

THE DYNAMICS OF STUDENT VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS AT A  
CO-EDUCATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE ST GEORGE EAST  
EDUCATION DISTRICT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: TEACHERS'  
PERCEPTIONS

EDRS6900: Project Report  
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education (Concentration in Curriculum)

of  
The University of the West Indies

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2016

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## Abstract

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This study investigated the dynamics and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. It sought to gain a deeper understanding of this serious phenomenon about which little was known. This study employed a qualitative case study approach. Purposive sampling was used to select four participants and data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Findings revealed that teachers experienced various acts violence including verbal, physical, sexual, social, and technological. Key reasons for students' violent behaviours were school related influences- unproductive climate, weak administration, negative teacher behaviours and the inability to meet the needs and interest of some students- family background and individual traits. Further, teachers' psycho-emotional wellbeing was affected; changes in careers, avoidance behaviours and teachers' weakened capacity to discipline delinquent students were some of the negative repercussions found. A discussion of the findings with recommendations linked to these was offered.

Keywords: Celina Millington, student violence against teachers, school violence, teachers' perceptions, student violence

### Acknowledgements

First of all, I give praise and honour to Almighty God without whom I could not complete this study. I am eternally grateful for the wisdom, understanding, guidance and good health He gave me.

I acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Zhanna Dedovets and express deepest gratitude for the unwavering support and expert advice which she gave me throughout the development of this study. Her timely feedback, insightful comments and demands for thoroughness were greatly appreciated.

Special thanks are extended to the Principal for allowing me to conduct this study at the school, and the teachers who willingly participated in the study, gave of their time and shared valuable perceptions honestly and candidly. I am also grateful to my colleagues who supported me throughout my studies.

I am especially grateful to Mrs. Arlene Winchester-Morris for the many ways in which she supported me throughout my studies. Other friends and family members who provided much needed emotional support, I say a heartfelt, thank you!

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**CHAPTER 1**

The performance of the teacher, though not the only factor which influences student outcomes, remains a crucial facet in the teaching-learning processes. This is likely because of the teacher's many functions which include creating an enabling or supportive learning environment; enacting the curriculum and fostering healthy relationships with students through which they are inspired to achieve. Thus the importance of the teacher cannot be overemphasized. However, when students hurl insults and verbal abuses at teachers, threaten their safety or direct any form of violence toward them, teachers not only become humiliated but also demoralized. Additionally, teachers who are victims of student violence cannot protect and care for the safety of those entrusted to their care. Student violence perpetrated against teachers has the potential, if left unattended, to rob teachers of their dignity, weaken their potential to be the best they can be and undermine teacher morale and effectiveness (Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013).

Yet despite the gravity and prevalence, which are well established through various reports, the issue of student violence against teachers has not received the attention it deserves and has remained grossly understudied. Violence directed toward teachers is considered part of the larger issue of school violence, and while myriad of studies on school violence in general have been conducted, they focus mainly on the perspectives of student violence against students and fail to capture the actual experiences or perceptions of teachers on the issue of violence perpetrated against them by students, with a few exceptions (Espelage,

Anderman, Brown, Jones, Lane, Mc Mahon, Reddy and Reynolds, 2013; Martin, Mackenzie and Heal, 2008; Reddy, 2014). Additionally, Espelage et al. (2013) assert that school violence is a complex social issue which requires a systemic approach to the study of the phenomenon. To study victimization of students only, without considering other parts of the system, results in a misrepresentation of the issue of school violence and limits the possibilities for solution to a complex problem. Hence, this study attempts to fill that gap by focusing on the perceptions of teachers on the phenomenon.

### **International Context**

The issue of student violence against teachers is one of international concern and there are calls for researchers to go beyond investigating its prevalence in order to deepen understanding of the issue (Espelage, et al, 2013). As such, identifying the nature of violence committed is an essential component of the dynamics. In the United States, reports indicate for the period 1998-2013 that theft, threats with injuries, violent crimes such as robbery, physical assault or aggravation are some of the non-fatal crimes. Verbal abuse, obscene remarks and gestures, rude and disrespectful behaviours are more pervasive (Dinkes et al., 2012). In 2007 a quantitative study conducted in Northern London by the North Union Teachers (NUT) involving 250 respondents has shown ninety-two percent (92 %) experienced verbal abuse which include the use of offensive name calling, homophobic and racial language. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers (68%) has reported physical assault in the forms of being pushed, bitten, having doors slammed in their faces or chairs thrown at them. The number which has

experienced non-verbal intimidation is 59%, personal threat fifty-eight ( 58%), threats against property twenty-nine percent (29%), sexual assault two percent (2%) and other forms of violence fourteen percent (Martin, 2008). Additionally, a study conducted by Education International on cyber bullying involving a sample of 500 German teachers reveals 70% of perpetrators of cyber bullying to be students. Eight percent of the teachers has been victims and thirty-three and one-third percent knows of a colleague who has been a victim of cyber bullying by students. These involve defamation, smearing and even death threats (Education International, 2008). In Canada covert student attacks on teachers, such as harassment and verbal abuse are prevalent. Overt crimes such as physical violence which are either attempted, threatened or performed are not as widespread. In addition to these incidents of verbal and physical abuses, there are reports of abusive phone calls, sexual harassment especially from male students to female teachers and damage to property including the home (Younghusband, 2009).

Additionally, understanding the reasons why students may perpetrate violence against their teachers can illuminate the nature of the phenomenon. Across the countries such as United States of America (USA), Turkey, Slovenia and Canada, where studies have been conducted, researchers say that the school itself with a negative culture is a predictor of student violence against teachers. A school structure that is disorganized, poorly managed and in which there are deficiencies in administrative support and general lack of collegiality breed a negative school climate (Steffgen and Ewen, 2008). In addition, Martin, Mac

Kenzie and Healy (2008) assert that an environment that has been compromised by aggressive behaviour and indiscipline contribute to teacher victimization. Teacher factors such as incompetence in terms of pedagogy, lack of training or preparation in dealing with aggression in the classroom and classroom management skills are other strong predictors. Other teacher factors include lack of teacher- student relationships, teacher aggressiveness and unfair behaviour (Steffgen and Ewen, 2007; Espelage et al., 2013).

Further, communal/familial and student personal factors contribute to student violence against teachers. Schools in the United States (US) which are located in poor communities in which there is a dense population of African Americans have higher incidences of teacher victimization. Student personal factors which precipitate teacher victimization include being exposed to bullying and abuse of any form – whether at home or school. Sleep deprivation, peer isolation, academic stress and strained teacher- student relationships are other factors (Sungu, 2015).

Moreover, student violence against teachers, even if it is perceived, has had emotional and physical consequences on teachers. Reports of depression, anxiety and other psycho-somatic conditions have contributed to classroom ineffectiveness, impaired physical and /or emotional well-being, and decreased professional performance due to job dissatisfaction (Espelage et al., 2013). It also causes reduced commitment to the profession and eventually leads to attrition. In fact, Reddy et al. (2012), affirm that in the USA teacher abuse by students accounts for the high attrition rate in the teaching profession since fear for their

safety is one of the largest drivers. Further, student violence against teachers can incur high medical costs in treating physical and psychological injuries. In some countries such as the USA and Canada, teacher victims suffer wage losses when they take time-off to treat with their injuries, trauma or stress. Others costs include those of hiring and training new teachers. This cost to the USA is in excess of two billion dollars annually (APA, 2015).

### **Regional Context**

Gleaned from the various media reports of conferences, incidents and discussion on the topic, the Caribbean region like many other international countries considers the prevalence of student violence against teachers to be a serious issue. However, there remains a dearth of information on this subject. At the 36<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Caribbean Union Teachers (CUT) held in Georgetown Guyana, Claire Elshot, president of the Windward Island Teacher Union insists that the phenomenon is a growing regional problem in secondary schools (Today, 2013).

As regards the types of violence committed against teachers in the Caribbean, these seem to be similar throughout the region. In Jamaica a survey conducted over ten years ago reports that thirty-nine percent (39%) of the respondents indicated that students sometimes or often threatened teachers with physical violence and 21% actually carried out the threat. In Guyana and Barbados there are media reports of physical assault and battery, verbal abuses and threats (Thomas-Millard, 2003, Kaieteur News, 2015; Best, 2015).

Many of the region's territories, though unique in many respects, share common perceptions about contributors of student violence against teachers. In Jamaica educators perceive the violence which school people - student, teachers and other staff- experience is a reflection of what occurs in the society. Another reason purported is that the school system, through the absence of proper policies and strong administration to tackle the issue, perpetuates a school culture of violence. Societal factors such as the high incidences of crime can desensitize students to crime and violence. Additionally, in dysfunctional families and other relationships, violence is seen as the way to manage conflicts and the inability of teachers to understand the issue of violence and treat with it appropriately are possible reasons for student violence against teachers. Presidents of both teachers union in Barbados attribute the deterioration of home and school relationships, lack of agreement between teachers and administration on suitable methods of discipline, teachers' lack of training in self-defense and parents' inability to manage their children as contributing factors. Persaud (2014) expresses similar sentiments about Guyana, and adds that a breakdown of mores in the society, along with poor teacher student relationships are likely to be responsible for the problem violence against teachers (Ridell, Bailey and Valentine, 2013; Best, 2015; Persaud, 2014).

There is a scarcity of information on the repercussions of student violence against teachers. However, Claire Elshot's report gives a brief insight. She states:

We have heard horror stories in this Caribbean where teachers are now totally disabled because of the damages and wounds that have been

inflicted on them at the hands of students. It's no more an excuse that the legislators cannot put legislation in place to protect teachers from violence (Today, 2013, p. 5).

### **Local Context**

In Trinidad and Tobago information which validates the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers is sparse, except for what is garnered from parliamentary and media reports or statistics found in studies on school violence in general; student violence directed toward teachers as a separate study is largely unheard of. Trinidad and Tobago has been labelled a violent society by its Minister of National Security because of its high crime rate (Archibar, 2016). This violence is also mirrored in many schools across the country. Within the recent past, there have been numerous media reports of violence which plagues many secondary schools. These violent acts involve not only student victims but also teachers (and other adults including principal and security personnel have been victims of student violence). The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service reports that the number of reported cases of student violence against teachers and principals in 2014 and 2015 is 44 and 37 respectively. The report fails to identify the specific number of teachers and principals as victims (Joseph, 2016).

Apart from this report, the media have highlighted various forms of violence where students have issued death threats to teachers ( or put them on hit lists); teachers have been beaten, detained in classrooms, kicked and hit with objects (Paul and Mc Knight, 2004; Webb and Baynes, 2004; Douglas, 2016). Further, Maharaj-Sharma (2010) identifies violent acts such as intimidation and

bullying, gang activity and verbal insults which are committed against school personnel including teachers. These activities include the use of guns, cutlasses, knives and ice-picks. This problem is not a recent one. A former Minister of Education of Trinidad and Tobago, in outlining the nature and degree of indiscipline in schools in 1998 identifies verbal sexual harassment on female teachers, threats of attacks and violent physical attacks carried out on teachers as major acts of indiscipline prevalent throughout the country and in all school types (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Within the last eighteen years the Ministry of Education has embarked on a number of initiatives to deal with school violence in general. It is commonly believed that if school violence is controlled then the effects to teachers will also be addressed, although there is no evidence to support this claim (Geissler, 2015). Subsequent to a national consultation on school violence and indiscipline in 1998, a number of initiatives have been implemented in Trinidad and Tobago to deal with the issue. Among them are the establishments of Deans who are directly responsible for the pastoral care of students and Heads of Departments for curriculum matters. Student councils have also been commissioned where the student body is represented at the decision making level of the school. Additionally, half-day junior secondary schools have been de-shifted and converted to whole-day five and seven-year schools. Further, safety officers have been installed in all secondary schools; various support structures such as the appointment of the Student Support Services Division and the commissioning of the Local School Board to assist administration, and curriculum improvement

which involve the implementation of subjects such as Dance, Drama and Technology Education are all attempts at addressing violence and indiscipline in secondary schools (Cyrille, 2008). Moreover, during the period 2008-2010 twenty-five (25) secondary schools representing all education districts in Trinidad except Tobago have participated in an intervention by the Violence Prevention Academy to combat school violence. In spite of all these measures student violence against teachers persists.

As regards the contributing reasons, Mustapha (2013) asserts that the lack of spiritual and moral values is responsible for school violence which has spilled over to teachers. Additionally, Deosaran (2014) believes that the issue of student violence against teachers is a reflection of the societal ills where violence has become rampant, where people have become self-serving, and there is a struggle for power.

### **The School's Context**

The Secondary School in this study is a co-educational government secondary school (formerly junior secondary that was de-shifted in 2006) located in the St George East education district with a population of approximately 650 students and 51 teachers among which are eleven (11) male and forty (40) females; twenty-two (22) teachers are certified or trained. There are five Deans of discipline (only two are appointed) - one for each year group, and two Safety officers.

Students come from neighbouring depressed sub-urban districts which Ryan (2013) calls 'hot spot' areas along the east-west corridor. Thus a relatively

large percentage of the students comes from low socio-economic background and comprise mainly students who have scored in the fifty percentile or below, at the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA). Students struggle academically and the level of indiscipline appears to be a high. Violent acts such as bullying and fights are perpetrated against students by students. There appears to be a high level of disengagement as loitering and truancy are very common among students.

Gambling, smoking and teenage pregnancy are also common.

This school has been exposed to various strategies to curb the violence and indiscipline among students. In fact the school is one of the twenty-five in the Violence Prevention Academy programme where students who have been deemed violent or aggressive are pulled out for the intervention. Other strategies include the provision of anger management for students and peer mediation. Teachers, through various staff development sessions have been exposed to a variety of teaching strategies which promote student engagement. Despite all that have been done to address violence at the school, students continue to demonstrate violent behaviours toward teachers.

Teachers are verbally abused and receive many kinds of threats which sometimes include their families. I recall one incident where a dictionary missile intended for another student hit a female teacher on her shoulder. This happened approximately two years ago and that teacher is still in therapy. Still another, where a female student lunged violent blows at a male teacher. This is indeed a challenge for the victims and the teaching staff on a whole.

This problem of student violence against teachers is a serious issue which warrants attention because of the debilitating effects it has on not only the teachers and their well-being but also on schooling. A solution to this problem seems elusive and perhaps this is because all dimensions of school violence are not fully understood as is evident by the paucity of literature on the topic of student violence against teachers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Secondary School in this study is plagued by violent behaviours of students not only against students but also against teachers. Students have threatened, insulted and ridiculed teachers, and hit them with various objects among other violent acts. If left untreated, this problem is likely to negatively affect teachers and their ability to be effective.

Despite the gravity of this problem Espelage et al. (2013) confirm that it is grossly understudied, and there is a lack of understanding about the phenomenon. Moreover, this lack of understanding results in failure to address the problem through policies and appropriate intervention measures. Therefore, there is a need to explore teachers' perceptions on the dynamics of student violence against teachers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers at a co-educational Secondary School in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question which guides the study is: What are teachers' perceptions on the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a co-educational secondary school in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago? The sub questions are:

1. How do teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?
2. What are teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?
3. How do teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?

