

Teachers' Perspectives about Causes of Learner-on-Teacher Violence in Two South African Schools: Implications for School Leadership

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ABSTRACT Despite an increasing interest in researching school violence, there is a paucity of literature on violence against teachers. This paper expands research in this largely neglected area by focusing on the causes of violence instigated by learners against teachers and leadership implications thereof. The theoretical underpinning for the paper is double-folded. First, the ecosystemic theory was used to interpret and explain the said causes of violence. Second, transformational leadership was used as a lens to unpack the leadership implications regarding violence perpetrated by learners against the teachers. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data from a total of 12 teachers selected from two South African high schools. The findings revealed that violence against the teachers emanated from various sources, which include school, family, community and society. The paper concludes that the prevalent teachers' victimization by their learners was an indication of a leadership void in the two schools.

INTRODUCTION

Violence in South African schools is a rampant (De Wet 2016; Mgijima 2014) and a bothering concern (Mncube and Harber 2013). Although it is not a new phenomenon since schools have long been declared as battlefields (Morrell et al. 2012), it is worrying that it is escalating in South African schools (Le Roux and Mokhele 2011; Ncontsa and Shumba 2013). Studies and media reports portraying violent incidents in South African schools reveal that violence is increasing at an alarming rate and as such it requires urgent attention (Burton and Leoschut 2013). Concomitantly, these reports about violence have a potential to influence policymakers and public perceptions (Jacobs 2014). Due to a culture of violence prevalent in South African schools, the primary business of schools, which is teaching and learning, is undermined (Baruth and Mokoena 2016; Mncube and Netshitangani 2014). Internationally, a survey of the secondary schools teachers in Germany reveals that teachers may be victims of various forms of violence perpetrated against them by learners (Ewen 2007) with these forms

of violence including strong verbal attacks, threats, damage to objects and assault by learners (Ewen 2007). Özdemir's (2012) study of elementary and secondary schools' teachers in Turkey found that secondary schools teachers experience more violence than their counterparts in elementary schools.

Literature also suggests that South African teachers are not immune to violence instigated against them by their learners. For example, Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2009) contend that some teachers and principals have been murdered in South African schools. In a qualitative study conducted from three primary and four secondary schools, De Wet (2010) found that learner-on-teacher violence is rife. This study involved principals, heads of departments and teachers who have experienced learner-on-teacher violence. The findings indicate that teachers are exposed to various forms of violence perpetrated against them by their learners. This violence occurs in different areas within the school compounds. In the classrooms, some learners disrupt lessons by talking to each other and ignoring the teachers. They mock and humiliate the teachers. They throw objects at the teacher

while the teacher is writing on the chalkboard. The findings further show that the principals who participated in the study were at one point held captive and threatened by learners while they were in their offices.

Other studies point to multiple causes of violence in South African schools. These include, among other things, authoritarian forms of socialization (Harber 2004), sexism, gambling, xenophobia, threats and retaliation against provocation (Bester and Du Plessis 2010), societal factors, racism (De Wet 2009), and alcohol and drug abuse (Burton and Leoschut 2013; Ncontsa and Shumba 2013). For Singh (2006) the causes of increasing disrespectful behavior of learners include ineffective measures to caution deviant learners, prohibition of corporal punishment, the establishment of Representative Council of Learners, the emphasis of learners' rights by the media, poor parental involvement in disciplining learners and a shortage of school counsellors. While teachers and learners can be perpetrators and victims of violence, there have been few studies, which have focused on prevalence and causes of violence against teachers (Burton 2008; Ewen 2007; Ozmdemir 2012; Pahad and Graham 2012; Wilson et al. 2011).

The success of a school is attributed to effective leadership (Coles and Southworth 2003; Mokhele 2016). The functions of school leaders have increased (Odhiambo and Hii 2012). In particular, South African school leaders are expected to address multiple challenges, which include disciplinary problems and school violence (Botha 2004). In a sense, leadership as a process of influence may be exercised by any one regardless of their position (Bush et al. 2010). Since leadership is the ability to influence followers, all teachers should have leadership ambition about their learners' behavior (Deventer and Kruger 2008). Even though leadership is credited for the success of schools and ability to address various challenges, it is not known how leadership influences the causes of violence perpetrated by learners on teachers. It is this gap in the literature, which the current paper will attempt to fill. As indicated above, there is a paucity of literature on violence experienced by teachers from their learners and as such the present paper also expands research in this area. This paper is guided by the following questions:

- ♦ What are teachers' perspectives about the causes of learner-on-teacher violence in two South African high schools?

