WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE, GAUTENG

Annika Coetzee[1] and Francois Steyn[2]

ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a comparative investigation into educators' experiences of workplace violence in private and public secondary schools in Tshwane, Gauteng. Specific foci are experiences of, exposure to and perceptions of risk and safety, and policies and prevention strategies to combat workplace violence in school settings. A cross-sectional survey design was used to gather data from 122 educators working at six schools in the Tshwane metropolitan area. In addition to descriptive results, bivariate data analyses were conducted to identify significant differences between public and private schools. Educators at public schools were more likely to be aware of violence against a colleague; experienced more personal violence in the form of physical and verbal violence; bullying; and vandalism by learners. They were also at greater risk of victimisation in the form of unequal treatment and favouritism. The opportunity to victimise educators is greatest during classes, especially in public schools . The findings validate public school educators' adverse views of safety and risk in the workplace. The researchers made a number of recommendations, inter alia for increased awareness, training and dissemination of information related to workplace violence among all school staff. Furthermore, that the development and implementation of policies regarding workplace violence must receive priority.

Keywords: *educator-targeted violence; public and private schools; victimisation; workplace violence.*

INTRODUCTION

South Africa is known as one of the most violent countries in the world (Kirsten & Bruce, 2010:2). Violence is not only prevalent in community and home environments, but it is also present in the workplace. Research has, for example, been conducted on workplace violence in the health sector (Chapman, Styles, Perry & Combs, 2010), correctional and police services (Dussich, 2003; Prinsloo & Ladikos, 2003), and in occupations such as domestic and farm work (Kgosimore, 2004). Similarly, studies confirm that educators are victims of violence in schools (De Wet, 2007a:10; 2010a:195).

Numerous media reports serve as examples of such violence against educators, including an assault on a pregnant educator in East London (Prince, 2008); the stabbing of a female educator in a Soweto school (SAPA, 2011); another learner from Soweto who continuously threatened the life of a teacher, even enlisting the help of his friends who were not learners of that school (Madiba, 2012); and a grade eight learner who set on fire the hair of an educator, resulting in the educator having to undergo psychiatric treatment (Claassen, 2013:6).

A substantial body of evidence has been generated in South Africa about learner-on-learner violence (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011:30), yet limited research has been conducted on the experiences of educators as victims of violence in school settings (Du Plessis, 2008:31). Local studies have thus far focused on the nature and extent of educator-targeted violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2013), the effects of violent experiences (De

1. Postgraduate MA student, Department of Social Work & Criminology, University of Pretoria.
   Email: annikacoetzee@yahoo.com
2. Professor. Senior lecturer: Department of Social Work & Criminology, University of Pretoria.
   Email: francois.steyn@up.ac.za

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Vos, 2013), and strategies to prevent violence in schools (De Wet, 2011). Although research has been conducted abroad on violence in public versus private schools (Geberich, Nachreiner, Ryan, Church, McGovern, Geisser, Mongin, Watt, Feda, Sage & Pinder, 2011), insights into these divides are absent in South African discourses on violence in schools. As a response, the aim of the present study was to comparatively investigate workplace violence in private and public secondary schools with specific reference to colleagues' and personal experiences of workplace violence; exposure to and perceptions of risk and safety; impact of violent incidents on educators; victimisation in the context of decision-making and supervision; and policies and prevention regarding workplace violence in schools.

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
Even though the definition of workplace violence is still being debated, recent definitions state that understandings should include both physical and non-physical violence (Kgosimore, 2005:210). In this study, the term 'workplace violence' refers to the intentional use of power, threatened or actual, against another person, group or organisation in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed physically or psychologically, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of, his or her work. Such action, incident or behaviour departs from reasonable conduct in the work-related circumstances and can result in various forms of victimisation (International Labour Office (ILO), 2004:4; Kgosimore, 2005:210). Workplace violence is differentiated from workplace bullying where the latter refers to the hurtful and repeated maltreatment of a targeted employee (deliberate or intentional) involving a range of actions such as unwarranted offensive behaviour harming the target, impairing the target's health and affecting the target's work performance and reputation (Hoel, Glaso, Hetland, Cooper & Einarsen, 2010:454; Rayner & Cooper, 2006:124). Workplace bullying forces the target into an inferior position, eliminating his/her perception of power (Oade, 2009:2). Workplace bullying is therefore more repetitive in nature compared to workplace violence (Hoel et al, 2010:454).

Various typologies of workplace violence have been identified (Kgosimore, 2005:212-213). Type I stranger workplace violence involves violence committed by a stranger with no legitimate relationship with the workplace (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011:295). Type II customer/client workplace violence is violence committed by a customer, client, patient, student or inmate during the exchange of goods or services (Neuman, 2012:347). Type III employee-on-employee workplace violence includes violence that is committed by a current/former employee on another current/former employee (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011:295). Type III workplace violence includes organisational workplace violence in which the organisation places an employee in an environment conducive to violence without effective intervention (Kgosimore, 2005:213). Type IV relationship workplace violence is when the assailant has no legitimate relationship with the organisation but has a personal relationship with an employee (Bruce & Nowlin, 2011:295). Lastly, Type V employer-on-employee workplace violence relates to violence committed by an employer on an employee (Kgosimore, 2005:215). Workplace violence in schools has various manifestations ranging from vandalism commonly committed by learners and humiliation and unfair blame often instigated by co-workers (De Wet, 2007a:27 & 29). Unrealistic work expectations are considered a form of workplace violence perpetrated by education managers and principals (Kruger, 2011:94). As such, workplace violence can take numerous forms and can be applied to multiple vulnerable occupations including school settings, as will be demonstrated below.

SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST EDUCATORS
The following section reflects on local evidence regarding the nature and extent of educator-targeted violence, contributing factors and the impact and effects of such violence on victims.

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National studies that have been conducted include the National School Violence Study of 2012 (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) and the school-based violence report published by the SACE (2011).

Nature and extent of violence against educators
In a 2010 qualitative study with seven participants (De Wet, 2010a:195), educators were found to be targeted not only at their workplace, but after school as well. In 2007, an exploratory study (De Wet (2007a:75) found that 16 percent of 801 educators in the Free State had been verbally abused by learners. In Burton's analysis of the 2007 National School Violence Study he confirmed that learner-on-educator violence is both physical and verbal in nature (Burton, 2008:2). The SACE (2011:19) further corroborated these findings, since learner-on-educator verbal abuse was reported by three in five secondary schools and physical violence by one in four secondary schools.

De Wet (2007b:27) verified the findings above by means of quantitative and qualitative methods in research on educators as perpetrators and victims of school violence. Her results indicated that educators are more often victims of non-physical violence than physical violence. These insights are further substantiated by Burton and Leoschut in the 2012 National School Violence Study (comprising of 5 939 learners, 121 principals and 239 educators), since respondents reported that more than half the educators were victims of verbal violence, 12 percent were victims of physical violence, and 3 percent were victims of sexual abuse by learners in the past year (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:27). Burton (2008:4) further pointed out that violence in private schools involved less obvious forms of violence (e.g. hazing[1]), compared to more blatant forms of violence in township schools. Common acts of violence against educators include threats with a weapon, stabbing, slapping, vandalism of property, disruption of lessons, ridicule, noisiness, throwing objects at educators, and holding educators hostage (De Wet, 2007b:27; Kruger, 2011:92). Other types of violence in schools include hazing, assault, robbery, rape, murder, sexual harassment, intimidation, bullying, shootings, gangsterism, drug trafficking, theft, race-related violence and violent student protests (SACE, 2011:6).

Factors fuelling violence against educators
Various factors can contribute to violence against educators. De Wet (2007b:18-24) indicates that learner-on-educator and educator-on-learner violence can occur when educators are seen as too strict, when there is a dereliction of duty, or when an educator's behaviour is a cause for such violence. Educator-on-educator violence may occur as a result of professional misconduct, corruption, misuse of power, loss of trust, and problematic leadership/management style. In addition, collegial violence, community-on-educator and parent-on-educator violence may include attacks on educators and abuse by parents from neighbouring schools. Kruger (2011:94) confirmed the reality of educator-on-educator bullying (e.g. misuse of power, threats, demands, manipulation and coercion) and principal-on-educator bullying (e.g. unreasonable work expectations or demands and favouritism). De Vos (2013:88-90) found that many educators experience verbal abuse at the hands of their school principals, in addition to being publicly humiliated by persons intent on causing damage to their reputation and social standing.

Research indicates that the causes of violence in schools are due both to internal and external factors. Qualitative and quantitative results (De Vos, 2013:32-40; De Wet, 2007b:32-34; De Wet, 2010b:1453) indicate that certain characteristics can contribute to an individual being a perpetrator (personality characteristics such as the need for power, control, lack of empathy, manipulation, professional envy, narcissism and other psychological disorders) and/or a victim (personal characteristics such as gender, age, race, submissiveness and low self-

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esteem) of workplace violence or bullying in the school environment. In 2007, De Wet (2007b:26, 32-33) reported that females and educators 30 years and younger were more likely to experience violence at school, and that male educators were more likely to experience verbal abuse from learners. Gender, age, race, work experience, health and even temperament are factors that influence the likelihood of violence, types of violence, perpetrators, and the probability of victims reporting violent incidents.

Violence against educators may extend beyond demographic and personality characteristics to management, leadership, organisational and societal causes (De Vos, 2013:40-43; De Wet, 2003:95-96; De Wet, 2007b:22; De Wet, 2010b:1453). In a 2003 study of 215 Eastern Cape educators' perceptions of the causes and scope of school violence, De Wet (2003:96-97) reported that internal contributors to educator-targeted violence include learner-related causes (low self-esteem, frustration. etc.); a negative school climate; autocratic leadership; school organisation; and gang activity in the school. External causes include socio-economic conditions (poverty and unemployment); poor parental involvement; availability of firearms; alcohol and drugs; political and juridical causes; and reports in the media about violence in schools. Similarly, Ncontsa and Shumba (2013:12) identified unemployment; poverty; crime; poor discipline; intolerance; and overcrowding; as causes of violence in schools (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013:12). Burton and Leoschut (2013) added community and family level risk factors as causes of school violence. Poverty and unemployment, crime, gangs, alcohol and drug availability, poor housing, and accessibility to recreational facilities and low job opportunities can contribute to school violence. Further contributing factors include family risk factors such as abuse, neglect, lack of parental involvement, single parent families, parental criminality and erratic disciplinary practices (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:54, 57 & 64).