**Significance of the Study**

Student violence against teachers is seldom spoken of except in the media where few cases might be reported and this topic is rarely considered when dealing with the issue of violence and indiscipline in schools. Nevertheless, this phenomenon continues to affect teacher's well-being, morale, teaching self-efficacy- performance and schooling in general. Further, fear of violence in the workplace is deemed a risk factor and in order to understand the matter deeply, teachers' description of the violence they experiences, perceptions of the reasons for such deviant behaviours and the outcomes they produce are critical (Martin, Mackenzie and Healy, 2008). This study is also important because it serves to heighten awareness of the issue and contributes to the body of research on the topic which aids in lessening the dearth of information on problem. Moreover, its

findings can be used by the school administrators to develop evidence-based policies to tackle the problem of teacher victimization by students. Other education professionals may find it useful and applicable in contexts which are similar.

### **Operational Definition of key Terms**

In order to understand the dynamics of student violence against teachers it is crucial that key terms or expressions are defined operationally.

*Dynamics* denotes the driving or motivating forces – physical or moral, in any field (Dictionary.com). **Operationally** in this study, dynamics refer to those aspects, characteristics or drivers, and effects of student violence against teacher.

*Perception* denotes “the way something is regarded, understood or interpreted” (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary).

***Student violence against teachers:*** aggressive behaviour intentionally or unintentionally perpetrated by students that harm the teacher. It includes any form of verbal, physical, social, psychological or electronic violence – direct and/or indirect. It may be a single incident or repeated over time (Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007).

***Teacher Perception*** can be operationally defined as the way teachers regard the issue of student violence against them- their understanding of the nature of the problem and the way they interpret or give meaning to their experiences.

### **Organization of the Paper**

This research project is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents the background which situates the problem in the global, regional, local

and school contexts. It also highlights my observation of the issue – the motivation for this study. The statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study are also presented.

The second chapter focuses on the literature review. It explores three major aspects relevant to the research questions: characteristics of violence, contributors and repercussions. It begins with a brief introduction. The body contains analyses of each major dimension of the content in the study, and the chapter concludes with a synthesis of the major ideas.

The methodology is discussed in the third chapter. Here a description with justification of the research design is presented. Data collecting procedures and analyses are discussed; limitations and delimitations are identified.

In chapter four the data are analyzed and results of the findings presented. This analysis is done in relation to each research question. Ethical guidelines are also discussed. Data will be displayed using tables, charts and narratives.

Chapter five presents an overview of the study, summarizes and discusses the findings in relation to the literature, draws conclusions and make recommendations based on these findings. It also identifies an area for further research.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain insights into the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a co-educational Secondary School in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago. As such, the literature review is an important component of the study because it provides the conceptual framework upon which the study is built. Additionally, it highlights major issues germane to the study and situates it in the body of research. In this study the review of the literature seeks to provide detailed descriptions of the characteristics of violence committed against teachers. Explanations of reasons why students may direct violence toward their teachers are also presented and repercussions of the issue are explored.

#### **Importance of Teachers' Perception of Student Violence**

The literature reveals that teachers' perception of student violence directed toward teachers is scarce. Few studies can be found internationally, and there seems to no study found in the Caribbean or locally and certainly none at the school under study. Teachers' perceptions are important because an unsafe feeling promotes negative teacher behaviours, and diminishes the quality of effective teaching. Teachers' perception can also reveal gaps in policies and practices which may contribute to the issue and as such provide better informed decision making to tackle student violence against teachers (Morewitz, 2008).

#### **Characteristics of Student to Teacher Violence**

Student violence against teachers can be classified into various forms which can be covert or overt, direct or indirect, verbal, physical, social or technological (Hicks, 2014). Covert violent acts include disrespectful behaviours such as name-calling, verbal threats, character assassination and intimidation. However, overt violence such as damage to property, assault and threats with weapons are more severe forms of student violence against teachers. Additionally, student violence against teachers can involve a range of direct and indirect actions. Direct forms of violence may be physical or non physical. Physical may include pushing or hitting teachers; non physical can be verbal or non verbal (such as theft or damage to the teacher's property). Indirect violent behaviours can be conducted in such a manner as to hide the identity of the perpetrator. However, a third party may be instigated to perform a violent act or through damage to property, the teacher may be injured. Indirect violence can also be non verbal and may include disruptive behaviours where in such situations the students are in control of the class, and may humiliate, insult or disparage the teacher; or where students are non compliant (Garrett, 2014). In the NUT study 60% of the teachers experience direct student violence. However, approximately 12% experience indirect violence as these teachers receive injuries while quelling a fight or protecting students from an aggressor. Twenty-nine (29%) receive both direct and indirect forms of violence (Martin, 2008).

Student violence committed against teachers can also be categorized as verbal violence, physical violence, social violence or technological violence which includes wide range behaviours (Espelage et. al, 2013; Dzuka and Dalbert,

2007; Garrett, 2014). Verbal violence as seen in the various studies is the most common type of violence perpetrated against teachers. It involves the intentional use of callous, derogatory and inappropriate words in order to hurt the teacher. Students may use this form of violence to utter their displeasure or dissatisfaction through name-calling, humiliation, ridicule and demoralization of teachers with no regard for the consequences of their actions (Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013). Physical violence is defined as deliberate repeated or one-time rough infliction of pain and/or body injuries by another person that involves potential risk of physical harm and consequences which may not be visible (WHO, 2006; Bilic et al, 2012 in Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013, p.1). Physical violence includes kicking, stabbing, beating, assault and threats using weapons or objects, and murder. Relational or social violence involves making false statements about teachers in order to disgrace their reputation or undermine their dignity. Refusing to cooperate, avoiding and ignoring are all examples of relational violence against teachers (Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013).

Technological violence (or sometimes referred to as cyber bullying or mobbing) is also perpetrated against teachers. This involves the use of communication technologies- internet, smart phones- (through media such as email, fake website and social media) to harass, bully, intimidate or defame teachers (Education International, 2008). Garrett (2014) observes that students use teachers' names to create fake face book accounts on which they make offensive comments. Students have hacked into teachers' email account; doctored videos where they superimposed faces of teachers on the bodies of

pornographic stars. Through these videos viruses are spread to teachers' electronic devices. Students have also mounted online smear campaigns where teachers are depicted as being sexually involved with minors. More recently, students are engaged in cyber-baiting where they tease teachers, record their reactions and post, or threaten to post them online (Fox, 2011 in Garrett, 2014).

In addition to these various forms of student violence perpetrated against teachers, gang violence is becoming prevalent. Espelage and Horne (2008) find that threats, victimization and physical attacks involving gangs or gang related violence have become more widespread in schools located in communities where there is a strong presence gangs. While there is a lack of consensus on the definition of the term 'gang', many agree that a definition includes these features: the gang contains a distinct number of people- usually within the age group 12-24(in which secondary school age children fall) but may go beyond 24 in some gangs; it has a name or identity which is displayed through a particular clothing, colour, symbol or graffiti and can be obvious or subtle. The gang tends to have a leader, the members claim the right to specific territory (turf), and engage in criminal activities (Seelke, 2008; Issurdatt, 2011).

### **Reasons for Student Violence against teachers**

One critical aspect in understanding the dynamics of student violence against teachers is the ability to unearth the roots for such behaviours. The literature presents a myriad of reasons which include personal, familial, peer association, community and aspects of the school.

#### ***Relating to the Individual***

Reasons which pertain to the individual student contribute to violence against teachers (Steffgen and Ewen, 2007). According to Day and Wanklyn (2012), students' individual factors include aggression, antisocial beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, and low academic achievement. Aggressive behaviour is typical in young children. However, Kazden (1995) believes that if by the age of eight (8), a child still exhibits aggressive behaviours there is the likelihood that such aggression will continue into adolescence. Aggression remains one of the most consistent individual factors for violence in youth. "Aggression is operationally defined as behaviour that harms, or is intended to harm another person"(Cole and Dodge, 1998 as cited in Day and Wanklyn, 2012, p. 16). Additionally, students' approval or sanction of antisocial attitudes and beliefs puts them at risk of becoming violent. This risk factor can be identified in many ways and often include one or more of these traits: rule-breaking behaviours, hostility toward police officers, favourable attitude toward violence or dishonesty, substance abuse, impulsivity and psychopathic behaviours (Day and Wanklyn, 2012). Further, low academic performance and particularly verbal and linguistic deficiencies have been linked to indiscipline in students. Marsh and Wolfe (2010) assert that such literacy problem may hinder proper development of emotional regulation and self control which can result in the lack of empathy and cause behavioural problems. Other individual factors include depression and low self esteem; over exposure to violence in various media such as music and video games significantly increase aggression and violent conduct (Lerner and Steinberg, 2009).

Additionally, students' use of alcohol and drugs such as caffeine and alcoholic beverages impair their judgments and affect their ability to think rationally. As such, substance abuse is linked to criminal and violent behaviours (Sugut and Mugasia, 2014). The period of adolescent is filled with many stressors brought on by physical, social and emotional changes- which include conflictual relationship with parents and teachers, problems relating with the opposite sex- which students must overcome as a part of their maturation and developmental processes. However, some teens resort to substance abuse to help them cope with their issues and put themselves at risk for becoming violent. Adolescents may also engage in drug use out of curiosity or peer pressure. It is well documented that teenagers who engage in drug use are often ill-tempered, impolite, rebellious and aggressive (Sugut and Mugasia, 2014).

### ***Family Issues***

In addition, issues relating to the family contribute to student violence against teachers (Espelage et. al, 2013). Studies indicate that parent-child separation also known as disrupted families can contribute to violence in teens. A disrupted family can be defined operationally as “Any permanent or temporary separation from a biological parent as a youth, typically before the age of sixteen” (Day and Wanklyn, 2012, p.21). Other sub categories of disrupted families include one-parent households, being homeless and foster care – nontraditional homes. Living in a disrupted family comes with its share of stress which may result from a plethora of circumstances such as poverty or abuse. This is not to suggest that living in a traditional nuclear family is devoid of stress on the

adolescent but studies indicate that there are marked differences in the rate of delinquencies between the two groups (Day and Wanklyn, 2012).

Additionally, impoverished parental management and skills are known to contribute to indiscipline in children. Practices such as failing to discipline children or being too lax or harsh, lack of proper monitoring and supervision of children and lack of parental support demonstrate poor parental management (Farrington, 2009). Children from such home environments are prone to various forms of ill-treatment which may include neglect, emotional, sexual or physical abuse. These experiences put the children at greater risk for becoming violent (Ford, Elhai, Connor and Frueh, 2010). Furthermore, “Criminal and antisocial parents tend to have delinquent antisocial children” (Farrington, 2009, p.204). Children whose parents have been imprisoned or convicted are likely to become offenders. Similarly, exposure to domestic violence and parental conflict put children at risk of becoming violent (Day and Wanklyn, 2012). On the other hand, children who are nurtured in homes where there are loving, caring parents, whose parenting style is authoritative – where parents are responsive to the children’s needs, and children receive ample emotional support, where they are respected; well adjusted and disciplined- are able to regulate or control their emotions and develop relevant social competencies which make these children less likely to engage in deviant or violent behaviours (Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

### *Negative Peer Association and Community*

Further, negative peer association contributes to student violence (Bender, 2010). This association involves being friends with peers who engage in violence such as thefts and fights. The process by which negative peer groups reinforce delinquency is referred to as deviancy training (Fagan, 2007; Dishion and Piehler, 2007). Although closely related to negative peer association, students who are involved in gangs are at a far greater risk of being deviant and engaging in violence. Quarles (1993) highlights that teens who join gangs are usually from weak family structures. The gang is viewed as a safety net where its members find emotional and physical security. Nevertheless, in the US the presence of gangs in schools is prevalent and it is one of the major causes of violence in schools and against teachers (Issurdatt, 2011).

Furthermore, many believe that the community in which students live can influence violent behaviours. Day and Wanklyn(2012) indentify two aspect of the community which may appear to contribute to violence: community disadvantage and community safety or violence. A community is considered disadvantage if it constitutes a combination of features which include: unemployment rate of adults and male, school dropouts, number of families on welfare and government's public assistance, female one-parent families, rate of population below the poverty line and patterns of settlement. Factors which relate to the community safety and / or violence where students repeatedly witness incidents of violence such as beatings, threats with weapons and murders are found to be associated with violence and have strong internalizing and externalizing outcomes (Mrug and Windle, 2010)

***School Related Contributors***

Moreover, school features contribute to student violence against teacher. Steffgen and Ewen (2007) affirm that a school that is disorganized and poorly managed is the breeding ground for violence. Disorganization in a school contributes to disorder. Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) assert that the size of the school and its constituents are organizational features which relate to orderliness. Although larger school may be more highly structured, there tends to be weaker means of social control. Additionally, the composition of students in terms of their social backgrounds, and the makeup of the teaching staff as regards their skills, abilities and competencies determine orderliness. Another feature relates to that of school management. In schools where there are disagreement between teachers and administrators about regulations and policies, students tend to flout school rules, and generally disregard guidelines for their behaviours. However, where there is high emphasis on academic achievement, and there exists collegiality between administrators and teachers, indiscipline and incivility are unlikely.

Another school factor relates to *school culture and climate*. According to Steffgen and Ewen (2007) factors relating to school culture contribute to aggressive behaviours in students and set the stage for student violence against teachers. The culture of the school is its 'persona'. It is a set of values, traditions, or beliefs that are unwritten, yet determine the behaviours and activities which take place at the school. Although there are nuances in the definitions for school culture and climate, this study does not seek to discuss these subtle differences,

but uses the terms interchangeably. A positive school climate/culture creates an environment that is safe “Where people are protected, respected, encouraged and held accountable for their actions.” Additionally, it promotes teacher behaviours which engender healthy teacher-student relationships, teaching practices which are stimulating and engaging, and teachers demonstrate high degree in skill classroom management (Ophelia, 2006, p. 1; Steffgen and Ewen, 2007; Bryner, 2008). However, violence against teachers thrives in a negative school culture where there is the absence of policies which govern behaviours and tackles anti-social issues such as bullying in the school.

In addition, failure to establish and enforce rules and norms that promote respect, lead to indiscipline which put the safety of teachers at risk. Rules that are too rigid have the same effect (Ophelia, 2006). On the other hand, some school personnel perpetuate violence against teachers by their actions or inactions. This is done when administrators and some teachers deny the actual levels of violence at the school in order to avoid publicity. They may discourage teachers from reporting the incidents, to settle disputes quietly, or they may treat incidents as too insignificant to warrant any attention (Quarle, 1993). This can be a likely reason why information on the issue is so sparse.

