



Interpreting and responding to learner violence in rural secondary schools: A call to curb learner violence in public schools

Julius Theledi Nkube

E-Mail: Theledi.nkube@ump.ac.za

Khashane Stephen Malatji

E-Mail: Khashane.Malatji@ump.ac.za

School of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, University of Mpumalanga,
Siyabuswa Campus, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

Abstract

This study investigated how school management teams interpret and respond to learner violence in rural public schools in South Africa. The study explored causes of school violence and measures to curb it and ensure a safer school environment. Schools in South Africa today are still characterised by suffering, fear, and injuries to both learners and teachers, despite the availability of legislation and a school safety framework. Becker's labelling theory served as the theoretical framework for this study. A qualitative research approach with interpretivism as a research paradigm. A case study design was applied, and Interviews were used to collect data, to obtain an in-depth understanding of policies and learner-teacher interactions related to school violence. The findings revealed that minimal attention is given to Human Rights violations in a school environment. Easy access to public schools by community members is evident in rural areas, posing a risk of unauthorised weapons entering schools. The lack of partnership between the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service also makes schools unsafe environments. This study concluded that, due to financial constraints, schools are unable to implement access controls, thereby compromising school safety. The study recommended that the Department of Basic Education collaborate with the Department of Social Development to create sustainable programmes to offer psychological support to schools and provide schools with opportunities to learn about school violence. Moreover, the Department of Basic Education must provide funds to support all strategies developed to ensure security protocols that ensure the safety of public schools.

Keywords: Management, violence, bullying, rights, policies, school, teachers, learners, safety.

Introduction

School violence in South African public schools has now become a recurring concern. It affects the overall school climate, culture, teaching, and learning. According to Govender (2015), the main contributing factor to school violence is a society that may be broken in many categories. Research reports that school bullying challenges disrupt the daily school routine. Other cases report both learners and teachers experiencing fear and psychological distress. This study examines the role of senior management teams in developing innovative strategies that may contribute to a safer school setting. School violence in South Africa is not a new phenomenon; South African scholars have long documented its prevalence and complexity. Violence is an exercise of power/ physical/ verbal/or force or intimidation that results in fear, suffering or

injury, and is a form of aggressive and abusive behaviour (Van der Walt, 2004). Researchers like Govender (2015) and Meyer (2005) further identified that the causes often originate from challenges in societies, such as past trauma of an aggressive environment, rape, family instability, carelessness, and substance abuse, poverty and substance abuse. A study by the South African Council of Educators reports that learner aggression is often directed at teachers, and the National School Safety Framework (2015) reported on ongoing challenges with access control and the implementation of policy in South African schools. Although South Africa has legislation such as the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996), which provides regulatory guidelines, the Gap remain apparent in under-resourced rural schools.

Within the South African context, despite extensive policy development, there are three areas of concern which persist, how school management teams interpret the challenges of human rights violations that are linked to schools, challenges related to access control, which remained weak in many south African underprivileged schools due to financial constraints, and existing studies focus their attention on learner–learner bullying with minimum attention given to the view point of school leadership and institutional response. These gaps limit the construction of context-sensitive strategies that may contribute to violence prevention in schools. This study's objective is to explore how school management teams view and understand the causes of learner violence and how it manifests itself in a school setting. This study also seeks to identify strategies applicable to strengthening school safety. By advancing the school's leadership perspective, this research aims to develop capacity and refine policies within school leadership and management structures. This study is grounded in Becker's (1963) labelling theory, which was later interpreted by Bernberg (2009). This theory provided a perspective on how to assess a deviant behaviour, as it can be constructed, judged and managed. The interpretivism paradigm was used to inform this research process. A qualitative approach and case study design were employed to gain in-depth knowledge about the context of selected secondary schools. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from principals, deputy principals and Departmental heads to capture their firsthand experiences and the institutional interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation.

Problem statement.