De Wet (2010a:1453) found that poor support structures contribute to educator-targeted violence, as manifested in abuse, ridicule, poor working situations, dissatisfaction with management, role conflict, poor mutual encouragement, unfounded criticism, isolation, favouritism and threat of dismissal. De Vos (2013:40-43) similarly identified contributing factors as organisational characteristics (a stressed work environment), the type of organisation (diversity of school community), leadership (*laissez-faire* or autocratic), organisational culture and climate, and organisational support. A large number of learners (more than 500) and school location (schools located in rural areas are at greater risk) influence the levels of risk in educator-targeted violence (De Wet, 2007a:59). The SACE (2011:19) highlighted that 58 percent of educators in secondary schools feel unsafe at their place of work, while Burton and Leoschut (2013:102) found that one in three educators felt unsafe at school.

Impact and effects of violence against educators
Educators suffer both verbal and non-verbal abuse, which affects them physically, non-physically, personally and professionally (De Vos, 2013:4; De Wet, 2010a:196-199; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013:2). Effects of workplace violence include varying symptoms of psychological distress, headaches, sleep deprivation, eating disorders, stress, shame, anger, powerlessness and withdrawal from education activities (De Wet, 2010a:196). The SACE study (2011:30) indicated similar effects, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, withdrawal and anger. Related physical and emotional effects were reported by De Vos (2013:98, 103), namely sleeping problems, stress, fatigue, tension headaches, depression, crying/tearfulness, anger and personality changes. Educator-targeted violence negatively impacts on the institution (teaching and learning) and society (relationship between school and home/community), resulting in a disintegration of teaching, a lack of enthusiasm, questioning of professional abilities, poor collegiality and adverse parental attitudes (De Wet, 2010a:196-198). Ncontsa and Shumba (2013:10) add that when learners are ill-disciplined, educators become demoralised and even struggle to complete the syllabus.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study draws on two victimological theories namely, the Differential Risk Model proposed by Fattah (1991) and the extended Control Balance Theory developed by Piquero and Hickman (2003). According to the Differential Risk Model of victimisation, target selection depends on criteria such as attractiveness, physical visibility, accessibility, availability and proximity which increase the risk of victimisation. Similarly, exposure (i.e. contact with potential offenders and high risk situations) elevate risk of victimisation and is mediated by socio-demographic factors (e.g. gender and marital status) and social activities. Furthermore, non-household activities (e.g. vocational activities outside the home environment) can increase the risk of victimisation, since they expose individuals to dangerous times and places. In addition, the model postulates that an individual's awareness of risk and perception of vulnerability or fear can influence his/her risk of victimisation as it affects the defensive/avoidance behaviours he/she engages in (Fattah, 1991:342-347).

This study further draws on the Extended Control Balance Theory, which accounts for the probability of victimisation since it suggests that a control imbalance (control deficit and/or control surplus) can account for the probability of victimisation. Individuals who suffer a control deficit emit a sense of 'weakness' (i.e. become passive and submissive) which increases their chances of being victimised. Individuals who experience an excess of control feel a sense of invincibility which affects their perception of vulnerability and fear, and impacts the behaviours they engage in which in turn can increase their probability of victimisation (Piquero & Hickman, 2003:285-287).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research followed a quantitative approach to numerically determine the experiences of secondary school educators[2] regarding workplace violence across private and public divides (Neuman, 2014:31-32). The study aimed at answering the 'what' aspect of educator-targeted violence. In other words, to understand the very essence of the phenomenon (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:11). Central to the study is not to find reasons and explain why workplace violence occurs in the school context, but rather to describe the situation, thus focusing on the *what, how* and *who* questions, and not *why*. The purpose of the research was to describe the frequency and types of violence experienced and/or perpetrated by specific parties, and identifying the relationship between certain variables (Kumar, 2014:18). The study was basic in nature since no intervention was planned following the research.

Survey research is advantageous when a descriptive research purpose is followed and mostly involves a structured questionnaire asking standardised questions to all respondents. The survey design allowed the researchers to gather a wide range of information from secondary school educators by asking all respondents the same questions, for example regarding their backgrounds, personal experiences of workplace violence, reactions to violence, involvement in decision-making, etc. Descriptive statements could, therefore, be deduced (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:74). More specifically, the cross-sectional survey design was optimal for the research since it was necessary to obtain a cross-section of experiences of workplace violence against educators in a single time frame, and to distribute questionnaires during one contact session at each school. The cross-sectional design further allowed for associations and relationships to be tested between experiences of violence at private and public secondary schools (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:85).

The study used probability and non-probability sampling methods to identify a study population of 274 educators. After obtaining a list of all secondary schools in Gauteng, filtering took place and mutually exclusive strata were applied. The strata entailed male, female or mixed schools; private or public schools; primary or secondary schools; schools that cater for learners with special needs; and language of tuition. Three public and three private secondary

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schools in the Tshwane metropolitan area were randomly selected thus affording all schools an equal chance of selection (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:111-112). After the schools were selected, availability sampling was used to gather data from educators working at each of the six schools. The use of stratified and availability sampling methods increased the representative potential of the data and resulted in a fast and less costly sample selection method (Neuman, 2014:167, 179).

