

**EDUCATORS AS VICTIMS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN SELECTED  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT OF THE LIMPOPO  
PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**By**

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**THESIS**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

In

**CRIMINOLOGY**

In the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**(School of Social Sciences)**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

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**2018**

## Declaration

I, DAVID LEEPILE KGOSIMORE, hereby declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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David Leepile Kgosimore

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Date

## **Abstract**

Schools mirror the culture of violence that is endemic in our society. They have therefore become the focus of research on violence. However, much of our knowledge on violence that occurs in schools is on learners as victims of educator-on-learner and learner-on-learner violence; and as perpetrators of learner-on-learner because a great amount of research focuses only on these types of violence. Very little research has been done on teachers as victims of violence, and of learner-perpetrated violence, in particular. The little knowledge that is available indicates that objectionable behaviour, such as ill-discipline, class disruptions, and aggression and violent behaviour are aspects of interpersonal relationships that may cause teachers stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health, and lead to them quitting the teaching profession.

This study investigated learner-perpetrated violence as a school and workplace violence. The results of this study, which are the outcomes of independently conducted qualitative and quantitative studies, confirm the parallel existence of learner-perpetrated violence and teacher stress and related ill health, behavioural reaction and organisational effects. The implications of these results are that the current legislation, the South African Schools Act, and regulations and policies associated with it, is inadequate in preventing the victimisation of teachers by learners, in their workplaces. Hence, this study recommends a model that can be implemented to prevent violence against teachers at a primary, secondary, and tertiary level. Learner violence is an occupational health and safety risk for teachers and needs to be handled in the same way as any other occupational health and safety hazard; hence the desire by teachers to be covered against violence at work under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

It is recommended that future research should focus on the incorporation of violence into the existing list of occupational hazard. This will force employers to take every step possible to prevent the victimisation of teachers in their workplaces. The reduction of incidents of violence against teachers has the potential of slowing teacher attrition down.

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## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to my wife, Cynthia Kenalemang; my sons, Ntsako and Letsholo; my mother, Gadifele; and my late grandfather, Nicholas Modiga.

## **Acknowledgements**

- First and foremost, I acknowledge the greatness of God and always believed that He would guide me up to the end of this project.
- I express gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. C.J. Roelofse and Prof. S. Mashegoane, for overseeing, supporting and ensuring the accomplishment of this work.
- I thank Mr Silas Makhubela and Mr Mmbengeni Netshidzivhani for the statistical analysis for this project.
- Special thanks to Prof. N.R. Malema and Prof. N.M. Jali. Simply enquiring about the progress I was making with my project motivated me a lot.
- I thank the Limpopo Department of Education, Capricorn District, for giving me permission to conduct research for my project in the schools under your authority.
- Last, but not least, gratitude is due to high school principals and all the teachers who participated in the interviews and in the survey.

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## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has a long history of violence (Abrahams, 2010) which, as Shabangu (2013) contends, has become part of the country's social culture. It manifests in vigilantism, gangsterism, taxi wars, xenophobic attacks, domestic violence, house robberies (Shabangu, 2013; Abrahams, 2010), and the rituals of violent service delivery protests (Fick, 2013). Studies by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013), Jacobs (2012), Bester and Du Plessis (2010) and De Wet and Jacobs (2006) attest to the fact that violence is also a phenomenon that schools in South Africa have to deal with. There is also confirmation from studies by Cunniff and Mostert (2012) and Steinman (2003) that violence is present in workplaces.

The violence referred to above is interpersonal violence. This is one of the three categories of violence which, according to Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi and Lozano (2002), were developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The other two categories are self-directed violence, and collective violence. Interpersonal violence is divided into two sub-categories, namely, family/partner violence and community violence (Krug *et al.*, 2002). Family/partner violence includes physical, sexual, and psychological violence against children, partners, and the elderly; as well as deprivation or neglect, particularly of children and the elderly (Krug *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, community violence is violence between individuals who are not related, and who may or may not know each other (Krug *et al.*, 2002). It occurs mainly in the streets, as street violence; or in institutional settings such as prisons, nursing homes, schools, and workplaces. One of the manifestations of community, which is the focus of this study, is school violence.

The mass media frequently reports on school violence (Kondrasuk, Greene, Waggoner, Edwards & Nayak-Rhodes, 2005). As a result, school violence has become the focus of research (Steffgen & Ewen, 2007) for a wide range of disciplines, including criminology, education, law, and public health. However, the majority of research in school violence, for example, Beninger (2013), Ncontsa and

Shumba (2013), Ngqela and Lewis (2012), South African Council of Educators' Report (2011), Chen and Astor (2010), Gasa (2010), Benbenishty and Astor (2008), Burton (2008), Ndamani (2008), Prinsloo (2008), De Wet (2007), Prinsloo and Naser (2007), Kollapen (2006), Prinsloo (2006), De Wet (2005), Ruff, Gerding and Hong (2004), focuses on violence perpetrated by learners on other learners; and on learners as victims of violence perpetrated by teachers. Hence, the current scientific knowledge on school violence, particularly in South Africa, is dominated by findings from learner-focused research, while knowledge on violence against teachers remains the missing link in the school safety discourse (Reddy *et al.*, 2013).

Literature on teachers as victims of school or workplace violence remains scarce (Ruff *et al.*, 2004) despite the fact that violence against teachers is quite a serious matter. The seriousness of this violence is reflected in the American Psychological Society's (2016) contention that violence against teachers is a silent national crisis in America; and in Kondrasuk *et al.*'s (2005) findings that teachers were three times more likely to be victims of school violence than were learners. The risk of violence for teachers emanates from their intensive interactions with learners over learning methods and outcomes and learner indiscipline. These interactions create tensions that lead to the verbal and physical victimisation of educators, particularly at secondary school level (ILO, 2003). In addition, teachers have to deal with their colleagues' violent behaviour, hostile parents (Steyn & Kamper, 2006); abusive supervisors and managers who harass and torment them (Howard, 2007); as well as external violence, such as gang violence when it involves some of the learners in the school. It is therefore surprising that researchers largely ignore violence that occurs in the workplace when they research violence (Simpson, 1991; Sinclair, 1999). Violence against teachers in schools is part of what Chappell and Di Martino (2006) see as the trend that has turned work environments into toxic and hostile settings. Howard (2007) veers from the narrow explanation of a toxic environment as one that exposes workers to hazardous materials only. A toxic work environment is also one that exposes workers to a physically, emotionally and mentally destructive workplace culture (Howard, 2007), and leaves the primary or direct victims and bystanders physically and psychologically scarred (Simpson, 1991).



Two studies in South Africa, namely De Wet (2006) and Du Plessis (2008), focused on teachers as victims of bullying by learners, and on secondary school teachers' experiences as witnesses of school violence, respectively. The researcher is not aware of any research that has investigated school violence as a workplace problem in South Africa, or that has explored educators as victims of workplace violence; and certainly not from a criminological or victimological perspective. This position remains unchanged despite the fact that some research findings indicate that:

- Teachers may be at an increased risk of different types of workplace violence, such as verbal threats, physical harm, bullying, and psychological harm (Tiesman, 2009);
- The intensive interaction of educators with learners over learning methods and outcomes as well as learner indiscipline, creates tension that becomes the source of verbal and physical assault of educators; particularly at secondary school level (ILO, 2003);
- Educators experience the effects of learner violence more than any other employee within the school system (Baker, 2003); and
- Psychologists have found that educators who were exposed to violence at school presented with several symptoms of chronic post-traumatic stress, which impacted negatively on their ability to teach as they felt trapped in the school environment (Kollapen, 2006).

The researcher's assertion is that the evidence presented above highlights the need to refocus research on school violence. It should therefore stimulate research in the area of workplace violence in general, and in school workplace violence, in particular. The knowledge acquired through this research could be invaluable for policy makers in their endeavour to address teacher attrition in South Africa.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Historically, most workplaces, particularly schools, have always been viewed as benign and violence-free environments where dialogue and debate formed part of the normal operating milieu (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). However, this situation has changed. Some of the work environments that have traditionally been immune to

violence, such as education and health facilities, are increasingly becoming affected by workplace violence (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). For example, as workplaces, schools have become dangerous for teachers as they not only have to grapple with the aggressive behaviour of their colleagues, but also with objectionable learner behaviour and poor discipline (Steyn & Kamper, 2006). Nevertheless, studies of school violence continue to be biased towards learners as perpetrators of violence against other learners or as victims of violence by teachers and other learners (Savage & Savage, 2010). Consequently, the antecedents as well as the consequences of violence experienced by teachers remain less documented in South Africa.

Much of what has been published on school violence in South Africa, as mentioned earlier, has overlooked teachers as victims. However, the following media headlines indicate that learner-violence against teachers is a reality:

- “South African schools are the most dangerous in the world” (Blaser, 2007) and, therefore, quite dangerous places for teachers to work in;
- “Pupil terrorise teacher with death threat” (Naidoo, 2007);
- “The blackboard jungle: The country’s educators are in crisis, with violence from pupils and depression a regular occurrence at SA schools” (Makwabe, 2007);
- “Pupil makes teacher’s life hell: Boy’s threats drove her away” (Kgosana, 2005);
- “Pupils in frenzied attack on principal” (Naidu, 2004); and
- The National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) foresees a stage when it would be difficult to recruit young people to the teaching profession if violence in schools continues (Mail & Guardian, 10 October 2006).

Other concerns about violence against teachers have been that:

- Violence in schools is bad for teachers’ working conditions (Marlet & Boni, 2003);
- Violence has devastating and long-lasting effects on the psychological and physical well-being of teachers (Cirillo, Pruitt, Colwell & Kingery, 1998);

- Workplace violence has both tangible and intangible costs for the employee and the employer (Beech & Leather, 2006); and
- Tangible costs of workplace violence can easily be calculated from sickness absence, premature ill-health, and early retirement, while the intangible costs may be calculated from loss of morale, problems with recruitment and retention, increased staff fear, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Beech & Leather, 2006), and the quality of teaching (Fisher & Kettl, 2003).

The evidence presented above indicates that school violence and its consequences on employees is not a myth and should be researched more than is currently the case. It is therefore important for researchers to also pay attention on teachers as victims of school violence because this will broaden our knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon. This study takes its cue from the preceding statement to investigate learner violence against secondary school teachers as a workplace phenomenon.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Workplaces are milieus for various types of violence, regardless of the industrial sector they serve. The school as a teachers' workplace is, like any workplace, also a milieu for various types of violence; including robbery, murder, assault, rape, harassment, and intimidation. Also, all stakeholders in the school system are potential victims of violence. However, two issues in particular, raise concern about workplace violence. The first one is that the workplace is largely neglected as a site for criminological research (Hocking & Guy, 2008) by South African mainstream criminologists, notwithstanding the extensive deaths and injuries that occur in this milieu (Hocking & Guy, 2008). Consequently, as scientists whose main focus is crime and everything related to it, South African criminologists lose what Hocking and Guy (2008) regard as a vital opportunity to provide a fuller recognition of what constitutes crime and violence. The second concern is expressed by Steffgen and Ewen (2007) and Ruff *et al.* (2004). They contend that research on school violence deals very poorly with the problem of teachers as victims of school violence.

Currently in South Africa, knowledge and insight into the phenomenon of school violence derives mainly from learner-on-learner and educator-on-learner violence research. Since policy makers rely on, and often use research findings and recommendations to develop policies, learner-focused research is unlikely to assist policy makers adequately to develop holistic school violence prevention policies. In fact, it has led to the development and implementation of school-based violence prevention policies and programmes that are mainly aimed at preventing violence against learners. The teacher, as a victim of school violence, is largely ignored. What is rather neglected is the fact that teachers themselves are increasingly subjected to harassment by learners (Lokmić, Opić & Bilić, 2013).

Since, as stated above, school violence affects all the role-players in the school and education sector, all forms of violence associated with the school social context need to be understood both separately and as a whole (Astor, Guerra & van Acker, 2010) if we hope to combat this scourge successfully. Therefore, focusing solely on learner victimization to the exclusion of teacher victimisation not only results in a distorted representation of the problem of school-based violence but also: (a) militates against a deeper understanding of teacher victimisation in school violence (Astor *et al.*, 2010), and (b) restricts an array of possible solutions to the complex problem (Espelage, Anderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, McMahon *et al.*, 2013).

The current dearth of research on violence against teachers has certain implications for policy makers. For example, the Department of Basic Education cannot fully meet its constitutional obligation to protect the rights and dignity of all the role players in the school system (including those of teachers), as stated in sections 10, 12(1)(c and e), 12(2), and 24(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The resultant gaps in their knowledge of school violence mean that policy-makers do not have adequate scientific knowledge to guide them in the development of policies and programmes through which they could deal effectively with violence against teachers, as such, turning schools into environments that are safe and conducive for teaching and learning.

It is important to broaden our knowledge of school violence by placing equal importance on violence against teachers in research on violence in schools. This

would enable us to build scientific knowledge which can be used to develop policies and strategies to prevent it. Therefore, knowledge about the factors that contribute to violence against teachers, the types of violence that are perpetrated against them, and the consequences of this violence on victims (both direct and indirect victims), that is pursued in this study, is intended to contribute new knowledge that will fill the gap that currently exists in the understanding of school violence and how it affects teachers in their workplaces. It is only when scientific knowledge on violence against teachers is available that relevant policies and programmes can be formulated to control it and reduce its effects on the victims, and the Department of Basic Education, as the employer.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study highlights the importance of including the victimisation of teachers in the research agenda on school violence. As it was pointed out earlier, the scarcity of research that focuses on this problem leaves a gap in our comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of school violence. It is anticipated that the results of this study will make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge on school violence in general, and to workplace violence in particular, as it focused on teachers as victims of violence in their places of work or in circumstances related to their work.

The workplace violence perspective of the victimisation of teachers, as well as the psycho-criminological approach to workplace violence adopted here, adds a new dimension to the conceptualisation and study of school violence. Of importance is that this study not only raises awareness about factors that contribute to learner violence against teachers and its nature, but also gives prominence to its consequences on the health and safety of teachers as workers. In addition, it also exposes the limitations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), Act No. 85 of 1993 as a workplace health and safety regulatory instrument that should secure all categories of workers against any hazard that poses a threat to their health and safety at work. It cannot address workplace violence in its current form. To this end, this study is set to contribute scientific knowledge that may be taken into consideration when guidelines or policy and procedures, through which matters

related to violence against teachers could be addressed, are developed. It is therefore envisaged that education planners and policy makers will find the recommendations that emanate from the results of this study invaluable in their quest to reduce the prevalence of learner violence against teachers and to turn schools into safer and healthier workplaces for teachers.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.5.1 Purpose of the study: Qualitative design**

#### *1.5.1.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers as victims of workplace violence in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

#### *1.5.1.2 Research questions*

The principal question that the study sought to answer was: What is the nature of workplace violence experienced by a group of secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa? Subsidiary questions were:

- What are the factors that contribute to learner violence against teachers?
- What types of violence by learners are teachers victims of?
- What are the consequences of learner violence on teachers?

### **1.5.2 Purpose of the study: Quantitative design**

#### *1.5.2.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of the quantitative component of the study was to statistically determine the relation between learner-perpetrated violence against teachers, or the threat thereof, and work-related well-being (stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and ill health), and

turnover intentions among a sample of teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

#### *1.5.2.2 Research Hypotheses*

A number of hypotheses were developed from the findings of the qualitative design and tested in the quantitative design. These hypotheses are presented in the methodology section of this study in Chapter 3.

### **1.5.3 Research design**

This study utilised a multi-method research design. A multi-method research design is a research design in which two or more data collection methods are utilised in one project (Esteves & Pastor, 2004). In the current project, two distinct methods were utilised to collect qualitative and quantitative data from samples of secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. Appropriate methods and procedures were followed to process and analyse each set of data. The strategy of complementarity was then applied. According to Roberts (2002), complementarity takes place when both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed within the same research design in order to generate complementary data sets which together to provide a more lucid explanation of the phenomenon under study than can be obtained using either method singly. The complementarity nature of this strategy is that the quantitative method builds upon the results of the qualitative method in a complementary fashion.

## **1.6 OUTLAY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1: This chapter presented an overview of the study, background information about the study, and the significance of the study. In addition, the research methodology is also outlined in this chapter, in which the research design is discussed.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, the concepts applicable in this study are defined, and the theoretical perspectives that guide the study are discussed. In this chapter, pertinent literature is also reviewed.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the research methodology followed in this study. The qualitative and quantitative research designs are discussed as well as the multi-method research design; the last-mentioned being the research design for the current study.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the results of the qualitative study are presented, analysed, and discussed.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, the results of the quantitative study, including the results of the hypotheses are presented, analysed, and discussed.

Chapter 6 addresses the question put to the respondents in the questionnaire; whether the Occupational Health and Safety Act should be extended to cover acts of violence in the workplace, or not. The chapter draws examples from other countries in order to illustrate the necessity of treating violence as an occupational health and safety hazard in South Africa.

Chapter 7: This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

The final section of the thesis includes references and appendixes.

## **1.7 SUMMARY**

The current scientific knowledge on school violence, particularly in South Africa, is dominated by findings from studies that focus mainly on learners as victims of learner-on-learner, and teacher-on-learner violence. The teacher, as a victim of school violence, is largely ignored. Hence, scientifically based literature on teachers as victims of school or workplace violence remains scarce despite the fact that violence is endemic in workplaces.



The gaps in the knowledge on teachers as victims of workplace or learner-perpetrated violence is at variance with the fact that violence against teachers is part of the trend that has turned work environments into hostile settings for workers. In the school environment, teachers are three times more likely to become victims of school violence than learners, according to Kondrasuk *et al.*'s (2005). However, it is the learners who feature prominently in research on violence in schools. The dearth of research on violence against teachers is also at variance with the fact that workplace violence, particularly client/customer violence, has been found to be endemic to service-oriented workplaces, such as schools and health facilities, which should obviously call for intense investigation into the problem. Researchers will therefore have to carry out large-scale research in order to close the existing gap in the knowledge on school-based violence. Policy makers can then tap into this knowledge in order to develop policies to prevent learner/workplace violence against teachers.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEARNER-PERPETRATED WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter sets the theoretical framework for this study. Concepts that will be utilised in this study will be theoretically defined. Where adjustments are made to the original definition, it will be for the relevance of the definition to the study. A multiple theoretical approach is adopted to adequately explain the concept under investigation because modern criminology rejects single theoretical explanations of crime or violence outright. This explanation is done within the eclectic theoretical framework. Furthermore, a review of pertinent literature on violence, school violence, workplace violence, occupational health and safety is also done in this chapter to demonstrate how or why this study fits into the broader field of workplace violence.

#### **2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION**

##### **2.2.1 Violence**

Comprehension of the concept “violence” precedes the understanding of school violence against teachers, which is also used interchangeably with workplace violence and school workplace violence against teachers in this study. It is only when the concept “violence” has been delineated that incidents of school violence against teachers can be identified, reported, recorded and dealt with (Wiskow, 2003).

Violence is intentional physical force, emotional torment, and abuse of power, by one or more individuals, designed to intimidate, dominate, or inflict pain on another (Manvell, 2012). Violence has harmful effects on the dignity, safety, health and well-being of the victim (Chen & Astor, 2011; WHO, 2006; Di Martino, Hoel & Cooper, 2003). This definition does not differ much from that of “aggression”, which is defined as behaviour that is directed towards another person or persons, and is carried out with the intention to harm (Aquino & Thau, 2009), injure, or cause the victim

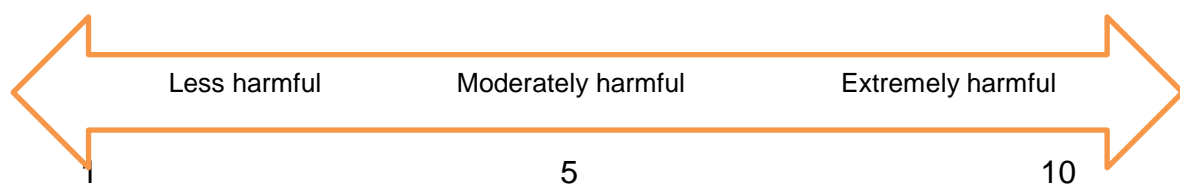
discomfort (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000). Agnich (2011) defines it simply as a continuum of aggressive behaviours. Manvell (2012) defines a continuum as a coherent whole characterized as a collection, sequence, or progression of characteristics or values varying by minute degrees. Extending this definition to human behaviour, Manvell (2012) defines violence continuum as a graphic representation of verbal and emotional abuses, at the one extreme, and more overt physical assaults, at the other extreme, that one individual may use against another.

Violence and aggression are intertwined. They have similar effects on the victims, and are sometimes used as synonyms. For example, Schat and Kelloway (2005) say that the terms workplace aggression and workplace violence have often been used interchangeably. However, where aggression and violence are used to refer to different classes of behaviour, aggression would refer to typically verbal and non-physical behaviours (Schat & Kelloway, 2005), which is similar to what Engel (1998) refers to as soft violence. Violence would then be reserved for physical behaviours (Schat & Kelloway, 2005), or extreme violence (Engel, 1998). For example, Neuman and Baron (1998) applied workplace aggression only to those behaviours that are verbal in nature, and to those that are physical but far less extreme. On the other hand, they applied workplace violence to behaviours that involve direct, and serious, physical assault that could even lead to the death of the victim.

Plotted on a violence continuum (see Figure 1), soft violence (Engel, 1998) or verbal and non-physical behaviours (Schat & Kelloway, 2005), and extreme violence (Engel, 1998) or physical behaviours (Schat & Kelloway, 2005), are perched at the extreme opposite ends of the continuum. For Espelage *et al.*, (2013) and Agnich (2011), behaviours that constitute violence incorporate at the one extreme end of the violence continuum, low-level and less serious or harmful non-physical forms of interpersonal violence. At the other extreme end of the violence continuum are the more or extremely serious or harmful physical forms of interpersonal violence. Moderately serious or harmful forms of violence are located in the mid-point between the extremes of the violence continuum. The progression from soft or low-level violence to serious or extreme forms of violence is symbolised by numbers 1-10, respectively; with 5 indicating moderately harmful forms of violence.

Behaviours that are classified under non-physical acts range from angry and hostile glares, through disrespectful behaviour, verbal abuse, verbal threats, threatening gestures, and intimidation (Espelage *et al.*, 2013; De Haan, 2008; Waddington, Badger & Bull, 2004). Physical acts, on the other hand, include abuse or assault that may cause minor injuries (Espelage *et al.*, 2013; Lokmić *et al.*, 2013; De Haan, 2008), and attacks that may cause serious injuries or death (Waddington *et al.*, 2004). (For further categorisation of physical and non-physical behaviours, see Table 1).

**Figure 1: Violence continuum**



Modelled after Manvell's (2012) Violence continuum

Researchers tend to localise their definitions of violence at the one extreme of the violence continuum to reflect the seriousness of the act. However, the shortcoming of a definition that focuses on the physical harm of violence is inclined to emphasise the visible harm and to omit several critical elements of harm, such as the emotional and psychological pain that results from domination of some over others (Henry, 2000). For example, Olweus (1999) defines violence as an aggressive behaviour where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body or an object (including a weapon) to inflict (relatively serious) injury or discomfort upon another individual. Similarly, Daniels, Marshall and Ochberg (1970) define it as the exertion of physical force by one or more individuals, aimed at injuring or destroying another, accompanied by anger and hostility. These definitions link to purely physical and serious acts and fail to incorporate threatening and intimidating behaviour. In contrast, Walker (2013) and Blaya (2003) locate violence at the opposite end of the continuum. They define it as verbal harassment, rumour mongering, and verbal threats that results in emotional harm and the hurting of others. In contrast, WHO (2006) looks at violence from both extreme ends of the continuum and define it as

any form of physical or emotional abuse, and unfair treatment of people, which results in real or potential danger for their health and dignity.

This study is oriented towards the health and safety definition of violence that was advocated by the ILO, ICN, WHO and PSI (2002) and Di Martino *et al.* (2003). Violence shall therefore refer to any wilful and unlawful physical or non-physical behaviour by a learner or a group of learners that is directed at a teacher, and is harmful to their safety, health and well-being.

### **2.2.2 Victim**

According to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP, 1999), victims are persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative in the country in which such acts or omissions take place. Based on this definition, victims of violence in this study are teachers who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through the wilful acts or behaviour by a learner or learners, and which are harmful to their safety, health and well-being.

### **2.2.3 Workplace**

A workplace is any premises where workers need to be or to go in order to perform their duty (ILO, 2003) in the course of their employment (OSHA, 1993), and which is under the direct or indirect control of their employer (ILO, 2003). These definitions broaden the way a workplace is defined and, for Hoel *et al.* (n.d.), they provide challenges for organisations to introduce new measures to ensure the health and safety of a wide range of employees. Although Friedman (1999) had raised concern about the school environment as a health and safety risk for teachers back then, the situation remains unchanged; school milieus continue to pose a risk to the health and safety of teachers. Therefore, noting that schools are not only places of learning, but also teachers' workplaces (ILO, 2003; Schonfeld, 2006), the school's physical

structure or any place where teachers perform their education-related duties shall be regarded as the teachers' workplace for the purpose of this study.

#### **2.2.4 Learner**

According to the South African Schools Act (hereafter referred to as SASA), Act No. 84 of 1996 a learner is any person who receives education or is obliged to receive education. For the purpose of this study, a learner is any person who has enrolled in a secondary or high school to receive formal education under the guidance of an educator, through systematic teaching and learning.

#### **2.2.5 Educator**

An educator is any person who teaches at a school, and whose employment appointment and terms and conditions of employment are regulated by the above legislation (SASA, 1996). However, the nomenclature that is commonly used outside the school system to refer to persons who are responsible for educating children in schools is "teacher". During the process of collecting data, the researcher discovered that this term also continues to be used in schools. The official term "educator", as defined in the South African Schools Act of 1996, will therefore be used interchangeably with the term "teacher" in this study.

#### **2.2.6 Employee**

Subject to the provisions of the OHS Act, an employee is any person who is employed by, or works for an employer and who receives or is entitled to receive remuneration. The provisions of the OSHA therefore render the relationship between Limpopo Province's Department of Education or School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and teachers, an employer/employee relationship. The term "employee" in this study shall refer to a teacher/educator who is employed by Limpopo Province's Department of Education or an SGB – whether permanently, temporarily or on a part-time basis – in a secondary school to perform the educative duty of teaching learners.

### **2.2.7 School code of conduct**

According to the national Department of Basic Education (2008), a school's code of conduct is a set of rules through which a school should commit itself to provide an environment that secures the rights and safety of all learners, teachers and parents, and is conducive for the delivery of quality teaching and learning. To attain this goal, the school's code of conduct: (i) spells out how learners should behave while they are on the school premises or when they are away from the school representing it or attending a school function; (ii) stipulates the disciplinary system and procedures to be followed by the school when a learner has transgressed the code of conduct; and (iii) prescribes sanctions for the transgression of the code of conduct.

### **2.2.8 School violence**

There is no single common definition of school violence (De Wet, 2007; Vettenburg, 1999). Three reasons may be advanced for this situation. The first one is that school violence is a very broad concept. It encompasses many forms of harm, including, but not limited to, victimisation from verbal harm, physical harm, sexual harassment, threats and weapon-related threatening and violent behaviours (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). The second reason is that the research community has varied the definition of what constitutes school violence as the research on the topic evolved and they became more aware of the many dimensions that are inherent in this phenomenon (Buck, 2006). In early research, school violence was defined in terms of such learner behaviours as insubordination, getting out of one's seat, chewing gum, sticking on other learners' backs, or even the rare breaking of a window (Goldstein, Apter & Harootunian, 1984). Definitions that evolved later tended to focus on violent criminal acts occurring on school grounds (Buck, 2006). Currently it is not uncommon to encounter definitions that define school violence across the whole spectrum of the violence continuum. It is defined in terms of intimidation, threat, harassment, robbery, vandalism, physical assault (with or without a weapon and including rape and other types of sexual battery), or murder that happens on school grounds or on buses going to and from school (Capozzoli & McVey, 2000; School Violence Resource Center, 2009).

The third reason is that some researchers continue to define the concept in a narrow and learner biased way, notwithstanding the progress that has been made in the field of study. For example, Cantor and Wright (2002) and Rabrenovic, Kaufman and Levin (2004), view school violence as various aggressive and antisocial behaviours among students that range from bullying and serious physical acts involving the use of lethal weapons, such as assault and even murder, to less serious physical behaviour such as shoving and pushing. DeVoe, Peter, Kaufman, Miller, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, eVoe *et al.* (2004) take a similar learner-focused approach. They view school violence as any behaviour that can make students fearful and affect their readiness and ability to learn.

Much more inclusive definitions that cover a wide range of violent acts that constitute school violence have emerged. School violence has been expanded to include behaviours that vary in severity and frequency, and can cause physical and psychological harm to the victim. These behaviours include, but are not limited to verbal threats, intimidation, vandalism, violence directed at staff, gang violence, and sexual harassment, the presence of weapons, dating violence, rape and murder (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005).

The Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002) defines school violence in a broad and somehow neutral way to accommodate the victimisation of all the role players within the school system, as well as the different types of acts that constitute it. According to the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002:1), school violence is "...any behavior that violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder". Prinsloo and Nesor (2007) follow a similar approach. They define school violence as any intentional physical or non-physical condition or act resulting in physical or non-physical pain that is inflicted on the recipient of that act while the recipient is under the school's supervision. Similarly, Furlong and Morrison (2000) define school violence as a multifaceted construct that involves criminal and aggressive acts in school, both of which affect learners and teachers by harming the school's climate of teaching and learning.



The approach in this study is that a definition of school violence that is grounded in workplace violence is more germane to the understanding of school violence against teachers than one that reduces it to mere “school violence”. This approach will contribute towards making teachers the focus of research on school violence research.

### **2.2.9 Workplace violence**

Violence in the workplace emerged as an occupational health and safety issue in the late 1980s, became a cultural and media phenomenon in the 1990s, and has now settled in as a chronic workplace concern (Schouten, 2006). Violence that occurs in one’s place of work or in situations in which the victim is performing work-related duties is called workplace violence. Various terms, among them, “workplace incivility” (Yoder-Wise, 2015), “student bullying of teachers” (SBT) (Garrett, 2014), “educator-targeted bullying” (ETB) (De Wet, 2010), and simply as “violence against teachers” (VAT) (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007; Chen & Astor, 2008; Wilson, Douglas & Lyon, 2011; Turkum, 2011; Mooij, 2011), have been used to refer to workplace violence.

Yoder-Wise (2015) applies the term “workplace incivility” to refer to a wide range of behaviours against workers. They range from ignoring others, to yelling, and eventually to physical and non-physical or psychological personal attacks. Anderson and Pearson (cited in Hutton, 2006), define workplace incivility as a low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. The nature of workplace incivility led Gallant-Roman (2008) to the conclusion that it becomes a precursor of more serious forms of workplace violence if it is ignored. This progression is best explained by the Broken Windows Theory, which is discussed below on pages 27-29.

De Wet (2010) uses the term “educator-targeted bullying” to refer to aggressive physical, verbal or non-verbal acts that are perpetrated by learners against teachers. Such acts are deliberate and repeated, and are aimed at harming the teacher victim physically, emotionally, socially and/or professionally.

According to Garrett (2014), SBT comprises a multitude of direct or indirect behaviours. Direct forms of SBT may be physical (for example: hitting, spitting, shoving, hair pulling, inappropriate touching, and abusive telephone calls) or non-physical. Non-physical bullying may be verbal (for example: the use of sexually inappropriate or abusive language, racist remarks, cruel and hurtful comments about teachers' personal appearance or character orientation). It may also be non-verbal (for example: making offensive gestures and noises, staring, giggling or mocking the teacher, use of intimidating and threatening facial expressions, eye contact and body language, slamming or throwing objects or damage to or theft of teachers' property).

Indirect SBT typically takes the form of non-verbal behaviours which may include: purposely ignoring or isolating the teacher (Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2004), disruptive behaviour has also been recognised as a form of indirect SBT (Debarbieux, 2003), include: students talking out of turn and making insolent comments (Parzell & Salin, 2010), persistent tardiness or refusal to obey instructions (James *et al.*, 2008) humiliating the teacher in front of staff or other students (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012) According to Garrett (2014), indirect bullying behaviours are intended to cause psychological and emotional distress to the recipient and damage to their social status among their peers.

What is common between these different ways in which violence against teachers is conceptualised is that they all point to the physical, verbal, and non-verbal acts by learners that are meant to harm teachers physically, emotionally, socially, or professionally. These elements are consistent with the definitions of workplace violence that follow below.

In their study, Martin, Mackenzie and Healy (2012) provided a workplace-oriented definition of violence as: "Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work as a secondary school teacher, that was perpetrated by pupils, colleagues or members of the public" (p. 3). Other researchers, who, like Martin *et al.* (2012), provide a workplace-oriented definition of violence, define workplace violence in either a broad or narrow way. For example, ILO (2004), Mayhew and Chappell (2005) and Steinman (2003) adopt a broad definition of workplace violence.

For ILO (2004), workplace violence is as any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct, and results in a worker being assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of performing their work. Similarly, Sullivan *et al.* (2004) and Steinman (2003) also define workplace violence in a broad and more inclusive way as incidents where employees are physically or emotionally abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work. In contrast, Verdugo and Vere (2003) define workplace violence in a narrow way as any act or behaviour that violates an employee's right to be safe from fear or injury while at work.

When behaviours that are subsumed under the concept "workplace violence" are plotted on the violence continuum in terms of their severity, they range from negative and often noxious and aggressive interpersonal behaviours (Agnich, 2011; Gallant-Roman 2008), such as murder, homicide, assault, to threats and verbal abuse (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007). These are behaviours that teachers experience from learners in their places of work.

Various phrases are often used as synonyms of "learner violence against teachers". For example, Garrett (2014) refers to it as "Student Bullying of Teachers" (SBT), while De Wet (2010) calls it "Educator Targeted Bullying" (ETB). Noting that schools are places where teachers work (Schonfeld, 2006), and that the general aim of this study is to understand the violence that is perpetrated by learners against teachers at school, the concept "school violence", when it is applied in the context of the violence that is committed by learners against teachers, shall have the same meaning as "workplace violence" in this study.

Researchers usually accompany their definition of workplace violence with a detailed description of the types of this violence (Fisher & Lab, 2010). These types of workplace violence encapsulate the perpetrator's relationship with the victim or workplace (Bowie, 2002). The most common workplace violence typology is one developed by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) in 1995 (Bowie, 2002). This typology divides workplace violence into three categories: Type I, Type II, and Type III. Researchers have since modified the original three-type workplace violence typology into four types by adding Type IV

(Bowie, 2002; Bowie, Fisher & Cooper, 2005), and Type V (Fisher & Lab, 2010) workplace violence. The summarised version of the explanation of these types, as presented in Bowie (2002), Fisher and Lab (2010), and Bowie *et al.* (2005), is presented below.

- Type I (Criminal intent or intrusive) workplace violence is committed by an outsiders, usually criminals, who have no legitimate relationship with the affected employee or organisation.
- Type II (Service- or consumer-related) workplace violence is committed by the recipient of some product or service offered by the workplace and who therefore, has a legitimate relationship with the organisation offering the service. Perpetrators of this violence include customers, clients, patients, students, for example; while victims include police officers, prison staff, health care workers, and teachers, to name but a few.
- Type III (Employee-on-employee) workplace violence involves one employee attacking or threatening another in the workplace. The perpetrator has an employment relationship with the affected workplace by virtue of being employees or past employees of the business or organisation. Perpetrators of this violence include disgruntled employees who have been suspended or dismissed from a job, or employees who have problems with management.
- Type IV workplace violence is committed by someone who has a personal relationship with an employee of an organisation. The violence is a spill over, into the workplace, of a domestic conflict and may involve a wife/husband or girlfriend/boyfriend.
- Type V (Organizational violence) is committed by organisations against its employees. Bowie (2011) contends that organizations commit Type V workplace violence when they knowingly and unnecessarily place their workers in hazardous or violent situations or when they allow a climate of abuse, bullying, or harassment to thrive in the workplace.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers as victims of Type II workplace violence which, according to the typologies discussed above, is perpetrated by learners. For the purpose of clarity, Type II workplace violence is synonymous with learner-perpetrated violence, and the two concepts are used interchangeably in the

current study. The researcher contends that Type II workplace violence is intricately linked to Type V workplace violence because its prevalence depends on the steps that organisations, as employers, take or fail to take, to curb it. According to Bowie (2011), organisations, as employers, perpetrate Type V workplace violence when they fail to fulfil their duty of care to provide a safe and healthy work environment for their employees and allow a climate of abuse, bullying, or harassment to thrive in the workplace.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The fundamental step that has to be taken in an endeavour to understand school violence is to review general theories that explain the genesis of the violent and aggressive behaviour in the human being (Estévez, Jiménez & Musitu, 2008). Criminology is well positioned to offer such a review. Criminologists' point of departure is that no one model provides a complete explanation of violence in school and elsewhere (Schonfeld, 2006; Bergman, 1984; Baron & Byrne, 1981). In fact, modern criminology rejects single factor or single theoretical explanations of crime or violence outright. For example, Ainsworth (2012) avers that it is naïve to presume that there could be one factor which could account for the vast array of behaviours defined as violence. No single factor can adequately explain violence, argues Pease (2011). With regard to theories, Rosenfeld (2010) argues that no single theory dominates criminological approaches to the study of violent crime. In support, Pease (2011) asserts that no single theoretical explanation of violence is better than any other.

