang-infested areas will have incidences when violence from the outside spills inside the school. According to South African figures, over 400 occurrences of gang violence occurred during the school year in 2022 (Edwards, 2023). Several of these incidents happened among pupils from opposing communities, with misconduct spilling over into the school settings. Gangster activity includes damage to infrastructure, such as street art of their organisation's emblems and derogatory words intended at opposing gangsters. According to Hlatshwayo (2018), gangsterism is an obstacle, as gangsters are indeed likely to have a

malcontent impact on pupils and teachers in educational realms. Additionally, Fredericks (2016) highlights that gang culture has an adverse influence on both pupils and teachers since pupils may be persuaded into joining gangs, and teachers may be chosen victims for illegal activities.

Nadine and Du Toit (2014) highlight that gang violence frequently happens as a result of a lack of resources and a socially challenged condition. Ljungkrantz and Einarsson (2022) supported this claim, as they assert that gang occupants are the culmination of a shattered household, as a result, they identify with a family amidst their peers. Among the latest episodes of gang aggression in South Africa is the killing of two grade 1 learners, who were caught in the crossfire of gang rivalry, on the premises of Riebeeck Primary School in the Western Cape (Edwards, 2023). Another example of gang violence on school grounds is the murder of a Primrose Park Primary staff member, who was assassinated near the school while on her way to work, in the Western Cape (McCain, 2022). The previously mentioned instances demonstrate how communal gang violence can spread from the community to school institutions. According to De Wet (2016), street gang syndicates have thrived in South African cities throughout the early twentieth century. To mention a few, Cape Town's Cape Flats and Johannesburg's Westbury and Eldorado Park are infamous for having been dominated by gang organisations.

There are an alleged 100,000 criminals operating in 137 groups in the Western Cape. Gang syndicates and violence are considered a double-edged sword on the Cape Flats, as gang involvement represents up to 60% of severe criminality in the Western Cape (De Wet, 2016). This statement is corroborated by accounts of occurrences such as the 17 deaths of innocent bystanders in 16 days in 2014, and 13 individuals murdered in July of 2019 as well as the fatal shootings of a 30-year-old pregnant woman and a 7-year-old child in February 2020 (van der Westhuizen & Gawulayo, 2020). In addition, Westhuizen and Gawulayo (2020) state youths starting at nine years old have joined gangs in the Cape Flats. Although adolescents in gangs may not exclusively consist of males or disadvantaged youths, the author says that gangs in the Cape Flats mostly recruit boys and appeal to their desire for acceptance. Furthermore, youth

unemployment has both financial and social ramifications that should not be overlooked. Youths who have little possibility of furthering their education may see gang engagement as the sole means for ensuring a future. Therefore, Petrus (2021) postulated that guardians may not encourage their children to attend school facilities if they are at risk of being subjected to gang culture and activity.

#### **2.6.5 Access to drugs, alcohol, and weapons**

Schools residing in communities with significant rates of criminality, aggression, and substance abuse are more likely to encounter incidents of violent activities. Exposure to these crimes may stimulate curiosity within young individuals. Similarly, Portia and Rawles (2010), further asserted that unemployment, inequality, and lack of opportunities encourage resentful behaviour. African townships are prime examples, as many individuals lose hope and turn to criminality. For example, residents may seek to distribute illicit substances and weapons to the youths, resulting in a normalisation of drug and alcohol abuse, which surges violent behaviour (North Caroline Community Action, 2020). On the other hand, the availability of drugs and alcohol is not the sole issue plaguing communities and school environments, but also the access to lethal weapons (Christina, 2022). Pupils who carry weapons to school institutions are often involved in violent crimes beyond the school gates. Therefore, they generally carry firearms to defend themselves or hurt others (Mhlongo, 2017). Roberto and Braga (2018) stated that possessing weapons appeared common in areas that experienced coercion, substance misuse, and gangsterism. Hence, early detection strategies targeting substance use, harassment, and gangsterism can assist in reducing the usage of weaponry.

#### **2.6.6 Desperation for attention**

Saxena (2021) states that initiatives to capture the centre of attraction are characterised by attention-seeking behaviours. The reason for this behaviour is frequently ego-driven, with the spotlight serving as a means of affirmation. According to Marais and Meier (2010), students' rebel as they desire attention. Dismissing these students' attempts for attention may be tedious as individuals can project unfavourable behaviour or violent behaviour. Fourie (2020), further contended that guardians of young individuals with behavioural issues were

found to be much more unfriendly and contemptuous of their children, than parents of children exhibiting conventional behavioural patterns. Therefore, attention-seeking behaviour may be negative in a classroom environment as individuals may engage in a physically aggressive manner that can be damaging to learning and teaching (Lázaro, 2019).

#### **2.6.7 Influence of culture**

Socio-cultural components are said to lead to the demonstration of violence by placing the sources of violence within larger societies (Sibisi, 2021). Mkhize (2021) supports this claim, as he states that society creates its standards for what is and is not appropriate. Individuals are taught and adhere to the norms of the groups to which they belong. As a result, in aggressive situations, youthful individuals may be of the view that resorting to violence is appropriate to accomplish a certain end (Mkhize & Sibisi, 2021). In South Africa, deeply rooted patriarchal cultural and religious practices continue to reinforce gender inequality and dominance over women (Mudimeli & Khosa-Nkatini, 2024). As a result, aggression towards women is both a manifestation and a consequence of systemic perceptions of women's inferiority. Consequently, adolescents who grow up witnessing these conventional, normalised practises carry their knowledge into practise and attack their female teachers at school since they are raised in a society in which it is justifiable to disrespect females (Grobler, 2018). With this in mind, cultural influence serves a key position in the daily lives of young individuals as it influences how they engage in broader society (Sibisi, 2021).

#### **2.6.8 Negative peer relationships**

Children's close relationships with their friends can tempt them to do violent acts. Costello (2021) contends that youthful individuals, raised in brute settings are more likely to engage with and invest their time around offenders, unlawful or immoral peers. For example, students who have peers who participate in inappropriate actions, including individuals who are no longer attending school, embracing substances, or engaging in criminal activities, are more likely to become involved in criminal activities than those who are involved in positive friendship groups, such as team sports (Sibisi, 2021). According to South African

Council for Educators (SACE) (2012) given the elevated prevalence of criminality and misconduct in South African culture, young people are prone to be confronted with delinquent and aggressive individuals or peers with whom they may develop friendships.

#### **2.6.9 School violence in the Intermediate Phase**

The intermediate phase in South African primary schools is the educational duration that continues from fourth to sixth grade. This phase addresses developing greater practical and scholastic abilities (Phala & Hugo, 2016). Students within this age group, typically aged between 9 and 12 years, commonly undergo the developmental stages of puberty (Krasniqi & Cakirpaloglu, 2020). Puberty is a biological and psychological period of transition during which a child matures into an adolescent capable of sexual reproduction, accompanied by physical, emotional, and behavioural changes (Mendle et al., 2019). It is influenced by both environmental and biological factors and demands several years to end. Although puberty usually begins between ages 8 to 13 in girls and 9 to 14 in boys, many intermediate phase learners fall within this age range, and some may start to experience early signs of puberty (Mendle et al., 2019). According to Anne (2018), intermediate-phase pupils undergoing puberty often have trouble with emotional regulation, controlling their impulses, and solving disputes. For that reason, many teachers within the phase may face verbal abuse from hormonal students (Anne, 2018). In addition, some intermediate-phase pupils are vulnerable to violence in classrooms, neighbourhoods, and their residences. Therefore, receiving exposure to aggression at elevated rates or in many situations has been associated with mental desensitisation, which is characterised by low levels of internalising symptoms. Thus, pupils may latch onto violent behaviour, forcing intermediate phase teachers to deal with physical and verbal school-based violence (Bonnie, 2019).

### **2.7 THE EFFECTS SCHOOL VIOLENCE HAS ON TEACHERS**

Competent schooling is an acute issue in numerous nations throughout the world (Van Schalkwyk, 2021). According to Mupa & Chinooneka (2015), everyone requires torch lighters, teachers, who support pupils to excel in all areas of life and education. Teachers are fundamental to altering society at large, if they are

jeopardized, pupils' progress and achievement will be compromised. As a result, competent schooling will not take place in the instructional setting if teachers are targeted with violence by their students (Fakude, 2022). Beukes (2017) states that it is well-acknowledged that teaching is a mentally, physically, and socially demanding profession. Therefore, adding school violence against teachers increases the demands. Today, teachers are subjected to violent occurrences within their classrooms, by pupils, in the forms of physical and non-physical violence. In addition, considering that teachers are among the initial viewers of school violence, whether intended at them or not, it is probable that they are affected in some manner. Fakude (2022) highlighted that although many teachers are not victims of school aggression, their position places them in charge of controlling violent situations among students. Therefore, violence targeting teachers is ubiquitous and possesses the possibility to harm teachers' well-being, functionality, and sustainability in the field (Anderman & Eseplage, 2018).

### **2.7.1 Lack of wellness effects practice and mental health**

The theory of wellness incorporates concepts on what it entails to enjoy an ideal existence, along with methods to overcome challenging conditions. Although there remains no universally accepted description of wellness, most interpretations concur that it is multifaceted and includes characteristics of physical, psychological, sentimental, and religious features. Stoewen (2017) states that by providing nourishment to the body physically and psychologically, stimulating the brain sentimentally, and cultivating the spirit with religion, human beings aim to live life with idyllic wellness. For teachers, professional wellness cannot be overstated, as occupational wellness leads to exemplary practice (Falecki & Mann, 2021). Teachers who become overworked or worn out have less meaningful encounters with pupils and supply less efficient teaching (Grobler, 2018). An array of research investigations has shown that school aggression may have an adverse effect on South African teachers on both an emotional and professional plane. For example, Bester and Du Plessis (2010) investigated the interactions of secondary school teachers, with violent behaviour at school. The focus of the present research was to examine, from an interpretative standpoint, the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in a violent instructional setting. An unstructured interview with one teacher was



utilised as a data-gathering strategy in the study, to gain a sense of their encounters with aggression in a secondary school. According to the findings, aggression is perceived as a fight for control by force, such as threats, coercion, and other forms of breaching the law. Violence was a painful reality for the participants in this study, and it had a detrimental impact on their performance as teachers in a variety of ways, including mental anguish, hostility to pupils, lack of enthusiasm to teach pupils, and burnout (Bester & Du Plessis, 2010). Considering the teacher's dissatisfaction, it is probable that his or her teaching ability may suffer as a result.

In addition, according to Grobler (2018), teachers are more likely to reject assisting pupils who are viewed as demanding, turbulent, challenging, contentious, or aggressive. Teachers consider certain indiscipline pupils unworthy of concern. De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, and Fraizzoli (2019) stated that once this occurs, the impact on teachers is negative, as teachers may feel lacking in the profession. These shifts in professional identity may hamper their functioning within the classroom, therefore establishing a disconnect in the profession. In addition, while considering teacher attribution in the education profession, two categories are the most notable. The first being those who resign, and the second, those who relocate. Fakude (2022) further stated that once teachers are on school grounds, they might encounter violent assaults and become fearful. Thus, teachers turn to truancy and claim to be unwell, out of fear of being victimised, which negatively impacts their career. Similarly, Petso (2021) claimed that teachers who have had first-hand encounters with violence frequently quit their jobs. According to Hill's (2010) empirical study, 52.7% of teachers often think about relocating when threatened by school violence.

Furthermore, countless studies have demonstrated that the teaching profession represents one of the most demanding vocations, as it has the potential to harm one's wellness. Teachers, in fact, have among the poorest ratings for physical and emotional wellness when compared to other occupations. According to an investigation carried out by the American Psychological Association Task Force on school violence oriented toward teachers, 80% of teachers throughout 48 states disclosed at least one experience of some sort of job victimisation that

affected their practice and overall health (Reddy, 2013). Those subjective situations may disrupt the professional role, causing teachers to acquire adverse sentiments concerning education. Furthermore, intimidation of teachers affects not just those who are directly affected, but along with those who observed it. It additionally exerts an influence on the academic setting, curriculum requirements, and eventually, the calibre of education offered, and has profound repercussions for pupil health and achievement (Berlanda , Fraizzoli , Cordova, & Pedrazza , 2019).

### **2.7.2 Emotional and psychological effects**

As previously mentioned, educational settings are extremely taxing, as they are constantly confronted with severe obstacles and a scarcity of suitable physical and mental solutions, as well as preventative measures (Beukes, 2017). When presented with violence, the average person will respond in a comparable manner when faced with a threat by undergoing heightened alertness or an intense stress response, both of which are known to trigger the 'fight or flight' reflex (Sibisi, 2021). Teachers could become anxious, apprehensive, and frightened because of school violence, encouraging the formation of 'burnout syndrome' (Ribeiro & Martins, 2022). According to Candeias (2020), 'burnout' is an employment medical concern, and teachers are particularly sensitive to it. Burnout syndrome is defined as a cognitive expression of occupational stress that often occurs among those whose profession entails care or aid to individuals (Bostan, 2018). Sibsi (2021) supported this claim, as she states stress occurs through an association between an individual and their surroundings, whereby something happens in the world that confronts an individual with a demand, a restriction, or a behavioural prospect. Christina (2022) states that violence or contexts of aggression prolong psychological dysfunction in teachers. According to Arvidsson (2019), burnout among teachers is common due to insufficient optimism and demanding work environments. Arvidsson's quantitative and qualitative study on burnout among teachers found that the incidences of acute burnout among teachers were 15%, whereas 28% of teachers varied from low to high levels of burnout.

In addition, violence against teachers by pupils is an epidemic that has a significant effect on a teacher's intent to shift school institutions or resign from their jobs entirely. Li and Ahn (2023) supported this claim, as they reported 10531 teachers abandoning their profession due to mental distress brought on by teacher victimisation. According to Kim (2018), post-traumatic stress disorder shapes teachers who are victims of pupil misconduct. These teachers may constantly revisit the trauma, evade social situations, and behave severely emotionally to the troublesome conduct of their pupils. Cho (2018) further asserted that violations of teachers' rights, such as emotional and physical threats by pupils, drain teachers and render them feel less concerned about their pupils, and reduce their level of professional fulfilment, all of which contribute to mental burnouts. Consequently, there is no denying that teachers' psychological difficulties may have a serious adverse effect on the schooling of their students. After all, teachers lay the groundwork in education, and if they are mentally unwell, it might have a negative impact on the school (Care, 2023). Shields and Nadesen (2014) supported this claim, as they asserted that it may become troublesome for pupils to pay attention and thrive in an unfriendly classroom atmosphere when teachers suffer from mental illnesses due to school violence. Citing Wettstein's (2021) work, he found that disturbances in the classroom are the main source of strain for teachers.

Christina (2022) contends that violence or situations in which one faces a risk of violence, promotes emotional dysfunction in teachers, as some suffer anxiety. Anxiety induces instability in the pedagogy of teachers, affecting both the learning and teaching functions. For example, Sitoyi (2020) claims several instructors in townships are anxious about going to school, which leads to low ambition and problems performing their job obligations. Teachers cannot execute their tasks if they feel uncomfortable in their workplace (Sitoyi, 2020). In Govender's (2015) study on primary school teachers' experiences of violence perpetrated towards them, participants stated that instructors are being mistreated because of the emerging generation of pupils, whose liberties appear to take precedence over teachers' rights. According to Govender (2015), students' behaviours against teachers, such as their appearance, manner of speaking, and actions, are distressing and unsettling for the participants in this study. Such conduct

produces psychological abuse, which has a variety of consequences for teachers, including the impairment of their teaching performance. In addition, teachers' anxieties are carried home and projected onto their loved ones. This generates even more anxiety since their conduct produces conflict in their families (Carroll, 2022)

Therefore, to become a successful teacher, one must be actively involved in the teaching practice. Yet, frequent workplace stressors such as school violence can have a significant impact on teacher performance and disposition (Hill, 2010). Additionally, Sibsi (2021) contended that teachers operate in circumstances wherein their pupils frequently insult and assault them. This stressful work atmosphere influences teachers' mental well-being, work productivity, and disposition toward their vocation.

## **2.8 MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

School aggression is a complex problem. As a result, the DBE, teachers, guardians, and individuals in the community may be liable for school violence (Christina, 2022). According to Burton and Leoschut (2013), to tackle violence in an educational setting, all schools need to interact with the DBE and adhere to guidelines put in place by the DBE. The establishment of the school welfare strategy and scheme should be linked to community development and safety policies, with unambiguous definitions of duty and transparency specified among the school stakeholders.

### **2.8.1 School Policies and Strategies for Preventing School Violence**

Schools, like home environments, should promote nurturing and caring settings, and any form of aggression on school premises is abhorrent. For this reason, the national Department of Education (DoE) enacted the South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996. According to the Act, the governing body of a public institution has a fiduciary duty to establish a code of conduct for learners after consulting with the students, guardians, and teachers. In line with human rights principles, such a code should include school policies, expectations, punishments, and disciplinary processes that are applied equitably (Beckmann & Prinsloo, 2009).

