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The Effects of School Violence on Learners in Rural Secondary Schools

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Abstract

School violence is an escalating concern globally, particularly in rural secondary schools, where unique socio-economic challenges exacerbate the problem. This paper aims to investigate the impact of school violence on learners in rural secondary schools, focusing on how such violence affects their academic performance, mental health, and future aspirations. The study also explores the contributing factors to school violence and proposes evidence-based interventions to mitigate its effects. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the interaction between individuals and their environments, the research paper highlights how community, cultural norms, and resource constraints shape the incidence and impact of school violence. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi- structured interviews and focus groups to collect data from learners, teachers, and community members in selected rural secondary schools. The sample comprised 30 learners, 12 teachers, and 5 administrators from 5 rural secondary schools, purposefully selected to provide diverse perspectives on the issue. Data were analysed thematically, revealing key patterns in the experiences of school violence. The paper found that learners exposed to violence, either as victims or witnesses, faced significant academic challenges and serious emotional and psychological effects, including anxiety, depression, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The paper recommended that to protect learners from violence, it is crucial to enhance school safety by monitoring high-risk areas and establishing safe spaces. These measures will create a supportive environment, allowing students to concentrate on their studies without fear.

Keywords: Academic performance, Bullying, Mental health, School safety, School violence

1. Introduction and Background

School violence is a serious and growing problem that affects learners all over the world. It creates many challenges for teachers, school leaders, and communities. School violence can take different forms, such as bullying, physical fights, verbal abuse, and even more serious acts like sexual harassment or the use of weapons. When there is violence in schools, it makes the learning environment unsafe. This can cause learners to struggle with their schoolwork and harm their emotional well-being.

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While school violence happens everywhere, rural secondary schools often have special challenges that make the problem worse. In rural areas, schools may lack resources and support, such as mental health services or enough teachers. Rural schools are also sometimes isolated, making it harder for learners to get the help they need when violence occurs (Nkosi, 2019). Because of these difficulties, violence in rural secondary schools can have a deep impact on learners, affecting both their physical and mental health as well as their academic success.

Violence in rural secondary schools has become a big concern, especially in places where poverty, unemployment, and cultural traditions can lead to more violence inside and outside of school. Rural schools often exist in poor communities where there is a lot of social and economic hardship. These schools may not have enough money or support to prevent or deal with violence, leaving both learners and teachers unprepared when conflicts arise. As a result, learners are more likely to face violence, including bullying and physical fights (Mabena and Morolong, 2022).

In many cases, the violence in rural schools is made worse by the conditions in the surrounding community. High crime rates in rural areas often influence behaviour in schools, with learners bringing aggressive habits from outside into the classroom. In some rural communities, cultural norms may also contribute to problems, such as gender-based violence or corporal punishment, making violence even more common in schools (Nkosi, 2019). When learners do not feel safe, they are less likely to attend school regularly, which can hurt their academic performance and lead to dropping out.

The effects of school violence do not stop at the school gates. Violence that starts in school can also affect the wider community. When learners learn violent behaviours at school, they are more likely to continue these behaviours as adults, creating cycles of violence that harm both the community and its economic development (Mabena and Morolong, 2022). For these reasons, it was important for this paper to find solutions that address the economic, social, and cultural causes of school violence in rural secondary schools.

This paper explores how school violence affects learners in rural secondary schools. It looks at how violence impacts their schoolwork, emotional health, and future opportunities. By understanding the challenges faced by rural schools, this paper hopes to suggest ways to reduce the harm caused by school violence and improve the safety and well-being of learners.

2. Problem Statement

School violence is a growing problem in schools worldwide, but it is especially serious in rural secondary schools, where issues like poverty and lack of resources make things worse. Even though more people are aware of school violence, there is not enough research focused on how it affects learners in rural areas, where support services are often hard to access. In rural secondary schools, learners face physical and emotional harm, which also affects their ability to do well in school and their overall well-being.

