
Perceptions of Parents and Teachers on Violence Among Learners: Impacts on Academics and Mental Health in eThekweni, South Africa

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Abstract: Learners' academic performance, safety at school, and general well-being are all impacted significantly and profoundly by violence. Bullying, sexual abuse, harassment, and physical assault are just a few of the many manifestations of school violence, all of which contribute to a hostile learning environment. This study explored parents' and teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of violence among learners in eThekweni, South Africa. This paper presents data gathered through in-depth interviews with 18 teachers and focus group interviews involving 12 school governing body (SGB) members, comprising both parents and teachers. The data were analysed using Tesch's eight steps of thematic analysis for qualitative research. This study provides critical localised insights into stakeholder perceptions of school violence in a high-risk South African context, complementing broader national and international research. The findings underscore an urgent need for schools to implement targeted mental health support programmes and establish formal parent-teacher partnerships to develop violence prevention strategies tailored to local community needs. The study emphasises the urgent need for collaboration between parents and teachers to effectively address school violence and implement appropriate measures to safeguard learners.

Keywords: violence; schools; learners; impact; teachers

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Introduction

As violence in schools continues to undermine learners' safety and well-being, understanding the perspectives of key stakeholders is crucial for developing effective interventions. Violence among learners in South African schools has become a concerning issue, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal (Khuzwayo et al., 2016). Adewoye and du Plessis (2021) highlight that schools, traditionally viewed as safe spaces for academic and social development, are increasingly witnessing incidents of aggression, bullying, and even criminal behaviour. These occurrences not only disrupt the educational process but also deeply affect the psychological well-being of both victims and perpetrators (Mosito & Sitoyi, 2024). In the context of the current study, the perceptions of key stakeholders, particularly parents and teachers, offer critical insights into the impact of school violence. School violence profoundly impacts learners, educators,

and parents, undermining effective teaching and learning processes. It has significant and often long-lasting effects on learners' psychological, physical, and social well-being, as well as their academic performance (Carroll-Lind et al., 2011). Kuposov et al. (2021) argue that exposure to violent events leads to adverse outcomes for learners' mental health, social functioning, and development. Absenteeism, defined as learners not attending school or specific classes, is a pervasive issue linked to school violence (Kabungo & Lusaka, 2018). Simuzya (2022) reports a concerning rise in absenteeism rates in schools, often associated with learners' exposure to or experience of violence. Nyumbu and Banja (2022) categorise absenteeism as a common form of learner indiscipline, yet violence plays a central role in driving learners away from school. Lowry et al. (2023) found a strong correlation between exposure to interpersonal violence and school absenteeism, as learners feel unsafe within school premises. Though often implemented as a disciplinary measure, corporal punishment has been identified as a significant contributor to learners' fear and avoidance of school (Okeny & Mboya, 2022). Moreover, a harsh school environment fosters feelings of disconnection, further exacerbating absenteeism (Huang & Cornell, 2021).

School violence also contributes to absenteeism among learners, as those who experience it may choose to stay away from school as a way to protect themselves (Vidyakala, 2017). Moreover, the consequences of absenteeism extend beyond academic underachievement, leading to failure, dropout, and diminished future prospects for learners (Mboweni, 2014). Effective parental involvement and school management are essential for creating a safe school environment that addresses absenteeism and mitigates its impact on learners' educational trajectories (Özcan, 2022). Gubbels et al. (2019) underscore the importance of stakeholder collaboration in understanding and addressing the risk factors that contribute to absenteeism. Further, exposure to violence within schools negatively affects learners' academic performance and disrupts their ability to focus on learning (Polanin et al., 2021). Fisher et al. (2018) highlight the detrimental impact of violent incidents on learners' cognitive engagement and performance. A consistent inverse relationship exists between exposure to violence and academic achievement, with learners struggling to excel in such environments (Lepore & Kliever, 2013). Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) highlight the significant ways in which violence in schools undermines academic outcomes, creating a ripple effect that compromises the overall educational experience for learners and teachers. First, and foremost, violence disrupts the school environment, rendering it non-conducive for effective teaching and learning; second, when learners and educators feel unsafe or threatened, the focus shifts from academic pursuits to concerns about personal safety, thereby hindering educational progress; and third, the constant need to resolve conflicts further diverts attention from core educational activities.