Furthermore, the school governing body must ensure that the code of conduct outlines specific guidelines addressing issues such as illegal drug distribution, sexual assault, and dangerous weapons, and that these guidelines are updated continually (Mthiyane, 2013). A code of conduct strives to establish an orderly and meaningful school atmosphere committed to enhancing the educational experience for all learners (Hanslo, 2020). Therefore, all learners must adhere to the code of conduct of the school they attend (Zondo, 2022).

In addition to SASA, the Department of Education (1998) released the Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners, which provides practical advice for implementing fair and effective disciplinary procedures. Teachers must be knowledgeable about these school policies and understand how to appropriately refer misbehaving students to disciplinary structures when necessary.

Internationally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a fundamental human rights document that outlines the liberties granted to minors. Although the CRC does not explicitly address school violence, its principles advocate for the protection of children from psychological or physical harm, including within educational contexts (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2009; CRC, 2011). This emphasis on child protection indirectly supports creating a secure and nurturing environment that also benefits teachers' well-being (Lansdown & Vaghri, 2022; Gmsainz, 2020).

Alongside these policies, several initiatives have been implemented to create safer schools. The National School Safety Framework (NSSF) provides an outline for violence prevention and offers guidelines for schools to develop their own safety policies (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2015). Similarly, the National Action Plan to Address Bullying in South African Schools focuses on strategies to prevent and address both traditional and cyberbullying (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2012). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) also disseminates regular circulars and guidelines aimed at promoting school safety and a positive learning environment (DBE, 2023).

In the Western Cape specifically, the WCED initiated the Positive Behaviour Intervention Strategy (PBIS) nearly two decades ago. This strategy focuses on promoting positive learner behaviour through proactive support and reinforcement rather than punitive measures. Positive Behaviour Supports aim to create a school climate where positive behaviours are taught, modelled, and rewarded consistently, thus reducing incidents of violence and misconduct (Reinke, Herman & Stormont, 2013).

Teachers play an essential role in implementing these policies effectively. According to UNICEF (2016), even the most stringent school rules will fail to mitigate violence without adequately trained and informed teachers. Teachers must understand their responsibilities within the framework of school policies and should be involved in collaborative processes with learners, such as co-developing classroom rules and promoting restorative approaches to discipline (Eke, 2022).

Engaging learners in decision-making, such as forming student representative councils or participating in safety committees, fosters a sense of ownership and respect for school rules (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Zedain & Jawad, 2020). Regular assemblies and workshops that focus on violence prevention and positive school culture provide platforms for open dialogue, allowing learners and teachers to co-create a safe and inclusive environment (Christina, 2022).

### **2.8.2 Emotional Support and Safer Learning Environments for Teachers**

Teaching in aggressive and violent environments may be stressful for teachers. As a result, teachers need support structures that allow them to express their concerns, reflect on their experiences, and navigate challenging environments. This emotional support is vital in preventing teacher burnout and fostering resilience (Yang et al., 2021). Pragmatic interactions with learners, their guardians, colleagues, and school leadership often create a more positive attitude among teachers, increasing their job satisfaction and professional commitment (Grobler, 2018).

However, research by Hill (2010) suggests that exposure to school violence can have the opposite effect, leading to emotional withdrawal and disengagement among teachers. Volungis and Goodman (2017) emphasise the importance of teachers supporting one another, particularly through structured emotional support mechanisms such as counselling and trauma-informed practices. These may include access to qualified mental health professionals and safe spaces where teachers can share and process their experiences.

Each child has the inherent right to education (Churr, 2015). This is vital for learners' development as it provides the foundation for creativity, critical thinking, and socio-emotional growth (UNICEF, 2016). In order to nurture this development, it is essential that both teachers and learners operate within a safe and supportive environment. However, for many South African schools, the reality is often quite different. Numerous studies have highlighted the prevalence of violence in schools, where teachers and learners are frequently exposed to aggressive behaviours that compromise safety and learning (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Jacobs (2014) drew attention to extreme cases of school violence, where teachers were disrespected, assaulted, or even murdered during school hours. Such incidents, widely circulated in the media, reflect a disturbing subculture of school-based violence that severely undermines the ethos of teaching and learning.

Grobler (2018) reinforced this notion, asserting that teachers working in violent environments often expend much of their time and emotional energy managing behavioural crises instead of delivering focused and structured instruction. This not only affects educational quality but also contributes to stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction among teachers.

To respond to these challenges, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has implemented initiatives aimed at supporting teacher well-being. One such initiative is the Employee Health and Wellness Programme, which provides specialised counselling services and psychosocial support to teachers experiencing trauma, stress, or burnout as a result of their working conditions (WCED, 2023). According to the Western Cape Education Department, this

initiative offers confidential counselling, trauma support, and crisis intervention, helping teachers cope with the emotional toll of working in high-stress school environments.

Duque (2021) also highlights the benefit of peer support programmes, which allow teachers to engage empathetically with colleagues facing similar challenges, fostering unity and mutual understanding. Similarly, participation in community-building events, both within and outside the school, can cultivate a sense of solidarity and support (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2010). Lastly, having clear and responsive reporting mechanisms in place for incidents of violence helps assure teachers that their concerns are taken seriously, reducing anxiety and enhancing psychological safety (World Health Organization, 2019).

## **2.9 SUMMARY**

Overall, the literature review focused on showing the ubiquity and severity of school violence on South African teachers. Although numerous investigations have delved into the roots and repercussions of school aggression, few have investigated teachers' perspectives and experiences in violent educational settings and how it affects their practice and well-being (Berlanda, et al., 2019). These shortcomings are critical as it impede current knowledge of viable preventative measures that teachers may employ in violent schools. Additionally, this body of research may contribute key discernment to the influence school aggression has on teachers, as it could shape strategies and methods that promote teachers' protection and mental wellbeing (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). Therefore, the literature review examined what defines school violence, the types of school violence, and the nature of school violence, as well as the possible causes of school violence and how it affects teachers' well-being and practice.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopted two theoretical frameworks to establish the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being. These are the Social Ecology Perspective of Resilience and the Hedonism Theory of Well-being.

#### **3.1 THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVE OF RESILIENCE AND HEDONISM THEORY OF WELL-BEING**

Human beings face a myriad of challenging circumstances in a complex setting comprised of daily obstacles and unforeseen challenges. One paradigm that corresponds to a person's capacity to endure distress and pressure, is the theory of resilience (Pauley, 2019). Consensus on the meaning of resilience has proven difficult to achieve, as numerous scholars have put their own twist on the concept. Definitions are essential in ensuring that individuals are proficient in unison. To a degree, the idea of resilience has evolved into a hollow term that may be loaded with nearly any meaning. Several individuals define resilience as a characteristic that is inherent in the individual, while others define it with a broader meaning. Some define resilience as individual competencies or abilities, while others define it as constructive functionality in the face of adversity (Breda, 2018). Mawila (2022) states that individual elements should be considered in a definition of resilience, but carers and environmental variables should also be considered.

The theory of social ecology perspective of resilience and hedonism was adopted for the study as the researcher aimed to explore how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice, well-being, and resilience in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape. Although there are various interpretations of resilience, people prefer to conceive resilience, as the capacity to recover from adversity, or a particular set of challenges (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). 'Resilience' as a principle, according to Latif (2019) aids us in overcoming hardship, bad luck, or even discontentment. Cornelissen (2016) contends that two requirements must be met for an individual to be considered resilient. Firstly, a danger that elevates the possibility of bad things happening to an individual. Secondly, for an individual to be considered resilient, they must be able to change or progress in the face of difficulties. Teachers in violent school

environments exude the characteristics of resilience, as they often devise a sense of devotion to their pupils and their practice (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). On the other hand, the author adopted hedonism theory to assess how teachers' quest for wellness and aversion to pain determines how they react to violence and its consequences on both their private and professional lives (Moore, 2013). According to Weijers (2011), the concept of hedonism stems from the ancient Greek word 'pleasure'. Hedonism is a metaphysical ideology that considers satisfaction or joy as the fundamental purpose of human existence. It implies that individuals are inclined to want delight while minimising pain and that each of their actions is fuelled by an urge for delight and aversion to discomfort (Moore, 2013).

### **3.1.1 Ungar and the Social Ecology Perspective of Resilience**

In this study, the theory of resilience is theorised by Ungar (2011). According to Ungar (2011), resilience consists of avenues to encountering wellness and the ability of one's relatives and society to deliver these health assets and opportunities in socially relevant ways. In the realm of education, the well-being of educators shapes their instructional atmosphere and the prosperity of their pupils (Shaik; Dippenaar; Kwenda; Petersen; Esau & Oliver, 2022). Thus, Ungar highlighted four fundamental principles: de-centrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. Through de-centrality, individuals shift their attention away from their own abilities to their surroundings. Teachers in violent school environments, should not just focus on their own efforts, instead, they should embrace the assets and assistance provided by the surroundings, to achieve effective change. Secondly, Ungar stated that the principle of complexity is an elaborate term that includes the skill of people to grab possibilities of the setting to support the development and the continuous interplay between humans and the atmosphere. Thirdly, the principle of atypicality according to Ungar refers to remaining open to alternative methods of strengthening resilience which is not regarded as standard practice (Ungar, 2011). For example, teachers in a violent school environment may instil subjective wellness in their practice, as they need to keep working to fulfil their monetary duties. Lastly, the principle of cultural relativity, according to Ungar (2011) indicates that historical and cultural factors

have an impact on positive development and resiliency. Thus, schools should evaluate how these alterations may influence teachers' practice and well-being.

### **3.1.2 Adversity in the Social Ecology Perspective**

The study of adversity is an interest in how challenging life events affect people adversely, and it is the foundation of the resilience theory (Mawila, 2023). Adversity is referred to as the combination of life events and situations that undermine or impede appropriate growth (Luthar & Small, 2015). A variety of scholars have acknowledged that resilience may persist even in the face of considerable hardship or trauma. According to Oldjohn (2019), the competence to adapt to adversity is vital for human growth, and education serves as no distinction. Teachers, like many other professions, encounter difficulties in the workplace. Teachers are, therefore, required to surmount these obstacles while trying to fulfil their duties. For example, working conditions and an array of working stresses have a substantial impact on resilience. Systemic flaws such as school violence, can cause workplace troubles and have a permanent adverse result for teachers (Kalisch & Müller, 2015).

### **3.1.3 Ungar's Mediating Process and Better Than Expected Model**

The mediating processes that permit individuals to attain better-than-expected results in the midst of the result of adversity are at the centre of resilience studies. According to Brede (2018), the foundation of resilience was devoted to identifying characteristics such as intrapsychic ones, which divided individuals with better-than-expected outcomes from individuals with anticipated or adverse results. Hardiness, feeling of coherence, self-efficacy, and grit are examples of these characteristics. On the other hand, Ungar (2011) contends that while one's resilience is the outcome of an array of internal and external factors, resilience is primarily contingent on the individual's physical and social ecology's potential to potentiate good growth under adversity

### **3.1.4 Bio-ecological Perspective on Teacher Resilience**

From a social-ecological standpoint, it is crucial to maintain that many interpersonal and contextual circumstances may potentially promote or inhibit teacher resilience. Ungar (2012) asserted that resilience is vastly influenced by

the environmental factors of an individual. Grobler (2018) supported this claim, as in situations where teachers are frequently faced with school aggression, teachers sometimes struggle to survive, which causes anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Thus, teachers develop a negative perspective on the difficulties they are confronted with and tend to concentrate on the bad. Yet, a handful of teachers prudently progress, amid difficult conditions, which speaks to their perseverance and displays their resilience. In any academic setting, teacher resilience is crucial as it may lead to a variety of advantages. According to Wabule (2020), some advantages of a resilient teacher include being driven, determined, versatile, and capable of managing sentiments and stress through relationships and support structures. More precisely, resilience results in psychologically savvy teaching, adaptability, potency, self-assurance, skill, and good interpersonal sentiments (Wang, 2021). Bobek (2002) further contended that teachers who are resilient, have the ability to recognise difficult circumstances and develop coping strategies, as well as put the right solutions into action. Resilience, as a crucial buffer, addresses the aspects that may contribute to teacher motivation. Individual traits that improve motivation among educators are perceived as not just protective and leading to reduced stress, but also as assisting teachers in having more pleasant experiences, increasing their well-being, and raising their feeling of success (Cornelissen, 2016).

Furthermore, Ungar (2013) contends that Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model of human development demonstrates progress in resilience theory. These improvements have shifted from a major focus on individual-level forces to an improved understanding of the complex connections between people and their environments at many levels. With Ungar's (2011) concepts of resilience in mind, his social ecology of resilience theory and his ecological systems theory are strongly interrelated. For example, Ungar (2018) applies Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory, which underlines the interconnection of people and their natural surroundings at numerous phases, including micro and macro systems. Ungar (2018) states resilience is proposed to accumulate via encounters among people and their social settings at various levels. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological paradigm, featuring his emphasis on the impact of numerous systems on the development of the individual, will be utilised to

explain the genesis of teachers' resilience when faced with school violence (Ungar, 2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994) devised the ecological systems theory in order to show that human growth cannot be investigated or described by one single aspect, but rather through a broader, multifaceted, and elaborate process. The growth of a human being is dictated by many systems within their immediate surroundings as well as the connections between the systems (Crawford, 2020). According to Sibsi (2021), educators participate closely with pupils, co-workers, and their surrounding school community inside the microsystem. By generating an unpleasant and hazardous atmosphere, school violence undermines the microsystem (Panopoulos & Drossinou-Korea, 2020).

As a result of first-hand encounters or the requirement to address violent occurrences, teachers could feel increased stress, tension, and trauma (Sibisi, 2021). Oriol (2017) further asserts that the relationships between distinct microsystems, such as the connection between teachers, pupils, and school officials, are part of the mesosystem. School violence can disrupt these bonds, impairing interaction, and cooperation among school personnel. Coordination of attempts to confront and avert violence may provide difficulties for teachers. Furthermore, exterior settings that have an incidental influence on teachers are included in the exosystem. Teachers' capacity to cope is influenced by school regulations, community assistance, and social views regarding violence. Insufficient external system assistance may aggravate the adverse effects of school violence on teachers' well-being (Cornelissen, 2016). The macrosystem, which includes societal and social issues, influences teachers' reactions to school violence. Social conventions around schooling, demands for teacher responsibilities, and societal views regarding violence can all have an impact on teachers' reactions and the means to obtain help (Sibisi, 2021). Lastly, the chronosystem considers the factor of time as well as how resilience builds with time. Continual exposure to school violence or long-term structural difficulties may possess an overall impact on teachers' well-being, perhaps triggering burnout, or other long-term implications (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). Thus, educators can suffer mental anguish, sentiments of powerlessness, and a decrease in job fulfilment during school violence. The interdependence of microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems,

and chronosystems collectively have an impact on how teachers respond and perceive to aggression in their day-to-day environments.

In addition, another concept of resilience theory, according to Ungar is the role of risk and protective variables. Masten (2011) asserts that diverse layers of interactions impact the formation of resilience in all individuals. For example, variables that pose a risk, expand the chance of adverse consequences in the presence of adversity, whereas protective variables shield humans from the repercussions of strains and encourage favourable adjustment. Valdivia (2019) further states that several elements related to the formation of resilience are the features of the individual, elements of their immediate families, and qualities of their larger social milieu. These protective elements can be structured into Ungar's ecological systems theory. Correspondingly, another theoretical idea related to resilience theory is cultural resilience. Following Ungar (2008), cultural influences assist in forming and determining resilience in individuals. Cultural resilience encompasses the manner through which cultural ideas, principles, customs, and rituals help people and communities deal with hardship and sustain well-being. Cultural resiliency accentuates the benefits and assets found in various cultural situations. For example, the value of resilience in a certain culture might impact whether a specific characteristic is essential for an individual's achievement after facing difficulties (Ungar, et al., 2020). Therefore, resilience is far more than a personal quality, it is deeply ingrained in the social and cultural setting in which individuals exist. Diverse cultures possess distinct methods of comprehending and coping with adversity, and cultural resilience acknowledges the advantages and assets present in many ways of life (Ungar, 2008).

### **3.2 HEDONISM THEORY OF WELL-BEING**

As aforementioned hedonism is the precedence of indulgence in an individual's existence, activities, or thinking (Moore, 2013; Weijers, 2011). This framework helps analyse how teachers seek well-being and respond to adversity.