Most studies look at violence in urban schools or treat school violence as a general problem, without considering the specific challenges rural learners face, like isolation, poverty, and lack of support. This gap in research makes it difficult for teachers and policymakers to find solutions that meet the unique needs of rural schools. This paper aims to fill this gap by looking at how school violence affects learners in rural secondary schools, especially in terms of their schoolwork, mental health, and future opportunities.

3. Aim

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of school violence on learners in rural secondary schools, with a focus on understanding how these experiences influence their academic performance, mental health, and future aspirations. The paper also seeks to identify the factors contributing to school violence in rural areas and to propose evidence-based interventions to reduce its occurrence and impact.

4. Research Question

- How does school violence affect the academic performance and mental health of learners in rural secondary schools?

- What are the primary forms of school violence experienced by learners in rural secondary schools?

- What are the contributing factors to school violence in rural secondary schools?

- What strategies and interventions can effectively mitigate the effects of school violence in rural secondary schools?

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which provides a comprehensive lens for understanding how various environmental systems influence an individual's development. According to Bronfenbrenner, an individual's behaviour and experiences are shaped by interactions within different levels of environmental systems, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

In the context of school violence, the microsystem includes immediate surroundings such as family, peers, and school. For example, learners who experience violence at home or in their peer groups are more likely to encounter similar issues at school (Smith and Harper, 2019). The mesosystem involves the relationships between different microsystems, such as the connection between family and school. Effective communication between these systems can help address and prevent school violence. When families and schools work together to support learners, it creates a more cohesive support network for managing violent behaviours (Jones and Smith, 2020).

The exosystem includes broader community and local policies that indirectly impact individuals. In rural areas, limited community resources and inadequate local policies can exacerbate issues of school violence. The lack of support systems and intervention mechanisms in these broader contexts can contribute to the persistence of violence in schools (Brown et al., 2021). The macrosystem encompasses cultural and societal norms that influence behaviour. In some rural communities, cultural attitudes toward aggression and violence can perpetuate these behaviours. Understanding and addressing these societal norms is crucial for developing effective interventions (Taylor and Rivers, 2022).

By applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this study provides a holistic view of how various environmental systems contribute to the prevalence and impact of school violence in rural secondary schools. This framework underscores the importance of considering multiple levels of influencing immediate interactions, relationships between different systems, broader community contexts, and cultural norms in addressing and mitigating school violence. The findings highlight the need for interventions that address these diverse factors to create a safer and more supportive school environment.

6. Literature Review

School violence in rural areas is a complex issue influenced by a variety of socio- economic, cultural, and institutional factors. The existing literature highlights several key aspects of this problem, providing insight into how school violence affects learners and offering suggestions for how it can be effectively addressed.

7. Resource Limitations in Rural Schools

One of the major challenges in addressing school violence in rural areas is the lack of resources. According to Smith and Harper (2019), rural schools often have fewer financial resources, personnel, and support systems compared to their urban counterparts. This lack of support limits the ability of rural schools to implement comprehensive anti-violence programs. For instance, rural schools may not have access to school counsellors, social workers, or specialized training for teachers to handle conflict and violence. The geographical isolation common in rural areas further complicates these issues, as learners have fewer opportunities to report incidents of violence or seek external support. Without adequate resources and support networks, rural schools are often ill-equipped to deal with the rising incidence of bullying, physical altercations, and other violent behaviours, which can lead to the normalization of violence within the school environment.

The infrastructure in rural schools is often underdeveloped, contributing to an unsafe and unmonitored school environment. Inadequate facilities such as overcrowded classrooms and poor security measures create spaces where violence can occur with minimal intervention. As Smith and Harper (2019) suggest, improving the resource allocation to rural schools is essential in addressing school violence effectively.

8. Impact on Academic Performance

School violence has a direct impact on learners' academic outcomes, especially in rural secondary schools where violent incidents are more common. Jones and Smith (2020) found that learners exposed to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, tend to perform worse academically. The psychological stress caused by experiencing or witnessing violence can impair learners' ability to focus on class, complete assignments, or participate in school activities. Increased absenteeism is another common consequence, as learners who feel unsafe at school are more likely to avoid attending, which in turn negatively affects their learning and academic progress.