School violence in South African public schools continues to undermine learning and teaching despite the comprehensive policy and legislative framework that exists, such as the national safety framework and the South African Schools Act (Govender, 2015). Challenges of substance abuse, bullying, physical aggression and intimidation persist, particularly in underprivileged rural schools that are under-resourced and characterised by constraints of finances that limit effective access control and security measures (Catana, 2015). Although studies previously reported on the prevalence and the causes of school violence, limited attention is given to how the senior management teams interpret the incident of violence, apply available policies within constrained settings, and develop strategies that are practical for the prevention of school violence. This gap weakens the institution's responses and may contribute to inconsistencies in the management of challenges related to human rights violations, affecting both teachers and learners. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the school management team's perspective to inform sustainable strategies for a safer school environment.

Research questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- How do senior management teams understand and respond to challenges of learner violence in their schools?
- What strategies can be developed to create safer school settings in South African public schools?

Research objective

- To explore school management teams' perspectives on learner violence and respond to learner violence in schools.
- To recommend relevant strategies to strengthen school safety in South African public schools.

Literature review

South African scholarship has documented school violence widely; however, its management and interpretation remain challenging. Vander Walt (2004) defines violence as an activity that involves the dominance of power through verbal or physical force that results in injury or fear. Vander Walt's definition provides for the nature of violent behaviour. According to Govender (2015), the experience from teachers defined school violence within a broader social experience, such as family instabilities, poverty and abuse of substances. The contrast is vivid. One approach is social, and the other defines violence as a concept. Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) expanded the debate by linking school violence to historical disadvantages and structural differences. Research conducted by Hoffman (2013) shifted the focus on teachers as victims, physical aggression from learners and reported that teachers continue experiencing intimidation. SACE (2015) study supported this finding and indicated that challenges of violence are not limited to learner-learner bullying. Studies congregate into evidence that violence is multidirectional in nature. Most of the studies focus their documentation on prevalence and the effects of school violence. The school leadership and the management teams' responses receive less focused analysis.

Literature blended with policy presents a formal government perspective. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) and the National School Safety Framework (DBE, 2015) offer regulatory guidelines for challenges related to safety and discipline. Potgieter (1997) noted that school management teams and school governing bodies bear the binding responsibilities for policy implementation in South African schools. On paper, the policy presentation and the framework appear comprehensive. Allen and Mintrom (2010) caution that the government policies assume that schools have fully capacitated leaders; however, the reality is the opposite. In rural public schools, financial constraints limit access control, security, and safety appointment systems. This creates a vivid understanding of the gap between the policy's interpretation and the school's leadership capacity. South African scholars such as Malatji, Maphosa, and Mavuso (2016) and Mhlongo, Maile, and Malatji (2021) remained focused on collaboration among unions, schools, and communities in their reports. Relational dimensions in a school setting were the focus of their school safety reporting. They further recognised that leadership effectiveness depends primarily on engagement with stakeholders. However, this study focused on broad participation. It did not examine how School Management teams

interpret, how the perception of violence shapes decision-making and how it shapes itself in a school setting.

Theoretical views also differ. Becker's (1963) understanding of deviance, later detailed by Bernburg (2009), suggested that an individual's behaviour becomes deviant through labelling and social reaction. In a school setting, learners may adopt labels assigned by people in authority. According to Catana (2015), causes of violence may be categorised into school culture, managerial and individual aspects. These ingrained perspectives move beyond individual blame and acknowledge institutional accountability, inviting a closer examination of leadership practice. A continuing tension in the literature concerns human rights and the responsibilities they entail. The South African Constitution (1996) guarantees human dignity and safety for both teachers and learners. SACE (2015) indicated that teachers feel more uncertain when enforcing discipline due to fear of procedural violations. This uncertainty threatens the consistency towards responding to violence. Safety may require both psychological and physical protection (Maxwell, 2000). The policy recommends Access control and infrastructure for South African schools; however, resource limitations regularly hinder their implementation, leaving schools vulnerable to bullying and unsafe conditions. The literature indicated a strong account of the causes, prevalence and policy implementation dimensions of school violence in South Africa. The literature is documented. What remains under-investigated is the interpretive analysis of how school management teams' viewpoints on school violence, particularly the challenges faced by rural public schools, are shaped. Limited research is available on school management teams' perspectives on their roles in developing strategies and in schools' responses to school violence. This study addressed a Gap by investigating how school management teams conceptualise school violence and identify practical strategies to curb school violence.