#### **3.2.1 Forms of Hedonism**

Psychological hedonism, formerly referred to as motivational hedonism, is a theoretical hypothesis concerning what encourages individuals. According to

psychological hedonism, each individual's conduct is intrinsically driven by an affinity for pleasure and the prevention of suffering. This form contends that satisfaction is the sole inherent good, whereas suffering is the only inherent bad (Garson, 2016). Jackson (1993) further asserts that individual tasks are based on assumptions about what gives happiness. Incorrect assumptions could deceive individuals into activities that would cease to produce happiness; nonetheless, even ineffective acts are driven by concerns of pleasure, as defined by psychological hedonism. Considering this research study, psychological hedonism will allow the researcher to inquire about how motivation for pleasure and aversion to unpleasant experiences impact teachers' choices, conduct, and mental responses. Similarly, ethical hedonism is the conviction that every aspect of pleasure is virtuous, and all hardship or dissatisfaction is harmful. Moore (2013) states that ethical hedonism expands the premise of psychological hedonism to a forum of ethics, implying that enjoyment is not simply the final objective for human existence, but it is additionally the tread criteria for morality. With the research topic in mind, researchers may analyse the ethical features of educators' views of school violence, considering how conducts that maximise satisfaction correspond with ethical values and promote general well-being.

In addition, egoistic hedonism stresses the acquisition of enjoyment for oneself, by placing one's well-being and joy ahead of other individuals. It is commonly pertinent to an egoistic or selfish attitude toward living (Friedland, et al., 2020). For this reason, the researcher shall concentrate on the strategies for coping used by teachers to address or reduce the adverse influences of violence on their professional lives and general wellness. This involves looking at resilient methods that enhance pleasure or happy instances, along with destructive reactions that might worsen suffering or reduce general well-being. Hedonistic utilitarianism is commonly perceived as more egalitarian rather than hedonistic egoism since the well-being is considered and assigned equal importance. Hedonistic utilitarian's, on the other hand, adhere to advocating against pillaging from destitute individuals as doing so generally leaves the individuals significantly less cheerful and the perpetrator relatively happier (Rosenqvist, 2020). By employing hedonistic utilitarianism as a paradigm to investigate how educators deal with school violence, the researcher will be able to evaluate the activities

done to combat violence in terms of their influence on their general well-being or enjoyment of the teacher. Contrastingly, altruistic hedonism is the most appropriate approach for assessing if a practice is ethical to deliver satisfaction for everyone. This form of hedonism values empathetic feelings understanding and helping others (Scarpi, 2020).

Therefore, hedonism asserts that well-being has been defined as an overall advantageous equilibrium that prioritises happiness over suffering. In a nutshell, human lives are most gratifying when it is saturated with pleasure (Austin, 2019). Dietz (2021) contends that hedonism implies that delight or satisfaction serves a purpose, regardless of whether individuals consider it worthwhile. If things only appeared significant due to individuals desiring them, hedonism would be comparable to a type of desire theory.

### **3.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND CONCLUSION**

In this study, Ungar's (2011) principles of resilience and hedonism is used to describe the data collected in this study. The researcher uses a methodical and complete manner to analyse and present the findings on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. The researcher explores how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being, in a school intermediate phase, considering that school violence is a pervasive phenomenon (Boran & Taskan, 2021). In addition, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological paradigm, featuring his emphasis on the impact of numerous systems on the development of the individual, is used to explain the genesis of teachers' resilience when faced with school violence. As a result, there is a theoretical link connecting Ungar's model of resilience and the term well-being, as maintaining an immediate feeling of well-being is a form of resilience. In accordance, the hedonism theory was adopted to assess how teachers' quest for wellness and aversion to pain determines how they react to violence and its consequences on both their private and professional lives (Moore, 2013).



### **3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presents the literature review of the research problem stated. It also discusses the theoretical viewpoints on which the literature concentrates in relation to how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. This theoretical framework is centred on Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology Perspective on Resilience and Hedonism theory of well-being. In the next chapter, this study describes the study's research methodology and procedures on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practise and well-being.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter primarily defines the research model, design approach, and methods used in the study. The chapter provides background information on the manner in which the data was collected, the sampling technique implemented, and the analysis processes. Correspondingly, a purposive sampling approach was utilised, whereby the main data collection approach employed semi-structured interviews with teacher participants who consented to participate. The collected data was then synthesised thematically by underlining the common themes that surfaced from the data.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Hickman (2015), a qualitative phenomenological methodology is an investigative approach, derived from literature and psychology in which researchers recount participants' lived experiences. Considering the flexible and pliant nature of qualitative data, a phenomenological design was applied in this research as it typically contains qualitative research methodologies. According to Rahman (2017), the desired outcome of qualitative research is multi-method, with an interpretative, holistic approach to its inquiry. For that reason, the researcher employed a phenomenological design as he/she intended to explore the participants' individualistic ideas and feelings towards the topic of school violence rather than merely obtaining data and numbers statistically (Sibisi, 2021). Applying the principles of qualitative research has several advantages. At its core, the qualitative research method generates a rich account of participants' thoughts, views, and circumstances, as well as analyses the significance of their actions (Rahman, 2017). Barrow (2017) further highlights that the use of a phenomenological design is most appropriate for researchers trying to comprehend the significance of certain events as stated by participants.

#### **4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Additionally, the use of qualitative approaches provided an essential basis for developing an emergent image from the study, as the participants' testimonies

demonstrate their encounters as victims of school violence (Rahman, 2017). For example, a handful of respondents' perspectives of school violence may be complex and all-encompassing, whilst other respondents' conclusions may be restricted and thus more personal (Sibisi, 2021). Therefore, the phenomenological research design has allowed the researcher to explore the lived experiences of four Intermediate phase teachers, in a primary school. The primary objective of this particular study was to explore the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. Considering the researcher anticipated to recognise the issue under study via teachers' opinions and encounters with school violence, the qualitative research approach fundamentally matched the study's purpose and aims.

#### **4.4 SITE SELECTION**

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers' experience of violence influences their practice and well-being in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape. For that reason, the study site was conducted at a primary school located within the southern suburbs, in the Western Cape. The identity of the site remained confidential throughout the study. Therefore, the site will be referred to as 'School X'.

##### **4.4.1 Profile of School: 'School X'**

'School X' is located within a diverse, vibrant, and commercially active urban and suburban area in the Southern Peninsula region of Cape Town. A blend of affluent and impoverished communities and strong ties to community groups characterise the surrounding communities. The range of cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity in nearby families means 'School X' caters to a very broad range of learners. While the school aims to educate local learners, many learners come from neighbouring areas.

This school was deliberately chosen on the likely basis that it is in an area with a known prevalence of violence (Kiewit, 2020). The school lies very close to communities with high crime and social disarray. The South African Police Service (SAPS) Crime Statistics (2022) indicate that in some areas of the Southern Suburbs, there were 1,737 cases of serious crime related to violence.

Mokwena & Setshego (2020) maintain that communities experiencing violence and surrounding schools often reflect high levels of availability of drugs and substance dependency. Therefore, the site and its socio-political context made it a suitable and significant site to collect data on how teachers experience and respond to violence within their practice.

#### **4.5 PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

This study solicited the voluntary participation of four intermediate-phase teachers. Each participant received a formal letter of consent that outlined the purpose and scope of the study. To uphold ethical standards, the identities of the participants remain confidential; thus, they are referred to as 'P1', 'P2', 'P3', and 'P4' throughout this research.

The participants were purposely chosen under the assumption that they would potentially experience events of school violence due to the proximity of the school to a community known to have violence that may potentially enter the school (Mokwena & Setshego, 2020). The participants represent a range of teaching experience, which is important to examine how experience can impact the way teachers respond to violence.

Teaching experience is commonly categorised into three groups:

- Novice teachers: Teachers with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience (Makoa & Segalo<sup>2</sup>, 2021).
- Experienced teachers (also referred to in some literature as intermediate): Teachers with 5 to 9 years of experience (Cosgun & Atay, 2021).
- Veteran or senior teachers: Teachers with 10 or more years of experience (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2009).

Accordingly, one participant was a novice teacher (1-4 years of experience), one was an experienced teacher (5-7 years), and two were senior teachers (10+ years). All participants taught within the intermediate phase and shared commonalities in terms of phase-level responsibilities, even though their ages and experiences varied.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCES</b>
Participant 1	60	Senior (10 years +)
Participant 2	24	Novice (1-4 years)
Participant 3	29	Experienced (5-7 years)
Participant 4	32	Senior (10 years +)

#### **4.5.1 Purposive sampling**

The fundamental aim of sampling is to gather acceptable individuals or components, in order to effectively explore the study's main objective. According to Andrade (2020), purposive sampling, commonly referred to as prejudicial or arbitrary sampling, refers to a class of sampling procedures that depend on the researcher's discretion in choosing the samples. Purposive sampling is intended to produce information-rich examples for further investigation. This is true as respondents represent individuals who have the necessary position, encounters, or are recognised to exhibit particular expertise, to supply the researchers with the insights they seek (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). In this study, purposive sampling was employed, in the form of homogeneous sampling. Thomas (2022) states that homogenous sampling requires selecting comparable examples to examine a certain phenomenon or population of interest thoroughly. For this specific reason, purposive sampling was utilised in this qualitative study, as it allowed the researcher to focus on a group of teachers with the intermediate phase at a school, whose practice and well-being are influenced by school violence. As a result, the researcher received corresponding experiences, a variety of viewpoints, and an array of knowledge related to how teachers' experiences with violence affect their practice and well-being.

#### **4.6 DATA COLLECTION**

According to Hickman (2015), qualitative approaches are employed to gather data from individuals during the research process. Qualitative data-collecting procedures involve interviewing, monitoring, documenting, and interpreting

information to gain insight regarding what individuals undertake, understand, believe, and experience (Rahman, 2017). Therefore, the researcher adopted an assortment of data collection approaches to develop an improved understanding of how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being, as well as to enhance the trustworthiness of the research outcomes. This study employed an in-depth semi-structured interview as the primary research instrument. The in-depth semi-structured interview consisted of 10 open-ended questions. These questions allowed the researcher to probe further into the topics, enabling an analysis of the complexities and reasons for violence in a school setting and its impact on teachers' practice and well-being (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020).

The researcher obtained qualitative data from the four respective teacher participants via semi-structured interviews. Each participant engaged in a one-on-one, face-to-face semi-structured interview, which allowed the researcher to gather detailed narratives from teachers who had experienced physical, verbal, or emotional forms of school violence. The researcher employed the ten open-ended questions as a guide. The interviews were captured and classified in accordance with the variety of themes that emerged from the data collected. In addition, the researcher made use of concurrent probing to gain deeper insight into how teachers' experience of violence influences their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school (Julie, 2022).

Qualitative researchers frequently utilize semi-structured interviews, providing the investigator flexibility to consider participants' lived experiences, yet a degree of consistency across semi-structured interviews. Gill et al. (2008) explain that semi-structured interviews can also provide an opportunity for the investigator to ask follow-up questions, thus providing more opportunity to explore any complexity in the phenomena. In this context, the semi-structured interview design was appropriate for the current study investigating the personal and professional impact of school violence for teachers.

The interview schedule and reflective journal questions I created were influenced by the literature that exists on school violence, teacher well-being, and resilience

theory (Ungar, 2011; Moore, 2013), and the expansive literature on stress, coping, classroom management, and emotional fatigue provided the themes for open-ended interview questions. Likewise, I adapted the reflective journal questions from the literature on best practices in qualitative inquiry, which focused on encouraging participants to reflect on their emotions and their critical reflection process over time (Annink, 2017).

Consequently, the researcher provided the participants with reflective journaling questions and a feedback form to obtain constructive feedback from selected participants. The reflective journaling questions and the feedback form were given to participants prior to the one-on-one interviews, allowing each participant ample time to voice and express any issues, criticism, or perceived biases they found within the study. The researcher encouraged participants to share their thoughts and concerns during their participation in the study. According to Annink (2017), the use of a reflective journal may allow the researcher to think introspectively about the data obtained from participants and is a good source for the triangulation of the data.

All interviews were conducted in a private and quiet space within the school premises to ensure confidentiality and reduce external distractions. Each session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Ethical protocols were followed to ensure participant comfort, and participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. These logistical considerations were essential in promoting participant trust and ensuring the trustworthiness of the data collected (Shenton, 2004).

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The act of methodically employing statistical and rational methods to define, demonstrate, compress, and recapitulate, as well as assess data is known as data analysis (Taherdoost, 2022). According to Dawadi (2020), thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach employed by academics to comprehensively arrange and evaluate large amounts of data. In this study, the researcher employed a thematic approach to analyse the data. Common themes

were categorised, and similarities as well as differences were identified. The researcher demonstrates the thematic approach by perusing the collection of data and determining themes by examining correlations in the context of the material collected (Dawadi, 2020). Specifically, the six-phase approach by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed, as it offers a flexible and rigorous framework that enhances the reliability of the analysis.

#### **4.7.1 The Six-Phase Approach by Braun and Clarke (2006)**

Braun and Clark's (2006) six-phase guide on a thematic analysis was employed, as it provided the researcher with a valuable framework that maintained reliability.

##### **4.7.1.1 Step 1: *Becoming familiar with the data***

The researcher was responsible for the verbatim transcription of all interviews, and the transcripts were read repeatedly, as a way of becoming immersed in the data. The researcher wrote in the margins of the transcripts, where ideas emerged that sparked meaning inscribed in the participants' lived experiences, as well as reflective journal entries, were reviewed to immerse oneself in the experience of the participants.

##### **4.7.1.2 Step 2: *Generating preliminary codes***

Preliminary codes were produced manually and color-coded through Microsoft Word. Coding is the process of noting segments found across different transcripts that use words or phrases connected by some pattern relevant to the research questions.

##### **4.7.1.3 Step 3: *Searching for themes***

After being able to code all the data in the preliminary phase, and thus generating the preliminary codes, the researcher began to organize the codes and dataset into possible themes. Initial overarching themes included the "Verbal Violence and Physical Violence", " Emotional Exhaustion and Job Demotivation", " Efforts to Preserve Well-being and Avoid Confrontation ", and "Disruption, Stress, Anxiety, and Fear caused by school violence".



#### **4.7.1.4      *Step 4: Reviewing the themes***

The researcher was able to extract themes and test the extracted themes for internal and external homogeneity. The researcher determined that some of the extracted preliminary themes could be combined, relabelled, or eliminated. For instance, the initial codes that fell under the extracted theme "Verbal Violence and Physical Violence" were consolidated and re-titled as an extracted theme "Forms of Violence Encountered by Teachers".

#### **4.7.1.5      *Step 5: Defining and naming themes***

Next, the researcher produced definitions/services around themes, which were followed by establishing the central essence of each theme. The researcher wrote about the themes and verified that every theme reflected minute and embodied meanings that captured how the participants described how school violence impacted their practice and well-being.

#### **4.7.1.6      *Step 6: Producing the report***

The final themes were used to extract a coherent story about the data, relative to the aims and research questions of the study. The findings chapter consisted of direct quotes from the participants to illustrate the thematic interpretations of their ideas and outlined their credibility.

By approaching the data thematically, the researcher provided rich descriptions and thick perspectives of how teachers' experiences of violence in the intermediate phase impacted their professional practice and emotional well-being (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **4.8      TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness in research refers to the assurance of the findings' accuracy, consistency, and neutrality (Connelly, 2016). As Kerfoot and Winberg (1997, as cited in Sitoyi, 2020) note, it is about identifying whether the research is measuring what it claims to measure. Trustworthiness in this study was achieved through an extended engagement period and contact between the researcher

and the participants. This facilitated an understanding of the context, rapport and trust were achieved (Sibisi, 2021)

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher adopted the four underlying components of trustworthiness outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Importantly, reflexivity was identified as an important element of trustworthiness. Reflexivity is about the researcher being critical and reflexive about him or herself in the research process, including influence, values, assumptions, and positionality (Berger, 2015). A reflexive journal was maintained over the complete research journey to record insights, biases, and decisions as these changed. This reflexive process assisted with transparency and reduced subjectivity during data interpretation.

#### **4.8.1 Credibility and Validity**

Credibility is the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings from the perspective of the participant (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Credibility is essential to ascertain the findings are authentic and credible accounts (Stahl and King, 2020). The study took several steps to enhance credibility by:

1. Member checking: After transcription, participants were allowed to review and verify their interview data (Birt et al., 2016).
2. Data triangulation: Multiple sources of data were used, semi-structured interviews and reflective journals, to cross-validate findings and deepen the analysis (Carter et al., 2014).
3. Building rapport: A trusting relationship was developed between the researcher and participants, encouraging open and honest sharing.
4. Voluntary participation: All participants had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study without providing a reason, which created a safe and respectful research environment.

The interview schedule was designed using the literature about school violence and educator well-being to align with the aims of the research and thus develop data collection tools that could be considered (Johnson & Adkins, 2020) to provide prospective validity. Data were collected by the researcher using co-created documents and semi-structured interviews (Birt et al., 2016). Participants were interviewed in a private, quiet location, so confidentiality was maintained. Each interview was audio-recorded with participant consent and lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.

During the interviews, participants were encouraged to speak freely about their experiences, which allowed for rich, contextual narratives to develop that would contribute to data analysis and findings. Validity was preserved as participants' authentic responses were used rather than the researcher's own interpretations (Sibisi, 2021). The researcher took care to present the thinking and feelings of each participant as accurately as possible in relation to the presentation of findings. The audio recordings were transcribed and then analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis as a systematic means of interpreting recurring themes.