- ♦ What are implications for school leadership drawn from teachers' perspectives about the causes of violence instigated against them by their learners?

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted a two-pronged theoretical framework consisting of ecosystemic theory and transformational leadership. Since schools are organizations that operate in a certain environment and context, the first part of the theoretical framework is drawn from environmental theories. Estevez et al. (2008: 4) argue that "environmental theories stress the influence that the environment or social context exert on violent behavior and consider that the person carries out an active role throughout the learning processes." The researchers regarded school violence as emanating from the environment in that a person learns behavior in response to certain environmental events. To this effect, Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecosystemic theory was selected as an ecological approach for this paper. It was used as a theoretical base to understand teachers' perspectives regarding the causes of violence directed by learners against the teachers. Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory depicts violence as interplay among various systems or nested contexts. These nested and layered contexts consist of the families, school, neighborhood, learners or teachers' culture as well as the political, social and economic status of the whole society (Benbenishty and Astor 2008). The ecosystemic approach demonstrates that to understand the violent behavior of learners against their teachers it is essential to take into account both the *micro-violence* present in such learners' immediate contexts (family or school) as well as cultural and structural *macro-violence* in the society.

In line with the focus of this paper, the researchers also used transformational leadership theory as part of the theoretical framework. Transformational leadership became popular in the 1980s in reaction to changes that were predominantly top-down driven at the time (Halling 2003). It denotes the leader's ability to inspire followers in such a way that they transcend their interests in favor of working for the benefit of all. Leaders who use transformational leadership strive to transform and change individuals to be motivated and increase their per-

formance to a high level (English 2006; McGuire 2011). In a way, through transformational leadership, teachers have potential to inspire learners to change their violent behavior against the teachers.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) contend that transformational leadership approach is concerned with setting direction, developing people and redesigning the organization. Setting direction means that leadership assists members of staff to understand organizational goals, purpose and vision. People are likely to be motivated by challenging and achievable goals. Also, transformational leadership is premised on the understanding that developing people is essential. This calls for leaders to provide an appropriate model, individualized support and intellectual stimulation to members of staff. Redesigning of the organization requires adjusting school structures to enhance culture building and ensuring participative decision-making through the creation of collaborative processes (Leithwood and Jantzi 2005). The principle of collaborative culture on decision-making as advanced by proponents of transformational leadership has a positive impact on teachers. Such a culture promotes the commitment of staff to the school vision and self-motivation in working towards achievement of school goals since they partake in decision-making as opposed to being directed (Hallinger 2003). It, therefore, appears that collaboration among the teachers could yield positive results about reducing or stopping learner-on-teacher violence.

Since this paper was concerned about two broad issues of causes of learner-on-teacher violence and school leadership implications thereof, the two theories discussed above provided a blended theoretical framework appropriate as a lens for explaining the findings in response to critical research questions that guided this paper. Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory was used to address the first research question, which seeks an understanding of teachers' perspectives about learner-on-teacher violence while transformational leadership served as a lens for responding to the second research question that focused on the school leadership implications of the said perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the researchers adopted a qualitative research approach to finding out from the participants how they make meaning of the

causes of violence in their setting. This approach allowed the participants to speak about their understanding and interpretations of the causes of violence (Morse and Richards 2002). Two schools served as research sites. These schools were selected after conducting a pilot study, which was intended to identify schools experiencing a high level of violence in a ward found in one district of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. They are located in a relatively poor community. Both of them are no fee schools. To protect their identity, the researchers assigned them fictitious names. The researchers called the first one Better High School (BHS) and the second, Capable High School (CHS). At the time of data generation, BHS was attended by black African learners only, while CHS was attended by black African, Colored and few Indian learners.