Whereas, because of their nature, non-integrative theories tend to ignore more factors than they consider, and are therefore less attractive to modern criminologists, integrative theories are more appealing because, according to Barak (2002), they allow for a creative plurality of knowledge-based frameworks. According to Hagan (2011) and Turner and Blevins (2009), criminologists who subscribe to the integrative theoretical approach to crime and violence, such as Thornberry and Elliott, and Tittle, Moffitt, respectively, cite numerous factors that contribute to crime and violence. These factors include learning, extreme permissiveness and freedom, subculture of violence, excessive materialism, poverty and unemployment,

environmental decay, and overly lax or erratic childrearing practices (Shepard, 1981). Therefore, they utilise a host of bio-psychological, social-structural, social-process and environmental theories singly, but often in combination and in a complementary way, to explain the complex factors that are associated with the violence that manifests itself in criminal behaviour and criminal victimisation. The reasons for doing this are: (i) events in the physical or social environment in which crime and violence occur are generally very complex (Shepard, 1981); and (ii) an individual act of criminality or violence is sometimes best understood as a reaction to immediate circumstances and at other times as an expression of an enduring behavioural disposition (Wilson & Herrenstein, 1985).

Some researchers who study workplace violence subscribe to the notion of the multi-factor explanations of crime or violence. For example Di Martino *et al.* (2003) warn against over-emphasising any single factor in the aetiology of violence. They argue for the interplay of a host of factors at the individual, organisational and environmental levels. Espelage *et al.* (2013) take a similar approach. They contend that a multi-systems approach is best suited for attaining a comprehensive understanding of workplace violence against teachers because of the complexity of factors associated with it. For example, violence that occurs in the workplace may be a reflection of an individual's reaction to the enforcement of rules and denying clients' requests or demands (Sheridan, Henrion, Robinson & Baxter, 1990). It may also be triggered by situational factors such as overcrowding, provocation, management practices (Davis, 1991); as well as environmental and interpersonal factors (Whittington, 1994).

The social, psychological and ecological environment of the school, such as, class cohesion, disregard for rules, student participation, ecology of the school, quality of the class rooms, and time pressure, to name but a few, are factors that are central to school violence (Steffgen & Ewen, 2007). Khoury-Kassabri, Astor & Benbenishty (2009) indicated that learner violence against teachers is influenced by learners' individual factors, such as gender and age. Espelage *et al.* (2013) and Kratcoski (2012), on the other hand, attributed it to school contextual factors such as disorganised school structures, negative school climate, lack of administrative and collegial social support, school and class size, ineffective school intervention

programmes and codes of conduct. The interaction of these variables in incidents of violence varies too widely and is far too complex to afford the luxury of a simple and unitary explanation (Shepard, 1981; Baron & Byrne, 1981) of school violence.

The foregoing discussion advocates a multi-theoretical approach in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of violence. The stance taken in this study is that this can be done within the Interactional and Social-ecological perspectives. A number of theories that fall within these perspectives will be discussed briefly to enhance the explanation of violence. The researcher takes cognisance of the fact that these theories are not mutually exclusive. Elements of a theory that is discussed under the Interpersonal Perspective may well reflect a Social-ecological Perspective, and vice versa. The Differential Risk Theoretical Model and the Enabling System Theoretical Approach will be discussed under the Interactional Perspective, while the Ecological, the Broken Windows, and the Liability theories will be discussed under the Social-ecological Perspective. The aim is to lay a foundation for an eclectic theoretical approach through which learner violence against teachers may be understood.

### **2.3.1 The Interactional Theoretical Perspective**

The Interactive Perspective underlines the interactive character of human behaviour, and the fact that violence is the result of the interaction between the individual's characteristics and the circumstances of the surrounding social context (Estévez *et al.*, 2008). According to Espelage (2014), the ABC (antecedent-behaviour-consequence) model within the Interactional Perspective provides a structured process-oriented mechanism that can be applied to better understand and prevent workplace violence and, by the same token, violence directed towards teachers. The A in the model, represents antecedents of workplace violence. They include the characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim, as well as the workplace environmental factors. The Behaviours, or B, in the model, are the hostile reactions to the antecedents of workplace violence. They manifest in actual violence in reaction to hostile relations between employees or the users of the service offered by the workplace; and because the workplace environment is conducive for such hostile reactions to take place. The hostile reaction of an employee or the consumer of the service offered by a workplace leads to consequences, C, actions or series of events that flow from responsive behaviours (Espelage, 2014). A teacher who is

empowered with the knowledge and understanding of the ABCs of learner behaviour should be able to prevent violent behaviour by learners.

**(i) The Differential Risk Model of criminal victimisation**

This model identifies the following factors as determinants of criminal victimisation: socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and residential area; exposure to high-risk situations and environments; associations, namely that individuals who are in close personal, social or professional contact with potential offenders run a greater risk of being victimised; and being in dangerous places (Davis, 2005). Conflict may arise during the interaction between an employee and a customer, client or recipient of a service during the offering and receiving of such a service. In the case of teachers, this exchange will take place with the learner during the teaching-learning encounter.

**(ii) The Enabling Environment Perspective**

Remboldt (1994) introduced the perspective of the “enabling environment” as one of the perspectives that could contribute to our understanding of the genesis of violence in schools. According to this perspective, school violence is associated with an environment created by administrators’, teachers’, other staff’s, parents’, and learners’ injudicious beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and behaviours, which unwittingly allow and encourage learner violence to thrive by preventing those who engage in it from understanding and experiencing the consequences of their behaviour (Remboldt, 1994).

The “enabling environment” perspective may be applied to explain learner violence in schools in South Africa continue unabated notwithstanding the Department of Basic Education’s and schools’ policies to combat it. The relevance of the “enabling environment” perspective in this study is that it can also be applied to provide answers to pertinent questions raised by some of the participants in the qualitative study, about the effectiveness of schools’ codes of conduct and other government policies that are aimed at rooting out learner violence from the schools.



### 2.3.2 Social-ecological Perspective

The Social-ecological theory was first introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s as a paradigm to explain the relationship between the environment and the different stages of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Social ecological models are usually used to describe the interactive characteristics of individuals and environments that underlie health outcomes (Golden & Earp, 2012). Akin to the development of a crime prevention model that is based on the public health model of the prevention of diseases, Espelage *et al.* (2013) contends that the Social-ecological Perspective has become a dominant theory in the study of violence. It has been applied by a considerable number of researchers, such as Wilson *et al.* (2011), Hong and Espelage (2012) and Golden and Earp (2012), to illustrate that no single factor can explain why teachers are at risk of school violence more than any other worker in the school system.

The Social-ecological Theory posits that individual attitudes and behaviours are shaped by a range of nested contextual systems that include family, friends, school, work, community, and social environments (Espelage *et al.*, 2013). For example, psychological studies of school violence acknowledge that violent acts occur within social contexts; that is, classrooms, schools, neighbourhoods and families, and involves complex social interactions between and among individuals (Espelage *et al.*, 2013). The Ecological Systems Theory provides an integrative framework for understanding the multi-level factors influencing the individual. According to this framework, the *chrono-*, *macro-*, *exo-*, *meso-*, and *microsystem* levels are all influences that shape individual attitudes and behaviours (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Hong, Cho, Allen-Meares & Espelage, 2011). A short explanation of these levels in the context of school violence against teachers is as follows:

- The chronosystem represents the dimension of time or historical context. This system can impact the individual through external events, such as promotion, or internal events, for example, teacher stress or burnout.
- The macrosystem refers to abstract influences such as cultural values customs, and laws. In the school context, the macrosystem impacts on the teacher through its indirect influence on the exosystem, mesosystem and microsystem; and

- The exosystem refers to the social context with which the individual does not have direct contact, but which affect them indirectly through the microsystem; that is, through the work contexts and learners. For example, school policies related to the conduct of learners;
- The mesosystems refer to the interaction between components of the microsystem referred to above. For example, teachers-learner relationships and teacher-parent meetings;
- The microsystem is made up of the family, friends, and work contexts with which individuals (that is, teachers) have direct contact;

The five multi-level factors presented above demonstrate the complex interplay between the individual and their socio-ecological environment. The ontology of school workplace violence is embedded in these complex interactions.

### **(i) The Ecological Theory**

The Ecological Theory is a genre of theories that consider human behaviour as interplay between the individual's personal traits and the contextual social and physical environmental factors (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). From an ecological perspective, all the various behaviours of human beings, including crime and violence (Savage & Vila, 2003) are a function of the physical and social environment in which they take place (Maxfield & Babbie, 2006). The ecological theory also seeks the causes of problems that affect people's lives, such as workplace violence against teachers, from multiple sources. These include public policy and interpersonal, intrapersonal, institutional, and community factors (Eddy, Donahue, Webster & Björnstad, 2004). The causes of workplace violence against teachers could therefore be attributed to any of the following factors, as outlined by Eddy *et al.* (2004):

- Intrapersonal factors (such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and personality traits);
- Interpersonal factors (interpersonal processes, and primary groups including family friends, peers, that provide social identity, support, and role definition);
- Institutional factors (rules, regulations, policies, and informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviours);

- Community factors (norms or standards, which exist as formal or informal among individuals, groups, and organizations); and
- Public policy (national policies and laws that regulate or support health actions and practices, such as occupational health and safety).

In essence, the Ecological Theory addresses human behaviour in much the same way as the Socio-ecological Perspective by addressing the complexities of human behaviour as an interplay between the individual's traits and the contextual social and physical environmental factors.

## **(ii) The Broken Windows Theory**

The Broken Windows Theory was first expressed by political scientist James Q. Wilson and criminologist George Kelling (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). They assert that if a window in a building is broken and it is not repaired, people will assume that nobody cares about the building and more windows will be broken. Eventually, the building with broken windows will create a sense of disorder and neglect, which criminals will find attractive because they thrive in conditions of public apathy and neglect (Burke, 2005).

The implication of the Broken Windows Theory for criminology and criminal justice is that when low-level crimes are tolerated or ignored, the environment becomes increasingly conducive to more serious crimes (Zugelo, 2007). Taking their cue from the Broken Windows theory, Hale, Hayward, Wahidin and Wincup (2005) assert that residual indicators of petty criminality often remain available in public places and in this way, offer a symbolic invitation to more serious forms of criminality.

From a criminological perspective, the Broken Windows Theory also finds credence in the explanation of violence that occurs in the workplace. Firstly, the complexities of the violence that occurs in the workplace arise to some extent, from a culture that accepts violence as "part of the job" (McPhaul & Limpscomb, 2004:1). For example, because of the nature of their occupations, which expose them to the risk of falling victims of client/customer-related violence, nurses, teachers/educators, the police,

prison guards are often expected to tolerate the violence they experience as unavoidable and therefore part of the job they do. Therefore, this suggests that teachers and nurses should expect to be verbally or physically abused by their learners and patients, respectively, or their parents or relatives. Similarly, the police and prison guards should know that they always face the risk of violence because of the violent nature of the people they have to deal with.

Secondly, tolerating verbal abuse and threats of assault may lead to more serious forms of violence. McPhaul and Lipscomb (2004) aver that, when verbal abuse, threats of assault and low level violence are tolerated in a work environment such as a school, more serious forms of violence are likely to follow. For example, one could anticipate that learner discipline problems that are tolerated and, in the process, allowed to recur because they are “small” and seemingly harmless, would lead to a larger problem of crime and violence in schools (Snell, 2005). Thirdly, the ever-present risk of learner violence in schools may be related to the indecision of the authorities in dealing with this problem (Zugelo, 2007). The Broken Windows Theory suggests that school that do not deal decisively with minor learner discipline problems can expect even more serious learner problems, as a result.

### **(iii) The Lifestyle/exposure Theory**

The lifestyle/exposure model explains crime and violence in terms of the victim’s exposure to the risk of victimisation. It postulates that the likelihood that an individual will suffer criminal victimisation depends heavily on the concept of lifestyle (Hindelang, 2009). Lifestyle in this context refers to patterned, regular, recurrent, prevalent, and routine activities that people engage in on a daily basis; including both obligatory and vocational activities such as work, schooling, keeping house, and discretionary leisure activities (Walklate, 2007; Hindelang, 2009). Walklate (2007) therefore concludes that there is a link between one’s daily routine activities or lifestyle, and exposure to circumstances in which the risk of criminal victimisation is high. However, whether victimisation will take place or not, will be determined by, among others, the physical meeting between the potential offender and the potential victim at a particular place (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). In the case of school workplace violence, the meeting place for potential victims (teachers) and

potential offenders (learners) is the school. Therefore, according to the lifestyle theory/exposure theory, the explanation of school violence against teachers is that it is a function of their routine daily activities of going to work and interacting with learners (through teaching); in unsafe and hostile work environments.

### **2.3.3 Eclectic theoretical framework**

The theories presented above each enhance our understanding of crime and violence by providing different perspectives on the factors that are perceived to be associated with these phenomena. While Fast and Marchetti-Mercer (2009) argue for a single comprehensive theory that would explain and help us understand the myriad forms of violence, Thaler's (2012) view is that violence is too complex to be explained by a single theory. We need as many angles of vision as possible to bear on the phenomenon (Thaler, 2012). Turner and Blevins (2009) concur. They aver that no single theory can adequately explain all types of, and variations in crime and violence. Consequently, researchers need to integrate theories in order to understand the behaviour under study in a more complex, and potentially more complete manner (Turner & Blevins, 2009). This study has therefore borrowed theoretical constructs from the theories presented above and integrated them into an eclectic theoretical framework. The aim is to broaden the basis for the understanding and interpretation of learner-on-teacher violence. As Greene (1999) postulates, an eclectic orientation brings with it the responsibility to integrate effectively a number of theories in order to explain and intervene in human behaviour.

The assumption that was made from an eclectic perspective was that the probability of a teacher becoming a victim of violence that is perpetrated by a learner at their place of work is a function of:

- An enabling administrative system that inadvertently creates a toxic work environment and exposes its employees to the risk of all kinds of violence. This is consistent with the Differential Risk Model's postulation about the risk of violence posed by socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and the physical and social environment. In particular, the Enabling Environment Perspective under this model attributes school violence to the school's (that is, administrators', teachers', other staff's, parents') attitude that inadvertently allow

and encourage learner violence to thrive by preventing those who engage in it from understanding and experiencing the consequences of their behaviour. Similarly, the Broken Windows Theory's perspective is that, more serious forms of violence are likely to follow when schools fail to deal decisively with minor learner discipline problems. It will be argued later in this study that the disregard of the grade-age may lead to presence of learners who are beyond their grade-age, and the accompanying learner indiscipline associated with over-age learners;

- The physical and social conditions in the workplace which, according to the Ecological theory, are the result of public policy (for example, school disciplinary policies and the availability or lack of laws that regulate or support health actions and practices, such as occupational health and safety), and interpersonal factors, such as knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. One of the most common problems associated with these factors in schools is learner indiscipline. This problem is intricately linked to the inadequacy or failure of school rules, regulations and policies to constrain learner behaviour. The outcome is learner use of drugs, the carrying of weapons, and violence against teachers;
- The convergence in time and space, of the potential victim and offender through their lifestyle and routine daily activities, and in circumstances that expose the former to the risk of victimisation, as postulated by the Lifestyle/Exposure Theory and the Differential Risk Model of criminal victimisation. For example, the Lifestyle/Exposure Theory contends that the routine daily activities of teachers of going to work bring them in contact with learners, in work environments that expose them to violence by the latter. Similarly, according to the Differential Risk Model of criminal victimisation, individuals (for example, teachers) who are in close personal, social or professional contact with potential offenders (for example, learners), run a greater risk of being victimised
- Public apathy towards non-physical violence in the workplace, where behaviours such as insolence, verbal abuse, and threats of assault of workers are tolerated as part of the job; particularly for teachers, nurses, police, and emergency rescue services workers. However, as the Broken Windows Theory contends, failure by the authorities to adopt zero tolerance towards these behaviours may lead to more serious violence, as it will also become apparent later in the discussion;

- A culture that fails to recognise violence as an occupational health and safety hazard, but rather accepts it as entwined with an employee's job and therefore unavoidable, as the Broken Windows Theory the Enabling Environment Perspective contend;
- The ecological factors, such as school and classroom overcrowding, overage learners, and the lack of, or inadequate security in a school and the resultant prevalence of drugs and weapons, as the Ecological Theory would postulate; and
- Learners' sense of entitlement to use violence to solve problems. This happens when their seemingly harmless violence (the Broken Windows Theory) is ignored or tolerated by the authorities, and when this attitude unwittingly allows and encourages learner violence to thrive (the Enabling Environment Perspective).

## **2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The researcher embarked on five steps in the process of reviewing literature for this study. The first step was to find literature on violence, school violence and workplace violence, as well as relevant South African legislation. The second step involved the evaluation of this literature for one pertinent to teachers (and secondary school teachers in particular), as victims of learner- or client-perpetrated violence. In the third step, the literature was analysed to determine the factors that were possibly associated with this violence against teachers. The fourth step entailed identifying the types of violence by learners, that teachers were victims of in their workplaces. The focus of the literature review in step five was on the reported findings on the effects or consequences on teachers, of learner-perpetrated violence.

The researcher used a broad and inclusive search strategy in order to attain the above goals. Searches were performed in Ebscohost, ScienceDirect, Proquest, JSTOR, Sabinet databases, as well as Google Scholar for scholarly journal articles on general violence, workplace violence, school violence, learner violence against teachers, and teachers as victims of workplace/school violence. The key words that were used for the internet databases searches were: violence; workplace violence; occupational violence; client/customer-initiated workplace violence; school violence; learner-on-educator violence; student/pupil-on-teacher violence; occupational health

and safety; and violence and health and safety in the workplace. Each article that was located in the databases was reviewed to determine its relevance to this study. Other sources, such as books, statutes, teacher unions' magazines and manuals and policy documents on workplace violence were also reviewed.

#### **2.4.1 Factors that contribute to learner-on-educator violence**

The assumption that was made in the discussion of the theoretical perspectives was that the probability of a teacher becoming a victim of learner-perpetrated violence is a function of the interaction between multiple school-based factors. Researchers, among them, Astor *et al.* (1996), Krug *et al.* (2002), Orpinas and Horne (2004), (2005), Steffgen and Ewen (2007) and recently, Kratcoski (2012) Pahad and Graham (2012), and Espelage *et al.* (2013), have found this to be the case over the years. For example, Steffgen and Ewen (2007) identified the social, psychological and ecological environment of the school, such as, class cohesion, disregard for rules, student participation, ecology of the school, quality of the classrooms, and time pressure, as factors that are central to school workplace violence. Similarly, Espelage *et al.* (2013) attributed school workplace violence to school contextual factors such as disorganised school structures, negative school climate, and lack of administrative and collegial social support, school and class size, ineffective school intervention programmes and codes of conduct. Pahad and Graham's (2012) study examined educators' perceptions of factors that contribute to learner-on-learner violence and learner-on-educator violence. They found that factors that were associated with violence in the communities, such as widespread poverty, lack of resources, and the availability of illicit substances, such as drugs, alcohol and weapons, were also associated with learner-on-learner, and learner-on-educator violence in the school.

Malecki and Demaray (2003) classify risk factors for school violence into three categories. The first category comprises factors external to the school (Orpinas and Horne, 2004; Bickley-Green, 2007), such as the culture of violence in the neighbourhoods in which learners live and urbanicity. The second category includes the school's internal factors such as school policy, school enrolment size, class size (in terms of learner-educator ratios), and school security (Bickley-Green, 2007).



Learner-related factors such as indiscipline, bringing weapons to school, being in possession of alcohol and drugs in school, and aggressive behaviour (Ruff *et al.*, 2004), make up the third category.

#### 2.4.1.1 *Factors external to the school*

Some of the factors that influence learner violence are external to the school, and the schools can do nothing or very little to contain them. They include factors such as gang violence or the proliferation of drugs and weapons in society. Engel (1998) confirm the link between external factors and the violence that may occur at the workplace. She contends, for example, that violence that affects workplaces is a natural spill over into the workplace of the violence that permeates society, community and family life. Masitsa (2011) came to a similar conclusion; namely that, factors that threaten safety in schools are external to the schools. It may be deduced from the foregoing that, when learners engage in violence-inducing behaviours such as drinking, drug use, and the carrying of weapons, such behaviours would be an epitome of the problem that already exists in communities.

The assertions made above are consistent with the postulations of the Interactional Theoretical Perspective and the Socio-ecological Theory about the factors that contribute to crime and criminal victimisation. The former, as pointed out earlier, postulates that violent behaviour is triggered by factors in a person's internal or external environment. In particular, one model under the Interactional Theoretical Perspective, namely, the Differential Risk Model of criminal victimisation, identifies residential area as one of the factors that determine criminal behaviour and criminal victimisation. The Socio-ecological Theory, on the other hand, posits that individual behaviours such as violence are shaped by a range of nested contextual systems that include the community, and the social environments, among others (Espelage *et al.*, 2013). The Ecological Theory says specifically that all the various behaviours of human beings, including crime and violence (Savage & Vila, 2003) are a function of the physical and social environment in which they take place (Maxfield & Babbie, 2006).

Studies that have investigated the prevalence of school violence and the (physical and social) environment in which the schools are located; have found an association between the two variables. For example, De Wet (2007) found that urban areas had the highest incidents of learner violence against teachers compared to rural areas. ILO (2003) made a similar finding; as did Verdugo and Vere (2003), and Small and Tetrick (2001). ILO (2003) went on to hypothesise that the probability of a teacher being a victim of workplace violence varies according to urbanicity; that is, the urban, suburban or rural setting of the school. The findings in a study conducted by Verdugo and Vere (2003) confirm the ILO's (2003) hypothesis. They found that teachers in urban schools were more vulnerable to crime at school than were their counterparts in suburban schools. Small and Tetrick (2001) provided figures to support the notion that teachers in urban schools were more likely to be victims of violent crimes (at 40/1000) than were teachers in suburban or rural schools, whose risk of victimisation was 24/1000.

DeVoe, Peter, Ruddy, Snyder and Rand's (2003) survey on schools and staffing not only confirmed urbanicity as a factor in learner violence against teachers, but went a step further to draw an association between urbanicity and the type of violence teachers experienced. DeVoe *et al.*'s (2003) findings were that 11% of teachers in central city schools had been threatened with injury by learners, compared with 8% each in urban fringe and rural schools. Five percent of teachers in central city schools had actually been attacked by students compared to only 3% each of teachers in rural schools and schools in the periphery of urban areas. Verdugo and Vere (2003) found a slightly higher percentage of incidents of teachers being threatened by learners. In their study, 18% in central city schools were victims, 12% in the urban fringe schools, and 10% in schools in rural areas. Furthermore, they found that 4% of teachers were physically attacked by a learner in the urban fringe schools and 3% in schools in rural areas.

It was anticipated that in this study, learner violence against teachers would be unevenly distributed in schools in urban, semi-urban and rural settings. This assertion emanated from the figures presented in the foregoing discussion and from Vlahov and Galea's (2002) assertion that phenomena such as violence, crime, and

substance use, are typical urban phenomena. They are present to a much greater extent in urban than in non-urban areas.

#### 2.4.1.2 *School internal factors*

A number of school internal factors have been found to contribute to school violence. For example, indiscipline, insolence, the possession and use of drugs on the school grounds, and the possession of weapons, create a hostile environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning. In contrast, a hospitable school environment is created when norms and values do not threaten or violate the rights of others, but support their experience of feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe, and respected (Cohen, Pickeral & McCloskey, 2009).

The school internal factors, which create an environment that is conducive to learner indiscipline and violent behaviour against teachers and fellow learners, emanate from what this study views as non-compliance with the principles of the SASA, or from the inept application of school policies that are meant to support the SASA in safeguarding the constitutional rights of all the role players in the school system. These rights include: (i) the right to have their dignity respected and protected (s 10); (ii) the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (s 12(1)(c)); (iii) the right bodily and psychological integrity (s 12(2)); and (iv) the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being (s 24).

The current study regards the South African Schools Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act as two pieces of legislation that are crucial for upholding the constitution rights of individuals that are stated above, within the school system. For example, proper formulation and application of the SASA could drastically reduce the antecedents of learner violence against teacher in the latter's work environment. The OHSA could protect the constitutional rights of teachers by setting up procedures through which employers (the DoBE and SGBs) could reduce their risk of exposure to occupational hazards, and have their occupational health and safety secured. The Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health defines occupational health and safety as the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of all workers in all occupations; the prevention among workers

of departures from health caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health (Feitshans, 1998).

The researcher contends that, notwithstanding the aforementioned, the SASA and the OSHA, as pieces of legislation that operate in the prevailing human rights culture in South Africa, have shortcomings to be effective in preventing learner violence against teachers. The SASA is not applied stringently enough to achieve this. On the other hand, the OSHA, in its current form, cannot deal with violence as a workplace hazard and a threat to the health and safety of workers. The Act does not recognise it as a hazard in any of the categories of workplace hazards that employers should protect their employees against. This is the *status quo*, notwithstanding the evidence that: (i) violence that occurs in the workplace violates employees' right to be safe from fear or injury while at work (Verdugo & Vere, 2003), (ii) the use of violence results in workers being assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of performing their work (ILO, 2004), and (iv) violence encompass incidents where employees are physically or emotionally abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work (Sullivan *et al.*, 2004; Steinman, 2003). This exclusion could render OSHA unlawful because, "The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; [and] law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid..." (s 2), and it declares that "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (s 10).

#### 2.4.1.3 *The South African Schools Act*

South African schools are governed according to Government policy, which is stated in the SASA, Act 84 of 1996. The SASA was drafted with the aim of guiding SGBs and educators to manage schools efficiently. For example, this Act sets policy regarding the school-going age of learners, the age-grade norm, and class size or the Learner-Educator Ratios (LERs) for primary and secondary schools. Most important is that the Act also sets the framework for schools' policies on codes of conduct for learners. This is set under section 8 of the Act titled: "A code of conduct for learner's school policy".

A code of conduct for learners is a form of subordinate legislation that supports the values of human dignity, equality and freedom (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012) espoused in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. For this purpose, a school's code of conduct spells out rules regarding learner behaviour at school, in the classroom, and outside school, while engaged in school-related activities (Sun & Shek, 2012). A school's code of conduct is therefore the school's instrument for enforcing learner discipline. It describes the disciplinary process to be followed when disciplinary measures are taken against learners who transgress the school's code of conduct (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). It also prescribes the sanctions that may be imposed on those learners who are found guilty of transgressing the school's rules and regulations.

A scrutiny of Section 8 of the SASA reveals two purposes of the Act. First, the SASA was crafted to protect the rights of members of school communities to a safe environment, as espoused in the Constitution. Second, it was developed as an instrument through which the Department of Basic Education could achieve its goal of maintaining schools as environments that are conducive for teaching and learning. The attainment of this goal meant that schools would also be able to protect the Constitutional rights of learners, teachers and other workers to a safe and healthy environment. These goals are encapsulated in Ministry of Education's Notice 776 of 1998 in the form of guidelines for consideration of Governing Bodies in adopting codes of conduct for learners. These guidelines state that schools must "protect, promote and fulfil the rights identified in the Bill of Rights" as outlined in chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

In order to achieve the goals stated above, section 8 of the SASA provides guidelines for school safety policies. According to the foregoing section, school policies should cover safety in the classroom, safety on the school grounds, and safety in all school-related activities on, and off the school grounds. Sub-section 8(1) of the Act places an obligation on school governing bodies to develop codes of conduct for learners. In terms of section 8(2), a code of conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, in which non-educators, educators and learners may work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, or violence; and are physically and

psychologically safe. All the role players in the school system, namely the school management, teachers, learners and parents are expected to support the schools' codes of conduct in order to make them effective. Section 8(4) of the Act in particular, places a legal obligation on learners to comply with the code of conduct of the school they attend. Section 8 of the SASA is supported by regulations as the National Schools' Safety Framework, and the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug use among learners, to ensure safety and security in public schools.

From the foregoing the researcher assumes that schools that adhere to policies on the school-going age of learners, the age-grade norm, and class size or the LERs would reduce the risk of learner indiscipline and, *ipso facto*, the level of school violence. Conversely, schools that fail to comply with the requirements of this Act by not adopting a learner code of conduct, or in which there are gaps in the implementation of the code of conduct, are inadvertently creating an unsafe work environment for teachers. Learner indiscipline is likely to thrive unhindered in such schools. This assumption resonates with Squelch's (2001) contention that safe schools are characterised by good discipline by learners. It also accords with Reddy, Espelage, McMahon, Lane, Anderson, *et al.* (2012) contention that violence against teachers occurs less often in schools with clear rules and disciplinary policies. Such schools are characterised by good learner discipline, a culture conducive to teaching and learning, professional educator conduct, good governance and management practices and an absence (or at least low levels) of crime and violence (Prinsloo, 2005). However, Mestry and Khumalo (2012) caution that discipline at a school cannot be measured against a well-drafted code of conduct only, but also against the practical application of this policy.

A study of the dynamics of school violence in secondary schools in six provinces in South Africa, which was conducted by Mncube and Harper (2012), confirms that the attainment of discipline in a school requires more than a well-drafted code of conduct. The study found that violence was a problem in these schools despite the fact that they had developed codes of conduct for learners, as required by law. The researchers concluded that the problem of violence in these schools could be attributed to the implementation of the codes of conduct. The schools did not abide

by their schools' codes of conduct fully. For example, the code of conduct was not emphasised in some schools and, as a result, not followed.

The findings made by Mncube and Harper (2012) leads the researcher to the assumption that schools that experience learner indiscipline and associated problems, such as the prevalence of weapons and prohibited substances would be those in which there were challenges in the implementation of the SASA and related policies to the letter. The researcher also contends that learner indiscipline and violence against teachers are predictable. They are inextricably linked to factors such as the age of the learner and unfavourable class sizes. Based on what we know from the Interactive Perspective, the two variables are the individual characteristics and the surrounding social context, or antecedents, which teachers interacts with, and which, if such interaction is hostile, will result in learner violence against teachers, according to Estévez *et al.* (2008). This notion is supported by psychological studies of school violence, which state that, from the Social-ecological theoretical perspective, violent acts occur within social contexts, such as classrooms, schools, neighbourhoods and families, and involves complex social interactions between and among individuals (Espelage *et al.*, 2013).

**(i) Age of the learner**

One of the aspects of the school that the SASA regulates in order to address learner indiscipline and violence is the age of learners per grade. The age-grade norm determines the ideal age of learners per grade. Therefore, as a norm, learners ideally enrol for secondary school education phase (Grades 8-12) when they turn 14 years old, and complete the compulsory school-going age at age 15, in Grade 9. They are expected to complete schooling (Grade 12) when they turn 18 years old. However, the Act is mute about the exclusion of over-age learners from schools. Sheppard (2009) notes that, while education is not compulsory beyond Grade 9 in South Africa, the law does not prevent any learner who wishes to continue with schooling up to Grade 12, to do so. As a result, South Africa has a significant percentage of learners who continue to enrol well beyond the compulsory school going age (15 years). Whereas, learners are expected to finish school when they turn 18 years old, teachers are sometimes forced to deal with learners who are 2-4

years above the age-grade norm (Meny-Gilbert, 2012; Social Surveys Africa, 2010; Zulu, Urbani & Van der Merwe, 2004); and are already adults (Social Surveys Africa, 2010; Zulu *et al.*, 2004). Fabelo, Thompson, Plotkin, Carmichael, Machbanks III, *et al.* (2011) aver that these are learners who would have been held back a grade or two because of repeated discipline or suspension from school for discretionary violation of school rules.

As stated above, the SASA is not explicit about the exclusion of over-age learners from the mainstream schooling system. Consequently, the decision to exclude over-aged learners from the mainstream schooling system or to admit them is left to the schools. The choice of the former option presents schools with problems that are mainly associated with indiscipline. Over-aged learners tend to lack discipline, challenge the schools' rules, disrespect teachers and challenge their authority. There is also the risk that they could react in a violent manner if they were forced to abide by the schools' code of conduct. In fact, Zulu *et al.* (2004) found the presence of overage learners to be one of the factors associated with school violence. Akinsola (2010) came up with similar findings in a study of the determinants of, and preventive strategies for high school violence. The study found that the activities of overaged learners were highly represented in learner misconducts that could be directly linked to school violence. The risk that schools face with the presence of overage in the school is that the younger learners may imitate their behaviour and, as such, exacerbate perpetuate the problem of learner indiscipline and violence.

## **(ii) *Learner-Educator Ratios and class size***

Research on workplace violence indicates an association between overcrowding in the workplace and violence. Klotz and Buckley (2010) contend, for example, that depersonalisation and anonymity, which are common in large workplaces, arise out of situations of overcrowding. This unhealthy working atmosphere becomes a breeding ground for violent events (Klotz & Buckley, 2010). Similar results have been found in school violence research. For example, Deborah Meier, who is regarded as the pioneer and advocate of small schools aver that small are manageable, and offer safety and security, which metal detectors and security guards cannot offer, (Meier, 1995). This notion is supported by Klonsky (2002), who found that feelings of



personal safety were lowest in the largest schools and highest in the smallest ones. According to Klonsky (2002), a high learner-to-teacher ratio creates anonymity (of learners in the classroom) which, according to Benbenishty and Astor (2005), makes it practically impossible for teachers to monitor learner behaviour effectively. As a result, discipline problems and violence at school increase. Other studies that also concluded that a large number of learners in classes were an important factor in violence against teachers include Alzyoud, Al-Ali and Bin Tareef (2016), Espelage, Anderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, McMahon *et al.* (2013), Kratcoski (2012), Casteel, Peek-Asa and Limbos (2007) and Ohsako (1997). Alzyoud *et al.* (2016) specifically found that violence against teachers occurred in classes with a large number of learners and that such classes are found mainly in schools that have enormous enrolment of learners. Casteel *et al.*'s (2009) contention was that small-sized schools were in particular, predictors of non-fatal assault of teachers by learners in public schools. Similarly, Ohsako (1997) concluded that unmanageable class sizes caused feelings of anger, resentment and rejection, which are the entry points to aggression and violence in schools.

Research findings with regard to the association between school enrolment or class size and violence against teachers are by no means unanimous. In contrast to the findings above, the common conclusion reached by Constitutional Rights Foundation (2009), Van Tonder and Williams (2009), Leung and Ferris (2008), Bickley-Green (2007), De Wet (2007), Benbenishty and Astor (2005), DeVoe, Peter, Kaufman, Miller, Noonan, Snyder *et al.* (2004), Ma (2002), Klonsky, (2002), O'Neill (2001), National Center for Education Statistics (1999), and Devine (1996), was that there was no positive relationship between learner violence and school or class size.

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that most researchers found large classes to be sources of learner indiscipline and violence. Therefore, the conclusion that suggests that the purpose of the government's Learner Educator Ratios (LERs) policy is to create an environment in which teachers are able to maintain discipline and prevent violence in the long term, is not implausible.

### **(iii) Discipline and prohibited items and substances**

According to Mellor and Mellor (n.d.), adolescence lasts from 13 years (a year before the child enters secondary school) to about 21 years of age. Fabelo *et al.* (2011) contend that, while it is indisputable that teachers face serious challenges in classrooms, secondary school teachers face an even more serious task because they have to manage the behaviour of large group of adolescents. Although Levinson (2014) argues that a great deal of adolescent misbehaviour that teachers have to deal with is aimed at the peer group, it nevertheless impacts on the teachers. By their nature, some of the adolescent behaviours, such as breaking rules, disobedience, defiance, argumentative, uncooperative, fit the definition of violence, as used in this study.

Age of a learner is inextricably linked to their grade in school. For example, early adolescence (13-14 years old) spans grades 7-8 (Levinson, 2014), while adolescence (15-18 years old) spans the remaining grades in secondary school (Levinson, 2014). As part of the child's developmental stage of adolescence, learner age is also closely associated with discipline. When age, discipline and grade intersect during the learner's interaction with the teacher, violence is likely to result, particularly when such learners are overage. Some of the laws that the Department of Basic Education in South Africa passes related to schooling, are meant to prevent the eventualities mentioned above, and to turn schools as environments that are conducive for teaching and learning.

Schools adopt codes of conduct in an endeavour to control learner behaviour that disrupts teaching and learning and causes teachers' distress (Sun & Shek, 2012). Schools that successfully apply learner codes of conduct are safe teaching and learning environments, characterised by learner discipline, according to Squelch (2001) and Reddy *et al.* (2012). Violence against teachers occurs less often in schools with clear rules and disciplinary policies (Reddy *et al.*, 2012). The converse is true; namely that violence is likely to occur quite frequently in schools in which learners lack discipline and the rules and disciplinary policies are not followed to the letter. In the foregoing discussion, age of the learner was cited as one of the factors associated with learner indiscipline in schools and, consequently, Type II workplace

violence. Age of the learner, on the other hand, forms the integral part of a child's developmental stage. At secondary school level, that developmental stage is adolescence.

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Maree (2000) attributes violence in South African schools to inadequate security, the carrying of knives, guns and other weapons to school by learners, and the smoking of *dagga* and the consumption of alcohol and other illegal substances on the school grounds. The presence of drugs and weapons on the schools' grounds feature among a host of factors that, according to the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002), define school violence. From the foregoing, it is deduced that the presence of weapons on schools' grounds is part of the display of violent behaviour by learners. It not only creates an intimidating work environment for teachers, but also hampers the mission of the DoBE to make schools safe environments for teaching and learning. As such, the concerns of teachers for their safety in an environment where learners carry weapons and use drugs and alcohol are therefore

justified. As Pahad and Graham (2012) found in their study, learners who take drugs are very violent, and any teacher who attempts to discipline them put themselves at risk of victimisation.

Numerous other studies on school violence also confirm that the presence of drugs and weapons on the school premises poses a threat to the safety of teachers. For example, 58.1% of secondary school teachers who participated in Burton's (2008) National Schools Violence Study reported feeling unsafe at their schools when teaching. The participants associated their fears with learners' access to alcohol and drugs in their schools. Similarly, the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs (*marijuana*) on the school premises by learners during school hours (Singh & Steyn, 2014); and the carrying and use of deadly weapons on the school premises by learners to scare teachers and innocent learners and to force them into submission (Pitso, Njeje, Bonase, Mfula, Nobendle, *et al.*, 2014; Singh & Steyn, 2014); were found to create a school environment that was hostile to both teachers and learners (DeVoe *et al.*, 2004). Waheed and Youssef (2007), contend, however, that the occurrence of incidents involving weapons was relatively infrequent.

