

## What newspapers tell us about teacher-on-learner violence in South African schools

Corene de Wet

Office for International Affairs, University of the Free State  
South Africa

### Abstract

*This small-scale qualitative study of newspapers' portrayal of teacher-on-learner violence in South African schools is informed, firstly, by the World Health Organisation's definition of violence and four of the World Health Organisation's six main types of violence involving children and, secondly, by John Galtung's theory of violence. South African media was used as a database for identifying South African English newspaper articles on teacher-on-learner violence. Qualitative content analysis was employed to systematically work through the identified newspaper articles. Five types of direct teacher-on-learner violence were identified: (1) The physical abuse of learners under the pretext of addressing learner misbehaviour; (2) the normalisation of the sexual abuse of learners by their teachers; (3) teachers' use of words to systematically humiliate and tear down learners; (4) teachers' negative stereotyping and discrimination of learners belonging to a different race; and (5) teachers' malicious neglect of their in loco parentis responsibilities. Looking at teacher-on-learner violence through the lens of Galtung's theory of violence, this study facilitates an understanding of the multi-layered and complex nature of teacher-on-learner violence and contributes to the existing body of knowledge on teacher-on-learner violence.*

**Keywords:** abusive teachers; corporal punishment; John Galtung; media analysis; South Africa; teacher-on-learner violence; theory of violence.

### Introduction

Teachers are responsible for the emotional, psychological and physical well-being of the learners under their care. This responsibility, known as the *in loco parentis* principle (Mampana, 2018), obliges teachers to not only “behave as superior parents” (Mampana, 2018,

---

p. 187) but also create a safe and healthy learning environment in which children can grow intellectually, physically and emotionally to become well-rounded individuals (Magolego, 2003). While learner-on-learner violence receives extensive attention worldwide and is of global concern (see Khoury-Kassabri, 2006; Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco & Brethour, 2006), limited research has been done on teachers forsaking their duty of care and abusing those who are placed under their care (see Datta, Cornell & Huang, 2017; Da Silva & Da Silva, 2018; Geiger, 2017; Khoury-Kassabri, 2006; Kiziltepe, Irmak, Eslek & Hecker, 2020; Monsvold, Bendixen, Hagen & Helvik, 2011; Shumba, 2002; Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005). Numerous researchers seem to agree that teacher-on-learner violence has serious negative consequences for the targeted learners: victims may lose their confidence (Shumba, 2002) and become socially withdrawn (Nearchou, 2018). Furthermore, Nearchou (2018) and Shumba (2004) have found that victims of teacher-on-learner violence may lose interest in their schoolwork, abandon their loyalty towards their school and even drop out of school. Khoury-Kassabri, Astor and Benbenishty (2007, p. 2) note that teacher-on-learner violence “severely threatens children’s overall sense of safety, sense of trust towards adults, and long-term emotional well-being”. In addition, Naicker, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2014) have found that victims of teacher abuse may experience anger, insecurity and fear. Chen, Chang, Lin and Wang (2022, p. 3279) write that “exposure to maltreatment by teachers is one of the major traumatic events in students’ daily lives”. According to them, it can lead to feelings of shame, self-blame, depression, anxiety and guilt (Chen et al., 2022, p. 3281). The situation is exacerbated in Confucian societies and African cultures where teachers and the elderly are traditionally well regarded and act as role models (Chen & Wei, 2011; Idang, 2015).

Further research on the topic is necessitated by the negative consequences of teacher-on-learner violence on the victims, the scarcity of research on teacher-on-learner violence within the South African context (Naicker et al., 2014, p. 4) and the public outcry after a sports coach of a respected all-boys school in Parktown, South Africa, was found guilty of 144 charges of sexual assault and 14 of assault (Cowen, 2020). The aim of this article is to expand our knowledge of teacher-on-learner violence in South Africa by using newspaper articles as textual data.

### **What is teacher-on-learner violence?**

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2016, p. 14) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death,

psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”. The WHO (2016) has identified six types of violence against children. The following four types of violence can be linked to teacher-on-learner violence: (1) *Maltreatment* may include neglect, harsh punishment or sexual, physical and psychological or emotional violence; (2) *Bullying*, including cyberbullying, is characterised by an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim, as well as the repetitive nature of physical, social or psychological negative behaviour. (3) *Sexual violence* includes “non-consensual completed or attempted sexual contact; non-consensual acts of a sexual nature not involving contact (such as voyeurism or sexual harassment), sexual trafficking ... and online exploitation” (WHO, 2016, p. 14). (4) *Emotional or psychological violence* includes limiting a child’s movement, vilification, mocking a child, discrimination, intimidation and rejection. In addition, the WHO (2016, p. 14) notes that when “any of these types of violence [are] directed against girls or boys because of their biological sex or gender identity, these types of violence also constitute gender-based violence”.

There seems to be no clear-cut agreement among researchers on precisely what teacher-on-learner violence involves. Whereas Shumba (2002) identifies three forms of teacher-on-learner violence, namely emotional, sexual and physical abuse, Nearchou (2018) sees emotional teacher-on-learner abuse as both verbal and non-verbal acts. Monsvold et al. (2011) and the WHO (2016) name teacher-on-learner bullying as a specific form of teacher abuse. Both sources highlight the repetitive nature of bullying and the power unbalance between the teacher and his or her victim as characteristics that differentiate bullying from other forms of violence. In this article, I focus on teacher-on-learner violence, and not the repetitive abuse of power by the bullying teacher (see Masiko, 2018; Sgqolana, 2018 for newspaper articles on the repetitive sexual abuse of learners by their teachers).

### **Research on teacher-on-learner violence**

A review of international research reveal that, although limited research has been done on this topic, teacher-on-learner violence is a worldwide phenomenon prevalent in countries such as South Africa (De Wet, 2014; Naicker et al., 2014), Zimbabwe (Nhunsu & Shumba, 2001; Shumba, 2002), Nigeria (Aluede, Ojugo & Okoza, 2012), Tanzania (Masath, Hinze, Nkuba & Hecker, 2021), Israel (Benbenishty, Zeira, Astor & Khoury-Kassabri, 2002; Benbenishty, Zeira & Astor, 2002; Geiger, 2017; Khoury-Kassabri, 2006; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007), Italy (Longobardi, Prino, Fabris & Settanni, 2019), the United States of America (USA) (Datta et al., 2017; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008), Hong Kong (Chen et al., 2022), Australia (Delfabbro, Winefield, Trainor, Dollard, Anderson, Metzger & Hammarstrom, 2006),

Norway (Monsvold et al., 2011), Taiwan (Chen & Wei, 2011), Brazil (Da Silva & Da Silva, 2018) and Turkey (Kiziltepe et al., 2020).

The following paragraphs give a peek into findings from mostly survey studies on teacher-on-learner violence in two Middle Eastern, two European and three African countries, as well as Taiwan and Australia. A comprehensive study by Israeli academics resulted in several publications on teacher-on-learner-violence since the turn of the century. A large-scale study (n = 17 465) by Khoury-Kassabri (2006, p. 691) on learner victimisation in Israel found that almost a third of the respondents were ‘emotionally maltreated’ by their teachers. Almost a quarter of the surveyed primary and junior high school learners were victims of physical teacher-on-learner abuse. Nearly 8% of secondary school learners were victims of sexual teacher-on-learner abuse (Khoury-Kassabri, 2006). A study by Benbenishty, Zeira, Astor and Khoury-Kassabri (2002) on the maltreatment of primary school learners by their teachers found that 29,1% of their respondents (n = 5 472) were emotionally maltreated by their teachers and a further 22% were insulted, mocked or humiliated by their teachers. An earlier publication by Benbenishty, Zeira and Astor (2002) shed light on physical and sexual teacher-on-learner abuse in Israel. This study found that 13% of the participants reported being physically abused by their teachers during the previous month. More than 8% of the learners indicated sexual abuse by teachers.