The selection of the participants was based on the advice of Creswell (2007), who argues that qualitative researchers seek a detailed understanding of an issue by visiting people, talking with them and allowing them to tell their stories. Since the researchers sought to understand teachers' perspectives regarding the causes of violence instigated by learners on teaching staff, the researchers purposely selected the teachers to participate in this study. The selection of these teachers was based on the advice of Saunders (2012), who contends that qualitative researchers continue with data production until there is saturation. To this effect, the researchers interviewed teachers who were willing to be the participants until the researchers could no longer obtain new information from the participants. This saturation of data occurred after the researchers have interviewed six teachers from each participant school. Individual and semi-structured interviews were held with the participants in the selected schools.

The researchers transcribed and analyzed interviews using content analysis techniques in which patterns, themes and categories emerged (Patton 2002). Due ethical issues were observed. The researchers obtained permission to conduct the study from the South African Department of Education. The principals of the two schools were conducted and issued with letters requesting permission to conduct the study in their schools. After obtaining permission from the principals, informed consent was sought from all the participants. The researchers maintained anonymity and confidentiality throughout the paper.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were of the view that the causes of the learner-on-teacher violence emanated from two broad levels namely, micro and macro levels. Within these two levels, there were interdependent factors prone to violence. To protect the participants' identity, the researchers refer to BHS teacher participants as BHST1, BHST2, BHST3, BHST4, BHST5 and BHST6. Their counterparts from CHS are called CHST1, CHST2, CHST3, CHST4, CHST5 and CHST6.

The Causes of Learner-on-Teacher Violence at Micro Level

The participants believed that sometimes family and school were risk factors that contributed to the causes of learner-on-teacher violence at the micro level. According to Slavin (2009), this level is an individual's immediate environment in which different activities, roles and interpersonal relationships transpire.

Family

Bronfenbrenner (1994) emphasizes the crucial role, which the family plays on children's behavior in general and violent behavior in particular. The teachers reported that some learners came from child-headed families in which they experienced many socioeconomic challenges, and as such, they instigated violence against their teachers. Some of the reasons for learners' violent behavior were provided by one teacher from BHS as follows:

Most of the learners in this school are orphans, and others do not stay with their parents. There is no authority figure in their homes. As a result, they sometimes see teachers at the school as authority that they are not used to because at home these learners are authorities themselves. Sometimes they view some young educators like their brothers or sisters whom they ignore instructions from them at home. When the learner refuses to take instructions from the teacher, problems start (BHST1).

Another teacher from the same school shared similar views:

You find that some of these kids come from homes where there are no parents. The majority of them are orphans. A family culture is not found in them. They don't have any solid background of learning, morals and values (BHST3).

The findings suggest that the absence of some learners' parents had created a gap in which the family was expected to lay a foundation for schools by teaching children socially accepted values, morals and respect for adults. Lack of these fundamental societal values seems to be contributing to the violence, which the affected learners directed at their teachers in the school environment.

The teacher participants at CHS also highlighted the role of the family in fueling learner-on-teacher violence. A teacher from this school blamed learners who came from child-headed households for lack of values such as respect for adults and authorities. As a result, they tended to behave violently towards teachers easily:

Most of our learners come from single parents' homes where they are adults in their own homes. They are being forced to mother their younger siblings because the parent who is supposed to be there is tied up in a job and unavailable. (CHST2).

CHST1 indicated that the manner in which learners were treated at home influenced their behavior towards the teachers. Since they were exposed to violence at home, they readily adopted violence at schools in response to teachers' attempt of disciplining such learners:

You know, there are learners that are influenced by history of disrespecting adults due to circumstances at home. For example, when the teacher threatens to hit such learners, they want to hit back because they are used to this kind of violence at home. They have learnt to hit back at the adults at home.

The role of the family in the socialization process of a child is of paramount importance. Children who grow up in dysfunctional families miss the key opportunity of proper parenting essential for human development and societal values (Le Roux and Mokhele 2011). As a result, the participants strongly felt that learners who did not stay with their parents tended to be violent against their teachers.

School

Within the school environment, teachers and learners interact daily. It is during interactions that violence sometimes manifests and unfolds. The researchers commence the discussion in this subsection with teachers as a factor contributing to the learner-on-teacher violence and then move to the learners as a factor also.

Teachers

The teachers' ways of keeping order in the classrooms and school had a potential to cause or inhibit violence. According to Sugut and Magasia (2014), the attitudes of teachers towards the teaching profession have a direct bearing on the way in which they attempt to control learners. The following quotations from the BHS teachers illustrate that some learners responded in a violent way when teachers resorted to violent means to control the learners:

We had a case where a teacher slapped a child, and as the child runs out of the school premises to call the parents, the child threatened the teacher and said 'I come back for you with my parents, watch it, you don't do that to me again. I am coming back for you' (BHST 2).