The following deductions can be made from the above discussion. Firstly, lack of discipline by learners, and inadequate security and the presence of drugs and weapons on school grounds are intricately associated with learner violence against teachers. Secondly, the prevalence of these factors schools signifies the lack of success of the DoBE's policies to make schools safe environments for teaching and learning.

#### **2.4.2 The nature of learner-on-teacher violence**

Debarbieux (2007) contends that any worthy research on violence against teachers must include the nature of the acts that constitute this violence. The discussion that follows below seeks to broaden our understanding of violence against teachers. It also seeks to illustrate that violence against teachers covers a spectrum of behaviours represented on the violence continuum (Figure 1) and in the categories of violence against teachers (Table 1). These behaviours by learners not only violate schools' codes of conduct, but also transgress the Constitution of the Republic of

South Africa, South African Criminal Law, and the SASA. They also put the health and safety of teachers at risk.

The violence that teachers are subjected to is expediently categorised simply as verbal violence at the one extreme of the violence continuum or physical violence, at the other extreme (Baker, 2003). However, research indicates that violence against teachers encompass an array of other behaviours between these two extremes. For example, the types of violence against teachers that Espelage (2013) identified at the one extreme end of the violence continuum ranged from disrespectful behaviour, bullying or intimidation, verbal threats or gestures, and damage to property, to cases of physical assault, at the other extreme. Similarly, De Wet (2007) found that teachers were victims of the following acts of violence by learners: vandalism (of educators' property), verbal abuse, verbal threats, physical violence (for example, slapping, stabbing, and being hit with missiles such as fruit in class and stones outside class), and humiliation. Wilson *et al.* (2011) on the other hand, categorise the violence that teachers are victims of into covert and overt violence. An example of the former includes teachers being called names, having their reputations tarnished, and any behaviour that is aimed at intimidating teachers. The latter, on the other hand, includes the threatening of teachers with a weapon, having their property damaged, and actual physical assault. Hocking and Guy's, (2008) notion of violence at work is similar to that of Wilson *et al.* (2011). According to Hocking and Guy (2008), workplace violence covers both direct and more subtle and insidious acts such as threats of violence, sexual harassment and workplace bullying. It extends to indirect acts, which have quite serious and dramatic consequences, such as industrial manslaughter. For Mooij (2010), the violence that teachers are victims of may be classified as verbal, material, social, mild physical, severe physical and sexual violence.

Two broad categories of violence against teachers, namely direct and indirect violence, may be discerned from the foregoing discussion. These categories, together with a host of behaviours that accompany them, are summarised in the Table 1 below. This table also depicts the directions that the categories of violence may take; which may be physical or non-physical. Furthermore, the table affirms

Sullivan *et al.*'s (2004) contention that indirect violence takes the form of non-verbal behaviours.

**Table 1: Categories of violence against teachers**

	Physical violence	Non-physical violence	
		Verbal	Non-verbal
Direct violence	Hitting, spitting, shoving, hair pulling, stabbing, inappropriate touching, hitting with missiles (De Wet, 2007), assault, with a weapon (Espelage <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007).	Use of sexually abusive language, hurtful comments about teacher's personal appearance or character orientation (Garrett, 2014; Espelage <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011); humiliating the teacher in front of staff or other learners (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012); verbal threats, or name-calling (Espelage <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011, Waheed & Youssef, 2007); intimidation (Waheed & Youssef, 2007).	Making offensive gestures and noises, staring, mocking the teacher, use of intimidating and threatening facial expressions, eye contact and body language, slamming objects (e.g., doors) (Garrett, 2014; Espelage <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011).
Indirect violence			Purposely ignoring the teacher and ongoing classroom disruption (Debarbieux, 2003; Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall, 2010; Sullivan, 2004); learner talking out of turn and making insolent comments (Parzell & Salin, 2010); persistent tardiness or refusal to obey

			instructions (James <i>et al.</i> , 2008); undermining the teacher's relationship with other learners (Kauppi & Pörhölä, 2012). Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend/insult/intimidate (Espelage <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Waheed & Youssef, 2007). Classroom disruption (Maunder <i>et al.</i> 2010; Debarbieux, 2003).
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The discussion that follows below puts the violence continuum into perspective. The findings of the studies reviewed here (Reddy, 2014; Lokmić *et al.*, 2013; Walker, 2013; Reddy *et al.*, 2013; Mooij, 2010; Burton, 2008; Denise, 2008; Martin *et al.*, 2012; De Wet, 2007; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007); Waheed & Youssef, 2007), support the notion that teachers are indeed victims of a spectrum of learner-perpetrated acts of violence across the violence continuum, with direct and indirect violence situated at the extreme opposite ends of the continuum. The discussion also shows that the majority of school violence acts are non-physical and not life threatening (De Wet, 2007). It also shows that serious violence, such as actual, attempted, or threatened physical violence (Wilson *et al.*, 2011), and physical assaults (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007), are less common.

#### 2.4.2.1 *Non-physical violence*

Teachers are at risk of becoming victims of non-physical violence by learners more than they are of becoming victims of physical violence. For example, a study by Buck (2006) found one form of non-physical violence, namely psychological violence, to be twelve times more likely to occur than physical violence. Psychological violence refers to behaviour that humiliates, degrades or indicates a lack of respect for the dignity and worth of an individual, as well as to the intentional use threats of physical force against a person, which can result in harm to mental, spiritual or social well-being (Di Martino, 2002).

Verbal violence is the use of inappropriate and harsh words to hurt another person (Lokmić *et al.*, 2013). Researchers (Reddy, 2014; Lokmić *et al.*, 2013; Reddy *et al.*, 2013; Mooij, 2010; Denise, 2008; Burton, 2008; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007) have found that it is the most common form of non-physical violence that teachers are victims of. For example, in Burton (2008) verbal abuse was exceedingly common at secondary schools, at 59.7%. Although De Wet's (2007) and Steffgen and Ewen's (2007) findings of verbal abuse of teacher were 34.7% and 23.9%, respectively, they were still higher than those of physical abuse. Arguably, one of the highest findings of verbal abuse of teachers by learners was made in a study conducted by Denise (2008) in the USA. The study found that as high as 92% of teachers reported verbal abuse against self and 87.7% against colleagues.

When verbal violence was compared with other types of violence, it was found to be the most prevalent form of violence by learners against teachers (Zimmer, 2012; Mooij, 2010; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007). Mooij's (2010) finding was that the percentage of teachers who claimed to have been victims of violence varied from 33% (verbal violence) to 1% (severe physical violence). Steffgen and Ewen (2007) and Martin *et al.* (2008) found an even higher percentage (49.10% and 92%, respectively) of incidents of violence of a verbal nature, compared to other incidents of violence. In a study that was conducted by Martin *et al.* (2008), they found that threatening behaviour from learners was common, with learners facing up to teachers or verbally threatening to carry out some form of physical action. Similarly, Lemaire (2004) reports that many teachers constantly have to face intimidating behaviour from learners, such as yelling, threats, foul language and sexist, racist or homophobic slurs.

Burton's (2008) research on the experiences of school violence in secondary schools in South Africa found that verbal abuse was exceedingly common at 59.7%, compared to physical violence at 25.2%. A study that was conducted by Denise (2008) in the USA confirms this common occurrence of verbal violence. Ninety-two percent of teachers in this study reported verbal abuse and 58.2% threats against self; and 87.7% verbal abuse and 53.7% threats against colleagues (Denise, 2008).

The study by Espelage *et al.* (2013) illustrates the prevalence of verbal violence in other countries. For example, this study analysed research results of 14 studies totalling 13 347 teachers, which were conducted in the USA, Belgium, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey. They found that learner verbal aggression was most frequently reported by teachers in these countries. A similar study, which was conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force to review studies on violence against teachers, found that verbal aggression was the most common form of violence against teachers in these studies (Reddy *et al.*, 2013).

#### 2.4.2.2 *Physical violence*

Non-physical violence is a risk factor for physical violence against workers (Lanza, Zeiss & Rierdan, 2006). In practice, physical and non-physical violence often overlap, making any attempt to categorise different forms of violence very difficult (Di Martino & Musri, 2001). However, a distinction between the two can be achieved by following the definitions of physical violence that were formulated by WHO (2006) and Lokmić *et al.* (2013), respectively. They define it as the deliberate infliction of pain or body injuries, which may, or may not be visible, by one person on another.

Although incidents of physical violence are less common than non-physical violence (Denise, 2008), they are nonetheless highly salient when they occur (Reddy, Borum, Berglund, Vossekuil, Fein, *et al.*, 2001). Their consequences are of significant concern (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007) mainly because they are often visually apparent (Waheed & Youssef, 2007). For example, incidents that involve shootings or stabbings often raise safety concerns and fears (Reddy *et al.*, 2001), and bring the issue of school violence into public focus (Bickley-Green, 2007). This was the case in the highly publicised school shootings in Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado, USA, in 1999 (Bickley-Green, 2007).

A study conducted by Kondrasuk *et al.* (2005) of violence affecting school employees in K-12 schools in the USA confirmed the rarity of incidents of physical violence. They found that secondary school teachers are more likely to be threatened with physical harm but less likely to be actually physically attacked by learners. In contrast, Martin *et al.* (2008) and Walker (2013) contend that physical attacks of teachers by learners do occur in schools. For example, Martin *et al.* (2008) found a high percentage of incidents of physical violence, with 68.3% of respondents reporting it. Incidents of physical violence against teachers in Walker's (2013) study were similar to those found by De Wet (2007). They involved incidents in which teachers were hit with missiles (De Wet, 2007; Walker, 2013) in class and with stones outside class (De Wet, 2007). Martin *et al.* (2008) and Walker (2013) found that cases of physical violence that were so serious or severe that, according to Walker (2013), they necessitated medical attention, were not common. In contrast,

some of the incidents of physical violence in De Wet's (2007) study were stabbings, and the victims required medical attention.

### **2.4.3 Consequences of violence**

This study assumed that exposure to, and experience of learner violence, would have negative consequences on secondary school teachers in the form of fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and psychological distress. These effects would eventually lead to teachers quitting the profession.

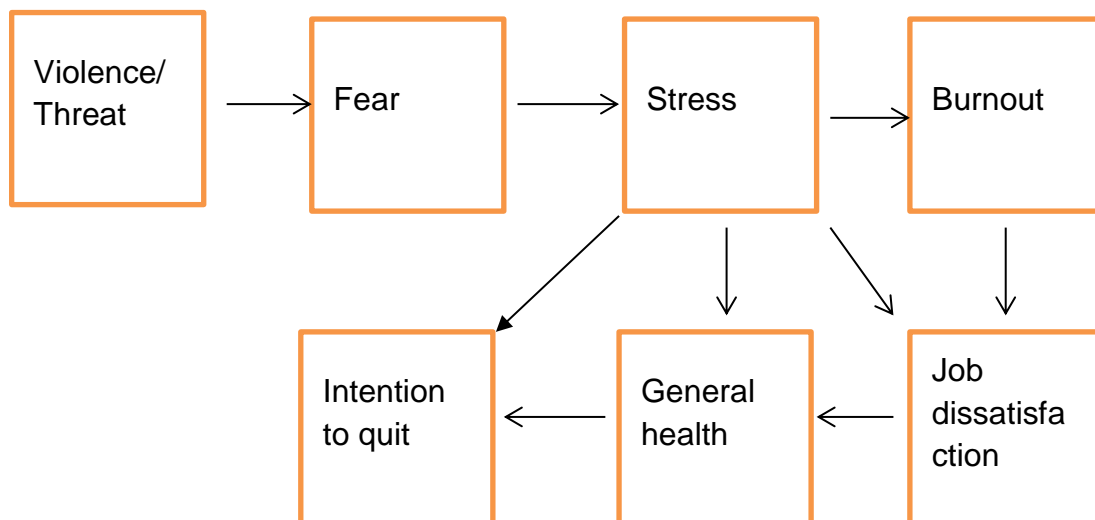
Literature review was not unanimous on the path the consequences of violence followed. For example, in Smith (2003) and McMahon, Espelage, Anderman, Lane, Reddy, *et al.* (2010), fear preceded all consequences of violence. Violence was found to instil fear in that it created an environment that curtailed individuals' rights to a life free of fear and intimidation (Smith, 2003); and teachers were less eager to go to school (work) due to the threat of violence (McMahon *et al.*, 2010). In Friedman (1999), burnout in the teaching profession was found to be the outcome of student violence. Other studies (for example, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), 2011; Brackett, Palomera, Mojska-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010; Sharma, Verma, Verma & Malhotra, 2010; Vokić & Bogdanić, 2007; Antoniou, Polychroni & Vlachakis, 2006; Haberman, 2004) indicated that in the majority of cases, stress preceded most consequences of violence.

A number of diverse paths emerged from this literature review. They indicate the following flow of the consequences of violence: the stress → burnout path (Antoniou *et al.*, 2006); the stress → job satisfaction → early retirement (quit) path (Cano-Garcia, Padilla-Munoz & Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005; Van Dick, Phillips, Marburg & Wagner, 2001); the stress → job satisfaction → burnout path (Camilli, 2004); the stress → burnout → job satisfaction path (Goswami, 2013; Fisher, 2011; Sharma *et al.*, 2010; Brackett, Palomera, Mojska-Kaja, Reyes & Salovey, 2010; Haberman, 2004); the fear → stress → burnout path (Abel & Sewell, 1999), or the fear → burnout path (Barling, 1996).

The paths presented above were found to be too haphazard for the determination of the precise path the consequences of violence follow. Therefore, this study conceptualised a tentative, but more coherent consequences path model (see Figure 2). The assumption is that the logical path that the consequences of violence should follow is a six-stage model of fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health and intention to quit.

Figure 2 depicts the flow of a sextuple of consequences of learner violence against teachers. The model indicates that the consequences may follow one major path or four minor paths. In the major path, the consequences appear in the following sequence: fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health and intention to quit path. The assumption is that the fear of the ever-present risk of learner violence in their workplace would lead to direct and indirect victims developing stress. The model depicts stress as central to the other four minor paths of the consequences of violence. These paths are depicted in the model as: (i) the stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health, and intention to quit path; (ii) the stress, job dissatisfaction, general health, and intention to quit path; (iii) the stress, general health, and intention to quit path; and (iv) the stress and intention to quit path.

**Figure 2: Paths of consequences of violence against teachers**



An empirically based path model of the consequences of violence against teachers will be presented in Chapter 5 of the current study. The final consequences-paths in the envisaged model would be determined by the results of the hypotheses that were developed and tested for causal relationships.

The purpose of the discussion that follows below was to develop a holistic understanding of the consequences of learner-perpetrated school/workplace violence on teachers. To achieve this, fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, general health and teachers' intention to quit the profession are discussed in order to assess how they, either individually or in association, impact on the teacher victim.

#### 2.4.3.1 *Fear of violence*

One of the concerns about violence in schools is that it creates a climate that denies teachers their constitutional right to work in a safe and healthy environment (Smith, 2003). According to Barling (1996), direct exposure to workplace violence will likely be most detrimental to those who experience it directly, while others in the workplace may be vicariously or indirectly affected to a lesser extent. For example, Buck (2006) notes that one act of violence perpetrated against a teacher could bring fear and insecurity upon the direct victim as well as upon other individuals within the direct victim's work environment; including co-workers and learners. From a workplace violence perspective, indirect victims are "employees who themselves were not violated but whose perceptions, fears, and expectations are changed as a result of being vicariously exposed to violence" (Barling, 1996, p.35).

Fear is a general perception of how safe one feels, and an emotional response to the perceived threat of violence, based on one's judgement of the risk of becoming a victim of violence in the future (Crow & Semmens, 2008). Teachers' perceived victimisation has been found to be associated with their fear for personal safety (Espelage *et al.*, 2013; Astor, Meyer, Benbenishty, Marachi, & Rosemond, 2005). The reason why teachers tend to be unsuccessful in maintaining learner discipline is found in Joong and Ridler (2006), who contend that teachers may hesitate to confront misbehaving learners out of concern for their own safety. Learners who recognise this hesitation are less likely to show respect for the teachers and are

more likely to continue with their insolence, thus making discipline in class almost impossible. Pickhardt (1978) came to a similar conclusion; namely that learners who become aware that teachers fear them use that fear against the teachers and in the process, lose respect for such teachers.

One consistent finding throughout the literature is the importance of fear as a consequence of workplace violence. Wilson *et al.* (2011) found, for example, that victimised teachers experienced heightened levels of stress, and increased fear. Indications are also that teachers need not be directly affected by violence in order to develop fear. For example, Budd, Arvey and Lawless (1996) found that 15% of all their respondents, whether victimised or not, said that fear of violence had caused them to consider changing jobs, and 12% indicated that this fear had caused mental or physical distress. Similarly, Buck (2006) found that exposure to workplace violence, whether directly or indirectly experienced, can create fear. Chappell and Di Martino (2000) and share similar sentiments. Chappell and Di Martino (2000) contend that the effect of violence can pervade the entire workplace in the sense that violence at work not only affects the person who is the target of such violence, but often extends to people in proximity to the act. Singh and Steyn (2014) contend that, for every violent act perpetrated by an aggressive learner, there is a consequence that not only affects the victim adversely, but also the entire school community.

It is worth noting that the fear of violence, as discussed above, is stimulated by all types of violence. O'Connor-Duffy and Mooney, Jr. (2014) and Reddy *et al.* (2001) point to incidents of extreme violence at school, such as shootings or stabbings which, they say, often raise safety concerns and fears among teachers and learners and parents alike. In contrast, Schonfeld (2006) found that, just being exposed to threats and witnessing learner-on-learner violence or learner-on-teacher violence without actually being assaulted adversely affects teachers. Similarly, Dworkin (1987) had earlier reached the conclusion that teachers were most fearful of violence in schools where there was actually very little violence directed against them.

Teachers' perceived victimisation has been found to be associated with their decision to leave the profession of teaching altogether (Chen & Astor, 2009; Astor *et al.*, 2005). As Martin *et al.* (2012) found, when teachers felt unsupported in their

effort to enforce schools' codes of conduct, it increased their sense of vulnerability to violence; hence their decision to quit the profession. This association between violence and teacher quitting the profession will be discussed at a later stage in this study.

#### 2.4.3.2 *Stress*

Stress is a general term used for pressure that people are exposed to in life (Eres & Atanasoska, 2011). Occupational stress in the human services professions, particularly in teaching (Aftab, & Khatoon, 2012), is often associated with various types of workplace violence (Magnavita, 2014). For example, a low-key violence such as students' lack of respect for the teacher is likely to contribute strongly to teacher stress (Giving, 2007). Occupational stress has been the focus of study in the human service professions in the last decades (Aftab, & Khatoon, 2012). One such study, which was conducted by Nagra (2013), revealed that teachers experienced moderate levels of occupational stress. In contrast, Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2005) contend that teachers experience disproportionately high levels of stress.

Violence and stress are closely related. Severe and chronic exposure to stress in the workplace that accompanies violence eventually wears an employee down, and compromises their health. The vast and growing literature on occupational stress has established robust relationships between worksite stress and negative health outcomes (especially cardiovascular morbidity) in a variety of occupations (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). In addition, stress negatively affects the victim's work performance and relationships with co-workers; and also contributes to absenteeism, voluntary attrition, social withdrawal, thoughts of quitting, change of career goals, and withdrawal from clients (Blasé, Blasé & Du, 2008).

When stress was correlated with the role of the teacher at school, role appeared to significantly affect perceptions of work stress and strain. One of Mulholland, McKinlay and Sproule's (2013) findings was that teachers who held the role of middle manager were the only group to report a range of stressors as stressful on a daily basis. They also found the "workload" dimension of work as significantly more stressful for middle managers than both class teacher and senior manager.



There are indications that certain professional variables stimulate teacher stress. For example, Kerlin (2002) aver that secondary school teachers experience stress more frequently than elementary teachers. Also, the fewer the years of professional preparation a teacher had, the greater the likelihood of stress. However, Kerlin (2002) found that age and gender were not significant when examining teacher stress.

One of the most severe manifestations of stress in the workplace (Camilli, 2004; Robinson, Clements & Land, 2003) and the consequences of extended occupational stress (Haberman, 2004; Antoniou, Polychroni & Vlachakis, 2006) is occupational burnout. The ILO (1995) identified burnout as a major problem in the teaching profession. This is much in the same way as stress. Hence, burnout and stress are often used interchangeably (Younghusband, Garlie & Church, 2003).

#### 2.4.3.3 *Burnout*

One of the most severe manifestations of stress in the workplace (Camilli, 2004; Robinson, Clements & Land, 2003) and the consequences of extended occupational stress (Haberman, 2004; Antoniou *et al.* 2006) is burnout. The ILO (1995) identified burnout as a major problem in the teaching profession. For example, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) assert that all teachers experience stress in their work. However, while most teachers cope successfully with job-related stress, others do not. Those teachers whose coping mechanisms fail to stem the demands of their job, experience heightened stress levels that threatens their mental and physical well-being; ultimately leading to burnout (Antoniou *et al.*, 2006; Haberman, 2004).

In everyday discourse, burnout is used as a colloquial term to describe an emotionally depleted state experienced by individuals who work in the helping professions, such as teaching, social work, psychology and nursing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). These individuals experience burnout more than workers in other professions (Pienaar & van Wyk, 2006; Manassero, Baudes, Torrens, Ramis, Vázquez & Ferrer, 2006). This is because of the kind of services they offer in their jobs (Manassero, *et al.*, 2006) and the characteristics of the recipients of this service (Pienaar & van Wyk, 2006).

Van Tonder and Williams (2009); Antoniou *et al.* (2006); and Griva and Joekes (2003) contend that burnout is more prevalent among educators and therefore more relevant to teaching than any other professional arena. Compared to other workers in the field of education, public school teachers experience a significant degree of burnout because of their close and frequent interaction with ill-disciplined and violent learners (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). School environmental factors, such as the characteristics of its organisation, have also been found to contribute to teacher burnout. They include large school and class sizes, inadequate resources, lack of security on the school grounds and high levels of crime in the neighbourhood of the school (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Azeem, 2010; Dworkin, Saha & Hill, 2003).

In their research on burnout among secondary school teachers, Van Tonder and Williams (2009) found that the greatest contributing factors to teacher burnout in schools in the Gauteng Province were the behaviour and attitude of learners. Burnout has also been linked to various characteristics of school organisation, such as school and class sizes (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009; Dworkin *et al.*, 2003). Sichambo, Maragia and Simiyu (2012) assessed other variables against burnout. Their study revealed that apart from the normal classroom teaching, teachers had a number of remedial lessons to attend to; large classes to handle, a lot of paper work and some had to stay in their workstations other than their normal school timings in order to complete various tasks. All these factors were contributing to burnout among teachers which were badly impacting their performance.

Haberman (2004) explains that teachers who are burned out remain as paid employees but stop functioning as professionals. They go through the motions of teaching with no emotional commitment to the task and no sense of efficacy. Haberman (2004) characterise burned out teachers as detached jobholders who feel neither responsible nor accountable for learners' behaviour and learning, or anything else. Their only goal is to do the minimum required in order to remain employed. These teachers are unlike what Haberman (2004) refers to as idealists teachers who are significantly more likely to leave teaching when they are faced with similar experiences.

#### 2.4.3.4 *Job satisfaction*

Strong measures of burnout are associated with diminished job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009; Cano-Garcia *et al.*, 2005; Abel & Sewell, 1999). For example, George, Louw and Badenhorst (2008) found a significant correlation between levels of job satisfaction and burnout among secondary school teachers in Namibia.

Job satisfaction is the extent to which a staff member has favourable or positive feelings about their work or the work environment (De Nobile & McCormick, 2005). If a person's work environment is healthy and safe, that person tends to have a higher degree of job satisfaction, a better relationship with colleagues, management and clients or customers, as well as a better effectiveness and productivity (Baker, 2003/4). Locke (1969) avers that job satisfaction denotes a "pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating one's job values" (p.317). Sources of job satisfaction among teachers include healthy school environments, favourable workplace conditions, supportive school administrations and adequate parental support (Ofili, Usiholo & Oronsaye, 2009).

Compared to job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, according to Locke (1969), denotes "the unpleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as frustrating or blocking the attainment of one's values" (p.317). Workplace stress is considered to be the main contributory factor to job dissatisfaction (Van Dick *et al.*, 2001). When one is experiencing significant stress, it is likely that one will not be experiencing satisfaction with one's life in general and possibly with one's profession, in particular (Camilli, 2004). For example, through multiple regression analysis Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014) found that occupational stress correlated negatively with job satisfaction. Relevant to the subject of the current study, Otero-López, Castro, Villardefranco and Santiago (2009) assert that teachers who experience high levels of stress have a correspondingly high level of job dissatisfaction. Echoing a similar view, Haberman (2004) declared that teachers' feelings of job satisfaction are a significant predictor of less stress, statistically. Therefore, job dissatisfaction would characterise teachers who experience severe stress in their jobs. In general, we may assume that when one is experiencing

significant stress, it is likely that one will not be experiencing satisfaction with one's life, and possibly with one's job, in particular (Camilli, 2004).

With regard to specific research on job satisfaction amongst teachers, researchers have found a relationship between job satisfaction and other variables associated with workplace stress and violence. For example, Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2006) found that bad behaviour by learners was the source of job dissatisfaction among teachers in elementary and secondary schools in Cyprus. In their research on teacher job satisfaction and teacher job stress, Green-Reese, Johnson and Campbell, cited by Camilli (2004), found that the size of the school the teacher worked in was significantly related to job stress and also lowered job satisfaction. With regard to school size, Wasley and Lear (2001) found that, unlike their counterparts in large schools, teachers in small schools reported a greater sense of efficacy and job satisfaction, and that these schools tended to report fewer or no incidents of serious violence.

Focusing on a different variable, Mertler, cited by Camilli (2004), studied job satisfaction and perception of motivation among middle and high school teachers and found that the age of the teacher and years of teaching experience were statistically significant. Both age and years of experience showed that younger, less experienced teachers had significantly higher rates of job satisfaction than older, more experienced teachers. Liu and Ramsey (2008) also found that teachers' job satisfaction varied with gender and years of teaching.

Teacher job satisfaction is important to study because of its effects on teacher retention (Akhtar, Hashmi & Naqvi, 2010) and the decrease in popularity and status of the teaching profession as a whole (George, *et al.*, 2008). When teachers are not satisfied with their working conditions they are more likely to change schools or to leave the profession altogether (Akhtar *et al.*, 2010).

#### 2.4.3.5 *General health*

Violence at work has widespread consequences. Whereas violence (in a narrow sense) is often associated with physical injury or death, workplace violence is, to a

great extent, associated with health complaints related to stress. Some authors, such as Youngusband *et al.* (2003), even recognise stress as the major single health problem among teachers; whether they are direct or indirect victims of violence. A study that was conducted by Nagra and Arora (2013) confirmed the association between stress and ill health. They did a correlational analysis of the relationship between the level of occupational stress and health among teachers, and found that occupational stress does have significant and negative impact upon the health of the teachers. Some of the health complaints that have been found to be associated with stress are headaches, gastrointestinal problems, musculoskeletal problems, blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, strokes, cancers (Nagra, 2013; Blasé *et al.*, 2008; Vokić & Bogdanić, 2007; Steyn & Kamper, 2006); as well as high cholesterol, high blood sugar, skin problems, and suppressed immune system (Vokić & Bogdanić, 2007), to name but a few.

Exposure to both physical and verbal aggression is recognised as significant risk factors for physical and psychological injury in the workplace (Kessler, Spector, Chang & Parr, 2008) and a major occupational health and safety hazard (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007). For example, in extreme cases of workplace violence, victimised teachers may experience symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), heightened levels of stress, and increased fear (Wilson *et al.*, 2011). However, teachers have also reported severe trauma that has been attributed to psychological offenses such as threats, harassments, and intimidations (Wilson *et al.*, 2011; Williams, Winfree, Jr. & Clinton, 1989).

Workplace violence is also regarded as a frequent precursor to mental ill health; and Youngusband, *et al.*, 2003); found that the primary health problem among teachers is stress, which they associated with the hostile environment in which teachers work. Other negative effects of workplace mistreatment or abuse on physical-physiological health include headache and migraine, loss of strength, significant weight changes, high blood pressure and irritable bowel syndrome (Blasé, *et al.*, 2008).

Sarentes and Suárez (2006) maintain that the health of workers who were victims of workplace violence is clearly recognised. All cases of violence, including minor acts, generate distress in the victim, with long-lasting deleterious effects on their health

(Bowie *et al.*, 2005). Meloy (cited in Dalton & Eracleous, 2006) share the same opinion – namely that exposure to all forms of work-related violence, including intimidation, verbal abuse and threats, should be seen as a potential stressor in the work environment.

Chappell and Di Martino (2000) have also recognised violence as a threat to the well-being of employees. They contend that violence at work leads to an increase in health complaints by victims, particularly with regard to stress, which was experienced by 40% of victims of physical violence (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). A great deal of research has also recognised the deleterious effects of workplace violence on a victim's psychological-emotional health, physical-physiological health, work performance and relationships with co-workers, and personal life (Blasé *et al.*, 2008). Victims whose psychological-emotional health is affected by workplace violence experience reduced job satisfaction and burnout (Blasé *et al.*, 2008); and the physical manifestations of those whose physical-physiological health is affected would include headaches and migraines, significant weight changes, cardiovascular and gastro-intestinal disorders, and physiological fatigue (ETUCE, 2011; Blasé *et al.*, 2008; Vokić & Bogdanić, 2007; Steyn & Kamper, 2006). Some psychological consequences include anger, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and inability to concentrate (Steyn & Kamper, 2006).

In the school context, researchers have found that, exposure to all forms of work-related violence, including intimidation, verbal abuse and threats (Meloy, cited by Dalton & Eracleous, 2006) by learners is a health hazard (Lemaire, 2004) and therefore, bad for teachers' health (Baker, 2003). It causes pain, suffering, anxiety and stress (Hughes & Hughes, 2008), and impairs the teachers' emotional well-being (Galand, Lecocq & Philippot, 2007). This prompted researchers like Lemaire (2004) to caution teachers not to put up with verbal abuse and threats by learners because they are a health hazard and have the potential to cause them psychological harm.

In a study conducted by Wilson *et al.*, (2011), which assessed the impact of violence, participants were asked to indicate whether their experience of violence at school resulted in various specified symptoms or effects, 84.0% reported emotional/psychological symptoms such as guilt and sadness, and 60.8% reported

on the physical effects of violence, such as headaches and fatigue. The conclusion reached by Chappell and Di Martino (2000) is that violence at work clearly leads to an increase in health complaints, particularly with regard to stress, which was experienced by 40% of workers exposed to physical violence, 47% of workers exposed to bullying and 46% of workers exposed to sexual harassment.

#### 2.4.3.6 *Teacher's intention to leave the profession*

The negative emotional impact of some forms of school violence could be an important factor in a teacher's intention to leave the profession (Galand *et al.*, 2007). One important factor that has had a negative impact on the hiring and retention of teachers is school violence (Ruff *et al.*, 2004). Any teacher who is assaulted or experience any type of violence at school would carefully consider continuing in the profession (Fisher & Kettl, 2003). Of importance is that such a consideration may also be made by indirect victims; which indicate that the experiences of the effects of workplace violence extend far beyond the direct victims. Hocking and Guy (2008), Howard (2007); Schofeld (2006), DeVoe *et al.* (2003); and Chappell and Di Martino (2000) develop this point further. Hocking and Guy (2008), Howard (2007), and Chappell and Di Martino (2000) aver that violence at work not only affects the person who is the focus of such violence, but often extends to people in proximity to the act. It has consequential impact for direct victims and their co-workers (Hocking & Guy, 2008) and pervades the entire workplace (Chappell & Di Martino, 2000). Similarly, Schonfeld (2006) contends that just being exposed to threats and witnessing violent acts without actually being a direct victim adversely affects teachers. They worry about their safety and may leave the profession altogether (DeVoe *et al.*, 2003).

The ILO (2003) asserts that a typical teacher reaction to workplace stress is to: quit teaching for other jobs; take transfer to less problematic schools or opt for teaching positions in private schools; or take early retirement. Shisana, Peltzer, Zungu-Dirwayi and Louw (2005) came to a similar conclusion. One of their findings was that violent events in schools have an impact on educators' intention to leave the teaching profession. The study also found that the intention to leave or quit the service as an educator was also a powerful predictor for attrition among the educators.

The evidence of psychologists who participated in the public hearings on school-based violence that were conducted by the Human Rights Commission in 2006 (see Kollapen, 2006), showed consistency in the relationship between teachers' experience of violence and the intention to quit teaching. The participants spoke of the growing number of teachers who experienced psychosocial stress and related conditions because of the hostile and insecure environment in schools. Most teachers wished to leave the profession if they could have the opportunity to do so. This consistency is also found in Ruff *et al.*'s (2004) findings, which indicate that one out of every five teachers who chooses to leave the profession does so because of the dangerous environment in which they teach. This is a sign that they are not satisfied with their job and, as such, need a career change (Baker, 2003).

## **2.5 Legislation and the consequences of workplace violence**

Subject to the provisions of the OHSA, Limpopo Province's Department of Education or SGBs and the teachers who work for it, are in an employer/employee relationship. As a general practice, the OHSA requires employers to protect the health and safety of employees. It therefore places the principal responsibility for the management of occupational health and safety hazards in the workplace on employers. OHSA provides a list of these hazards under a number of categories. Although the discussion so far points to the fact that workplace violence is indeed an occupational health and safety hazard, and, according to Hesketh, Duncan, Estabrooks, Reimer, Giovannetti, *et al.* (2003), "a significant and widespread public health concern" (p.311), it is not included in the list of occupational health and safety hazards under the OHSA. Therefore, compared with the radical shift that is taking place with regard to how violence is treated in occupational health and safety legislations internationally, the South African occupational health and safety legislation is obsolete in its current form.

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of British Columbia recognised violence as an occupational hazard in 1993 with a new regulation that requires employers to develop and implement workplace violence prevention programmes in all workplaces where the potential for violence exists (Sinclair, 1999). This development also led to schools being recognised as workplaces with a potential for violence (Sinclair,



1999). They were also required to have violence prevention programmes in place, according to Sinclair (1999). A similar development occurred in Australia. According to Mayhew (2000), the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation in each Australian State and Territory states that employers have a primary duty to ensure, so far as is practicable, the health and safety of all people on a worksite performing work. The OHS duty of care provisions includes protecting people from violence, which is supposed to be treated in the same way as any other occupational health and safety risk. In 2009, the Province of Ontario, in Canada, amended the Occupational Health and Safety Act by adding “workplace harassment” and “workplace violence”. Sweden and The Netherlands were the only countries to have introduced specific legislation dealing with violence at work, according to Mayhew (2000).

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter delved into the definitions of concepts that form the basis of this study in order to create the context in which they are used, and should be understood. The chapter also presented a host of theories in an endeavour to illustrate that learner violence against teachers is a multiple factor phenomenon and therefore too complex to can be explained through a single theory. It is for this reason that this study is chose to be guided by the eclectic theory. The chapter concludes with a review of pertinent literature on the factors that contribute to learner violence against teachers, the types of learner-perpetrated violence that teachers are victims of, and the consequences that this violence has on the direct and indirect victims. The literature review did not reveal any specific path about the flow of the identified six consequences from the epicentre of the violence. As a result, the researcher developed such a model from the diverse paths identified in the literature.

There are signs of a move towards the recognition of violence as a workplace health and safety hazard. Countries such as Canada, Australia, Sweden, and the Netherlands have already taken steps in this direction. The governments of these countries have amended their occupational health and safety legislations to include violence in the list of occupational health and safety hazards. However, no such development is taking place in South Africa.

The next chapter deals with the research methodology that was followed in the study. Since this study comprises two studies – one qualitative and the other quantitative – both qualitative and quantitative research methods are discussed.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study investigated learner-perpetrated school violence against teachers, which is categorised as Type II workplace violence in workplace violence parlance. The aim of the investigation was to acquire a comprehensive knowledge and insight into this phenomenon. As such, the study considered the multi-method research approach as the best approach for achieving this aim. By opting for a multi-method research approach (Morse, 2003), researchers are able to capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the phenomenon under study (Kurniawan, 2008; Holtzhausen, 2001).

Byrne and Humble (2007) assert that, when a study adopts a multi-method research approach and utilises qualitative and quantitative research designs, the research designs complement each other. However, each research design produces relatively complete results by itself. In this study, a qualitative research design was applied to explore the nature of learner violence against teachers, the factors associated with it, and the possible consequences it has on the teacher victims. Six consequences of learner-perpetrated violence, namely, fear, stress, job dissatisfaction, burnout, ill health and teachers' intention to quit the profession, emerged from the qualitative data analysis. However, because of the nature of the qualitative research design, nothing more than hypothesising about the relationship between the emerging variables could be done. The hypothesis formulated in the qualitative research design then set the platform for the testing of the hypothesised causal relationship between the emergent variables through a quantitative research design.

#### 3.2 MULTI-METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN

The choice of the multi-method research design for this study was motivated by the researcher's quest to acquire what Holtzhausen (2001) refers to as a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the units under study; namely, learner-perpetrated

violence against teachers. Multi-method is a research design that utilises more than one methodological tradition (for example, qualitative and quantitative methods) (Seawright, 2013; Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Young, Jones & Sutton, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), within the same study (Hunter & Brewer 2003) to answer a research question. For example, multi-method design may utilise in one study, two research designs, each conducted rigorously (Morse, 2003), and relatively complete on their own (Byrne & Humble, 2007). Most important is that multi-method research can test assumptions that are generally untested in single-method research (Seawright, 2016). For example, the qualitative study in the current research concluded with the formulation of hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested for confirmation in the quantitative study.