Another important dimension of school culture is teacher behaviour which refers to how teachers conduct themselves in the classroom and school in general. Undesirable teacher behaviours such as incompetence, offensiveness and indolence create a negative atmosphere. Incompetent teachers display a range of behaviours which demonstrate lack of care and interest for students. These

teachers either lack proper teacher skills or they are indifferent to what constitute appropriate teacher behaviours. They may also treat students in a mean or cruel manner, verbally abuse them or show favoritism. Indolence is demonstrated in absent-mindedness, general neglect of duties, unpreparedness, tardiness and unpunctuality (Mc Croskey, Richmond and Mc Croskey, 2006). These behaviours are also associated with poor teacher-student relationships- another critical factor which contribute to student violence against teachers (Espelage, 2011). On the other hand, a positive school climate is characterized by positive teacher behaviours which promote student engagement and healthy teacher-student relationships necessary in mitigating the effects of aggression in the classroom (Mc Croskey, 2006; Yisrael 2012; Lawrence 1999).

Classroom practices and management are also important aspects of the school climate which contributes to levels of aggression and poor classroom management skills which breed disorder and chaos (Espelage, 2011). Classroom activities can either hinder or promote student violence against teachers. Sugut and Mugasia (2014) assert that teachers who are unqualified may be deficient and ineffective. Such deficiency may demonstrate itself in the teachers' inability to use effective teaching strategies, their inability to understand and meet students' learning needs or through the lack of instructional clarity. Such classrooms are teacher focused; students tend to become bored, frustrated and disengaged as there is little opportunity for them to interact with their peers, inquire, discover create and take ownership of their learning.

Furthermore, *lack of teacher preparation* renders the teacher unequipped to deal with aggression in the classroom. Teacher preparation provides empirical, evidenced- based skills in classroom practices and management so teachers become competent in enacting lessons that are stimulating and engaging; creating an enabling environment and building healthy teacher student relationships. While teacher pedagogical training programmes in curriculum matters are essential, preparing and training in violence prevention is also critical and should be a part of the teacher preparation programmes (Geissler, 2015).

### ***A Theoretical Explanation***

One of the most widely accepted theories on delinquent behaviours among the youth is Travis Hirschi's control theory. Hirschi (1969) posits that children have the propensity to be deviant and delinquent. However, close bonds with family, school, religion and other agents of socialization constrain them to conform or display acceptable behaviours. Conversely, when bonds within these institutions are weakened, or boundaries and restrictions are not clearly established, they are more likely to choose to yield to delinquent temptations. Hirschi (1969) posits that there are four elements in the social bond which help to restrain adolescents: attachment, commitment, involvement and beliefs- and the stronger these bonds are the greater the constraints. The most important of them is attachment which refers the close relationships teens form with their families and other significant people in the society such as their teachers. It is this affective connection which enables the youth be empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others. Commitment relates to the aspirations and goals which the

adolescents may set for themselves, and as a result choose to invest time and energy in order to achieve their aims. Such foci prevent the youth from engaging in delinquent behaviours and cause them to conform to conventional norms and rules. Involvement is another critical element in this theory because it suggests that if as students, young people are engaged in productive worthwhile activities they are less likely to be involved in violence. Involvement is closely tied to their commitment to their future goals and has implications for the types of school activities and level of engagement at school. Hischi (1969) also believes that one's belief or moral persuasion is a determinant of delinquency. If the youth do not accept the values and norms of the society or the school for example, they are likely violate them and put themselves at risk for committing violence against teachers.

### **Repercussions of Teacher Victimization**

#### ***Post Traumatic Stress Disorder***

In one of the most comprehensive studies conducted by APA (2011) on violence against teachers, it is revealed that teachers suffer a range of negative effects to their well-being which includes physical symptoms and post traumatic stress disorders. According to Daniel, Bradley and Hays (2007) the US Department of Health Services reveals that teacher victims of student violence can suffer both long-term and immediate consequences. Physical and emotional or psychological trauma can be immediate as well as long-term. Physical symptoms may include dizziness or faintness, tightness in the stomach, chest and throat, gastrointestinal distress, nausea and hot and cold bodily sensations.

Additionally, teachers who are victim of student violence may also experience psychological symptoms such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), heightened levels of stress and fear (Wilson, Douglas and Lyon, 2007). PTSD can be developed after a traumatic incident which threatens the safety of the victim and causes feelings of helplessness. Symptoms of PTSD include feeling of constant sense of danger, avoidance and numbness, and increased anxiety and emotional arousal. As a result, teachers may lose interest and avoid activities and events related to the trauma. Additionally, affected teachers demonstrate fear of the work place and avoidance behaviours toward students. Such avoidance may manifest itself in absenteeism or unpunctuality (Wilson, Douglas and Lyons, 2007).

### ***Teacher Disengagement and Burnout***

Based on the various research highlighted in this study, verbal abuse, students' disrespectful and misbehaviors (verbal threats or gestures, intimidation), theft and property damage are more common forms of student violence against teachers than physical aggression. However, the deleterious effects of these non physical types of violence must not be under estimated because they also have significant effects on the teachers' commitment to the job or their professional engagement. They contribute to teacher depression, dissatisfaction and eventually lead to burnout (Espelage et al, 2011; Daniel, Bradley and Hays, 2007). "Burnout is defined as a state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment resulting from reported and long lasting stress" (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; in Galand, Lecoq and phillipport, 2007). Such disengagement

can contribute negatively to students' academic outcomes as teachers who are depressed and disengaged are usually unable to promote and maintain students' engagement since the quality of their teaching is also affected (Pelletier, Seuin and Leguly, 2002). Additionally, Klassen and Chiu (2011) insist that student violence against teachers is responsible for one-third of affected teachers leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction and the feeling of disempowerment to curb the rate of violence against them. Further, victimized teachers are likely to display negative behaviours which can heighten the occurrence of student violence (Galand, Lecoq and philliport, 2007).

Other negative repercussions associated with student violence against teachers include cost to individual teachers and the state, which can be incurred through wage loss, compensation (for injuries, trauma and distress) and litigation costs. Teacher absenteeism affects the quality of education since it can create gaps or lack of continuity and classroom instability due to the loss teaching-learning time. Due to trauma and other stress related effects, teachers become disabled in promoting skills such social competencies, citizenship and an enabling classroom environment which can produce a negative school climate that is not conducive to academic engagement. Additionally, violence against teachers may tarnish the image of the school due to negative publicity (Espelage et al, 2013).

### **Summary**

Studies on the issue of student violence against teachers are sparse. However, the few that are available have identified various categories of violence

which students perpetrate against their teachers. They include covert and overt violence, physical, verbal, social, technological, direct and indirect forms of violence. Additionally, there are many contributors to the phenomenon. Students' individual characteristics of aggression, substance use, negative peer association and gang membership give rise to student violence against teachers. A disorganized school structure and climate where there is a lack of discipline policies; a weak administration, and negative teacher behaviours are also contributors. Added to these reasons are dysfunctional families with weak bonds in violent communities. Furthermore, this problem leads to serious repercussions. Victims become stressed, may develop post traumatic stress disorder, become disengaged, avoid students and may eventually leave the profession. These consequences tend to affect the school culture; teacher-student relationships, teacher self- efficacy and eventually students' academic outcomes are negatively affected.

## **Methodology**

### **Chapter III**

#### **Chapter Introduction**

The aim of this qualitative case study is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a co-educational Secondary School in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago. This chapter describes the research methodology. It presents the sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis to answer research questions, the researcher's experience in conducting the study, limitation and delimitation of the study.

#### **Qualitative Case Study Design**

The research design is a systematic plan for the research project, which describes the method, procedure and key features of the investigation. It connects data, instrument and methods of analysis employed in the study to the research purpose and objectives (Marshall, 1998; Kelly, Lesh and Baek, 2008). Parahoo (2006) affirms that the research design selected for a study should be the one best suited to provide answers to the proposed research questions. Additionally, Creswell (2009) elucidates that the qualitative approach is suited for a study in which there is the need to understand the phenomenon, where there is little research on the topic, and /or where the topic may be new or has never been studied with the particular participants under study. These criteria for choosing a qualitative design fit the aims and objectives of this study- the perception of the nature and consequences (dynamics) of student violence against teachers. As

such, this research employed a qualitative case study design to explore the dynamics of student violence against teachers. “A case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (for example, observation, interviews,... documents...) and reports a case description and case bound themes” ( Cresswell, 2007, p.73 as cited in Merriam, 2009). Additionally, a case study is best suited to this research because of its ability to provide insights, deepen and illuminate meanings that can expand its readers’ experiences. This heuristic feature of the design made it apt because it aligned with purpose of the study which was to understand more deeply the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers. Further, this design of inquiry is appropriate because through a single bounded system the researcher hopes to provide rich, holistic, intensive description and analysis of the phenomenon. The single bounded system or setting in this study is a co-educational secondary school situated along the east-west corridor of the St George East education district. The descriptive nature of the qualitative case study also allows the researcher to present the teachers’ descriptions of violence perpetrated against them, their perceptions of the reasons and repercussions in vivid narration, verbatim (Merriam, 2009).

### **Sampling Procedure**

#### **Sample Type**

In order to achieve the aims of this study, purposeful sampling was used to select participants. Merriam (2009) refers to purposive sample as a non-probability technique which is preferred in qualitative studies. This sampling strategy was appropriate since the researcher wanted to gain insights or deepen understanding of the nature and repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers. Hence, a sample from which the most could be learned was selected, as oppose to random sampling where the participants were most times selected based on convenience and/ or as representatives of a larger population where the goal would be to generalize.

Additionally, Parahoo (1997) affirms that purposive sampling strategy allows researchers to use their judgments to select participants in the study based on their knowledge or experience of the phenomenon. Accordingly, participants who were victims of student violence were selected because they were deemed most suitable to provide the relevant data for the study. Further, Yin (2011) observes that participants should also be selected with various demographic characteristics including teaching experiences and gender in order to allow for diversity of views. Guided by this principle, the researcher selected two experienced and two inexperienced teachers. Among the four participants there was one male. The goal of purposive sampling in this study was to obtain a wide range of perspectives on the topic.

### ***Target Population***

The target population in this study was fifty-one (51) teachers at the school under study. The school- a former junior secondary school- was de-shifted

in 2006 to five-year school with a single shift, as part of the Secondary Education Modernization Programme. As a typical junior secondary school, it was reputed for violence and indiscipline among students. It was from this population the researcher selected the sample of participants.

### **The Accessible Population**

The accessible population comprised four teachers who were purposefully selected from a staff of fifty-one (51). Four participants were adequate because the aim of the research was not to generalize but gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The criteria for selection of participants were based on their experiences as victims of student violence and teaching experience. Thus, all participants were victims of student violence. Two teachers in particular were chosen because of what appeared to be an anomaly that puzzled the researcher. These teachers appeared to be so caring to their students, yet they were often reciprocated with such level of disrespect and unkind treatment. These two participants had over fifteen years teaching experience at the school under study – one male and one female. The other two participants had teaching experience of fewer than four years at the school. One of these participants was young and the other more mature but inexperienced. They were both females.

### **Participants' Profile**

In keeping with the ethical principle of anonymity, each participant is represented by a pseudonym.

Ms. James was a 42 year-old teacher with twenty years of experience and had been at the school under study for approximately nineteen (19) years. Her

highest level of qualifications was the Post Graduate Diploma of Education and she was ranked Teacher III Secondary. Ms. James was a committed, caring teacher who was a stickler for principles and required a high standard of performance from her students. From time to time Ms. James got into conflict with some students who flouted school rules or were unwilling to cooperate. The fact that Ms. James was a victim of student violence, and an experienced and trained teacher made her an eligible participant.

Mr. Mark was 47 and had been teaching at the school under study for the past 15 years, but his teaching experience spanned twenty-eight years. He was a disciplinarian and like Ms. James, he required a high standard of performance from his students. He was one of the few teachers who ensured that he did make-up classes with his students upon his return to school if he were absent. He was currently pursuing Mediation Studies at the Master's level. However, he was ranked Teacher I Secondary. Mr. Mark was a suitable participant because he experienced a number of violent acts from students. Additionally, despite his years of experience, he was untrained, and he was the only male participant. These characteristics were likely to add balance and varied perspectives to the study.

Ms Salvry was thirty (30) and had been at the school understudy for all her four (4) years of teaching. She was soft spoken and dealt compassionate. Her highest level of qualifications was Bachelor of Science and was ranked Teacher III Secondary. Ms Salvry had not yet pursued the Post Graduate Diploma of Education (teacher training). Ms. Salvry was victim of student violence.

Additionally, she was an inexperienced teacher and the youngest participant. These features made her an adequate participant who could broaden perspectives on the issue.

Ms Rico was 48 and had been teaching at the school under study for two (2) years but her teaching experience spanned four (4) years. Despite her inexperience, she brought a mature approach to her job. She was firm yet caring, understanding and motherly. Her highest level of qualifications was a Bachelor of Arts. She was ranked Teacher III Secondary, but had not yet received secondary teacher training. Ms Rico was a suitable participant because she was a victim of student violence. Additionally, she was an inexperienced teacher who was mature. Her perception of the issue could be different and might add richness to the study.

## **Data Collection**

### ***Instrument***

Data collection is the process of gathering information for the study. It served to provide answers to the researcher's questions using a research instrument. The instrument refers to the tool and processes the study employed to collect data from participants. For this qualitative case study, the researcher was the main research instrument and the participants were the data sources; this suggested there was an interaction between researcher and participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Since this study aimed to understand more deeply the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers, "the human instrument which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive seems to be

the ideal means of collecting data.” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 16). Hence, this study collected data using interviews. The researcher designed the interview schedule using the research questions, and findings from the literature review on common ideas about the topic, as a guide for its (interview schedule) development. This allowed the researcher to elicit the perceptions directly related to the study from the participants, as oppose to relying on other instruments such as a questionnaire developed by another inquirer. Additionally, this topic required subjective and multiple perspectives which could not be measured and assessed by formal means (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

### *Interviews*

This research employed the use of semi structured, face-to-face interviews. The semi-structured interview allowed for a degree of flexibility in the conversation between the participant and the researcher. This interview process was guided by a mixture of structured open-ended and less structured questions (Merriam 2009). Face-to face interactions allowed the researcher to capture social cues – facial expressions, gestures and other non verbal expressions which could add meanings to responses (Opdenakker, 2006). In addition, face-to-face semi structured interview allowed the researcher to digress from the main question at hand and probe more deeply a particular response from the participants. Further, it allowed the researcher the opportunity to enter into the mind and perspectives of the participants in order to understand how those individuals made meanings as victims of student violence, quite unlike quantitative instruments, such as the survey, which was unable to truly capture the

attitudes of the participants. Through the interview, the researcher could obtain the participants' thoughts, feelings and intents; it also allowed the researcher to gain insights into the participants' past experiences with student violence and how they influence the present behaviours. Merriam (2009) further elucidated that the interview was the most effective method to use when conducting a case study of a few individuals. Accordingly, the semi-structure interview was used to answer all three research sub-questions.

### *Administration of Interviews*

Prior to interviews permission was obtained from the principal (see Appendix A). Each participant was interviewed once on an individual basis at a time and place agreed to beforehand by both the researcher and participant. Interviews lasted approximately twenty-five to forty-five minutes each. All sessions began with an explanation of the purpose of the study and the assurance from the researcher of confidentiality and anonymity. Every participant was given an informed consent form to read and sign (see Appendix A) and this activity was followed by a few questions to familiarize and establish background which preceded the subsequent open-ended interview questions. The sessions were audio-taped to facilitate transcribing later on. Notes of participants' non verbal expressions were handwritten. At the end of each interview, appreciation was expressed verbally.