#### **4.8.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the ways in which the results from one study may be used in similar situations (Stahl & King, 2020). The main way to promote transferability is to provide rich descriptions. The author addressed this issue in the study by conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews based on an interview plan. The author provided clarity and consistency in the instrument by crafting each question for accuracy and clarity (Christina, 2022). Additionally, when in the analytic stage of the study, the author frequently compared his findings to each other to create groups and themes (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016).

#### **4.8.3 Dependability**

Dependability is the instance at which the researcher asks if the research methodology is reasonable, reliably documented and evaluated. Dependability can be kept in sight by providing a full account that allows the reader to evaluate

to what extent research practices were followed (Christina, 2022). Gasson (2004) suggests that clear and consistent protocols for undertaking research should be established to ensure the dependability of findings. Therefore, in this research, to ensure dependability, the researcher offers descriptions of the study's approaches to data collection, analysis, and conclusions. This has included a comprehensive account of what was being studied, the study's purpose, the location of the respondents and the rationale for selecting the respondents, and the setting in which the data were collected. In order to address dependability, document the research correctly so that future researchers can repeat it (Sibisi, 2021).

#### **4.8.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability pertains to the concept that the research deductions were derived from information rather than the researcher's preconceptions (Forero & Nahidi, 2018). Thus, the researcher imparted an unambiguous explanation of the study's employed methodologies, allowing viewers to consider the degree to which the data and conclusions derived from individuals could potentially be trusted. In addition, interviewing and analysis of documents were employed, and the study findings reflected the interviewees' perspectives and feelings rather than the researcher's judgments (Christina, 2022).

### **4.9 THE RESEARCHER'S POSITION**

The researcher played a pivotal role in retaining the perspectives of teachers in a primary school and the progression of this study. Therefore, to prevent subjectivity, the researcher fulfilled the position of an unbiased mediator. For example, the researcher remained neutral and unbiased toward the outcomes and findings of this study. It is important to note that the researcher was an employee at the selected research site. Therefore, to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher was responsible for ensuring that participants felt at ease when sharing their experiences. The researcher achieved this by creating an atmosphere and context in which individuals felt comfortable. Additionally, the researcher aimed to build trust and rapport with the participants by disclosing a few of their experiences of school violence before the interviewing process. Consequently, the researcher remained transparent and honest about the study

as it progressed. However, it is important to note this conflict of interest, as the researcher had personal ties with the research site and participants.

#### **4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In the interest of ethical integrity in this study, the researcher secured the appropriate approvals from the relevant authorities. These included ethical clearance from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) (Ethics Committee), as well as formal permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Research Department. The approval was granted on 1 November 2023 with a reference number of 164E0FAF0000033-20230930. After the researcher received institutional clearance, the next step was to draft letters of full informed consent to each participant, including the school principal and teacher participants. The informed consent letters would outline the purpose of the study, the measures of participation, and the letters stated clearly that participation was voluntary and that participants were able to withdraw from the research at any given time, for any reason, without any consequence. The researcher made it clear that they would continue to explain the purpose and procedures of the study to the participants in order to obtain informed consent.

In the interest of anonymity and confidentiality, both the school and participants would need to be anonymized and protected. The school was referred to as 'School X' and the teacher participants were labelled as 'P1', 'P2', 'P3', and 'P4', with the letter 'P' referring to the word participant. There were no identifiers in any aspect of the reporting or the data analysis. Raw data, such as audio recordings, transcriptions, and reflective journal entries, were locked away on a password-protected computer that was only accessible to the researcher and the researcher's academic supervisor, where appropriate. The data will be kept for five years in accordance with institutional requirements, after which the researcher will delete all raw data that could identify a participant and any information belonging to that participant using secure methods of data destruction. Participants were treated with dignity and respect throughout the research study. All collected information was used exclusively for academic purposes, and every effort was made to minimise any potential harm or discomfort.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the researcher anticipated the possibility of emotional distress during or after participation. The participants were purposefully sampled due to their direct experiences with school violence. In this regard, the researcher exercised ethical concern in the approach taken. The participants were told before the research study commenced that some of the interview questions could be difficult to respond to. They were reassured that they could pause or stop the interview at any point. The researcher was mindful that if any participant experienced discomfort or distress, there was an option of finding additional support within the school's internal support structures, or preferably, if there were none, to refer them to the Western Cape Education Department, Employee Health and Wellness programme for professional counselling support. While some participants reflected emotively on recollections during the interviews, not one participant requested to be springboarded for immediate support at the end of each interview. Nevertheless, the researcher remained attentive to signs of distress and checked for signs of discomfort during each interview.

#### **4.11 CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY**

This study will contribute to the body of research concerning school violence within the educational realm, as it could bring to light the possible problems teachers experience when working in non-conducive learning environments. Regarding the present literature, it is unsurprising that many researchers fail to recognise the deleterious impacts of school violence on teachers. Rather, many academics investigate the psychological impact of school violence on students (Grobler, 2018). Therefore, given the scarcity of literature on teachers as victims of school violence, the research study aims to uncover teachers' experiences of violence, the types of school violence teachers experience, and how these violent experiences influence teachers' resilience in their teaching and overall well-being. By identifying teachers' experience of violence, the study will highlight the negative impact school violence has on teachers. In addition, the study could allow the establishment of preventative and support programmes for teachers who experience similar encounters with aggressive pupils.

#### **4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter described the study's research methodology and procedures on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being. The analytical components of this master's study were characterised. It therefore further presented an outline of the qualitative approach of this research. Data collecting tools and data analysis strategies were brought forward, as well as ethical procedures to increase the study's credibility and trustworthiness. As aforementioned it is important to note the researcher's position, as the researcher had personal ties with the research site and participants. Thus, biased judgment may be a conflict of interest in this master's study. In the next chapter, the outcomes of the study on how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being will be addressed.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an overview of the results derived from the thematic-centred narrative analysis undertaken. It contains twelve main themes found in the study. The chapter intends to explicate the primary objective of this study, which explored the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. To address the key research concern, the study's main and sub-questions were:

##### **Main Question**

- The influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school

##### **Sub-Question**

- What types of school violence do teachers experience in a Western Cape primary school?
- How do teachers' experiences of school violence affect their job practices and overall well-being?

For that reason, the researcher collected data from four intermediate-phase teachers who experienced school violence and how these violent experiences influenced their practice and overall well-being. The study focuses on a difficult subject, excavating into teachers' personal experiences with violence. Regardless of how delicate the subject matter was, owing to the researcher's respect and empathy towards each participant, participants felt at ease sharing their encounters with school violence. Subsequently, it appeared that several of the participants employed the interviews as a platform to express their devastating recollections. Although some of the described events were traumatic for the participants, many felt that such problems needed to be disclosed and dealt with appropriately. According to Bruce (2016), narrative research allows individuals to investigate personal experiences across the parameters of an interview, delivering information about treatment and other wellness procedures



(Bruce, et al., 2016). Therefore, the researcher will briefly recapitulate why the sharing of teachers' experiences of school violence is significant.

Throughout the transcribing procedure, the collected information was arranged into multiple themes and sub-themes. The themes that surfaced from the data supplied by the participants were eventually constructed to provide a comprehensive picture of how teachers' experiences of violence influence their job practice and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. The conclusions drawn from this research study are rooted in the thematic, experience-centred narrative analysis detailed in the methodology chapter.

## **5.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY'S FINDINGS**

The data collected through semi-structured interviews with four participants was analysed using thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Following the transcription of the interviews, the transcripts were read multiple times to ensure thorough familiarisation with the content. Segments of the data were then coded and examined for patterns, allowing for the identification and grouping of related codes into broader categories. These categories subsequently informed the development of the themes and sub-themes discussed in this chapter. The table below outlines the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from this analytical process.

**TABLE 5.2: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
5.2.1. Forms of Violence Encountered by Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verbal Violence</li> <li>2. Physical Violence</li> </ol>
5.2.2. Teachers' practice and well-being influenced by school-based violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional exhaustion and job demotivation</li> <li>2. Efforts to Preserve Well-being and Avoid Confrontation</li> <li>3. Disruption, Stress, Anxiety, and Fear caused by school violence</li> </ol>

5.2.3. Confrontational violent incidents affect teachers both physically and emotionally	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional trauma and long-term psychological impact</li> <li>2. Efforts to Preserve Well-being and Avoid Confrontation</li> </ol>
5.2.4. Lack of aid and support mechanisms from management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frustration with procedural delays and bureaucracy</li> </ol>
5.2.5. Teacher resilience - Coping practices and measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social Communication</li> <li>2. Practicing Self-Reflection</li> <li>3. Adaptive teaching techniques and boundary-setting</li> <li>4. Suppression of emotional response for professional survival</li> <li>5. Emotional Distancing</li> </ol>
5.2.6. Navigating the ripple effects of School Violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School violence's impact on teacher-student relationships, respect, and learning environments</li> </ol>
5.2.7 School violence influences teachers' efficacy and passion for interactive lessons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change of Teaching Technique and Demeanour.</li> <li>2. Shift in Teaching Efficacy</li> <li>3. School-Violence Affects Teachers' use of Educational Resources</li> </ol>
5.2.8. Obstacles when addressing cases of school violence with parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hostile Parent/Guardian Meetings</li> <li>2. Teachers Detachment</li> </ol>

5.2.9 Methods teachers employ to prioritise emotional resilience and work-life balance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional Resilience</li> <li>2. Positive Mindset's in Teachers Faced with School-Violence</li> <li>3. Separating Professional and Personal Life</li> </ol>
5.2.10 Lack of Teacher Training Regarding School Violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systemic shortcomings Concerning Teacher Workshops and the Topic of School-Violence</li> </ol>
5.2.11 Participant Reflection on the Study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotions Drawn out of Participants</li> <li>2. Worry and Anxiety</li> <li>3. Self-care and Support Techniques Participants Gained from Study</li> <li>4. Participants' Thoughts and Opinions About the Lacking Support Structures</li> <li>5. Participants Reflection on Participating in Study</li> </ol>
5.2.12 Participants' feedback on the study	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Feedback from Participants</li> </ol>

### 5.2.1 Forms of Violence Encountered by Teachers

Based on the study's results, the teachers who participated in the semi-structured interviews had observed violence among students at school. The teachers acknowledged two separate types of school-based violence, notably verbal and physical abuse directed at surrounding students and themselves. Among the 4 participants, all were confronted with verbal violence by their students, whereas 2 were confronted with physical violence.

### ***Sub-theme 1: Verbal Violence***

The semi-structured interviews indicated that verbal violence was one of the most typical types of violence experienced by teachers in 'School X'. Verbal violence exhibits itself in a variety of ways, including threats and obscenities directed towards teachers, as well as teachers being called disparaging terms and subjected to overtly inappropriate language. Participants 1 and 3 both mentioned a verbal altercation between learners and themselves, which demonstrates the omnipresence of verbal violence in 'School X'. These excerpts, therefore, demonstrate verbal abuse directed at educators.

**P1:** *"I have witnessed both physical and verbal violence from learners towards each other. These disputes were usually for redundant reasons. Learners would often swear and make ugly threats."*

**P3:** *"I have commonly encountered verbal and physical violence in my class. I remember a learner being extremely rude towards me and verbally threatening me. Learners would sometimes say inappropriate things towards me."*

### ***Sub-theme 2: Physical Violence***

On the other hand, physical violence was found to be the second most prevalent type of school-based violence found in 'School X'. All participants interviewed had experienced as well as witnessed physical violence, presumably directed at them or not. Two out of the four participants reported direct physical violence from learners, while all observed it between learners. These incidents caused distress and disrupted the teaching environment.

**P2:** *"I have been confronted with both physical and verbal violence in the classroom as a novice teacher. One occurrence I remember vividly is when two Grade 4 learners got into a fight in class and I jumped in to stop them when a learner stabbed a pencil in my head."*

**P4:** *"Learners often inflict physical harm towards each other, however, once a learner physically assaulted me, by throwing a concrete brick towards me. This incident occurred right after a verbal dispute with the learner."*

Participant 4's response asserted that the level of verbal violence and physical violence may sometimes go hand in hand when teachers are faced with learner-to-educator violence. Participant 4's response describes a distressing incident between a learner and himself that has left a painful memory in his teaching career. Additionally, the learner-on-learner conflict was particularly a frequent occurrence in 'School X', which had a detrimental impact on teachers. Several teachers asserted that the disputes involving pupils happened for trivial causes that could have been easily rectified.

Teachers shared that such incidents negatively impacted classroom morale and their ability to teach effectively:

**P1:** *"Physical incidence of violence affects the atmosphere within the classroom."*

**P3:** *"Physical violence disrupts teaching and curriculum coverage."*

**P4:** *"Learner-on-learner conflict wastes my time and energy."*

These findings indicate that physical violence, while slightly less common than verbal abuse, has serious implications for teacher safety and instructional quality.

Considering the findings, many learners at 'School X' resort to verbal school-based violence, as they feel they are not doing any harm to the teacher. According to Mangena (2023), workplace brutality and harassment occur when there are power disparities, and teachers are regarded to have greater power than students. Inequalities in power reverse themselves in learner-to-teacher aggression and intimidation, as the pupil acquires more power than the teacher because of the teacher's professional demeanour which is a normal expectation in the teaching profession. Students are seen as a greater threat than adults in this scenario. As a result, it may be argued that students who engage in direct and indirect violence have more authority than the teachers they are targeting (Mangena, 2023). The theory of resilience theorised by Ungar (2011), emphasises how demanding life events, such as school violence, affect people like teachers, adversely. The above exceptions indicate that the teacher participants experienced adversity in the form of verbal and physical violence

from their students. According to Ungar (2011), the capacity to grow accustomed to hardship remains essential for human progress; thus, teachers must overcome these impediments while attempting to execute their work responsibilities. Ungar (2011) posits that resilience theory is defined as an innate disposition or quality that enables individuals to overcome adversity and prevent harmful consequences to their health and well-being. In this case, teachers are encouraged to employ the principle atypicality of resilience theory, which includes preserving openness to different strategies for building resilience (Shaik; Dippenaar; Kwenda; Petersen; Esau & Oliver, 2022). Therefore, the findings show that Intermediate phase teachers are more prone to experiencing verbal violence than physical violence from their learners.

### **5.2.2 Teachers' practice and well-being influenced by school-based violence**

According to the findings, participants reported that school violence had a noticeable impact on their teaching practice and overall well-being. For instance, factors such as the number of working hours, the quantity of lessons taught, and class sizes were all cited as contributing to their professional strain. The time and energy a teacher invest in their work is influenced not only by institutional expectations but also by personal factors such as motivation, resilience, and job satisfaction (Yang et al., 2021). Five sub-themes emerged from participants' responses.

#### ***Sub-theme 1: Emotional Exhaustion and Job Demotivation***

The data revealed that school violence in 'School X' impacted teachers both emotionally and professionally.

**P1:** *"I feel that I always need to solve disputes between learners and parents, which is emotionally exhausting and demotivates my job fulfilment".*

**P3:** *"School violence affects my overall energy and excitement for the lessons I planned. It also causes stress and anxiety, as I tend to fall behind when incidents of violence disrupt my lesson time".*

Despite this, not all teachers suffered comparably, as the obstacles they faced varied in certain cases. Most participants expressed feeling emotionally exhausted, tense, and stressed by school-based violence. The hedonism theory of psychological well-being orientates itself with the above findings, as all participants discussed their sentimental reactions to the obstacles presented by school violence (Garson, 2016). Positive and negative hedonic sentiments act as key stimulants of behaviour, and they are considered to have developed to help individuals decide which behaviours to pursue or avoid. For example, experiences from exterior stimuli, such as happy and painful experiences, are combined with an organism's development and present state. This enables an organism to soon derive meaning and relevance from those feelings (Becker, Susanne; Anne-Kathrin Bräscher, Anne-Kathrin; Bannister, Scott; Bensafi, Moustafa; Calma-Birling, Destany; Chan, Raymond C.K; Eerola, Tuomas; Ellingsen, Dan-Mikael, 2019). Therefore, once a teacher witnesses school violence, their sentiments, both favourable or adverse, are influenced by the information they have learned in previous years and how they feel presently. In essence, their feelings play an integral role in how they engage and decide what to do next.