While it is widely acknowledged that schools must take all necessary measures to ensure safe and supportive learning environments, the implementation of zero tolerance policies as a means to achieve this goal remains highly contentious (Huang & Cornell, 2021). Proponents, such as Wodon et al. (2021), argue that well-defined school policies and procedures are essential for establishing clear behavioural expectations, safeguarding both learners and teachers, and facilitating the provision of high-quality education. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that zero tolerance policies may, in fact, undermine these aims. Critics contend that such punitive approaches often fail to improve school safety and disproportionately affect marginalised learner populations. Instead, it is argued that schools can more effectively enhance learner safety and promote educational equity by abolishing zero tolerance policies, curbing the use of suspensions and expulsions, and equipping teachers with the skills to implement positive behaviour interventions (Santiago-Rosario et al., 2024). Teachers and administrators often find themselves preoccupied with mediating disputes, implementing disciplinary measures, or managing the fallout from violent incidents. This diversion detracts from instructional time and reduces the quality of education delivered to learners. Astor et al. (2010) argue that the mechanisms through which violence impacts academic performance remain underexplored, calling for further research to understand these dynamics comprehensively. A peaceful and conducive learning environment is critical for learners to thrive academically (Kapur, 2018).

The psychological impact of school violence is severe, manifesting in various forms of mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Tian & Zhang, 2022). Violence at school creates a sense of insecurity among learners, which adversely affects their emotional and mental health (Cornell, 2020). Eunmi (2019) reports that exposure to violence, including bullying and physical threats, significantly increases learners' susceptibility to depression and anxiety. Emotional trauma stemming from violent incidents often results in low self-esteem and poor social interactions, further isolating learners (Singh & Steyn, 2014). Duru et al. (2019) highlight that learners experiencing violence face psychological barriers to learning, leading to inappropriate behaviour and disengagement from school. The cumulative impact of these experiences perpetuates cycles of

antisocial behaviour, with victims of violence more likely to engage in further acts of aggression (Mkhize, 2012). To address these challenges, Abrahamyan et al. (2020) advocate for school-based mental health interventions involving parents, teachers, and mental health professionals. Programmes aimed at enhancing resilience, fostering self-esteem, and addressing anger management are essential for improving learners' psychological well-being (Lee et al., 2015). Therefore, understanding the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the impact of violence among learners in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, was essential. South African schools, especially those in areas like eThekweni, have been reported as frequently experiencing high levels of school-based violence, including bullying, physical assaults, and gang-related incidents (Milligan et al., 2024). Moreover, as highlighted by Hong and Espelage (2012), parents and teachers play a pivotal role in shaping learners' behaviours and attitudes, making their perspectives invaluable for identifying both the causes and effects of such violence.

Methods

This study used a qualitative methodology with an exploratory, descriptive design to gather information from parents and teachers on school violence. Qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings (Teherani et al., 2015). The use of qualitative approach allowed the researcher to explore the complex issues in-depth and detail, providing rich insights into human experiences and behaviours (Mwita, 2022), which served as an advantage for the current study. Moreover, Swedberg (2020) indicates that an exploratory design can be defined as an attempt to discover something new and interesting. This study explored the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the impact of violence on learners in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal. Descriptive research is a methodological approach to systematically and accurately describe characteristics, behaviours, or phenomena without manipulating variables (Siedlecki, 2020). The setting of this study was two high schools situated in Lamontville Township. Lamontville Township, situated south of Durban, has experienced various incidents of violence and crime over the years, reflecting the broader challenges faced by communities in KwaZulu-Natal (Dlungwane & Hamlall, 2024). Areas that are considered disadvantaged in South Africa have high incidents of violence where teachers and learners are confronted with daily cases of physical abuse, threats, bullying, and assaults (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). The study employed a purposeful sampling strategy to select schools. This type of sampling was appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to reach the targeted study settings quickly and gather rich information from participants. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling is used to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Involving the parents and teachers of the school governing body (SGB) in addressing and understanding the impact of violence among learners is critically important, especially as incidents of violence in South African schools continue to rise at an alarming rate. Their active participation offers valuable insights and fosters a collaborative approach to identifying root causes, implementing preventive measures, and supporting affected learners (Hendricks, 2019). Learners, especially those affected by violence, were excluded due to ethical concerns around potential harm and the complexity of obtaining consent. Additionally, involving SGB members was more feasible and allowed the study to gather relevant perspectives without risking re-traumatisation of vulnerable learners.