### *The Interview Guide*

Polit and Beck (2008) advised that an interview guide be developed and used with each participant during the interviews (see Appendix C). This helped to ensure good use of time, made the process more organized and provided focus for

the sessions. The guide consisted of twenty-seven open ended questions, specifically developed by the researcher for the sole purpose of this study. The questions were categorized to address each research sub-question which would in turn answer the overarching research question. Depending on how the participants responded, questions were re-phrased, omitted or the order changed. Table 1 gives an overview of the interview guide.

**Table 1: Overview of Interview Protocol**

Themes/ Categories	Research Questions	Interview Protocol Questions
	<b>Overarching question:</b> From the perception of the teachers, what are nature and consequences of student violence perpetrated against teachers at a co-educational secondary school in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago?	1-27
Verbal Physical Sexual Covert Overt Social Technological	<b>Research Question # 1:</b> How do teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?	5-12
Individual Traits Family Background School Influences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture/Climate</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Teacher Behaviour</li> <li>• Students' Needs and Interests</li> </ul> Limited Options to Discipline Failed System Social Media	<b>Research Question # 2:</b> What are teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?	13-20
Psycho-emotional Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waning Motivation</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Levels of Tolerance</li> <li>• fear</li> </ul> Career Change Avoidance Risk to Life	<b>Research Question # 3:</b> How do teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?	21-27

### Researcher's Experience

I was motivated to conduct this research based on initial observations of the level of student violence perpetrated against some of my colleagues, and of how unhappy and dissatisfied they had become. As a student whose specialization was in Curriculum Studies, I felt as educators that teachers'

curriculum delivery could not be my only concern. I believed people perform best when they can function in a safe, pleasant and happy environment. That was the impetus which started the conceptualization process.

As I sought to establish a solid background and present a good description of the local context, I discovered local information about the issue of student violence against teachers was not readily available except whatever little was reported in the media and what colleagues in other schools would talk about. There was hardly any documentation which could suggest how prevalent the issue was in Trinidad and Tobago and the impact this problem had on teachers. I made official requests for information to several educational agencies. I delivered those requests by hand, followed up with phone calls and emails, but none responded favourably. This consumed a lot of wasted time. Even the school under study could not provide evidence of the problem because teachers' complaints were not recorded. All of these were evidences that a dearth of information existed locally. Internationally, there also existed a scarcity and all the available literature made reference to this. I could not find a single study to replicate; most of them were quantitative studies.

As I progressed with the study, arriving at a suitable title, articulating the statement of the problem and the research questions proved to be problematic. They were revised numerous times. However, I discovered the deeper I got into the literature, the more my understanding was illuminated and this allowed me to make necessary corrections over time. Sometimes it meant leaving the particular challenge and returning to it later. That helped!

Data collection was time consuming. Interviews took longer with the more experienced teachers which seemed probable because they had more to say; the longest session took forty-five minutes. In addition to the initial interviews, there were follow-ups which were needed to clarify certain points made in the interview. However, it must be noted that all four the participants in the study were happy to share their stories and vent their frustrations. It must be noted that because I was an insider researcher- a teacher at the school under study, I had to be careful that my biases did not gain pre-eminence in the research procedures. Every effort was made to ensure accuracy. I observed the strictest ethical standards and principles of trustworthiness to ensure that the data collection and interpretations were true reflections of participants' perceptions and not mine.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved the preparation and organization of the data. The data was then reduced in the themes by a process of coding then the condensing of codes and lastly by presenting the data in tables, discussion or figures. Essentially it was making meaning of the data in order to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013, Merriam, 2009). In preparing and organizing the data for analysis, the researcher manually transcribed the audio-taped raw data from each interview, verbatim. In order to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, the researcher listened to the recordings while reading the details, several times. Next, transcripts were sent to each participant via email to check for discrepancies. This was necessary in order to validate the data and make the study credible (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, clarifications on ideas which

emerged during transcription were made with participants. Upon its return, each transcript was read several times so that the researcher could become familiar with the information. Next, the data were open coded (see appendix D). That meant the researcher made descriptive notations next to bits of data that were relevant to the research question. Data were condensed as similar codes were grouped into themes or categories. The data were sent to a neutral person for peer review. That was another critical step in ensuring the trustworthiness of the study (Merriam, 2009). The themes were represented in a table (see table 1) based on the research questions they answered. Subsequently, data were interpreted based on those themes and in relation to the research questions, and then written up in a descriptive narrative. Finally, data were sent back to the participants to verify that the perceptions expressed in the study were indeed theirs and not the researcher's biases. This member checking process was also another way of validating the study since it was the "most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and the perspective they have" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The interaction between researcher and participant in qualitative studies tended to raise a number of ethical issues. This was because qualitative research data collection procedures can be considered an invasion into the participants' private lives as they might be required to share sensitive pieces of information that may put them at risk (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, participants in this study were informed about the nature and purpose of the research and their right

to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Assurance was given to participants that anonymity and confidentiality of their identities and shared information will also be preserved. Additionally, findings were made available to participants after the data were transcribed and analyzed to build trustworthiness and add credibility of the study.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations were those methodological conditions which restricted the researcher's ability to generalize the study (Berg and Lune, 2011). This qualitative case study was limited to one school and four participants who were purposefully chosen. This methodology limited the research because such small sample size with just one institution might not be representative of behaviours at other similar institutions and as such findings cannot be generalized. However, the provision of rich thick description in the study should allow for transferability in similar contexts and experiences of teachers.

Delimitations are those boundaries which the researcher imposed on the study (Best and Khan, 2006). This study was delimited to understanding teachers' perception of the nature and repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers at one school. Therefore this study did not seek to generalize its findings. Although teachers could also be witnesses or perpetrators of violence, this study focused on the teacher as victims of student violence. It also excluded the perception of students, administrators and other adult personnel at the school.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a co-educational Secondary School in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago. It sought to answer the following research questions:

#### **Main Question**

What were teachers' perceptions on the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers at a co-educational secondary school in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago?

#### **Sub questions:**

1. How did teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?
2. What were teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?
3. How did teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?

Qualitative data collection and analyses were used to provide answers to research sub questions one to three. Data were collected through semi-structure interviews with four participants: Ms James, Mr. Mark, Ms. Salvry and Ms Rico (pseudonyms) who were all victims of student violence. The data were coded.

Similar codes were then grouped (Refer to Appendix E) into themes which were reflected in the literature.

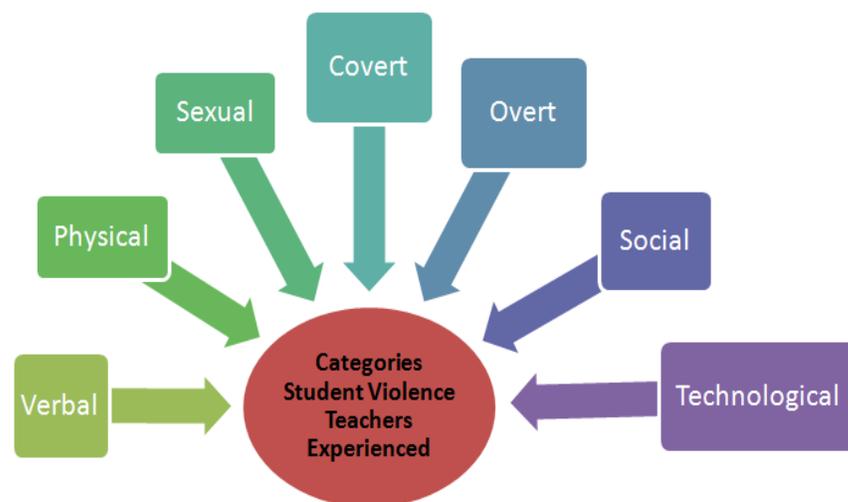
## Findings

### *Research Sub-question 1:*

*How did teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?*

For research sub question 1, diagram A. shows the themes which emerged from the data.

**Diagram A: themes for Research Question 1**



### **Verbal Violence**

Findings revealed that at the school under study teachers were verbally abused. Ms James lamented: “They try to bring down my name as best as they could. It’s almost like a goal or aim just to do that.” Likewise Ms Rico reported that:

They would say things. You know like: you look like an ogre. They insult your hair, like uhm: ‘where yuh hair line?’ Things you would hear-ridiculous things that sometimes you laugh, sometimes you get vex because it just not necessary.

Mr. Mark considered it repugnant that sometimes after disciplining some students he “would be called ‘bullerman’ and other really distasteful names.” Ms Salvry regarded some remarks as threats. She voiced:

They would want to throw words at you and say things like ... “monkey know which tree to climb” so you know that comes like they throwing a threat towards you.

In relating an incident where he had to restrain an unruly boy to take him to the office, Mr. Mark said another student was heard making the statement, “that’s why sometimes people does get shoot.” This he interpreted as a death threat. Thus all participants described acts of verbal violence perpetrated against them which suggest its pervasiveness.

### **Physical Violence**

Additionally, this study found that teachers experienced physical violence.

Ms James’ described an account of her attempt to settle a dispute between two girls. She recounted:

I was getting a class settled for the beginning of a lesson... I was actually taking the roll and two girls had a squabble ... a fight broke out in my class and I naturally went to part the fight. One of the parties involved in the fight left, took up a duster and threw it at the girl. I got it to the head instead!

Ms Rico and Mr Mark also experienced physical assaults, but theirs were direct unlike Ms James’ whose attack was indirect. Ms Rico related: “I’ve had one student strike me- that was the child with the bin... she just took the bin and fling it back at me and that was it.” On the other hand, Mr. Mark had several

experiences of physical violence. He explained, “Am trying to part a fight and sometimes students take the opportunity- I got kicked in my back.” His explanation continued:

During an exam a female student was using a cell phone and I attempted to take it away from the student. The student’s response was a violent one... my hand was brushed away.

Additionally, “when I first came to the school,” Mr. Mark continued, “I had a rotten egg ...thrown at me... it grazed the side of my head.” He added, “Recently I had another injury...a student took the pin and kept sticking me in my elbow.” This incident took place during a Science lesson on Law of Reflection and the pin was a piece of equipment used in the lesson. However, Ms Salvry did not report any acts of physical violence. Therefore, teachers described acts of physical assaults that were direct and indirect forms, but unlike verbal abuse not all participants had experienced physical violence.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Moreover, when asked to describe her experience with student violence, Ms Salvry explained in horrifying tones:

It was sexual harassment. The student ... taped me walking towards my vehicle, but when he was walking to the vehicle, he was talking while taping and saying that he will ‘f’ me and HE WILL DO THAT!

No other participant described an experience of sexual harassment. A probable reason could be that Ms Salvry was attractive and young- closer to the ages of the students. This study found that sexual harassment was present at the school under study

### **Covert Violence**

As teachers continued to share their experiences, acts of covert violence surfaced. Ms James, in commenting on a fight which broke out in her class expressed: “They literally had no respect for my presence; they just wanted to get at each other so much that I became almost invisible.” Ms Rico expressed similar feelings when asked, which act of student violence was most common, she said:

Just disrespectful behaviour- for example, knowing that there are adults in your presence and you choose to use obscene language, you choose to show somebody middle finger, you choose to slap a boy in his face right in front of a teacher...

She also added: “disrespectful things, ‘you can’t tell me what to do,’ you know me?- those kinds of things. Ms Salvry also concurred, “I have the ones who are disrespectful.”

Furthermore, Ms James and Mr. Mark reported incidents of theft. Ms James reported: “A morning shift student took my hand bag from the ... classroom and walked away with it.” Mr. Mark stated: “I know theft has taken place, but for me it has been more incidental, petty stuff, but theft is theft.” He also described scenario of theft:

That’s how opportunistic it is...two girls were fighting and I intervened because ... it really looked bad because it was girls in uniform... but in trying to part the fight, I felt a hand take money out my pocket.

Therefore, acts of covert violence described by all teachers were rude and disrespectful behaviours- incivility and theft were found at the school.

### **Overt Violence**

Both Ms James and Mr. Mark experienced direct overt violence in regard to their properties. Ms James reported: “My vehicle was parked at the front parking lot and someone broke my front lights.” Similarly Mr. Mark declared, “...

I have had cases of deflation of tyre. Sometimes you see scratches on the vehicle.” However, the other two teachers did not report such violent acts. That was perhaps because of their short number of years as teachers or they did not own vehicles. Nevertheless, teachers described damage to vehicles as violent acts perpetrated against them.

### **Social Violence**

Results of this study showed that both Ms James and Mr. Mark experienced social violence. Ms James remarked: “a child accused me of assaulting him physically, and I never even touched that child!” Similarly, “a student concocted a story- that I turned her over in the car and all sort of thing,” said Mr. Mark. However, the other two inexperienced teachers did not report any acts of social violence. Therefore, this study found that the experienced teachers were victims of social violence as they were falsely accused.

### **Technological Violence**

Finally, this study found that teachers experienced technological violence. Ms James narrated:

In October 2012 cyber bully was triggered in an unusual way! ...I gave them an essay to write titled: “The Greatest Bacchannal”. One student in her essay described in vivid detail an intense physical fight that she had with me and described what she did to be declared ‘victor’ (Refer to exhibit 1 for essay). ... That evening she took to Facebook to describe what she did, and threatened to bring her essay to life if I should inform her mother and take the matter to the police (Refer to exhibit 2 for copy of the Facebook message).

Ms Salvry also described her experience

He taped me walking towards my vehicle ... another teacher got hold of his phone and he (*the teacher*) was going through the videos and that came up.

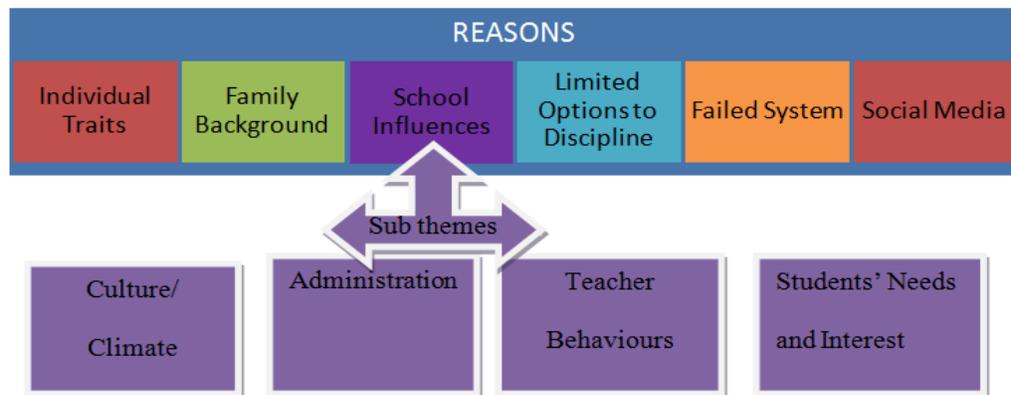
However, Mr. James and Ms Rico did not report such violent acts. Technological violence was not easily recognized because of anonymity and privacy issues so it would more correct to say the other two participants were unaware of any technological violence perpetrated against them. Nevertheless, this study found that technological violence in the form of cyber bullying, and inappropriate videotaping of a teacher was present at the school under study.