Data was gathered by means of a self-administered questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. In order to maximise the quality and precision of responses, questions were not only dichotomous in nature but other forms of questions were also included. Questions such as contingency questions (requesting respondents to answer a follow-up question about workplace violence when relevant) and class intervals (in the case of the victimisation table) were utilised (Neuman, 2011:323). In addition, scales in the Likert (five-point) format were utilised. This enabled the provision of several more complex statements to which respondents had to answer. Such questions included, for example, one's opinion about workplace violence as a serious problem, which was measured using the categories: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' (Babbie, 2014:185).

The questionnaires were completed by the respondents in their own time without any aid provided by the researchers (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:124). By using this data gathering instrument, the researchers optimised the sample population over a short period of time with minimal costs (Neuman, 2011:337). The purpose and procedures of the research was explained to potential respondents at the morning staff meetings of the identified schools. Thereafter sealed questionnaires were left in a box accompanied by a letter of informed consent and an information sheet providing contact details of support services if needed. A total of 122 questionnaires were completed and collected in the provided sealed box one week after distribution. The sample coverage was 44.5 percent which is higher than other experiences when making use of survey research methods (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:124).

Prior to data analysis, coding took place, since each questionnaire and question was provided with a unique number (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:140). The data was entered into a Microsoft Excel spread sheet and exported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM Corp, 2016). The descriptive analysis optimised the summary of the data while bivariate analysis facilitated estimation, the determination of relationships and resulting conclusions (Abbott & McKinney, 2013:364-365). In light of the sampling procedures and the fact that the data was not normally distributed, non-parametric measures in the form of the Mann-Whitney *U* test had to be used to determine significant differences between experiences of workplace violence at private and public schools. In addition, effect sizes (*r*) were calculated to determine the strength of significant differences, where -0.1 indicates a small, -0.3 represents a medium and -0.5 denotes a large effect size (Field, 2009: 550).

Professional research conduct was maintained throughout the study in order to ensure the safety and protection of respondents' rights (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012:22). The standard ethical considerations applicable to research in the social sciences were adhered to, including no physical or psychological harm to respondents; respondents were not deceived about the purpose or procedures of the research; they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time; they participated voluntarily; and they provided informed consent. In light of the research design, anonymity and confidentially were guaranteed. The study received clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, and permission to conduct the research was obtained from relevant structures of the Department of Basic Education and from the selected schools.

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RESULTS

The following section presents the results of the self-administered survey under the broad headings of background information of respondents; experiences of workplace violence; perceived causes of violence in schools; impact and reporting of violent incidents; exposure to and perceptions of risk and safety; victimisation resulting from decision-making and supervision; and policies and training on workplace violence in schools.

Background information of respondents

The majority of respondents (n=88; 72.1%) were female. The greater part of respondents (n=75; 61.5%) worked at public schools and 38.5% (n=47) were employed at private schools. Slightly more than half (n=66; 51.6%) of respondents were younger than 40 years of age and the majority was White (n=104; 87.4%) followed by Black (n=10; 8.4%), Mixed race (n=2; 1.7%) and Indian/Asian (n=2; 1.7%) respondents. The greater proportion of respondents was married (n=74; 60.7%) and 22.1% (n=27) were single. Ten respondents (8.2%) were divorced and eleven (9.0%) were either widowed, engaged, partnered or in a domestic partnership. Nearly all respondents were permanent employees (n=105; 86.1%), while one in seven (n=17; 13.9%) worked on a part-time basis at the sampled schools.

In terms of occupational post, nearly two-thirds of respondents were subject educators (n=78; 65.0%), followed by (co-) heads of department (n=27; 22.5%), (vice-) principals (n=13; 10.9%) and assistant educators (n=2; 1.7%). Nearly half of respondents (n=57; 47.9%) had a postgraduate qualification, followed by a bachelor's degree (n=49; 41.2%) and a diploma (n=13; 10.9%). Private school respondents (n=29; 61.7%) were significantly more likely (p=0.005; r=0.25) to hold a postgraduate qualification compared to their public school counterparts (n=28; 38.9%).

Colleagues' and personal experiences of workplace violence

Although less than half of respondents (n=50; 41.3%) were aware of a co-worker experiencing violence in the workplace, public school respondents (n=43; 58.1%) were significantly more likely to be aware of such incidents than respondents from private schools (n=7; 14.9%) (p<0.001; r=-0.42). With regard to personal experiences of workplace violence, more than half the respondents (n=69; 56.6%) experienced verbal violence followed by vandalism (n=36; 29.5%) and bullying (n=26; 21.3%) (Table 1). Significant associations were evident in terms of the status of schools and the forms of personal violence that respondents experienced.