Rural schools also often lack sufficient mental health services to help learners cope with the trauma of violence. Without proper mental health interventions, learners may suffer from long-term psychological issues, such as anxiety, depression, and post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hasan and Asad (2020) argue that these mental health struggles further reduce learners' ability to succeed academically, as they have difficulty concentrating on their studies and engaging in schoolwork. The absence of mental health support exacerbates the impact of school violence, leading to a cycle of underperformance and emotional distress.

9. Cultural Norms and Violence

Cultural norms within rural communities can play a significant role in perpetuating school violence. Brown *et al.* (2021) discuss how certain aggressive behaviours may be socially accepted or even encouraged in some rural areas. In these contexts, violence is sometimes seen as an appropriate way to resolve conflicts or assert dominance, both in school and in the wider community. This normalization of violence can create a toxic school environment where violent behaviours are not adequately addressed by school authorities, leading to an increase in bullying, fights, and other forms of aggression.

Cultural stigmas around reporting violence can also prevent learners from seeking help. In many rural areas, learners may fear being labelled as weak or facing retaliation if they report incidents of violence. This reluctance to report violence makes it more difficult for schools to identify and intervene in violent situations. As a result, many incidents go unaddressed, allowing violence to persist and even escalate over time. Brown *et al.* (2021) highlight the need for schools to address these cultural factors by promoting non-violent conflict resolution strategies and encouraging a more open dialogue about violence.

10. Community-Based Interventions

Given the unique challenges of addressing school violence in rural areas, Taylor and Rivers (2022) advocate for community-based interventions tailored to the specific needs of rural schools. They argue that effective interventions should involve not only the school but also the broader community. By engaging parents, local leaders, and community organizations, schools can foster a more supportive and collaborative approach to preventing violence. Community involvement can help ensure that intervention programs are culturally relevant and accepted by the local population.

Taylor and Rivers (2022) also emphasize the importance of improving access to mental health services in rural schools. In many cases, rural learners who experience violence have limited or no access to professional counselling or therapy. By expanding mental health resources and integrating them into schools, it is possible to provide learners with the support they need to recover from the trauma of violence. Additionally, schools should implement programs that teach conflict resolution skills, promote empathy, and build a positive school climate. These interventions can help reduce the frequency of violent incidents and create a safer environment for all learners.

The lack of resources, the impact on academic performance, cultural norms that may perpetuate violence, and the need for community-based interventions are all critical factors that must be considered. Addressing these challenges require a comprehensive effort that improves resource allocation, promotes mental health services, and involves the community in developing effective, culturally sensitive strategies. By addressing both the immediate effects of school violence and the broader socio-cultural factors contributing to it, it is possible to create a safer, more supportive educational environment for rural learners.

11. Research Methodology

11.1. Research Design

This study employed qualitative research method to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of school violence in rural secondary schools. The qualitative method includes interviews and focus groups with learners, teachers, and administrators to explore the impacts of violence on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being.

11.2. Population and Sampling

The target population for this study includes learners, teachers, and administrators from rural secondary schools in rural area in South Africa, Mpumalanga Province. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who have direct experience with school violence. The sample included 30 learners, 12 teachers, and 5 administrators from 5 rural secondary schools (Table 1).

Table 1: Participant Demographics			
Participation Group	**Number**	**Gender (M/F)**	**Age Range (Learners)**
Learners	30	15M/15F	13-18
Teachers	12	7M/5F	–
Administrators	5	3M/2F	–

12. Data Collection Methods

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of learners, teachers, and administrators to obtain in-depth insights into the effects of school violence. These interviews explored participants' personal experiences, perceptions of the school environment, and suggestions for reducing violence.

Focus Groups: Focus group discussions were held with teachers and administrators to identify common challenges and potential interventions for addressing school violence in rural settings.

13. Data Analysis

Qualitative Data: The interview and focus group data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the effects of school violence. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of the contextual factors contributing to violence and its impact on learners.

14. Ethical Considerations

The paper adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the confidentiality of their responses was maintained. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The paper ensured that any discussions of violence are conducted sensitively, with appropriate support mechanisms in place for participants who may be distressed by the topic.