### Research Sub-question 2:

*What were teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?*

For research sub question 2, the following diagram B shows themes which emerged from the data.

Diagram B: Themes and sub themes for Research Sub-question #2



### Individual Traits

Findings revealed that individual traits represent one reason for student violence directed toward teachers. Mr. Mark opined: “I know this would sound like a bad term but you have a young person who have not valued discipline, fair play, justice- aka a brute.” He further added:

I have discovered somebody who like a small student with no restraint who may be angry poses a greater danger than somebody who has the restraint because you see they may have limits.

When asked about the presence of gangs in the school, Ms James reported:

That question was asked last week and officially they said 'no' (teacher chuckled). But I believe there are pockets of students who are literally up to no good, on the compound.

Likewise, Ms Rico and Ms Salvry could not confirm the presence of gangs but alluded its presence. Ms Rico stated:

I am not fully aware that uhm.. it depends on what you consider a gang because there are groups of girls ... they probably won't be identified as a gang per se but that's how they operate.

Similarly, Ms Salvry reported:

Certain students from my class, they tend to go overboard and like they have control of the people in admin... They always in the office for wrong doing -cursing, walk out on teachers, back chatting with teachers and in fights.

However, Mr. Mark was convinced that there were gangs and drugs. He stated:

I've heard there are students who belong to gangs in the community- the external- and there was a case where a student got in a fight and was unconscious, and we see the number of people who came in representing. When you listen to the discourse you realize that it's really retribution for out there.

He continued:

I believe it is present in the community so you have gang representatives in the school. Whether they are formalized in a gang I can't tell. But I see there are some people who float about the school in a suspicious manner. I think the attraction was the drugs. Their involvement is drugs in the school... If you go down to the last IA Block you smell the thing and there are signs, the darkened lips and so on. It is a kind of a loafing gang in the school even if you're in form five... they just loaf- floaters – no directions. Even if there is exam next week, it doesn't change because I think their sensibility is been captured by something else.

Based on his observation, Mr. Mark was convinced that gangs and drugs were present at the school. However, the other three participants cautiously indicated that the behaviours of some students were gang-like. Therefore, this study revealed that students lack of values, restraint and gang-like behaviours were individual traits which caused student violence against teachers.

### **Family Background**

Another reason perceived by teachers why student perpetrate violence against them related to the home background. Ms James suggested:

If you check back, like in my form class for example, there may be about two or three students in the class who come from a nuclear family where mom and dad are present and active in their lives. The others' parents maybe working two to three jobs, they can't keep up, or they may have so many children - they can't keep up with their activities, you know. So kids are often on their own- so to speak... like a latch keyed child.

Ms Rico, in commenting on the child who hit her stated:

I recognized that this child is affected by so many things ... She has to drop her brother to school in the morning, so she is late every single day and that continues up to today. She has to pick him up in the afternoon, but even when she doesn't drop even before she started dropping him to school she would have to get up and get him ready, so she was like the adult in that home.

Ms Salvry also agreed that the home influence was a major reason. She voiced:

I think ... their household and their parenting because if the parents are not adults the children don't have anybody to look up to because sometimes when the parents come in they behave just as the children so they will do exactly as what their parents do.

Mr. Mark also held the view the home was one of the reasons for students' violent behaviours toward teacher, but added:

Our society does not hold parents responsible for how the children come out and what they do in the society because for example, after you know you have worked for that hard earned money, if you can be fined for

infractions of your children you might make a more concerted effort not to just provide things, but to form.

All participants agreed that some students came from disrupted families, did not receive adequate parental supervision and guidance- socialization. Thus, findings revealed that the home and family background was responsible for student violence perpetrated against teachers.

### **School Influences**

Additionally, teachers perceived the school itself as being responsible for student violence directed toward them. In describing the *atmosphere* of the school Mr. Mark said: “It is not a productive tone. It’s just like I said, rudderless, it doesn’t show direction for the majority, so within there, people just get lost...”

This sentiment was echoed in various ways by the other teachers. Ms James asserted:

I would describe the environment of our school as negative, toxic, inconducive to teaching and learning and supported by a notably weak administration.

...They (*students*) break the rules and I think teachers are getting tired of trying to instill rules ...they basically try to choose between teaching the lesson and ignoring everything or ensuring that they follow the rules and forgetting the lesson.

She further added:

I don’t think the staff is together as a unit where discipline is concerned. Things are allowed to pass in the presence of some teachers where as in the presence of other teachers it is not allowed and the kids tend to want to push the envelope to see when those who follow the rules, when they would break, so to speak.

In similar expressions Ms. Rico opined:

There is not a clear distinction of who is in charge- this is an authority figure, and this is a student. There is a kind of blurred line where anything goes. Anything goes in terms of what you say to each other – in both

directions- and sometimes anything goes in terms of where- so the respect is broken down... We don't have like a consistent way of representing ourselves to the students.

There was also a reverberation in Ms Salvry when she expressed:

Some rules are not strict enough to have a certain order in school. Even like coming to school late that – the children see that as not important because they will come to school nine o'clock, half nine, walk in normal to school... so all of that not having a proper hold of them they feel that they have an upper hand.

These teacher perceptions connoted a school culture which was disorganized and lacked structure. Added to those characteristics Ms Rico observed:

The children ... yearn for somebody to come to them... they want somebody to come to them; they want to see a teacher because they haven't seen a teacher for like 3-4 periods. And sometimes people are in the class but I am not sure what they are doing.

Here students seemed to be disengaged another facet which spoke to the culture of the school. Thus, this study revealed the culture of the school appeared to be negative

Another critical aspect of the school was teachers' perception of *administration*. All teachers undisputedly stated that administration was "weak."

Mr. Mark explained:

There is no inspirational leader to drive them (*students*) to a new culture. Administration has changed ... for the former administrator a student with a sad story could get away with almost anything. Then you have waiving of the consequences, no upholding of the discipline matrix. But now ...there is no equity, no consistency... For example, that thing where the student said I turn her over in the car, that administrator said, 'well I was not there.' Because he was on holidays, he's not dealing with it.

This opinion would no doubt be endorsed by Ms James who stated, "I don't think there is sufficient follow through for misdemeanors against teachers; the administration don't really follow through. Ms Salvry who also expressed her

dissatisfaction with the way administration dealt with the issue of sexual harassment said, “I believe if he (*perpetrator*) gets the chance he will ... And he is still in school up to now! So I find that wasn't handled properly.” She further explained why she thought administration was weak. She said, “Certain students from my class tend to go overboard and like they have control of the people in admin.”

Thus, these pieces of evidence suggested that administration was weak and disorganized.

According to findings teachers perceived the school as not meeting the *interests and needs* of some, and this contributed to the violence against teachers.

Ms. James believed there was a relationship between the subject she taught and students' violent attitude toward her. She said:

I think it (*violence against her*) is more prevalent in my... Management class because these children did not choose the subject and were not interested in knowing anything about the scope of the subject either. As a result, they enter the class with a mental block towards me and the subject. They also enter the classroom with a plan to provoke and frustrate me so I that I would put them out- which is what they really want!

Ms Salvry also opined:

Teachers don't know how to use the energy that the children have-they (*children*) are more active but it have no where for them to use the energy. ...we don't have a playing field so they don't have anywhere to exert all their energy.

However, Mr. Mark and Ms Rico did not express any views on this.

Results of this study also indicated *negative teacher behaviours* as a reason for student violence perpetrated against teachers. Ms James affirmed:

I believe some teachers' personalities cause kids to feel that they are one with us. ... They (*teachers*) want to be friends with them. Then they

(*students*) feel they have rights to more, yuh know; they push the envelope further.

Ms. Rico shared this sentiment and added, “People may think it helps” to be students’ friends,” and “Some of us (*teachers*) are disrespectful ourselves...” She continued. She further suggested inappropriateness in deportment and dress when she said:

I don’t know if they too young or they are pretending not to know that they are dealing with young men who are experiencing puberty and a lot of changes- hormone raging and so you need to adjust yourself to that. If you are in school --- adjust yourself – your dress and so on and how you interact with them as well.

Mr. Mark believed, “... teachers do not have the value to care for the children as they would want other people to care for their children.” However, Mr. Mark’s behaviour could be perceived by students as uncaring as well. He appeared to be a firm disciplinarian when he stated:

I am from a family of teachers and I understand discipline. I push work; ... am very old school... Am from a family with people in their 90’s my godparents, my parents, my aunts, my brothers, my sisters; they are teachers plus a policemen for a father, so you respect! So because of that I am insistent.

Teacher behaviour that was rigid would have the same effect as lax teacher behaviour and could be interpreted as unresponsive and uncaring. In a similar manner this issue of care was expressed implicitly when Ms James said, “They (*students*) consider me out-of-timing, am too clean, am too organized, am too tidy.” This statement suggests there was distance between the teacher and students; this has implications for the quality of teacher student relationship.

Thus, teacher behaviour appeared to be negative. This was perhaps due the notion that teacher victims of student violence were themselves likely to display negative teacher behaviours and as such contribute to poor teacher student-relationships which could cause student violence against teachers. Therefore, results of this study revealed that the school itself which appeared to have an unproductive climate; weak administration; negative teacher behaviours and the inability to meet needs and interest of children caused students to be violent toward their teachers.

### **Limited Options to Discipline**

Moreover, findings showed limited options to discipline students contributed to student violence against teachers. Mr. Mark strongly voiced:

I believe that with the uhm removal of corporal punishment as an option – am not talking about corporal abuse- it left the only option to counsel/talk...

I think like if you wanted to remove corporal punishment you needed to replace it with something. The replacement must take place alongside the old until it strengthens. You can't just pull something and leave nothing in its place.

Mr. Mark also observed that the removal of corporal punishment did “not remove violence from the system.”

Ms James also implied limited options when she stated:

It is unfortunate the corporal punishment was considered, but we have to go back to the drawing board and look for more creative ways of dealing with indiscipline. Letting them, let the kids, understand that there are consequences for their actions.

Ms Salvry also expressed the idea of limited options for disciplining students when she stated:

All they doing is parent coming back, parent coming back and suspension, and to me suspension is a waste of time ... I don't see that helping. They need something other than suspension.

However, Ms Rico did not comment on any disciplinary measure as a reason for student violence against teachers. Ms Salvry and Ms Rico made no reference to corporal punishment perhaps because their teaching career began after the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. Therefore, findings indicated that limited options for disciplining students contribute to student violence against teachers.

### **Systemic Failure**

Furthermore, Mr. Mark perceived reasons for student violence against teachers as systemic failure. He stated:

I think the adults - parents, teachers, police, ministers of spiritual- everything - that role model, authority- that moral authority- is no longer there- and have really failed because the children are supposed to be formed.

While other participants mentioned the home and school only as contributing to the reasons why student were violent toward their teachers, Mr. Mark made the link to other institutions . Thus systemic failure was found as a reason for this phenomenon at the school under study.

### **Social Media**

The final reason revealed by this study was that of social media. Ms James believed:

With the advent of social media, students tend to believe that they are anonymous and they say the worst things about people-Face book and Instagram and so on. So they've gotten in the habit of saying the worst of things about people so it's like nothing now when meeting up a person in real life to be inconsiderate.

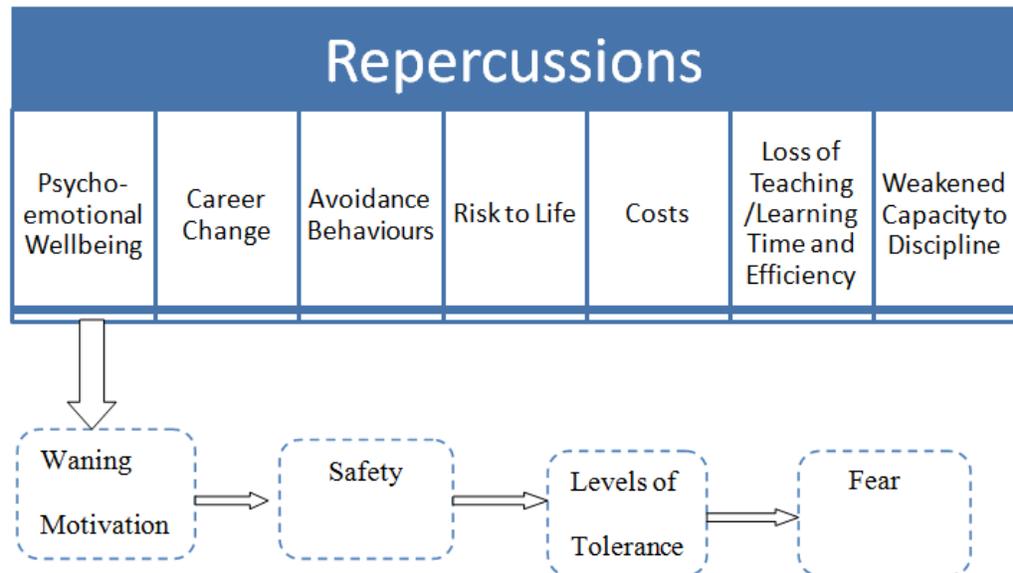
This idea was not expressed by other participant perhaps because they did experience cyber bullying but Ms James did. Thus this study found that the anonymity which social media afforded was responsible for student violence perpetrated against teachers.

### Research Sub-question 3

*How did teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?*

For research sub question 3, the following diagram B shows themes which emerged from the data.

Diagram C: Themes and sub themes for Research Sub-question #3



### Psycho-emotional Wellbeing

Findings revealed that student violence against teachers affect their psycho-emotional wellbeing. Both Mr. Mark and Ms James said they felt “frustrated.” “I

have to be leaning on friends for encouragement, so that I would not become despondent,” declared Ms James. Likewise Mr. Mark expressed:

I feel extremely tired! There is a despondency of the system not really changing because nobody is willing to speak up and call a spade a spade... ... That’s why I said I walk the corridor either sad or saddened when I have to discipline children.

Mr. Mark believed that the school system perpetuated student violence against teachers because of the poor manner in which the Ministry of Education and school administration had been dealing with the issue. As he continued to express how he was affected, he stated, “It has changed my perspectives of my job, my sense of self esteem- that psycho-emotional- my sense of self- efficacy.”

Ms Rico expressed bewilderment when she was hit by the student. She lamented:

Why am I doing this! I don’t deserve this! I am giving my best; am early for class all the time,... I started going through everything that I do and kept second guessing myself.

Additionally, student violence against teachers affected their motivation- an aspect of the psycho-emotional wellbeing. Mr. Mark expressed *waning motivation*:

There is very little that perks you up in this system... Sometimes I don’t feel to go to work. Right now I am feeling like I want a sabbatical. I have asked for a year off from being a form teacher.... I would have been more unshaken no matter what, who, whatever in times gone but ... my enthusiasm I think is a little less.