Before the study was conducted, ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee of the Durban University of Technology (Reference Number: IREC 267/22). Thereafter, permission was requested from the Provincial Department of Education and the school principals of the two schools studied. Participants were recruited with the help of the principals. The school principals were given an invitation letter to give to teachers and SGB members. Participants were provided with a letter of information that highlighted the study's purpose and how it would be conducted. They were also requested to complete a consent form to indicate their agreement to participate in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 18 school teachers, and two focus group discussions were held with 12 SGB members, comprising both parents and teachers. The in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research method that involves conducting thorough individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their views on a specific topic (Bazen et al., 2021). Whereas, Islam and Aldaihani (2021), explains that a focus group interviews is a process that is used to collect qualitative insights from people with specific knowledge of a particular topic. A semi-structured interview guide, which was aligned with the study's objective, was used to collect data from the participants. The participants also consented to the interviews being audio-recorded. The data collection ended once data saturation was reached. The in-depth interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, and the focus groups lasted one hour. Each focus group interview lasted between one and three hours. To protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms were used throughout the research to ensure their anonymity.

The data was analysed using Tesch's eight steps of thematic analysis for qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The researchers carefully reviewed all transcripts to gain a general understanding of the data and noted any initial insights. Key themes were identified, and similar topics were organised into groups. These themes were then abbreviated into codes, which were applied to relevant sections of the transcripts. By repeatedly reviewing the participants' responses, additional categories emerged. These categories were further refined and grouped based on shared meanings, ultimately leading to a finalised list of themes. Further, Johnson et al. (2020) suggest that rigour in both the research process and its findings is established when every component of the research methodology is carried out systematically and transparently, with thorough, methodical, and precise reporting. The researchers upheld rigour in the study by aligning the methodology with the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2014). Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation and transparent reporting of direct quotes and narratives. All interviews were digitally recorded, and participants' own words were integrated into the analysis, enabling readers to assess the alignment between the data and the researcher's conclusions. In this study, dependability was maintained by the same set of research questions, which were posed to comparable groups of participants during different interviews.

Additionally, the researcher maintained a record of personal notes, including observations and reflections, to demonstrate the consistency of the methodological approach throughout the data collection process. To ensure confirmability, an audit trail documented each step of the research process, including data collection procedures, analytical decisions, and emerging interpretations. The secure storage of these materials ensures that they can be reviewed to verify that the findings genuinely originate from the participants, rather than the researcher's subjective perspective. Participants were also given the opportunity to review their transcribed interviews and final interpretations to confirm accuracy. The researcher promoted transferability by providing comprehensive descriptive data. Readers and future researchers can determine whether the study's context and participants resemble those in their own setting and evaluate the feasibility of replicating or adapting the study's findings.

Findings and discussion

The following section discusses the findings derived from the analysis of data collected from parents and teachers regarding the impact of violence among learners. The themes discussed below were identified from the participants' responses:

Negatively impact academic performance

Poor academic performance presents a significant challenge for learners, particularly for those who are subjected to violence within the school environment. Victims of school-based violence often struggle to concentrate on their studies, as their attention and emotional energy are diverted toward coping with the psychological and physical impacts of the abuse they experience. Instead of engaging fully with academic tasks, these learners are frequently preoccupied with fear, anxiety, and stress—emotional burdens that interfere with learning processes, such as memory retention, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Consequently, these learners' academic progress suffers, placing them at a heightened risk of falling behind their peers, losing motivation, and ultimately disengaging from education altogether, as highlighted by the following excerpts:

Learners who are exposed to violence are unable to pay attention to their academic work, sometimes they do not focus on their studies, but deal with triggers that come with experiencing violence in school. (Participant 16, Female, School B, Teacher, 41–45 years old)

... sometimes, a learner may choose to withdraw from participating in class due to being victimised by another student. This could happen when a learner is targeted because of their better grades, leading them to feel scared to engage in activities during teaching and learning. (Participant 3, Female, School A, SGB Member, 51–55 years old)

School violence has influenced learners to quit attending school, as they have a fear of facing their peers who abuse them daily. In most cases, learners feel unheard and alone as the schools are not doing something to address the issue of violence among learners. (Participant 11, Male, School B, Teacher, 18–25 years old)