Table 1:   Respondents' experiences of workplace violence

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
Physical violence	16	13.1	1	2.1	15	20.3	0.004*	-0.26
Verbal violence	69	56.6	16	33.3	53	71.6	<0.001*	-0.37
Bullying	26	21.3	5	10.4	21	28.4	0.018**	-0.21
Vandalism	36	29.5	4	21.1	32	57.1	0.007*	-0.31
Excessive monitoring by parents	2	1.6	2	10.5	0	0.0	0.015**	-0.28
* Significant at *p*<0.01; ** Significant at *p*<0.05								

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The data shows that nearly two in four respondents (n=48; 39.3%) experienced none of the above forms of violence and a significant association (*p*<0.001; *r*=-0.38) featured since private school respondents (n=30; 62.5%) had a higher likelihood of having experienced none of the forms of violence compared to public school respondents (n=18; 24.3%).

Violence in the form of relationship workplace violence (i.e. violence committed by the victim's previous/current partner) and organisational workplace violence (i.e. feeling victimised by the organisation) only featured among public school respondents. Relationship workplace violence amounted to one case each (n=1; 1.8%) of verbal violence, bullying, cyber bullying, and denial of information and resources. Two cases (n=2; 3.6%) respectively of isolation and exclusion, unfair blame and humiliation were reported. Victimisation by the organisation involved one case each (n=1; 1.8%) of denial of information and resources, isolation and exclusion, and denial of support, as well as seven cases (12.5%) of unrealistic work expectations.

Perceived causes of workplace violence
Respondents attributed educator-targeted violence primarily to ill-discipline (n=34; 14.6%) and absent/ineffective parenting and problems at home (n=28; 12.0%) (Table 2). Note that the responses in the table below stem from an open-ended question, hence differentiation between public and private schools was not feasible since all responses were categorised and coded directly from the completed questionnaires. Also, the percentages reflect the total number of responses as opposed to the total number of respondents.

Table 2:   Respondents' views about the main cause of educator-targeted violence

	Total	
	n	**%**
Ill-discipline	34	14.6
Absent/ineffective parenting and problems at home	28	12.0
Lack of mutual respect	27	11.6
Uncontrolled emotions	22	9.4
Substance abuse and physical/psychological disorders	19	8.2
Ineffective management, communication and protection	17	7.3
Negative parental influence	16	6.9
Social and moral decay	14	6.0
Workplace stress and frustration	14	6.0
Ineffective disciplinary rules/system	10	4.3
Inadequate academic preparation and excessive pressure	10	4.3
Socio-economic conditions	10	4.3
Unprofessional conduct among educators/poor preparation	8	3.4
Other	4	1.7

Impact and reporting of violent experiences
Most respondents (n=58; 78.4%) felt the violent incident(s) increased their levels of frustration, followed by a change in stress levels (n=42; 56.8%) (Table 3). Two in five respondents (n=30; 40.5%) experienced sadness, in particular those from public schools (n=28; 51.9%). Very few respondents reported that the violent incidents resulted in them experiencing guilt (n=9; 12.2%) or shame (n=6; 8.1%).

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Table 3:   Personal impact of violent incidents on respondents

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
Frustration	58	78.4	14	70.0	44	91.5	0.224	-
Stress	42	56.8	12	60.0	30	55.6	0.908	-
Sadness	30	40.5	2	10.0	28	51.9	0.002*	-0.35
Anxiety	24	32.4	5	25.0	19	35.2	0.512	-
Cynicism	13	17.6	1	5.0	12	22.2	0.104	-
Fear	12	16.2	2	10.0	10	18.5	0.136	-
Guilt	9	12.2	1	5.0	8	14.8	0.289	-
Shame	6	8.1	1	5.0	5	9.3	0.601	-
* Significant at *p*<0.01								

On a professional level, the majority of respondents (n=37; 50.7%) noted that experiences of violence resulted in low job satisfaction, followed by them withdrawing from school activities (n=22; 30.1%) (Table 4). Roughly one in five respondents experienced poor concentration (n=16; 21.9%) and felt alienated (n=14; 19.2%) following incidents of violence.

Table 4:   Professional impact of violent incidents on respondents

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
Low work satisfaction	37	50.7	6	30.0	31	58.5	0.031*	-0.25
Withdraw from activities	22	30.1	2	10.0	20	37.7	0.022*	-0.26
Burnout	17	23.3	3	15.0	14	26.4	0.372	-
Poor concentration	16	21.9	2	10.0	14	26.4	0.166	-
Alienation	14	19.2	2	10.0	12	22.6	0.269	-
Low commitment	11	15.1	1	5.0	10	18.9	0.168	-
* Significant at *p*<0.05								

More than half of the respondents from private (n=10; 52.6%) and public schools (n=28; 54.9%) reported the violence they experienced. Of those who did not report such experiences, nearly all (n=27; 81.8%) indicated that they handled it themselves. The most common outcome of reporting violent incident(s) (n=28; 56.0%) was that the perpetrator was reprimanded. Fourteen respondents (28.0%) stated that they have received support following victimisation. In nine cases (18.0%) the perpetrator was suspended and in seven cases (14.0%) the matter was reported to the police.