A study by Longobardi et al. (2019, p. 56) in Italy found that teachers often forced learners “to stay outside in the cold or heat”, stand or kneel in such a way that it hurts or have their ears twisted by their teachers as punishment. Furthermore, Longobardi et al. (2019) found that the learners who took part in their study were often verbally abused by their teachers. They also found that it was not uncommon for teachers to sexually abuse learners under their care. Teachers, for example, opened or took their own clothes off in front of learners “when they should not have done so” (Longobardi et al., 2019, p. 56). A study by Nearchou (2018, p. 96) on the emotional abuse of learners in Greece by their teachers found that 64% of the participants (n = 223) reported “at least one emotional abuse incident” by their teachers.

In a survey among teachers from seven urban elementary schools in the USA, 45% of the 116 teacher respondents admitted to having bullied a learner (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 194). In another USA study, conducted among learners who attended “alternative schools”, that is, schools with learners with behaviour problems, 86% of the 50 participants indicated that they were physically maltreated by either their teachers or other adults from their schools (Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The most common types of physical abuse were not being allowed

to go the toilet (70%) and being grabbed “very hard” (38%) or punched (32%) by an adult or teacher (Whitted & Dupper, 2008, p. 335). More than 80% of the learners who took part in Whitted and Dupper’s (2008) survey indicated that they were victims of psychological abuse by their teachers. They were often yelled at (66%), isolated from their fellow learners (64%) or ignored by their teachers (56%). Learners also experienced racism: 20% of them indicated that teachers made fun of them because of their race or the colour of their skin (Whitted & Dupper, 2008). A survey completed by 56 508 seventh- and eighth-grade learners from the State of Virginia, USA, found that 3,4% of the participants reported being bullied by a teacher or other school staff members (Datta et al., 2017).

The majority of the 293 learners (54,9%) who took part in a study on teacher-on-learner violence in Turkey indicated that they had been emotionally abused by their teachers in the month preceding the study (Kiziltepe et al., 2020). More than half of the learners (53,6%) indicated that they were subjected to emotional violence and physical teacher-on-learner violence (25,2%) (Kiziltepe et al., 2020). This study identified shaking (15%) and slapping (8,7%) as the most common types of physical teacher-on-learner violence (Kiziltepe et al., 2020).

The majority of teachers (96%) who took part in a study on teacher-on-learner violence in Tanzania acknowledged that they used violence against their learners in the preceding month, and 86,1% were in favour of “at least one form of violent discipline” (Masath et al., 2021, p. 12). This study found a direct association between teachers’ positive attitudes towards violent discipline ( $\beta = 0,41$ ), stress ( $\beta = 0,23$ ) or teachers’ own experiences of violence ( $\beta = 0,21$ ) and teachers’ use of violence (Masath et al., 2021). A retrospective case series study conducted in Zimbabwe, using 110 nonclinical case files of teacher perpetrators as data, found that 98% of the victims of teacher-on-learner sexual abuse were girls and all of the perpetrators were male teachers (Nhunsu & Shumba, 2001). Learners from Nigeria who took part in a study by Aluede et al. (2012) identified the following as the most common types of teacher-on-learner emotional abuse: discriminating against, rejecting, ignoring, demeaning, terrorising and verbally assaulting learners. A qualitative study by De Wet (2014) found that learners were physically and verbally humiliated by their teachers. She also identifies “lust for power and lack of empathy” as important features of teachers who bully (De Wet, 2014, p. 7).

A large-scale study by Chen and Wei (2011) identifies being slapped, beaten or hit as the most common forms of teacher-on-learner violence in Taiwan. Teacher-on-learner violence in Taiwan seems to be more physical than sexual or emotional. In the large-scale study on

bullying in Australia by Delfabbro et al. (2006), 5,9% of the boys and 1,4% of the girls who took part in the study indicated that they were bullied by their teachers.

### **Newspapers and school violence**

Newspapers “provide a picture of events people do not experience directly” (Bullock & Cubert, 2002, p. 475), have the power to create an awareness of societal and educational issues, such as school violence, and shape people’s interest in and attitudes towards such a problem (Hoyle, Smith, Mahoney & Kyle, 2018). Näsij, Tanskanen, Kivivuori, Haara and Reunanen (2021, p. 575) write that the “image the media paints about crime eventually becomes the perceived reality for many media consumers”. Zhu, Krever and Choi’s (2018, p. 470) view that violent crimes are “inherently newsworthy, thanks to its stark deviance from deeply engrained social norms” is supported by Jacobs (2014). In order to improve circulation figures, newspapers are eager to satisfy readers’ appetite for news on school violence (De Wet, 2013b; Näsij et al., 2021). Newspapers play an important role in breaking the code of silence that often surrounds violence in schools and can act as a trigger for education authorities to take action against perpetrators. A case in point is the indifference shown by the South African Department of Education, the school governing body and the school principal to parents’ complaints of sexual abuse and violence at Parktown Boys’ High before the parents turned to the media (Germaner, 2018a).

Several researchers have used newspaper articles as textual data to shed light on different aspects of school violence, internationally and in South Africa. The following examples of international research in the USA, Australia and Sweden will suffice: Using qualitative media analysis, Altheide (2009, p. 1355) examined news accounts on “the meaning of Columbine” after the 1999 school shootings. He found “a control narrative” in the analysed newspaper articles that incorporated the tragic happenings at Columbine into the “discourse of fear and terrorism” in the USA (Altheide, 2009: 1355). Gutsche and Salkin’s (2017, p. 994) study of newspapers’ portrayal of Roberts – who had killed five female learners during the Amish school shooting (October 2006) in the USA – found that the newspapers cast Roberts as a “monster”. Hilaire, Campbell, Kelchner, Laguardia and Howard (2022) investigated to what extent a gunperson’s race might have an influence on how school shootings are described in the United States media. Using qualitative content analysis to examine how *The New York Times* and *USA Today* report on school crime and violence, Kupchik and Bracy (2009, p. 136) have found that “news stories stoke readers’ fears by providing a heightened sense of the threat of school violence, without a broader context for understanding how rare it is”. Carden’s (2017,

pp. 592-596) article deals with discourses of blame and responsibility emerging from newspaper reports on “a crisis” in Aurukun – an isolated indigenous community in Far North Queensland, Australia. In May 2016, young people perpetrated violence against the teachers and principal of the community’s only school. Edling, Francia and Shields (2021) used interviews published in newspapers as data to gain insight into education leaders’ views on violence at a Swedish boarding school.