Schools are intended to be environments that promote academic excellence and support learners in their pursuit of educational growth. However, this ideal is often undermined by the prevalence of violence within educational settings (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023). The findings of

this study confirm that violence has an impact on learners' academic progress in school. Thus, Mosito and Sitoyi (2024) argue that persistent school violence negatively affects teaching and learning. The persistent occurrence of violence in schools poses a serious threat to both effective teaching and meaningful learning. This alarming trend underscores the urgent need for comprehensive research to examine the current extent, nature, and impact of school violence (Lumadi, 2024). Kim et al. (2020) note that fighting, threats, and bullying are significantly linked with higher levels of school safety concerns and mental health challenges for learners, which eventually contribute to lower academic performance for both females and males. Schools are meant to be places where learners acquire education and other necessary life skills, but the high rate of violence in schools indicates that the education sector is facing significant challenges. Letwala (2021) highlights the same concern regarding schools facing several challenges that are considered unsafe school environments. The paradigm shift in educational management, which includes the devolution of school management in South Africa, has contributed to numerous changes in South Africa's education landscape, especially with school violence increasingly becoming a contentious challenge for teachers and policymakers alike (Padayachee, 2024).

Mental health

The participants in this study indicated that violence among learners significantly affects their mental health negatively. Exposure to or involvement in violent incidents can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, and trauma. Such experiences often disrupt learners' mental and emotional stability, impairing their ability to concentrate, engage in school activities, and form healthy peer relationships. Furthermore, the psychological consequences of violence can include persistent negative thoughts and emotions, such as feelings of worthlessness, isolation, and the belief that they are not valued or cared for by others. These internalised experiences may reduce self-esteem and contribute to a sense of hopelessness, affecting these learners' overall mental functionality and academic performance. This is evident in the participants' excerpts below:

... learners would have psychological problems because of abuse they have to suffer from their peers and those close to them. This also relates to the feelings of anxiety and panic attacks experienced when those learners who are the victims of violence have to come to school. (Participant 4, Male, School A, Teacher, 41–45 years old)

Honestly, I think that learners who are the victims of violence in school are at risk of mental illness. They would even fear to come to school as they are anxious about what they will be going through within school premises. Some of these incidents are not reported ... timeously to deal with them. (Participant 8, Female, School B, SGB Member, 40–50 years old)

... I have dealt with a sensitive case where a learner was diagnosed with depression, and this was because she was bullied. It was sad to see her mental health deteriorate. (Participant 5, Male, School A, Teacher, 26–30 years old)

According to Polanin et al. (2021), the ongoing challenges posed by various forms of school violence, including physical aggression, bullying, peer victimisation, and general threat, can have long-term impacts on learners' mental health. It is a known fact that the prevalence of violence among learners has reached a level where it is no longer easily containable, and this escalating trend presents a serious threat to the mental health and well-being of both learners and teachers. Such a hostile environment undermines the basic purpose of educational institutions as safe spaces for learning and development. Hence, the study's findings emphasise that learners who are routinely exposed to violent behaviour, whether as direct victims or witnesses, suffer significant psychological consequences. These experiences can lead to long-term emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and in some cases, post-traumatic stress disorder. Duru and Balkis (2018) affirm that the psychological ramifications of being a victim of school violence are profound, affecting not only a learner's mental health but also their academic engagement and social development. Furthermore, the ongoing inability to foster a school climate that actively supports and promotes mental well-being hinders efforts to enhance overall school safety. As Gaal and Fuller (2024) argue, the absence of a mentally supportive environment perpetuates cycles of violence and insecurity, ultimately obstructing the broader educational mission to create secure and nurturing schools.

Contribute to low self-esteem

Participants emphasised that learners who are frequently exposed to violence, whether at home, in their communities, or within school environments, often suffer significant damage to their self-esteem. Continuous exposure

to abuse can lead these learners to internalise the belief that they are inherently unworthy or flawed. As a result, they may come to accept punishment and mistreatment as something they deserve, rather than recognising it as unjust or abusive. The participant statements below support this:

... the fact is that learners who experience violence do not have self-confidence, and they most often think they deserve to be punished and abused, which is not true. But feelings and thoughts play a role in how they view and how they feel about themselves. (Participant 10, Female, School B, SGB Member, 60–65 years old)