Exposure to and perceptions of risk and safety
In terms of time spent on activities at school, nearly all respondents (n=114; 95.8%) indicated that they spend between six and ten hours at school per day. Compared to respondents from private schools (n=25; 59.5%), those from public schools (n=63; 91.3%) felt significantly more at risk of victimisation during classes (Table 5). Private school respondents (n=6; 14.3%) were significantly more likely to feel at risk of violence over weekends compared to respondents from public schools (n=1; 1.4%).

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Table 5:   Times at which respondents feel most at risk of violence

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
During classes	88	79.3	25	59.5	63	91.3	<0.001*	-0.37
After school	21	18.9	16	38.1	5	7.2	<0.001*	-0.38
During breaks	13	11.7	2	4.8	11	15.9	0.088	-
Before school	8	7.2	4	9.5	4	5.8	0.429	-
Weekends	7	6.3	6	14.3	1	1.4	0.007*	-0.25
* Significant at *p*<0.01								

The majority of respondents (n=103; 84.4%) considered their schools to be safe (Table 6). Compared to respondents from private schools (n=47; 97.9%), those from public schools (n=56; 75.7%) were significantly less likely to consider their schools as safe. They were also significantly more likely to have felt threatened in the workplace (n=29; 39.2%) compared to respondents from private schools (n=6; 12.5%). Furthermore, public school respondents (n=15; 20.3%) were significantly more likely to report their school as at high risk for victimisation compared to private schools (n=2; 4.2%). Nearly all respondents from the private schools (n=42; 91.3%) felt "powerful" in the workplace (n=42; 91.3%) compared to 57.5% (n=42) of respondents from public schools.

Table 6:   Respondents' perceptions of risk and safety in the workplace

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
School is safe	103	84.4	47	97.9	56	75.7	0.001*	-0.29
Ever felt threatened	35	28.7	6	12.5	29	39.2	0.002*	-0.28
Frequency of threat:								
Very often	3	8.6	-	-	3	10.3		
Often	3	8.6	-	-	3	10.3	<0.001*	-0.20
Sometimes	13	37.1	1	16.7	12	41.4		
Seldom	16	45.7	5	83.3	11	37.9		
School is at high risk	17	13.9	2	4.2	15	20.3	0.012**	-0.22
In the workplace, I feel:								
Powerful	84	70.6	42	91.3	42	57.5	<0.001*	-0.36
Powerless	33	27.7	4	8.7	29	39.7		
* Significant at *p*<0.01; ** Significant at *p*<0.05								

The survey explored respondents' opinions about various elements of their work environment and workplace violence (Table 7). Nearly half of all respondents (n=56; 47.9%) felt that workplace violence is a serious problem, and specifically more so among respondents from public schools (n=43; 61.4%) compared to private schools (n=13; 28.3%). Nearly three-quarters of all respondents (n=84; 73.9%) noted that security measure at their workplace were sufficient although respondents from private schools (n=37; 82.2%) were significantly more likely to agree with the statement than their public school counterparts (n=47; 67.2%). Note that, in the interest of space, the table below depicts only "strongly agree/agree" responses as an indicator of respondents' views about workplace violence.

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Table 7:   Respondents' views about workplace violence and security measures

"strongly agree/agree"	Total		Private		Public		p	r
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Workplace violence is a serious problem	56	47.9	13	28.3	43	61.4	0.002*	-0.28
Workplace violence is adequately recognised	70	63.1	33	75.0	37	55.3	0.030**	-0.20
Workplace violence is sufficiently addressed	70	63.6	32	76.1	38	55.8	0.040**	-0.19
Security measures at my workplace are adequate	84	73.9	37	82.2	47	67.2	0.027**	-0.20
* Significant at $p<0.01$; ** Significant at $p<0.05$								

Victimisation resulting from decision-making and supervision

More than a third of respondents (n=47; 38.8%) rated their level of involvement in decision-making regarding school issues as 'good'. However, private school respondents (n=33; 68.8%) were significantly more likely to rate their level of involvement as 'exceptionally good/good', whereas public school respondents (n=42; 57.5%) had an 'average' to 'severely restricted' level of involvement ($p=0.007$; $r=-0.24$). Table 8 presents the types of victimisation respondents feel they are exposed to in terms of decision-making and supervision. One in four (n=31; 25.4%) respondents felt "often/very often" exposed to victimisation due to unequal treatment. One in five (n=25; 20.5%) felt "often/very often" exposed to victimisation as a result of favouritism in the workplace. Note that, in the interest of space, only the "often/very often" data are presented in the table below.

Table 8:   Exposure to victimisation in terms of decision-making and supervision

"often/very often"	Total		Private		Public		p	r
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Unequal treatment	31	25.4	9	20.0	22	32.4	0.007*	-0.25
Not being heard	26	21.3	5	11.4	21	30.4	0.016**	-0.22
Workplace overcrowding	8	6.6	1	2.2	7	11.1	0.001*	-0.30
Favouritism	25	20.5	7	15.6	18	26.8	0.001*	-0.20
* Significant at $p<0.01$; ** Significant at $p<0.05$								

Policy and training

The greater proportion of respondents (n=66; 59.7%) were unaware of policies regarding workplace violence at their schools (Table 9). A significant association ($p=0.039$; $r=-0.25$) indicates that the need for additional policies on workplace violence was stressed more among public school respondents (n=33; 75.0%) than those from private schools (n=10; 47.6%). Furthermore, the bulk of respondents (n=111; 91.0%) emphasised that they had not received any training on workplace violence and 51.3% (n=59) of the respondents stated that they need such training.