15. Limitations

One limitation of this paper was that it focused on a specific rural area in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other rural regions.

16. Findings and Discussions

The findings of this research are based on information gathered through interviews and focus groups with learners, teachers, and school administrators. The primary aim was to understand the effects of school violence on learners in rural secondary schools. Through careful analysis of the collected data, three key themes emerged: the impact on academic performance, the emotional and psychological effects of violence, and the role of the community. These findings reveal that school violence is a complex issue, shaped by a combination of social, cultural, and resource-related factors.

17. Impact on Academic Performance

One of the most prominent findings from the paper is the negative impact that school violence has on learners' academic performance. Learners reported that being exposed to violence, including bullying, physical fights, and even verbal harassment, significantly disrupted their ability to concentrate and perform well in school. Many learners admitted that they often skipped classes or avoided certain areas of the school, such as hallways or playgrounds, where violence frequently occurred. This avoidance led to increased absenteeism, causing these learners to miss out on important lessons and fall behind in their studies.

Teachers also corroborated these findings, noting that learners who were either directly involved in or witnessed violence had noticeably lower grades and engagement levels in class. According to Smith and Harper (2019), this phenomenon can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the fear of being harmed and the overall disruption that violence causes within the school environment. When learners feel unsafe, they are less likely to participate in classroom activities, which contributes to their academic underperformance.

Learners described feeling anxious and constantly on edge, which further hindered their ability to focus on schoolwork. The stress caused by school violence led to diminished motivation and, in some cases, a complete disengagement from school. This cycle of fear, absenteeism, and academic decline demonstrates the profound impact violence has on learners' educational outcomes.

This simple bar chart shows the relationship between violence exposure and academic outcomes such as absenteeism, grade academic outcomes and dropout rate (Figure 1).
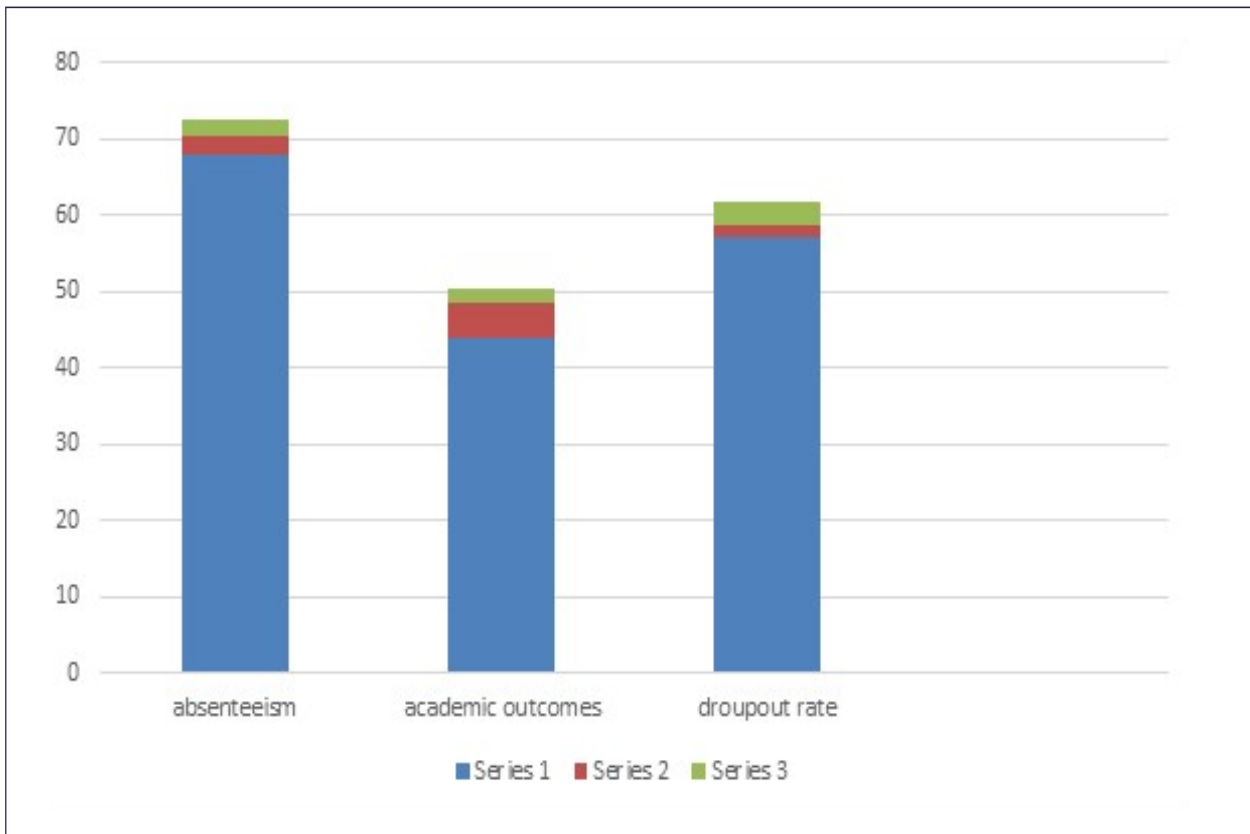