### ***Sub-theme 2: Efforts to Preserve Well-being and Avoid Confrontation***

Correspondingly, these data indicate that most of the teacher participants try to minimise emotional distress while increasing satisfaction with work. These findings align with both egoistic and ethical hedonism as individuals is driven to seek pleasure and avoid suffering. This is evident as most participants aimed to preserve their general well-being, instead of opposing learners and their parents. A teacher participant shared:

**P4:** *“School violence has changed my teaching approach. I do not force children/learners to engage with my lessons. I treat learners as willing participants.*

For example, Participant 4 chose to treat pupils as willing participants to preserve his general well-being. Similarly, Participant 1 employed communication to resolve issues related to school violence among students to preserve their

general well-being. Meanwhile, in accordance, egoistic hedonism is inherently futile and full of irony. Egotistical hedonism demands an individual create decisions based exclusively on personal satisfaction. As demonstrated by Nash (2024), a paragon of egotistical hedonism is a drug addict. For example, a drug addict may take money to fund their upcoming hit if their enjoyment surpasses any moral distress caused by the crime (Nash, 2024). In the case of the teacher participants, like participants 1 and 4, participants were more drawn to conserving their happiness than feeling the effects of school-based violence on their overall wellness and practice. On the other hand, ethical hedonism, in its simplest form, remains the contention that every aspect of happiness has positive value while discomfort or dissatisfaction has negative value (Moore, 2013). This framework serves to clarify the challenges and actions of teachers encountering school-based violence, as shown. For example, participant 1 and 3, descriptions of subjective frustration and depletion suggest the detrimental impact of pain and dissatisfaction on their experience. According to ethical hedonism, these negative feelings reduce their overall well-being and work satisfaction. Participant 2 reported feeling anxiousness as an effect of increased teaching time, and their obligation to complete the curriculum on time. This is an obvious example of discontent having a negative impact. The transition from teaching to addressing safety problems reduces the individual's professional enjoyment and fulfilment, which is in line with ethical hedonism's assessment of disappointing events. While Participant 4 shifts their teaching style to minimise dispute and tension, this can be interpreted as an effort to reduce dissatisfaction and increase pleasant sentiments among the teacher and the pupils (Moore, 2013).

### ***Sub-theme 3: Disruption, Stress, Anxiety, and Fear Caused by School Violence***

The participants' responses made it evident that the violence at the school produced disruption and distress, as once students commenced a dispute, teachers were forced to step in and divide the pupils. A participant had shared:

**P2:** *“School violence has made me cautious and taught me to take a step back and immediately alert management. My class practice is largely influenced, as*



*school violence results in more instructional time than teaching. This makes me feel stressed as the curriculum needs to be covered on time”.*

With these findings in mind, Ungar’s model of resilience asserts that resilience is vastly influenced by the environmental factors of an individual (Ungar, 2012). Ungar (2013) states that Bronfenbrenner’s social-ecological model of human development exhibits the advancement in resilience theory. For example, Ungar (2018) applies Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological systems theory and promotes the intricate relationship of humans and their natural surroundings at numerous phases, including micro and macro systems. Therefore, Ungar’s model of resilience advances that teachers who are routinely subjected to classroom aggressiveness might find it difficult to stay afloat, leading to anxiety and emotional fatigue. Sibsi (2021) supports this claim, as she states that teachers may feel uneasy and nervous because of school violence, fostering the establishment of 'burnout syndrome' (Sibisi, 2021). The findings show that school-based violence influences teachers’ practice and well-being, as the long-term consequences of verbal abuse extend beyond the initial emotional distress it produces feelings of dejection, frustration, and concern via prolonged contact with discomforting and abusive words (Sibisi, 2021). Considering the social ecology theory of resilience and hedonism theory, the above findings depict the intricate interplay of teachers’ encounters with school-based violence and how it influences their practice and well-being.

### **5.2.3 Confrontational violent incidents affect teachers both physically and emotionally**

Regardless of the type of violence a teacher witnesses, he or she experiences harm both physically and emotionally. According to the findings, all teacher participants had experienced an occurrence that affected them both physically and emotionally.

#### ***Sub-theme 1: Emotional trauma and long-term psychological impact***

These findings indicate that many teachers had been left with a traumatic experience in ‘School X’.

**P1:** *“A parent threatened to report me to the department for victimising her child. However, her child had been extremely rude and disrespectful towards me. The learner had refused to do his oral assessment, to which I responded by giving him a zero. He lied to his mother, that I said he could not do his assessment. The principal demanded that I write a letter of apology to the learner and his mother, for the mother not, to take the incident further via the department. This had made me extremely angry as the learner had lied but no action was taken toward him. Additionally, the learner felt that he could walk over me as his mother believed him”.*

**P3:** *“I remember a learner being extremely rude and saying: ‘What are you going to do to me, tog nothing!’ This made me question do I want to stay in this profession”.*

Each participants claimed to have experienced intimidation from their learners, whereas fewer recalled being physically threatened with school violence by their learners. Lloyd (2018) states that verbal assault and resistance may induce psychological wounds that promote self-doubt and call into question one's aptitude for an educational profession. With Participant's 1 scenario in mind, it is clear that teachers face tumultuous disputes in the social environment, particularly with parents and school administrators. According to Ungar's (2011) theory of resilience, this scenario emphasises the relevance of supporting social networks and institutional establishments that validate teachers' experiences while also providing options for addressing disagreements and injustices. Yang (2021) further highlights that teachers require supportive tools that permit them to share their problems, address their interactions, and identify their difficult environment. It empowers them to communicate their criticisms, anxieties, and issues, which may assist with reducing pressure and lessen teacher burnout (Yang, et al., 2021). As a result, functional interactions with students, carers, and even co-workers and school management, tend to develop a positive attitude among teachers. Therefore, supporting teachers effectively may foster a strong mental resilience among teachers.

### ***Sub-theme 2: Physical harm and safety concerns***

In addition to the participants expressing their traumatic experiences of intimidation at 'School X', they also highlighted how physical violence advanced them to prioritise their safety when violent episodes erupted within the classroom setting.

**P2:** *"I have been confronted with both physical and verbal abuse, and it has made me realise that as a teacher I cannot solve all my learners' issues at the risk of my safety. Professionally I learned that contacting their parents immediately is important as well as being stern and strict".*

**P4:** *"A child threw a brick at me. This happened after reprimanding a child for swearing at another learner".*

From a hedonistic standpoint, it is clear that the above findings illustrated by participants reduce general well-being as it encompasses adverse emotions and a danger to their professional image and competence. Kim (2018) posits that teachers may frequently scrutinise the trauma of school violence, avoid social circumstances, and respond harshly in response to their students' behavioural issues (Kim, 2018). Cho (2018) went on to say that abuse of teachers' rights, such as emotional and physical threats from students, exhaust instructors, make them less caring about their students, and diminish their feeling of professional satisfaction, all of which often led to mental burnout. Therefore, the research findings indicate that most teachers are influenced by school violence in an array of ways. Violence against teachers is rampant and has the potential to impair teachers' well-being, importance, and longevity in the profession.

#### **5.2.4 Lack of aid and support mechanisms from management**

According to the findings, the School Management Team (SMT) fails to assist teachers in preserving school discipline.

### ***Sub-theme 1: Frustration with procedural delays and bureaucracy***

These findings show that teachers become dissuaded when the school administration does not work with them to reprimand students.

**P3:** *“There is no real support we are told to self-manage our classes and record incidents in our discipline books. Nothing comes from it”.*

**P2:** *“There is not much support available. I can go to my departmental head and colleagues at any time to seek advice, however, not much is done consequently for learners like detention.*

**P1:** *“At our school, you mostly need to solve your problems yourself”.*

Teachers are deterred from reporting aggressive students to the administration since they are not reprimanded correctly. The participants responses demonstrate their resilience, as they assert that in their school, teachers are obligated to address their classroom obstacles. This demonstrates a strong emphasis on self-sufficiency and implies that teachers are forced to deal with the fallout from classroom violence on their own. Managing school violence may be extremely upsetting for teachers. Isolation, tension, and dissatisfaction may be exacerbated by the absence of a network of support. Participant 4 admitted to being dissatisfied at work because of the absence of help and troublesome pupils.

**P4:** *“We have our unions and SMT, which very few staff members rely on. At school our materials are not useful, for example, we hand out letters of transgression to learners which parents sign. Learners are quite aware that the school has no consequences like detention and expulsion. Thus, many learners do not adhere to the rules listed in the code of conduct”.*

He claims that good education does not occur in the classroom as pupils are disrespectful to teachers and the SMT as well as the Department of Education fails to offer adequate support for teachers. According to Lodge, Kennedy, Lockyer, Arguel and Pachman (2018), studies suggest that having discussions regarding the setting and difficulties that teachers encounter is difficult. This is due to management's contemptuous disposition towards teachers. Teachers are not allowed to acquire more about the social context and setting in which they work since there are no open talks (Lodge, et al., 2018). Ncontsa & Shumba (2013) further highlight that in the absence of a disciplined environment, teachers

suffer to impart knowledge, and students fight to learn productively. Every stakeholder in both the educational institution and the community deserves to be included in appropriate disciplinary practices.

Thus, the findings of this research align with Ungar's (2011) conclusion that supportive social structures and institutional resources are imperative for stimulating resilience across teachers confronted with school-related violence. The scarcity of sufficient support and structural flaws within an educational setting may constrain teachers' strength to deal with and overcome adversity (Ungar, 2011). Similarly, the above findings correlate with the hedonism theory of wellness as teachers' well-being could become compromised as a result of violent encounters and a lack of support (Weijers, 2011).

#### **5.2.5 Teacher resilience - Coping practices and measures**

According to the findings from the interview, all teachers questioned had employed a self-coping mechanism or practice, which displayed their resilience.

##### ***Sub-theme: Social Communication***

**P2:** *"In order to cope I make sure I have good communication with parents and keep my discipline book at hand. I also ensure that I talk about my experience/day to my family or colleagues, so I know I am not alone or feel incompetent because of the violence experienced".*

The above extract display that most teachers employ coping mechanisms and practices to deal with the pressure and psychological toll of school violence. The steps used by the teacher participants demonstrate their professional understanding of duty in dealing with school violence, with a desire to carry out their professional responsibilities. Ungar (2011) states that the concept of individual resilience begins with all individuals implementing their advantages and assets to deal with difficulties in their social ecology (Ungar, 2011). Therefore, some of the above findings would be consistent with the theory of individual resilience, as many participants, employed Ungar's four fundamental principles: de-centrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity.

Luthar (2006) states that de-centrality suggests the relevance of an individual's social ecology and promotes the necessity to decertify or de-emphasise the individual, meaning that resilience is not merely an individual quality, but it is also driven by surrounding resources and interactions (Luthar, 2006). For teachers, de-centrality stimulates teachers to achieve meaningful shifts, whereby teachers do not rely on themselves but also on surrounding resources. The findings reveal that teachers often acquire support from parents and guardians to cope with school violence within the classroom. According to Balkar, Tuncel, and Demiroglari, 2022 (2022), frequent contact with carers enables teachers to customise their approach and employ suitable tactics to meet the needs and prevent violent incidents (Balkar, Tuncel, & Demiroglari, 2022). Participant 2 embodies de-centralisation by promoting the advantages of proficient communication with parents and seeking synergy from close relatives and peers. Behfar, Cronin, and McCarthy (2020) states that having complaints about work may make a group feel more connected, especially if they are all experiencing comparable workplace stress (Behfa, Cronin, & McCarthy, 2020). Casale (2015) further asserts that social support has been empirically found to be an anti-depressant and anti-anxiety component. People with substantial social ties are less inclined to suffer from these illnesses, and when they do, they recuperate faster. Having a circle of supporting friends and family may provide an environment of protection and assurance, which may serve to alleviate experiences of melancholy and isolation (Casale, et al., 2015). This dependence on exterior relationships and assets, assists in reducing the adverse effects of school violence, proving that resilience cannot be created in detachment.

### ***Sub-Theme 2: Practicing Self-Reflection***

Contrasting to dependence on exterior relationships and assets, Participants 1 and 3 tend to employ a more individualistic orientation to resilience.

***P1: "I would regularly try to self-reflect and calm myself down. I would then attempt to deal with the problem myself, as I believe these violent experiences build character and prepare teachers when similar incidents occur."***

**P3:** *“I always try to remind myself why I become an teacher and think of the learners who appreciate the things I get to teach them”.*

For example, the themes that emerged from the findings demonstrate employing self-reflection, as a coping mechanism. This exhibits a purposeful attempt to examine and comprehend one’s feelings, behaviours, and ways of coping. Shandomo (2010) states that reflection is an exercise of introspection and assessment that competent teachers participate in regularly to enhance their professional practices (Shandomo, 2010). Chang (2019) further asserts that reflecting is an essential component of acquiring knowledge from experience. Being reflective encourages teachers to behave thoughtfully and purposefully rather than haphazardly when confronted with violence (Chang, 2019).

The second concept of individual resilience, complexity, states that resilience is not an easy endeavour. Rather, it comprises lively and complicated interactions between a person and their social surroundings. According to Ungar, the principle of complexity is a wide term encompassing one's capacity to seize opportunities in their surroundings to assist their growth and the ongoing relationship between people and the environment (Ungar, 2011). Participant 1 illustrates complexity by participating in self-reflection and applying specific incidents as learning opportunities. Participant 2 presents a holistic strategy that melds forward-thinking measures like communication and discipline, with psychological aid programmes.

### ***Sub-theme 3: Adaptive teaching techniques and boundary-setting***

Additionally, participant 4 suggests changing their classroom practices to lower conflict and safeguard their mental well-being.

**P4:** *“I distance myself emotionally and contribute positively where I can. I also know that violence can happen at any time. I accept this fact, and I am willing to deal with it once I am confronted by it”.*

Participant 4 adopts complexity by instinctively dividing oneself while preparing to face aggression. On the other hand, atypicality demonstrates the

unconventional paths that people choose to build resilience. According to Ungar (2011), several kinds of encounters, materials, or events could result in favourable outcomes, even if they do not align with normative paths of resilience (Ungar, 2011). For example, teachers in an antagonistic school atmosphere may induce subjective well-being in their profession as they are obliged to work to meet their financial demands. Participant 1 employs an atypical approach by interpreting unpleasant situations as character-building opportunities. Pala (2011) asserts that character-building opportunities inform teachers about the influence of values like rights, dedication, empathy, reverence, and bravery in their daily lives (Pala, 2011). Correspondingly, Participant 4 highlights the principle of atypicality, as the individual recognises the prospect of school-based violence and contemplates dealing with it once it presents itself, which may differ from more prevalent avoidance or mitigation tactics.

Finally, the principle of cultural relativity, according to Ungar (2011) indicates that historical and cultural factors have an impact on positive development and resiliency. This principle entails knowing that resilience is affected by cultural circumstances. Participant 2 engages parents through interaction as a primary approach to demonstrate cultural relativity, which aligns with the value placed on society and parental engagement in education. However, Participant 3 displays cultural relativity by basing their resilience on their enthusiasm and devotion to teaching. Therefore, considering Ungar's model, the above finding is akin to the theory of social resilience, as individuals rely on positive relationships and social networks to deal with adversity (Ungar, 2011).

#### ***Sub-theme 4: Suppression of emotional response for professional survival***

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated a common theme of intrinsic motivation among participants for professional survival. This form of coping aligns with the hedonism theory of wellness, as the teacher consciously strives to mitigate the adverse effects of school violence by recognising advantageous components of her profession (Weijers, 2011). Wabule (2020) highlights that teachers with resilience traits are prone to cope in difficult situations, adjust to new environments more easily, and are more conducive to the profession (Wabule, 2020). Mansfield (2012) further states that personal characteristics like



compassion, robust intrinsic drive, tenacity and determination, optimism, willingness to take chances, mental agility, and adaptability are components that promote teacher resilience and maintain them in the face of adversity (Mansfield, et al., 2012).

### ***Sub-theme 5: Emotional Distancing***

In accordance, the research findings further revealed that some participants employ emotional distancing as a practice to combat the pressure and anxiety caused by school violence. This practice depicts an intentional attempt to build a psychological barrier that separates the difficult features of violence in schools and their well-being. This emotional distance can assist in keeping incidents from becoming overly personal. According to Ferreira, Figueiredo and Santos (2023), setting emotional boundaries is regarded as a necessary protection that allows teachers to maintain their well-being while undertaking rigorous and emotionally intense work (Ferreira, et al., 2023). With Ungar's model in mind, the data garnered correlates with the premise of ecological resilience, in which people adjust to and embrace the difficulties that their social and physical contexts present while conserving an understanding of responsibility and positive participation (Ungar, 2011). On the other hand, from a hedonistic perspective this finding concurs that individuals tend to mitigate discomfort by embracing and adjusting to the knowledge of their environment. By understanding the potential consequences of violence and taking a proactive strategy to coping, participants can minimise stress and improve their general well-being (Garson, 2016).

### **5.2.6 Navigating the ripple effects of School Violence**

According to De Cordova and Berlanda (2019), school violence imposes an adverse effect on a teacher's professional well-being and makes it a greater challenge to create strong learner-teacher relationships in the classroom (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019).

***Sub-theme 1: School violence's impact on teacher-student relationships, respect, and learning environments***

When participants were questioned about their student-teacher relationship, respect, and learning environments, each participant admitted that it was difficult when violence occurred in the class frequently. Participants stated:

***P1:*** “When conflict between learners arises, it is very important not to take sides, and to deal with the situation fairly. I believe respect can only be gained when dealing with situations in a respectful manner and trying to solve the problem for teaching and learning to continue”.

***P2:*** “School Violence makes me more conscious of my pupils especially those who are disciplined and quiet as I need to focus on them as well. I noticed that by including others and not focusing on violent learners, a bond is created, and I find that they are more eager to work when appreciated”.