Table 9:   Policies and training on workplace violence

	Total		Private		Public		*p*	*r*
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**		
Aware of policies	46	40.4	19	42.2	27	39.1	0.787	-
Policies are effective	31	47.0	13	59.1	18	40.9	0.157	-
Additional policies needed	43	66.2	10	47.6	33	75.0	0.039*	-0.25
Received training	11	9.0	4	8.3	7	9.5	0.878	-
Training needed	59	51.3	19	42.2	40	57.1	0.080	-
* Significant at *p*<0.05								

The policies that respondents were mostly aware of included: learner conduct and disciplinary policy (n=18; 50.0%); safety and security policy (n=13; 36.1%); staff policy (n=9; 25.0); and school policy (n=8; 22.2%). The top five training needs that respondents identified were: defusing a violent event (n=52; 86.7%); preventing school violence (n=51; 85.0%); skills to cope with school violence (n=45; 75.0%); educator-learner relationships (n=42; 71.2%); and assertiveness (n=38; 63.3%).

DISCUSSION
The survey confirms that educators experience both physical (13.1%) and verbal (56.6%) violence, although the dominance of the latter appears more prevalent in school settings. These findings mirror other South African research on violence at schools (Burton & Leoscut, 2013:27) and evidence from abroad (Ozdemir, 2012:51). The survey further indicates that, compared to educators at private schools, those at public schools are not only more aware of colleagues' experiences of workplace violence (r=-0.42), but that they are at greater risk of experiencing numerous forms of personal violence, including physical violence (r=-0.26), verbal violence (r=-0.37), bullying (r=-0.21), and vandalism by learners (r=-0.31). On the other hand, educators at private schools seem more likely to experience excessive monitoring by parents (r=-0.28). It serves to be mentioned that private school educators were significantly more likely to report not experiencing any form of violence (r=-0.38), albeit physical, verbal, social, bullying and/or sexual in nature. In addition, incidents of relationship workplace violence and organisational workplace violence, although limited, were only present at public schools thus adding to the evidence that public school educators have an increased risk of workplace violence.

In line with the Differential Risk Model, an increase in exposure can contribute to an increased risk of victimisation by affecting the routine activities individuals engage in and/or elevating contact and/or proximity to potential offenders by means of differential associations. Education as a profession is a non-household, non-family activity that increases the risk of victimisation (Fattah, 1991:344). The survey indicates that nearly all respondents (95.8%) spend between six and ten hours at school per day thus affording a substantial amount of exposure to potential risk situations. However, the opportunity to victimise educators is not only restricted to school grounds but can also occur when journeying to and from school, during school events and during the commission of school-related acts (De Wet, 2007a:12). It is, therefore, understandable that some educators feel at risk both during classes (private school respondents at 59.5% and public school respondents at 91.3%) and after school (private school respondents at 38.1% and public school respondents at 7.2%). These findings substantiate similar insights from research in private and public schools conducted in Minnesota (Gerberich et al., 2011:297). With the private/public divide in mind, public school educators felt more at risk of victimisation during classes (r=-0.37) whereas those at private schools felt more at risk after school (r=-0.38). Although only a few respondents reported feeling victimised by

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overcrowding at their school, it was mainly found among respondents at public schools ($r=-0.30$) which supports notions of overcrowding as a problematic feature of public schools (Department of Basic Education, 2015:14).

Unfortunately, the level of exposure is not the sole contributing factor to workplace violence. Evidence from abroad (Benbenishty & Astor, 2008:65; Steffgen & Ewen, 2007:89) emphasises the interrelated role of multiple contextual factors in school violence. Local researchers (De Wet, 2003:96-97; Burton & Leoschut, 2013:54) likewise underscore the importance of personal, proximal and environmental factors as contributors to educator-targeted violence. The present survey backs these insights, as respondents identified a range of contributors to violence, amongst others, ill-discipline, ineffective disciplinary rules, familial factors such as poor parenting, substance abuse, workplace stress and frustration, ineffective management, communication and protection, and social and moral decay. What is thus far clear is that educators are vulnerable to various types of workplace violence and that violence can be committed by various profiles of perpetrators. The fact that educators are exposed to violence at various times and from different sources may well exacerbate their fear, which could in turn decrease their sense of control and hamper quality teaching and learning. This observation particularly applies to public school educators since they are more likely to feel threatened and fear for their personal safety, as evidenced by the predominantly medium effect sizes of statistical significance.

Research indicates that the risk of workplace violence can be reduced by the distribution of materials on workplace violence, effective reporting and debriefing mechanisms, involvement in decision-making, and training (Kajs, Schumacher & Vital, 2014:94-95; Kelley & Mullen, 2006:502). The present survey found that the greater proportion of educators (57.9%) were unaware of policies regarding workplace violence and public school educators were more likely to call for specific policies in this regard ($r=-0.25$). It is of grave concern that 91% of respondents have not received training on workplace violence and, not surprisingly, more than half (51.3%) stated that they would welcome such training. Furthermore, public school educators were more inclined to consider the security measures at their schools as inadequate ($r=-0.20$) which to a large extent underscores their heightened risk of workplace victimisation. It can, therefore, be surmised that the absence of policies, training and prevention strategies may well foster greater exposure to and experiences of workplace violence among public school educators.