Figure 1: Relationship Between Violence Exposure and Academic Outcomes

18. Emotional and Psychological Consequences

Another critical theme that emerged from the research is the emotional and psychological toll that school violence takes on learners. Many participants shared their experiences of fear, anxiety, and depression stemming from repeated exposure to violence. Learners described feeling constantly threatened, not only within the school environment but also in the broader community. This sense of fear and insecurity severely affected their mental well-being, leading to emotional exhaustion and, in some cases, long-term psychological trauma.

Some learners reported developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), particularly those who had experienced severe bullying or physical assault. Brown *et al.* (2021) highlight the lack of mental health services in rural areas, which compounds the problem. Learners suffering from these emotional and psychological effects are often left without access to counselling or therapeutic interventions, exacerbating their mental health issues. Teachers and school administrators expressed concern over the emotional state of these learners but also acknowledged that there were limited resources available to address their mental health needs.

The normalization of violence in some rural communities further complicates efforts to provide emotional support. In certain areas, learners expressed that violent behaviour was often viewed as a normal part of life, making it difficult for them to seek help or even recognize the harm being done. This cultural acceptance of violence inhibits reporting and makes it more challenging to intervene before violence escalates. As a result, the emotional and psychological consequences of school violence remain largely unaddressed, leaving many learners to cope with their trauma in isolation (Figure 2).
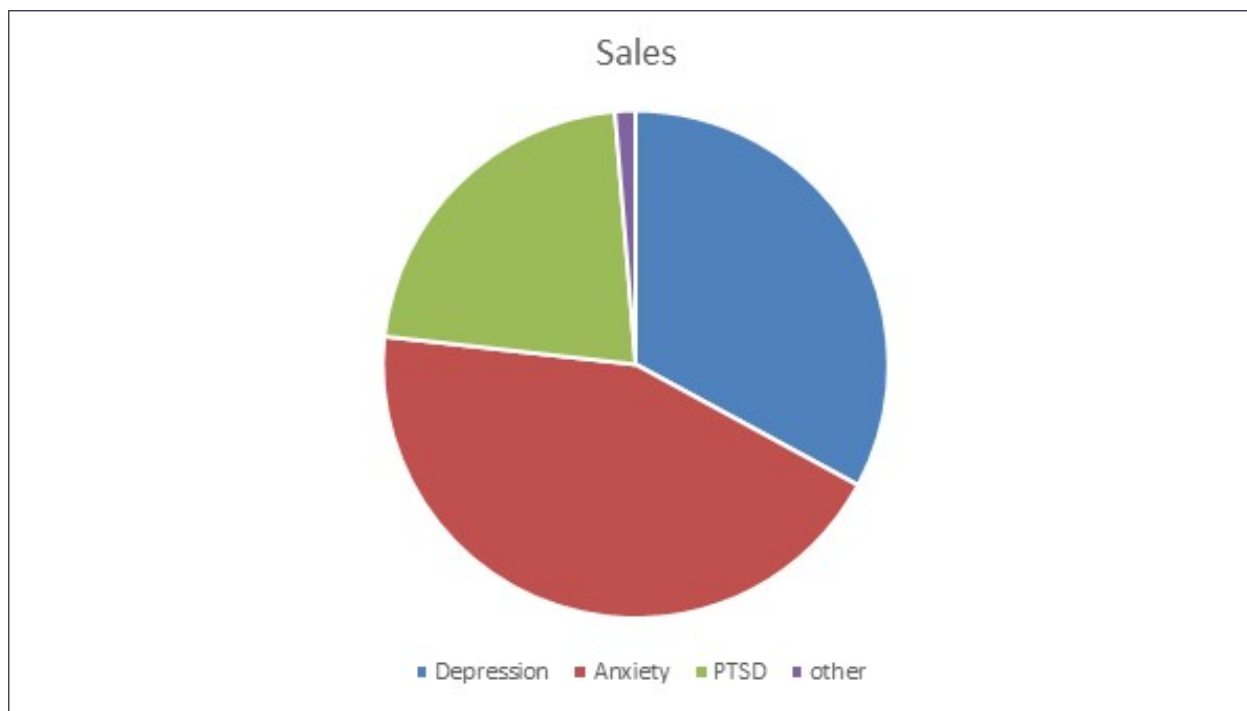
Figure 2: Emotional and Psychological Effects of Violence