We also have cases where learners have threatened to catch teachers after school perhaps because the teachers disciplined these learners during the day or they made them kind of...they humiliated them in class. So, learners make a threat to that particular teacher (BHST4).

From these findings it is suggestive that teachers' violent way of maintaining order was not effective, rather it contributed to violence against them. In CHS, poor classroom management by some teachers was identified as one of the causes of the learner-on-teacher violence. One of the functions of management is planning. By failing to plan their lessons, the teachers appeared to have prepared to fail. They laid a foundation for chaos in the classrooms, which in turn enabled learners to perpetrate violence against such teachers. As one teacher points out:

Some teachers go to class unprepared, and as a result, learners do whatever they like. In the end, there are disciplinary and violence issues, which happen in such teachers' classes (CHST3).

Sharing the same sentiments was another teacher from the same school who claimed:

A lot of our problems stem from the fact that a lot of our teachers are doing the bare minimum of preparations. So a child goes into the class and finds a teacher ill prepared for the lesson. Since the teachers are ill prepared for the lesson, they are sitting in the chair pretending to be busy while the children are left to do whatever they like, and this is where the discipline problems come about (CHST4).

Polka (2007) contends that planning is a fundamental managerial task for the successful operation of the school. The teachers who did not plan their lessons were viewed as creating a classroom environment where learners could be free to do whatever they wanted including acts, which teachers considered to be violent. In such an environment some learners also tended to misunderstand and misinterpret their rights by thinking that they had the rights to behave anyhow in the classrooms.

The manner in which some teachers tried to control the behavior of learners in the two schools contributed to the learner-on-teacher violence in that learners violently responded to teachers' provocative act or utterances. Mncube and Harber (2013) argue that when those in authority become abusive and violent to learners, the learners tend to consider violence as normal and therefore reproduce it. In this way, the schools, through the acts of some teachers, as an immediate environment to learners contributed to the learner-on-teacher violence that did violate not only the affected teachers but also undermined teaching and learning process in the participant schools.

Learners

Learners' peers were also found as contributing to violence in the two schools. The peers caused learner-on-teacher violence through their actions, which illustrated that they approved the behavior of those who violated teachers. Commenting on the response of learners pertaining to their fellow learners' violence against the teachers, a BHS teacher lamented:

These learners insult you or behave in a manner that challenges your emotion. What the learners want to see is you as a teacher becoming angry. Then they will become excited (BHST 5).

Congruent to her BHS counterpart's views, another teacher from CHS had this to say:

During my first year at this school, the learners tested me a lot because I was the new teacher in the school. For example, if I give instructions they would back chat. They wanted to get the attention of their peers. They wanted other learners to see that they could challenge a teacher (CHST1).

It was notable that peer influence placed some learners in a position where they engaged in antisocial behavior (Burton and Leoschut 2013) displayed through antagonizing teachers

to impress their peers. It thus became apparent that the perpetrators of violence might also have been motivated by their friends who laughed when they victimized the teachers (Card and Hodges 2008).

Interplay Between Home and School

In this section, the researchers focus on the connection between microsystems of family and school (Santrock 2008). The findings indicate that the relationship between home and school contributed to violence perpetrated by learners against teachers. This relationship was played out by parents and teachers. Parents, for example, were reported as influencing learners to instigate violence against the teachers. In this regard, one CHS teacher was empathetic that:

The parents encourage their children to misbehave towards teachers because some parents come to the school and shout or insult the teachers in the presence of their children and the children also do the same thing (CHST5).

CHST2 also blamed the parents for learners' violent behavior against the teachers:

Besides, in the community that we teach in, the parents often tell their children that the teachers have no right to shout at them or to tell them this and that. So if a teacher is sitting here and has no rights while children have all the rights, the children also assume that they also have a right not to learn, and hence they abuse teachers and disrupt lessons whenever they feel like doing so. As a teacher, you feel bad and your confidence is injured when you are disrespected or insulted by learners.

The teacher participants felt that the rights of learners were overemphasized by the parents, and hence learners tended to instigate violence against the teachers with the understanding that they were exercising their rights.