The concept 'multi-method' research is often used interchangeably with the concepts 'mixed method' research, and 'multiple methods' research (Creswell, Fetters & Ivankova, 2004; Esteves & Pastor, 2004). The source of this interchangeable use of these concepts may be attributed to the fact that multi-method research and mixed method research are broad categories of multiple research methods, which use more than one method to study phenomena (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, what distinguishes multi-method research from the other multiple research designs is that it uses qualitative and quantitative designs that are relatively complete on their own, and then combined in a complementary fashion to produce the results of a single study (Byrne & Humble, 2007; Wood, Daly, Miller & Roper, 1999). In contrast, authors, such as Wahyuni (2012), Wood, Daly, Miller and Roper (1999), Brewer and Hunter (1989), and Denzin (1978), use 'multi-method' as a synonym of 'triangulation'. Hussein (2009) defines triangulation as the combination of multiple methodological approaches and analysis methods, mainly qualitative and quantitative, to study the same phenomenon. However, for Dixon-Woods *et al.*, (2004), the notion of triangulation constitutes part of the rationale for multi-method research, according to which the results of the qualitative and quantitative enquiries are integrated through methodological triangulation, and reported as the results of a single study.

What is discernible from the above discussion is that multi-method research designs encompass the process of combining data-gathering and analysing techniques from

two or more methodological traditions, whose results are then integrated to form a comprehensive whole (Morse, 2003). Examples of multi-method research include studies that, among others, combine qualitative and quantitative methods in support of a single causal inference (Seawright, 2013; Byrne & Humble, 2007) in one project (Morse, 2003). Each of these projects is conducted rigorously (Morse, 2003), and are complete on their own (Byrne & Humble, 2007). However, because qualitative studies are exploratory in nature, they are often used to generate hypotheses, which are then tested in quantitative studies (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Young, Jones & Sutton, 2004). Through this process, key issues of causal inference in the qualitative study can be transformed from matters of speculative assertion into points of empirically based debate (Seawright, 2013). The results of both types of studies are then integrated to form essential components of one research report (Byrne & Humble, 2007).

Wood, Daly, Miller and Roper (1999) aver that multi-method research is usually conducted from an evolutionary or a complementary perspective. They explain that a multi-method research follows an evolutionary perspective when little research has been conducted on a phenomenon of interest. Such studies are therefore typically exploratory and their research methods qualitative in nature. Their goal is to identify key issues in the area under investigation; and they use existing literature to identify general topics for investigation in the exploratory phase. Finally, these studies generate hypotheses that can be tested in subsequent studies. In contrast, multi-method studies that follow a complementary perspective tend to be quantitative in nature. They have as their main goal, the investigation of key findings from a qualitative study, using quantitative methods, such as hypothesis testing, for example (Wood *et al.*, 1999). They can therefore transform key issues of descriptive and causal inference from speculative assertion into points of empirical debate (Seawright, 2013).

Whereas Wood *et al.* (1999) suggest a single (evolutionary or complementary) perspective for conducting multi-method research; the researcher opted for a dual perspective because it was consistent with the aim and objectives of the study. The first study was qualitative and, from an evolutionary perspective, exploratory in design. Its aim was to identify and understand key issues associated with learner

violence against teachers. Qualitative data was collected and analysed. The findings that emerged from the analysis of data provided answers about the prevalence of learner violence against teachers, the factors that contribute to it, its nature, and its consequences on teachers. Furthermore, emerging from the data analysis, and supported by literature, was a pattern of relationships amongst fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, ill health, and teachers' intention to quit the profession, as consequences of learner violence against teachers. However, because of the nature of its research design, the qualitative study could go no further than make assumptions about patterns of relationships among the identified variables, which emerged from the study, and the possible causal relationship between learner violence and work-related well-being of teachers.

As stated above, this study was conducted from a dual (an evolutionary and a complementary) perspective. From a complementary perspective, therefore, the results of the qualitative research had to be confirmed by subjecting them to the veracity of statistical testing found only in quantitative research designs. To achieve this, hypotheses were generated from assumptions made at the conclusion of the qualitative study, and tested through a quantitative research design. As a result of statistical testing, inference from the qualitative study about causal relationship between learner violence and work-related well-being of teachers, as well as the assumed patterns of relationships among the identified variables, were empirically confirmed or refuted.

When criminologists study violence, they do so with the aim of acquiring empirically based knowledge and insight into the phenomenon. The ultimate goal is usually to apply such knowledge and insight to prevent occurrence or re-occurrence of the phenomenon. Therefore, the overall aim of this study is to utilise the knowledge acquired from the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study, to develop a path model of the consequences of violence. This model may be a useful tool for preventing violence against teachers at any stage along the proposed path. As a starting point, the researcher contends that the authorities can contribute towards preventing violence against teachers from occurring in the first place by recognising violence as an occupational health and safety hazard in the relevant legislation.

### **3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.3.1 Purpose of the study**

##### *3.3.1.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of this component of the study was to explore teachers as victims of learner-perpetrated violence in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

##### *3.3.1.2 Research questions*

Given the scarcity of research on teachers as victims of learner-perpetrated school or workplace violence, the principal question that the qualitative component of the study sought to answer was: What is the prevalence of learner-perpetrated violence experienced by a group of secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa? Subsidiary questions were:

- What are the factors that contribute to learner violence against teachers?
- What types of violence are perpetrated by learners against teachers?
- What are the consequences of learner violence on teachers?

#### **3.3.2 Research design**

The research design utilised here is cross-sectional and exploratory in nature. According to Burns and Groove (2001), the purpose of exploratory studies is to discover, and increase knowledge about a phenomenon. The choice of the exploratory research design as appropriate was based on two grounds. Firstly, the review of literature indicated a scarcity of studies in the field of workplace violence in general in South Africa. The literature review also revealed a dearth of studies that focused on teachers as victims of violence in their workplaces; and from a workplace health and safety perspective, in particular. Secondly, the researcher found the exploratory research design appropriate since one of the purposes of the current

study was to gain, and create an understanding of Type II workplace violence from the data collected. The researcher's choice of an exploratory research design for a study such as the current one is supported by Bachman and Schutt (2003) and Grinnell and Williams (1990). They contend that where very little is known about a phenomenon, research that is exploratory in nature should be considered because its purpose is to uncover data or facts about the phenomenon under investigation, and to gain as much insight into it as possible.

### 3.3.2.1 *Population*

Participants in the qualitative component of this study were secondary school teachers who taught in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. Their schools were located in the urban, semi-urban and rural settlement areas. The urban areas are characterised by a significant level of development, with commercial and industrial activities, as well as residential areas. The semi-urban areas, on the other hand, are mainly residential areas with some level of development, but with no major commercial or industrial activities. In fact, the majority of the residents in the semi-urban settlement areas work in the urban areas. Lastly, the rural areas are settlement areas that are under the traditional system of administration under a king, a chief, or an *induna*.

### 3.2.2.2 *Sampling*

Non-probability, convenience sampling was chosen as the appropriate sampling method for this part of the study. It was done in two phases. The first phase entailed sampling schools, and the second, sampling participants in the sampled schools. It was apparent from the list of schools that was obtained from the provincial Department of Education that schools in the area of focus of the study were located in three distinct settlement areas; namely urban, semi-urban and rural settlements. The urban areas are characterised by a significant level of development, with commercial and industrial activities, as well as residential areas. The semi-urban areas, on the other hand, are mainly residential areas with some level of development, but no major commercial or industrial activities. Finally, the rural areas are settlement areas that are under the traditional system of government.



The first step in the sampling of schools was to write down the three categories of urban, semi-urban and rural settlements, in which the schools were located. The second step entailed listing the schools under these categories, according to their location. Since there were only a few schools in the urban settlement, all of them were sampled. The schools in the rural and semi-urban areas were numbered, and the samples were drawn through simple random sampling. The researcher phoned the principals of all the schools that were sampled, including those in the urban settlement area, and informed them about the study. The researcher then requested them to grant teachers in their schools permission to participate in the study

As indicated above, sampling was done in two phases; the second being the sampling of teachers who would participate in the study. This took place in the schools that were sampled in the first phase of sampling. These were schools whose principals would have expressed their willingness to allow teachers in their schools to participate in the study.

A non-probability, convenience sampling was also applied in the second stage of the sampling process to select the actual participants in the sampled schools. Prior arrangements were made with the principals of the sampled schools for them to invite teachers in their schools to attend a briefing session about the research, on a set day; by the researcher. The researcher arrived at the different schools on the set dates and addressed teachers who were present at the briefing session about the study. Strong emphasis was laid on ethical issues, particularly on the fact that participation in the study was voluntary and that the anonymity of the participants would be maintained. The briefing concluded with an invitation being extended to teachers who were willing to participate in the study to approach the school principal. The idea was that the principals would compile a list of participants and draw up an interview roster, based on the teachers' class timetable. The researcher followed the matter up with the principals after two days and secured dates on which the interviews would be conducted.

The challenge that the researcher faced with regard to the interviews was that some schools could not honour their appointments for various reasons. For example, when the researcher arrived at some schools as arranged, he would find that the principal

had been summoned to the circuit office for an urgent meeting and was therefore not available. Those left in charge would not be very helpful. In some instances, the arrangement with the principals would be thrown into disarray by the sudden unavailability of teachers due to teacher union activities. In yet other instances, learner protest activities in the school would make it impossible for the interviews to be conducted.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 12 teachers from four schools. Four of the teachers came from one urban school, six (three each) from two semi-urban schools, and two from one rural school. Besides questions on the participants' biographical information, the interview guide contained guiding questions that were linked to the research question. These questions were used to probe and nudge participants to narrate their experiences of incidents of violence perpetrated by learners and how it affected them, the types of violence by learners against teachers that were prevalent in their schools, and the possible factors that contributed to the violence.

### 3.3.2.3 *Data collection*

Qualitative studies normally use interviews to collect data. The utility of interviews in qualitative studies is that they tend to yield a great deal of useful information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). This comes about when the researcher puts follow-up questions to the participants, or probes them for details and clarity (Harris & Brown, 2010). The utility of interviews mentioned above resonated with the aim of this qualitative component of the current study, which is to explore teachers as victims of learner-perpetrated violence.

Semi-structured interviews were the preferred strategy for collecting qualitative data. The interviews were guided by a set of questions that were central to the principal research question, namely, "What is the prevalence of learner-perpetrated violence experienced by a group of secondary school teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, South Africa?" The purpose of predetermined questions was to ensure that all participants were asked opening questions in the same way. After the opening questions, a considerable amount of

time was spent with each participant; asking them follow-up questions, probing their responses, and encouraging them to provide details and clarification on their responses. In this way, the researcher was able to acquire diverse information from the participants on the questions asked. This strategy is consistent with the contention by PeerThink (2007) that, in semi-structured interviews the interviewer should not ask for concrete information, but should be more interested in narratives and ideas about concepts, which the participant is able to provide (such as the nature and consequences of school workplace violence in this study).

### **The interview process**

Steps towards conducting credible interviews that comply with the ethical requirements for social sciences research were taken long before this stage of data collection. For example, the researcher had familiarised himself with the UNESCO's Ethical Guidelines for International Comparative Social Science Research (UNESCO, n.d.). Consideration was also given to the following components, which Rabionet (2011) regards as important for the interview protocol: (a) how the interviewer should introduce himself to the interviewee, and (b) what questions to be asked. The first component is important for establishing a rapport, for creating an adequate environment, and for eliciting reflections and truthful comments from the interviewee. The second important and central component of this stage is the development of the questions and follow-up probes (Rabionet, 2011).

The first thing that the researcher did when each participant entered the interview room was to introduce himself to them, and to remind them about the aim and objectives of the research. The participants were informed about the duration of the interview, namely that it would take between 40 and 45 minutes. This was approximately length of teaching time on the class timetable. The aim was to minimise disruptions to the interviews and to the teachers' teaching time.

The researcher was quite aware of the disagreements about the ideal length of time for conducting an interview with a participant. For example, Seidman (2013) does not favour an hour-long interview, but also considers a two-hour one too long. A 90-minute long interview would therefore be reasonably long (Seidman, 2013). In

contrast, Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwich (2008) contend that the length of interviews varies, depending on the topic, the researcher and the participants. However, while the latter reckon that on average, interviews should last 20-60 minutes; they also concede that there is nothing magical or absolute about the interview time frame.

The interviews only got underway after the participants had signed the consent form and handed it back to the researcher; but not before the final preparation. This was the creation of an identity file for each participant. Each participant was identified with the letter P (for participant), followed by the file number allocated to them (1 through to 12). As an additional identity, the participant's file reflected the settlement area of their schools in the following manner: a hash (#) for rural schools; a single asterisk (\*) for the first semi-urban school and a double asterisk (\*\*) for the second one; and a cross (†) for an urban school.

During the interviews, the participants were asked one question at a time from the interview schedule. The probing technique was also applied to seek clarification and elaboration when responses were not clear or regarded as insufficient. This was done by, for example, encouraging the participant to "tell me more", "explain what happened next", "give me an example". The researcher also gave an occasional nod to encourage the participant to carry on with his or her narration of the events related to his or her victimisation by a learner or learners, while at the same time maintaining neutrality in order not to influence the participant negatively or positively.

A high level of vigilance was maintained during the participants' narration of their stories. They were redirected to the topic once they began to stray from it. The researcher also tried hard not to be personally involved or suggestive. For instance, he tried not to be animated when taking notes on something dramatic that the participant had said, being aware that the participant may notice this reaction and thus be influenced to respond in a manner, which in their opinion, would please the researcher, as the interview proceeded. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher thanked the participants and told them how they could get in touch with him if they so wished.

#### 3.3.2.4 *Data analysis*

The six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were applied to analyse data. These phases are: (i) Familiarising one with your data; (ii) Generating initial codes; (iii) Searching for themes; (iv) Reviewing themes; (v) Defining and naming themes; and (vi) Producing the report.

##### ***(i) Familiarising myself with the data***

The interviews for this research were recorded on a digital voice recorder. So, the first thing that the researcher did in order to familiarise himself with the data was to convert the audio data into text data. This meant that he had to listen to the audio files that he had created for each participant. The researcher selected one file at a time; played the recorder, listened to the interview, and transcribed it verbatim into text. He replayed the recording, listened again to the interview, and filled in the gaps in the text. He continued this way until he was satisfied that the contents of the text that he had created resembled those of the audio-recorded interview. He repeated this process with the audio files of each participant until he got to the twelfth one. He then read and re-read data set that he had developed until he had become familiar with the data. He also noted down initial thoughts and ideas as he was reading the data set.

##### ***(ii) Generating initial codes***

The researcher gave the whole data set equal attention. He was then able to identify, within the data set, patterns that he thought were relevant to answering the research questions in this research. He then coded them across the entire data set, and then collated data relevant to each code.

##### ***(iii) Searching for themes***

In this phase the researcher examined all codes and collated them into potential themes, and gathered all data relevant to each potential theme.

#### ***(iv) Reviewing themes***

In this fourth stage the researcher refined all the themes. He collapsed some into other themes and broke others into smaller components. This review was done at two levels; namely, at the level of the coded data and the level of the themes. The researcher did reviewing at the level of the coded data by re-reading all the data extracts that fitted into each theme to ensure that all the data formed a coherent pattern. Only then did he go on to review at the level of the themes involved. Here, the researcher considered each theme in relation to his my data corpus. He examined whether the relationships between the themes reflected the meaning of the data as a whole. He advanced to the next phase only when he had satisfied himself that the relationship between the themes reflected the meaning of the data as a whole.

#### ***(v) Defining and naming themes***

At this stage the researcher captured the essence of what each theme was about and what aspect of the data each theme captured. He then named them. The researcher also looked out for sub-themes and named those that he could identify.

#### ***(vi) Producing the report***

In this final step of the analysis, the researcher presented the data that he generated through the preceding stages. He explained its meaning in a manner that would convince the reader of the merits and validity of the analysis.

### ***3.3.3 Quality criteria***

#### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a matter of persuasion (Gunawan, 2015), which can be achieved by following a set of assessment criteria (Bryman, 2012). Guba (1981) proposes the following four criteria that he believes should be considered by qualitative

researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

### **Credibility**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Credibility involves establishing that the results of the study are credible or believable. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are a number of provisions that researchers may make in order to promote confidence that they have accurately recorded the phenomenon under scrutiny, and that their studies are trustworthy. The following, are the provisions proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

- (a) The adoption of research methods well established in qualitative investigation in general.
- (b) Although much qualitative research involves the use of purposive sampling, convenience sampling was used in this study because of the availability of the participants. On hind side, this sampling method may have negated the charges of bias often levelled against qualitative studies. However, since the researcher held briefing sessions with teachers about research, he is not oblivious to the fact that some of the participants may have availed themselves because it was one way of publicising their plight with learner-perpetrated violence against teacher.
- (c) During data collection sessions, the researcher ensured that the participants provided him with honest. Each participant was read a consent form, which they signed before the interviews could commence. The consent forms informed them about their voluntary participation in the research, and the fact that the information they provided would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, repeating questions or rephrasing them for the benefit of clarity to the participants, as well as probing, ensured that their responses were kept within the confines question posed and, most importantly, to uncover misleading information. This strategy gave the researcher the opportunity to immerse himself in the participants' world, to gain an insight into the context of the study, and as such, minimise any distortion of information due to the presence of the researcher, as Anney (2014) would argue.

Silverman (1981) regards the ability of the researcher to relate their findings to an existing body of knowledge as a key criterion for evaluating qualitative research. Because of the approach taken in this study, namely that of treating learner-perpetrated violence as a type of school violence and equally as a type of workplace violence, the researcher evaluated the credibility of the current research by assessing the degree to which its findings were consistent with those of studies on school violence directed at teachers and those of studies on Type II (client-perpetrated) workplace violence.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the probability that certain research findings have meaning to others in similar situations (Guba & Lincoln, 1985), or the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred and applied to other contexts with other respondents (Anney, 2014). Bitsch (2005) aver that a researcher facilitates transferability of a study to a potential user by providing a detailed description of the study and how participants were selected. Therefore, the researcher has the responsibility to provide a clear description of the research context and sufficient descriptive data to allow the reader to assess and evaluate the applicability or transferability of the data to another context (Shenton, 2004). In this study the researcher provides this description in the methodology section. Most importantly, the researcher used open data collection strategies to ensure that the findings arrived at are likely to be the same if the study was to be conducted under similar conditions in another context.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016; Bitsch, 2005), if the work was to be repeated in the same context, with the same methods and participants, similar results would be obtained (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Furthermore, it refers to the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process (Moon, *et al.*, 2016). Detailed coverage of the methodology and methods employed allows the reader to assess the extent to which appropriate research practices have been followed; and researchers should therefore document research designs and



implementation, including the methodology and methods, the details of data collection, and reflective appraisal of the project (Moon, *et al.*, 2016).

To meet this criterion, the researcher in the current study reported the research methodologies and research processes in the study in detail to enable future researchers to be able to repeat the work and, if possible, obtain the same results.

### **Conformability**

Conformability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Bitsch, 2005). It is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not the researcher's own predisposition (Shenton, 2004) or imagination, but are clearly derived from the data (Bitsch, 2005). This is the strategy to ensure neutrality and it means that the findings are free from bias. In this study the researcher ensured that the results of the qualitative component of the study emanated directly from the ideas of the participants. As explained in the methodology section, the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. The researcher also kept a notebook, or a reflexive journal, according to Koch (2006), in which he recorded the conditions of the interview room, disturbances during the interview process and any reactions by the interviewees to such disturbances. The researcher also recorded the respondents' reactions, if any, when probing or follow-up questions were asked. By making field notes during the interviews, the researcher ensured that all pieces of information were captured during the interviews. The researcher then converted the voice responses of each participant into text. This was done by listened to the voice recorder and replaying it several times while making notes. All the responses were quoted verbatim.

#### 3.3.4 Ethical considerations

The following ethical issues were considered before each interview could commence:

- The researcher first sought the permission of each participant to be interviewed; notwithstanding the fact that the principals had briefed them about the research. It was impressed upon each participant that their

participation in the interview was voluntary and that their privacy would be protected.

- The participants were made aware that the interview would be recorded on a digital voice recorder and, as such, their verbal consent was desirable.
- Furthermore, participants were informed about their right to participate or not to participate in the interviews, as well as their right to withdraw at any stage of the interview. They were also informed that they could even change their minds and withdraw from the interview completely even before it started, without any consequences.
- Each participant was given an assurance that their statement would be kept confidential at all times and that the information they provide would be used solely for the purpose of this research.
- Finally, the researcher provided each participant with a consent form to sign before each interview could commence.

One of the questions that the qualitative study sought to answer was about the consequences of learner-perpetrated violence on teachers. The question related to the associations between six variables that constituted the consequences of learner violence against teachers; namely, fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, psychological distress, and intention to quit the profession. The assumption was that the association between these variables was causal. However, the measurement of an association between these variables was beyond the realm of a qualitative study. Therefore, the qualitative study concluded by posing the following questions, “Is there an association between learner-perpetrated violence and teacher stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health, and attrition? This question was left to future studies to answer.

The quantitative component of the study endeavoured to fill the gap on knowledge about the causal relationship between learner violence against teachers and teachers’ psychological distress. The aim was to test this association through the rigor of a quantitative research design.

### **3.4 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The qualitative component of the study explored factors that contribute to learner-on-educator violence, its nature, and its consequences. One of the findings in the qualitative component of the study was that, as direct or indirect victims of learner-perpetrated violence, teachers suffered from host of psychological distresses, such as stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, and ill health. These psychological distresses were assumed to have a negative impact on teachers' well-being, and were seen as the reason why teachers considered leaving teaching at their earliest convenience, or opting to take early retirement. Of importance, was the question that the qualitative component of the study raised about the possible relation between learner-perpetrated violence and teacher stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health, and attrition. The qualitative component of the study could not address this question. Establishing relationships between variables is a robust procedure. It requires the application of statistical tests which, by their nature, lie in the realm of quantitative research designs. Nevertheless, the qualitative component of this study proposed a number of hypotheses, which future research could explore as well as test statistically to determine, on the one hand, the assumed association between learner-perpetrated violence and psychological distresses the teachers suffered from, and that among the consequences of violence themselves, on the other hand.

The quantitative component of the study below viewed the question raised by the qualitative component regarding the possible causal relationship between learner-perpetrated violence and a host of psychological distresses that affected teachers' well-being, as well as their intention to leave the teaching profession, as a gap which, if filled, could advance knowledge on school and workplace violence; particularly with regard to its effect on teachers as victims. Because of its research design, the qualitative component of the study was well positioned to test the hypotheses proposed by the quantitative component of the study statistically and, as such, confirm or refute the hypothesised causal relation between learner violence against teachers and the teachers' well-being.

### **3.4.1 Purpose of the study**

#### *3.4.1.1 Aim of the study*

The aim of the quantitative component of the study was to statistically determine the relations between the consequences of learner-perpetrated violence and well-being and intention to leave teaching among a group of teachers in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

#### *3.4.1.2 Research Hypotheses*

The following null hypotheses were developed to be tested in order to enable the researcher to attain the above aim:

$H_0$  1: There is no association between actual or threat of violence, and perceived stress.

$H_0$ 2: There is no association between verbal abuse and perceived stress.

$H_0$ 3: There is no association between harassment and perceived stress.

$H_0$ 4: Leave teaching and threat or actual acts of violence do not correlate

$H_0$ 5: Leave teaching and verbal abuse

$H_0$ 6: Leave teaching and harassment

$H_0$ 7: There is no relation between perceived stress and burnout.

$H_0$ 8: Perceived stress and general health do not correlate.

$H_0$ 9: There is no association between burnout and job satisfaction.

$H_0$  10: There is no association between burnout and teachers' intention to leave the profession

$H_0$  11: There is no relation between general health and teachers' intention to leave the profession

$H_0$  12: There is no association between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave the profession

The chi-square test of independence was selected as the appropriate statistical test for testing the relations stated in the above hypotheses. The alpha level at which the researcher would reject the null hypotheses was set at .05 level of significance.

### **3.4.2 Research design**

The design here is cross-sectional and exploratory in nature. The justification for the choice of an exploratory type of research as appropriate for this study was because of the scarcity of studies in the field of workplace violence in general, in South Africa, and particularly those that focus on teachers as victims of this violence, and from a workplace health and safety perspective. The approach taken here is consistent with that taken by Bachman and Schutt (2003) and Grinnell and Williams (1990). They contend that where very little is known about a phenomenon, research that is exploratory in nature should be considered because its purpose is to uncover data or facts about a given phenomenon – learning as much as possible about particular people and/or events.

#### *3.4.2.1 Population*

The population of the teachers who taught in the Capricorn District, where the study was conducted, was 4288. They taught 124 410 learners in 213 public secondary schools. Therefore, the teacher-learner ratio was 1:29. These figures were obtained from Limpopo Province's Department of Education offices in Polokwane. However, this information did not indicate how the teachers were distributed in the rural, urban, and semi-urban areas of the district. Therefore, when questionnaires were

distributed, three symbols, R (rural), U urban) and S (semi-urban) were allocated to identify the schools according to their location in the district, and for the purpose of data processing.

#### 3.4.2.2 *Sampling*

The sample size of the component part of this study was arrived at by following the one-tenth (1/10) convention on sample size, according to which a sample of one-tenth (10%) of the population is regarded as reasonable big enough to give one a reasonable control over sampling error (Grinnell, Jr., 1985). A decision was therefore taken, based on this information, to sample 10% of the 4288 teachers in 213 secondary schools in the Capricorn District. Consequently a figure of 429 participants was arrived at and a total of 429 questionnaires were distributed to schools in the rural, urban and semi-urban areas.

The distribution of the questionnaires to the participating teachers was highly dependent on the cooperation and permission of the school principals. The principals of the urban secondary schools were approached personally at their schools and informed about the research as well as to seek permission to distribute questionnaires among their teaching staff. The same procedure was followed with regard to principals in semi-urban secondary schools. Contact with principals of secondary schools in the rural areas was done telephonically because these schools were spread far and wide. Only those principals whose schools had a contact number in the form of a fixed landline telephone number or a cellular phone number were contacted. Their telephone numbers appeared on a list of telephone numbers that was obtained from the regional office of the Limpopo Department of Education. Appointments to brief them about the research could only be made with principals who answered the researcher's call. This meant that the researcher had to make an appointment with the principals and drive out to their schools on a set day to brief them about the research, as well as to make an arrangement for the distribution and collection of questionnaires

To select a sample to participate in the research, principals in each of the schools that were visited were requested to supply the researcher with a list of teachers on

their register. The researcher then took a copy of the list home, but with the permission of the principal, to work out how random sampling would be conducted. Each member on the list was allocated a number (1-*N*). A sample was then drawn from the list (population) of teachers at each school. The lottery method was used to select a sample from the list, and to avoid bias. This involved transferring each member's allocated number onto a separate piece of paper.

Each piece of paper was then folded and placed in a box. When the numbering was complete, the box was closed and then thoroughly shaken to get the numbers well mixed. The researcher then opened one flap of the box only wide enough to enable him to slip his hand into the box. He then grabbed one piece of folded paper while moving his hand in a stirring motion at the bottom of the box. He then drew his hand out of the box while holding on to the selected piece of paper. Each piece of paper retrieved from the box in this manner represented a part of the sample. This simple random sampling was repeated at each of the schools until a sample size of 429 was reached. The lists of teachers in the schools were returned to the principals when the questionnaires were delivered to the schools.

#### 3.4.2.3 *Data collection*

##### **(a) *Data collection instrument***

An eight-part self-administered questionnaire was utilised to collect quantitative data (see Appendix B). Section A of the questionnaire elicited the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and workplaces data, respectively. Section B helped to elicit data that quantified the nature of violence that the teachers were subjected to, and the socio-ecological factors that contributed to its occurrence. Sections C enquired about violent incidents the respondent had experienced in the past twelve months). Sections D-G contained four scales, namely, the Perceived Stress Scale, Teacher Burnout Inventory, Job Satisfaction Scale, and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), which were used to assess the consequences of learner violence on teachers. These scales are widely used to measure occupational health outcomes. They are available online, together with their scoring instructions. The last section, Section H, contained two questions. One enquired about the respondent's

intention to quit the profession. The other sought the respondent's opinion about the inclusion of workplace violence on the list of occupational health and safety hazards in the OHS in South Africa.

A pilot study was conducted with a sample of 15 teachers in order to determine the validity and reliability of questions 11-20 of the questionnaire of the quantitative part of the study. Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. According to De Vos (1998), the definition of validity has two parts; namely whether the instrument measures the concept I question and whether the concept is measured accurately. The researcher therefore used scales which, as stated above, have been used to measure occupational health outcomes. The other parts of the questionnaire were used mainly to collect data on the factors associated with Type II workplace violence, and the types of violence teachers are subjected to.

Reliability is the degree of consistency or dependability with which the instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. De Vos (1998) explains that reliability is primarily concerned with how well what is being measured is measured

*(i) Perceived Stress Scale*

The short version of the Perceived Stress Scale, the PSS-4, was used to assess the perceptions of stress among teachers who experienced workplace violence directly or indirectly. The subjects' responses were measured on a five-point scale (0=Never, 1=Almost never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Fairly often, 4=Very often). The scores were obtained by summing across all four items. Reverse coding was used to score items 2 and 3. This involved assigning the opposite score. For example, a score of 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, 3=1, and 4=0. The higher the score, the more perceived the stress.

*(ii) Burnout Scale*

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) was used to measure burnout levels in teachers. Responses to the burnout scale were made on a six-point Likert-type scale. The scale was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Moderately



Disagree; 3=Slightly Disagree; 4=Slightly Agree; 5=Moderately Agree; and 6=Strongly Agree.

(iii) *Job Satisfaction Scale*

Job satisfaction was assessed by using three items of the scale developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980), namely the 3-item Work Satisfaction Scale. The scale measures the extent to which an employee is satisfied and happy with his or her job. The statements were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the three statements that indicated work satisfaction by selecting the following response items: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree and 6=Strongly Agree. High scores indicated a high level of work satisfaction, while low scores indicated a low level of work satisfaction.

(iv) *The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)*

The general health questionnaire was originally developed by Goldberg in the 1970s as a 60-item instrument to assess psychological distress in population surveys, and to screen for non-psychotic mental disorders in clinical settings (Goldberg & Williams, 1991). However, a range of shortened versions of the questionnaire has now been developed. It includes the GHQ-30, the GHQ-28, the GHQ-20, and the GHQ-12. The GHQ-12 is the most popular version in epidemiological studies and population studies (Drapeau, Marchand & Beaulieu-Prévost, 2012). It comprises 12 items that measure three distinct constructs of 'Anxiety', 'Social dysfunction' and 'Loss of confidence' (Hankins, 2008). The twelve items are divided into six positive items and six negative items (Hankins, 2008). The positive items are: Been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing? Felt that you are playing a useful part in things? Felt capable of making decisions about things? Been able to enjoy your day-to-day activities? Been able to face up to your problems? Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered? The negative items are the following: Lost much sleep over worry? Felt constantly under strain? Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties? Been feeling unhappy or depressed? Been losing confidence in yourself? Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person? (Drapeau *et al.*, 2012).

The GHQ-12 scale asks whether the respondent had experienced a particular mood or behaviour recently. Each item is rated on a four-point scale as follows: 'not at all', 'same as usual', 'rather more than usual', or 'much more than usual'. The most common scoring methods for the GHQ-12 are the bi-modal (0-0-1-1) and the Likert (0-1-2-3) scoring styles (Montazeri, Harirchi, Shariati, Garmaroudi, Ebadi, *et al.*, 2003). The GHQ-12 gives a total score of 12 or 36, depending on whether one used the bi-modal or the Likert-type scoring methods, respectively. In both cases, higher scores indicate the probability of mental health problems. In this study, the standard, Likert-type scoring (0-1-2-3) method was applied. Items 2, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11 were reverse scored, that is, 3-2-1-0. A range of 0-36 score was anticipated.

### ***(b) Data collection process***

Every effort was made to brief teachers personally about the study, before the questionnaires could be distributed. It turned out that the only time available to hold such briefings was during the school breaks. The problem was that this effort would interfere with the teachers' break time. This idea was ultimately abandoned because the cover letter that accompanied the questionnaires conveyed the same message that would have been delivered at the briefings.

The questionnaires were delivered to the schools, each in its own envelope, on the day that was set with the principals, in envelopes. Each questionnaire was allocated a hand-written number. The numbers were taken from the list that was generated for each school during the sampling process that was explained earlier. The envelopes were marked with the same numbers as the questionnaires.

The principals were requested to distribute the questionnaires according to the list that the researcher had generated through the lottery method of simple random sampling for their school. It was impressed upon the principals that no teacher was to be coerced to participate in the study. Their participation was to be voluntary. The information on voluntary participation was also contained in the cover letters that accompanied the questionnaires. Specifically, the cover letters informed the respondents about their right to participate in the study or not; and that they could withdraw their participation in the study at any stage, without any consequences. In

addition, the cover letters assured the respondents that they completed the questionnaires anonymously and that the information they provided would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Lastly, the cover letters informed the respondents about the purpose of the study.

A total of 429 questionnaires were delivered at schools in the rural, urban and semi-urban areas. The questionnaires were collected from the principals after a week. I made several follow-up trips to the schools to collect outstanding questionnaires, but with very little success. I ultimately had to settle for only 150 (34.9%) returned questionnaires. Of the 150 questionnaires received back, 107 (71.3%) were found to be suitable for processing. The remaining forty-three (28.6%) were inapt for processing and were discarded. The data was captured and analysed through Version 24 of the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, with the assistance of a statistician. The detailed data analysis process that was followed is outlined below.

#### *3.4.2.4 Data analysis*

Quantitative data was analysed for the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the security situation of the schools, and the types of violence learners perpetrate against teachers. The main analysis, however, was of the data that was tested for the association between learner violence and teacher stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health, and attrition.

However, the question that the qualitative design could not answer, and which it left to future studies, was about the causal relationship between the variables mentioned above. As indicated earlier, it is only through the rigour of a quantitative research design that such a relationship could be determined.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

The researcher adhered to the following philosophical principles that guide ethical research, as recommended by Wassenaar (2006): autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons, avoiding possibilities of harming others, and beneficence and justice. The researcher also adhered strictly to ethical practices recommended by

Creswell (2008), such as respecting the rights of respondents and honouring the research sites (schools) that were visited. In respect to the latter, the researcher sought permission from the Department of Basic Education in the Limpopo Province to conduct research in the schools under its administration. In addition, the researcher relied on the guidance of his supervisors not to transgress any ethical issues in research involving human beings. Although this is now policy and a requirement for all researchers at the University of Limpopo to first apply for, and be issued an Ethical Clearance Certificate before they can conduct research, this was not a prerequisite when the proposal for this study was approved.

Having secured permission from the DoE, the researcher then approached each principal where the search was to be conducted for approval to conduct interviews or distribute questionnaires among teachers in their schools. The principals who gave the researcher permission to conduct research in their schools we requested to arrange a meeting with the teachers in their schools so that the researcher could brief them about the research.

Informed consent was considered and adhered to when data was collected for the study. According to Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006), central to the case for ethically sound research is the principle that research participants are able to consent freely to their involvement in research. Consequently, respondents who were the focus of this study were informed, through a letter that accompanied the questionnaires, about:

- The purpose of the study.
- The anticipated use of the data and the form of publication that may result.
- The degree of protection of their anonymity and confidentiality of the information they provided.
- Any possible harm or discomfort that may have resulted from the research.
- Their right to withdraw their participation at any stage without fear of any consequences to themselves because their participation in the study was voluntary.

Permission to conduct research in schools in the Capricorn District and to use educators as respondents was also applied for at the Department of Education, Sports and Culture in Limpopo Province.

### **3.6 SUMMARY**

The multi-method approach was adopted for conducting this study. While in principle, multi-method studies may employ two or more qualitative methods or two or more quantitative methods, the current research is a combination of two separate studies; one qualitative and the other, quantitative. The methodologies applied in the qualitative and quantitative research designs were presented separately and were consistent with methodologies of studies of their nature. The evolutionary and complementary perspectives of the multi-method approach were followed because little research conducted on teachers as victims of learner violence in their workplaces (evolutionary perspective) and research hypotheses developed from the research questions raised in the qualitative study required increased focus (complementary perspective).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reports on the results of the qualitative data analysis. First, it describes the demographic characteristics of the participants. Second, it presents the results of the themes that emerged from the interviews.

#### **4.2 RESULTS**

##### **4.2.1 Demographic characteristics**

As indicated in the previous chapter, the participants/respondents in the current study came from secondary schools located in the urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. The distinguishing features of these areas were also stated. Urban areas were said to be characterised by a significant level of development, with commercial and industrial activities, as well as residential areas. Semi-urban areas, on the other hand, were said to consist mainly residential areas and no major commercial or industrial activities. Finally, rural areas were described as settlement areas that are under traditional leaders, with the local government playing a supporting role. They are characterised by poverty and poor, or no infrastructure, and no industrial or commercial activities.

The demographic characteristics of the 12 participants are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of participants**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P8	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**
P9	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*    School 2 = \*\*    School 3 = †    School 4 = #



Three broad themes associated with learner violence against teachers emerged from the six-phase thematic data analysis. In addition, a number of sub-themes also emerged from each broad theme, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Themes of learner violence against teachers**

Broad Theme	Sub-themes
1. School-based factors associated with violence against teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner indiscipline, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the carrying of weapons,</li> <li>- the use of alcohol and drugs, on school grounds;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Age of the learner;</li> <li>• Class grade of the learner;</li> <li>• Class size;</li> <li>• School security; and</li> <li>• Workload.</li> </ul>
2. The nature of school workplace violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical violence; and</li> <li>• Non-physical violence.</li> </ul>
3. The consequences of learner violence on teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear;</li> <li>• Stress;</li> <li>• Burnout;</li> <li>• Job satisfaction;</li> <li>• General health; and</li> <li>• Intention to quit the profession.</li> </ul>

An analysis of these results is presented below.