19. Role of the Community

The paper also underscored the significant role that the community plays in both perpetuating and preventing school violence. In some cases, participants revealed that community attitudes toward violence contributed to the problem. In rural settings, where social norms may differ from those in urban areas, aggressive behaviour is sometimes tolerated or even encouraged as a means of resolving conflicts. This acceptance of violence creates a broader social environment in which violent behaviour is normalized, both within schools and outside of them.

Some participants noted that the community's reluctance to intervene in incidents of school violence allowed the problem to persist. In rural areas where close-knit relationships exist, there may be fears of retaliation or social stigma associated with reporting violence. This reluctance often extends to teachers and school administrators, who may feel powerless to act without community support. Taylor and Rivers (2022) argue that this lack of intervention can create a cycle in which violence is allowed to continue unchecked, further harming learners.

Table 2: Identified Types of Violence		
Types of Violence	**Frequency Reported (%)**	**Impact on Learners**
Verbal Abuse	80%	Emotional distress
Physical Violence	65%	Absenteeism
Sexual Harassment	20%	Trauma
Cyberbullying	35%	Anxiety

Many participants believed that community-led initiatives had the potential to significantly reduce school violence. Involving parents, local leaders, and other community stakeholders in school activities and anti-violence programs was seen as a promising strategy for creating a safer school environment. These participants emphasized the importance of aligning violence prevention efforts with the specific cultural and social values of the community, as this would increase the likelihood of success. For example, schools could organize workshops or town hall meetings where community members are educated on the harmful effects of school violence and encouraged to take an active role in prevention efforts.

Despite the potential for positive change, efforts to involve the community were often hindered by a lack of resources and coordination. Many rural schools struggle to establish effective partnerships with local organizations or secure

funding for community-based programs. As a result, even well-intentioned initiatives are difficult to sustain. Participants called for more targeted support from policymakers and education authorities to ensure that these community-based interventions are properly funded and adapted to the specific needs of rural communities.

The findings of this paper provide a nuanced understanding of how school violence affects learners in rural secondary schools. The negative impact on academic performance, combined with the emotional and psychological consequences, demonstrates that school violence is a critical issue that must be addressed. Furthermore, the role of the community in either perpetuating or preventing violence highlights the importance of involving local stakeholders in anti-violence efforts. Addressing school violence in rural areas requires a comprehensive approach that considers the unique socio-cultural and resource-related challenges faced by these communities. By providing targeted support and developing context-specific interventions, it is possible to create a safer and more supportive educational environment for rural learners.