The following are examples of research on the portrayal of school violence in South African newspapers: Jacobs’s (2014) study on newspapers’ framing of school violence found that the manner in which readers were informed about violence in South African schools supported the view that school violence is an individual and not a societal problem. She also found that newspaper articles often gave sanction to stereotypes and assumptions. De Wet (2015) used newspaper articles from an Afrikaans newspaper, *Volksblad*, as textual data to do research on school violence in the Free State Province. She found, firstly, that *Volksblad* perceived school violence as a serious problem and, secondly, that *Volksblad*’s journalists were guilty of sensational reporting. De Wet (2013b) used a three-level exosystemic model as the point of departure to investigate the reporting on school violence in South Africa by an Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, *Rapport*. She identified eight themes, including that learners are the focal point in the newspaper articles, school violence is uncontrollable, racism is often at the core of school violence and teachers tend to neglect their duty of care towards the victims of learner-on-learner school violence.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is informed by the Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung’s typology of violence. Galtung’s (1969, p. 168) definition of violence reads as follows: “Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.” Galtung (1969) describes violence in terms of two forms, namely direct and indirect violence. Direct violence can be physical aggression or verbal abuse; indirect violence can be structural or cultural. Structural violence is violence “that is present in societies, rendering them socially unjust” (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, p. 1125). This type of violence is also referred to as “social injustice” (Galtung, 1969, p. 183) and is “built into the way things are done” (Cremin & Guilherme, 2016, p. 1127). This may include, but is not limited to, the denial of human rights, injustice and colonisation. Social structures, such as schools, are often “structurally violent as it is organized so to privilege a group [e.g. teachers] over others [e.g. learners]” (Guilherme, 2017, p. 216).

Schools have what Guilherme (2017, p. 216) calls a “strict pyramidal organizational structure”. Teachers usually have power and privilege over learners. According to Cremin and Guilherme (2016, p. 1125), cultural violence, as perceived by Galtung (1969), occurs “in support of structural violence, masking it”. Cultural violence refers to “the prevailing attitudes or beliefs used to legitimize violence of direct or structural nature” (Dutta, 2020, p. 1) and may include, among other things, the acceptance of racial or gender discrimination against specific sections of society. In my concluding remarks, I argue that the presence of any of the three dimensions of teacher-on-learner violence, namely direct, structural and cultural violence, can hinder learners from realising their full potential.

### **Research methodology**

This qualitative media study was undertaken within an interpretive research paradigm. Interpretivism draws attention to people’s “subjective experiences of the social world by sharing meanings and how they interact with or relate to each other” (Nieuwenhuis, 2015, p. 418). This paradigm supports this study, because journalists construct and give meaning to newsworthy happenings such as teacher-on-learner violence (Jacobs, 2014), and researchers “acknowledge that they ... co-construct findings that are socially situated, but may be transferred to similar contexts” (Buzzanell, 2018, p. 796).

South African English language newspaper articles were used as textual data for this study. Newspaper articles are easily accessible public records of newsworthy events (Jacobs, 2014). I used South African Media as a database for identifying newspaper articles on teacher-on-learner violence. Using “teacher violence” and “teacher abuse” as keywords, I identified 619 newspaper articles published in the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2022. I scanned through the newspaper articles and downloaded 113 articles that I perceived to be relevant to my topic. It should be noted that the majority of these 113 articles, namely 59,3%, were published in 2018 and 2019, thus before the closure of schools on 26 March 2020 due to the 2019-Covid pandemic (see Lebuso, 2022).

I used qualitative content analysis, which is “a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data” (Schreier, 2013, p. 170), to work through the downloaded newspaper articles. Qualitative content analysis is systematic and flexible, and it also helps to reduce the amount of data (Schreier, 2013). I followed the steps provided by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2011) and Schreier (2013) to guide my data analysis: I carefully read and reread the data (newspaper articles), I assigned coding labels to the data and, thereafter, I

categorised and thematically organised related codes. Guided by Galtung's (1969) typology of violence and the WHO's (2016) definition of violence, I identified the following themes: physical teacher-on-learner violence, teacher-on-learner sexual abuse, teacher-on-learner verbal abuse, racism and neglect as types of teacher violence.

Rigour or trustworthiness is important in qualitative research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007: 113). To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I kept an audit trail of the decisions that I made during my data analysis (see Beck, 2023). I furthermore provided sufficient thick descriptions to enable transferability, as suggested by Beck (2023). I chose quotations with caution, and if needed, I contextualised these quotations (see Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Moreover, I avoided the oversimplification of findings and generalities. Lastly, I placed, when possible, the findings of this study within the existing body of knowledge on the topic, as suggested by Patton (2002).

### **Findings and discussion: types of teacher-on-learner violence**

Within the theoretical framework and the WHO's conceptualisation of violence directed at children and the use of qualitative content analysis, the following themes emerged: teacher-on-learner physical abuse, the sexual abuse of learners by their teachers, verbal teacher-on-learner violence, teacher-on-learner racism and the malicious neglect of children by their teachers. The findings will, when possible, be placed within the existing body of knowledge on teacher-on-learner violence.

#### ***Teacher-on-learner physical abuse***

Even though corporal punishment was banned under Section 10(1) of the *South African Schools Act* of 1996 (see Maphosa & Shumba, 2010), this study finds it to be a common disciplinary strategy in some schools in South Africa. According to a member of the Congress of South African Students (as cited in Kubheka, 2018, p. 1), "at least 90% of teachers at [a specific] school administer corporal punishment". An analysis of the data reveals that corporal punishment, under the pretext of addressing learner misbehaviour, is callous physical abuse. The following are a few examples: Teachers hit learners with pipes (Kubheka, 2018; Venter 2022) and chalkboard dusters (Nkosi, 2021). Learners were hit on their hands, the back of their heads (Venter 2022) and over their heads and cheeks (Germaner, 2018b; Venter 2022). Teachers were also guilty of punching learners (Masuku, 2018), shoving them against doors or walls (Germaner, 2018c; Masuku, 2018) or pushing them to the floor (Masuku, 2018). The teachers' actions were often excessive, as illustrated by the following cases: An Eastern Cape

teacher was found guilty of breaking a learner's hand by hitting it 58 times (Linden, 2019). A parent told Tshikalange (2018, p. 1) that a teacher had slapped his seven-year-old daughter so hard ("massive slap") that her left eardrum had been damaged. Another teacher was found guilty of slapping a learner with an open hand across the face; the learner's glasses fell from her face and broke (Nkosi, 2021). A school principal was found guilty of putting a young boy into a pit latrine toilet (Phandle, 2021). The pitiless nature of physical teacher-on-learner violence moves beyond the formal 12 years of schooling, as seen in the case where a two-year-old boy's nose was damaged and he was admitted to hospital after being assaulted by his teacher at a crèche in Phoenix (Phungula, 2021).

Physical abuse, under the pretext that teachers were disciplining deviant learners, is rationalised by a teacher who was caught on video manhandling a learner who refused to take off his cap when he entered the teacher's classroom. The teacher told the school's safety committee that "the learner became violent, screaming that the cap was not his ... I eventually overpowered the learner" (Govender, 2021a, p. 15). The teacher apologised for the incident and said, "I got carried away ... I totally apologise. I don't hate him. The boy is smart, but was won over by elderly boys. He must change over to be a better person" (Govender, 2021a, p. 15). The teacher thus implied that the psychological force he had used would change the boy into becoming "a better person".