Theoretical framework

The study was grounded in Becker's (1963) labelling theory, further elaborated by Bernburg (2009). found that wrongdoing does not necessarily rely on a defined code to be violated, but also on the act that outrages the societal communities. This theory holds that one's image is socially constructed and later reconstructed through individual and community interactions. People are being labelled according to how society perceives their behaviour. According to Bernburg (2009), this is evident when one is aware of how the community judges them, based on multiple attempts across various functions and roles that allow such individuals to gauge reactions from those in proximity. Bernburg (2009) claims that the theory constructs the self as a subjective conception and further claims that others project into such a self, necessitating reconstruction through intersubjective means that is evaluated for attractiveness. The term "deviate role" refers to when someone behaves in ways that are not expected in a school setting. Since every learner is required to abide by the policies, laws, rules, and regulations that govern the school, it is simple for teachers and the school management teams to identify deviations and render fair judgments. The study aims to understand school management teams' perspectives on the prevalence of learner violence in schools. This theory provided a lens that allowed a clear interpretation. Police officers, judges, and teachers were used as examples of social representatives implied to provide such judgment in this theory, which holds that a person in a social role may provide clear and widely respected judgment.

Bernburg (2009) further cited Becker (1963) in his investigation, who stated that applying the deviant role significantly affects how those in positions of judgment perceive those roles, as well as how an individual views their interpersonal relationships and place in society.

According to Bernburg (2009), social functions are stigmatised when self-labels and perceptions are aligned with the deviant role. There are many ways that students use violence in schools, and the stigma role is used to limit and control deviant behaviour. Research over the years has shown that bullying, killing, beating, and other forms of violence have been reported, and this can be classified as social stigma. From them, a conclusion can be drawn to limit the deviant practice, but the insightful understanding of those charged with this responsibility becomes crucial. School Management Teams should be able to recognise this social stigma, per SASA (Act 84 of 1996), which is charged with oversight of proceedings within a school environment. To reach a conclusion and make recommendations regarding learner violence in South African schools, the research enabled an understanding of school management teams' views on the stigma faced by students in schools.

Methodology

Interpretivism was applied as the study paradigm, with a qualitative approach, in this research. According to Rubin and Babbie (1989), qualitative research is by its very nature an inductive process. A case study design was used, and, according to Simons (2009), a case study focuses on a deep exploration of the various viewpoints of a problem, integrated with the components of a real-world system. The selected methodology was adopted to explore the senior management teams' interpretation of learner violence in the selected secondary schools.

Population and sampling

The study's population consist of 27 principals, 6 deputy principals, and 33 departmental heads. Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants who had responsibilities and direct experience managing the challenges of school violence. The selected sample comprises 15 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM members. Three principals (one female, two male principals), three deputy principals (one female and two males), and nine heads of departments (five males and four females).

Methods and analysis

Data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. Questions focused on learners' experiences, their understanding of violence and human rights violations, and policy implementation. This method allowed a researcher to probe and respond to clarify responses, which generated a detailed account of the experiences of selected participants. Themes were used to analyse the interview transcripts. Coding across participants was used to identify patterns and differences in perspectives.

Trustworthiness and ethical consideration

Credibility, dependability, authenticity, and transferability ensured trustworthiness. Direct engagement with participants increased credibility. Dependability was maintained through consistent data collection procedures. Authenticity was ensured by applying a direct and accurate representation of participants' views. Transferability was supported by providing contextual details of the research. Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. The researcher made clear that participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained, confidentiality was maintained, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities.