Safety was another aspect which affected the psycho-emotional wellbeing. Ms James reported:

I don’t feel safe here at times. I try to ensure that I am not alone in a class. For example the incident that happened last week with the boy, he stalked me for about 45minutes before he reported me with the alleged assault. When I sense he was in my presence, I told the girls stay back with me

until I finished lock the classroom and we'll go down together. So I didn't want to be left alone knowing that they may be lurking around.

Similarly Ms Salvry explicitly stated how she felt as a result of being sexually harassed:

I felt unsafe ... I didn't expect that from him so it made me feel unsafe around the student because ... you don't have any security on each floor so if something happen to me ... and that class was full of boys too. They would talk amongst themselves because it was a good few of them who were in the video itself. He was voicing his opinion and they were agreeing. ... I feel unsafe still up till today.

Mr. Mark was *fearful* and cautious. He said, "Let me not rock the boat for my own safety, so I will be more conservative."

*Levels of Tolerance* was another psycho-emotional feature which affected teacher victims. Ms James indicated, "I am a bit less tolerant." However, Ms Rico seemed to have a higher level of tolerance, especially for verbal violence, when she said:

... Sometimes the children are cultured into violence. They talk to you, they don't mean anything but they don't know another way to speak. So you might take it as aggression and to them, 'dat is how I does talk.'

Ms Rico could be more tolerant because she had not experience the quantum or level of violence which the more experienced teachers faced. Nevertheless, this study found that student violence against teachers affected the psycho-emotional well-being of all teachers.

### **Career Change**

Moreover, this study revealed that career change was one of the repercussions of student violence against teachers. When asked to articulate ways in which he was affected by student violence against him, the first thing Mr. Mark

said was, “I changed profession! This confused the researcher a bit because he was still a teacher. Mr. Mark further explained:

...My academic skill set from science. I changed degrees, I teach lower school. I was supposed to complete my science degree so that I could teach upper school. I am a T1 (*Teacher 1*) Secondary. I changed to psychology so I could be a counselor any day and I changed to mediation. I can leave anytime, so I have had to put a backup plan B and C for my life so I have the employment options other than teaching because you see that’s the only way now if you don’t get dignity being communicated to you...

Ms. James also stated that she changed career as she was pursuing another degree which would allow her to position herself in another area, “There are times I feel like if I’m wasting my time here. There are other options... I changed subject areas...”

However, Ms Rico and Ms Salvry who were relatively new teachers (four years and under) and not yet exposed to the level of violence as the other two participant did comment on changing careers. Thus, this study found that teachers who were exposed to numerous acts of violence were engaged in career change.

### **Avoidance Behaviours**

Further, this study identified avoidance behaviours as a repercussion of student violence against teachers. Mr. Mark exhibited this when he stated:

...sometimes I may for example, on a Monday morning before lunch I don’t have classes so I may not come out until after lunch for that one class I have in the evening. That is in effort to give yourself (*myself*) a little ease from...and make an easier transition into the work week.

In referring to her perpetrator, Ms Salvry admitted: “I asked if he would not be in my class.” She further stated:

Well I made it clear ... that I would not be going to that class if he is in the classroom...if I see him I go somewhere else. I talked to the HOD and

asked if it is okay that I stay closer to this side and he is not to come in the class.

In Ms Rico case, “the dean of that level decided that she would move her (*the violent student*) from the classroom she was in and put her in another classroom.”

When asked if she would have felt comfortable with the child remaining in the classroom, Ms Rico responded, “I thought it would be better for her to be in another classroom...” Similarly, Ms James had the student with the cyber bullying “transferred to another class.” However, Mr. Mark remained aggrieved and considered it a lost battle “with the Ministry where students are still in the same class and you (*I*) have to teach them.” Thus, this study revealed that teacher victims of student violence exhibited avoidance behaviours as they were unwilling teach their perpetrators.

### **Risk to Life**

Furthermore, this study revealed that the risk of dying was another repercussion of student violence perpetrated against teachers. Mr. Mark reported while trying to restrain an unruly boy another student commented: ““that’s why sometimes people does get shoot.”” He continued:

Now you hearing about teachers being threatened and on hit list and you see how people are just being .... No value. So you know the threat is real- you can’t dismiss that. When you say you can hate a teacher because they doing too much work, it’s not making sense. To the extent that you are poking me, where I had to go to emergency and go on HIV Retroviral medicine – that could wipe out myself, my family. A teacher even had a dream that I died- got killed on the compound.

The other teachers did not explicitly mention any risk to their lives. This was perhaps because they did not experience the kind of violence but Mr. Mark did.

Nevertheless findings indicated a risk to like as a repercussion of student violence against teachers.

### **Costs**

Findings of this study also revealed that cost was also a repercussion of student violence against teachers. After receiving damage to her vehicle, Ms James reported, “I later submitted my bill and advised the principal at the time to compensate me for damages...” Mr. Mark scoff at the idea of compensation from the school for his damaged vehicle and stated, “I handled that cost.” When questioned about the medical cost he incurred for being stuck with the pin, Mr. Mark responded, “well I couldn’t afford it at the time so I ended up having to go to the --- (name) Health Centre where I could have gotten attention and medication free.” However, the other teachers incurred no cost as a result of their violent attacks. That was due to the nature of the violence they experienced. Despite that, this study found that one of the repercussions was cost since the school, the teacher or the state expended money to repair damages to property or health.

### **Loss of Teaching/Learning Time and Efficiency**

Findings revealed that loss of teaching learning time and Efficiency were repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers. Mr. Mark reported:

..Going on HIV Retroviral medicine ... makes you sick- nauseous, all sorts of thing for a whole month... I couldn’t do anything- all my project with UWI – I also had to mark students papers and I just couldn’t function. So I was late with submitting students’ marks.

He continued, “So because of that there has been loss of time.” Although the other participants did not explicitly state this, teachers would have lost valuable teaching time each occasion there was a parent-teacher conference to deal with matters of indiscipline regarding their children. Additionally, each time deviant children were suspended, they would have lost instructional time. Ms Salvry alluded to this loss of time when she said, “All they doing is parent coming back, parent coming back and suspension...” the repetition was interpreted to mean the frequency of parental visits to the school in order to have dialogues about their children’s conduct. Therefore, this study found that teacher efficiency and effectiveness were affected due to loss of valuable instructional time.

### **Weakened Capacity to Discipline**

Finally, this study revealed that teachers’ capacity to discipline student was affected by student violence perpetrated against them. First of all, it must be noted that three teachers implied that they were disciplinarians. However, they underwent changed attitudes on becoming victims of student violence. Ms James stated:

I am a stickler for following the rules of the school... I usually ensure that I follow not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the law... *but* there are times I just want to turn a blind eye and pretend I did not see certain things because of the consequences that I have to suffer as a result.

Similarly Ms Rico implicitly stated her firmness on discipline when she said, “I demand certain things from the children which include being early at my class, if there is no good reason to be late...” However, after her experience she stated:

I would not be too forceful; I would be present, always doing what I am supposed to do and if you want it, you would come in because that’s what you come to school for and I will give all that I could afford to give you,

even extras, but am not going to go looking for anybody to bring them back. That's it!

When asked how she felt about disciplining student on a whole, even those she did not teach, Ms Rico stated:

Some people you could see that they are not going to accept that kind of discipline. They won't accept it from their parents; they won't accept it from their teachers sometimes so that would be a bit of a challenge.

Mr. Mark asserted, "I am from a family of teachers and I understand discipline."

However, after his experiences with student violence he admitted:

... I am more cautious ... I have become a little bit more marginal in the sense that I pick my battles and sometimes when I look at my classroom I recognize the things people would have gotten away with and (teacher chuckles) you teach those who want to learn and those who don't want to, you occa---sionally would pull them up.

He continued:

If you are going to intervene ... you can be cussed; you can be... all sorts of things- insulted, all sorts of things.

For Mr. Mark fear was associated with his ability to discipline errant students.

When asked if he was at times fearful, he stated:

Fear, well yeah! I'll say there is fear because I...., want to be consistent right through because sometimes, you see, I will tell you, put away your phone or whatever and you will ignore me. When the student says 'no' well that's a no. With other others you will go the further distance.

Thus this study found that student violence against teachers weakened the teachers' capacity to discipline students.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study explored the perceptions of teachers regarding the dynamics and repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers. Findings for research sub question one revealed that teachers at the school under study

experienced various forms of student violence. Acts of verbal violence were pervasive; Physical assaults included direct and indirect forms. Sexual harassment, acts of covert violence in the form of incivility and theft and damage to vehicles were also perpetrated against teachers. Through false accusations social violence was found; technological violence in the form of cyber bullying and inappropriate videotaping was also present at the school under study.

Research sub question two sought to understand why students directed acts of violence toward their teachers. Findings revealed there was no single reason responsible for this. Students' individual traits and family background contributed; the school itself which appeared to have an unproductive climate, weak administration, negative teacher behaviours and did not meet the needs and interest of some students was another significant finding. Systemic failure and social media were other reasons revealed in this study which caused student violence perpetrated against teachers.

Furthermore, research sub question three sought to explain how teachers perceived the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers. Findings revealed that teachers' psycho-emotional wellbeing was affected. More experienced teachers were exposed to numerous acts of violence and changed careers. Avoidance behaviours and risk to life were also repercussions found. Additionally, costs to the school, the teacher or the state, teacher inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and teachers' weakened capacity to discipline delinquent students were other repercussions found in this study.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

#### Introduction

This qualitative case study sought to understand the nature and repercussions of student violence against teachers at a co-educational Secondary School in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago. As the final chapter in this study, the purpose is to reprise the findings and discuss each in light of the literature. Recommendations will also be made that are linked to each finding.

#### **Summary of Research Findings**

Findings for research sub question one revealed that teachers at the school under study experienced various forms of student violence. Teachers were victims of verbal abuse, physical assaults, sexual harassment, social and technological violence. Additionally, covert and overt violence as well as direct and indirect forms of violence were experienced.

For research sub question two, findings revealed several reasons were responsible for students' violent behaviours toward their teachers. These reasons were individual traits, home and family background, the school influences, limited options to discipline students, a failed education system and social media.

Findings for research sub question three revealed that teachers' psycho-emotional wellbeing was affected. Other repercussions found in the study were career changes, teacher avoidance, costs, the loss of teaching /learning time and the ability to perform efficiently, and the weakening of school discipline.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### ***Research Sub-question 1***

The results of this study confirm common perception in the literature that the most widespread form of student violence against teachers is verbal abuse. The other forms of violence- physical, sexual, social, covert, overt and electronic violence- experienced were also consistent with the literature. Indirect forms of violence were also prevalent at the school. This is perhaps due to the high level of indiscipline at the school because in many instances teachers were abused in their attempts to intervene or part fights (Younghusband, 2009; Dinkes et. al, 2012; Espelage et. al, 2013; Garrett, 2014; Sangu, 2015). This finding is aligned to the definition given of student violence against teachers (Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007). It must be noted also that the more experienced teachers are more often victims than the inexperienced teachers (Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013).

### ***Research Sub-question 2***

Consistent with the literature, results revealed that students' *individual traits* was one reason why students perpetrated violence against their teachers (Wanklyn and Day, 2014; Sungut and Mugasia, 2014). Another reason found related to home and family background (Espelage et. al, 2013). Teachers attested to the large number students who came from disrupted families that were mainly one-parent households. This is likely to account for the lack of parental supervision which essentially produces latched-keyed children who are not cultured or taught values which enable them to respect themselves and others (their teachers). As a result, they lack moral values to govern their behaviours.

This finding is also validated in the literature which claims that children from disrupted families have limited parental supervision and whose parents demonstrate poor parental judgment contribute to indiscipline in children (Sungu, 2015).

Moreover, results showed the school itself was a major contributor to the problem of student violence against teachers. According to conventional wisdom, if the home failed in its responsibility, the school should be able to pick up the slack. However, the school under study seems unable to do that. Findings indicate the school's culture appears to be riddled with indiscipline. The atmosphere does not promote student engagement; discipline is lax or not enforced, and boundaries are diffused. Additionally, the administration is described by all participants as weak. There are too many inconsistencies as standards are not upheld. Administration seems not to understand its role in promoting a climate that is conducive to teaching /learning, or a healthy community of practice. These findings are consistent with other studies which found that such negative school culture and weak administration contribute to student violence against teachers (Espelage et. al, 2013).

As regards teacher behaviours, results indicated that seemingly uncaring teachers contributed to the problem. The lack of immediacy, unresponsiveness and unprofessionalism were all negative teacher behaviours which demonstrated lack of care and had implications for the quality of teacher-student relationships. Common findings in the literature suggest negative teacher behaviours contribute to poor teacher student/relationships - that affective connection which enables the

youth be empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others and whose absence causes student violence against teachers (Steffgen and Ewen, 2007; Espelage et al, 2013;(Galand, Lecoq and phillipport, 2007)). Another school related reason was lack of teacher training. This is a plausible reason since more than half of the staff is untrained. Sugut and Mugasia (2014) assert that teachers who are unqualified may be deficient and ineffective. Such deficiency may demonstrate itself in the teachers' inability to use effective teaching strategies and their inability to understand and meet students' needs.

Added to that, the school did not have a playing field so there was an apparent need for a greater level of creativity on the part of teachers. Further, there seemed to be limited subject options which catered to needs or interest as students at the form four level where students are offered subjects in which they have absolutely no interest. The sum of all this is a disorganized, poorly managed school whose culture has been compromised by indiscipline; where administration is weak, and there exists undesirable teacher behaviours which do not foster positive teacher-student relationships. These features of the school contribute to a negative climate which according to other studies is the breeding ground for student violence against teachers (Mc Croskey, Richmond and Mc Croskey, 2006; Steffgen and Ewen, 2008; Martin, Mac Kenzie and Healy, 2008).

Further, in the perception of teachers the removal of corporal punishment was premature and there was no suitable replacement. Teachers were left with limited options where students could understand there were consequences for wrong doing. The general view is that suspension does not work since students

viewed it (suspension) as something to achieve. Corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure finds favour with a few groups in the literature. However, anti corporal punishment groups maintain that it not only violates the human rights of the child, but there is also no evidence that corporal punishment corrects students' behaviours or promotes moral character development. Instead, it promotes violence (Kennedy, 2016).

Furthermore, this study revealed that students were violent toward their teachers because of a systemic failure. The home failed. The school system failed- from the Ministry of Education right down to the level of the school itself. Since very little was done by the MOE (and whatever was done, did not work) and other institutions within the community to arrest the problem of student violence against teachers, it was reasonable to conclude there was a systemic failure (Espelage et. al, 2013). Thus, this reason for student violence toward teachers finds favour with the control theory which purports that when bonds within the institutions : family, school, religion and other agents of socialization- are weakened , or boundaries and restrictions are not clearly established, children are more likely to yield to delinquent temptations (Hischi, 1969).

The last reason discovered was social media. The literature supports this as a cause of student violence against teachers. According to Lokmic, Opic and Bilic (2013) the “anonymity and the feeling that the perpetrator would not be revealed” promote student violence against teachers. Additionally, the social learning theory provides the explanation why it is probable that students who are habitually violent in the virtual world are likely to be violent in reality. If violent

expressions on social media are liked by friends then such acts are rewarding.