The things that some learners go through in life generally play a role in how they see themselves and others. Particularly when they have to be the ones who are abused, they would always feel different from others. (Participant 2, Male, School A, Teacher, 31–35 years old)

The issue of low self-esteem emerges as a significant concern when learners are exposed to violence, as highlighted by various studies and observations. The participants in this study noted that learners who experience violence often lose their sense of self-worth and confidence, especially when subjected to public ridicule by their peers and the broader school community. This phenomenon is not only distressing in the immediate context but can also have long-lasting effects on the psychological and emotional well-being of the affected individuals. González Moreno and Molero Jurado (2024) emphasise that school violence is a serious social issue which severely disrupts learners' psychological well-being. It undermines their self-esteem, leading to a distorted self-image. Such violence often results in feelings of shame and helplessness, further eroding the victim's sense of worth. The negative impact of violence extends beyond the immediate experience, altering how the individual perceives themselves and the world around them. In line with this, Pandey et al. (2021) define self-esteem as a psychological component that reflects an individual's subjective evaluation of themselves. This evaluation can fluctuate based on various factors, such as moments of personal reflection or external circumstances. When learners are subjected to abuse, their self-appraisal often becomes overwhelmingly negative, as they internalise blame for the abuse they endure. They may view themselves as unworthy or deserving of mistreatment, which fosters a cycle of negative thinking that deepens their emotional wounds. The long-term effects of this abuse are further compounded by the emotional and psychological damage caused. Afolabi and Animashaun (2024) argue that the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of abuse can lead to significant behavioural and mental health difficulties. Victims of abuse are often unable to overcome these challenges on their own and may struggle with issues such as depression, anxiety, and behavioural problems. The persistent emotional scars of abuse can manifest in various aspects of life, affecting academic performance, social relationships, and personal development.

Self-isolation

The study participants also indicated that learners who experience violence tend to withdraw socially, often isolating themselves from others. This behaviour appears to stem from a heightened sense of caution about whom they interact with, driven by a fear of further harm or betrayal. As a result, these learners may struggle to form or maintain relationships with their peers. The findings also suggest that such learners commonly develop trust issues, making it difficult for them to open up to others. Interestingly, it was also noted that while these learners are hesitant to build relationships, they do not view such connections as entirely meaningless; instead, their reluctance stems from fear and self-protection rather than a complete rejection of social bonds. The following statements illustrate the participants' perspectives:

... because of the challenges that they face, they choose to isolate themselves from others and always feel alone to feel secure and protected from others. They use this as a technique to avoid being teased and manipulated by their peers, who are perpetrators of violence. (Participant 1, Male, School A, SGB Member, 35–40 years old)

Learners do not want to develop any relationship with others, and they carefully choose who they associate themselves with. They cannot even open up their feelings because of fear. (Participant 12, Female, School B, Teacher, 36–40 years old)

... they tend to have trust issues and build a wall as a coping mechanism to prevent people who might trigger them. That is why sometimes they cannot relate to other people, it is because

building relations with others is meaningless. (Participant 5, Male, School A, Teacher, 26–30 years old)

Other participants, such as Participants 5 and 10, expressed concerns about how school violence physically impacts learners who are victims. According to these participants, violence can have short and long-term consequences on the learners' physical health;

... also, the physical aspect is negatively affected, as learners fight they injure themselves whether with a knife or whatever tool they use to hurt each other, and that have got various implications on the health of the other learner who is badly beaten; it can lead to two things, it can be death or permanent disability. (Participant 5, Female, School A, SGB Member, 35–40 years old)

Violence contributes to the impact of physical health, and most often those who are involved in the acts of violence suffer consequences that contribute to consequences of physical harm and injury. In most cases, some have broken legs, arms, etc., and bruises, that [is] how bad the exposure to violence is among learners. (Participant 10, Female, School B, Teacher, 36–40 years old)