A teacher from BHS also highlighted the issue of parents who insulted teachers in the presence of learners:

You see, when a learner has done something wrong and you try to call a parent, a very drunk person will show up, and he will insult you in the presence of the child (BHST 2).

The findings revealed that there was lack of mutual understanding between some parents and the teachers. As a result, such parents were violent towards some teachers. Literature suggests that children learn by watching the acts of

people around them. A child who witnesses his or her parents using conflict to solve problems is likely to settle disputes through violence in the future (Swartz et al. 2004). It is, therefore, suggestive that by being violent against teachers, the parents fueled learner-on-teacher violence.

The Causes of Learner-on-Teacher Violence at the Macro Level

The macro level consists of the community proximate to the schools and the South African society as a whole. The community level focuses on experiences from a particular context, which influences what teachers and learners experience in their immediate setting (Bronfenbrenner 1994) while the society level involves culture, values, beliefs and ideologies (Powell et al. 2009). However, the two levels are closely related.

Community and Society

Schools are a part of communities and as such, violence, which is prevalent in the communities, may also spill into the schools (Leoschut and Burton 2013). In this sense, the community becomes one of the sources of violence experienced by teachers. In relation to community and society as contributing factors to the learner-on-teacher violence, there was a noticeable culture of writing on the walls in the two schools and some learners misused this culture by instigating written violence against the teachers. The participants traced the origin of insults from the community around the schools. Commenting on the influence of the community on violent behavior of learners, a BHST had this to say:

The learners had written the word in isiZulu, which is an extremely vulgar language. They wrote igolo. This is a private part of a woman. They wrote on the door something like a rectangle and also wrote that so and so is that name meaning igolo. The writing was done during break time. The community does not uphold the values of respect, and not using any word like vulgar language. You will find that it is common for these learners even among themselves. That is a ubiquitous thing, which shows the level in the community for not upholding the correct values. For it says even the community has an element of doing or saying these things (BHST6).

BHST5 painted a picture of the manner in which violent and rampant service delivery protests prevalent in South Africa influence some learners to instigate violence of equal magnitude on teachers:

Learners do destroy the property of teachers if there has been a confrontation between a learner and a teacher about certain subjects, and the learner is not satisfied with the punishment that was administered by that teacher. To get back at the teacher, the learner destroys the teacher's property. This societal problem arises because in South Africa there are lots of service delivery protests. Sometimes angry protesters destroy the property of community leaders. They block roads and burn tyres.

Interestingly, violence experienced by teachers was linked to that suffered by community leaders and thus acknowledging the interconnection between the community and the school. Further, some participants at BHS were of the view that the community, which learners came from influenced them to use vulgar language against the teachers. The macro-system level of ecosystemic theory stresses the importance of societal values and ideologies in shaping the behavior of children (Santrock 2008). The society was blamed for failing to uphold and instil values such as respect in some BHS learners. In turn, such learners wrote insults targeted at some teachers. It could be inferred that learners learnt abusive language from some members of the community since children learn by observing the acts of people around them (Powell et al. 2009). Factors such as anger and feelings of revenge by some learners made them violent against their teachers.

A peculiar finding from CHS was the prevalence of xenophobic violence instigated by some learners on African foreign teachers teaching in this school. The participants traced the cause of this form of violence from the South African society as a whole. One teacher, for instance, was empathetic that perhaps the manner in which xenophobia was dealt with in South Africa as a country influenced the attitudes of learners against African foreign teachers:

Our foreign teachers have faced a serious stumbling block in our school. They have to be strong because the way our country has been handling xenophobia has not been effective. There is a xenophobic kind of attitude that comes out from the learners in our school. This

generally happens in other KwaZulu-Natal province schools as well (CHST5).

An African foreign teacher who experienced xenophobia had this to say:

After I entered the class, one learner started saying in isiZulu 'kwerekwere'. It happens that this is what learners mean when they refer to the African foreign teachers. It was a Zulu girl learner who claimed that she was talking to another learner, not me. But I heard her saying kwerekwere because for her any African teacher that doesn't come from South Africa is a kwerekwere. It means maybe you are not up to the standard as a teacher (CHST6).