20. Results

The effects of school violence on academic performance and mental health of learners in rural secondary schools

Learners who see violent circumstances may get depressed, which can have a negative influence on their ability to study. Pupils claimed to have lost concentration as they had become afraid of what the perpetrators might do to them during the break or after school. A substantial number of learner respondents said they couldn't concentrate on their academics because of school violence. Learners felt threatened by their peers, and they sometimes performed things they didn't intend to do. Participants ended up missing classes, and in other cases, kids dropped out due to peer harassment. Learners said that school violence had a detrimental influence on their educational achievement.

"I become concerned throughout the day and I am unable to concentrate on my schoolwork" (Participant 1).

"Sometimes I feel dropping out from school, my results are dropping all the time

I have become terrified of predators" (Participant 3).

The primary forms of school violence experienced by learners in rural secondary schools.

According to teachers, learners and administrators there are different kinds of violence taking place in their schools include insulting, threatening, ignoring, isolating, rejecting, name-calling, humiliation, ridicule, spreading rumors, lying, or punishing another person, rape, sexual form, cyberbullying and such actions has a negative impact on academic performance of learners as some stated below by participants.

"Learners are sometimes engaging themselves in Physical violence to fight each other and bringing weapons in school" (Participant 2).

"Leaner, I have been a victim of abuse since grade 9 my friend and teacher are always making fun of me (Participant 4)".

"We had a case in the school where a gang of boys were fighting each other for girl a girl (5)".

"Even though the department of education has abolished corporal punishment teachers never stop using it as a form of punishment (Participant 1)".

Interviews and focus groups with teachers, learners, and administrators revealed that rural secondary schools experience various forms of violence, which have serious consequences for learners' well-being and academic performance. The main types of violence identified include:

Verbal Abuse and Emotional Bullying such as insults, name-calling, and spreading rumours, which cause emotional trauma and isolation.

Physical Violence including fights and the presence of weapons, creating a threatening environment.

Sexual Violence involving incidents of rape and harassment, which severely impact victims' mental health and academic progress.

Cyberbullying through social media, making victims feel isolated and unsupported. *Gang-related Violence* that escalates conflicts and makes schools unsafe for all learners.

These violent behaviours negatively affect learners' academic performance, leading to absenteeism, anxiety, and lack of focus in class. Participants stressed the need for targeted interventions to address these specific challenges in rural school environments.

The contributing factors to school violence in rural secondary schools?

As stated by educators and administrators, frustration constitutes one of the reasons and catalysts for aggression in schools; instructors might be insensitive while dealing with learners. Teacher their own animosity into the classroom and, on occasion, both verbally and physically attack learners. The assertion is supported by the following quotations from the participants.

Teachers have been known to taunt and beat learners, causing pandemonium when other learners refuse to leave (6).

Educators are failing to address personal difficulties and work effectively (10).

Strategies and interventions can effectively mitigate the effects of school violence in rural secondary schools.

Teachers and administrators feel that every educational institution have a set of guidelines which guides them on offenses and potential punitive actions, but they've discovered it challenging to apply them. The educational institution's code of conduct is only stored in files and is not made available to learners at the start of each year. Furthermore, parties engaged are unaware of their duties, such as school governing bodies, administrators, instructors, and parents. Instructors stated that in certain cases, learners dispute teachers' authority by disrupting teaching and learning, teasing others in class, and failing to pay attention.

The findings are reflected in the verbatim quote below

Learners who smoke dagga, take drugs, or arrive to school inebriated may have decreased comprehension of others (1).

Whenever there are instances of violent incidents, learners frequently go out of their separate courses to see the fights happening inside and outside the school grounds, and they cannot be managed (2).

Interviews with educators and administrators identified several factors contributing to school violence in rural secondary schools, including frustration, teacher misconduct, and weak disciplinary enforcement.

Frustration and Teacher Misconduct: Both learners and teachers experience frustration, often leading to aggression. Teachers may bring personal issues into the classroom, sometimes resulting in verbal or physical abuse of learners, worsening the situation and diminishing their authority. Participant accounts describe teachers taunting and beating learners, fueling chaos.

Lack of Discipline and Accountability: School rules and codes of conduct are not effectively implemented. Many learners, parents, and educators are unaware of these guidelines, leading to poor discipline. Substance abuse and spectatorship during violent incidents further disrupt the learning environment, making violence difficult to manage.