#### **4.2.2 School factors and learner violence against teachers**

South African schools are governed according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, with the purpose of creating an environment that is safe and conducive for teaching and learning. To achieve this goal, the Act has decreed on the school-going age of learners, the age-grade norm, and class size or the Learner-LERs. Most importantly, section 8 of the Act titled: “A code of conduct for learners’ school policy” sets the framework for policies on codes of conduct through which

schools can regulate learner indiscipline, including violence. This endeavour is supported by the Department of Basic Education's regulations such as the National Schools' Safety Framework (see Department of Basic Education, UNICEF & Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2015; Makota & Leoschut, 2016); and the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Alcohol and Drug use among learners in schools (see Department of Basic Education, 2013).

Given the goal and dictates of the SASA, particularly the ones dealing with learner code of conduct (section 8 of the SASA), this section of the interview was developed with the intention to elicit participants' inputs on learner indiscipline and the behaviours associated with it, the measures that schools implement to deal with it, and how effective these measures were. The assumption that was made in relation to this section of the interview was that a school that did not have a policy on the code of conduct for learners, or whose procedure in applying such a policy was erratic would inadvertently create a systemic problem for itself. Learner indiscipline and, *ipso facto* violence would most likely thrive undeterred. This, in turn, would create an unsafe work environment for teachers and support staff in the school. The learning environment would equally be unsafe for learners. This assumption is consistent with Squelch's (2001) observation that safe schools are characterised by good disciplined learners; as it is with Reddy *et al.*'s (2012) contention that violence against educators occurs less often in schools with clear rules and disciplinary policies. The findings below do not refute these contentions.

#### 4.2.2.1 *Learner indiscipline*

Section 8(1) of the SASA decrees that all schools should adopt learner codes of conduct in an endeavour to curb learner indiscipline. Therefore, any behaviour by learners that violate the schools' codes of conduct is dealt with through the disciplinary processes that are spelt out in the schools' learner codes of conduct. All the participants in the current study indicated that their schools had developed and adopted a learner code of conduct. Nonetheless, learner indiscipline still emerged as an important factor in learner violence against teachers because of, among others, the flouting of the disciplinary procedures, the lack of support for the disciplinary

process by various stakeholders, and the ineffectiveness of the sanctions prescribed in the codes of conduct.

Five participants expressed their misgivings about the sanctions that are prescribed in the schools' codes of conduct. They regarded them as "*weak*" (P1 and P6), "*not effective*" (P8); doing "*very little to change the learner's behaviour*" (P5), and as "*a little less than a slap on the wrist*" (P3). The general view held by these participants was that the prescribed sanctions did not deter ill-disciplined learners. In fact, one participant (P5) attributed learner recidivism into indiscipline to the ineffectiveness of sanctions that are prescribed in the schools' codes of conduct. He said for example, that "*when a learner who gets suspended comes back to school after serving their suspension, they come back as if they were on leave. They don't feel the pain*". The other concern raised by P1 was that the process of implementing sanctions was too long. Lengthy disciplinary processes tended to weaken the association between the perpetrator's behaviour and the punishment that is ultimately imposed; thus rendering sanctions ineffective.

The schools' codes of conduct require the cooperation of learners, teachers, Department of Education officials, and parents for it to be effective. However, it was found that this support was not always forthcoming. As P1 indicated, teachers "*don't get support from parents with regard to their children's behaviour*". Sometimes the absence of the parents at the disciplinary hearings is orchestrated by the learners. For example, P12 reported that "*Most of the learners don't bother to bring parents to school. Others simply defy the principal's order and don't even bother to go home*". In other situations, "*Some of the so-called parents are not really the learners' parents but someone from the street*" according to P2. Some teachers also acted against the letter and spirit of the schools' codes of conduct. According to P1, "*Some teachers side with learner against the DC (Disciplinary Committee)*", and "*just a few teachers cooperate*" (P2). The disciplinary process was also not always followed. As P3 put it, "*Sometime the DC seats and takes a decision on a learner you have reported and you are not even called to the hearing*". Some principals were just too slow to react to learner indiscipline, according to P3.

The schools' codes of conduct regard the presence of a parent at their child's disciplinary hearing as a way of supporting the school to correct the learners' behaviour. However, what emerged from the responses of six participants was that schools were not getting this support from parents. They either did not attend these disciplinary hearings or the attendance was poor. The lack of support for teachers by the school management and other department officials was also cause for concern for five of the participants. For example, P4 indicated that the principal at her school did not protect teachers against violent learners. Neither did the government (the Department of Education), in the sense that the law proscribes any retaliation by a teacher, against a learner. Participant P8 felt that the goal that is envisaged by the SASA to curb indiscipline in schools by involving parents was difficult to attain because some of the troublemakers were themselves "parents". They "*come from homes where they themselves are fathers and mothers – they head households*" (P8). As a result, they detested having to play a minor role at school. In addition, the problem of learner discipline was also exacerbated by what P12 saw as the lack of support for teachers by some parents who took sides with their ill-disciplined children.

It emerged from the interviews that the only group of learners whose behaviour was contained by the schools' codes of conduct was the newcomers to the school, namely the Grade 8s. After Grade 8 the code of conduct and the prescribed sanctions become irrelevant and ineffective to the learners, according to P7.

#### 4.2.2.2 *Age of the learner*

The registration of learners in school in South Africa is regulated in terms of the age-grade norm, under the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Therefore, it is assumed that learners would start secondary education (Grade 8) at 14 years old and finish school at Grade 12 when they are 18 years old; if they do not repeat or skip a class. However, it was evident from the participants' responses on learner discipline that teachers often had to deal with learners who were 2-4 years above the age-grade norm. As such, an additional path towards the understanding of the association between learner indiscipline and school workplace violence emerged in the form of age-grade of learners. This link is captured in the responses of four of the

participants. For example, P1 said that they expected 15-year olds in grade nine, but most were 17-19 years old. P2's response in this regard was that *"it is those [grades] 9s and 10s [who tended to be ill disciplined] because some of them are 18, 19, and 20 years of age or older, and it is not easy to discipline them"*. Similarly, P8 indicated that teachers *"have fear because some learners come from homes where they themselves are fathers and mothers – they head households. They can attack you because they are not well disciplined"*. Lastly, P12 said that *"some of the learners who have wrong behaviour in class are repeaters and they are old. They don't have respect for school and teachers"*.

The problems that were found to be associated with over-age learners, as reported by the participants, were that they were ill disciplined. They lacked respect for the school and teachers, and they were not easy to discipline. Some of them were parents themselves and headed households, according to one of the participants (P8). The last-mentioned factor was a significant finding. No other research has so far identified this as a possible school-related factor in violence against teachers.

#### 4.2.2.3 *Grade of the learner*

One of the important sub-themes that emerged from the main theme on school context factors associated with learner violence against teachers was "the grade of a learner" as a factor in violence against teachers. The majority of participants, eight brought it up during the interviews, and as their responses were being probed for clarity. Seven of the eight participants cited Grade 9 as the most problematic grade, whereas six mentioned Grade 10. Only two participants mentioned grade 11. Grades 8 and 12 did not feature in the list of grades that were problematic.

The participants characterised Grades 9 and 10, respectively, as grades where: i) most incidents of verbal and non-verbal violence against teachers were taking place; ii) teachers had a lot of problems with boys who were aggressive; iii) learners did not submit homework; (iv) learners were generally troublesome. The participants did not experience the same kind of behaviour, or at least to the same extent, in the senior grades (Grades 11 and 12), and with Grade 8 learners. One participant's contention was that Grade 8 learners were the only group of learners whose behaviour was

contained by schools' code of conduct. After Grade 8, the code of conduct and the prescribed sanctions become irrelevant and ineffective to them.

#### 4.2.2.4 School security

Security was assessed upon arrival at each school. Only two out of the four schools visited had a security guard posted at the gate. The only security check that was conducted at one school was to ask the researcher to fill in the visitors' register. At the other school the security guard just waved the researcher in and continued his conversation with the hawkers at the gate. One participant (P1) at the latter school had this to say about the security situation at her school: *"Security at school is not tight to deal with issues of dangerous weapons and drugs. We only have old men at the gate who are not trained and are even afraid of these boys"*. This comment led to the assumption that the carrying of weapons and use of drugs by learners on the school grounds could be attributed to the lack of, or poor security in schools.

The problem with the presence of drugs and weapons on the school grounds is that they not only create an intimidating work environment for teachers, but compromised the safety of teachers and other learners. Fifty percent of the participants expressed their fear of being physically attacked by learners because: *"Most of the learners are always under the influence, and some reveal to us that they are addicted"* (P1); *"They are using a lot of drugs. In fact you can smell the dagga when they come back from break"* (P2 and P4); *"We often invite the police to come and do an unannounced search for drugs and alcohol and they don't leave empty-handed"* (P5); *"Always when they come into class after break they smell of dagga"* (P6); *"And most of the learners are smoking dagga, and this can contribute to their behaviour"* (P7). The participants who associated learner violence against teachers with the carrying of weapons by learners were four. Their responses were that: *"Teachers fear learners because they always carry weapons such as guns, knives or any dangerous weapon"* (P1); teachers are not safe *"with learners bringing such dangerous weapons to school"* (P4); *"We often invite the police to come and do an unannounced search for drug, alcohol and weapons and they don't leave empty-handed"* (P5); *"Every teacher is concerned about violence, especially these days."*

Everywhere or anywhere on the school ground you can find a learner with a weapon” (P7).

#### 4.2.2.5 Class size

The other factor that was closely associated with indiscipline, and therefore learner violence, was class size. Participants indicated that they taught in “big” and “overcrowded” classes, with learner-educator ratios (LERs) that averaged 1:80. Their stance was that indiscipline and acts of violence by learners arise out of such overcrowded situations. They found it difficult to maintain discipline in such big classes.

It turned out from the analysis of data that the problem of overcrowded classes impacted on the teachers’ ability to maintain discipline, as can be deduced from the following responses of three participants. P2 said the following, for example *“It is not easy to discipline learners especially because the classes that we teach are overcrowded. They average 80/1”*. The relationship between class size and learner discipline was also echoed by participant P11. She said that *“Big classes make it difficult to maintain discipline. For example, one grade 10 class that I teach has 79 learners”*. Big classes also create an opportunity for anonymity, which makes the implementation of disciplinary measures against learners difficult, if not impossible. For example, P12 reported as follows: *“A group of boys took exception when I tried to reprimand them for making noise. They uttered something, which brought laughter to the whole class. There was nothing I could do because this was a big class of learners”*.

#### 4.2.2.6 Work over-load

The participants were asked to comment about their workloads and job demands. Five participants reported that their workloads were acceptable. However, the majority (7) of the participants indicated that they were experiencing heavy workloads and that their jobs demanded too much of them. For example, P8, a Post Level 2 teacher, reported that, as head of department, he was burdened with a lot of administration work. He had to monitor the work of all the teachers, give them

support, and go through learners' books to ensure that teachers gave them sufficient tasks. He also had to attend disciplinary hearings; and still carry his teaching load. He felt that this work overload make him unproductive as a teacher. These sentiments were also echoed by the other Post Level 2 teachers (P1 and P5). The former added that such work overload made her unproductive, and the latter felt that he could not cope with the pressure of work because he had to carry the load of teachers who had resigned and also of those who were off because of illness.

Ordinary teachers (Post Level 1 teachers) also complained about work overload. P2 attributed this work overload to understaffing, large classes, the volume of tasks given to learners, teachers quitting their jobs, and the fact that they still had to supervise sports and other activities. The response of P12, a Post Level 1 male teacher, summarises teachers' workload as follows:

*I am burdened with a lot of administrative work. And I often ask myself "Am I a teacher or a slave?" "What a lot of work; prep, marking, etc." I also have workshops and meetings to attend, and I cannot cope. It gives me stress. That is why other teachers leave teaching or are forever absent. Almost every day we are trying to resolve disciplinary issues almost 50% of the time. Only about 25% the time is devoted to teaching. Admin work is a burden. When do I get time to prepare for my lessons?*

The following factors also contributed to the teachers' workload:

- Teaching large classes and learners doing too many tasks (P2 and P3).
- Understaffing as a result of and teachers who resign not being replaced (P5, P6 and P12).
- Too many periods to teach per week (P8).

The participants who said they were overloaded with work were made up of six males and only one female. It was also made up of six of participants who were 36-54 years old and one who was 35 years or younger. Three participants had the highest work experience of 21 or more years. The remaining four participants were equally split, with two reporting work experience of 10 years or less, and the other two of 11-20 years. In comparison, the demographic characteristics of participants who indicated that their workloads were acceptable were as follows: three were 35 years old or younger, and the remaining two were 55 or more years old and between 36 and 54 years old, respectively. Three participants in this group had the least work



experience of 10 or fewer years, while two reported work experience of 21 years or more.

#### 4.2.3 Nature of school workplace violence

None of the participants in the qualitative study was a victim of physical violence perpetrated by a learner. One participant indicated that she had also not been a victim of non-physical violence. In contrast, 11 participants reported that they had been direct victims of non-physical violence by learners, or had seen, or heard of, a colleague being victimised by a learner non-physically. Three participants, who were indirect victims of learner violence reported that: learners were aggressive against their colleagues and were mostly feared by female teachers (P1); there was a high level of verbal abuse by learners and they humiliate teachers (P3); many colleagues had been victims of verbal violence where learners would “throw a lot of vulgar words” at them (P8).

Eight of the 11 participants had been direct victims of non-physical attacks by learners. Participants P2, P4, P10, P11 and P12 were humiliated when a learner verbally attacked them in front of other learners in class. P7 said that the learners back-chatted a lot. P5’s attack came through the lyrics of a song. Disgruntled learners came to his class *“singing a song that is usually sung by people who are protesting. It contained lyrics about violence, and I felt threatened”*. With P10, she said that she sometimes found unpleasant messages directed at her written on the chalkboard. For P6 the verbal attack came in a subtle way. For example, when he asked learners to prepare a speech for class presentation, they prepared stories that targeted foreigners, knowing too well that he was one.

Not all non-physical violence was verbal. As P3 reported, sometimes there is unspoken violence. For example, he reported that *“when you look in the eyes of the learner they tell you that if anything happened and the learner is annoyed, reaction could be physical. And when I see physical threat in the learners’ eyes I withdraw and let him be the boss”*. P11 had a similar experience. She reported as follows: *“I feel intimidated. When you reprimand the learners they look you straight in the eyes and you can analyse what they are saying, as if to say, ‘you are not my parent’. Their*

*eyes tell me that he is saying 'I have anger in me and you give me the same treatment as I received at home'.* In some situations, *"...a learner will just walk by and slam the door shut just to disturb my class"* (P10). One participant, P6, reported on a colleague who was *"Cartooned by boys in the hostels and they ridiculed him. It was quite humiliating for the teacher"*. A report by P3 indicates that cyber violence could be a new way of attacking teachers. He reported that *"They [learners] post stuff on utube if they don't want to interact with you"*. He went on to raise concern about the effect that this type of violence, saying it *"could be very humiliating if they posted embarrassing stuff about you and it went viral"*.

#### **4.2.4 Consequences of violence on teachers**

At this stage the purpose of the study was to explore the consequences of learner-perpetrated violence on teachers. The study therefore assumed that school workplace violence would have a sextuple effect on the victims. That is, those teachers who were direct or indirect victims of learner violence would develop fear and as a result, suffer stress. Stress would in turn, lead to burnout, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, or intention to leave the job or profession. The actual results are presented in sub-sections 4.2.4.1 – 4.2.4.6, with the accompanying tables (Tables 4-9). These tables summarise the demographic characteristics of the participants for each consequence of violence. Table 10 presents a quick glance of the summary of consequence of violence discussed in section 4.3.

##### *4.2.4.1 Fear of violence*

During the interviews, participants were asked to comment about their fear of violence. Two participants, namely, P1 and P9, who were both females, declared that they did not fear any form of violence. In contrast, 10 participants indicated that they feared violence (both physical and non-physical). These fears were genuine. They arose out of real experiences in which seven of these participants (P2, P4, P6, P7, P10, P11 and P12) had actually been victims of verbal attacks by learners. For example, P2 reported that learners called him names. P4 was verbally attacked by a Grade 11 learner. They then *"...exchanged ugly words – words that I can't repeat to you"*. P6 had a boy swear at him when he intervened in an altercation in which the

boy was trying to beat a girl learner. P7's experience was that *"Sometimes they [learners] tell you what they want to tell you straight in the face [more of back chatting]"*. P10 was verbally attacked while trying to discipline a group of learners who were making noise in class. P11 was verbally insulted by a parent of a learner she was trying to discipline. Lastly, P12 was once attacked by a learner who did not want to take instruction to do work.

The gender representation of the participants mentioned above was four females and three males. Five of these participants had working experience of 10 or fewer years, compared to 21 years or more of three participants. It also turned out that the majority (4) of these participants were younger than the rest, being 35 years old or below. Two were between 36 and 54 years old, and only one was 55 years or older.

The fears of violence by six of the 10 participants who reported that they feared violence may be attributed to the carrying of weapons and the use of drugs and alcohol on the schools' grounds by learners. This can be discerned from their responses, as presented below.

*"There is quite a high level of verbal abuse by learners. Much of this behaviour by learners has to do with drugs. There is a serious abuse of drugs on school ground. They are using a lot of drugs. In fact you can smell the dagga when they come back from break"*. P3

*"Yes, as teachers we do have fear. I in particular because we teach learners who take nyaope and other drugs. They take these particularly at break time because when they come into class after break they actually smell dagga. We do not feel safe"*. P4

*"Fear of being physically attacked by learners, especially because they take drug and alcohol. They bring these to school and used it on the school grounds, especially during break. "We often invite the police to come and do an unannounced search for drug, alcohol and weapons, and they don't leave empty-handed – particularly with regard to drugs"*. P5

*"Yes. Fear is always there because the level of indiscipline in learners is very high. Always when they come into class after break they smell dagga"*. P6

*"Every teacher is concerned about violence, especially these days. Everywhere or anywhere on the school ground you can find a learner with a weapon. And most of the learners are smoking dagga, and this can contribute to their behaviour"*. P7

None of the participants had been a victim of physical violence. However, four participants indicated that they feared physical violence for various reasons. For P3 it was because he had “...*had colleagues who have been physically assaulted by learners*”. P4 had “... *witnessed an incident of a learner chasing another with a panga. [and] This shows that we are not safe with learners bringing such dangerous weapons to school*”. P5 had a “*Fear of being physically attacked by learners, especially because they take drug and alcohol*”. While P6 acknowledged that physical abuse was not much, he feared it because “*there is always a threat*” that it may occur. Similarly, P8 said “*Physical violence is always a possibility*”.

**Table 4: Fear of violence**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3**	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4**	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6**	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**

**Table 4: Fear of violence (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12**	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: No fear of violence (Px\*) = 2(16.6%)

Fear of violence (Px\*\*) = 10(83.3%)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*    School 2 = \*\*    School 3 = †    School 4 = #

#### 4.2.4.2 Stress

The majority (7) of the participants reported that they were experiencing stress. Five said they did not. The unfavourable or hostile environment in which they worked emerged as the source of these teachers' stress. Probing revealed work overload and unsupportive management as the sources of a generally unfavourable work environment. Probing also exposed learner indiscipline, and a host of behaviours associated with it, as another factor that contributed to the hostile work environment for teachers.

The association between the teachers' stress and school environmental factors was noticeable in the participants' responses. Five of the teachers who said they suffered from stress mentioned "the school environment" (P1), "*a high stress level environment*" (P6), a "*hostile environment*" (P4 and P8), and the "*work situation*" (P5) or "*conditions I am working under*" (P4) as the source of their stress. Not surprising, all seven participants cited "*the behaviour of learners*" (P3), "*students' provocative and humiliating behaviour*" (P6) "*learner violent behaviour*" (P4 and P8), and "*learner indiscipline*" (P1, P5 and P7), as having something to do with their stress. In addition, the participants also mentioned other factors that are inextricably associated with learner indiscipline and, *ipso facto*, with stress. They included "*lack of cooperation between teachers, school management and SGBs*" (P1), "*management's indecisiveness in dealing with such (learner) behaviour*" (P3, P4 and P8), "*lack of support by the school management for teachers who are victims of such a hostile work environment*" (P4), "*the management style of the school management*" (P12); "*the carrying of dangerous weapons by learners, and the prevalence of drugs and their widespread use on the school ground*" (P4); "*large and uncontrollable classes*" (P6); and "work overload" (P5 and P6).

It may be noted that workload or work overload was measured separately as one of the factors that were associated with school workplace violence. Therefore, although only two participants (P5 and P6) related their stress to work overload and, by implication, to school workplace violence, there were six other participants who identified workload as a factor in school workplace violence, thus making it a significant number of participants. Four of the seven participants who said they

experienced stress were males, and only three were females. This took the females to the majority (3) for those participants who did not experience stress. The majority of participants who said they had experienced stress were between 36 and 54 years old. The remaining two were 35 years or younger, and 55 years or older. Among those participants who said that they had not experienced any stress, three were 35 years old age or younger, and two were between 36 and 54 years old. With regard to work experience, four of those participants who said they had experienced stress had teaching experience of 21 or more years each; two of between 11 and 20 years each, and one had taught for 10 or less years. In contrast, four of the participants who said that they had not experienced any stress had teaching experience of 10 or fewer years, while the other one had experience of 21 or more years.



**Table 5: Stress**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4*	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**

**Table 5: Stress (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9**	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12**	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: Stress (Px\*) = 7(58.3%)

No stress (Px\*\*) = 5(41.6)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*    School 2 = \*\*    School 3 = †    School 4 = #

#### 4.2.4.3 Burnout

The responses (9) of the majority of the participants epitomised behaviours that are associated with burnout; particularly with the dimension of depersonalisation. The participants are inclined to distance themselves from the school, and from the recipients of their service, namely the learners. typically, they: “*push or drag*” themselves to work (P1, P5, P8 and P12); “*feel like leaving for the day*” when learners do not cooperate (P2); and “*feel like staying at home and not coming to work*” even when they are not sick (P3, P4, P6 and P7).

The verbatim responses were captured as follows:

*“Sometimes I just drag myself to work. Coming to work has become such an effort, mainly because of all the problems that I know I am coming to face. Its like I am trying to avoid facing the situation and wish I could just stay home” (P1).*

*“But sometimes if things are not going well in class and learners do not cooperate, then, ja! you just feel like leaving for the day” (P2).*

*“The situation at the school makes me to try and find any excuse that I can find, to stay away from these thugs [learners]. It is sickening. That is why I try and make use of all my sick leave days” (P3).*

*“Sometimes I don’t feel like coming to work even when I am not sick; particularly after a quiet and restful weekend. But I end up dragging myself because it is my job. Sometimes I have to consult a doctor because I develop a headache. And I think it is because of my work. During the school holidays or weekends I would be ok. But when its Sunday and I remember that I am going back to work on Monday, then it (headache) starts” (P4).*

*“At the start of every week I have to drag myself to work. Sometimes I tell my colleagues that I wish I could be booked off sick for a number of days and use those days just to sleep at home. I just want to be away from work. I feel that way every week” (P5).*

*“Sometimes I just feel I don’t want to come to this environment. It is not healthy” (P6).*

*“Although I only have 7 years’ experience as a teacher, I already feel that this job is just too much for me. All the learners’ problems that one becomes exposed to and all the administration problems that you are subjected makes*

*me feel like shouting out loud that “enough is enough”. To such an extent that I don’t feel like coming to work” (P7).*

*“Although I am far from reaching retirement age, the atmosphere at the school usually makes me not to feel like coming to work. I have to push myself to come here because I feel for the learners” (P8).*

*“I have to drag myself to work, particularly when you know that you are going to the same class where learners misbehave and don’t seem to appreciate what you are teaching them and management does not support you” (P12).*

**Table 6: Burnout**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4*	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**

**Table 6: Burnout (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9**	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12*	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: Burnout (Px\*) = 9(75.0%)

No Sign of Burnout (Px\*\*) = 3(25.0%)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*    School 2 = \*\*    School 3 = †    School 4 = #

#### 4.2.4.4 Job satisfaction

Participants were asked to comment about their satisfaction with their job. A follow-up question was posed as to whether they would consider quitting teaching. Seven participants (P1, P2, P3, P7, P10, P11, and P12) indicated that they were satisfied with their job. One participant (P11), said that she was satisfied with, and committed to her job as a teacher because she liked helping others. She would not quit her job for any other job. In contrast, the other six participants who also indicated that they were satisfied with their job said they were considering quitting teaching. The following were their responses: *“Yes! Even tomorrow if I can find a job I will jump with joy. I am really pre-occupied with the thought of leaving teaching”* (P1); *“Sometimes I think about quitting”* (P2);

*“I want to quit. However, it is not the profession that I want to quit but the school, because of the problems that we have with learner indiscipline and lack of support from the school management”* (P3);

*“I would not change it for any other job. But, it is starting to be challenging – particularly with the level of learner indiscipline that we have to deal with almost on a daily basis. One would never know”* (P7).

P10's love for her job was:

*“Out-weighed by the behaviour of some learners, which affect me to such an extent that I don't want to see myself working as teacher. As such, I would quit at the earliest opportunity. I am actually looking for a job”*.

One participant, P12, indicated that the only time he felt satisfied with his job was *“when students' results are released and learners have passed and complements are coming from all sides”*.

The majority (4) of the seven participants who indicated that they were dissatisfied with their job were males. There was a reversal of gender representation when it came to job satisfaction. Three of the participants were females. When job satisfaction/dissatisfaction was compared with age, it turned out that four out of seven participants who were dissatisfied with their job fell within the 36-54 years age category. One of the remaining participants was 55 years or older and the other two fell within the 35 years old or younger age category. In the category of those teachers who were satisfied with their job, three were between 36 and 54 years of age. The remaining two were 35 years old or younger. Lastly, a comparison of job

satisfaction/dissatisfaction with job experience revealed the following results: four of participants who were dissatisfied with their job had teaching experience of 21 years or more. Two of the remaining three participants had 10 years or less teaching experience while the last one had experience of 11-20 years. Among the participants who were satisfied with their job, three had a 10 years or less teaching experience. The remaining two had teaching experience of 11-20 years and 21 years or more.

In contrast to the participants mentioned above, five participants, namely, P4, P5, P6, P8, and P9 indicated that they were not satisfied with their job, and would not hesitate to quit teaching. They responded as follows: *“I am generally dissatisfied with the job of teaching at this school. I would rather resign and do something else. Even today if I had another income, I would quit”* (P4); *“(I am) Not satisfied at all. I regret having taken teaching as a profession. Quitting teaching is always a possibility”* (P5); *“I am not satisfied with my job. As such, I am always thinking about quitting my job. Recently I went for an interview for an administration post... If I had my way, I would never teach again”* (P6); *“I am not satisfied with my job as a teacher. I would rather be doing some other job”* (P8); *“I can’t say I am satisfied with my work as a teacher because of salary and the working situation (environment). However, I have not yet considered leaving teaching”* (P9).

The majority (3) of the participants who were not satisfied with their job were males. Four of these participants were between 36 and 54 years old. Similarly, four of these participants were the most experienced in the profession; each having taught for 21 years or more.



**Table 7: Job Satisfaction**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4**	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6**	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**

**Table 7: Job Satisfaction (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9**	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12*	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: Job Satisfaction (Px\*) = 7(58.3%)      Job Dissatisfaction (Px\*\*) = 5(41.6%)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*      School 2 = \*\*      School 3 = †      School 4 = #

#### 4.2.4.5 *General health*

Half the number of participants indicated that they did not suffer from any illness, while the other half reported as follows: three of the six, namely, P1, P4 and P9, who were all females, indicated that they were on treatment for hypertension. In addition, P9 was also receiving treatment for cholesterol. One male participant (P6) was receiving treatment for chronic back pain. Another male participant (P2) indicated that he has to be treated for allergy from time-to-time, while yet another male participant, P5 said he had received treatment for stress.

The results further show that all the participants who reported that they suffered mental ill health were above 35 years of age. The overwhelming majority (5) were between 36 and 54 years old. The remaining one was 55 years old. With regard to work experience, the majority (5) of the participants were the most experienced, each having worked for 21 or more years. The remaining participant had the lowest work experience, having worked for 10 years or less. The results from the participants who did not report any psychological distress were an inverse of the above results. For example, all the participants in this category were below 55 years of age. Specifically, four were 35 years old or younger, while two were between 36 and 54 years old. Also, the majority (4) among these participants had the least work experience, with four each recording work experience of 10 years or below. Two had work experience of 11-20 years each.

**Table 8: Psychological distress**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3**	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4*	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8**	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**

**Table 8: Psychological distress (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12**	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: Psychological distress (Px\*) = 6(50.0%)

No psychological distress (Px\*\*) = 6(50.0%)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*    School 2 = \*\*    School 3 = †    School 4 = #

#### 4.2.4.6 Quit teaching

The purpose of the interview at this stage was to establish whether, given the hostile environment in which they work, the participants had any intention to quit teaching or not. One participant (P11) gave a categorical “No!” She did not want to quit teaching. In contrast, nine participants wanted to quit. They gave an emphatic “yes!” answer as encapsulated in their responses below:

- P1 *“Yes! Even tomorrow if I can find a job I will jump with joy. I am really pre-occupied with the thought of leaving teaching”.*
- P2 *“Sometimes think of quitting, and like others, move into a new career”.*
- P3 *“Although I want to quit, it is not the profession that I want to quit but the school”.*
- P4 *“I would rather resign and do something else. Even today if I had another income, I would quit”.*
- P5 *“Quitting teaching is always a possibility. I wanted to quit last year and take early retirement”.*
- P6 *“I am always thinking about quitting my job. Recently I went for an interview for an administration post in a school”.*
- P8 *“I would rather be doing some other job”.*
- P10 said her level of satisfaction teaching and making a difference in the lives of learners is *“outweighed by the behaviour of some learners, which affect me to such an extent that I don’t want to see myself working as teacher”.*
- P12 *“Yes! Because learners misbehave and don’t seem to appreciate what you are teaching them and management does not support you”.*

The responses that the last two participants gave were somewhat ambiguous. For example P7’s response was that she *“I would not change it (her job) for any other job. But, it is starting to be challenging – particularly with the level of learner indiscipline that we have to deal with almost on a daily basis. One would never know”.* P9 said she had not yet considered leaving teaching.

Of the participants who were adamant that they wanted to quit teaching, six (66.6%) were males and three were females. With regard to age, the majority (6) fell within the 36-54 years age category. Two of the remaining three participants were 35 year old or younger and the last participant was 55 years or older. The majority (4) of the nine participants who wanted to quit teaching, had teaching experience of more than 20 years each. Three of the remaining five participants had teaching experience of

10 years or less, while the other two participants' teaching experience was 11-20 years.

It is worth noting that the intention to quit teaching by four participants was inconsistent with their stance that they were satisfied with their job. In contrast, the intention to quit teaching by the other four participants was consistent with how they felt towards their job; namely that they were dissatisfied. This was also the case with the one participant who expressed satisfaction with her job and did not want to quit it. The indecision of three participants whether they would quit their job or not matched an equally wavering decision of whether they are satisfied with their job or not.

**Table 9: Quit Teaching**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P1*	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P2*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban*
P3*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	11-20 yrs	Permanent	1	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban*
P4*	Female	55 yrs +	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P5*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	2	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P6*	Male	36-54 yrs	Foreign national	21 yrs +	Contract	1	Post-graduate degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P7***	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Urban <sup>†</sup>
P8*	Male	36-54 yrs	South African	11-20 yrs	Permanent	2	Post-graduate degree	Semi-urban**



**Table 9: Quit Teaching (continued)**

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Nationality	Teaching Experience	Employment Status	Post Level	Qualification	Settlement
P9***	Female	36-54 yrs	South African	21 yrs +	Permanent	1	Diploma	Semi-urban**
P10*	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Semi-urban**
P11**	Female	35 yrs & below	South African	10 yrs or less	Permanent	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>
P12*	Male	35 yrs & below	Foreign national	10 yrs or less	Temporary	1	Degree	Rural <sup>#</sup>

N=12

Summary: Yes Quit Teaching (Px\*) = 9(75.0%)      No Quit Teaching (Px\*\*) = 1(8.3%)      Unsure (Px\*\*\*) = 2(16.6%)

Post Level 1 signifies ordinary teacher and Post Level 2, Head of Department (HOD) (including some Deputy Principals and Principals)

School 1 = \*      School 2 = \*\*      School 3 = †      School 4 = ††

### 4.3 Consequences summary

The consequences of violence against teachers that are presented in Table 10 below indicate possible associations between learner violence and teacher fear of violence, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, psychological distress and intention to quit the profession. One participant (P9) said she was not a victim of any form of violence by learners, whereas 11 other participants were. Of the 11 participants who reported having been victims of violence, 10 feared violence; seven suffered from stress; nine were suffering from burnout; four reported that they were not satisfied with their jobs. Five participants indicated that they suffered from one form of psychological distress or another, compared to six who said they did not suffer from any psychological distress. Nine participants were ready to quit teaching while two were not sure whether they wanted to quit their job or not, and one had no intention of quitting her job. While P9 had not experienced any violence, she nevertheless indicated that she was not satisfied with her job, but was uncertain as to whether she wanted to quit teaching or not. So, unlike the other participants, her lack of job satisfaction cannot be associated with learner violence.

The results for P9 are that she was not a victim of violence; hence she did not report any negative consequences, except for psychological distress. She was also undecided as to whether she wanted to quit teaching or not. When participant P9 is excluded from the calculations because of the reason stated above, then the table shows the following results with regard to the negative consequences of violence on teachers: (a) three of the participants (P4, P5, and P6), experienced six of the consequences associated with learner violence. That is, they feared violence, had stress, were burnt out, were not satisfied with their job, were suffering from psychological distress, and they wanted to quit the profession. (b) One participant (P8) experienced all but one consequence of violence, namely psychological distress. (c) P1, P2, and P3 are the three participants who experienced four consequences of violence. What the three had in common was that they all reported that they were satisfied with their job. The difference between them was that P1 did not fear violence; P2 did not report any stress, and P3 did not suffer from any psychological distress. (d) Participants P7 and P12 experienced three consequences of violence. They both feared violence and suffered from stress. The difference

between the two was that P7 reported being stressed but had no intention to quit her job, while P12 did not report being stressed, but wanted to quit his job. (e) The consequences of violence experienced by P10 were that she feared violence and wanted to quit her job. (f) P11 experienced only one consequence of violence, namely, fear.

**Table 10 Learner violence-consequences association**

	Participants												Totals					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	Y		N		U	
Victim?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	11	91.6%	1	8.3%	0	0
Fear?	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	10	83.3%	2	16.6%	0	0
Stress?	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	7	58.3%	5	41.6%	0	0
Burnout?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	9	75.0%	3	25.0%	0	0
Job satisfaction?	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	7	58.3%	5	41.6%	0	0
Psychological distress?	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	0	0
Quit?	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	1	9	75.0%	1	8.3%	2	16.6%
Negative consequences	4	4	4	6	6	6	3	5	1	2	1	3						
	66.6%	66.6%	66.6%	100%	100%	100%	50.0%	83.3%	16.6%	33.3%	16.6%	50.0%						
No negative consequences	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	1	4	4	5	3						
	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	33.3%	16.6%	66.6%	66.6%	83.3%	50.0%						
Undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0						
	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16.6%	0%	16.6%	0%	0%	0%						

N=12

Key: 1=Yes (Y)

2=No (N)

3=Unsure (U)

## 4.4 DISCUSSION

### 4.4.1 Factors that contribute to school workplace violence

The results that were presented in the previous chapter indicate that the probability that a teacher will become a victim of violence that is perpetrated by a learner at their place of work is a function of the interaction between multiple school-based factors. They also indicate that, similar to any other workplace violence, learner violence against teachers is a complex phenomenon. It takes a multiplicity of intricately linked factors with a network of relationships to understand and explain it.

During the interviews, and through probing and personal observation of the school environment in which the interviews were conducted, schools' codes of conduct, learner indiscipline, schools' lack of security, classroom overcrowding, overage learners for the grades, and the presence of weapons and drugs on the school grounds, emerged as the contexts which, according to the Social-ecological Theory, shape individuals' attitudes and behaviours. According to the ABC of the Interactional Theoretical Perspective's ABC model (Espelage, 2014), these factors are antecedents (A) of a hostile behaviour (B) by the users of the service offered by the workplace (learners), towards employees (teachers), which manifest in workplace (Type II) violence. The above-mentioned factors act in combination to create a hazardous work environment in which, contrary Squelch's (2001) notion of a safe school, teachers carry out their work under fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse or physical violence; and a threat to their health and safety. They also confirm the assertion of the Social-ecological Perspective (Wilson *et al.*, 2011; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Golden & Earp, 2012), that no single factor is adequate to explain learner violence against teachers.

Below follows discussions of individual factors and their association with learner violence against teachers as found in this study and how these findings compare with the findings in other studies.

**(i) Discipline**

Discipline in school is defined as respect for school laws and regulations and the maintenance of an established standard of behaviour and as such, implies self-control, restraint, and respect for oneself and others (Idu & Ojedapo, 2011). Indiscipline is a negative form of behaviour in any or all of the following areas: respect for school authority, obedience of rules and regulations, and maintenance of established standards of behaviour (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). Like similar behaviours that fit the definition of school or workplace violence, such as workplace incivility, student bullying of teachers, educator-targeted bullying, and violence against teachers, indiscipline is behaviour that, according to the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (2002:1), "...violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder". The review of literature in chapter 2 indicated that learner indiscipline was inextricably linked to factors such as the age (overage) and grade of the learner, as well as unfavourable class sizes, and they act together as antecedents of a hostile work environment for teachers.