Data presentation

All the schools sampled were rural public schools in the Limpopo DoE, South Africa, and the researcher conducted 15 interviews with 3 principals, 3 deputy principals, and 9 departmental

heads from the Maleboho East Circuit. Minimum attention is given to Human Rights violations affecting both learners and teachers in public schools, and outsiders have easy, uncontrolled access to them due to a lack of financial support. The following are results and revelations from the gathering and presentation of opinions.

Limited institutional response to the challenges of human rights violations.

Concerns about school violence persist, and participants have demonstrated that they agree. Their responses indicated that school violence is seen as usual and that advocacy for human rights is not consistently translated into daily practice. There is still a lack of systems in place to address these issues.

DP1 said: *“We are faced with a challenge where teachers are constantly accused of violating learners' human rights. At the same time, teachers raise concerns about their safety when learners insult or threaten them. We are caught in the middle”*. P3 added that: *“a learner reported a challenge to me about a teacher, upon investigation, I found that the teacher was responding to how a learner was addressing her, she even insulted her teacher”*

In the response, the challenge of human rights violations is presented as contested terrain, and school disciplinary systems are interpreted through fear of practical error.

DH1 explained that: *“learners report bullying but later withdraw their cases as they fear revenge after discipline. In our school, there is no proper counselling procedure in place to support them”* DH2 added that: *“Sometimes learners are called troublemakers, this may happen even before investigation. Teachers in these cases already know a day will not go by without these learners being involved in trouble”*.

Dh8 said: *“I sometimes feel like resigning, I cannot handle that school anymore”*. Dh4 added: *“It is challenging sometimes to wake up and prepare for work.”*

The absence of support for psychological challenges renders school structures weak and unable to respond to daily challenges. This results in a school culture rooted in fear.

DH3 observed that: *“School management teams rely on their experience. There is no proper training in place to help school management teams address human rights violations and school violence”*. P1 added that: *“I have not attended any formal workshop that developed us in terms of dealing with human rights challenges in our circuit”*

This suggests that human proper management in schools is informally managed. The policies do exist; however, the responses indicate the challenges evoked from a lack of practical capacity in School management teams.

Across participants' responses, human rights are inconsistently applied; however, they are recognised in principle. School management teams displayed uncertainty when balancing procedural compliance and discipline. Lack of psychosocial support, labelling practice and limited support to professional development contribute to unstable institutional responses. Challenges of violence are therefore structural and behavioural.

Substance abuse, community influence and weak access control.

Participants have emphasised how several external causes and infrastructure weaknesses influence and intensify school violence. Participants' responses indicated the porous boundary between the community and the school environment.

DP2 said: *“Our drug and alcohol challenges are mainly on Mondays, learners come to school drunk on Mondays”*. DH9 explained that: *“This learner stays at the toilet, smokes, becomes disruptive at school, and when forced to attend classes, it becomes chaos: teachers complain about them”*.

DH 7 added that: *“they steal and beat other learners; lessons cannot continue; and teachers are always threatened during lessons”*.

P2 stated that: *“There is nothing we can do to stop learners from using drugs, with no security to search them”*. DP3 added and said: *“Our school do not have a proper fence that is maintained. During breaks, people enter the school yard as they please. At some points, problems start outside the school and find their way into the school yard”*

DH6 explains that: *“learners just do as they please, they stay in the toilets and smoke. We are not sure about alcohol in a school yard, but if you go to a boy’s toilet, you will find a pack of smokes left over from dagga and cigarettes in many qualities”*.

DH5 shared that: *“Weapons are something found after a challenge is reported. Without random searches, we discover them after the damage is already done”*.

Teachers and school management teams choose to deal with what policies allow them to do; policy does not allow schools to use their Norms and standard funds to hire security personnel. This leaves the school entrances uncontrolled during morning and break times. Learners and people outside the school can move freely and bring anything to and from school without anyone noticing. The difficulties posed by school violence persist due to this challenge. These free movements directly contribute to school violence, as drugs, alcohol, and weapons can reach the school at any time.