Journalists (e.g. Botha, 2018; Hughes, 2021) not only report on teachers' excessive use of physical force under the guise of disciplining learners but also bemoan the continued use and normalisation of corporal punishment in schools. Botha (2018, p. 21) writes,

... by normalising what is essentially abnormal, we run the risk of replication of criminals such as ... the former Parktown Boys' High School assistant water polo coach. ... [The assistant water polo coach] said the abuse [administering corporal punishment] he put his victims through was a culture at the school, and that he saw nothing wrong because he and many others went through the same things.

A finding of this study, namely that physical teacher-on-learner violence is an accepted, normal, seemingly effective disciplinary strategy in South African schools that stood the test of time among its supporters, resonates well with research on corporal punishment. In a research article published nearly 30 years ago (Fraser, Meier, Potter, Sekgobela & Poore, 1996, p. 261), it is stated that corporal punishment was used in South African schools "to curb the

escalation of minor offences, angry, chaos and violence ... [and] as a ‘pedagogical punitive measure’ to ‘remedy’ violent student behaviour”. Despite the ban of corporal punishment and findings from numerous researchers (e.g. Fraser et al., 1996; Masath et al., 2021; Mayeza & Bhana, 2017) on the unsuitability of corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy, the aforementioned researchers have found that corporal punishment still seems to be the preferred method for instilling discipline in some schools in South Africa. Mayeza and Bhana (2017, p. 420) provide the following reasons for the continued use of corporal punishment in South African schools: the lack of alternative methods that work, the legacy of ‘authoritarian education practices’ and the notion that corporal punishment is essential for successful teaching and learning to take place. Similarly, Chen and Wei (2011) found that parents, teachers and even learners in Taiwan were of the opinion that physical or psychological pain could increase academic performance and learner behaviour. A study by Masath et al. (2021) on corporal punishment in schools in Tanzania found that prevailing laws were insufficient in reducing the use of violent disciplinary strategies. They, therefore, suggest non-violent intervention approaches that challenge teachers’ positive demeanour towards corporal punishment. Ngidi and Kaye’s (2022) finding that teachers often see corporal punishment as an easy answer to learner misbehaviour is supported by Quali and Ward’s (2022) argument that the perseverance of corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy can be attributed to a lack of knowledge of positive disciplinary strategies. However, Quali and Ward’s (2022, p. 634) systematic overview of 223 primary sources on positive discipline found that “a wide range of well-tested, evidence-supported interventions [to curb learner misbehavior] exists and are effective even with severely challenging behavior”. It is, therefore, time for teachers to widen their horizons regarding disciplinary strategies.

### ***The sexual abuse of learners by their teachers***

#### *The nature and magnitude of teacher-on-learner sexual abuse*

Reports on sexual violence, which can be defined as “sexual conduct which involves the unlawful and intentional use of threatened or actual physical force and results in a violation of the bodily and/or sexual integrity of another person” (De Wet, 2013a, p. 24), often appear on the pages of South African newspapers. From an analysis of the data, it seems as if teacher-on-learner sexual abuse is out of control in some South African schools. A mother from Centurion, Pretoria, told Sobuwa (2019) that it had come to light that a 55-year-old teacher from a primary school had sexually assaulted 23 girls between the ages of 10 and 12. Mention is made in newspaper reports about the sexual assault of young girls by their school principals (Masiko,

2018; Sgqolana, 2018; Zwani, 2022) or teachers (Beangstrom, 2018; Masiko, 2018; Pillay, 2022; Sadike, 2021a). The following are a few examples of teachers' sexual abuse of learners: learners were improperly touched by their teachers (Tlou, 2020), male teachers sent inappropriate messages, videos and photographs (often of themselves) to learners (Beangstrom, 2018; *Daily Dispatch*, 2019) or made comments on the length of female learners' gymslips and their weight (Phandle, 2020). At the South African Human Rights Commission's hearing in Limpopo, a girl said that teachers used the chalkboard to sexually abuse them. When asked for an explanation, she said, "because we cannot reach the chalkboard the teachers lift us up to be able to write on the chalkboard, but in the process put their fingers in our panties" (Sadike, 2021b, p. 1). A mother told Phandle (2020, p. 1) that a teacher had told her daughter that "he would bring Aids prevention tablets to that meeting". Reports have also been made of teachers abusing the uneven power relations that exist between them and learners to gratify their own sexual urges by trading "sex for good marks" (Phandle, 2020, p. 1) or the promise to be promoted to the next grade (Masiko, 2018).

The previous paragraph emphasises the aggressiveness, crudeness and abusive nature of teacher-on-learner sexual abuse. I, however, identify data that suggest that teacher-on-learner sexual relationships can be consensual and often enjoy the support of the learner's parents (Manda, 2018; Phandle, 2021). Manda (2018), for example, mentions a 15-year-old Grade 10 learner who has been involved with her teacher from the time she was 12.

Not all the perpetrators of teacher-on-learner sexual abuse are male teachers abusing female learners. A female history teacher, who was also the water polo coach at a school in Cape Town, had sexual relations with at least seven boys between the ages of 17 and 18 (Behr, 2019). It is alleged that this teacher sent 'selfies' of herself wearing provocative underwear to the boys (Behr, 2019, p. 5). A male secondary school principal was accused of sexually abusing three male learners (Nyaka, 2018). A police investigation discovered that more than 30 boys from Parktown Boys' High School had been sexually groomed and abused by their water polo coach (Germaner, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e).

In some cases, learners not only were sexually abused by their teachers, but their sexual orientation was ridiculed by teachers as well. A group of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer [or questioning]) learners told Mvana (2021, p. 1) that they were "subjected to homophobic discrimination by ... staff at the school".

#### *Reasons for teacher-on-learner sexual abuse*

This study identified the abuse of power, powerlessness, wantonness, poverty and the normalisation and acceptance of relationships between teachers and learners as reasons for teacher-on-learner violence in some South African schools.

The wantonness and arrogance of a teacher who had sexual relations with four underage girls are highlighted in an article by Govender (2021b). According to the victims, the perpetrator gave the following reasons for having sexual relations with them: the perpetrator's "ancestors wanted to connect" with one of the girls, which "could only happen if she had a relationship with him" (Govender, 2021b, p. 18); the perpetrator told another learner about his break-up with his wife and that "he was good in bed" (Govender, 2021b, p. 18); and the perpetrator told this learner and another girl that he wished "he could put them in a bottle and take them very far away from this corrupt world to marry them" (Govender, 2021b, p. 18).

A report commissioned by Parktown Boys' High School after rumours came to light of a teacher sexually abusing members of the water polo team, lists the following as reasons for teacher-on-learner abuse at this school: "the absence or indifference of house masters and teachers, homophobia and toxic masculinity" and the presence of a code of silence prevailing in the school ("what happens at Parktown stays at Parktown") (Germaner, 2018d, p. 8). According to Germane (2018d, p. 8), the report "paints a picture of suspected ongoing abuse that remains an 'open secret' at the school". Parents of learners at Parktown Boys' High similarly told Gous (2018, p. 12) that "every single bit of this evidence [sexual abuse of their children] was presented to the headmaster, to the SGB [school governing body] and it was too much for them and they tried to squash the information". Furthermore, it seems as if parents turned a blind eye to what was happening, because they wanted their children to get a 'privileged education': during a meeting of the parents of Parktown Boys' High School, one of the parents had the following to say: "I blame myself. I thought because I wanted privileged education, I had to let go of certain things, like my basic humanity ... I am to blame for anything that has happened because I chose to be silent" (Germaner, 2018e, p. 5).