A lack of control can increase the risk of exposure to workplace violence. As control can be partially mediated by autonomy and participation in decision-making (Notelaers, De Witte & Einarsen, 2010:499), a decrease in either of these can potentially result in a control deficit. Public school educators reported a lower level of involvement in decision making than their private school counterparts ($r=-0.24$). As such, they are more likely to suffer a deficit in control that may contribute to higher levels of victimisation. In fact, the survey shows that public school educators were more likely to have reported frequent exposure to victimisation in the form of not being heard ($r=-0.22$), favouritism ($r=-0.20$) and unequal treatment ($r=-0.25$).

The higher risk of exposure to and experiences of workplace violence evident among public school educators echo concerns about their personal safety (SACE, 2011:19). Public school respondents were more likely to consider workplace violence as a serious problem ($r=-0.28$) and that workplace violence is not being adequately recognised ($r=-0.20$) or sufficiently addressed ($r=-0.19$). It is, therefore, understandable that educators in public schools not only feel more threatened ($r=-0.28$) and powerless ($r=-0.36$) in the workplace but are also more likely to report their school at high risk for victimisation ($r=-0.22$) and less likely to consider their workplace as safe ($r=-0.29$). It is only reasonable, therefore, to argue that it is not only actual experiences of victimisation but also negative perceptions about personal safety that may well influence educators' work commitment and job satisfaction.

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LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though the quantitative procedures followed in the study provided numerous advantages, the numerical approach constrained personal, in-depth information regarding the feelings, emotions and lived experiences of victims of educator-targeted violence. The authors are fully aware that the availability sampling strategy followed might have resulted in a non-representative profile of educators in the metropolitan area. In addition, the basic nature of the research may cause the findings to not be considered in problem-solving or policy development initiatives, although it can serve as groundwork for future investigations. Also, the study's descriptive purpose has limited explanatory capacity, thus the results do not indicate trends in workplace violence or explain why such violence occurs in schools. Using self-administered questionnaires has the limitation of the researcher not being present to clarify misunderstandings. Although respondents were provided with the contact information of the researchers if clarification was needed, no-one made use of the opportunity and missing data featured. The lower than expected response rate is furthermore attributed to the use of self-administered procedures.

Research covering a larger geographical area than the present investigation is needed and should comprise more schools and different education districts. Future research should refine understandings of the influence of schools' status vis-à-vis the typologies of violence experienced, in particular organisational and relationship workplace violence, the severity of offences, and the outcomes of reporting. Delving deeper into the forms of leadership in schools and their possible association with experiences of power is further suggested. Finally, an evaluation of the various forms of support and training available to educators may be beneficial in developing future policies regarding educator-targeted violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of the nature and extent of educator-targeted violence, increased awareness campaigns and the dissemination of information related to workplace violence are needed. Information and policies need to clearly indicate to all parties that both physical and non-physical violence – whether transgressed by a learner, parent, co-worker, stranger, principal or vice-principal, partner and/or organisation – against an educator qualifies as workplace violence. All parties need to be informed about the types of educator-targeted violence and the consequences of such violence must be known. The researchers recommend routine evaluation of safety measures at schools in addition to regular inspections of physical infrastructure related to safety concerns.

With regard to the effects and consequences of workplace violence, the researchers feel that support is vital as a protective factor. The equal distribution and provision of interpersonal, co-worker and supervisory support that cuts across the hierarchy in schools is therefore advocated. To minimise the adverse effects of violent incidents, continuous monitoring and review of complaints procedures and reporting mechanisms are recommended. Finally, annual awareness programmes for all staff members regarding leadership and management within the school setting – with specific reference to empowerment, trust, autonomy and participation in decision-making – may assist educators' participation in managing and preventing educator-targeted violence. Such awareness may be particularly advantageous to public school educators, resulting in a more efficient flow of daily operations and the harmonious distribution of power and control among all parties.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from this survey that, even though violence is a reality in both private and public secondary schools, educators at public schools appear to be at greater risk of workplace violence. In addition, the nature of the violence presents different typologies across the two

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settings. In part, public school educators suffer increased vulnerability due to a lack of control and inadequate policies, training and prevention strategies. As such, their increased vulnerability justifies their adverse perceptions of risk and safety in the workplace. Without addressing their risk and exposure to workplace violence, educators cannot be expected to teach to their full potential if personal safety remains a matter of concern. Addressing educator-targeted violence requires a coherent response that involves managers, educators, parents and learners.

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ENDNOTES:

1. Hazing involves norm-violating activities in which members must engage (suggested/ordered by a high-status member) that humbles a newcomer. The activity can be criminal or non-criminal (Nuwer, 2001: xxv).
2. The reader should keep in mind that, for the purposes of this study, the term "educator" is used in a broad sense and includes subject teachers, assistant teachers, co-heads of department, heads of department, vice-principals and principals.

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