The South African Schools Act was promulgated in order to instil and maintain discipline among learners, as well as to turn schools into purposeful teaching and learning environments. In order to achieve this goal, the Act decrees that every school in South Africa should develop and adopt a school code of conduct as an instrument for enforcing discipline among learners. A school's code of conduct therefore spells out rules regarding learner behaviour at school, in the classroom, and outside school, while engaged in school-related activities (Sun & Shek, 2012).

This study found that as a rule, the sampled schools (where the participants in this study worked) complied with section 8(1) of the the SASA with regard to learner codes of conduct and making their schools safe. All the participants indicated that their schools had developed and adopted learner codes of conduct. Nonetheless, learner indiscipline still emerged as an important factor in learner violence against teachers. Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2009) made a similar finding. The majority of the schools they had surveyed had implemented strict policies on

discipline as well as stringent security measures in an endeavour to promote good and respectful behaviour from learners. However, participating teachers indicated that these measures did not quell learner indiscipline, and that learner indiscipline and the accompanying violence posed a threat to the safety of teachers.

The findings presented above are by no means unique to these studies. Similar studies on learner violence against teachers have come up with results that confirm the association between learner indiscipline and violence against teachers. In their study on violence against teachers in Jordanian schools, Alzyoud *et al.* (2016) found that learners were the cause of violence against teachers. They lacked discipline and respect. Similarly, teachers who participated in Abdulla's (2011) study on school violence directed towards teachers in South African schools attributed school violence and the deterioration in the school environment to poor management and learner indiscipline in their school.

Teachers in Kratcoski's (2012) study were asked to mention the most important school internal factors that contributed to school violence in rank order; beginning with the most important. They ranked lack of respect and indiscipline second to large class size. This finding is consistent with the Ecological Theory's postulation that human behaviour, including violence (Savage & Vila, 2003) is a function of the physical and social environment (such as classroom overcrowding) in which it occurs (Maxfield & Babbie, 2006). Similarly, ILO (2003) found that learner indiscipline created tension, or an enabling environment (according to the Enabling Environment Perspective), that became the source of verbal and physical assault of teachers, particularly at secondary school level. Lastly, in a case study that was conducted to explore a secondary school educator's experiences of school violence, Bester and Du Plessis (2010) came to the conclusion that the educator associated learner indiscipline with the failure or inability of the education system to support teachers with the enforcement of acceptable practices in the classroom and on the school grounds. This conclusion is well within the realm of the Enabling Environment Theoretical Perspective. Applied to the problem of learner violence against teachers, one of the postulations of this perspective would be that the failure or inability of the education system to support teachers with the enforcement of acceptable practices in the classroom creates an environment that unwittingly allows and encourages

learner violence to thrive by preventing those who engage in it from understanding and experiencing the consequences of their behaviour (Remboldt, 1994).

**(ii) Overage learners**

The age of a learner for a grade is regulated in terms of the age-grade norm, under the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. However, the current study found that teachers often had to deal with overage learners in their classes; that is learners who were 2-4 years above the age-grade norm. The problems that were found to be associated with over-age learners, as reported by the participants, were that they were ill disciplined, and they lacked respect for the school and teachers.

The finding on over-age learners in this study is similar to the findings made by Meny-Gilbert (2012), Social Surveys Africa (2010), and Zulu *et al.* (2004), in similar studies. For example, Meny-Gilbert (2012) found that high levels of enrolment continued well beyond the compulsory school going age (15 years), and that over-age youth and a large spread of ages in each grade remained a defining trend of school participation in South Africa. Lastly, Social Surveys Africa (2009), and Zulu *et al.* (2004) came to similar conclusions, namely that South Africa has a significant percentage of over-age learners for high school. Zulu *et al.* (2004) actually found that learners in some schools were already adults.

The presence of over-age learners within the school system creates high-risk work environments for teachers. Conflict that may lead to Type II workplace violence is likely to arise during the interaction between the teacher and the learner because, as reported above, over-age learners tend to be ill disciplined, and to lack respect for teachers or authority. This situation is consistent with the postulation of the Differential Risk Model of criminal victimisation; namely that, individuals who are in close personal, social or professional contact with potential offenders run a greater risk of being in dangerous places and being victimised (Davis, 2005). Similarly, the Lifestyle/Exposure Theory postulates that the likelihood that an individual will become a victim of crime depends their routine activities, such as going to work (Walklate, 2007; Hindelang, 2009). Criminal victimisation is therefore likely to occur during physical interaction between the potential offender and the potential victim at



a particular place (Hindelang *et al.*, 1978). Therefore, the explanation of school violence against teachers, according to the lifestyle theory/exposure theory, is that it is a function of the teachers' routine daily activities of going to work and interacting with learners (through teaching and learning); in an unsafe and hostile work environment that is the product of learner indiscipline and lack of respect for teachers.

### **(iii) Grade of a learner**

One of the important sub-themes that emerged from the main theme on school context factors associated with learner violence against teachers was “the grade of a learner”. It emerged as the participants were being probed about the school context factors associated with learner violence against teachers. The majority of participants brought it up during the interviews; either directly or indirectly. They characterised Grades 9 and 10, respectively, as grades where: (i) most incidents of verbal and non-verbal violence against teachers were taking place; (ii) teachers had a lot of problems with boys who were aggressive; (iii) learners did not submit homework; and (iv) learners were generally troublesome. The participants did not experience the same kind of behaviour, or at least to the same extent, in the senior grades (Grades 11 and 12), and with Grade 8 learners. One participant's contention was that Grade 8 learners were the only group of learners whose behaviour was contained by schools' code of conduct. However, after Grade 8 learners transgress the schools' codes of conduct with impunity. They are not even deterred by the prescribed sanctions.

The findings in studies by Swart and Stevens (2002) and Pahad and Graham (2012) confirm the association between violence and the grade and age of a learner. The former found that the most reported incidents of school violence in the secondary schools they studied involved Grades 8 and 9 learners. Similarly, the latter found that violent learners were learners in Grade 8 and Grade 9. The finding of this study that Grade 8 learners' behaviour was subdued is therefore inconsistent with the behaviour expected from learners in this age group. Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners are in the early adolescence stage. Adolescent learners have their own problems due to the nature of this stage of development (Alzyoud *et al.*, 2016). They tend to

display rebellious behaviour (Pickhardt, 2009), and “normal misbehaviour” such as breaking rules, disobedience, and arguing (Levinson, 2014). These behaviours continue through the first two years of high school, and begin to diminish towards the last two years of high school when the teenagers become noticeably more mature and begin to demonstrate more restraint and more reasoned arguments (Levinson, 2014). This explains the finding in this study that violence towards teachers was not common among the Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners.

Grade of a learner is linked to learners’ age. Therefore, the Differential Risk Model and the Lifestyle/exposure Theory are equally applicable in explaining its relation with violence against teachers.

#### **(iv) Class and school size**

The assumption that was made with regard to class size and learner violence against teachers was that failure by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to assist schools to achieve and maintain an ideal learner-to-educator ratio (LER), as espoused in the SASA, would affect a school’s class size. This study found that, whereas the LER policy for secondary schools is 1:35, the DoE did not do much to assist schools to achieve and maintain an ideal learner-to-educator ratio. Participants indicated that they taught in “big” and “overcrowded” classes, with LERs that averaged 1:80. Their stance was that indiscipline and acts of violence by learners arise out of such overcrowded situations. They found it difficult to maintain discipline in such big classes.

The association between class size and indiscipline is confirmed by similar studies on learner violence against teachers. For example, the finding by Alzyoud *et al.*, (2016) was simply that learner violence against teachers occurs because of the large number of learners in classes. Espelage *et al.* (2013), Kratcoski (2012), and Ohsako (1997) cited large classes among the factors associated with learner indiscipline and violence against teachers. Similarly, Benbenishty and Astor (2005) had observed that the common view that was popular among teachers in their study was that school violence problems increase in proportion to the size of the class and the school. Further findings of the association between school violence against teachers

and class size or overcrowding were made in the following studies which, for a period spanning more than a decade, consistently came up with results that indicated a proportional relationship between class and school size and learner indiscipline and violence: Constitutional Rights Foundation (2009), Van Tonder and Williams (2009), Leung and Ferris (2008), Bickley-Green (2007), De Wet (2007), DeVoe *et al.* (2004), Klonsky, (2002), O'Neill (2001), National Center for Education Statistics (1999), and Devine (1996). Ma (2002), as well as Benbenishty and Astor (2005) found that there was no positive relationship between violence and school or class size.

The finding made by Alzyoud *et al.* (2016) was that violence against teachers occurs in classes with a large number of learners and that such classes are found mainly in many schools that have a large enrolment of learners; thus linking class and school size to learner violence against teachers. In contrast, school size in this study did not emerge as a factor associated with learner indiscipline and violence against teachers, as class size did. This is consistent with Steinberg, Allensworth, and Johnson's (2011) finding that school size was not a strong determinant of teachers' perception of safety because some of the least safe schools were large, but some of the safest schools were also large. Notwithstanding the finding by Steinberg *et al.* (2011), one participant in the current study reported a problem that was associated with school size, in relation to large enrolment of learners. The participant reported that teachers in her school did not get to search every learner and their bags for weapons and drugs because their high enrolment figures. This situation created an opportunity for learners to smuggle weapons and drugs into the school, thus creating the next problem, which is discussed below.

#### **(v) *Drugs and weapons on school grounds***

The presence of weapons and drugs on the school grounds signifies indiscipline among learners. They not only create an intimidating work environment for teachers, but also hamper the DoBE's mission of making schools safe and conducive for teaching and learning. It was evident from the participants' responses in the current research, that the presence of drugs and weapons on the school grounds compromised the safety of teachers and other learners. Fifty percent of the

participants expressed their fear of being physically attacked by learners because they used drugs and alcohol, and also carried weapons on the school grounds. This fear was legitimate because they reported that learners usually smelled of *dagga* when they came back to class after break. One participant reported that they had actually witnessed an incident where a learner was chasing a fellow learner with a *panga*. The concern of the teachers for their safety is therefore unquestionable. For example, the finding in a study conducted by Alzyoud, *et al*, (2016) on violence against teachers in Jordanian schools was that some learners displayed violence against teachers due to drug and alcohol problems. Similarly, Pahad and Graham (2012) found that learners who took drugs were very violent, and any teacher who attempted to discipline them put themselves at risk of victimisation.

There are other studies that have also found that the presence of drugs and weapons on the school premises pose a threat to the safety of teachers. For example, 58.1% of secondary school teachers in Burton's (2008) National Schools Violence Study reported feeling unsafe at their schools when teaching. The participants attribute this to their learners' access to alcohol and drugs. Similarly, the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs (particularly *dagga*) on the school premises by learners during school hours (Singh & Steyn, 2014); and the carrying and use of deadly weapons on the school premises by learners to scare teachers and innocent learners and to force them into submission (Pitso *et al.*, 2014; Singh & Steyn, 2014); were found to create a school environment that was hostile to both teachers and learners (DeVoe *et al.*, 2004). Although, as it was indicated above, school size creates a problem of the proliferation of weapons on the school grounds, Waheed and Youssef (2007) found that the occurrence of incidents involving weapons was relatively infrequently.

#### **(vi) Work overload**

Participants attributed work overload to understaffing, large classes, the volume of tasks given to learners, teachers quitting their jobs, and the fact that they still had to supervise sports and other activities. The study found that teachers were burdened with heavy work overloads and high jobs demands. This situation is attributed to large classes, the volume of tasks given to learners, and understaffing. Understaffing

can be traced back to class overcrowding and its related problems for teachers who, as a result, quit teaching. However, schools find it difficult replace teachers who quit. The level of violence in schools, in general, and of violence against teachers, in particular, has made the teaching profession detestable.

The study conducted by Mulholland *et al.* (2013) came up with findings similar to those of the current study, namely that teachers were experiencing heavy workloads. However, their findings were with regard to teachers who occupied middle manager positions. As heads of department, these teachers were responsible for coordinating activities related to their subjects and still had classroom teaching responsibilities. Mulholland *et al.* (2013) found that work overload was the main predictor of strain for these teachers. They were the only group to report a range of “change-related” stressors as stressful on a daily basis. The “workload” dimension of work was significantly more stressful for middle managers than both class teacher and senior manager (Mulholland *et al.*, 2013).

#### **4.4.2 Nature of violence**

It was stated earlier in this report that learner violence against teachers comprises a range of behaviours that span across the violence continuum. It ranges from soft and deceptively harmless behaviour, to serious and conspicuously harmful behaviour. As noted, the former includes verbal and non-verbal behaviour, and the latter, physical acts. It was also noted that verbal violence was the most common form of violence against teachers (Reddy *et al.* 2013; Lokmić *et al.*, 2013; Denise, 2008; Mooij, 2010; and Steffgen & Ewen, 2007), while physical violence was less common (Walker, 2013; Wilson *et al.*, 2011; Burton, 2008; Denise, 2008).

Although, as reported on p132, one participant reported that they had actually witnessed an incident where a learner was chasing a fellow learner with a *panga*, no incidents of physical violence against teachers were reported in this study. These results are therefore consistent with the results of similar studies. that found that: physical violence against teachers was not common (Wilson *et al.*, 2011); although teachers were threatened with physical harm, they were less likely to be actually physically attacked (Kondrasuk *et al.*, 2005); and teachers were more likely to be

victims of non-physical than physical violence (De Wet, 2007). That being the case, a few participants did, however, report fearing physical attacks. They cited the looks in learners' eyes were the source of this fear. Similar studies by Denise (2008) and Garrett (2014), found that learners used eye contact and glaring as forms of non-verbal violence, to threaten teachers to carry out some form of physical action against them. Therefore, the fear of physical attacks that was reported by teachers in this study is by no means unreasonable. This reported conduct by learners constitutes workplace incivility which, according to Yoder-Wise (2015) and Anderson and Pearson (cited in Hutton, 2006), is a low-intensity deviant behaviour that may eventually develop into physical or psychological personal attacks.

Contrary to the findings on physical violence that are discussed above, experiences of non-physical violence of a verbal and non-verbal nature were a common occurrence. It manifested in behaviours that Waheed and Youssef (2007) say are more insidious in nature, rather than outwardly physical, such as the humiliation of teachers, back chatting, and swearing. Other forms of non-physical violence that were common were lack of respect for teachers and refusing to take instructions to do activities in class. These results on non-physical violence compare favourably with results of other studies that examined workplace and school violence. They also confirm non-physical or verbal and non-verbal violence as the most prevalent form of violence against workers. For example, Lokmić *et al.* (2013) found that verbal violence was the most common form of non-physical violence that was experienced by workers in the workplace, while Denise (2008) found that verbal abuse was also the most common type of violence experienced by teachers. These findings are supported by the results of the study that was conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) Task Force, as reported by Reddy *et al.* (2013). This study reviewed studies on violence against teachers and found that verbal aggression was the most common form of violence committed by learners against teachers (Reddy *et al.*, 2013). Espelage *et al.* (2013) reached a similar conclusion based on the results of a study conducted in the USA, Belgium, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey. So did Hilsdon and Randell (2012), Mooij (2010), Burton (2008), De Wet (2007), and Steffgen and Ewen (2007).

The finding made by Martin *et al.* (2008) was similar to the finding of the current study. They found that threatening behaviour from learners was common, with learners facing up to teachers or threatening to carry out some form of physical action. Similarly, Lemaire (2004) reported that many teachers had to constantly face intimidating behaviour from learners, such as yelling, threats, foul language and sexist, racist or homophobic slurs.

#### **4.4.3 Consequences of school workplace violence**

This study explored the possibility that school workplace violence would have sextuple negative consequences on teachers. The assumption was that teachers who were direct or indirect victims of learner violence – whether threatened or actual – would, as a result, develop fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and a tendency to want to quit the teaching profession. In essence, the assumption was that there is some kind of a relationship between, on the one hand, threat of, and actual violence and the consequences mentioned above, and among the consequences themselves, on the other hand. The results presented in Table 10 seem to point in this direction. However, no statistical test was applied to confirm the assumed relationships. A test of this nature is beyond the realm of a qualitative study.

The results presented in Table 10 indicate that eleven of the 12 participants had been victims of one form of learner-perpetrated violence, or the other. The results also indicate that the majority (9) of the 11 participants who reported that they had been victims of learner-perpetrated violence experienced half or more of negative consequences of violence. Furthermore, these results indicated that, of the 11 participants who reported that they had been victims of learner-perpetrated violence: 10 reported fear of violence; nine experienced burnout; nine wanted to quit the teaching profession; seven reported stress; four were dissatisfied with their job; and five indicated that they were suffering from psychological distress. The results further indicate that the participant who had not been a victim of any form of violence by learners, reported only one consequence (psychological distress), which is associated with the experience of learner violence with other participants. She was not certain that she wanted to quit teaching.

Whereas, as indicated above, 81.8% of victims of learner-perpetrated violence experienced 50% or more (that is, 3-6) negative consequences of violence, the non-victim only experienced one (16.6%). These results give credence to the hypothesised model (Figure 2), which plots the paths that the consequences of violence follow. Based on the above results, it is reasonable to assume that acts of violence by learners, be it non-physical violence such as the verbal threatening of teachers, or physical acts of violence, such as pushing teachers or hitting them with objects, trigger at most, a sextet of consequences on teachers; namely, fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health, and intention to quit the profession. The assumption, as stated in Chapter 2, is that a chain reaction of the consequences would follow in the order in which the consequences are presented in the previous sentence. Furthermore, the qualitative enquiry indicated that the victims did not experience learner violence the same way. The researcher therefore concluded that the consequences of violence do not follow a single path. The paths would differ from one victim to the other, as proposed in the hypothesised model in Figure 2.

Some studies on teachers as victims of school workplace violence and on workplace violence in general, have examined the association between the consequences of violence. However, none of these studies had examined the relationship between six consequences as in this study. For example, the studies conducted by Goswami (2013), George, *et al.* (2008), and Abel and Sewell (1999) found that diminished job satisfaction was the consequence of burnout among secondary school teachers; whereas Klassen and Chiu (2010), Klassen, and Usher and Bong (2010) found that it was job-related stress that led to teachers' dissatisfaction with the profession. In studies conducted by Youngusband, *et al.*, (2003), Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor *et al.* (2005), Vokić and Bogdanić (2007) and Nagra (2013) the association was between stress and health, where mental ill health was found to be the consequence of prolonged stress. In Abdulla's (2011) study the association was found to be between fear of violence and the intention to quit the job; with many teachers leaving the profession because they were forced to teach in hostile environments where violence by learners was always lurking.

Unlike the aforementioned studies, the results from the following studies indicate an association between three consequences of school workplace violence. For



example, Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf and Spencer (2011) and O'Connor Duffy and Mooney, Jr. (2014) found a relationship between teacher stress and burnout and teachers' intention to leave the profession. In contrast, Shernoff *et al.* (2011) found in their study, a phenomenon that they labelled on-the-job-retirement, among a subset of teachers with the highest rates of stress and burnout, but were the least likely to leave their jobs notwithstanding their burnout and stress level. They were characterised by frequent absenteeism and distancing themselves from their learners (Shernoff *et al.*, 2011). The finding in O'Connor-Duffy and Mooney, Jr. (2014) was that teacher stress and burnout play a part in their desertion of the profession. In the study conducted by Espelage *et al.* (2013), teachers' decisions about staying on or leaving the profession was found to be influenced by job stress and job satisfaction. In contrast, studies conducted by Haberman's (2004) and Sharma *et al.* (2010) found that stress and burnout were inexorably linked with job satisfaction. Whereas the foregoing studies found links between three consequences of school workplace violence, the results of the studies that were conducted by Steffgen and Ewen (2007) and Van Dick *et al.* (2001) indicate an unavoidable link between four consequences of violence, namely, stress, job dissatisfaction, burnout and intention to leave the profession.

Studies by Fisher (2011), Haberman (2004), Sharma, Verma, Verma and Malhotra (2010), and Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer and Ilic (2015) also found an intricate web of relationships between workplace violence, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, general health, and intention to quit the job. In contrast to the studies mentioned above and the current study, Fisher (2011) used three multiple regression tests to test the relationships between stress, burnout and retention of secondary schools teachers. The study found that: (i) stress and burnout were predictors of job satisfaction; (ii) job satisfaction, years of experience and burnout were predictors of stress; and (iii) job satisfaction and stress were predictors of burnout. Although their study was conducted in a different sector (health sector), Khamisa *et al.* (2015) used multiple linear regression analysis and found significant relationships between four consequences of violence; that is stress, burnout, job satisfaction and general health among nurses.

## 4.5 SUMMARY

South African schools are governed according to the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, whose purpose is to create a safe environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. However, procedure in applying this law has been found to be inconsistent or erratic, thus making the achievement of this objective difficult, if not impossible. The result is that: (i) schools cannot realise an ideal LER of 1:35, hence oversize classrooms and consequent learner ill-discipline and teacher work overload; (ii) the age-grade norm has not been achieved, the consequence of which is over-age learners for grades and the resultant discipline problems from learners who are “adults”; there are no security measures in the majority of schools visited, hence the prevalence of drugs and weapons in schools, and the concomitant ill-discipline and violence, or the threat thereof. However, despite these factors, and consistent with the results of other studies on school or workplace violence, this study could only record the prevalence of non-physical violence, and none of physical violence.

Lastly, fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health, and intention to quit the job are the six consequences of violence that emerged from the analysis of data. These consequences do not follow a single path. Their paths differ from one victim to the other.

## CHAPTER 5

### QUANTITATIVE DESIG RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Quantitative data was collected from a sample of secondary school teachers in selected secondary school, in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. An eight-part self-administered questionnaire was used for this purpose. Version 24 of the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows was used to analyse the data from the questionnaires. This data related to the respondents' personal information, information about their workplaces, and information on incidents of violence they had experienced. The questionnaire also solicited responses to the question whether they were considering leaving teaching, given the conditions under which they worked. In one other question, the respondents had to indicate whether they thought violence should be recognised as a workplace health and safety hazard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, or not.

The main focus of the questionnaire was to collect data that would address the issues that emerged from the qualitative research design about the relation of violence with six consequences of fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, general health and intention to quit the profession. The first and last of these consequences were addressed in the general part of the questionnaire, while the other four were handled through four standardised questionnaires. The Perceived Stress Scale was used to collect data on the respondents' perceived stress. Maslach's Burnout Inventory was used to collect data that would determine the teachers' burnout. The teachers' level of satisfaction with their job was determined through the use of the Job Satisfaction Scale. Lastly, the General Health Questionnaire was used to collect data on the teachers; general state of health.

Hypotheses about the association between these variables were developed from the assumptions that were made in the qualitative design. The hypotheses were tested through the Chi-Square Test of independence test. The purpose was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the variables that constituted

consequences of violence and were stated in the hypotheses. The significance level for rejecting the null hypotheses was set at .05

## 5.2 RESULTS

### 5.2.1 Demographic factors

The respondents' gender, age, marital status, nationality, employment status, professional qualification, teaching experience, and settlement in which the school is located, are summarised in Table 11, below.

**Table 11: Demographic details of the sample**

	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	38	35.5
Female	69	64.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>		
35 years or under	17	15.9
36-54 years	40	37.4
55 years and over	50	46.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	12	11.2
Married	84	78.5
Others	11	10.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Nationality</b>		
South African by birth	91	85.0
Others	16	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Employment status</b>		

Permanent/Full-time	88	82.2
Others	19	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Qualification</b>		
No teacher's qualification	47	43.9
Teacher's diploma/certificate	40	37.4
Teacher's diploma/certificate plus degree	20	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Teaching experience</b>		
10 years or less	27	25.2
11-20 years	39	36.4
21 years and above	41	38.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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#### **Settlement**

Rural	27	25.2
Semi-urban	27	25.2
Urban	53	49.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **5.2.2 School factors associated with learner violence against teachers**

Table 12 shows school and class size as school-related environmental factors associated with learner violence against teachers. Table 12 also shows the level of occurrence of incidents of learner violence against teachers in different settlement areas. It is apparent that there is an association between school size and learner violence against teachers. Schools with an enrolment of 500-1000+ learners in rural, semi-urban and urban schools accounted for 86.9% of incidents of violence against teachers. A similar trend is found with regard to class size, where classes of 31 or more learners accounted for 85.0% of incidents of learner violence against teachers.

**Table 12: School environmental factors**

							Total			
	Rural		Semi-urban		Urban		F	%		
	f	%	f	%	f	%				
<b>School size</b>										
Less than 500 learners	13	12.1	0	0	1	0.9	14	13.0		
Between 500 and 1000 learners	12	11.2	23	21.5	27	25.2	62	57.9		
Over 1000 learners	2	1.9	4	3.7	25	23.4	31	29.0		
Total	27	25.2	27	25.2	53	49.5	107	100		
<b>Class size</b>										
No response	4	3.7	3	2.8	3	2.8	10	9.3		
30 or less learners	2	1.9	2	1.9	2	1.9	6	5.6		
31-50 learners	4	3.7	0	0	38	35.5	42	39.2		
51-60 learners	16	15.0	12	11.2	10	9.3	38	35.5		
61 or more learners	1	0.9	10	9.3	0	0	11	10.3		
Total	27	25.2	27	25.2	53	49.5	107	100		

N=107

Other factors associated with learner violence against teachers are summarised in Tables 13-17. There was no clear indication of what the security situation was in the schools where data was collected, with 31.8% of respondents indicating that it was not a problem while 39.3% indicated that it was; while 29.0% were not sure. The majority of respondents reported that the use of alcohol and drugs by learners on the school grounds was a problem in their schools. These problems ranged from minor to moderate, and to serious; with “serious problem” being the least represented in both situations. There was, however, an impasse with regard to the sale of drugs on school grounds, with 50.5% of respondents indicating that it was a problem. Slightly less than half of the respondents (48.1%) indicated that the possession of weapons was a problem in their schools.

The schools’ security systems are summarised in Table 13 below. The respondents were asked to respond with “Yes” or “No” to questions about security measures in

place in their schools. Table 13 below is therefore a summary of the frequency of security measures they identified as being present (“Yes”), or not present (“No”) in their schools.

**Table 13: School security**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Fence around school</b>			
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	94	98.9
	No	1	1.1
	Total	95	100.0
Missing	System	12	
	Total	107	
<b>Access control</b>			
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	17	16.5
	No	86	83.5
	Total	103	100.0
Missing	System	4	
	Total	107	
<b>Security guard</b>			
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	18	17.0
	No	88	83.2
	Total	106	100.0
Missing	System	1	
	Total	107	
<b>Random searches</b>			
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	5	4.8
	No	100	95.2
	Total	105	100.0
Missing	System	2	
	Total	107	

Table 14 below is a summary of the frequencies of discipline-related incidents or problems that the respondent indicated were prevalent in their schools.

**Table 14: Learner discipline-related incidents**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Late coming</b>	Not a problem	18	16.8
	Problem	80	74.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>91.6</b>
Missing	System	9	8.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Absenteeism</b>	Not a problem	13	12.1
	Problem	79	73.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86.0</b>
Missing	System	15	14.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Alcohol use</b>	Not a problem	14	13.1
	Problem	76	71.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	17	15.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Drug use</b>	Not a problem	22	20.6
	Problem	70	65.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86.0</b>
Missing	System	15	14.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Sale of drugs at school</b>	Not a problem	14	13.1
	Problem	78	72.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86.0</b>
Missing	System	15	14.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Possession of weapons</b>	Not a problem	20	18.7
	Problem	72	67.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86.0</b>
Missing	system	15	14.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>



### 5.2.3 Incidents of learner violence against teachers

Categories of learner violence against teachers are presented in Tables 15. The table shows that teachers were victims of the following types of non-physical violence perpetrated by learners: harassment, threats, and verbal abuse. A few respondents were victims of physical violence. Respondents were presented with a list of types of violence associated with learners and asked to indicate those they had been victims of (“Yes”), as well as those they had not been victims of (“No”). The responses are summarised in Table 15 below.

**Table 15: Type of violence experienced**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Harassment</b>	Yes	68	63.6
	No	33	30.8
	Total	101	94.4
Missing	System	6	5.6
	Total	107	100.0
<b>Threatened</b>	Yes	77	72.0
	No	26	24.3
	Total	103	96.3
Missing	System	4	3.7
<b>Verbal abuse</b>	Yes	90	84.1
	No	17	15.9
	Total	107	100.0
<b>Physical abuse</b>	Yes	4	3.7
	No	103	96.3
	Total	107	100.0

### 5.2.4 Consequences of violence

Violence is a continuum of aggressive behaviours (Agnich, 2011) that range from verbal and emotional abuses, at the one extreme of the continuum, to more overt physical violence, at the other extreme, that one individual may use against another (Manvell, 2012). Violence has harmful effects on the dignity, safety, health and well-being of the victim (Chen & Astor, 2011; WHO, 2006; Di Martino *et al.*, 2003). This study hypothesised about the association between violence (across the violence

continuum) and the harmful effects it has on the victims. A Chi-Square Test of Association was conducted to test the relationship between different types of violence and stress, as well as between different types of violence and teachers' intention to leave the profession. Additional chi-square tests were conducted to determine the relationship between different consequences of violence, as stated in the exploratory hypotheses. Physical violence was, however, excluded from both chi-square testing because only four respondents indicated that they had been victims of this type of violence. Exact  $p$ -values are reported for all statistical tests, with an alpha level set at .05.

The researcher was cognizant of Rana and Singhal's (2015) contention that a chi-square test of independence only informs us about the relationship between two variables without informing about the closeness of their relationship. However, according to Pallant (2013), there are a number of effect size statistics available in the Crosstabs procedure through which we can calculate the strength of the relationship between two variables. Two of these effect size statistics are the Phi and Cramer's  $V$  measures of association. They can be run together with cross-tabulations, using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24 to produce symmetric measures results, as was the case in this study. The Phi measures the strength of the association between two variables, but only applies to 2x2 nominal tables, whereas Cramer's  $V$  applies to nominal\*nominal crosstabs, or ordinal\*ordinal crosstabs, with no restriction on the number of categories (POL242 LAB MANUAL, n.d).

The values of Cramer's  $V$  measures of association are presented in Figure 3. The researcher utilised the figure as a statistical table to interpret the results of the symmetric measures that were obtained through cross-tabulations in SPSS.

**Figure 3: Cramer's V Measures of Association Table**

LEVEL OF ASSOCIATION	Verbal Description	COMMENTS
0.00	No Relationship	Knowing the independent variable does not help in predicting the dependent variable.
.00 to .15	Very Weak	Not generally acceptable
.15 to .20	Weak	Minimally acceptable
.20 to .25	Moderate	Acceptable
.25 to .30	Moderately Strong	Desirable
.30 to .35	Strong	Very Desirable
.35 to .40	Very Strong	Extremely Desirable
.40 to .50	Worrisomely Strong	Either an extremely good relationship or the two variables are measuring the same concept
.50 to .99	Redundant	The two variables are probably measuring the same concept.
1.00	Perfect Relationship.	If we the know the independent variable, we can perfectly predict the dependent variable.

Figure obtained from POL242 LAB MANUAL (n.d.), University of Toronto.

The results of the sample data for each hypothesis that was tested are summarized and displayed in contingency tables, which are accompanied by the chi-square and the Phi and Cramer's V (Symmetric) measures results tables (Tables 16-52) below. It is worth noting that data related to stress, job satisfaction, burnout and general health was collected through standardised data collection instruments. The results of the chi-tests associated with the data are also reported below.

**$H_0$  1: There is no association between threat actual of violence and perceived stress.**

The first association to be explored was that between perceived stress and threat or actual acts of violence. This was guided by the null hypothesis that stated that "There is no association between actual or threat of violence, and stress". Actual violence in the hypothesis refers to physical or non-physical violence. Acts of non-physical violence included threats of violence, verbal violence and harassment.

The chi-square test for independence, also called Person Chi-Square test of association, was used to determine if there was a relationship between actual or

threat of violence and perceived stress. The following Pearson Chi-Square Test results obtained:  $\chi^2(2, N = 86) = .709, p = .702$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .091.

**Table 16: Perceived Stress \* Threatened Cross-tabulation**

		Threatened			
		Yes	No	Total	
Perceived Stress	Never	Count	34	7	41
		% within Perceived Stress	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%
	Sometimes	Count	22	7	29
		% within Perceived Stress	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%
	Often	Count	12	4	16
		% within Perceived Stress	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	68	18	86
		% within Perceived Stress	79.1%	20.9%	100.0%

**Table 17: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.709 <sup>a</sup>	2	.702
Likelihood Ratio	.714	2	.700
Linear-by-Linear Association	.599	1	.439
N of Valid Cases	86		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.35.

**Table 18: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.091	.702
	Cramer's V	.091	.702
N of Valid Cases		86	

**$H_0$  2: There is no association between verbal abuse and perceived stress.**

The second association to be explored was that between verbal abuse and perceived stress. According to Pearson Chi-Square test results in Table 19,  $\chi^2(2, N = 79) = .896, p = .639$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .106.

**Table 19: Perceived Stress \* Verbal Abuse Cross-tabulation**

		Verbal Abuse			
		Not a Problem	Problem	Total	
Perceived Stress	Never	Count	4	32	36
		% within Perceived Stress	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%
	Sometimes	Count	4	25	29
		% within Perceived Stress	13.8%	86.2%	100.0%
	Often	Count	3	11	14
		% within Perceived Stress	21.4%	78.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	11	68	79
		% within Perceived Stress	13.9%	86.1%	100.0%

**Table 20: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.896 <sup>a</sup>	2	.639
Likelihood Ratio	.833	2	.659
Linear-by-Linear Association	.799	1	.371
N of Valid Cases	79		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.95.

**Table 21: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.106	.639
	Cramer's V	.106	.639
N of Valid Cases		79	

**$H_03$ : There is no association between harassment and perceived stress.**

The third association to be explored was that between harassment and perceived stress. And, according to Pearson Chi-Square Test results in Table 21 below,  $\chi^2(2, N = 86) = 2.911, p = .233$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .184.

**Table 22: Perceived Stress \* Harassment Cross-tabulation**

			Harassment		Total
			Yes	No	
Perceived Stress	Never	Count	24	14	38
		% within Perceived Stress	63.2%	36.8%	100.0%
	Sometimes	Count	18	14	32
		% within Perceived Stress	56.3%	43.8%	100.0%
	Often	Count	13	3	16
		% within Perceived Stress	81.3%	18.8%	100.0%
Total	Count		55	31	86
	% within Perceived Stress		64.0%	36.0%	100.0%

**Table 23: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.911 <sup>a</sup>	2	.233
Likelihood Ratio	3.115	2	.211
Linear-by-Linear Association	.835	1	.361
N of Valid Cases	86		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.77.

**Table 24: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.184	.233
	Cramer's V	.184	.233
N of Valid Cases		86	

***H*<sub>0</sub> 4: There is no relation between teachers' intention to leave teaching and threat or actual acts of violence**

The relation between teachers' intention to leave teaching and threat or actual acts of violence was tested. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 23 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 99) = .085, p = .810$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure of .029.

**Table 25: Leave Teaching \* Threatened Cross-tabulation**

			Threatened		Total
			Yes	No	
Leave Teaching	Yes	Count	50	17	67
		% within Leave Teaching	74.6%	25.4%	100.0%
	No	Count	23	9	32
		% within Leave Teaching	71.9%	28.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		73	26	99
	% within Leave Teaching		73.7%	26.3%	100.0%

**Table 26: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.085 <sup>a</sup>	1	.771		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.002	1	.963		
Likelihood Ratio	.084	1	.772		
Fisher's Exact Test				.810	.476
Linear-by-Linear Association	.084	1	.772		
N of Valid Cases	99				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.40.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 27: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.029	.771
	Cramer's V	.029	.771
N of Valid Cases		99	

***H*<sub>0</sub>5: There is no association between teachers' intention to leave teaching and verbal abuse**

The association that was explored through this hypothesis was that between teachers' intention to leave teaching and verbal abuse. And, according to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 25 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = .304, p = .749$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .058.



**Table 28: Leave Teaching \* Verbal Abuse Cross-tabulation**

		Verbal Abuse			
		Not a Problem	Problem	Total	
Leave Teaching	Yes	Count	8	54	62
		% within Leave Teaching	12.9%	87.1%	100.0%
	No	Count	5	24	29
		% within Leave Teaching	17.2%	82.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	13	78	91
		% within Leave Teaching	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%

**Table 29: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.304 <sup>a</sup>	1	.582		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.053	1	.818		
Likelihood Ratio	.296	1	.587		
Fisher's Exact Test				.749	.399
Linear-by-Linear Association	.300	1	.584		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.14.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 30: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.058	.582
	Cramer's V	.058	.582
N of Valid Cases		91	

**$H_0$  6: There is no association between teachers' intention to leave teaching and harassment**

The association between harassment and teachers' intention to leave the profession was explored. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 27 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 1.137, p = .346$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .108.

**Table 31: Leave Teaching \* Harassment Cross-tabulation**

		Harassment			
		Yes	No	Total	
Leave Teaching	Yes	Count	44	25	69
		% within Leave Teaching	63.8%	36.2%	100.0%
	No	Count	21	7	28
		% within Leave Teaching	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	65	32	97
		% within Leave Teaching	67.0%	33.0%	100.0%

**Table 32: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.137 <sup>a</sup>	1	.286		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.685	1	.408		
Likelihood Ratio	1.172	1	.279		
Fisher's Exact Test				.346	.205
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.125	1	.289		
N of Valid Cases	97				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.24.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 33: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.108	.286
	Cramer's V	.108	.286
N of Valid Cases		97	

**$H_07$ : There is no relation between perceived stress and burnout.**

The relation between perceived stress and burnout was explored. According to Pearson Chi-Square Test results in Table 29 below,  $\chi^2(2, N = 88) = 6.330, p = .042$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .268.