***P3:*** “It is difficult to create a learning environment with respect. These elements cause teachers to distance themselves and come across as stern and unapproachable. I find myself falling into this category as school violence forces me to become an authoritarian”.

***P4:*** “From experience, I believe that violence and hostile environments always have a negative influence and hinder positive learning environments and relationships.”

Three of the four participants emphasised the importance of remaining neutral during learner disputes and highlighted that fairness and respect are essential for maintaining a positive teaching and learning environment. Shanka and Thuo (2017) stated that competent dispute resolution is needed to build healthier and more inclusive school settings for learning. Jones (2022) supports this claim, as she states mutual respect frequently coincides with a strong emphasis on relationships. Sound teacher-student interactions, as well as healthy peer relationships, are important components of classroom culture. Ungar’s principle of de-centrality (2011) carefully aligns with the above findings as it is consistent

with the ideal fairness and impartiality needed to establish favourable and resilient environments. For example, Participant 1 exhibits decentralisation by recognising the importance of accountability and neutrality in settling disputes, which helps the development of a conducive learning context. Meanwhile, Participant 2 displays de-centrality by prioritising the obedient and respectful pupils. Thus, Participant 2 leverages interpersonal connections to foster an efficient and resilient classroom. Participant 3's account reveals concerns with decentralisation, as distancing and authoritarian teaching styles often reflect a lack of valuable external relationships and overall support. In addition, Participant 4's experience correlates with decentralisation as he contends the significant role of external resources (safe and supportive surroundings) in building resilience. Therefore, it is evident that teachers find their surroundings challenging when affected by school violence, thus, employing strategies that align with Ungar's principle of de-centrality (2011), most participants can manage adversities and promote individual resilience (Ungar, 2011).

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated a common theme of alertness among participants. This raised alertness suggests an acknowledgment of the effect school violence has on the classroom setting. According to Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), classrooms affected by school violence promote concentration problems, low grades, missing classes, instability, and occupied time, as well as gloom. All these variables contribute to school violence and have a detrimental influence on learning and teaching. Fang and Cao (2016) highlight that appreciating education is not about complimenting and praising pupils, but about recognising their behaviour outcomes to enhance their behaviour development. The intent is to establish an atmosphere that will guide pupil's development. Its purpose is to adequately advise pupils, improve their psychological experiences, and remediate negative behaviour.

Additionally, the research findings reveal that most teachers find it hard to develop a respectful learning environment when plagued by school violence. This problem is caused by school violence's destabilising features, which may jeopardise the general mood in the classroom (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). Participants have noted that these obstacles often prompt teachers to separate

themselves from their pupils. This distance could represent a normal reaction to the strain and dissatisfaction of dealing with the negative consequences of school violence. According to Khumalo (2019), arguably the most pertinent stressful variables in the education profession are student misconduct and hostility. It can adversely affect teachers' job satisfaction and hinder them from developing meaningful connections in the classroom (Khumalo, 2019). From a social-ecological standpoint of resilience, school violence causes teachers to appear intense and unfriendly as a result. This shift in demeanour may have developed inadvertently, as it is presumably a protective strategy used by teachers to exercise authority and preserve their well-being while in a turbulent setting (Ungar, 2012).

Similarly, these findings closely align with psychological hedonism as participants adopt an overtly authoritarian demeanour in response to school violence which may impede the potential for valuable connections with pupils and co-workers. For example, teachers who are unable to open up and seek positive synergy from others may restrict their development of healthy connections with not only co-workers but their students as well (Garson, 2016). Kloo (2023) further asserted this claim, as he mentioned that teachers who are more authoritative in their classroom supervision, may conceivably free numerous pupils from the abrasion of school violence by their fellow pupils along with all the adverse effects that come with it. Therefore, authoritative classroom management provides the ability to minimise school violence while also enhancing children's lives in society. As a result, teachers may actively elect to be both a promoter and a preventer (Kloo, et al., 2023).

In accordance, the data collected further indicates that violence and hostile surroundings impede healthy learning conditions. This implies that the chaotic character of violence undermines the environment required for fruitful teaching and learning. Troublesome behaviour, such as intimidation, disdain for teachers, or continual interruptions, can cause tension, worry, and stress in pupils and teachers, impairing their potential to prioritise and engage in classes. These adverse perspectives can also inhibit genuine interaction and mental wellness in

the classroom, both of which are essential for optimal academic performance (Crudup, 2020).

### **5.2.7 School violence influences teachers' efficacy and passion for interactive lessons**

According to Ladbrook (2009), teachers have discovered that there exists a dramatic rise in the need for versatile teachers during the previous decade. Presently, teachers need to be psychologists, nursing practitioners, social workers, and specialised teachers to effectively run their classroom (Ladbrook, 2009).

#### ***Sub-theme 1: Change of Teaching Technique and Demeanour.***

When frequently confronted with violence and intimidating situations within the classroom, teachers often change their teaching technique and overall demeanour. Participants stated:

**P1:** *“Yes. School violence has changed my behaviour with my pupils, as I am often cautious when dealing with learners. I have in the past been confronted with false allegations from parents, implying that I intentionally victimise their children, which is not the case. I have learned to take charge of situations within the class more effectively as I dislike parent involvement. My teaching technique has changed as well, to best accommodate my curriculum coverage, as I find too many engaging lessons create a less productive environment. For example, learners often stray from the topic or get to noise”.*

**P2:** *“Yes. School violence, constant fighting, and disruptive children have caused me to teach without making effective resources as I know it'll be a waste of time and money. Fun lessons become chaotic therefore my teaching style has become less interactive and strictly teacher-centred”.*

**P3:** *“Yes, I teach for those who came to learn and distance myself from those causing the behaviour challenges. I have learned not to waste time planning interactive lessons as certain individuals may take these too far and encourage*

*chaotic behaviour from others. I feel when this happens, I often lose motivation to plan another well-resourced lesson”.*

**P4:** *“Yes, I have frequent disturbances while teaching. Having to endure inappropriate, unfair, and insulting comments often brings my spirits down. I have learned to be mindful when planning open discussions with my class as verbal violence among students erupts rapidly and renders the lesson inactive as well as wasted”.*

Ungar’s principle of complexity (2011) carefully aligns with the above findings as it recognises that resilience is holistic and includes an amalgamation of multiple elements, namely the individual’s practices and reaction to circumstances (Ungar, 2011). For example, Participant 1’s reaction reveals an intricate versatility to the adverse effects of school violence. The Participant maintains an appropriate equilibrium between precaution and efficient classroom management. Additionally, participant 1 changes her teaching style to avoid pandemonium. Correspondingly, Participants 2, 3, and 4 proceed to a less active, teacher-centred approach demonstrating a multifaceted response to disruptive behaviour. By reducing their teaching approach, the teacher attempts to preserve control and minimise chaos. Therefore, the above findings correlate to Ungar’s concept of complexity, as the teacher participants’ solutions exhibit how these individuals traverse and negotiate multiple difficulties while maintaining excellent teaching and classroom management in the context of school violence.

On the other hand, some of the above findings would be consistent with the Hedonism theory of Well-being, as many participants’ responses coincide with the Hedonism principles of Well-being, which include: Egoistic, Psychological, Ethical, and Utilitarianism Hedonism. Garson (2016) states that psychological hedonism refers to everyone’s demeanour, which is subjectively steered by an attraction to pleasure and the prevention of suffering. This form of hedonism contends that satisfaction is the sole inherent good, whereas suffering is the only inherent bad (Garson, 2016). Participant 2’s views comply with psychological hedonism, characterised by an expectation of present convenience and aversion to unpleasantness. To minimise the frustration and disruption generated by

disruptive behaviour, Participant 2 eliminates the use of resources and the number of interactive lessons. On the contrary, Participant 1 response relates more closely to egoistic hedonism. Egoistic hedonism underlines the accession of enjoyment for oneself, by placing one's well-being and joy ahead of other individuals. It is commonly pertinent to an egoistic or selfish attitude toward living (Friedland, et al., 2020). In Participant 1's case, this individual emphasis on regulating personal stress and limiting bad contact with parents which reveals a connection with egoistic hedonism.

Participant 3's response evidently coordinates with ethical hedonism. Ethical hedonism is the opinion that every characteristic of pleasure is righteous, and all hardship or dissatisfaction is baleful (Moore, 2013). For example, Participant 3's tactic for focusing on students who intend to learn and avoiding disruptive students is consistent with ethical hedonism, as she aims to pursue enjoyment and mitigate difficulty in an ethically defensible manner. Lastly, Participant 4's retort reflects utilitarianism hedonism. Utilitarianism hedonism attempt to optimise happiness for a greater variety of individuals, whereas hedonism in general merely seeks to maximise the enjoyment of a single individual. As a result, utilitarianism is often seen as a more noble, altruistic way of practice than hedonism (Moore, 2013). Thus, Participant 4's approach to meticulously designing lessons to avert verbal violence displays utilitarianism, as the participant seeks to maximise satisfaction while minimising unhappiness. By anticipating probable disturbances and planning appropriately, the participant hopes to foster a more positive and productive atmosphere for the class. Therefore, Ungar's (2011) model of resilience and the Hedonism theory carefully align with these findings, as it is apparent that the participants' social interaction within the classroom shapes their resilience as well as their search for pleasure rather than pain.

### ***Sub-theme 2: Shift in Teaching Efficacy***

The above findings indicated that teachers were more mindful when engaging with students due to school violence. In fact, all participants agreed to changing, their efficacy and teaching style in different ways, when confronted with school-based violence. For example, Participant 1 admits being cautious when

approaching pupils due to previous disputes with parents and false accusations. This increased caution is most likely a result of prior encounters with school violence and misinformation. Bester and Du Plessis (2010) contend that teachers require a greater grasp on their liberties and duties, as well as how to respond in circumstances involving aggressive interactions with their students (Bester & Du Plessis, 2010). Adopting an engaged role in classroom management may help to create a sense of control and order. Lumadi (2019) emphasises that an authentic collaboration should be established among teachers and parents, as it will assure and regulate student discipline. Several features of uneasy parent-teacher associations are shown to be apparent where students display behavioural obstacles, and adverse relationships maintain this behaviour. Thus, when parents and teachers in a student's upbringing share an affinity in supporting the student in achieving his or her intellectual potential, superior teaching and learning occur. However, the teacher's responsibility in conserving pupil discipline diminishes when there are unfavourable parent-teacher interactions (Lumadi, 2019).

### ***Sub-theme 3: School-Violence Affects Teachers' use of Educational Resources***

In addition, the research findings indicated that school misconduct, incessant fighting, and unruly conduct have coerced all teacher participants to impart knowledge without developing useful resources. This decision seems to be influenced by an honest realisation that proficient or interactive materials may be unsuccessful in an unstable and noisy setting. With the above findings in mind, it is clear that all four participants had shifted their teaching methodology from participatory to teacher centred. According to Djemoui (2018), a teacher-centred approach curbs indiscipline as the pupils plays a passive role. The student, contrary to the teacher, is attentive to what the teacher teaches. Therefore, the student prioritises reiterating information from the teacher. Furthermore, any contact outside the teacher's consent is considered improper and is immediately discouraged (Djemoui, 2018). Emaliana (2017) states that teacher-centred techniques have proven helpful when pupils require a body of information or when students have little time for student-centred engagement (Emaliana, 2017). However, prepared teacher-centred lessons may become restrictive and



uninteresting, specifically when there is limited student interaction, implying that pupils cannot merely articulate their thoughts and inquiries (Mpho, 2018). In addition, pupils taught with a teacher-centred approach are often denied the ability to guide their learning (Ahmed, et al., 2022). As a result, their concentration might stray, affecting their learning adversely.

Similarly, the themes that emerged from the data demonstrate that most participants dislike creating interactive lessons as some pupils might advance matters beyond and nurture an anarchic classroom setting. For example, Participant 1 refrains from preparing dynamic lessons solely to minimise sporadic behaviour in her pupils, reflecting an analogous shift to a planned and less interactive teaching style. Participants 2 and 3 further agree with Participant 1, as they reiterate the futility of creating useful materials and engaging classes, which frequently become chaotic. In addition, like the other participants, Participant 4 agrees to have shifted his teaching style to a more teacher-centred approach. Participant 4 acknowledges the consequence of verbal violence between pupils amidst open conversations, forcing him to be particularly cautious when planning engaging activities. This reduces the chances of disturbances associated with engaging instruction. The absence of such lessons reflects that compromises were undertaken to preserve a more regulated learning environment. Garrett (2008) contends that pedagogical approaches that emphasise the teacher are commonly used to assist teachers in maintaining authority over pupils (Garrett, 2008). Masungi (2017) further affirms that indiscipline drives teachers to have an adverse mindset toward their pupils, disrupting the bond that needs to be maintained to continue to promote the process of education (Masungi, 2017).

The findings further revealed that teachers' behaviour is often affected negatively by school violence. For example, participants account for being exposed to unacceptable, arbitrary, and demeaning remarks, which have harmed their morale. Keeping up with such remarks can be emotionally draining, and it may trigger an adjustment in the teacher's state of mind, eventually compromising their general well-being and work contentment. Berlanda (2019) supported this claim, as she asserts that such subjective circumstances may impair the

professional role, prompting teachers to develop adverse feelings towards school. Teachers who experience violence such as verbal violence, often develop an adverse mindset towards their work, including inhibiting their career development or lowering optimism and devotion. Likewise, assault on teachers hurts not just those who are directly affected, but also individuals who see it. It therefore also has a ripple effect on teachers' efficacy, passion for interactive lessons, educational atmosphere, calibre of instruction, and, ultimately, the worth of the education (Berlanda, et al., 2019).

#### **5.2.8 Obstacles when addressing cases of school violence with parents**

The pupil's family upbringing is a variable that leads to their growth of disobedience (Soni, 2022). There is quite a considerable amount of variation across households when it comes to parenting. For example, types of parenting diverge among cultures when it comes to encouraging consideration, obedience, delayed reward, cognitive function, and exerting authority. Each parent has an individual approach to interacting with and guiding their children. This relationship typically establishes a pupil's values, ideals, and behaviour (Sanvictores, 2022). Therefore, when teachers disclose incidents of violent behaviour with parents/guardians, most may come across an array of challenges. Participants have noted the following extracts:

**P2:** *“When disclosing cases of school violence, I often employ the use of one-on-one meetings and WhatsApp messages. My biggest concern is that the parents do nothing to assist me or their child. They also tend to blame others in class which makes the situation unsolved”.*

**P4:** *“I personally detach myself from emotions and communicate from a point of care”.*

**P1:** *“When violent incidences at school occur, I usually call parents to meet immediately. I am extremely tactful when talking to parents, keeping in mind my wording and listening when problems arise. I have learned that choosing the right wording is key when dealing with parents who display strong personalities or plead innocent of their child’s bad behaviour”.*

*P3: "I ask parents to meet and discuss the issues, however, my worries are always, do I want to be subjected to the verbal abuse from parents, as well as parents tend to believe their children over the teacher who is a grown adult".*

### ***Sub-theme 1: Hostile Parent/Guardian Meetings***

The findings revealed that teachers often make use of one-on-one meetings when violent disputes occur among learners. Given the above findings, parent meetings may prove distressing for teachers, as several parents may enter with a crude demeanour. Erdem and Koçyiğit (2019) contend that intolerant parents may trigger the teacher to behave impulsively and defensively. When a parent is adverse, the teacher must demonstrate considerable restraint and appear cool and professional (Erdem & Koçyiğit, 2019). The findings further revealed that teachers often demonstrate a reluctance to contact parents as they fear being confronted with verbal abuse from parents. For example, the findings indicate that parents are more prone to trust their children than the teacher. This challenge demonstrates an imminent barrier to interaction and resolution when dealing with school violence.

### ***Sub-theme 2: Teachers Detachment***

Correspondingly, the above extracts indicate that most of the teacher participants tend to detach themselves from emotions when addressing the challenges of school violence with parents. Considering Ungar's (2011) model of resilience, emotional detachment is a form of coping that allows teachers to handle difficult or emotional discussions without being consumed by feelings. According to Varol (2023), psychological detachment is a component of rehabilitation that aids individuals in replenishing their cognitive state, since mental detachment from work encourages a reduction in triggering and stress degrees (Varol, et al., 2023). Khan (2017) further asserts that strong interpersonal competencies in teachers are essential for pupils' academic performance and advancement in life (Khan, et al., 2017).

### **5.2.9 Methods teachers employ to prioritise emotional resilience and work-life balance**

Teaching is a pleasant profession; however, it can also be mentally demanding and tedious, rendering teachers exhausted. Teachers require breaks to engage in self-care to unwind and replenish their energies to keep functioning efficiently (Hurley, 2021). Presently, no standard method is used by teachers and school administrators in South Africa to prioritise a healthy work-life balance (Le Mottee & Kelly, 2017).