Key findings

This study revealed that two interrelated dynamics are responsible for sustaining school violence in public schools in South Africa. The initial challenge reported is a weak institutional response and interpretation to human rights violations. The reports from participants show that the school management teams recognise school violence as a serious concern. They acknowledge that school environments are hostile, leaving both teachers and learners in fear, emotionally strained, and intimidated. Disciplinary systems in schools are handled with caution due to concerns about procedural errors and the risk of accusations of human rights violations. Victims sometimes withdraw their cases due to fear of retaliation. Other learners are referred to as troublemakers before investigations. Psychosocial support structures are not available in schools, and appropriate managerial development for managing human rights violations is lacking. The second challenge revealed is a structural vulnerability. Schools face challenges of uncontrolled access due to inadequate fencing, financial constraints, and a lack of security personnel. People from the community, drugs and alcohol access the school premises with no resistance. The policies available to schools prevent them from hiring security personnel from the norms and standards funds provided by the government without the department's approval. This creates frustration for school management, as they now operate under constrained conditions. Violence then becomes embedded in schools' daily activities and functions. The findings suggest that school violence is not only behavioural. It also reflected as institutional capacity gaps, structural limitations, and leadership uncertainty.

Discussions

Limited institutional response to the challenges of human rights violations.

The study's findings demonstrate that school management teams operate in an uncertain school setting. Participants understand that school discipline must align with the South African constitutional principles and the departmental policies. At the same time, they fear being accused of violating learners' human rights, which creates tension, leading to hesitation and weakening school authority. Hoffman (2013) reported that when teachers are exposed to recurring intimidation, they may withdraw their physical or emotional support from an unsafe environment. This report aligns with school management members who reported exhaustion and expressed thoughts of resignation. Teachers may feel unsupported when the leadership's responses look inconsistent. This may be interpreted as institutional weakness. Becker's conceptualisation of deviance, as elaborated by Bernburg (2009), is relevant here. Practices were labelled and evident from the participants. When school management labelled learners as troublemakers, this identity was reported to become socially fixed. This implies that the deviant role was enforced rather than transformed. In this situation, the discipline does not rehabilitate. It solidified a learner's stigma, and the leadership was decisive in this interpretation. If the school management lacks training in a human rights approach and in restoration capacity, they may unintentionally reproduce the deviant behaviour they seek to prevent.

Sace (2015) noted teachers' repeated uncertainty about enforcing discipline due to procedural fears. The reports and findings extend this argument form. This uncertainty not only affects school legality but also teachers' psychosocial status. Without structural intervention programmes and counselling systems in place, the fear internalised by both teachers and learners will only deepen. School atmosphere remains defensive and is dominated by fear. The implication is clear. Human rights advocacy must move beyond mere compliance and be translated into practical tools that schools can rely on. The implementation of Collaborative reflection forums, structured training, and case-based simulation may strengthen the school management's confidence. When the school leadership is guided through clarity and fairness, deviant labels may be replaced by corrective engagement.

Substance abuse, community influence and weak access control.

Infrastructure and policy constraints are the study's second significant findings. Participants explain that schools are characterised by porous school boundaries where community members enter the school yard and leave without control. As a result, weapons and substances circulate undetected throughout the school environment. This confirms Maxwell's (2000) claim that a school's safety depends on both psychological and physical protection. Malatjie, Maphosa, and Mavuso (2016) argue that the coordination of stakeholders' collaboration may strengthen school safety. The findings in this study support this position. However, coordination alone cannot address structural challenges. Supervision becomes symbolic when the fence is broken, and security personnel are unavailable. According to Allen and Mintrom (2010), the policy framework assumes that schools have readily available resources and capacity. Schools in rural areas frequently lack both. Administrative paralysis is created in this situation by the prohibition of using the school norms and standard funds for security without departmental approval. School management is responsible for ensuring school safety; however, there is no authority to implement prevention measures. In this case, school violence is not only allowed into the school environment from the community but also enabled by the policy arrangements. This study interprets the school violence in this event as reflecting a practical policy gap, uneven implementation, and a lack of a comprehensive legislative framework. Mhango, Mile

and Malatji (2021) suggested that there should be effective collaboration between the school, the communities and the teachers' union. This remains important; however, these collaborations must be advanced by financial support. Without resource backing, calls for partnerships may remain aspirational.