**Table 34: Perceived Stress \* Burnout Cross-tabulation**

			Burnout		Total
			Disagree	Agree	
Perceived Stress	Never	Count	13	29	42
		% within Perceived Stress	31.0%	69.0%	100.0%
	Sometimes	Count	7	23	30
		% within Perceived Stress	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
	Often	Count	0	16	16
		% within Perceived Stress	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count		20	68	88
	% within Perceived Stress		22.7%	77.3%	100.0%

**Table 35: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.330 <sup>a</sup>	2	.042
Likelihood Ratio	9.760	2	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.625	1	.018
N of Valid Cases	88		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.64.

**Table 36 Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.268	.042
	Cramer's V	.268	.042
N of Valid Cases		88	

**$H_0$ 8: Perceived stress and general health do not correlate.**

The output on the association between perceived stress and general health is presented below. According to Pearson Chi-Square, in Table 31 below,  $\chi^2(2, N = 84) = 2.852, p = .240$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .184.

**Table 37: Perceived Stress \* General Health Cross-tabulation**

		General Health			
		Same as Usual	Less Than Usual	Total	
Perceived Stress	Never	Count	13	29	42
		% within Perceived Stress	31.0%	69.0%	100.0%
	Sometimes	Count	7	23	30
		% within Perceived Stress	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
	Often	Count	6	6	12
		% within Perceived Stress	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	26	58	84	
	% within Perceived Stress	31.0%	69.0%	100.0%	

**Table 38: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.852 <sup>a</sup>	2	.240
Likelihood Ratio	2.741	2	.254
Linear-by-Linear Association	.558	1	.455
N of Valid Cases	84		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.71.

**Table 39: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.184	.240
	Cramer's V	.184	.240
N of Valid Cases		84	

**$H_09$ : There is no association between burnout and job satisfaction.**

The Chi-Square Test was run to test the association between burnout and job satisfaction. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 33 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 1.244, p = .270$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .117.

**Table 40: Burnout \* Job Satisfaction Cross-tabulation**

		Job Satisfaction			
		Disagree	Agree	Total	
Burnout	Disagree	Count	4	17	21
		% within Burnout	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	7	63	70
		% within Burnout	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	11	80	91
		% within Burnout	12.1%	87.9%	100.0%

**Table 41: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.244 <sup>a</sup>	1	.265		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.539	1	.463		
Likelihood Ratio	1.137	1	.286		
Fisher's Exact Test				.270	.224
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.231	1	.267		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.54.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 42: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.117	.265
	Cramer's V	.117	.265
N of Valid Cases		91	

**$H_0$  10: There is no association between burnout and teachers' intention to leave the profession**

The association between burnout and teachers' intention to leave the profession was tested using the Chi-Square Test of association. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 35 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 90) = .421, p = .581$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .068.

**Table 43: Burnout \* Leave Teaching Cross-tabulation**

			Leave Teaching		Total
			Yes	No	
Burnout	Disagree	Count	14	7	21
		% within Burnout	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	51	18	69
		% within Burnout	73.9%	26.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		65	25	90
	% within Burnout		72.2%	27.8%	100.0%

**Table 44: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.421 <sup>a</sup>	1	.516		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.138	1	.711		
Likelihood Ratio	.411	1	.522		
Fisher's Exact Test				.581	.349
Linear-by-Linear Association	.417	1	.519		
N of Valid Cases	90				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.83.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 45: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.068	.516
	Cramer's V	.068	.516
N of Valid Cases		90	

**$H_0$  11: There is no relation between general health and teachers' intention to leave the profession**

The Chi-Square Test was conducted to test the relation between general health and teachers' intention to leave the profession. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 37 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 88) = 5.819, p = .026$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .257.



**Table 46: General Health \* Leave Teaching Cross-tabulation**

		Leave Teaching			
		Yes	No	Total	
General Health	Same as Usual	Count	24	4	28
		% within General Health	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
	Less Than Usual	Count	36	24	60
		% within General Health	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	60	28	88
		% within General Health	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%

**Table 47: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.819 <sup>a</sup>	1	.016		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.694	1	.030		
Likelihood Ratio	6.359	1	.012		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.753	1	.016		
N of Valid Cases	88				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.91.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 48: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.257	.016
	Cramer's V	.257	.016
N of Valid Cases		88	

**$H_0$  12: There is no association between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave the profession**

The association between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave teaching was tested through the Chi-Square Test of association. According to Fisher's Exact Test results in Table 39 below,  $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 4.494$ ,  $p = .057$ . Cramer's V symmetric measure was .222.

**Table 49: Job Satisfaction \* Leave Teaching Cross tabulation**

			Leave Teaching		
			Yes	No	Total
Job Satisfaction	Disagree	Count	10	0	10
		% within Job Satisfaction	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Agree	Count	55	26	81
		% within Job Satisfaction	67.9%	32.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		65	26	91
	% within Job Satisfaction		71.4%	28.6%	100.0%

**Table 50: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.494 <sup>a</sup>	1	.034		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.059	1	.080		
Likelihood Ratio	7.212	1	.007		
Fisher's Exact Test				.057	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.444	1	.035		
N of Valid Cases	91				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.86.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 51: Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.222	.034
	Cramer's V	.222	.034
N of Valid Cases		91	

### ***Leave teaching and verbal abuse***

The researcher hypothesised that the hostile work environment that is created by learner indiscipline and actual acts of violence would lead to teachers quitting the profession. So, a specific question was included in the questionnaire, which asked the respondents whether they had ever considered leaving the teaching profession. They could choose from the following Likert-type responses: 1. “Yes, very often”, 2. “From time-to-time” and 3. “No! Never”. For the purpose of analysis, the responses were changed into two responses only. Responses 1 and 2 were collapsed into one response (1), which reflected the respondents’ consideration to leave teaching, while response 3 was changed to “0” to indicate no consideration to leave teaching. The results that are presented in Table 52 below indicate that the majority of respondents were considering leaving teaching.

**Table 52: Have you ever considered leaving teaching?**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Valid</b>	Yes	71	68.9
	No	32	31.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>	System	4	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	

### 5.2.5 Recognition of violence in the Occupational Health and Safety Act

The researcher further hypothesised that learner indiscipline and learner-perpetrated violence constitute occupational health and safety hazards for teachers as workers. Therefore, given this reality, and having considered that the intention of the legislature with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) in South Africa is to protect the health and safety of workers, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “Violence should be recognised as a workplace health and safety hazard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act”. The respondents had to choose one response from a list of four Likert scale-type responses. They would therefore indicate whether they “strongly disagree”, “slightly disagree”, “slightly agree” or “strongly agree” with the given statement. However, for practical purposes, the four categories were reduced to two, namely “disagree” and “agree” when the results were analysed. These results are presented in Table 53 below indicate that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

**Table 53: Recognition of violence in OHSA**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Valid</b>	Disagree	14	14.1
	Agree	85	85.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Missing</b>	System	8	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	

The results presented above are the outcomes of an endeavour to complement the knowledge that the qualitative research design had produced and, as such, contribute towards a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of learner violence on teachers. The gap that still had to be filled in this knowledge was that of the association of learner violence with fear, perceived stress, job dissatisfaction, burnout, general health and the intention to quit the profession, that the respondents

reported on. The meaning of the findings presented above are analysed in the discussion below.

### 5.3 Discussion

The Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to test the hypothesised “no association” between learner-perpetrated violence and teachers’ fear, perceived stress, job dissatisfaction, burnout, general health and the intention to quit the profession, as consequences of the violence. In addition, the association between the consequences themselves was also tested because it was envisaged that the paths of association would follow the path that was proposed in Figure 2. The first six hypotheses tested the association between the threat of violence, verbal abuse and harassment, as types of violence perpetrated by learners against teachers, and teachers’ perceived stress and intention to quit the profession.

The Pearson Chi-Square Test results on the association between threat of violence and perceived stress indicated a  $p$ -value of .702, which was greater than the pre-chosen significance level  $\alpha = .05$ . This meant that the results were statistically non-significant and that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. However, these statistically non-significant results did not mean a zero association between the two variables. Cramer’s V symmetric measure of .091 that was found in the Chi-Square test of independence was a very weak relationship (.00 - .15), rather than a no relationship (0.00) at all, according to the Cramer’s measures of association table (Figure 3). A very weak strength of association is not generally acceptable, according to Figure 3.

The above narrative applies equally to the Chi-Square test results of the association between verbal abuse and stress; and threat of violence, verbal abuse and harassment, when associated with teachers’ intention to leave the profession. The  $p$ -value for the association between verbal abuse and stress was .639, with a Cramer’s symmetric measure of .106. This is a very weak strength of association which, according to Cramer’s measure of association table, is not generally acceptable. The same conclusion can be made about the strength of association between threat of

violence, verbal abuse and harassment, when associated with teachers' intention to leave the profession. With a  $p$ -value of .810, the strength of the association between threat of violence and teachers' intention to leave the profession was .029. The association between verbal abuse and teachers' intention to leave the profession produced a  $p$ -value of .749 and a strength of association of .058; while the association between harassment and teachers' intention to leave the profession produced a  $p$ -value of .346 and a strength of association of .108.

The association between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave teaching was tested through the Chi-Square Test of association. The obtained  $p$ -value of .057 was greater than the chosen significance level  $\alpha = .05$ . This led to the failure to reject the null hypothesis, and the acceptance that there was no association between job satisfaction and teachers' intention to leave the profession. However, Cramer's symmetric measure of the strength of the association between the two variables was .222. This measurement, according to Cramer's measure of association table is moderate and acceptable.

The Chi-Square test of the association between perceived stress and burnout had a  $p$ -value of .04, which was lower than the pre-chosen significance level  $\alpha = .05$ . This  $p$ -value led to the rejection of null hypothesis, and the acceptance that there was indeed a relation between perceived stress and burnout. Cramer's symmetric measure of the strength of association between these variables was .268 which, according to Cramer's measure of association, is moderately strong and desirable. The other moderately strong and desirable association was that between the teachers' general health and their intention to leave the teaching profession, with Cramer's symmetric measure of .257, and a  $p$ -value of .026. This  $p$ -value was lower than the chosen significance level  $\alpha = .05$ . As a result, the null hypothesis of no relation between the two variables was rejected, and the relationship between the two accepted.

In summary, the Chi-Square Test of Independence led to the rejection of two "no relation" hypotheses and the acceptance of a relationship between the variables in the two hypotheses. These hypotheses also turned out to have the highest levels of

strength of association of all the other hypotheses that were subjected to the Chi-Square Test of Independence. The strengths were moderately strong and desirable.

The strength of association in the variables of one hypothesis that was tested was moderate and acceptable, according to Cramer's measure of association, while the strength of association in the other two were found to be weak, but nevertheless acceptable. The strength of association in the remaining seven hypotheses was very weak and generally not acceptable. However, none had a measure of zero strength of association.

In comparison to the findings of this study, Fisher (2011) conducted three multiple regression tests in a study of factors influencing stress, burnout, and retention of secondary teachers. The tests revealed that: (i) stress and burnout were, statistically, significant predictors of job satisfaction; (ii) job satisfaction, and burnout were statistically significant predictors of stress; and (iii) job satisfaction, preventive coping skills, and stress were statistically significant predictors of burnout.

López, Bolaño, Mariño and Pol (2010) conducted a study whose aim was to identify the main predictors of different manifestations of what they referred to as occupational malaise; namely, stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction. The finding on the association between stress and the threats posed by learners' violence was that they were not associated.

### ***Stress and job satisfaction***

The correlation between variables in this study is consistent with those of similar studies. For example, through multiple regression analysis Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2014) found that occupational stress correlated negatively with job satisfaction. Van Emmerik, Euwema and Baker (2007) found that workers who had gone through workplace threats and actual violence were likely to report less job satisfaction.

### ***Stress and general health***

A correlation analysis in Nagra and Arora's (2013) study aimed at finding out the level of occupational stress and its relationship to health among teachers revealed that occupational stress does have significant and positive impact upon the health of the teachers. Other studies found that workers who had been victims of violence or had been threatened with violence at their places of work were more likely to suffer from decreased well-being (Schat & Kelloway, 2003), and to experience more health problems (Shakespeare-Finch, Smith & Obst, 2002) than employees who had not been confronted with violence or aggression.

### ***Stress and burnout***

Lately, O'Connor-Duffy and Mooney, Jr. (2014) found that teacher stress and burnout played a part in their desertion of the profession. The findings in studies conducted by Espelage *et al.* (2013) and Aftab and Khatoon (2012) on occupational stress among secondary school teachers were that teachers' decisions to stay in, or leave the profession were associated with job stress and job satisfaction.

### ***Burnout and job satisfaction***

A study by Lee and Ashforth (1996) found that job satisfaction correlated comparatively higher with three-burnout dimension but most highly with depersonalisation (27% shared variance), followed by exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment (20% and 16% shared variance). Goswami (2013) found similar results in a study whose basic purpose was to determine the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of secondary school teachers. A study by Bass, Cigularov, Chen, Henry, Tomazic *et al.* (2016) Bass *et al.* (2016) of the effects of student violence against school employees also found that victimisation was positively associated with burnout and negatively associated with work engagement.

A study by Bauer, Stamm, Virnick, Wissing, Mueller, *et al.* (2006) of the correlation between burnout syndrome and psychological and psychosomatic symptoms among teachers, found that more psychological and psychosomatic symptoms were



reported by teachers experiencing high burnout. Buck's (2006) study examined the effects of direct and indirect experiences of school crime and violence on high school teacher burnout. The study, however, found that high school teachers were exposed to a great deal of violence within their work environments, this exposure did not necessarily lead to significant professional burnout.

### ***Quit teaching***

One of the findings in the qualitative design was that teachers' stress was associated with learners' threat to their health and safety, and that learner violence was also forcing them to quit the profession. However, the chi-square test found no association between the two factors. This finding is inconsistent with that made by the ILO (2003), namely that the typical teacher reaction to workplace stress was to quit the occupation for other jobs; to take transfer to less problematic schools or to opt for teaching positions in private schools; or take early retirement. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Galand *et al.* (2007) suggest that the negative emotional impact of some forms of school violence could be an important factor in a teacher's intention to leave the profession. In South Africa, the study by Shisana *et al.* (2005) came to a similar conclusion. One of the findings in their study was that violent events in schools had an impact on educators' intention to leave the teaching profession. The study also found that the intention to quit the service as an educator was also a powerful predictor for attrition among the educators.

#### ***5.4 Model of paths of consequences of violence against teachers***

Literature review, as well as the findings in this study, indicated various permutations of associations of consequence of violence, namely fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, general health/psychological distress, and intention to quit. However, the paths and patterns that the sequences of the consequences of violence followed were not uniform. For example, in some cases the consequences of violence followed a five-stage path of fear, stress, job dissatisfaction, ill health and intention to quit. In other cases, they followed a four-stage path of fear, stress, ill health and intention to quit. The last possible path is a three-stage path of fear, stress, and intention to quit. It was also indicated in chapter 2 that authors such as Smith (2003)

and McMahon *et al.* (2010) contended that fear preceded all consequences of violence. Violence was found to instil fear in that it created an environment that curtailed individuals' rights to a life free of fear and intimidation (Smith, 2003); and teachers were less eager to go to school (work) due to the threat of violence (McMahon *et al.*, 2010). In contrast, stress was not uniformly felt by all groups of teachers in Dworkin (1987). Teachers were also found to be most fearful of violence even in situations where they had not actually experienced it directly (Dworkin, 1987). Working in a school where a teacher may directly or indirectly experience assaults, threats, or intimidation, may have significant effects on burnout in teachers (Friedman, 1999). As Van Tonder and Williams (2009) found in their research, learner violence was one of the greatest contributing factors to teacher burnout. In the last examples, violence was directly linked to burnout.

While acknowledging individuals' unique responses to threatening situations and the plethora of paths the consequences of violence follow, it is important to develop a simpler way of understanding the consequence of violence on teachers, particularly its effect on teacher attrition. As can be discerned in the proposed violence consequences path model that was presented in chapter 2, quitting teaching comes at the end, or as a result of the experience of all other consequences. This is supported by the fact that 75% of the participants in the qualitative study indicated that they definitely wanted to quit the teaching profession at the earliest opportunity. This figure could be higher, considering that 16.6% of the sample was not sure whether they would quit or not.

The evidence from the literature review, the data that was analysed in the qualitative study, the analysis of the quantitative data through chi-square testing and the results of the statistical testing of hypothesis contribute significantly to our understanding of how learner violence impacts on the lives of teachers. In particular, it provides us with the knowledge to understand the level of teacher attrition, the reluctance of prospective teachers to join the profession, and the failure of the Department of Basic Education to recruit teachers. If anything at all, the empirically based path model of consequences of violence on teachers can be used as a violence prevention toolkit because intervention can be made at any stage along this path, before the teachers quit. Finally, this model should also prick the conscience of the

Department of Labour that violence is a workplace hazard and needs to be recognised as such. International bodies such as the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation, whose instruments South Africa recognises, do recognise violence as a workplace hazard for all categories of workers.

Literature review indicated an association between a sextuple consequence of violence, namely fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, general health/psychological distress, and intention to quit. However, the paths and patterns that the sequences of the consequences of violence followed were not uniform. For example, in some cases the consequences of violence followed a five-stage path of fear, stress, job dissatisfaction, ill health and intention to quit. In other cases, they followed a four-stage path of fear, stress, ill health and intention to quit. The last possible path was a three-stage path of fear, stress, and intention to quit. It was also indicated in chapter 2 that authors like Smith (2003) and McMahon *et al.* (2010) contended that fear preceded all consequences of violence. Violence was found to instil fear because it created an environment that curtailed individuals' rights to a life free of fear and intimidation (Smith, 2003). Therefore, teachers who were faced with such an intimidating environment were less eager to go to school (work) due to the threat of violence (McMahon *et al.*, 2010). In contrast, stress was not uniformly felt by all groups of teachers in Dworkin (1987). For example, simply working in an environment where they may experience assaults, threats, or intimidation, directly or indirectly, may have significant effects on burnout in teachers (Friedman, 1999). As Van Tonder and Williams (2009) found in their research, learner violence was one of the greatest contributing factors to teacher burnout. In the last examples, violence was directly linked to burnout.

Given the fact that one of the purposes of scientific enquiry is to create a better way of understanding phenomena, it was decided to finalise the development of a six-stage conceptual model of paths of consequences of violence against teachers that was conceptualised in chapter 2.

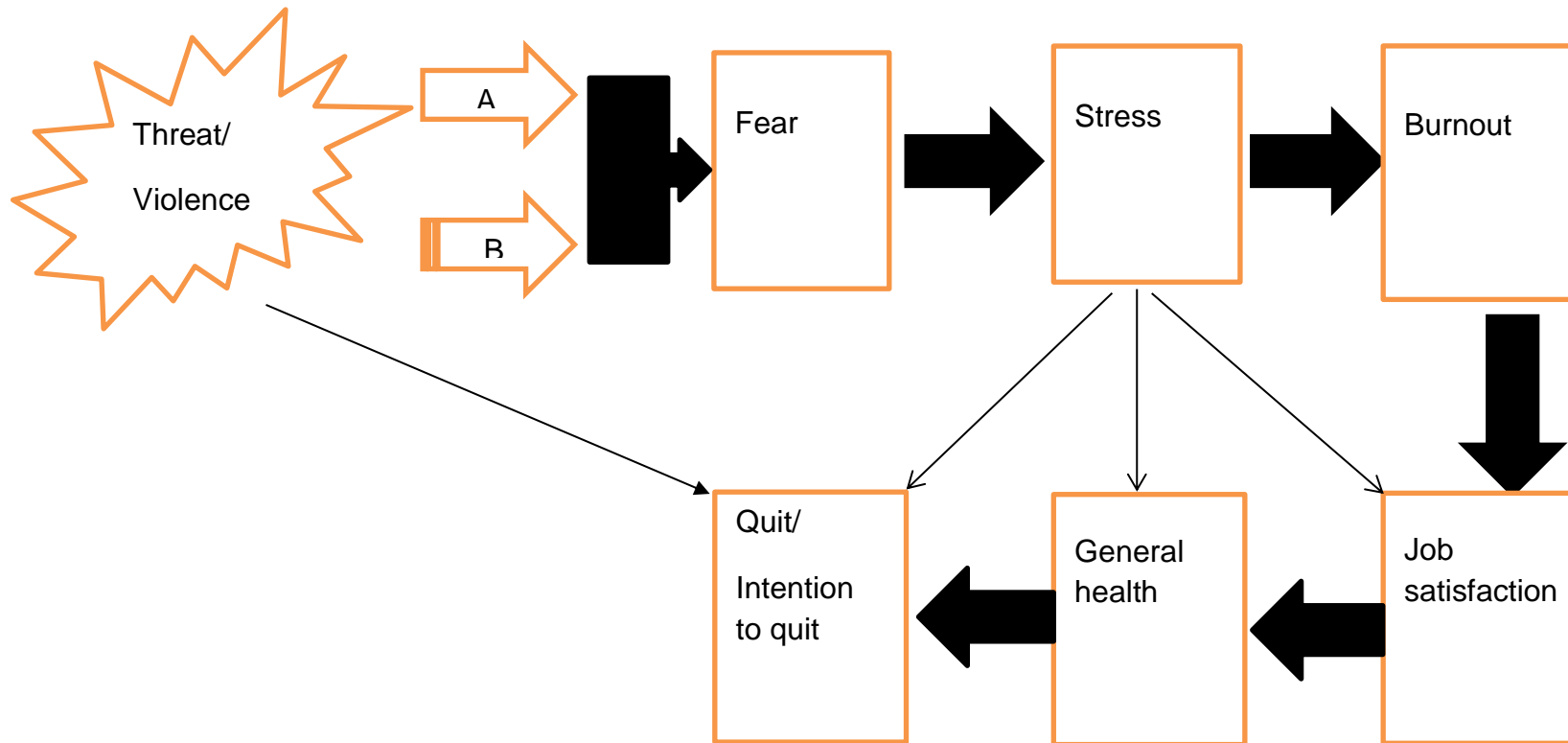
The six-stage model of paths of consequences of violence against teachers that is presented in Figure 4 indicates that the fear precedes all the consequences of

violence, while quitting or intention to quit teaching marks the culmination of these consequences. This sequence of consequences of violence is supported by the results of the qualitative study in this project, which indicated that 75% of the participants definitely wanted to quit the teaching profession at the earliest given opportunity. This figure could be higher, considering that 16.6% of the sample was not sure whether they would quit or not.

The consequences of violence against teachers are summarised in the six-stage path model in Figure 4. The conclusion that may be drawn from Figure 4 is that the consequences of violence against teachers follow one major path. This path is represented by the solid and broad directional arrows that run from the point where A and B become direct and indirect victims of violence, respectively. Compared to A, the shaded area that is discernible at the base of arrow B simply signifies that, although learner violence may not be directed at them, some teachers may nevertheless be affected by the hostile environment created by this violence. As a result, they develop fear in the same way as direct victims are affected by violence. The direct and indirect victims' fear of violence is followed by stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health and intention to quit, as indicated by the broad directional arrows in Figure 4.

The thin directional arrows that link stress to job satisfaction, general health and quit or intention to quit signify three possible minor paths that the consequences of learner violence against teachers could also follow. The first of these is a five-stage path of fear, stress, job satisfaction, general health, and quit or intention to quit. The second one is a four-stage path of fear, stress, general health, and quit or intention to quit. The third and last is a three-stage path of fear, stress, and quit or intention to quit.

**Figure 4: The six-stage model of paths of consequences of violence against teachers**



## 5.5 Summary

Learner violence against teachers is prevalent in the secondary schools that were surveyed for this study. The majority of the teachers were victims of non-physical violence, while only a few were victims of physical violence. This finding is consistent with finding in workplace violence studies. The current study takes the view that some of the factors that contribute to learner violence against teachers and, as such, a work environment that poses a threat to their health and safety, are presumably nurtured by the lack of enthusiasm by the school system to fully implement laws, such as the SASA, whose purpose is to foster an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. The tolerance of LERs that are well over the legal 1:35, and the accommodation, in a grade, of learners who are two or more years beyond the grade age limit, has the opposite effect, as the results of the study have shown so far.

A hostile work environment, which is created by learner behaviour, has adverse effects on the health and safety of the direct and indirect teacher victims. It causes them stress and stress-related illnesses, such as chronic headaches, hypertension, cholesterol. Although stress triggers other consequences, such as teacher burnout, job dissatisfaction, general illness, all of which may lead to teacher attrition, teacher burnout, job dissatisfaction and general illness may be triggers of teacher stress.

## CHAPTER 6

### WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

When criminologists study violence, they do so with the aim of acquiring knowledge on its antecedents, its nature, as well as its consequences. The ultimate goals are to use this knowledge to develop strategies to prevent it, and to contribute to a repository of evidence-based knowledge from which policy makers can draw when they formulate laws.

One of the findings in this study is that factors such as overage learners, learner indiscipline, the proliferation of drugs and weapons on the school grounds, and large classes, are antecedents of Type II workplace violence. They create a hazardous environment for teachers to work in, and would have to be controlled if workplace violence was to be prevented. The other finding was on the psychological and health consequences of violence. Victims suffered fear, stress, burnout, job satisfaction, ill health. Ill health manifested in a host of stress-related illnesses such as hypertension, cholesterol, allergies, and chronic back pain. The majority of the participants also indicated that they found teaching unbearable and were ready to quit the profession at the earliest opportunity. The findings on the consequences of Type II workplace violence are not unique to the current study. Studies by Bass *et al.* (2016), Khamisa *et al.* (2015), O'Connor-Duffy and Mooney, Jr. (2014), Espelage *et al.* (2013); Goswami (2013), Nagra and Arora (2013), Aftab and Khatoun (2012), Galand *et al.* (2007), and Shisana *et al.* (2005), for example, have made similar findings. They have also confirmed relationships between these factors and workplace violence.

One other important finding was that the majority of respondents in the quantitative component of the study supported the notion that violence should be recognised as an occupational hazard in the occupational health and safety legislation in South Africa. It is, after all, as the findings presented above and pertinent literature on violence, school violence, workplace violence, occupational health and safety

indicate, a threat to the health and safety of workers, like other hazards that the legislation recognises. For example, in the main, exposure to all forms of workplace violence by learners predicted physical and emotional effects in teachers (Hughes & Hughes, 2008; ICN, 2007; Galand *et al.*, 2007; Lemaire, 2004).

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No. 85 of 1993 is a workplace legal instrument that regulates the protection of all categories of workers against hazards that pose a threat to their health and safety at work. The Act goes on to categorise and list these hazards. However, violence is not on its list. In short, the Act does not recognise violence as a workplace health and safety hazard. Therefore, this means that any plans and actions that employers are compelled to take to make their workplaces safe for workers in compliance with the Act, would not apply to violence and issues related to it.

The desire expressed by respondents to have violence included as an occupational health and safety hazard in the Act is logical; considering the fact that the purpose of this piece of legislation is to prevent threats to the health and safety of workers. From a crime prevention perspective, the current occupational health and safety legislation is crafted in such a way that it would be possible to prevent workplace violence at three levels. That is, at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

## **6.2 PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION**

From a crime prevention perspective, preventive intervention against workplace or learner violence against teachers is desirable, feasible, and wise. And one of the ways in which it may be achieved is through legislation. This is because law prescribes a binding set of rules of conduct meant to enforce justice, as well as duties or obligations (businessdictionary.com). As one of its primary functions, laws protect the rights of individuals from being violated (businesslawbasics.com), by proscribing, through legislation, any act that would expose individuals to the risk of physical or psychological harm. It is therefore reasonable to surmise that when legislators conceptualised, and drafted, occupational health and safety laws, they did so because they anticipated that: (i) the introduction into the workplace, of



technology such as machines, threatened the safety of workers, and (ii) exposure to, and the handling of chemicals and other hazardous materials by workers, posed a threat to their health and safety (Ridley, 2008). One of the objectives of the legislators with the occupational health and safety law is to regulate the use of tools and machines and, as such, prevent injuries to workers. The other objective is to regulate the storing and handling of chemicals and other hazardous material by employers and employees, respectively, in order to minimise the risk they pose to workers' health and safety. An evaluation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in South Africa indicates that, in principle, this is what the legislators intended with this piece of legislation. However, this cannot be fully achieved in practice, with violence being excluded from the list of workplace health and safety hazards in the

The other way in which workplace violence may be addressed is through a well-planned violence prevention strategy, akin to the crime prevention model. This model is a popular strategy applied by criminologists to prevent crime and victimisation at a primary, secondary and tertiary prevention level, as well as to promote community safety. This strategy, which criminologists adopted from the public health model of prevention of diseases, endeavours to prevent the onset of crime (primary crime prevention), change people, typically those at high risk of embarking on a criminal career (secondary crime prevention) (AIC, 2003), and prevent further acts of crime by intervening in cases where individuals have already committed crime or embarked on a criminal career (tertiary crime prevention) (Newham, 2005).

The foregoing elucidate how, if adopted as a workplace violence prevention strategy, the crime prevention model could be applied to prevent workplace violence at different stages. For example, the OHS Act has the potential to prevent violence at a primary level because of its general deterrence and proactive nature. In its current form, this piece of legislation sets binding rules of conduct meant to enforce justice, and prescribes duty or obligation that are enforced by controlling authority. By decreeing that employers should do everything reasonably possible to protect their employees from occupational health and safety hazards, the legislation would prevent occupational health and safety incidents before they occur. The Act also has secondary prevention potential. This lies in the fact that it legislates that employers should prevent potential risks to employees' health and safety by identifying potential

to the health and safety of workers and taking steps revise or upgrade their workplaces' occupational health and safety prevention risk measures. Prevention at a tertiary level can take the form of imposition of sanctions on those whose behaviour transgresses prescribed rules of conduct and threaten the safety of workers. This would act as specific deterrence to the perpetrator not to repeat the violence in the future and as a general deterrence to others not to engage in acts of workplace violence.

The decree of the OHS Act regarding the protection of workers against workplace health and safety hazards cannot be extended to acts of violence in its current form. The Act would first have to be amended.

### **6.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and occupational health and safety**

The findings in this study confirm the following: (a) the prevalence of learner violence against teachers; (b) the complexity of workplace violence; (c) that violence that is committed against teachers can be physical or non-physical (verbal or psychological); (d) that the effects of non-physical violence (e.g., verbal abuse) on victims are similar to those of physical violence; (e) that workplace violence is a major occupational health and safety hazard and a frequent precursor to mental ill health; (f) that the majority of respondents would like to have violence recognised as a workplace hazard in the occupational health and safety legislation; and (g) that the trend, at least among some Western countries, is to include violence in their list of workplace hazards, and treat it as an occupational health and safety matter.

The findings mentioned above give credence to the call for the recognition of violence as a workplace hazard in the occupational health and safety legislation in South Africa. This notion is not implausible. Concerns about workplace violence as an occupational health and safety issue emerged in the late 1980s, became a cultural and media phenomenon in the 1990s, and has now settled in as a chronic workplace concern (Schouten, 2006). The juxtaposition of the OHS Act with other pieces of legislations in South Africa gives further credence to the call for violence to be included in OHS Act's list of occupational hazards. For example, this juxtaposition

indicates that the OHS Act violates certain sections of the Constitution and therefore runs the risk of being declared unlawful if left in its current form.

A human rights approach to violence is that it violates people's rights and dignity (Harris, 1980; Betz, 1977; Wallace, 1996) through the use of physical and verbal aggression, or both, and carried out with the intention to inflict physical or psychological pain, injury, or suffering (Cahn & Lloyds, 1996). Violence is one of the most dangerous occupational hazards in today's work environment (Zugelo, 2007). As a particular type of violence, workplace violence has emerged as a central human rights issue (ILO, INC, WHO & PSI, 2002). It poses a threat to the rights of workers to an environment that is free from fear and intimidation (Smith, 2003), and threat to their safety and well-being (Olszewski & Chikotas, 2007). For example, physical and psychological violence have serious implications for employees' right (ILO, INC, WHO, & PSI, 2002) to a safe and healthy work environment (Smith 2003), where they feel valued and respected (De Wet, 2007). In the context of the South African human rights culture, the presence of violence in the workplace, the employers' failure to institute policies and procedures to deal with it, and the government's failure to legislate against it, undermine the rights of workers to a safe, healthy, and decent work environment. The assumption that these failures amount to a transgression of the Constitution of South Africa is not implausible.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom through the Bill of Rights, as outlined in chapter 2. In particular, the following five sections in this chapter would have to be complied with if workers are to be protected from any form of violence in the workplace, under this Act:

- Section 10, which decrees that "Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected".
- Section 12(1)(c), which defends individuals' right "to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources".
- Section 12(1)(e), which proclaims everyone's right "not to be treated...in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way".

- Section 12(1)(e), which proclaims everyone’s right “not to be treated...in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”.
- Section 12(2), which declares the right of everyone to “bodily and psychological integrity...”

Through the fundamental human rights outlined above, the Constitution laid the foundation on which all laws in South Africa are supposed to be grounded. Consequently, when any piece of legislation is formulated, lawmakers have to ensure that they assimilate the fundamental principles of the Constitution, particularly the rights of individuals, into such legislation, lest they are found to be inconsistent with the supreme law of the land, and therefore unconstitutional (Benjamin & Thompson, 1992).

One observation about the OHSA is that it has maintained its pre-1996 (pre-Constitution) form. This means is that, in its current form, the Act does not protect the rights of individuals (in the workplace), as espoused in the Constitution. These are the rights: (i) to have their dignity respected and protected (Section 10); (ii) to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (Section 12(1)(c)); (iii) not to be treated in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way (Section 12(1)(e)); and (iv) to bodily and psychological integrity (Section 12(2)). It is not unreasonable to conclude that, by remaining in its pre-1996 form, the OHSA runs the risk of being declared inconsistent with, and most probably in contravention of section 2 of the Constitution, and therefore invalid.

A further contention is that the non-recognition of violence as an occupational health and safety hazard creates the notion that violence in the workplace is part of the job. The effect of such an approach is that it puts liability for any violence that occurs in the workplace on the victim. This approach effectively absolves employers of the general duty clause, in the occupational health and safety law, of providing and maintaining a work environment which, according to Benjamin and Thompson (1992), is safe and healthy and without recognised hazards that can cause, or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees; as well as to provide and maintain systems of work that are safe and healthy to employees. For example,

the employer would normally advance as a defence against liability, *volenti non fit injuria*. This dictum literally means that “to the one who is willing (to do the job), no harm is done” (Stranks, 2002:195). The argument is that the victim of violence voluntarily assumes risk as part of their normal work responsibilities (Stranks, 2002), or consented to run the risk of injury or suffering when they accepted the job (Ridley, 2008). In this way, *volenti non fit injuria* therefore reverberates with the assertion that violence is part of the job. Developments in the WHO and ILO have, however, led to the rejection of this notion, as has the Constitution of South Africa.

The risk faced by teachers, in particular, is that the attitude of treating violence in the workplace as “part of the job” may lead to their “constructive dismissal” from their job. Teachers who are victims of violence tend to become highly stressed and may, as a result, feel overwhelmed by their task. When this happens, they tend to withdraw from their work, as the discussion of the consequences of stress, burnout and job dissatisfaction illustrated. For example, such teachers tend to register increased rates of absenteeism, particularly as stress turns into burnout and precipitates more serious and chronic health problems. (ILO, 1996-2009). Faced with this situation, the teacher may take early retirement due to ill health, or may be discharged from service. According to section 11(1) of the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998, one of the grounds on which the employer (the Department of Basic Education) may discharge an educator from service is continuous ill health. Alternatively, the stressed teacher may dismiss themselves from their employment in order to avoid the source of stress. An employee who is forced to quit their job under such circumstances may sue the employer for constructive dismissal under the s 186(1)(e) of Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995. For cases of harassment, the Protection of Harassment Act, No. 17 of 2011 provides for the victim teacher to seek a court order to stop the harassment by the offending learner.

Under South African law, the Department of Basic Education, and educators as its representatives in the schools, is assumed to have the rights and responsibilities of *in loco parentis*. According to Farlex (2010), *in loco parentis* is a legal doctrine describing a relationship similar to that of a parent to a child. The theory is that the parents are in a position to exercise some form of control over their children and are responsible for controlling them. Therefore, when a learner commits an act of

violence on the teacher, on the school grounds, the Department of Education should be held liable if it has not taken any reasonable steps to prevent such violence. However, the general duty principle cannot be invoked to hold the Department of Education vicariously responsible for the violence of the learners, when violence is not recognised as a workplace hazard under the OHSA in South Africa.

The failure to recognise violence as a workplace health and safety issue creates a dilemma. On the one hand, the OHSA acknowledges the presence, in the workplace, of danger, hazards, risks, and threat to the health and safety of workers. The Act goes on to provide clarity on the meaning of these concepts through the following definitions:

- (i) “danger” means anything which may cause injury or damage to persons or property;
- (ii) “hazard” means a source of or exposure to danger;
- (iii) “healthy” means free from illness or injury attributable to occupational causes;
- (iv) “risk” means the probability that injury or damage will occur; and
- (v) “safe” means free from any hazard.

Section 8 of the OHSA then goes on to prompt employers to – as a general duty to their employees – establish, and maintain, a work environment that protects employees from exposure to any type of occupational health and safety hazard in the workplace while performing their work-related duties. The employer must, therefore, ensure that the workplace is free of hazardous substances that may cause employees injury, damage or disease. Where this is not possible, the employer must inform workers of these dangers, how they may be prevented, and how to work safely, and provide protective measures against substances listed in the Act, for a safe workplace.