The helplessness of foreigners who wish to study in South Africa, poverty and the wish to rise above one's circumstances seem to make learners easy targets for immoral, often powerful, male teachers. Reference is made to, for example, "a toxic power dynamic" in schools (Phandle, 2021, p. 6) and "screwed power relations" (Ramulifho, 2018, p. 1). These 'screwed power relations' often result in unprotected sex and the impregnation of learners by their teachers or principals (Beangstrom, 2018; Masiko, 2018; Phandle, 2021; Ramulifho, 2018). Ginindza (2019, p. 11) writes that a Mpumalanga school principal who had impregnated

two teenage learners, thought himself to be “untouchable”. He targeted the vulnerable, namely “girls from Eswatini and other neighboring countries who did not have permits to study in South Africa” (Ginindza, 2019, p. 11). Beangstrom (2018) reports that between 16 and 30 girls from a school near Kuruman were impregnated by three of their teachers. According to Beangstrom (2018, p. 4), allegations are being made that the teachers paid the girls to have “unprotected sexual relations” with their teachers. It has also come to light that parents sometimes approve of these relations, because the perpetrators give money to the impoverished parents (Phandle, 2021). Hence, there seems to be an acceptance and normalisation of teacher-on-learner sexual abuse.

Despite the awareness raised by researchers such as Shumba (2004), Benbenishty, Zeira and Astor (2002: 764) and Altinyelken and Le Mat (2017), as well as evidence published in the United Nations World Report on Violence against Children in 2005, on the occurrence of teacher-on-learner sexual violence, Parkes, Bhatia, Datzberger, Nagawa, Naker and Devries (2022) found a scarcity of research-based evidence on this topic (ample literature is available on physical abuse, especially corporal punishment, and verbal or emotional teacher-on-learner abuse). According to Parkes et al. (2022, p. 2), “there are significant ethical, normative and methodological barriers hindering research on teacher sexual violence”.

The scourge of teachers who sexually abuse their learners, as highlighted in the current study, is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. Shumba (2004, p. 147) found that learners believed that teachers abused them emotionally “for refusing to have sex with them”. In an Israeli study, Benbenishty, Zeira and Astor (2002) found that sexual harassment of learners by their teachers could take various forms, such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate comments and sexual advances.

The reasons for teacher-on-learner sexual abuse identified in this study are in line with those of two other studies on the African continent. Shumba (2009, p. 21) identified four reasons for teacher-on-learner sexual abuse in Zimbabwe, namely the possibility of marriage, poverty (poverty-stricken learners [and their parents] often see a relationship between a school girl and her teacher as ‘a security measure’), the belief that school girls are AIDS-free and morally decadent teachers. Furthermore, Altinyelken and Le Mat (2017) identified the following risk factors for sexual violence in Nigeria: economic decline, poverty, social change and the government’s failure to observe human rights treaties and agreements.

### **Verbal teacher-on-learner violence**

Whereas I identified an abundance of information on teacher-on-learner physical and sexual abuse, only a few examples of verbal teacher-on-learner violence were identified during my analysis of the relevant newspaper clippings. Mention is made of an 18-year-old learner who has been “subjected to vulgar and abusive language” by one of his teachers (Mvana, 2021, p. 1) and a teacher who “has been intimidating, threatening and swearing” (Zwani, 2021, p. 4). This teacher is also, according to Zwani (2021, p. 4), known for making remarks about learners’ “poor backgrounds”. Germaner (2018b, p. 4) reports on an art teacher of an elite school who is known for making “racist, derogatory, abusive and violence-inciting comments” during his lessons.

The scarcity of newspaper articles on teacher-on-learner verbal abuse may be attributed to the fact that verbal abuse is often perceived as not newsworthy or of a serious, life-threatening nature (Harcup & O’Neill, 2017). Shumba (2002) found, for example, that the teachers who took part in his study were ignorant of the fact that the scolding of learners is a form of child abuse. Geiger (2017) established that, despite limited interest among researchers on teacher-on-learner verbal abuse, it is a fairly common phenomenon in Israeli schools. Three quarters of the 200 teachers who took part in Shumba’s (2004) study indicated that shouting at learners was a way to discipline them. A study on teacher-on-learner abuse in Turkey identified screaming, yelling or shouting as the most common types of verbal abuse (Kiziltepe et al., 2020). In Geiger’s (2017, p. 97) study, verbal abuse encompassed “putdowns, name-calling, yelling and scapegoating ... by teachers when attacking students for their deficient scholastic abilities, work habits and achievements”. Da Silva and Da Silva’s (2018, p. 480) bibliographic study on teacher-on-learner school violence identified 18 different acts of verbal abuse perpetrated by teachers against learners in Brazil, including threats, insults, cursing, prejudice, discrimination and coldness. Verbal teacher-on-learner violence and racism go hand in hand, as will become apparent in the next theme.

### **Teacher-on-learner racism**

The *APA Dictionary of Psychology* (2023) defines racism as

a form of prejudice that assumes that the members of racial categories have distinctive characteristics and that these differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others. Racism generally includes negative emotional reactions to members of the group, acceptance of negative stereotypes, and racial discrimination against individuals; in some cases it leads to violence.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996) informed the promulgation of the *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act* (4 of 2000) that protects people who live and work in South Africa against racial slurs and hate speech. Notwithstanding this protective legislation, an analysis of the data showed that teachers were guilty of derogatory, racist name-calling and hate speech. Children were being called “blackie” because of their dark skin (Sadike, 2021b, p. 1). A teacher told a seven-year-old girl, “shut-up you idiot, stupid ‘k\*\*\*r” (Tshikalange, 2018, p. 1). A Parktown Boys’ High teacher called Indian pupils “c\*\*lies” and said that black learners were lazy (“black people always expect free things and they don’t want to work hard”) (Germaner, 2018c, p. 4). Learners told Tlou (2020, p. 2) that an Indian teacher “labels our kids as blacks and whores”. An Eastern Cape learner was accused of practising witchcraft; the teacher told the learner “not to look at her and [the teacher] said that the child’s headscarf stank” (Zuzile, 2019, p. 6). A learner informed a journalist from *Saturday Argus* (2020, p. 2) that a white male teacher told his class that “the reason people weren’t allowed to bring knives to school was because of coloured pupils, and that they couldn’t be trusted not to start a fight”.

Four newspaper articles on racism at a private school in Centurion have an abundance of examples of racism: Teachers compared black learners’ hair to steel wool (Kgosana, 2021) and beehives (*Saturday Argus*, 2020). A learner informed a *Saturday Argus* (2020, p. 2) journalist that her grade teacher had told her that her “hair was un-neat and unprofessional”. The teacher gave the learner the choice “to either straighten or relax my hair or else I wouldn’t be allowed to perform in the revue/concert”. A learner, Babalo Ngoma, told a journalist from *The Citizen* (2021, p. 12) that one of her teachers said “she was too smart for a black person”. According to Ngoma, this boils down to the “association that black equals stupidity” (*The Citizen*, 2021, p. 12). Learners told Kgosana (2021, p. 6) that they experienced “a lot of micro-aggressive racism and racist comments ... teachers say things like ‘you people’ or ‘you guys are so loud – this is not a shebeen. We are not in the ghettos’”. How ingrained racism is at this school can be deducted from the fact that a white history teacher told his Grade 9 class that “apartheid is just a conspiracy and ... never happened” (*Saturday Argus*, 2020, p. 2).