Strategies to curb learner violence in public schools

The study has revealed that a lack of partnerships between the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service compromises the safety on school premises. The issue of violence is a law enforcement matter since teachers are not trained on how to deal with violence-related issues. Therefore, schools need to work with the local police station to maintain order and safety. Malatji, Mavuso, and Malatji (2018) argue that a partnership between schools and other stakeholders plays a critical role in enforcing community members' accountability to support schools. In South African public schools, student violence is a serious problem that requires urgent action and successful remedies. A multifaceted strategy that involves learners, teachers, parents, and the community is essential to overcoming this difficulty. The establishment of restorative justice programs can promote communication between perpetrators and victims, fostering understanding and accountability (Mahome, Mphahlele & Malatji, 2024). Initiatives like these reduce the risk of further offences and help mend relationships. One additional crucial approach is the creation of anti-bullying laws. A safer environment where respect is fostered and conflicts are handled quickly can be created with clear anti-bullying policies and effective penalties for offenders (Mhlongo, Maile & Malatji, 2021). Additionally, offering students who are experiencing emotional issues or trauma access to counselling and support services can be a crucial step in reducing aggressive conduct. These programs provide early intervention, helping pupils learn to regulate their emotions and promote a more positive school environment.

Teachers must get the training they need to manage their classrooms and resolve conflicts successfully (Michael, Kgomotso, & Malatji, 2023). The learning experience improves when teachers are well-equipped to address violent incidents and foster a positive classroom environment. Additionally, programs that promote active participation in school events help foster a supportive community by increasing parental engagement. Working with parents strengthens positive behaviour in the classroom and at home, promoting a unified approach to violence prevention. Students in peer mediation programs are given the authority to hold themselves accountable for their actions and settle disagreements with their peers. Schools can leverage peer influence to encourage nonviolent conflict resolution by teaching pupils to mediate. Furthermore, the use of anonymous reporting systems enables students to discreetly report violence or threats, raising awareness of problems and facilitating prompt intervention by school officials. Learner violence can also be addressed through community partnerships (Malatji, Mavuso, Malatji, 2018). By working together with local groups, law enforcement, and mental health professionals, we can create a strong support system that goes beyond the classroom. Schools may address the fundamental causes of violence and establish a safer environment by using a holistic strategy. By integrating social-emotional learning into the curriculum, students acquire the fundamental skills to regulate their emotions, make wise choices, and resolve conflicts non-violently. Lastly, Mahome, Mphahlele and Malatji (2024) are of the view that maintaining a safe school environment, one with well-secured facilities and a clean atmosphere, helps foster a sense of safety and well-being among students. In conclusion, a concerted effort involving all parties is necessary to reduce learner violence in South African public schools successfully. By implementing these varied approaches, schools

can create a tranquil learning atmosphere that encourages the growth and development of all pupils.

Conclusions

This study explored how school management teams understood and responded to challenges of learner violence in rural schools of South Africa. The study findings indicated limited psychosocial support, inconsistent disciplinary practices, and uncertainty when applying the existing human rights school-based guidelines. The school's structural weaknesses, including limited funding and inadequate security, contribute to public school safety vulnerabilities. The existing policy framework is unevenly implemented in public schools. Public school leaders rely on their personal interpretations and experiences to manage challenges arising from school violence. To have a safer school, leadership capacity must be strengthened, structural support must be improved, and clear applicable procedural guidelines must be developed. This study's evidence indicates that policy presence alone cannot determine the school's safety outcome. Future researchers should conduct a comprehensive, multiprovincial study to examine how leadership training, security infrastructure, and resource allocation influence the effectiveness of violence-curbing strategies in South African rural schools.