#### ***Sub-theme 1: Emotional Resilience***

All four participants in this study differ in the methods they employ to prioritise emotional resilience and work-life balance amidst school violence. Participants stated:

**P1:** *“When an issue has been dealt with it is done. I try to stay calm and positive as much as possible. I have learned not to take things personally as I cannot help how certain individuals, I teach act in the classroom”.*

**P2:** *“My personal well-being is prioritised because I make sure I separate my work from my personal life. I don’t make my school life my whole personality as it will negatively impact my mental state. I make sure to continue to do things I love, which is spending time with my friends and family and enjoying my weekends away from school, doing things I love”.*

**P 3:** *“By distancing myself from problematic learners and separating my work life from my personal life. I’d also rely on my family to keep my spirits up with their support”.*

**P4:** *“I cannot guarantee my well-being. However, I can set boundaries to intentionally prioritise my personal life over my work life challenges”.*

Moore (2013) states that hedonism is the precedence of indulgence in an individual's existence, activities, or thinking (Garson, 2016). Therefore, some of the above findings would be consistent with the theory of psychological

hedonism, as three out of the four participants exhibit an affinity for pleasure. For example, Participant 1 prioritises having a composed and appealing attitude, which promotes greater personal happiness and decreased anxiety, whereas Participant 2 divides her work life from her personal life and invests in interesting pursuits such as interacting with close companions. Similarly, Participant 3 demonstrates psychological hedonism, as this participant employs distancing oneself from difficult pupils and requesting help from relatives to immediately mitigate anxiousness and improve mental well-being. Meanwhile, Participant 4 adopts boundaries to prioritise their personal-life, and discount work-related troubles to expand on their satisfaction. Therefore, the principle of psychological hedonism, is akin to the above findings, as individuals are intrinsically driven by an affinity for pleasure and the prevention of suffering.

On the other hand, according to Ungar (2011), the premise of individual resilience stems from individuals employing their potential and materials to cope with barriers in their social ecology (Ungar, 2011). As a result, several of the above extracts are compatible with the notion of individual resilience, as all four participants embraced Ungar's four key principles: decentralisation, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. By utilising decentralisation participants reflect on their inner assets and individual options for managing stress and well-being. Employing complexity allowed teacher participants to acknowledge and control the complexities of their work and private life. Thirdly, atypicality concedes that individuals use unconventional techniques that may differ from standard expectations, in order to ensure their well-being. Lastly, cultural relativity is demonstrated in the findings as participants employ culturally relevant coping techniques, such as support from relatives, to increase resilience. Therefore, considering Ungar's model, the above finding is akin to the theory of social resilience, as individuals rely on Ungar's four key principles - decentralisation, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity to prioritise emotional resilience and work-life balance.

### ***Sub-theme 2: Positive Mindset's in Teachers Faced with School-Violence***

The findings revealed that participants often continue with a positive mindset, once a challenge concerning school violence has been settled. This mindset

reflects an eagerness for finality rather than ruminating on prior occurrences. According to Cropley and Collis (2020), teachers who indulge in work-related rumination, often encounter an array of health issues (Cropley & Collis, 2020). By disregarding or removing oneself from frustrating experiences, individuals give way to the formation of emotional resilience. Grant and Kinman (2020) further contend that fostering emotional resilience may assist teachers to adapt effectively to stressful work environments and advance their careers. This premise of resilience could potentially help in demonstrating why certain teachers who face high levels of stress at work do not burn out, but rather prosper, allowing individuals to deal with future problems more successfully (Grant & Kinman, 2020). The findings further revealed that teachers prioritise a healthy work-life by not taking incidents of school violence personally. According to Strawson (2018), individuals gain a great deal of liberty when they do not take things personally. Individuals may no longer have to rely on what others practice or verbalise. Instead, they solely require confidence in themselves to make sound decisions (Strawson, 2018).

### ***Sub-theme 3: Separating Professional and Personal Life***

Similarly, the above findings indicated that teachers prioritise a healthy work-life by separating their work and personal life. The teachers expressed the relevance of not considering education as their entire identity. This method protects an individual's perception of self-care and well-being by minimising overly identifying with work-related pressures. According to Mathews (2021), work-life balance encompasses the premise that individuals establish equitable priority in their professional and personal lives (Mathews, et al., 2021). Hooja and Sen (2018) further stated that work-life balance is a vital feature of a productive and functioning workplace, as an individual who accomplishes this balance commits an equal amount of time to work-related responsibilities and personal affairs without getting stressed or burdened (Hooja & Sen, 2018).

In addition, data revealed that teachers often try to keep an optimal emotional distance to help mitigate the adverse effects of school violence on their health. For example, setting boundaries allows teachers to prioritise their overall

wellness. Thomas (2017) supports this claim as he highlights that individuals who receive support from relatives may experience a stronger perception of self-worth, which increases self-esteem and could function as an emotional asset, strengthening positive thinking and improving psychological well-being (Thomas, et al., 2017). Reczek (2014) further contends that friends and relatives may also manage one another's behaviours while providing knowledge and motivation to act healthily and use wellness services efficiently (Reczek, et al., 2014). Therefore, all participants admitted to consciously adopting decisions to prioritise emotional resilience and work-life balance.

#### **5.2.10 Lack of Teacher Training Regarding School Violence**

According to the findings, when asked about prior training or development aimed at dealing with school violence, all participants answered 'no'.

#### ***Sub-theme 1: Systemic shortcomings Concerning Teacher Workshops and the Topic of School-Violence***

Most participants emphasised that they had never attended a workshop on the topic of dealing with school violence, rather classroom management was an increasingly popular topic. Participants stated:

**P1:** *"No, I have never attended a training workshop on dealing with school violence".*

**P2:** *"No. The workshops I generally attend touch on classroom management, but nothing prepared me for incidents of school violence. The classroom management tips were unrealistic and difficult to implement in such a big classroom and cost money.*

**P3:** *"No".*

**P4:** *"I have never received training on school violence particularly, but conflict management, time management, and stress management which all contribute to my method of prioritising wellness".*

The findings revealed that participants shared no further sentiments on the question surrounding the lack of training, however, two of the four participants mentioned some form of training. For example, one participant asserts that the workshops she usually attends often align with classroom management. To some extent, the training is useful, however hard to implement as it can be costly and requires a small class. According to Mncube and Dube (2019), workshops and training initiatives enable teachers to manage difficulties as they emerge. These measures enable teachers to talk about their problems and remedies (Mncube & Dube, 2019). Contrastingly, another participant emphasised that he has never attended any sort of training regarding school violence, however prior workshops on conflict management, time management, and stress management have allowed him to practice putting his overall wellness first.

#### **5.2.11 Participant Reflection on the Study**

The following findings were uncovered via the 'Reflective Journal Questions'.

##### ***Sub-theme 1: Emotions Drawn out of Participants***

Three of the four participants shared similar emotions when discussing their experiences of school violence at School X. These emotions included anxiety, fear, tension, and, for one participant, a sense of hope and reflection about future growth. Ford (2018) asserts that humans who embrace their personal experiences could exhibit improved mental wellness, as this enables them to feel less adverse feelings in reaction to events. Each participant mentioned that this study draws out the following emotions:

***P3: "It was nice to release some past lingering anxieties when talking about my experiences of school violence".***

***P4: "It felt scary, as it reminded me of challenging times in my teaching career".***

***P1: "When asked about my experience concerning school violence, I felt tense and anxiety when reminiscing".***



*P2: "It was a good feeling as it allowed me to reflect. I feel hopeful that these experiences will make me a stronger teacher in the future".*

### ***Sub-theme 2: Worry and Anxiety***

With the findings in mind, it is evident that worry and anxiety were the most common themes found when participant voiced their experiences. According to Brook (2014), anxiety is a distinct emotion defined by excessive alarm, unfavourable valence, insecurity, and a lack of management (Brook, 2014). Although anxiety stems from negativity, it could promote good stress which allows individuals to feel inspired and prepared when faced again with adversity.

### ***Sub-theme 3: Self-care and Support Techniques Participants Gained from Study***

On the other hand, when participants were asked if they discovered any new self-care or support techniques due to their involvement in this study, they voiced the following:

*P1: "This study has made me realise how school violence, notable verbal violence affects my teaching and general health. It has made me aware that sometimes I don't know how to act when faced with violence in the class, and I should take a step back when overwhelmed, in order to safeguard my health".*

*P2: "Yes, I have realised the importance of prioritising my well-being and learning to balance my work and personal life".*

*P3: "This study has made me more aware about my well-being, and how I shouldn't allow pupils to affect my joy of teaching, in particularly my practice and well-being. In terms of self-care and support techniques, I feel that I should rely more on my colleagues as they may be experiencing the same or similar experience with violent learners".*

**P4:** *“This study has encouraged me to establish a better self-care, as I have come to realise that by merely distancing myself from incidents of school violence, I am not creating a good head space to work in”.*

The data revealed that all participants sympathise with how school violence, particularly physical and verbal violence, affects functional teaching and overall well-being. For example, participants are driven to simply step back and protect themselves, sustain an optimal work-life balance, be more conscious of their well-being and stress levels, as well as to seek emotional support when dealing with school violence. According to UNICEF (2020), self-care includes activities that individuals execute on purpose to provide care for their psychological, sentimental, and bodily well-being. Since it is a basic principle, it is one that teachers frequently disregard. Self-care is essential for lifting morale and diminishing stress (UNICEF, 2020).

### ***Sub-theme 3: Participants’ Thoughts and Opinions About the Lacking Support Structures***

In addition, when participants were asked what tools or support structures were lacking in resolving school violence, most participants shared similar sentiments:

**P4:** *“There should be more workshops on mental wellness as well as training on the signs and symptoms of stress and burnout”.*

**P1:** *“I believe not only the school but the Department of Basic Education, should have necessary steps in place to not only protect learners but teachers as well”.*

**P2:** *“Consistent Discipline strategies should be put in place. A school therapist or social worker could also assist, as it will allow learners to feel a sense of belonging and reveal why they act the way they do”.*

**P3:** *“The school management should properly implement the code of conduct at our school, as no true consequence takes place, and learners generally get away with things like school violence”.*

Each participant emphasises that the school management as well as the Department of Basic Education should support teachers when dealing with school violence, to resolve issues faced by teachers within the intermediate phase of School A.

#### ***Sub-theme 4: Participants Reflection on Participating in Study***

Lastly, participants were asked to reflect on their involvement in this study, and if it aided their professional development and created awareness. All participants agreed that their experiences may create an expanding awareness of how school violence impacts teachers' practice and well-being. Some participants mentioned:

***P1:*** “Most teachers today deal with the same issues surrounding school violence. I feel that this study will particularly aid novice teachers, as school violence is unpredictable and affects each teaching individual differently. Personally, this study has allowed me to prioritise my well-being more”.

***P2:*** “It has largely aided my professional development. It has made me aware of the reality of the classroom because all learners have different backgrounds. It made me realise that teachers need to be present for learners and create a safe space so violence can be avoided. It also made me aware of the fact that I am not alone in this journey and can seek help/support from other teachers”.

According to the findings, Participants 1 and 2 found that their involvement in this research emphasised the importance of their well-being and the honest realities teachers face when dealing with school violence. Participant 1 concedes numerous teachers presently face corresponding challenges relating to school violence. Her acknowledgment depicts a recognition that these obstacles are not distinct events, but rather systemic concerns affecting a wide range of educational professionals. As for Participant 2, She contends that her participation in the investigation has notably improved her vocational growth by providing her with valuable understandings and views on school violence.

### **5.2.12 Participants' feedback on the study**

Some of the following findings emerged as a result of the 'Feedback Form', which was constructed to acquire a stronger comprehension of the participants' experience as well as to uncover any matters for improvement within this study. Al-Bashir (2016) states that feedback has the potential to be significantly valuable to the research manager as it improves the accuracy and dependability of the investigation methodologies (Al-Bashir, et al., 2016).

#### ***Sub-theme 1: General Feedback from Participants***

According to the findings, when participants were asked about any challenges they experienced within this study, all participants stated that they had not experienced any:

***P1: "No".***

***P2: "No, it was easy to understand and comprehend".***

***P3: "No, all questions were clear and viable".***

***P4: "No, not really".***

Additionally, when participants were asked how the researcher could enhance this study many mentioned the following:

***P1: "The researcher should provide positive feedback on how to deal with situations concerning school violence".***

***P2: "The researcher should provide examples of what school violence is or add some scenarios. I feel terms such as well-being should be specified by the researcher as it has a wide variety of types".***

***P3: "Add a question for teachers to add what they think".***

***P 4: "The study is adequate".***

From the above extracts, it is clear that the researcher needs to be more specific when using terms that have a wide range of definitions. The researcher should, therefore, add a 'clarification of term' that includes well-being, school violence, etc. Consequently, participants were asked if the researcher approached the study subjectively, and all participants answered 'no'. Similarly, when questioned if the topic makes them uncomfortable, all participants answered 'no', as all generally stated that this research topic needs to be exposed more to teachers as well-being is an essential part of the teaching job.

Lastly, when participants were asked if they had any advice for the researcher, they stated the following extracts:

**P2:** *"Keep going! The questionnaire was beneficial as it allowed me to reflect as a novice teacher".*

**P3:** *"This is a great topic to explore, many individuals do not realise how teachers are affected by issues concerning school violence and how it changes you as not only an educator but also a person".*

**P1:** *"Please shed light on more teachers' experience concerning this matter, as it is progressively getting worse. Teacher rights need to be advocated more often".*

**P 4:** *"Good Luck and please create awareness for struggling teachers".*

Considering the above findings, it is evident that many teachers feel overlooked when dealing with challenging issues such as school violence, as many express the need for teachers' rights to be heard.

### **5.2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the study's data interpretation. Thematic analysis was employed to present, address, and understand the key findings. The study's findings emanated from the semi-structured interviews and discussions of the

topics. The study explored the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. Therefore, the experiences revealed within the findings indicated that school violence does influence intermediate-phase teachers' practice and well-being. In addition, the findings conceded that verbal violence was the most common form of school violence found in School X. Verbal violence and learner defiance may result in mental wounds that promote self-doubt in teachers and their overall practice. Furthermore, violent experiences encountered by teachers were found to influence teacher resilience in their teaching and well-being, as fostering emotional resilience may assist teachers to adapt effectively to stressful work environments and advance their careers.

### **5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter imparts an overview of the data procured from the thematic-centred analysis. It is derived from twelve main themes found within the study. The chapter aimed to clarify the primary objective of this study, which explored the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. This was done via semi-structured interviews with four teacher participants. During the interviewing, bilateral interviews were performed with participants who had experienced physical or verbal forms of school violence. The next chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations for this study.

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## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to explore the influence of school violence on teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. Following an in-depth review of the data, numerous findings emerged. This chapter provides the conclusions and relevant recommendations that stem from the findings outlined in the preceding chapter.

#### **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the current findings a range of recommendations emerged regarding how to mitigate the consequences of school violence on teachers' job practices and their emotional well-being. The recommendations are divided in two categories; 6.2.1, recommendations for informing education policy and school level practice; and 6.2.2, recommendations for aspects of education that require further academic investigation. The recommendations for school policy and practice and those for academic research are offered below.

##### **6.2.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

The recommendations below seek to inform and improve educational policies, school leadership practice, and institutional support systems related to school violence and the professional identity and functioning of teachers.

- The recommendations below seek to inform and improve educational policies, school leadership practice, and institutional support systems related to school violence and the professional identity and functioning of teachers.
- School-Based Support Structures: School management teams must provide tangible support to teachers dealing with violence, including proper implementation of disciplinary systems (e.g., Saturday detentions) and post-incident debriefings.

- **National Awareness and Training Programmes:** The DBE should roll out workshops and training sessions to equip teachers with skills to handle violence in schools. The workshops should also investigate issues of burnout and employee emotional fatigue, and access to healthcare professionals including social workers and counsellors.
- **Security and Mental Health Staffing:** Allocate funding to ensure at least two security personnel are present during school hours. Schools should have access to qualified therapists and/or social worker if teachers are managing trauma or psychologically due to school violence.
- **Proactive DBE Engagement:** The WCED should conduct school visits to engage directly with staff and management, identifying recurrent safety challenges and designing targeted interventions that are both preventative and responsive.

### **6.2.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

The suggestions below indicate some key areas for further research to enhance understanding of school violence and its consequences for teachers, and informing future actions and policy development.

- The WCED or DBE should conduct a large-scale nationwide study to determine the most common type of school violence experienced in South African primary schools. These findings can be used to inform a national framework of intervention for school violence, including policy, school-based programs of support, staff training, and support services.
- Future studies should explore the long-term psychological and professional impacts of school violence on teachers across different phases (foundation, intermediate, and senior) and geographical contexts, including both urban and rural settings.