Mkhize (2020, p. 9) is of the opinion that racism thrives in elite schools. He argues that white teachers in elite schools “secretly harbor ... internalized racism and post-apartheid resentment ... which they take out on the black children they teach”. According to Mkhize (2020, p. 9), these schools spread “the idea that there is nothing of value within African history, tradition and culture [and] ... there is little value to be gained from Africa”. Consequently, they

“go about punishing black children from wanting to speak their languages at school, or having normal African hair” (Mkhize, 2020, p. 9).

Nearly 30 years after the adoption of the 1996 South African Constitution, some teachers are still guilty of racism. They ridicule and humiliate, among other things, the language, cultural heritage, work ethics, morality, appearance and intellect of learners belonging to a different race than them. Some teachers even deny the apartheid history of South Africa, thereby denying people of colour their suffering and humiliation. These findings resonate with findings by Lebeloane and Machaisa (2017) on the persistence of racial challenges in South African schools. They found, for example, that white teachers frequently mixed up black learners’ names, lacked interest in pronouncing black learners’ names correctly and failed to challenge them intellectually. Marais (2010, p. 69) also found that teachers set intellectually more challenging tasks for white learners than black learners and that teachers were “quicker and less irritable when white learners wanted to ask questions compared to when black learners wanted to ask questions”. Likewise, a USA study (Joseph, Viesca & Bianco, 2016, p. 18) found that black learners thought that teachers disrespected them and believed that they “would [not] be able to succeed” and were dishonest (a teacher told a learner, “all minority students are nothing but good for being in jail and stealing”).

### **The malicious neglect of children by their teachers**

Teacher-on-learner violence not always needs to be attributed to an action but can be the result of a lack of care or action on the part of teachers. The following four examples identified in the newspaper articles will suffice: Booysen (2021) reports on a court case in which the Western Cape Department of Education was found liable for costs after a seven-year-old boy lost his eye after being punched by a fellow learner during a tag rugby match before school started one morning. According to the presiding judge, the teachers at the school were negligent and did not “take reasonable steps to prevent the incident from happening” (Booyesen, 2021, p. 1). The teachers failed to act *in loco parentis*. Mvana (2021, p. 1) reports on an incident where children who were celebrating Pride Month were “surrounded, threatened and intimidated” by fellow learners. The learners received no support from the school’s teachers. Instead of breaking up a fight between two learners, a teacher told an LGBTQ learner, “I will hit you so hard until you bring your mother, you moffie.” Black parents whose children were involved in a racial attack at a Witbank school told Marupeng (2021, p. 2) that the principal “did not even bother calling them as parents after the incident happened”. The parents of primary school learners were furious and rushed to the school when they heard on social media about a teacher who had

sexually assaulted 23 learners in Grades 5, 6 and 7 (Mahlokwane & Moyo, 2019). The parents perceived the inaction of the school governing body and principal as disregard of their right to know what is happening with their children.

### **Conclusion**

This small-scale qualitative study of newspapers' portrayal of teacher-on-learner violence is informed, firstly, by the WHO's definition of violence and four of its six main types of violence involving children and, secondly, by Galtung's theory of violence. By using qualitative content analysis and newspaper articles as textual data, five types of teacher-on-learner violence in South African schools were identified. (1) Teachers mercilessly physically abuse learners under their care under the pretext of disciplining misbehaving learners. (2) The sexual abuse of learners by their teachers is normalised and accepted in schools situated in both affluent and poverty-stricken communities. (3) Teachers use words to systematically humiliate and tear down learners. (4) Notwithstanding legislation protecting South Africans against racism, learners are subjected to derogatory name-calling and remarks by their teachers. Teachers negatively stereotype and discriminate against learners belonging to a different race. (5) Teachers maliciously neglect their *in loco parentis* responsibilities.

Looking at teacher-on-learner violence through the lens of Galtung's theory of violence, this study facilitates an understanding of the multi-layered and complex nature of teacher-on-learner violence and contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the topic. Direct violence, one of the three pillars of Galtung's conflict triangle, is usually easily recognised and has clearly identifiable victims (in this case, learners) and perpetrators (in this case, teachers). This study identified physical, verbal and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, as forms of direct teacher-on-learner violence. Structural violence, the second pillar of Galtung's triangle, is violence "without a subject" (Confortini, 2006, p. 336). In structural violence, "violence is built into the structure, and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances" (Confortini, 2006, p. 336). This study found that racial and gender inequalities and the unequal distribution of wealth prevent learners from reaching their potential. The third pillar of Galtung's triangle, cultural violence, denotes fundamental beliefs or attitudes that are used to establish structural or direct violence (Dutta, 2020). This study found that abusive teachers use existing cultural beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices to justify their abusive behaviour. The following are a few examples of cultural violence identified in this study: teachers' negative attitudes towards and disrespect for learners' language, conduct, individual style (hair) and indigenous African knowledge. This study suggests that teachers'

bias may result in lower academic expectations for black learners and stereotyping some learners as dishonest, loud and crude. The patriarchal attitude of male teachers was evident in the findings regarding teacher-on-learner sexual violence. For Galtung (1969), who is seen as the father of peace education, peace is more than the absence of personal and direct violence; it is also the absence of structural violence. This implies that the social injustice and inequalities embedded in the South African education system should be addressed. Only then will all learners be able to reach their full potential.

## References

- Altheide, D.L. (2009). The Columbine shootings and the discourse of fear. *American Behavior Scientist*, 52(10), 1354-1370.
- Altinyelken, H.K. & Le Mat, M. (2017). Sexual violence, schooling and silence: Teacher narratives from a secondary school in Ethiopia. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(4), 648-664.
- Aluede, O., Ojugo, A.I. & Okoza, J. (2012). Emotional abuse of secondary school students by teachers in Edo State, Nigeria. *Research in Education*, 88, 29-39.
- APA Dictionary of Psychology. (2023). *Racism*. American Psychological Association. Available at: [https://dictionary.apa.org/racism?\\_ga=2.17718586.2018077271.1679320409-1580653436.1644848449](https://dictionary.apa.org/racism?_ga=2.17718586.2018077271.1679320409-1580653436.1644848449) [accessed 20 March 2023].
- Beangstrom, P. (2018, April 9). NC dept probed 21 cases of pupil abuse. *Diamond Field Advertiser*, 4.
- Beck, C.T. (2023). *Introduction to phenomenology: Focus on methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Behr, M. (2019, November 30). Teacher abuse probe complete. *Saturday Star*, 5.
- Benbenishty, R., Zeira, A. & Astor, R.A. (2002). Children's reports of emotional, physical and sexual maltreatment by educational staff in Israel. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 763-782.
- Benbenishty, R., Zeira, A., Astor, R.A. & Khoury-Kassabri, M. (2002). Maltreatment of primary school students by educational staff in Israel. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 1291-1309.
- Booyesen, C. (2021, May 24). Judge slates negligent Bredasdorp teachers. *Cape Times*, 1.