According to social learning theory a violent behaviour is learnt through habitual actions that are rewarding (Essau, 1989; Conradt, 2006 as cited in Lokmic, Opic and Bilic, 2013).

### ***Research Sub-question 3***

A key finding of this study was that teachers who were victims of student violence suffered negative psychological and emotional ill-health. This corroborates with evidence in the literature (Wilson, Douglas and Lyon, 2007). Prolonged psycho-emotional ill-health leads to teacher burnout as teachers become demotivated and lose interest in their jobs. In addition, this study found that teachers who experienced greater levels of violence changed careers due to dissatisfaction with the profession. This is supported by the literature which purports that teacher attrition is strongly related to teachers' experiences of student violence perpetrated against them (Klassen and Chiu, 2011).

Additionally, this study revealed that teachers exhibited avoidance behaviour as a result of student violence perpetrated against them. This finding confirms other studies which indicate that avoidance thoughts and behaviours are typical results of teachers who are victimized by students (Wilson et al., 2011). All participants desired to have the perpetrators removed from their classes, but while some participants got their wishes, one was not so fortunate. This typifies the lack of equity, fairness and inconsistencies which the participants spoke about, as regards the handling of teacher victimization by students. Absenteeism is

usually associated with avoidance. This is evident through staying away as a coping mechanism or to seek medical treatment.

Furthermore, this study revealed that the risk of dying was another repercussion of student violence perpetrated against teachers. In studies found internationally death is the outcome of many acts student violence toward teachers. Participants did not refer to this risk directly except one who indicated that threats were made to his life. To him the threat became even more real after being stuck with pins and placed on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Retroviral medication. This threat was perceived as being directed to the participant's family also. This repercussion is very serious and cannot be considered as just a threat. One of the main rippling effects of this repercussion is fear which is the driver for other stress and anxiety related results (Wilson, Douglas and Lyon, 2007).

Further, findings of this study found that cost was also a repercussion of student violence against teachers. This finding is substantiated by other studies which indicate cost to the individual and state as outcomes (Espelage et al., 201; Reddy et al., 2014). This study did not set out to quantify the amount, but it was evident that a cost would be incurred for changing careers due to tuition and other cost related to obtaining new skill sets. Other costs can include time off to seek medical attention, time away from classes even when teachers are in conferences with parents and phone calls.

Furthermore, findings revealed that loss of teaching /learning time and efficiency were repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers.

That loss of time teaching time affected the teachers' performance, which is likely to negatively affect students' performance. Teacher efficiency and effectiveness are also associated with the notion that the teacher is unlikely to be effective because the emotional well-being is affected. The literature confirms this finding which is likely to have repercussions for students also (Espelage et al, 2011; Daniel, Bradley and Hays, 2007).

Finally, this study revealed that teachers' capacity to discipline or correct students was weakened. This is no doubt due to fear and other negative consequences of being a victim of student violence. Teachers opted to correct only the students who showed they were more inclined to obey. The literature confirms that teachers who are victims of student violence find it difficult to discipline errant students (Galand, Lecoq and Philliport, 2007). This has implications for the quality of school discipline. Thus, this attitude does not foster a positive school climate. It seems as though teachers have become disempowered and this is likely to perpetuate a culture of violence.

### **Recommendations**

Findings of this study revealed the problem of student violence against teachers is one which requires intervention all various levels: Ministry of Education, school (administration, teachers and students,) and community. The problem is a social one that has become an issue for education since the school, to a large extent contributes to the problem. Thus the following recommendations based on findings of the study are presented.

#### **Ministry of Education**

It is recommended that:

- The Ministry of Education (MOE) looks with favour at making it mandatory that all eligible applicants for school leader positions be certified in school leadership. This will equip administrators with the required skills and competencies to manage staff, students, curriculum and plant. The administrator is a key figure in ensuring that the climate of school is a productive one which promotes the safety and wellbeing of all, along with academic engagement.
- The MOE provides a greater level of support to school administrators, especially those who are new in the position, through the school district supervisors.
- The MOE seeks with urgency to complete the construction of the new plant which will facilitate improved facilities including the playing field.
- The MOE fills vacancies for the positions of Dean at the school.
- The MOE utilize existing resources such as student support services to ‘rehabilitate’ violent students while in school. This is to suggest that violent students be pulled away from the regular classroom and be placed on a special programme on the same compound but at a separate location. Upon completion, the students will be reintegrated into normal school. This requires additional staff so the MOE must be committed to it.

### **The school**

Additionally, it is recommended that:

- Administrators of the school becoming resolute to change.

- Principal and Vice-principal treat all complaints of student violence directed against teachers seriously and with the respect and thoroughness of investigation each deserves.
- Administrators seek to involve all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and community representatives) in developing school policies which govern appropriate conduct for students with appropriate behavioural expectations and suitable consequences. These policies will be informed by other policy documents such as the National School Code of Conduct and will be relevant to the school context and its needs.
- Principal seeks to ensure that the school structure is better organized. For example, establishing clear lines of command at the school and ensuring that deans are empowered and equipped to manage their charges.
- Administration conducts a needs assessment of students' interests and skills with the view of providing relevant programmes. This will involve lobbying the MOE for additional staff. For example, if students are interested in hair dressing then offering cosmetology will be a good option.
- Administration works at building collegiality among staff and between administration and staff. This can be done in a variety of ways which include providing opportunities for staff development which can promote activities that allow for team building, understanding the professional identity and building better relationships.

- Administration promotes collaboration between school and other institutions in the community to treat with the problem of violence.
- Administration and staff promote school-wide programmes that foster the development of social competencies. Additionally all teachers should be equipped with training in violence prevention and intervention strategies.

Further, it is recommended that:

- All teachers should seek to develop appropriate teacher behaviour such as immediacy and responsiveness that will foster positive student-teacher relationships.

### **Recommendation for Further Study**

This study addresses only a few important questions but there are others.

Research on this topic which offers further interesting insights should be continued and expanded to include students' perception on the issue.

### **Self-reflection**

This research project was indeed a learning experience in every sense. My understanding of the issue was illuminated and my research skills sharpened.

Reading extensively on the topic was a critical first step- although reading continued throughout the entire process. This helped me to develop and refine elements of the study. Data collection was time consuming, and demanded a high level of skills in preparing for the interview, administering and even after in terms of how data were transcribed. Analyzing the data proved overwhelming at times. There was so much information which must be organized properly before any interpretation and analysis could be made. This was perhaps the most time

consuming activity. Many times I had to return to the audio-taped interviews to ensure the transcriptions were accurate. The transcripts were also read a multiplicity of times to the extent that I eventually knew who said what.

Based on findings of this study, the seriousness of this issue grabbed me. I felt hurt for my colleagues whom I discovered were suffering silently. I now understand why one study referred to this issue as a 'silent crisis'. I wondered how many more are suffering silently. In retrospect, I thought perhaps a focus group of perhaps six to eight teachers might have given a wider coverage with the same depth- just eager to find out more! Overall, this study provided a rewarding experience. I trust that readers understand the gravity of this issue and those in authority will be moved to bring about change especially at the school under study.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the perceptions of teachers regarding the nature and repercussions of student violence perpetrated against teachers with the view of gaining a deeper understanding into this phenomenon that was grossly understudied. Findings revealed the nature of student violence perpetrated against teachers was multifaceted. It specifically found acts of verbal violence were pervasive; physical assaults included direct and indirect forms. Sexual harassment, acts of covert violence and social violence were found; technological violence in the form of cyber bullying and inappropriate videotaping was also present at the school under study.

In its attempts to understand the phenomenon more clearly, this study investigated reasons why students directed acts of violence toward their teachers. The study found a complexity of reasons due largely to a number of school related influences, and the interplay among other facets relating to the individual student, home, community and social media. The school under study appeared to have an unproductive climate, weak administration, negative teacher behaviours and did not meet the needs and interest of some students. In addition, students' lack of values, restraint and gang-like behaviours were individual traits found. Familial reasons relating to disrupted families, latch-keyed students who did not receive adequate parental supervision and guidance were unearthed. Further findings included limited options for disciplining students, systemic failure and the anonymity which social media networks were all reasons perceived by participants as contributing to student violence against teachers.

Furthermore, the study sought to explain how teachers perceived the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers. Findings revealed that the phenomenon had serious negative repercussions. Teachers' psycho-emotional wellbeing was affected. There was a waning motivation and lack interest in teaching which prompted changes of careers. Avoidance behaviour and risk to life were also repercussions found. Additionally, costs to the school, the teacher or the state, teacher inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and teachers' weakened capacity to discipline delinquent students were other repercussions found in this study.

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Appendix A

**Permission to Conduct Research**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Celina Millington  
Lp 7 Persad Street  
El Dorado

Dear Madam

With reference to your letter dated March 3, 2016 seeking permission to conduct research at our school, I wish to advise that your request has been met with our approval.

I also wish to emphasize the need for confidentiality, particularly of secondary sources of information, e.g log books where sensitive information is recorded.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your achievements, thus far, and I trust that the findings of this research would assist in the decision-making process of the system of education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Warmest regards

-----

Principal (Ag.)

**Appendix B****Informed Consent Forms with Certificate**

## Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in this research project conducted by Celina Millington of The University of the West Indies. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers at this school, with the view that such understanding will help in formulating appropriate strategies to curb this problem. I will be one of approximately (5) people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be done. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use protocols which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

5. Administration and staff will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts.

7. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

## CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Statement by the Researcher

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Informed Consent has been provided to the participant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CELINA MILLINGTON  
Researcher

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
DD/MM/YEAR

**Appendix C**

## Interview Protocol

**Date:** -----**Time:** -----**Name (pseudonym):** -----**Length of interview:** -----

**Main Research Question:** What are teachers' perceptions on the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers at a co-educational secondary school in the St George East education district of Trinidad and Tobago?

Good afternoon Miss/ Sir ... I am happy that you have agreed to be a part of this research project which looks at the nature and consequences of student violence against teachers. Your perspectives are very valuable to this study as it will help us to gain deeper understanding of this problem with the view that such understanding will help in the formulation of appropriate strategies to curb the problem.

Please read the consent form and sign indicating your agreement to participate in this study.

<p>Familiarization</p> <p>Establish Background Information</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How old are you?... in what age range</li> <li>2. What is your highest level of qualification?</li> <li>3. How long have you been a teacher?</li> <li>4. What is your understanding of the term 'student violence against teachers'?</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 1:</b></li> </ul> <p>How do teachers at the school under study <u>describe their experiences</u> of student violence perpetrated against teachers?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What acts of student violence have been perpetrated against you?</li> <li>6. ...physically assaulted?</li> <li>7. What damage to property?</li> <li>8. ...insulted?</li> <li>9. ...harassed?</li> <li>10. ...experienced theft?</li> <li>11. ...defamation</li> <li>12. Which act is most frequent?</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 2:</b></li> </ul> <p>What are teachers' views on the <u>reasons</u> for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. What factors do you think to student violence against teachers?</li> <li>14. ....what aspect of the school do you think ....? Collegiality? Support from administration?</li> <li>15. How would you describe the culture of your school?</li> <li>16. What about teacher related factors?</li> <li>17. ... student related factors?</li> <li>18. ... students' background- family etc.?</li> <li>19. ... community?</li> <li>20. What about teacher training or the lack there of?</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 3:</b></li> </ul> <p>How do teachers explain the <u>repercussions</u> of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. How has student violence affect/impacted on you?</li> <li>22. ...stress?</li> <li>23. ...injury?</li> <li>24. ...sick?</li> <li>25. ...cost?</li> <li>26. Do you sometimes feel to stay away from classes or school?</li> <li>27. How has your experience affected you ability to discipline students on a whole?</li> </ol>

Thank you for your willing and honest participation

## Appendix D

Interview Transcript-Raw Data  
Ms James

## Colour coding key

Research Sub question 1

Research Sub question 2

Research Sub question 3

Raw Data	Codes
<p>Researcher: Good afternoon Miss, am so happy you consented to be part of this process. Uhm, don't know if I told you before, but your were selected because I felt that your information, your contribution to this research would really be of ,yuh know, worth, value;</p> <p>Participant: oka-y</p> <p>Researcher: I feel that you have something to share and that's one of the reasons why you were selected. Alright? So that uhm... we'll begin, yeah?</p> <p>Ahh.. so tell me, I know some women are really cagey about their ages but you can tell me or you can give me an age range.</p> <p>Participant: Am 42 years old.</p> <p>Researcher: ok that's good. What is your highest level of qualification?</p> <p>Participant: Ahh.. post graduate diploma in education</p> <p>Researcher: G-ood. And how long have you been a teacher?</p> <p>Participant: I have been teaching since May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1995.</p> <p>Researcher: And how long at this school?</p> <p>Participant: Almost 21 years now but at this school about 18 going on 19years.</p> <p>Researcher: Oka-y. What do you understand by the term student violence against teachers? What do you think it is?</p> <p>Participant: I think it is about a student doing something illegal toward a teacher.</p> <p>Researcher: Oka-y</p> <p>Participant: It could be uhm.. Actually striking, hitting, use of obscene language, disrespecting uh.. an adult or teacher on the compound.</p> <p>Researcher: That's good</p>	