The term kwerekwere is used by South African citizens to refer to foreign African nationals who are perceived by the former as inferior (Manik 2013) and speak strangely as well as in unintelligible languages (Hemson 2011). The xenophobic attitudes, which foreign teachers experienced in this school can be understood from a broader social context of a South African society where foreign African nationals had been subjected to xenophobic violence by some members of South African society. There is a consensus among researchers (Hemson 2011; Manik 2013; Singh 2006) that xenophobia is a phenomenon, which exists among South African citizens. It reached a high climax in 2008 where many African nationals were attacked by some members of South African society. Thus, the xenophobia violence perpetrated by learners against African foreign teachers at CHS was a reflection of the manner in which some South Africans sometimes treat foreign African nationals.

In general, the findings suggest that multiple factors or systems were contributing to school violence in the participant schools. Some factors were internal while others were external to the schools. However, all these systems were interdependent and interrelated. As it emerged from the findings, dysfunctional families were viewed as a fertile ground for breeding violence, which affected the two schools negatively. The community and society's violent behavior also influenced how learners related and interacted with teachers in the schools. Harber (2004) warns that South African schools experience a high level of violence because they fail to address the systemic underlying risk factors prone to violence. Notwithstanding the negative impact of one system on another, there is a possibility of schools emerging as non-violent and as

such exerted positive effects on other systems when taking into consideration that effective leadership is associated with successful schools (Makhasane and Chikoko 2016; Mokhele 2016). The researchers now turn to discuss the implication of school leadership based on what the participants considered as the causes of violence against the teachers.

Implications for School Leadership

This paper argues that the teachers' prevalent victimization by learners in the two schools was a sign of the absence of leadership at various levels. At the senior management level, the principals and other members of school management teams appeared to have been struggling to create and maintain an environment where teachers would experience less violence. In essence, without leadership initiatives by senior management, schools were unlikely to address learner-on-teacher violence effectively (Makhasane and Chikoko 2016). New teachers, for instance, were said to be experiencing violence while they were teaching. This illustrates that leaders with positions failed to guide the said teachers on how to tackle learner to teacher violence. House (1996) maintains that it is the duty of positional leaders to supervise their subordinates, thereby creating a clear and easy path to be followed. In this way, it is fundamentally, the role of positional leaders to empower teachers to tackle learner-on-teacher violence. Dambé and Moorad (2008) maintain that visionary leaders have the potential to move an organization from a stagnant position to the stage where goals can be realized. It is arguable that educational goals can hardly be achieved where teachers are victimized by their learners, instead of exercising leadership roles to address violence effectively.

Some teachers also appeared to be ineffective as leaders. Instead of being violently victimized by learners, teachers were expected to be seen providing direction to learners for acceptable behavior since leadership as a process can be exercised by anyone regardless of their positions (Bush et al. 2010). In South Africa, it is a matter of policy that teachers should be leaders (Department of Education 2000).

Since leadership is a process available to anyone within schools (Bush et al. 2010), it is essential to create inclusive leadership involv-

ing teachers and learners to facilitate collaborative decision making to address school violence in general and its causes in particular. This deliberate designing of schools as organizations (Leithwood and Jantzi 2005) has a potential to empower leadership to provide direction and inspire the transformation of learners from violent to less behavior.

CONCLUSION

The findings generated from the original perspectives of research participants have expanded the understanding of learner-on-teacher violence in two schools from a generally deprived context and prompted barriers that need to be addressed. What is most significant is that the causes of learner-on-teacher violence in the two participant schools were multifaceted and embedded in the rural ecology. Clearly, an understanding of how various stakeholders interacted within these systems is essential for schools to address such causes of violence effectively. However, in the absence of leadership, such causes were likely to remain a challenge in the two schools. The paper, therefore, argues that there was an apparent leadership void in the two schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper was based on data generated from two schools only. Despite insights about the causes of learner-on-teacher violence provided in this paper, the results cannot be generalized to all South African schools. The researchers, therefore, recommend large-scale research that will explore the use of ecosystemic and transformational leadership theories with the community for advancing knowledge about the causes of learner-on-teacher school violence and leadership practices for creating and managing violent-free schools in South Africa.

The researchers also suggest that teachers and learners as well as other stakeholders should understand the causes of learner-on-teacher violence in particular and school violence in general. Based on this understanding, they can devise appropriate management strategies and leadership approaches to address school violence.

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