- Botha, M. (2018, December 5). Corporal punishment plants first seed of violence in children. *Sowetan*, 21.
- Bullock, C. & Cubert, J. (2002). Coverage of domestic violence fatalities by newspapers in Washington State. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17(5), 475-499.
- Buzzanell, P.M. (2018). Interpretive research. In M. Allen. (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Communication Research* (pp. 795-797). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Carden, C. (2017). “As parents congregated at parties”: Responsibility and blame in media representations of violence and school closure in an indigenous community. *Journal of Sociology*, 53(3), 592-606.
- Chen, J. & Wei, H. (2011). Student victimization by teachers in Taiwan: Prevalence and associations. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 35, 382-390.
- Chen, J., Chang, C., Lin, C. & Wang, L. (2022). An investigation of longitudinal associations between psychological distress and student victimization by teachers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(3-4), 3297-3297.
- Confortini, C.C. (2006). Galtung, violence, and gender: The case for a peace studies/feminism alliance. *Peace & Change*, 31(3), 333-367.
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Republic of South Africa. Available at <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/constitution/saconstitution-web-eng.pdf> [accessed on: 21 March 2023].
- Cowen, S. (2020). *Brutal school ties: The Parktown Boys’ tragedy*. Cape Town: CTP Printers.
- Cremin, H. & Guilherme, A. (2016). Violence in schools: Perspectives (and hope) from Galtung and Buber. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 48(11), 1123-1137.
- Da Silva, M. & Da Silva, M.C. (2018). Teachers and students. *Educação & Realidade*, 43(2), 471-493.
- Daily Dispatch*. (2019, February 1). Abusive teachers should be kicked out of profession, 9.
- Datta, P., Cornell, D. & Huang, F. (2017). The toxicity of bullying by teachers and other school staff. *School Psychology Review*, 46(4), 335-348.
- De Wet, A. (2013a). “Father to sue education department over rape”: Civil remedies for sexual violence and harassment in public schools. *Child Abuse Research: A South African Journal*, 14(1), 22-35.

- De Wet, C. (2013b). *Rapport se beriggewing oor skoolgeweld, 1994-2011: 'n Multidimensionele sosiale probleem [Rapport's reporting on school violence 1994-2011: A multidimensional social problem]*. *LitNet Akademies*, 10(1), 341-379.
- De Wet, C. (2014). Educators as bullies. *Child Abuse Research: A South African Journal*, 15(2), 1-12.
- De Wet, C. (2015). *Volksblad se uitbeelding van skoolgeweld in die Vrystaat [Volksblad's portrayal of school violence in the Free State]*. *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 55(3), 452-468.
- Delfabbro, P., Winefield, T., Trainor, S., Dollard, M., Anderson, A., Metzger, J. & Hammarstrom, A. (2006). Peer and teacher bullying/victimization of South Australian secondary school students: prevalence and psychosocial profiles. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 71-90.
- Dutta, K. (2020). *Violence triangle of Johan Galtung in context of conflict theory*. Available at <https://www.aihrhre.org/understanding-violence-triangle-johan-galtung-conflict-theory/> [assessed 28 January 2023].
- Edling, S., Francia, G. & Shields, C.M. (2021). Naming/Framing educational leadership perceptions in relation to child violence at a Swedish boarding school. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 49(2), 120-145.
- Fraser, W.J., Meier, C., Potter, C.S., Sekgobela, E. & Poore, A. (1996). Reflections on the causes and manifestations of violence in South African schools. *Prospectus*, 26(2), 249-278.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Geiger, B. (2017). Sixth graders in Israel recount their experience of verbal abuse by teachers in the classroom. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 63, 95-105.
- Germaner, S. (2018a, February 3). Parktown High abuse: Parents hit back. *Saturday Star*, 1.
- Germaner, S. (2018b, April 7). Racist, violent Parktown teachers censured. *Star*, 4.
- Germaner, S. (2018c, November 3). Parents slam inaction on abuse. *Saturday Star*, 4.
- Germaner, S. (2018d, June 16). Abuse at school is laid bare. *Saturday Star*, 8.

- Germaner, S. (2018e, April 17). Report on sexual abuse gets school body riled. *Saturday Star*, 5.
- Ginindza, B. (2019, July 19). Principal faces sexual abuse rap. *Daily Sun*, 11.
- Gous, N. (2018, April 14). Parents tell of pupils' trauma over sex abuse. *Saturday Dispatch*, 12.
- Govender, P. (2021a, May 5). Teacher in trouble over manhandling. *Sowetan*, 15.
- Govender, P. (2021b, February 5). Teacher sacked for sexual abuse of primary schoolgirls. *Sowetan*, 8.
- Guilherme, A. (2017). Understanding conflict resolution philosophically in school settings: Three different kinds of violence and dialogue. *Journal of Peace Education*, 14(2), 215-234.
- Gutsche, R.E. & Salkin, E. (2017). Behold the monster: Mythical explanations of deviance and evil in news of the Amish school shooting. *Journalism*, 18(8), 994-1010.
- Harcup, T. & O'Neill, D. (2017). What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies*, 18(12), 1470-1488.
- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. (2011). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Hilaire, B., Campbell, L.O., Kelchner, V.P., Laguardia, E.D. & Howard, C. (2022, May 5). Not another school shooting: Media, race, and gun violence in K-12 schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 1-16.
- Hoyle, L.P., Smith, E., Mahoney, C. & Kyle, R.G. (2018). Media depictions of "inacceptable" workplace violence towards nurses. *Policy, Politics & Nursing Practice*, 19(3-4), 57-71.
- Hughes, C. (2021, November 30). Four reasons why physically punishing schoolchildren doesn't work. *The Herald*, 11.
- Idang, G.E. (2015). African culture and values. *Phronimon*, 16(2), 97-111.
- Jacobs, L. (2014). Framing of school violence in the South African printed media: (Mis)information to the public. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(1), 1-16.

- Joseph, N.M., Viesca, K.M. & Bianco, M. (2016, Fall). Black female adolescents and racism in schools: Experiences in a colorblind society. *The High School Journal*, 4-25.
- Kgosana, R. (2021, June 1). Pupils expose “racist abuse”. *The Citizen*, 6.
- Khoury-Kassabri, M. (2006). Student victimization by educational staff in Israel. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 691-707.
- Khoury-Kassabri, M., Astor, R.A. & Benbenishty, R. (2007). Student victimization by school staff in the context of an Israeli National School Safety Campaign. *Aggressive Behavior*, 34, 1-8.
- Kiziltepe, R., Irmak, T.Y., Eslek, D. & Hecker, T. (2020). Prevalence of violence by teachers and its association to students’ emotional and behavioral problems and school performance: Findings from secondary school students and teachers in Turkey. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 107, 1-12.
- Kubheka, A. (2018, October 5). Viral caning video shocks experts. *Daily News*, 1.
- Kupchik, A. & Bracy, N.L. (2009). The news media on school crime and violence. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 7(2), 136-155.
- Lebeloane, L.D.M. & Machaisa, P.R. (2017). Persistent racial challenges: A case study of South African public schools. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 16(2), 20-32.
- Lebuso, S. (2022, March 27). A look back at the past two years of lockdown. *City Press*, 1.
- Linden, A. (2019, February 7). State to fine abusive teachers. *Daily Dispatch*, 1.
- Longobardi, C., Prino, L.E., Fabris, M.A. & Settanni, M. (2019). Violence in school: An investigation of physical, psychological, and sexual victimization reported by Italian adolescents. *Journal of School Violence*, 18(1), 49-61.
- Magolego, S. (2003). The legal obligations of teachers and education authorities’ duty *in loco parentis*: Safety of children at school. *Codicillus*, 44(1), 64-68.
- Mahlokwane, J. & Moyo, A. (2019, February 7). Teacher suspended after claims of sexual abuse. *The Star*, 3.
- Mampane, S.T. (2018). Exploring the practice of *in loco parentis* in public schools. In N. Popov, C. Wolhuter, L. de Beer, G. Hilton, J. Ogunleye, E. Achienewhu-Nworgu & E. Niemczyk. (Eds.), *Education in modern society*. BCES Conference Books, 16 (pp. 183-188). Sofia: Bulgarian Comparative Education Society.