However, it is discernible from the list of hazard provided in the Act that, what the legislators regard as workplace hazards, and therefore a threat to the health and safety of workers, are non-human substances only. This is confirmed by the fact that other Acts and regulations that are meant to give effect to OHSA, such as the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of

1993), as amended by Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act, No. 61 of 1997; the Application of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) in the Workplace: A Guide for Government Departments (2005); and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (No. 170, 2016), also do not recognise violence as a workplace hazard. For example, according to Schedule 3 of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act, No. 61 of 1997, employees who may be compensated for injuries or diseases are employees whose work involves the handling of or exposure to any of the following substances emanating from the workplace concerned, such as organic or inorganic fibro genic dust, asbestos dust, for example, or the handling of or exposure to chemicals, excessive noise, vibrating equipment, and repetitive movements, to name but a few. Similarly, the Application of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) in the Workplace: A Guide for Government Departments (2005) states that employees may be compensated if their injuries or diseases were caused by obvious defect in the condition of the premises, place of employment, equipment, material or machinery used in the business concerned, and for which the employer can be held accountable. According to the Personnel Administrative Measures, Government Notice 170 of 2016, teachers who suffer occupational or diseases or contract occupational diseases, are compensated under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993).

The Act makes no mention of violence as a workplace hazard and, therefore, a threat to the health and safety of workers. This, despite the fact that extracts from the findings in the qualitative and quantitative parts of the current study (presented below), indicate that violence fits into the definitions of concepts associated with the threat to the health and safety of workers, which are provided in the Act.

- (i) **Danger:** Violence is regarded as one of the most dangerous occupational hazards (Zugelo, 2007); a threat to the rights of workers to a workplace free from fear and intimidation (Smith, 2003); and real or potential danger for the health and dignity of workers (WHO, 2006). The ever-present risk of violence in schools makes them dangerous places for teachers to work in (Potts, 2006); while the high level of violence in South African schools,

in particular, makes them the most dangerous in the world (Blaser, 2007) and, therefore, quite dangerous places for educators to work in;

- (ii) **Hazard:** Violence is by its nature, hazardous and, according to Smith (2003), a threat to the rights of workers to a workplace free from fear and intimidation. Exposure to all forms of work-related violence, including intimidation, verbal abuse and threats (Meloy, cited by Dalton & Eracleous, 2006) by learners is a health hazard (Lemaire, 2004) and therefore, bad for teachers' health (Jim Baker in Labour Education 2003/4). In today's work environment, violence counts among occupational safety and health hazards present in government and public services (LeGrande, n.d.), and poses the same threat to the safety and wellness of workers as other occupational hazards against which they are protected under the OHSA.
  
- (iii) **Healthy/health:** Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Feitshans, 1998). A healthy and safe work environment facilitates optimal physical and mental health in relation to work, and can help to prevent workplace violence (ILO, 2003). Violence has serious implications for employees' right (ILO, INC, WHO, & PSI, 2002) to a safe and healthy work environment (Smith 2003). The OHSA obliges the employer to provide and maintain such a working environment, which is without recognised hazards that can cause, or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees (Benjamin & Thompson, 1992).
  
- (iv) **Risk:** Violence in the workplace is a significant risk for workers in every industry (Ruff *et al.*, 2004). However, workers in service industries such as schools and hospitals, along with the retail trade sector are most at risk for non-fatal violence acts (Ruff *et al.*, 2004). Studies indicate that, among the workers in the service industries, teachers carry excessive risk of different types of workplace violence, such as: vandalism (of educators' property), verbal abuse, verbal threats, physical violence (slapping, stabbing, and being hit with missiles such as fruit in class and stones outside class), and humiliation (De Wet, 2007; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007). Workers who are



exposed to physical and verbal aggression run the risk of physical and psychological injury (Kessler *et al.*, 2008).

- (v) **Safe:** Violence, as the consequential threat to individual safety, has long been a core focus of criminal law and human rights law (Gruskin, 2003). Violence in the workplace emerged as an occupational safety issue in the late 1980s, became a cultural and media phenomenon in the 1990s, and has now settled in as a chronic workplace concern (Schouten, 2006). Workplace violence has emerged as a serious threat to the safety and well-being of employees (Olszewski & Chikotas, 2007). In the education sector, violence against teachers increases their fears of personal safety (Astor, Meyer, Benbenishty, Marachi & Rosemond, 2005), and is often a key factor in teachers' decisions not to enter and/or to leave the profession (Espelage *et al.*, 2011).

For South Africa to be able to use legislation as a tool for the prevention of violence in the workplace, it would have to emulate the countries discussed below. However, as a starting point, the country would have to revise its list of occupational health and safety hazards in the Act and include violence.

## **6.2.2 International approaches to violence and occupational health and safety**

Empirical finding in this study that violence should be recognised as an occupational health and safety hazard in occupational health and safety legislation is consistent with the WHO- and ILO-influenced developments in the occupational health and safety legislations of some Western countries, as will become apparent in the discussion that follows below.

### **6.2.2.1**      *The contribution of the United Nations*

The United Nations Commission of Human Rights (UNCHR) Resolution 1990/31 put workplace violence on the agenda of occupational health and safety. It paid attention to the hazards faced by the staff of the UN, who were kidnapped, tortured, imprisoned, and even killed by terrorists, while doing their employer's principal work.

This work placed UN workers at equal if not greater risk to other workers, without the benefit of recognizing occupational safety and health concerns when formulating their own work agenda (Feitshans, 1998).

#### 6.2.2.2 *The contribution of the ILO and WHO*

As stated above, the idea of having violence treated as an occupational health and safety hazard in South Africa is not improbable. The foundation has already been laid for its possible achievement, with developments already underway in this direction internationally, as the discussion below will illustrate.

First, the conception is consistent with the approach taken by the ILO and the WHO, individually or cooperatively, to serve the welfare of workers. The two cooperate under the auspices of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health, founded in 1946 (Feitshans, 1998). Individually, the WHO regards the attainment of the highest standard of health as one of the fundamental rights of every human being (ILO Content Manager, 2011). The statement found in the Preamble to the Constitution of the WHO that “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (ILO Content Manager, 2011), is valuable for understanding what WHO means by “health”. It addresses the health consequences of workplace violence, as found in this, and other studies. The other contribution by WHO appears in its world report on violence and health (see Krug *et al.*, 2002), which is hailed as a major contribution to our understanding of violence and its impact. The report expands the conventional understanding of violence to include acts of violence that result from a power relationship, such as threats, intimidation and psychological abuse (Krug, *et al.*, 2002). These acts do not necessarily result in injury or death, but nonetheless pose a substantial burden on individuals and communities (Krug, *et al.*, 2002). Similar to the preamble to the WHO’s constitution, the Preamble to the ILO Constitution also echoes concern for the health and safety of workers. It considers the protection of workers against sickness, disease and injury arising out of their employment (ILO Content Manager, 2011).

One of the contributions of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health is its multidimensional conception of occupational health and safety. According to

Feitshans (1998), the Committee defines occupational health and safety as the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of all workers in all occupations; the prevention among workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health. This definition is comprehensive because its concern for both physical and mental elements of health and well-being implicitly takes into account the effects of occupational stress and other mental problems (Feitshans, 1998). The findings in the quantitative part of this study confirm the relationship between physical and non-physical violence and occupational stress.

As far back as 2002, the WHO and the ILO, together with the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the Public Services International (PSI) called upon governments and their competent authorities to provide the necessary framework for the reduction and elimination of violence (ILO, ICN, WHO & PSI, 2002), by amending their occupational health and safety laws to cover violence in the workplace. This was followed up by ILO's focus on preventing violence in specific sectors of employment. In 2003 experts from the ILO met to develop a code of practice on violence and stress at work in the service sectors (ILO, 2003). The experts developed the following principles to guide the services sectors when they developed their workplace violence prevention strategies:

- A healthy and safe work environment facilitates optimal physical and mental health in relation to work, and can help to prevent workplace violence;
- Policy against workplace violence should also be directed at promoting decent work and mutual respect; and
- Promoting gender equality could help to reduce workplace violence.

Second, having violence recognised as an occupational health and safety hazard in South Africa would be a positive response to the invitation made by the 2004 World Conference on the Right to and the Rights in Education to states across the world to, among others, "Take necessary measures to minimise school violence and crimes committed against students and teachers in schools, and ensure safety in schools" (Declaration of Amsterdam, 2004). Third, it is borne out by empirical research

findings, which have established that violence in the workplace has deleterious effects on victims' psychological-emotional health, physical-physiological health, work performance and relationships with co-workers, and personal life (Blasé *et al.*, 2008). Fourth, the change of attitudes among occupational health and safety practitioners, which could be attributed to the influence of both the WHO and the ILO, as stated above, has led to a number of countries amending their occupational health and safety laws to include, and treat violence as a workplace hazard. Fifth, a scrutiny of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa makes a compelling case for the recognition of violence as an occupational health and safety hazard. This step would make the OHS Act consistent with the Constitution.

Sixth, the broad definition of violence, the discovery of violence as a workplace hazard, and the cognizance of the physical and psychological consequences of violence, has brought workplace violence to the attention of lawmakers in progressive countries. Workplace violence is now being targeted by laws and regulations with greater frequency (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006), particularly those that are prejudiced towards the protection and promotion of workers' rights to a safe and healthy work environment. Hocking and Guy (2008) contend that this approach has led to the establishment of the principle that, for acts of violence to be deterred in the workplace, occupational health and safety legislations need to develop greater armoury of compliance measures. One such measure is employer liability. According to this principle, the health and safety legislation obliges employers to establish, and maintain, as far as is practically possible, a work environment that protects employees from exposure to any type of occupational health and safety hazard. Failure to do so means that employers may be held liable for the injuries and well-being of the worker victims.

#### 6.2.2.3 *The contribution of other countries towards the recognition of violence as a workplace health and safety hazard*

The gravitation towards the practice of holding employers liable for incidents of violence in their workplaces and the change of attitudes towards the importance of workplace violence as an occupational health and safety hazard started in earnest between 1986 and 1993. This was mainly due to several incidents of violence in the

USA involving post office workers “going postal” (Everett, 2009). The term “going postal” came to refer to incidents in which disgruntled employees or former employees came to the workplace to “get even” with current or former employer or fellow employees they blamed for their trouble at work (Everett, 2009).

At the turn of the new millennium, the legal regimes of the progressive nations responded to workplace violence within the broader band of protective legislation and regulations surrounding the workplace at large (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). Consequently, the concerns of health and safety regulations are now with general safety about the workplace and not only with safety in relation to particular processes or machinery only (Ridley, 2008). This change of attitude has led to the inclusion of workplace violence in the health and safety laws of a number of Western countries. In countries where the occupational health and safety legislations did not address workplace violence directly, their regulatory framework was considered to impose an obligation on employers to provide a violence-free workplace (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). This regulatory framework places a general statutory duty of care on employers.

According to the general duty clauses in the occupational health and safety legislations of countries that recognise violence as a workplace hazard, employers are obliged to provide and maintain – as far as is reasonably practicable – a working environment that does not expose their employees to risks to their health or safety, arising from the conduct of the employer’s business (The Northern Territory Government’s Workplace Health and Safety Act, 2007; Benjamin & Thompson, 1992). Specifically, these general duties are aimed at preventing anyone being killed, injured or contracting disease because of work or activities at their workplace (Commission for Occupational Safety and Health, 2005). Employers who fail to comply with the general duty clause may be held vicariously liable for injuries or damages sustained by their employees, despite having had no active involvement in the incident (Devine, 2009).

When it is applied in occupational health and safety legislation, the theory of liability states that employers are potentially liable for incidents in which their employees are negatively affected by the conditions they are exposed to in the workplace. The UK,

New Zealand, the USA, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, Canada, and Australia, count among the Western countries that have incorporated the general duty of employers, with their occupational health and safety legislations (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). The general duty clause in the occupational health and safety laws of the countries mentioned above obliges employers to provide and maintain – as far as is reasonably practicable – a working environment which, according to Benjamin and Thompson (1992) and The Northern Territory Government's Workplace Health and Safety Act, (2007), is safe and healthy and without recognised hazards that can cause, or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees, as well as to provide and maintain systems of work that are safe and healthy to employees. This means that, in the event that an employee becomes a victim of an incident such as violence in the workplace, and it is established that the employer had failed to establish a safe and healthy work environment through appropriate, and written, workplace violence policy and procedures, as required by law with any other workplace hazard, then the employer should be considered potentially liable for the employee's death, injuries, or resultant long-term illness. Whereas the legislations of the countries mentioned above are explicit about the extension of the general duty clause to workplace violence, as it will become clear in the discussion below, this is not the case in South Africa. The general duty clause does not extend to workplace violence because the Act does not recognise it as a workplace hazard.

(i) *The United Kingdom*

In the UK, employers have a legal duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This duty includes the minimization of exposure to the risk of violence at work.

(ii) *New Zealand*

In New Zealand, the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 has been used as the basis for developing a guide for employers and employees on dealing with violence at work. Under the law, employers have a legal duty to take all practicable steps to identify all hazards in the place of work, to determine their significance, and to eliminate, isolate or minimize the likelihood that the hazard will be a source of harm. In New South Wales,

Australia, verbal abuse and threats directed at teachers by learners are regarded as a health hazard because they have the potential to cause psychological harm on the victim (Lemaire 2004). The Occupational Health and Safety legislation decrees that it is the duty of the Department of Education and Training (New South Wales) to identify these hazards, to assess their risk in terms of their likelihood to cause injury or illness, and to assess the severity of the injury or illness that the victims are likely to suffer (Lemaire 2004). According to Section 8(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, “An employer must ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees of the employer” (The New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2004).

(iii) *United States*

In the US, employers may be held vicariously liable and in violation of the general duty clause – as declared in the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970 – if an employee is injured or killed while in the course of performing their employment duties. Under the OSHA, employers have an obligation to do everything that is reasonably practicable to protect the life, safety and health of employees, including removal or minimization of hazards, provision of safety devices and personal protective equipment, and the adoption of safe work practices, operations and processes in order to create a safe and healthy workplace.

(iv) *Finland*

The Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2003 cover workplace violence. The Act deals with physical and psychological violence, including threats of violence and harassment.

(v) *Sweden*

As early as 1993, the National Board of Occupational Safety and Health in Sweden issued two comprehensive and innovative ordinances on workplace violence under the authority of its Work Environment Act. These ordinances, which were the first of their kind in the world, cover violence and menaces in

the working environment and victimization at work. These ordinances remain valuable benchmarks for other countries.

(vi) *Belgium*

Belgium offers a comprehensive occupational health and safety legislation. It has a section that deals with the protection from violence, moral harassment (bullying) and sexual harassment at the workplace. Covered under this section is a wide range of situations of workplace violence, including physical violence and verbal aggression, as well as bullying, mobbing and sexual harassment. The law outlines employers' obligation to put into operation a series of preventive measures to reduce the risk of violence in the workplace. These include the physical organization of the working environment, establishing proper assistance and support for the victim, the availability of an adviser on prevention, quick and impartial investigation of cases of workplace violence, provision of information and training, and the responsibility of the management at all levels in preventing stress.

(vii) *Canada*

In Ontario, Canada, the Private Member's Bill, Bill 29 of 2007 amended the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act because it protected workers against anything in the workplace but people. The provincial government now accepts that violence in the workplace does exist. This is reflected in the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act, which states that workers, in any workplace, may face a continuum of unwanted behaviours, ranging from offensive remarks to physical violence, from any person in that workplace (Ministry of Labour, 2016). The Act is accompanied by the Ministry's Health and Safety Guidelines (Ministry of Labour, 2016), which explains the requirements in the Occupational Health and Safety Act of what all those who have a role to play in dealing with workplace violence and harassment need to know. These include, among others, their rights and duties. For example, employers have the duty, under the Act, to protect workers against workplace violence and harassment, to investigate allegations of workplace-related harassment and violence, and to take steps to prevent their further occurrence. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act [s. 43(3)(b.1)],



workers have the right to be protected against workplace violence and harassment in that the Act entitles them to refuse to work if they have reason to believe that they may be endangered by workplace violence. This section covers teachers as well. The only situation in which teachers may not exercise their rights to refuse to work is when a learner's life, health or safety is in imminent jeopardy [s. 3(3)].

(viii) *Australia*

Australia's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation treats the health and safety of workers as a primary duty of employers (Mayhew, 2000). In particular, section 8(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 decrees that "An employer must ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees of the employer" (The New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2004).

The duty of care provisions in the OHS legislation in Australia includes protecting people from violence (Mayhew, 2000). The preventive thrust of the legislation requires the prevention of "foreseeable risk". For example, where an employer is aware of the potential for occupational violence, a court could interpret the risks as foreseeable, and it would be expected that a prevention program had been implemented. In such a case where an employer fails to take preventive action, the offence/breach of the OHS legislation occurs in a time frame prior to an actual incident (Mayhew, 2000).

The duty of care of employers towards their employees in Australia is further detailed in the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation of each Australian State and Territory, with legislations of some addressing violence against teachers, in particular. For example, in New South Wales, Australia, verbal abuse and threats directed at teachers by learners are regarded as a health hazard because they have the potential to cause psychological harm on the victim (Lemaire 2004). The Occupational Health and Safety legislation decrees that it is the duty of the Department of Education and Training (New South Wales) to identify these hazards, to assess their risk in terms of their

likelihood to cause injury or illness, and to assess the severity of the injury or illness that the victims are likely to suffer (Lemaire 2004).

### **6.3 SUMMARY**

Whereas in the past, few international instruments addressed work-related violence, it is now receiving the attention of lawmakers internationally. As discussed above, some countries have already made strides to align their occupational health and safety laws with the latest views of violence in the workplace, and have added violence to their list of workplace health and safety hazard. Other positive developments include the call for governments and their competent authorities to provide the necessary framework for the reduction and elimination of violence; the Declaration of Amsterdam, which invites states to take necessary measures to minimise school violence and crimes committed against learners and teachers in schools and ensure safety in schools; the WHO's principle that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; the ILO's approach to protect workers against sickness, disease and injury arising out of their employment;; and the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that proclaimed that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

If it is assumed that early preventive intervention of learners' violent behaviour against teachers is desirable, feasible, and wise, then there would be theoretical advantages to such intervention. Legislations such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993 are meant to achieve this intervention. The aim of the legislature, with these laws, is to prevent incidents that pose a threat to the health and safety of workers; and the control of occupational hazards. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these laws would also be valuable in the prevention and control of workplace violence.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 SUMMARY

##### 7.1.1 Introduction

This study investigated factors that contribute to learner violence against secondary school teachers, the nature/types of violence the teachers are victims of, and the consequences of the violence on the victims. A multi-method research design was applied to achieve the set objective, using one qualitative and one quantitative research design.

##### 7.1.2 Factors associated with learner violence against teachers

Individual theories of criminology enhance our understanding of crime and violence by providing different perspectives on the factors that are deemed to be associated with their occurrence. However, the eclectic theoretical approach confirmed that the probability that a teacher will become a victim of learner-perpetrated violence at their place of work is a function of the intricate interplay of a host of factors at the individual, organisational and environmental levels. For example, during the interviews, and through probing and personal observation of the school environment in which the interviews were conducted, it became apparent that factors such as schools' codes of conduct, learner indiscipline, school security, classroom overcrowding, overage learners for the grade, the presence of weapons and drugs on the school grounds act singly or in combination to create an unsafe working environment for teachers.

##### 7.1.3 The nature of learner violence against teachers

The results of this study confirmed that learner violence against teachers comprises a range of behaviours that span across the violence continuum. It ranges from soft and deceptively harmless behaviour, to serious and conspicuously harmful

behaviour. The former includes verbal and non-verbal behaviours, and the latter, physical acts. This study found that verbal abuse was the most common type of non-physical violence against teachers. The finding is consistent with the findings of other studies of violence against teachers and of workplace violence, in general.

#### 7.1.4 Qualitative design findings

The qualitative study found six consequences of learner violence against teachers; namely, fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and a tendency to want to quit the teaching profession. The study postulated about the causal relationship between, on the one hand, threat of, and actual violence, and fear, stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and a tendency to want to quit the teaching profession. Hypotheses about this relationship were formulated and tested in the quantitative study.

#### 7.1.5 Quantitative design findings

For the quantitative research design, respondents completed an eight-part questionnaire. The questionnaire incorporated the following questionnaires that are related to the consequences of violence found in the qualitative research design: Perceived Stress Scale- 4 (Cohen & Williamson, 1988), Maslach Burnout Inventory (Seidman & Zager, 1987), Job Satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg & Williams, 1991). In addition, the respondents were asked a question related to their intention to quit the profession.

Chi-square Test of Independence was utilised to test the hypothesised association between violence and its consequences, as well as that among the consequences of violence. Cramer's V Measure of Association was utilised to measure the strength of association between variables. Although the Chi-Square Test led to 83% of the null hypotheses being retained, none of them had a zero strength of association.

### 7.1.6 Violence as an occupational health and safety hazard

Teachers' concern about the physical and mental consequences of violence is reflected in the respondents' positive responses to the question whether violence should be recognised as a workplace health and safety hazard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This response may be considered as a positive response to the call made by the WHO and ILO to member countries to have workplace violence recognised as an occupational hazard and a threat to the health and safety of workers. This call is already being heeded to in some countries. They have incorporated workplace violence into their occupational health and safety legislations.

### 7.1.7 The six-stage path model of consequences of violence against teachers

A six-stage path model was developed to track the consequences of violence against teachers. The model was based on the findings on the consequences of learner-perpetrated violence against teachers. The model indicates that the consequences of violence do not follow a uniform path. The path differs from one individual to the other. From the point of direct or indirect experience of violence, the consequences of violence against teachers could follow one major path or any of the three minor paths. The major path is a six-stage path of victims' fear of violence, followed by stress, burnout, job dissatisfaction, ill health and intention to quit the profession. The minor paths comprise a five-stage path of fear, stress, job satisfaction, general health, and quit or intention to quit; a four-stage path of fear, stress, general health; and a three-stage path of fear, stress, and quit.

## 7.2 Limitations

Determining the right time to access teachers turned out to be difficult because of their tight work schedule. Therefore, the distribution of questionnaires becomes dependent on school principals, through the school administration office. However, judging by the response rate, the principals' assurances that they would see to the distribution and collection of questionnaires was not a guarantee for a higher response rate.

### **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study noted that one of the consequences of learner violence was the teachers' intention to leave the profession at their earliest convenience. However, the measurement of the consequences of teachers leaving the profession was beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the researcher's assumption is that when teachers quit the profession because of learner violence, such an action renders the teaching profession less attractive to prospective teachers. This then leads to teacher shortage in schools and, with it, the re-emergence of factors such as large classes, poor teacher-learner ratios, and indiscipline, which initially contributed to teachers quitting the profession. It is therefore recommended that future research should investigate this aspect of teacher attrition and the cycle of learner violence against teachers in schools.

It is evident that the action of teachers to quit the profession violence is intricately related to how the sector addresses, or fails to address learner-perpetrated violence against teachers. Since respondents in the quantitative design part of this study have expressed their wish to have violence recognised as an occupational health and safety hazard, it is also recommended that future research should investigate the incorporation of workplace violence into the occupational health and safety legislation, as well as the development of workplace violence prevention policy and procedures. It is further recommended that such a research project should solicit the inputs of all the role players in the education sector as participants.

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**APPENDIX A**

**APPROVAL LETTER FROM LIMPOPO PROVINCE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC  
EDUCATION**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS**

**Title:** Educators as victims of workplace violence in selected secondary school in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province

**Investigator/Researcher:**

David Leepile Kgosimore

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Limpopo

Contact numbers: 015 268 2850 or 084 602 1939

**Purpose of Research:**

I am currently engaged in a study that is looking at violence perpetrated by learners against their teachers in secondary schools. Of great interest to me are the factors that contribute to such violence, the types of violence that the teachers are victims of, and the effects of the violence on the victims. To help me gain insights into this area of research, I would like to ask you to participate in this study by taking part in an interview that would last 30-45 minutes. This interview will be at your convenience and should not impact your professional responsibilities at your school.

**Research Design:**

This research employs a mixed method, which requires the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected through the use of questionnaires. The research has now reached a stage where I have to collect qualitative data through conducting interviews – hence my request for your participation in the interviews. These interviews will be audio taped for transcription purposes at a later stage. I will ask you a number of questions related to your experience of learner violence and how it has affected you personally. The interview will be the only time commitment expected of the participants in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The data that you provide will be recorded anonymously, so your participation and anything you say during the session will be held in the strictest confidence. A



numbered coding system will be implemented with each participant to ensure confidentiality. The number correlating to each research participant will only be known to the researcher and no one else. I welcome questions about this study at any time. Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis, and you may withdraw and no longer participate in the interview at any time without consequences or prejudice.

Signing your name below will be an indication that you have read and understood the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to take part in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C

### TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is David Leepile Kgosimore

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Limpopo. The title of my research is “**Educators as victims of workplace violence in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province**”.

The objectives of the research are to determine the factors that contribute to violence against educators at their places of work, the types of violence they are victims of, and the effects of such violence on the victims. To help me gain insights into this area of research, I would like to ask you to participate in this study by taking part in an interview that would last 30-45 minutes.

The interview will be audio taped for transcription purposes at a later stage. The information that you provide will be recorded anonymously, so your participation and anything you say during the interview session will be held in the strictest confidence. Therefore, a numbered coding system will be implemented with each participant to ensure that confidentiality is achieved.

Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis, and you may withdraw and no longer participate in the interview at any time without consequences or prejudice. Your signing of the Consent Form that I will present to you will serve as an indication that you understand the conditions under which you will participate in this research.

**[The interview schedule was made up of guiding questions, which the researcher followed up with probing for clarification when response to a question was provided].**

1. Biographical information

Please tell me about your background. [Anticipated information is on the participants' gender, age category, work experience as a teachers, currently post-level held, employment status, and qualifications].

2. Information on the social and physical environment in which the teachers worked; for example, school size, class size or learner-educator ratios, age of

learners taught, learners' conduct in school, including discipline, alcohol and drug use, and teacher-workloads.

3. Information on the latest incidents of violence experienced, and its type.
4. Information on the consequences of violence on the victim.

**Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.**

## APPENDIX D

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Educators as victims of workplace violence in selected secondary schools in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

#### SECTION A: Personal Information

1. Are you:

Male	1
Female	2

2. What is your age?

25 or under	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61+
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

3. What is your marital status?

Single	Married	Living partner with	Separated/divorced	Widow/widower
1	2	3	4	5

4. Are you:

South African (by birth)	1	┆
South African (by naturalisation)	2	┆
Other national	3	┆

5. What is your employment status?

Permanent/full-time	1	┆
Temporary/Fixed term contract	2	┆
Part-time	3	┆

6. Please state your qualifications.

e.g., Teachers Diploma, BA, BSc \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many years have you been a teacher? \_\_\_\_years.

8. How many years have you been a teacher at this school? \_\_\_\_years.

**SECTION B: Workplace information (in the past twelve months).**

9. What was the size of your school in the past 12 months?

1. Less than 500 learners.
2. Between 500 and 1000 learners.
3. Over 1000 learners.

10. What was the average class size that you taught at this school in the past 12 months?

1. Largest: \_\_\_\_ learners.
2. Smallest: \_\_\_\_ learners.

11. Please mark with a cross (X), the number that indicates the extent to which each of the following incidents was a problem in your school in the past 12 months.

Incident	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Not a problem
	3	2	1	0
a. Learner late-coming	3	2	1	0
b. Learner absenteeism/class bunking	3	2	1	0
c. Learner alcohol use	3	2	1	0
d. Learner drug use	3	2	1	0
e. Learner tobacco use	3	2	1	0
f. Sale of drugs on school grounds	3	2	1	0
g. Learner possession of weapons	3	2	1	0
h. Verbal abuse of educators by learners	3	2	1	0
i. Physical abuse of educators by learners	3	2	1	0
j. Theft of educators' property by learners	3	2	1	0
k. Damage of educators' property by learners	3	2	1	0
l. Educator alcohol or drug use	3	2	1	0
m. Educator absenteeism (due to illness and other reasons)	3	2	1	0

12. Please indicate which of the following **security measures** applied to your school in the past 12 months:

Security measure	Yes	No
a. Fence around the school	1	2
b. Controlled access (i.e. gates are locked during school hours)	1	2
c. A security guard on school grounds	1	2
d. Learner school identity card system	1	2
e. Metal detectors	1	2
f. Learner random search for drugs and weapons	1	2
g. No loitering on school grounds by students during lessons	1	2

**SECTION C: Violent incidents experienced by yourself (in the past twelve months).**

Please complete the following sections for incidents of learner violence against you in circumstances related to your work as an educator. **NB:** The incident could have taken place at the school or at any other place where school-related activities were taking place (e.g. sports grounds).

**NB:** If you were **not a direct victim** of learner violence at your school in the past twelve months, but **only witnessed (or heard about)** your fellow educator being threatened, harassed, verbally abused or physically assaulted by a learner in the past twelve months, please skip to items **25-30**.

**13.** In the past 12 months, were you ever **harassed** by a learner?

**NB: Harassment in this research refers sexual harassment, racist or xenophobic remarks.**

Yes | No | **(Go to 14)**

If yes, please indicate the type of harassment you were subjected to, by filling in the number of times you were subjected to it (**e.g. once=1, twice=2, etc.**) in the appropriate learner grade/gender boxes; e.g. sexual harassment by grade 8 male learner, twice (2). Please leave the boxes for the harassment which you did not experience empty.

	Learner Grade									
	Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender	
Harassment	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
a. Sexual harassment										
b. Racist remarks										
c. Xenophobic remarks										
<b>Other (please state)</b>										
d.										
e.										
f.										

**14.** In the past 12 months, were you ever **threatened** with violence by a learner?

Yes | No | **(Go to 15)**

If yes, please indicate in the boxes below the learner grade and the number of times you were threatened by a male or female learner in these grades; e.g. if once by a male grade 11 learner, write 1 the male/grade 11 box. Please leave the boxes for the grades in which no learner (male or female) threatened you empty.

		<b>Learner Grade</b>				
		Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Learner Gender	Male					
	Female					

**15.** In the past 12 months, you may have been a victim of one or more **verbal abuses** by a learner. Please indicate the type of verbal abuse you were subjected to by filling in the number of times you were subjected to it (**e.g. once=1, twice=2, etc.**) in the appropriate learner grade/gender boxes; e.g. swearing by grade 9 female learner, once (1); insult by a grade 12 male learner thrice (3). Please leave the boxes for the verbal abuse which you did not experience empty.

**NB: Please go to 17 if you did not experience any verbal abuse.**

	<b>Learner Grade</b>									
	Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender	
<b>Verbal abuse</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
a. Swearing										
b. Insult										
c. Teasing										
d. Humiliation										
<b>Other (please state)</b>										
e.										
f.										
g.										

16. Where did the incident/incidents of verbal assault take place?

**NB: Please mark with a cross (X), all applicable incidents and locations.**

	Incident Location		
	In classroom	On school grounds (outside classroom)	Off school grounds
<b>Verbal assault</b>			
a. Swearing			
b. Insult			
c. Teasing			
d. Humiliation			
<b>Other (please specify)</b>			
e.			
f.			
g.			

17. In the past 12 months, you may have been a victim of one or more **physical assaults** by a learner. Please indicate the type of physical assault you were subjected to by filling in the number of times you were subjected to it (**e.g. once=1, twice=2, etc.**) in the appropriate learner grade/gender boxes; e.g. pushed by grade 9 male learner, once (1); slapped by a grade 10 female learner thrice (3). Please leave the boxes for the verbal abuse which you did not experience empty.

**NB: Please go to question 21 if you were not assaulted by a learner.**

	Learner grade									
	Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender		Learner gender	
<b>Physical assault</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>
a. Grabbed										
b. Slapped										
c. Pushed										
d. Kicked										



e. Hit with a fist										
f. Hit with an object										
g. Knifed (or attempted)										
h. Pointed with a firearm										
<b>Other (please specify)</b>										
i.										
j.										
k.										

18. Where did the incident/incidents of physical assault take place?

**NB: Please mark with a cross (X), all applicable incidents and locations.**

	Incident location		
	In classroom	On school grounds (outside classroom)	Off school grounds
<b>Physical assault</b>			
a. Grabbed			
b. Slapped			
c. Pushed			
d. Kicked			
e. Hit with a fist			
f. Hit with an object			
g. Knifed (or attempted)			
h. Pointed with a firearm			
<b>Other (please specify)</b>			
i.			
j.			
k.			

19. What type of injury/injuries did you suffer as a result of the latest incident? [Please mark all the injuries that apply with a cross (X) below the injury].

Open cuts	Bruises	Broken bones	Psychological trauma	Other
1	2	3	4	5

20. Did you seek medical attention for your most recent injury?

Yes  1                      No  2

**SECTION D: Perceived Stress Scale- 4**

**21. Instructions:** The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, **please indicate with a cross (X)** in the options boxes how often you felt or thought a certain way. 0 = Never (N)

- 1 = Almost Never (AN)
- 2 = Sometimes (S)
- 3 = Fairly Often (FO)
- 4 = Very Often (VO)

Question	Options				
	N	AN	S	FO	VO
1. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	0	1	2	3	4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	0	1	2	3	4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	0	1	2	3	4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	0	1	2	3	4

Cohen & Williamson (1988)

**SECTION E: Maslach Burnout Inventory**

**22.** Please use the following scale to rate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- 2 = Moderately Disagree (MD)
- 3 = Slightly Disagree (SLD)
- 4 = Slightly Agree (SLA)
- 5 = Moderately Agree (MA)
- 6 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Please mark your option to each of the following statements with a cross (X).

Statements	Options					
	S D	MD	SLD	SLA	MA	SA
1. I look forward to more years of teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I feel depressed because of my teaching experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The teaching day seems to drag on and on.	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. I am glad that I chose teaching as a career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The learners act like a bunch of criminals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My physical illness may be related to my stress in this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I feel that the administrators are willing to help educators deal with learner indiscipline and violent behaviour should they arise.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I find it difficult to calm down after a day of teaching.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Teaching is more fulfilling than I had expected.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. If I had to do it all over again, I would not become an educator.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I feel that I could do a much better job of teaching if only the problems of learner indiscipline and violent behaviour were not so great.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. The stresses in this job are more than I can bear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Most of my learners are decent people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Most learners come to school ready to learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I look forward to each teaching day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
116. The administration blames educators for learner indiscipline and violent behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Students come to school with bad attitudes.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Seidman and Zager (1987).

### **SECTION F: Job Satisfaction**

**23.** Please use the following scale to indicate how satisfied you are with your present work as a teacher: 1=Strongly Disagree (SD)

- 2=Disagree (D)
- 3=Slightly Disagree (SLD)
- 4=Slightly Agree (SLA)
- 5=Agree (A)
- 6=Strongly Agree (SA)

**Please mark your choice with X**

Statement		SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA
1	Generally speaking, I am very happy with my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I frequently think of leaving this job	1	2	3	4	5	6

	(Reversed scored).						
3	I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Hackman & Oldham, 1975.

### **SECTION G: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)**

I would like to know how your health has been in general over the past few weeks.

Please answer **all** the questions by marking your option in the boxes below with a cross (X) for the answer which you think most applies to you. **Remember that you were asked not to provide your name. Therefore, your response is confidential.**

**24.** Have you recently:

<b>1. Been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing?</b>			
0. better than usual	1. same as usual	2. less than usual	3. much less than usual
<b>2. Lost much sleep over worry?</b>			
0. not at all	1. no more than usual	2. rather more than usual	3. much more than usual
<b>3. Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?</b>			
0. more so than usual	1. same as usual	2. less so than usual	3. much less than usual
<b>4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?</b>			
0. more so than usual	1. same as usual	2. less than usual	3. much less than usual
<b>5. Felt constantly under strain?</b>			
0. not at all	1. no more than usual	2. rather more than usual	3. much more than usual
<b>6. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?</b>			
0. not at all	1. no more than usual	2. rather more than usual	3. much more than usual
<b>7. Been able to enjoy your day-to-day activities?</b>			
0. more so than usual	1. same as usual	2. less so than usual	3. much less than usual
<b>8. Been able to face up to your problems?</b>			
0. more so than usual	1. same as usual	2. less so than usual	3. much less than usual

<b>9. Been feeling unhappy or depressed?</b>			
<b>0.</b> not at all	<b>1.</b> no more than usual	<b>2.</b> rather more than usual	<b>3.</b> much more than usual
<b>10. Been losing confidence in yourself?</b>			
<b>0.</b> not at all	<b>1.</b> no more than usual	<b>2.</b> rather more than usual	<b>3.</b> much more than usual
<b>11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?</b>			
<b>0.</b> not at all	<b>1.</b> no more than usual	<b>2.</b> rather more than usual	<b>3.</b> much more than usual
<b>12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?</b>			
<b>0.</b> more so than usual	<b>1.</b> same as usual	<b>2.</b> less so than usual	<b>3.</b> much less than usual

Goldberg & Williams, 1991.

**25.** Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession? **Please mark your choice with X.**

Yes, very often	From time-to-time	No, never
1	2	3

**SECTION H: Additional question**

**26.** Please indicate with a cross (X), in the appropriate box, the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: **“Violence should be recognised as a workplace health and safety hazard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act”**.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
- 2 = Slightly Disagree (SLD)
- 3 = Slightly Agree (SLA)
- 4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY.**



# LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquires: Armer I, Telephone: 015-290 7951 e-mail: [ArmerI@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:ArmerI@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

Mr. D.L. Kgosimore  
University of Limpopo  
Private Bag X 1106  
Sovenga  
0727

Dear Researcher

### Request for Permission to Conduct Research

1. Your letter of request bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that you are granted permission to conduct research. The title of your research project is **“EDUCATORS AS VICTIMS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO.”**
3. The following conditions should be observed:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerning the conduct of the study. Care should be taken not to disrupt the academic programme at the schools.
  - 3.3 The study should be conducted during the first three terms of the calendar year as schools would be preparing themselves for the final end of year examinations during the fourth term.
  - 3.4 The research is conducted in line with ethics in research. In particular, the principle of voluntary participation in this research should be respected.
  - 3.5 You share with the Department, the final product of your study upon completion of the research assignment.
4. You are expected to produce this letter at schools/offices where you will be conducting your research, as evidence that permission for this activity has been granted.
5. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

  
.....  
Head of Department

2010/02/24  
.....  
Date