Recommendations

This study recommends:

- Strengthen leadership capacity to manage human rights challenges in schools. School management teams need both structured and sustainable training on legal disciplinary procedures to restore an adequate approach and conflict intervention.
- Introduction of institutionalised psychosocial support systems. Access to psychosocial support, such as counselling, must be formalised and well advocated. Both teachers and learners need systematic behavioural and emotional support to address the identified drivers of persistent human rights violations.
- Improved security infrastructure and support mechanisms. Security fencing should be prioritised to secure schools, and controlled access must be mandatory and monitored. The authorities must allocate funding directly to safety needs identified at the school level.
- Strengthening of the partnership between the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service to maintain order and safety in public schools of South Africa.

References

- Allen, A., & Mintrom, M. (2010). *Responsibility and school governance*. *Educational Policy*, 24(3), 439–464.
- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: Free Press
- Bernburg, J.G. (2009). *Labelling theory* In: Marvin D Krohn, A. Lizotte & G. Penly Hall (Eds.), *Handbook on crime and deviance* (187–207). Springer Science & Business Media.

Catana, L. (2015). *Conflict between teachers, causes and effects*. Institute of Educational Sciences, Romania. Conference: Central and Eastern European Conference "New Approaches in Social and Humanistic Sciences," September 2015, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova.

Department of Basic Education. (2012). *School safety framework, addressing bullying in school: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention*. Available online at: <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/School%20Safety%20Framework%202016.pdf> NSSF_Part A&B. indd (education.gov.za). (Accessed on 01 Oct 2020).

Govender, K. (2015). *Primary school teachers' experiences of violence towards them, perpetrated by learners*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA

Hoffmann, C.T. (2013). *The nature and extent of teachers as targets of bullying by their learners in a high school and in the university. A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education*, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by combination of coursework and research. Johannesburg 2013.

Le Roux, C.S. & P.R. Mokhele (2011). *The persistence of violence in South Africa's schools: in search of solutions*, *Africa Education Review*, UNISA.

Mahome, M. M., Mphahlele, L. K., & Malatji, K. S. (2024). The Role of Teacher Trade Unions in Preventing Staff Victimisation: Voices from the South African Teachers. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 5(1), 26–37.

Malatji, K. S., Maphosa, C., & Mavuso, M. P. (2016). School Management Teams' experiences of their participation in school management in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit in Limpopo province. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 13(3), 276–284.

Malatji, M. J., Mavuso, P. M., & Malatji, K. S. (2018). The role of school-community partnership in promoting inclusive and quality education in schools. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 17(2), 72–86.

Maxwell, L. E. (2000). A safe and welcoming school: What students, teachers, and parents think. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 271–282.

Meyer, A.G. (2005). *School violence in secondary schools: Guidelines for the establishment of health-promoting schools*, Potchefstroom University, South Africa.

Mhlongo, A. R., Maile, S., & Malatji, K. S. (2021). Collaboration among teacher unions, parents and communities for quality education in public schools. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 20(2), 40–56.

Michael, M., Kgomotso, M. L., & Malatji, K. S. (2023). Teachers 'safety within the teacher-directed violence: A model for advancing teachers 'safety in South African schools. *Russian Law Journal*, 11(3), 3047–3059.

Potgieter, J. (1997). *The South African Schools Act: Comments on the functions of school governing bodies, with special reference to the admission and language policy*. In: De Groof, J & Malherbe, E.F.J. (eds) *Human rights in South African Education: From the Constitutional drawing board to the chalkboard*, 1997, 107-118 Leuven: Acco.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (1989). *Research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). (1996). South African Council of Educators Act 84 of 1996. Pretoria. government printer

SACE. (2015). *Report on violence and safety in South African schools*. Pretoria, South Africa: South African Council for Educators.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Van der Walt, J L (2004). *Violent as an impediment to a culture of teaching and learning in some South African schools,* " North West University, South Africa.