- Manda, S. (2018, June 20). Lax laws play a part in school sex abuse. *The Star*, 5.
- Maphosa, C. & Shumba, A. (2010). Educators' disciplinary capabilities after the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(3), 387-399.
- Marais, I.E. (2010). Individual versus structurally racist schools: Ethnographic findings at two previously Afrikaans primary schools in Johannesburg. *Africanus*, 40(2), 64-74.
- Marupeng, P. (2021, June 15). Racial tension high as parents clash at school. *Sowetan*, 2.
- Masath, F.B., Hinze, L., Nkuba, M. & Hecker, T. (2021). Factors contributing to violent discipline in the classroom: Findings from a representative sample of primary school teachers in Tanzania. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37, 1-24.
- Masiko, N. (2018, March 13). It seems like South African politics is just a boys' club. *The New Age*, 17.
- Masuku, S. (2018, November 19). Teachers accused of assault. *Daily News*, 3.
- Mayeza, E. & Bhana, D. (2017). Addressing gender violence among children in the early years of schooling: Insights from teachers in a South African primary school. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 26(4), 408-425.
- Mkhize, N. (2020, June 23). Racism in elite schools is doing deep damage. *Daily Dispatch*, 9.
- Monsvold, T., Bendixen, M., Hagen, R. & Helvik, A. (2011). Exposure to teacher bullying in schools: A study of patients with personality disorders. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 65, 323-329.
- Mvana, Z. (2021, June 11). Rhodes High learner claims teacher insulted his sexuality. *Cape Times*, 1.
- Naicker, A., Myburgh, C. & Poggenpoel, M. (2014). Learners' experiences of teachers' aggression in a secondary school in Gauteng, South Africa. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 19(1), 1-7.
- Näsä, M., Tanskanen, M., Kivivuori, J., Haara, P. & Reunanen, E. (2021). Crime news consumption and fear of violence: The role of traditional media, social media, and alternative information sources. *Crime & Delinquency*, 67(4), 574-600.
- Nearchou, F. (2018). Resilience following emotional abuse by teachers: Insights from a cross-sectional study with Greek students. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 78, 96-106.

- Ngidi, L.Z. & Kaye, S.B. (2022). Reducing school violence: A peace education project in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 42(2), 1-14.
- Nhunsu, T.J. & Shumba, A. (2001). The nature and frequency of reported cases of teacher perpetrated child sexual abuse in rural primary schools in Zimbabwe. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25(1), 1517-1534.
- Nieuwenhuis, F.J. (2015, 10-13 June). Martini qualitative research: Shaken not stirred. Paper presented at the 13th Annual International Conference of the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, Sofia, Bulgaria.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2007. Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree. (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 99-122). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Nkosi, B. (2021, May 19). Sex pest teacher's dismissal upheld. *Pretoria News*, 3.
- Nyaka, F. (2018, March 19). Principal in court for suspected sexual abuse of boys. *The New Age*, 16.
- Parkes, J., Bhatia, A., Datzberger, S., Nagawa, R., Naker, D. & Devries, K. (2022). Addressing silence in research on girls' experiences of teacher sexual violence: Insights from Uganda. *Comparative Education*, 1-21.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Phandle, G. (2020, December 7). Sexual abuse rife in school. *Daily Dispatch*, 1.
- Phandle, G. (2021, June 23). Abuse of pupils rising in Eastern Cape schools. *Daily Dispatch*, 6.
- Phungula, W. (2021, September 28). MEC calls for "abusive" crèche teacher's arrest. *Daily News*, 3.
- Pillay, T. (2022, February, 27). Mom slams school over "rape". *Sunday Tribune*, 11.
- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000. Republic of South Africa. (2000). Available at <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2000-004.pdf> [accessed 21 March 2023].
- Quali, K.R. & Ward, C.L. (2022). Nonviolent discipline options for caregivers and teachers: A systematic overview of the evidence. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 23(2), 620-638.

- Ramulifho, K. (2018, February 26). We must pay attention to scourge of sexual abuse of schoolchildren. *The Star*, 1.
- Sadike, M. (2021a, May 24). SAHRC vowed to deal with Limpopo school abuse. *The Star*, 2.
- Sadike, M. (2021b, May 21). Bullying, sexual abuse rife in Limpopo schools, *The Star*, 1.
- Saturday Argus*. (2020, June 13). Cape pupils share pain of racial abuse, 2.
- Schreier, S. (2013). *Qualitative content analysis*. In U. Flick. (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 170-183) London: Sage.
- Sgqolana, T. (2018, September 10). DA protests over principal in abuse case. *Daily Dispatch*, 4.
- Shumba, A. (2002). The nature, extent and effects of emotional abuse on primary school pupils by teachers in Zimbabwe. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 783-791.
- Shumba, A. (2004). Emotional abuse in the classroom: A cultural dilemma? *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 4(3/4), 139-149.
- Shumba, A. (2009). Reasons and justifications used by child abuse perpetrators in Zimbabwean schools. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 19(1), 19-24.
- Sobuwa, Y. (2019, February 7). Teacher moved to district over sex abuse allegations. *Sowetan*, 5.
- The Citizen*. (2021, June 1). No excuse for racist abuse of pupils, 12.
- Tlou, G. (2020, September 10). School caught in abuse storm. *Pretoria News*, 2.
- Tshikalange, S. (2018, May 24). Parents allege pupil's eardrum damaged by teacher's abuse. *Afro Voice*, 1.
- Twemlow, S.W. & Fonagy, P. (2005). The prevalence of teachers who bully students in schools with differing levels of behavioral problems. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 162, 2387-2389.
- Twemlow, S.W., Fonagy, P., Sacco, F.S. & Brethour, J.R. (2006). Teachers who bully students: A hidden trauma. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52(3), 187-198.
- Venter, Z. (2022, March 18). Call for harsher sentences for teachers. *Pretoria News*, 2.

- Whitted, K.S. & Dupper, D.R. (2008). Do teachers bully students? Findings from a survey of students in an alternative education setting. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(3), 329-341.
- WHO. (2016). *Inspire: Seven strategies for ending violence against children*. Geneva: WHO Press. Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565356> [accessed 10 March 2023].
- Zhu, R., Krever, R. & Choi, A.S.K. (2018). The impact of newspaper reports on fear of violent crime in Hong Kong. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 39(4), 470-480.
- Zuzile, M. (2019, March 17). "School bully was a teacher" but officials slow to react. *Sunday Times*, 6.
- Zwani, Z. (2021, March 26). "Bully teacher" goes unpunished. *Daily Sun*, 4.
- Zwani, Z. (2022, June 13). Pupil attempts suicide as principal is charged with rape. *Daily Dispatch*, 2.