- Additional research could also examine the perspectives of other school stakeholders (such as learners, parents, and school governing bodies) to understand how broader community dynamics contribute to, or could help reduce, school violence.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study revealed that teachers expend an overwhelming amount of their time overcoming conflicts related to various types of school violence rather than engaging in teaching and learning. In addition, a great amount of attention was given to the plausible difficulties teachers experience when working in non-conducive learning environments. Therefore, the study suggests that school violence has a significant influence on teachers' resilience in their teaching and overall well-being. Considering the lack of research on teachers as victims of school violence, this research study ultimately aims to identify teachers' experience of violence and its negative effect on teachers' overall wellness. Thus, this study may facilitate and contribute to the formation of preventative and support programmes for all teachers who have similar contacts with adverse students in precarious environments. In addition, the school needs to offer awareness discussions and sessions on several kinds of school violence. If not managed, these underlying factors may lead to the expanding disparity of unsafe teaching and learning environments for both teachers in South Africa, as well as students. Correspondingly, this study was conducted in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located within the Western Cape, with a largely homogenous group of individuals. Therefore, the results may not be universal to all teachers in different regions or with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the site, 'School X' has distinctive socioeconomic traits that may not reflect the general population; for example, the results can be influenced by factors such as teacher conduct, interactions with peers, and educational regulations.

### **6.4 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

The study affords an insight into the field of research on school violence in South Africa. This study investigated how school violence influences teachers' job practices and well-being in a Western Cape primary school. It raises further awareness of the challenges teachers face in conducting pedagogically effective

teaching, externally influenced and co-contaminated by learner aggression, as well as the nature of socio-economic environmental disturbances. A teacher's ethical duty to provide a safe, respectful teaching and learning space for learners is reversed in situations of persistent violence and systematic emotional burden, leading to inaction from teachers when faced by emotional burden, disciplinary consequences, and compromised teacher-learner relationships (NASDTEC, 2015). Learners are expected to be held accountable to follow behaviour expectations; as incidents of school-based violence surge, sometimes involving both learners and teachers, there is a ready-made deficit of credibility (Govender, 2015). This issue transcends the pedagogical situation and impacts families and communities, and the larger educational system. The recommendations are premised on a recognition that the research findings demonstrate the need for collaboration among all stakeholders to develop a supportive and safe school instructional/template educational experience that develops and nurtures teachers' resilience and enables teachers to provide pedagogically effective teaching even in difficult conditions. The following outcomes were found, as per the study's research question and purpose:

- How does teachers' experience of violence influence their practice and well-being in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape?
- To explore the types of school violence teachers, experience in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape.
- To investigate the violent experiences, which influence teachers' resilience in their job practices and overall well-being.

#### **6.4.1 Teachers' experience of violence influences their practice and well-being in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape**

According to the findings, all teachers within this study were found to have been affected by school violence both physically and emotionally, as well as professionally. The finding concluded that the physical and verbal occurrence of

school violence experienced by intermediate-phase teachers often affects their stress levels, anxieties, passion for teaching, and overall confidence, as well as general security. According to Arvidsson (2019), burnout among teachers is common due to insufficient optimism and demanding work environments. Furthermore, the unexpected possibility of classroom violence ultimately leaves teachers discouraged, unhappy, and burnout both physically and mentally. Pahad (2011) revealed that teachers who have been impacted by school violence often endure low motivation and an incapacity to function adequately in their position. De Cordova and Berlanda (2019) further supported this claim, as they stated that teachers may feel lacking motivation in the profession. These shifts in professional identity may hamper their functioning within the classroom. The finding further concluded that teachers' professionalism was frequently disadvantaged, as violent incidents impeded their lesson time as well as their general sense of accomplishment. As a result, many teachers changed their teaching style and employed a less engaging approach to save time and curriculum coverage. All participants highlighted that by employing a teacher-centred approach, they were able to reduce the occurrences of violence. According to Djemoui (2018), a teacher-centred setting curbs indiscipline as the pupils play a passive role. The student, contrary to the teacher, is attentive to what the teacher teaches. They prioritise recollection and reiterate information to the teacher. Furthermore, misconduct cannot be allowed. Any contact outside the teacher's consent is considered improper and is immediately discouraged. In addition, the findings uncovered that teachers generally lose motivation when overwhelmed by school violence, as they tend not to put much effort into their practice. For example, some teachers within the intermediate phase may opt to teach solely by employing textbooks.

#### **6.4.2 The types of school violence teachers experience, in a school intermediate phase, located within the Western Cape**

The findings revealed that teachers are more likely to experience verbal violence than physical violence. Teachers who participated in this master's study reported that verbal abuse is rampant and pervasive in the classroom environment, where teachers interact with pupils most frequently. Perils and obscenities to teachers, disparaging and offensive comments to teachers, embarrassing teachers,

deceiving teachers, and yelling at teachers are all examples of verbal abuse. According to Christina (2022), verbal abuse can harm a person's well-being in both subtle and explicit manners. In addition, the impacts of verbal violence on teachers, are similar to bullying repercussions. Non-physical aggression has a variety of consequences for an individual, which include, mental trauma, uncertainty, stress, alienation, despair, rage, reduced self-esteem, and suicidal ideation (Woudstra & Van Rensburg, 2018). Consequently, physical violence was the second most common form of violence experienced by teachers in this study. Some teachers had mentioned feeling stressed when violence erupted amongst learners, as they did not know how to deal with the situation. According to research, a human being is not obliged to sustain bodily injury or be present during an incident to be distressed or acquire post-traumatic stress-like symptoms. De Cordova and Berlanda (2019) highlight that teachers who are subjected to or witness physical violence may experience mental frustration, such as worry, nervousness, and even manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The persistent danger of violence in educational settings includes PTSD symptoms, which gradually demotivates the teacher and leads to burnout in the classroom. This culminates in inadequate productivity and, as an outcome, disappointing educational outcomes.

#### **6.4.3 Violent experiences influence teachers' resilience in their teaching and overall well-being**

Resilience was prominent in the participants' narrations, as the theme enabled teachers to persist in the school where they had witnessed violence. Grobler (2018) states that once an individual is resilient, he or she may competently change in the face of considerable adversity. Resilience denotes a favourable conclusion amidst adversity or the continuation of advantageous or successful functioning amid bad conditions. The findings in this study support this claim as all participants displayed some form of resilience when interviewed. Reasonably the teachers exhibited the competence to implement coping techniques, regardless of whether certain techniques were ineffective. The steps used by teachers revealed their resilience and professional understanding of responsibilities when confronted with school violence (Sibisi, 2021). Wabule (2020) states that teachers with resilience characteristics are inclined to cope in

difficult situations effortlessly and contribute to the profession. Mansfield (2012) further states that personal characteristics like as compassion, robust intrinsic drive, tenacity and determination, optimism, willingness to take chances, mental agility, and adaptability are components that promote teacher resilience and maintain them in the face of adversity. One coping technique had been to isolate oneself from aggressive learners by not intervening during disputes, limiting interactions with violent learners, and backing away when one-on-one clashes occurred. Another coping technique was simply prioritising a healthy work-life by implementing emotional boundaries. According to Ferreira (2023), implementing emotional boundaries is key to maintaining an individual's well-being while undertaking emotionally intense work such as teaching in violent environments.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: CPUT ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



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Faculty of Education  
Highbury Road  
Mowbray  
7700  
Tel: +27 21 680 1506

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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On the **24 October 2023**, the Chairperson of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethics approval (**EFEC 1-10/2023**) to L. Sambo for a MEd.

Title:	<b>Exploring how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape</b>
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Comments:

The Faculty Research Ethics Committee unconditionally grants ethical clearance for this study. This clearance is valid until **31<sup>st</sup> December 2026**. Permission is granted to conduct research in the **Faculty of Education**. Research activities are restricted to those details in the research project as outlined by the Ethics application. Any changes wrought to the described study must be reported to the Ethics committee immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zayd Waghid', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Date: 24 October 2023

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Prof. Zayd Waghid  
Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Education  
[efec@cput.ac.za](mailto:efec@cput.ac.za)

## APPENDIX 2: WCED ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



### Directorate: Research

[meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za)

Tel: +27 021 467 2350

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**REFERENCE:** 164E0FAF0000033-20230930

**ENQUIRIES:** Mr M Kanzi

Ms Laa'iqa Sambo  
203 Third Avenue, Grassy Park  
Cape Town  
7941

**Dear Laa'iqa Sambo,**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL:** EXPLORING HOW TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE INFLUENCE THEIR PRACTICE AND WELL-BEING IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL, LOCATED IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **1 November 2023 till 30 September 2024**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards,  
Meshack Kanzi  
**Directorate: Research**  
**DATE: 1 November 2023**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Meshack Kanzi', written over a horizontal line.

---

1 North Wharf Square, 2 Lower Loop Street,  
Foreshore, Cape Town 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 2531

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Private Bag X 9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47  
[wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za](http://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za)

## **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Exploring how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape**

### **Interview Questionnaire:**

1. What are the typical forms of school violence you have been confronted with?

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2. How has the prevalence of school violence influenced your practice and well-being?

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3. Can you describe any specific occurrences or situations involving school violence that have left an indelible mark on you personally and professionally?



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4. What aid and support mechanisms are available to teachers who have been touched by school violence in your school? How useful do you think these materials are?

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5. What coping mechanisms or practices do you apply to deal with the pressure and psychological toll of school violence?

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6. How do you think school violence impacts your relationships with pupils, as well as your capacity to create respect and sustain a pleasant learning environment?

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7. As a result of school violence, have you seen any transformations in your teaching technique or behaviour? If so, could you explain these changes and how they affect your teaching effectiveness?

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8. How do you disclose cases of school violence to parents and guardians? What are your obstacles or worries when addressing these matters with them?

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9. In the face of the issues provided by school violence, how can you guarantee that your personal well-being is prioritised? What methods do you use to strike a healthy work-life balance?

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10. Have you done any training or development that aimed at dealing with school violence? If yes, how has this training impacted your ability to negotiate these difficult scenarios?

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## APPENDIX 4: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

### Reflective Journal Question: (Participants reflection)

1. How did it feel to share my experiences of violence during the research process, and what emotions did it bring up for me?

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2. What impact have my personal experiences with violence had on my teaching approaches and relationships with pupils and co-workers?

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3. What new information or insights have I received from this study, that will help me in my future teaching career?

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4. Have I discovered any new self-care or support techniques because of my involvement in this study?

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5. What tools or support structures do I believe are lacking in resolving school violence, and how may these gaps be filled?

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6. In what ways has my involvement in this research aided my professional development and awareness of the issues other teachers in comparable situations face?

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## APPENDIX 5: FEEDBACK FORMS

### Feedback Form:

1. Did you find anything challenging or concerning within the study?

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2. What could the researcher do to enhance the study?

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3. Would you say that the researcher influences the study in a biased way?

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4. Does the topic make you feel uncomfortable?

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5. Do you have any feedback or advice for the researcher on his/her study?

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## APPENDIX 6: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



### Faculty of Education Ethics informed consent form

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

#### Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):

Principals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lecturers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Students	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)									

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by **Laa'iqa Sambo**, from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

An undergraduate project	<input type="checkbox"/>	A conference paper	<input type="checkbox"/>
An Honors project	<input type="checkbox"/>	A published journal article	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Masters/doctoral thesis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A published report	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **Selection criteria**

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because this study aims to exploring how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape.



**Title of the research:** Exploring how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape.

**A brief explanation of what the research involves:** Violence, primarily in schools, appears to be an expanding epidemic in South Africa (Boran & Taskan, 2021). Despite the establishment of many scholastic rules and strategies to avoid school violence, the DBE (Department of Basic Education) continues to disappoint teachers (Van Zyl, 2021). In fact, teachers are often more prone than pupils to be victims of school violence, as they are at the frontline of responding to violent individuals (Hill, 2010). This circumstance provides several issues to the teaching profession, as teachers can no longer feel safe and carry out their academic functions (Sibisi, 2021). With the current literature in mind, it is clear that many researchers do not discern the negative effects school violence has on teachers (Grobler, 2018). Rather, many scholars often examine the psychological impact of school violence on pupils (Christina, 2022). Whereby researchers frequently deem teachers as a repository for insight into student behaviour, or as practitioners of preventative programs, but rarely as victims (Galand & Lecocq, 2007). Therefore, as South African schools are presently plagued by school violence, the well-being of teachers cannot be overstated (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019). With learner-to-teacher violence on the rise, this study aims to investigate four intermediate teachers' experiences in violent primary schools, and how school violence influences teachers' practice and wellbeing. Considering the aim of this study, a qualitative research approach will therefore be adopted.

**Why is this research important:** This research study is important as it aims to explore how teachers' experiences of violence influence their practice and well-being in the intermediate phase of a primary school, located in the Western Cape.

**Benefits of research:** Although numerous investigations have delved into the roots and repercussions of school aggression, few have investigated teachers' perspectives and experiences in violent educational settings and how it affects

their practice and well-being (Berlanda, et al., 2019). These shortcomings are critical as it impede current knowledge of viable preventative measures that teachers may employ in violent schools. Additionally, this body of research may contribute key discernment to the influence school aggression has on teachers, as it could shape strategies and methods that promote teachers' protection and mental well-being (De Cordova, Berlanda, Pedrazza, & Fraizzoli, 2019)

**Incentives:** This study will be completely voluntary with no incentives included.

**Procedures:** This study will employ an in-depth semi-structured interview and reflective journals, as the primary research instrument. The in-depth semi-structured interview will consist of 10 open-ended questions. These questions will allow the researcher to probe further into the topics, enabling an analysis, of the complexities and reasons for violence in a school setting, and its impact on teachers' practice and well-being (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). During the third term of the school academic year, the researcher will obtain qualitative data from the four respective participants, with the use of the principal instrument, semi-structured interviews. The in-depth interviews will consist of one-on-one sessions between the participant and the researcher. The researcher will ask the 10 open-ended questions from the semi-structured interview questionnaire, and record the data collected.

**Right to withdraw/ voluntary:**

Each participant will receive assurances of anonymity, security, and confidentiality. Thus, the data acquired will used exclusively for the intent of the research being conducted. Participants will be handled with decency and reverence, to decrease compromising events for participants. Consequently, participants may elect to participate or withdraw from the research study at any moment of their choosing.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** This research will be carried out in a primary school in the Western Cape's southern suburbs. To ensure ethical considerations, the identity of the school will be kept confidential. As a result, the researcher will refer to the school as 'School X'. Both the school principal and the

participants will be needed to provide orthodox consent. This research study solicits the participation of four intermediate-phase teachers, who were at the forefront of responding to violent students. All participants will be provided with a formal letter of consent, whereby they are informed about the proposed research study. Participants selected, within the intermediate phase, are dissimilar in age, grade, and years of experience. To maintain ethical considerations, each participant's identity will remain anonymous in this study, therefore, the researcher will refer to each participant as 'Participant 1', 'Participant 2', 'Participant 3', and 'Participant 4'.

**Potential risks, discomforts, or inconveniences:** Psychological hazards may arise, as participants may find some topics stimulating psychological responses, while no physical testing will be performed in this research project.

**What will happen to the data when the study is completed:** This study will adopt a thematic approach to analyse the data. Common themes will be categorised, and similarities and differences will be identified (Nowell & Norris, 2017). Thus, the thematic approach will provide the study reliability, as it will highlight the common themes obtained from the participants on how teachers' experiences with violence affect their practice and well-being (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Tick the appropriate column		
Statement	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research.		
2. I understand what the research requires of me.		
3. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
4. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
5. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me because of my participation or non-participation.		
6. Comment:		

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Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

### Researchers

	Name:	Surname:	Contact details:
1.	Laa'iqa	Sambo	0824971599
2.			
3.			

Contact person: Laa'iqa Sambo	
Contact number: 0824971599	Email: <a href="mailto:laaiqasambo13@gmail.com">laaiqasambo13@gmail.com</a>

## APPENDIX 7: EDITING CERTIFICATE

### ***NERESHNEE GOVENDER COMMUNICATIONS (PTY) LTD***

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2016/369223/07

DR NERESHNEE GOVENDER (PhD)

neresh@ngcommunications.co.za

0847022553

WRITING PRACTITIONER • EDITOR • COPYWRITER • TRAINER

PhD-Management Sciences: Marketing (gender and media); PG DIP - Higher Education - Academic Developers (Cum laude); M-Tech Public Relations; B-Tech Public Relations (Cum laude); B-Tech Journalism (Cum laude); N-Dip Journalism

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21/10/2024

**LAA'IQA SAMBO**

Master of Education

CPUT

Supervisor: Dr N. Shaik

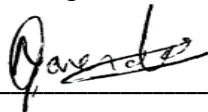
## **RE: EDITING CERTIFICATE**

**FOCUS AREA: EXPLORING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF HOW VIOLENCE INFLUENCE THEIR  
PRACTICE AND WELL-BEING, IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
LOCATED IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment the requirements for the degree - Master of Education in the  
Faculty of Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

This serves to confirm that this research has been edited for clarity, language and layout.

Kind regards,



Nereshnee Govender (PhD)

## APPENDIX 8: L. SAMBO TURNITIN REPORT

L Sambo 1 Final - CPUT Masters Thesis.docx

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

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## APPENDIX 9: L. SAMBO TURNITIN RECEIPT



### Digital Receipt

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