Interventions: To mitigate violence, educators suggest stronger enforcement of conduct codes, clearer communication of behavioral expectations, and mental health support for both teachers and learners. Such measures, along with community-based interventions, can address underlying frustrations and reduce school violence.

Therefore, addressing frustration, enforcing discipline, and providing emotional support are crucial to reducing violence in rural schools.

21. Discussion

The findings of this paper underscore the complexity of addressing school violence in rural secondary schools. The evidence reveals that school violence has a profound impact on both academic performance and emotional well-being, highlighting the urgent need for multifaceted strategies.

The negative effects of school violence on learners' academic performance and emotional health are severe. Violence disrupts the learning environment, leading to decreased concentration, increased absenteeism, and lower academic achievement. The emotional and psychological damage, including fear, anxiety, and long-term trauma further impairs learners' ability to engage with their education effectively. The data indicates that without addressing these issues, learners are at risk of falling behind academically and suffering from prolonged emotional distress.

The findings also highlight the critical role of community involvement in addressing school violence. In rural settings, where resources are often limited and support systems inadequate, community engagement can provide essential support. Involving local stakeholders such as parents, community leaders, and local organizations is crucial for developing and implementing effective interventions. Tailoring solutions to the specific needs and cultural contexts of rural communities can enhance their relevance and effectiveness.

While the paper offers valuable insights into a specific rural area, the themes and findings may be relevant to other similar settings. The qualitative data collected provides a detailed understanding of the experiences of learners and

educators in rural schools. However, it is important to acknowledge that these findings might not be universally applicable to all rural schools. Different areas may face unique challenges and require customized approaches based on their specific contexts.

Addressing school violence in rural areas necessitates a coordinated effort from educators, policymakers, and the community. Immediate interventions are needed to tackle violence directly, but a broader approach that considers social and cultural factors is equally important. Effective solutions should include clear disciplinary guidelines, mental health support, and community-based programs designed to prevent and address violence. By adopting a comprehensive approach that integrates immediate and long-term strategies, it is possible to improve safety and support in rural schools, ultimately enhancing learners' academic performance and overall well- being.

Therefore, solving school violence in rural secondary schools requires different strategies that combines immediate action with long-term solutions. Engaging the community, addressing local needs, and implementing effective interventions are essential for creating safer and more supportive educational environments.

22. Conclusion

This paper shows that school violence in rural secondary schools is a serious problem that affects learners' education, mental health, and overall well-being. The violence often comes from a mix of a lack of resources, tough economic conditions, and cultural attitudes.

To tackle school violence, we need to use several strategies. These include launching anti-violence programs, increasing mental health support, involving the community, enhancing school safety, training staff, establishing reporting systems, and strengthening local policies. Together, these strategies will help reduce violence and create a safer, more supportive environment for learners.

By dealing with both the immediate issues and the bigger problems causing violence, we can help improve learners' education and well-being. This will lead to a better school environment where learners can succeed and feel safe.

23. Recommendation

The paper made the following suggestions:

- **Implement Anti-Violence Programs:** Schools should introduce programs specifically designed to prevent and address violence. These programs can include workshops, counselling, and activities that teach learners about conflict resolution and respect.

- **Increase Mental Health Support:** Provide more mental health services in rural schools to help learners cope with the emotional impact of violence. This can include hiring school counsellors and offering counseling services.

- **Work with the Community:** Involve parents, community leaders, and local organizations in efforts to reduce violence. Community involvement can help create a supportive environment and address cultural attitudes that may contribute to violence.

- **Improve School Safety:** Make changes to the school environment to increase safety. This could involve monitoring areas where violence is more likely to occur and creating safe spaces for learners.

- **Provide Training for Staff:** Train teachers and school staff on how to handle and prevent violence. This training should cover recognizing signs of violence, responding to incidents, and supporting affected learners.

- **Strengthen Local Policies:** Work with local authorities to develop and enforce policies that address school violence. This might include stricter rules and regulations, as well as support for schools to implement these policies effectively.

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