The study findings show that violence has a profound impact on the ability of learners to establish and maintain relationships with others. Those who are subjected to abuse or exposed to violent environments often experience a significant lack of a sense of belonging. This lack of connection can hinder their social development and emotional well-being. According to Reisen et al. (2024), learners exposed to violence within the school environment may face challenges in forming healthy relationships with their peers. The constant threat or experience of violence can create a barrier to positive social interactions, making it difficult for these learners to feel accepted or integrated into their social circles. The devastating effects of violence on learners are extensive and can profoundly affect their sense of belonging in the school environment. Erasmus (2019) highlights that exposure to violence can have long-lasting consequences on the emotional and psychological health of learners. This disruption can be especially damaging to their sense of security and inclusion, as their experiences of violence create a constant state of fear or anxiety, further exacerbating feelings of isolation. Furthermore, the study findings highlight that learners who experience violence may eventually choose self-isolation as a means of protecting themselves from the dangers associated with being in a violent environment. This tendency to withdraw from others is not only a protective mechanism but also a coping strategy to avoid further harm. As noted by Magdeline et al. (2024), self-isolation serves as a critical defence for learners trying to avoid being bullied or subjected to physical or emotional violence by peers. This withdrawal, however, may inadvertently lead to further social exclusion, creating a cycle of isolation that can be difficult to break.

Additionally, the study found that the physical consequences of violence on learners were a serious concern for some participants, who expressed their worries about the lasting impact on the learners' health. The effects of violence can range from minor physical injuries to more severe, long-term health problems. Chipalo and Obasi Odii (2024) further support this view, indicating that violence not only harms the physical health of learners but can also cause psychological distress, leading to both temporary and permanent disabilities. The consequences of such violence are far-reaching, often causing irreparable damage to the learner's physical and mental well-being. Finally, the Department of Education also acknowledges that violence in schools has the potential to cause significant bodily harm, which can range from temporary injuries to long-lasting disabilities or, in the most extreme cases, even death (DoE, 2015). The risk of such severe outcomes underscores the urgent need for measures to prevent violence and protect learners from harm. Violence within the school environment has a multifaceted impact, affecting not only the emotional and social aspects of learners' lives but also their physical health, making it a critical issue that requires immediate attention.

Conclusion

A limitation of this study is its small sample size, and that it did not include learners as participants. Including learners in this study would have been beneficial, as they are frequently the direct victims or first-hand witnesses of violence within educational environments. Their lived experiences offer indispensable insights into the complex psychological and emotional toll such violence takes, as well as its impact on their academic engagement, performance, and overall well-being. By capturing their voices, the study can present a more comprehensive and authentic understanding of the issue, ultimately informing more effective and empathetic interventions.

The data was obtained from two selected schools in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal, which means the analysis is context-specific. Therefore, the study findings cannot be generalised. Furthermore, due to practical limitations, such as time and budget, it was not feasible to include a larger number of schools; selecting two schools allowed for rigorous data collection and analysis within the available resources. The study findings highlight that violence among learners has a detrimental impact on their academic performance, emotional well-being, and social relationships. These negative consequences not only hinder learners' ability to succeed academically but also affect their overall development and interactions with peers. The study findings underscore the importance of addressing violence as a key factor influencing various aspects of a learner's life. It is recommended that future research should focus on exploring the viewpoints of both parents and teachers regarding the critical role they must play in addressing the effects of violence on learners, particularly concerning their academic performance, emotional well-being, and social interactions. It is essential to recognise that learners who experience or witness violence require substantial support to navigate these challenges. This support can significantly influence their ability to succeed academically and maintain a healthy social life.

Moreover, parents and teachers must collaborate to develop effective, meaningful strategies that foster a sense of unity among learners. By doing so, they can strengthen relationships with learners, ensuring that learners receive comprehensive guidance and support that promotes their academic and emotional development. To address the impact of violence among learners effectively and enhance practical outcomes, policy recommendations and intervention strategies must be both evidence-based and sensitive to the specific context. Schools should implement mandatory anonymous reporting systems for learners, alongside the development and enforcement of comprehensive anti-violence codes of conduct that address issues such as bullying, cyberbullying, and corporal punishment. Additionally, integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum is essential for fostering empathy, emotional regulation, and effective communication skills among learners. This study makes a significant contribution to the field of education by providing localised insights into the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the impact of violence among learners. By capturing the voices of these key stakeholders, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how school-based violence affects learners' academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall development (Mayer et al., 2021). This study's findings highlight the social and educational impact of violence in this specific context, shedding light on the urgent need for context-sensitive interventions (Lumadi, 2024).

Declarations

Interdisciplinary Scope: The study employed an interdisciplinary approach, combining perspectives from both parents and teachers to provide a comprehensive analysis of how violence affects learners. By drawing on the experiences and observations of these key stakeholders, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the social, emotional, and academic consequences of violence within educational settings.

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