<p>• <b>Research Question # 1:</b></p> <p><b>How do teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?</b></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> So now am going to ask you, what acts of student violence, based on your definition, what acts of student violence were committed against you? What did the students do to you?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> uh ... I do recall an incident when I was getting a class settled for the beginning of a lesson.. I was actually taking the roll and two girls had a squabble, I think the weekend, that weekend, it happened a Monday so it happened like the Sunday at their home area and they came in already charged totally charged or ready to fight again, but I was aware of it because I was busy taking the role</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> yes</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>and an exchange took place which I didn't really pay attention to and a fight broke out in my class</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> oka--y</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> and I naturally <u>went to part the fight and one of the parties who was involved in the fight left, took up a duster and threw it at the girl. I got it to head instead!</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> wow</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>So they literally had no respect for my presence they were just wanted to get at each other so much that I became almost invisible</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okaa-y. But were ever physically directly assaulted?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> N---NO.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> what about verbal abuse- insults</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> YES! I have been. <u>There are many cases of slander. I can give you an example of when it happened just last week a child accused me of assaulting him physically assaulting him, and I never even touched that child!</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> uhuhm</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>they have been saying negative things about me for no reason at all.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> uhmm</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> they consider me out-of-timing, am too clean,</p>	<p>Indiscipline</p> <p>Physical assault</p> <p>Students' lack of respect</p> <p>Slander</p> <p>Accusations</p> <p>Defamation</p>
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<p>am too organized, am too tidy <u>and they use these things to put me in a bad light which I find makes absolutely no sense but they do and they try to bring down my name as best as they could. It's almost like a goal or aim just to do that.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> I see. Okay Miss, what about---</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> but I always say once you're bearing fruits people will want to throw stones, uh.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Have you ever been a victim of cyber bullying?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> Yes, in October 2012 the cyber bully was triggered in an unusual way! One afternoon my form class didn't have a subject teacher for two periods. In an effort to ensure they had a productive afternoon, my co-form teacher and I gave them an essay to write titled: "<u>The Greatest Bacchannal</u>". <u>One student in her essay described in vivid detail an intense physical fight that she had with me and described what she did to be declared 'victor'. She saw me reading it at the end of the class and would have obviously noticed that I didn't show any emotions and actually allowed her to leave the class. That evening she took to face book to describe what she did, and threatened to bring her essay to life I should inform her mother and take the matter to the police. She was later suspended and transferred to another class after the suspension. However, she dropped out of school before the end of Form III</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> what about theft</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> Almost. (smile) <u>A morning shift student took my hand bag from the Home Economics classroom and walk away with it.</u> the guidance officer saw her going through the bag and wallet in the staff room and told her that she had a pretty bag and struck up a conversation with her . ( he honestly did not realize it could have belonged to an adult !) after a few minutes I stormed into the staff room to announce that my bag was stolen from the classroom and caught her with my bag and wallet while talking to the guidance officer. He was in shock! <u>He couldn't believe that he unknowingly stalled a robbery. Not much was done as far as I can recall.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Have you ever had damage to your vehicle?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> once. About ten years ago. <u>My vehicle was parked at the front parking lot and someone broke my</u></p>	<p>Distance /relationship</p> <p>Defamation</p> <p>Internet threat</p> <p>Stolen bag</p> <p>Bag was found No consequences</p> <p>Damage to vehicle</p>
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<p><u>front lights. The police was called to the scene and a reported documented but no one was held responsible. I later submitted my bill and advised the principal at the time to compensate me for damages as there was no disclaimer on the parking lot.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Which act would you say is most frequent? Participant: Slander</p>	<p>Compensation for damage</p>
<p>• Research Question # 2:</p> <p>What are teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study</p> <p>Researcher: So what do you think might be responsible for these behaviours of these children? Why do you think? What do you think contribute to student violence against teachers?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I believe the kids are realizing that they appear to have more rights than we teachers do.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Do think there is something in the school they may have or may be contributing to it, what school factors do you think might be contributing to student violence against teachers?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I don't think there is sufficient follow through for misdemeanors against teachers, the administration don't really follow through and the staff don't come together as a body make a f-- a--- presence so to speak.</u></p> <p>Researcher: okay. What uhm about rules, regulations discipline?</p> <p>Participant: <u>There is no follow through for that! They break the rules and I think teachers are getting tired of trying to instill rules and they end up wasting time trying to instill rules and they don't get their lesson done so they basically try to choose between teaching the lesson and ignoring everything or ensuring that they follow the rules and forgetting the lesson</u></p> <p>Researcher: So in that regard how would you describe your administration in relation to the kind of support staff receive</p> <p>Participant: Weak!</p> <p>Researcher: How do you describe the culture/climate of the school?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I would describe the environment of our school as negative, toxic, inconducive to teaching and learning and supported by a notably weak administration</u></p>	<p>Appear to have more rights</p> <p>Lack of consistency Lack of collegiality</p> <p>Lack of follow through Teaching wasted</p> <p>Weak administration Negative, toxic, not conducive to teaching</p>

<p><b>Researcher:</b> Uhm, what about teacher factors, do you think teachers themselves contribute to students being violent towards them?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>I believe some teachers' personalities cause kids to feel that they are one with us, so to speak, yeah. So they'll be walking up to teacher and give them a tap on the shoulder, yuh know, and they want to be friends ( using her fingers to indicate friends in quotation marks) with them. Then they feel they have rights to more, yuh know, they push the envelope further</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> so there is an issue of boundary, is it?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> yes <u>there an issue of boundary</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> alright, what about</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>so some teachers allow certain things to pass and others won't so I don't think the staff is together as a unit where discipline is concerned. Things are allowed to pass in the presence of some teachers where in the presence of other teachers it is not allowed and the kids tend to want to push the envelope to see when those who follow the rules, when they would break, so to speak.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okay, what about student factors, the student themselves, what problems or what factors that they have which may contribute or cause they themselves</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>definitely family background! If you check back, like in my form class for example, there may be about two or three students in the class come from a nuclear family where mom and dad are present and active in their lives. The others' parents maybe working two to three jobs, they can't keep up, or they may have so many children they don't have they can't keep up with their activities, yuh know, so kids are often on their own so to speak.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> so the issue of student related factors, what student related factors do you think may contribute to them being aggressive towards their teachers?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>I guess with the advent of social media, students tend to believe that they are anonymous and they say the worst things about people</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> uh hmm</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>face book and instagram and so on. So they've gotten in the habit of saying the worst of things about people so it's like nothing now when meeting up a person in real like to be inconsiderate, disrespectful, slander their name and so on.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okay, do you think any their academic ability may contribute to it or so?</p>	<p>/learning</p> <p>Teacher personality</p> <p>Teachers want to friends with students</p> <p>Lack of boundaries</p> <p>Inconsistent disciplinary practices</p> <p>Family background</p> <p>Broken family</p> <p>Lack of supervision for children</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Bad habit of defaming others while hiding their identity makes it acceptable in reality</p>
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<p><b>Participant:</b> to some extent</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> alright, what about community how do you think they community can affect or cause students to become violent?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> uhm, basically it starts with the <u>family again, eh because many of these kids come from where they are like a latch keyed child or they may, their parents are not supervising them so there is a natural desire to be a part of a group.</u> So they will naturally adhere to <u>gangs and those groups that lead up to no good so...</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> do we have gangs in this school?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> that question was asked last week and officially they said no (teacher chuckled). <u>But I believe there are pockets of students who are literally up to no good, on the compound.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> oka-y, alright what about training? Or the lack thereof, do you think teachers trained to deal with student violence?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> No. No we are not?</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> We do you say that? What do teachers lack?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> uhm when <u>something happens you can see there is some measure of despair, they don't know what to do, what course of action to take, they don't know what to do and it's clear that we weren't train to know what to do when how to when some act of violence does occur</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> what about uhm, you said you were dip Ed trained. Does the dip ed programme prepare you for this kind of thing</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> I was trained about ten years ago, so the education has evolved since. students that we have today are different to ten years ago so that is why <u>I suggest that retraining takes place periodically'</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okay Miss you're doing well.</p>	<p>Family</p> <p>Latch-keyed children</p> <p>Gangs</p> <p>Pockets of students with ill intentions</p> <p>No training in crisis management</p> <p>Need for periodic retraining</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 3:</b></li> </ul> <p><b>How do teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?</b></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> On to the question of the impact on you. How has disrespectful behaviours or student disruptive behaviour or some of those acts of violence you</p>	

<p>mentioned earlier, how have they impacted on you?  Participant: earlier on in the teaching career, I would be unfazed because I have a goal in mind to make a difference but of late I don't know if it is because of my schedule, my lifestyle has evolved somewhat or has changed somewhat, <u>I am a bit less tolerant. I have to be leaning on friends for encouragement, so that I would not become despondent.</u></p> <p>Researcher: okaa-y so do you feel stressed?  Participant: <b>Yes I do!</b> Yes I do!</p> <p>Researcher: what other words would you use to describe your feelings?  Participant: <u>frustrated! Many at times unsafe. I don't feel safe here at times.</u></p> <p>Researcher: so do you feel, you said you feel unsafe at times does that prevent you from going to class? Or coming to school do you stay sometimes? Or do you feel like staying away  Participant: No I try to ensure that I am not alone in a class</p> <p>Researcher: I see  Participant: for example the incident that happened last week with the boy, <u>he stalked me for about 45minutes before he reported me with the alleged assault. When I sense he was in my presence, I told the girls stay back with me until I finished lock the classroom and we'll go down together. So I didn't want to be left, I don't, trust these kids to be left alone knowing that they may be lurking around and up to no good.</u></p> <p>Researcher: okay has your experience affected your ability to discipline children on a whole?  Participant: Y -es! As you would know from your experience being around me <u>I am a stickler for following the rules of the school and as of last week I am tempted to just turn a blind eye to some things sometimes- which is unfortunate but don't, I usually ensure that I follow not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the law, yes? And there are times I just want to turn a blind eye because of the consequences that I have to suffer as a result,</u> ok. There was a child who was very disrespectful to the office of the vice-principal. This happened just last week and uhm she was disciplined by other senior teachers; a letter was given to her for a parent to come in, the day came, she didn't come, the parent didn't come, but she was most present at sports day. My reaction was, to make sure we saw each other, and I called the parent</p>	<p>Less tolerant Needs support</p> <p>Stressed</p> <p>Frustrated /unsafe</p> <p>Stalking</p> <p>Lack of trust</p> <p>Stickler for rules/ disciplinarian</p> <p>Turn a blind eye</p>
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<p>that evening to let her know she really should not have sent her until we had a conversation mother-to-teacher and her response was to hang up on me. I called back a few seconds later, and she screamed, literally screamed at me and cursed me in the worst of words for calling her. So after an experience like that! which happened just last week Thursday, <u>I am tempted to turn a blind I eye to certain things and pretend I did not see certain things. That's how it has affected me.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Did I ask you about taking sick leave? Did I? No?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> No</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> But do you take leave as a result of feeling despondent or ...</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> I never did, but that day when we spoke, I was tempted to take half-day because I knew no classes would have been affected because I was free that same Tuesday afternoon. So I was tempted but it worked out that I didn't never took it after all</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> uhm and do you sometimes feel like you want to change school or quit teaching as a result?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> YES! Yes!</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> so tell me about that</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>there are times I feel like if I'm wasting my time here. There are other options, to change subject areas, but the subject area am interested in (chuckles) the administration has even less respect for it. That's music (chuckles). Administrations on the whole- prestige school or not even less respect</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okaay</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>I thought of going back to the hospital to work because I am into nutrition and dietetics. But I'll be dealing with a sick version of the same people, if I go back there! So am literally between a rock and a hard place.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> okay Miss, tell me uhm, what do you think could be done to correct this problem- students being disrespectful, being aggressive to teachers. What do you think could be done?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> is unfortunate the corporal punishment was considered, <u>but I personally don't believe in corporal punishment anymore but we have to go back to the drawing board and look for more creative ways of dealing with indiscipline. letting them, let the kids understand that there are consequences for their actions and until we come up with a decent discipline matrix that will work , that is tailored for our school and would work for our school,</u></p>	<p><b>Feign ignorance of students' misdemeanors</b></p> <p><b>Change of interest</b></p> <p><b>Thought of leaving the profession</b></p> <p><b>Enforce the discipline matrix/ consequences for actions</b></p> <p><b>Mayhem</b></p>
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**mayhem will continue!**

**Researcher: so are you saying at present there is nothing, no discipline matrix?**

**Participant: there is one on paper.**

**Researcher: but**

**Participant: but I don't see teachers actively referring to it. They just know the ranks- who to go to, when, you know, but there isn't any basic follow through and the kids are seeing there is no consistency. So once the kids are picking up that, they would continue to push the boundary. So they basically have more teeth than we do right a now- students that is.**

**Researcher: ok Miss thank very much your information was very helpful.**

#### **Follow up questions**

**Researcher: Do you think there is any relationship between the subject you teach and students' violent attitude toward you?**

**Participant: Yes for Home Management. I have not experienced it in my Food and Nutrition class. I think it is more prevalent in my Management class because these children did not choose the subject and were not interested in knowing anything about the scope of the subject either. As a result, they enter the class with a mental block towards me and the subject. They also enter the classroom with a plan to provoke and frustrate me so I that I would put them out- which is what they really want!**

**Inconsistency**

**Limited options for discipline**

**Disempowerment**

**Students lack of interest in the subject**

**Mr. Mark****Colour Coding****Research Sub question 1****Research Sub question 2****Research Sub question 3**

Raw Data	Codes
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p><i>Good morning Sir, it's really a pleasure to have you share in this process with me. You have read the informed consent form and you have agreed and signed indicating your willingness to participate and again, I thank you. Do you have any questions? I have just a few questions and if you are not sure or clear on anything, just ask me to repeat and I will.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: so tell me Sir, how old are you?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: I am 47</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: Okay, what is your highest level of qualifications?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: I am currently pursuing Master's level.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: Do you mind sharing with me what area of study you are pursuing?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: social Sciences- Mediation Studies</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: Okay good. How long have you been a teacher?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: Actually since 1988- I started part time. But with the Government, January 6, 1992.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: And how long have you been at this school?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: Since 2001, September.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: Alright. What is your understanding of the term 'student violence against teachers'?</i></p> <p><i>Participant: Well violence the first thing can be physical, it can also be emotional, it can also be uhm intellectual in terms of character assassination. It can even be spiritual but you won't really know if any student has done things spiritually against teachers.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: O –oh that's interesting, sir!</i></p> <p><i>Participant: All dimensions of the human person violence can be perpetrated- physical, spiritual, emotional even social.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Research Question # 1:</b></li> </ul> <p>How do teachers at the school under study describe their</p>	

<p>experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?</p> <p>Researcher: Yes, okay Sir. Having said that how would you describe the acts of violence perpetrated against you?</p> <p>Participant: okay so one would be: <u>am trying to part a fight and sometimes students take the opportunity- I got kicked in my back. So they take opportunities to inflict injury on teachers who intervene.</u> So I have been a victim of that.</p> <p>During an exam a female student using a cell phone and I attempted to take it away from the student. The student's response was a violent one.</p> <p>Researcher: Describe that violent response.</p> <p>Participant: Uhm as I reached for the phone, the student ---- (long pause)</p> <p>Researcher: Was it physical?</p> <p>Participant: <u>Yeah, yeah because my hand was brushed away.</u></p> <p>In terms of defamation of character – so that would be emotional, we had a form class and we (other form teacher and I) used to go out to the bus route to ensure the students boarded their maxis and were safe, and <u>a student concocted a story- that I turned her over in the car and all sort of --- yeah.</u> But fortunately in the class we have double form teachers – male and female- so eventually the investigation (researcher interrupted)</p> <p>Researcher: So you took her in your car to the bus route?</p> <p>Participant: No. oh no.! I would just go by the bus route to park up . So they wouldn't 'lime' on the bus route. It's really of ill-advised to take children in your vehicle. When I first started school I used to like if somebody is injured take them to hospital. <u>But, especially after that incident, I would be reluctant.</u></p> <p><u>Uhm, I would also have had sometimes- especially after disciplining students as a male teacher I would be called 'bullerman' and really distasteful names.</u></p> <p><u>I think sometimes children resent being disciplined and the risk is that their response can be physically, emotionally or verbally abusive. I think the term violence can really be decoded as abuse. Abuse gives it a more of what it is because its abuse in the line of duty, in exercising what you think is the best judgment.</u></p> <p>Researcher: What about theft. Has any student ever stolen anything from you?</p> <p>Participant: The thing about this is you may never really have proof of it. So like a simple thing would have been: <u>I had one of those multi colored pens or it would be white board markers- you start off with things at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day you just don't have them.</u> I have not lost. I've heard for some people phones and those things. <u>I know theft has</u></p>	<p>Kicked in the back</p> <p>Physical</p> <p>Defamation</p> <p>Reluctant to assist in taking sick students to hospital</p> <p>Homophobic Language</p> <p>Abuse comes after disciplining students</p> <p>Minor theft compared to what other teachers have lost</p>
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<p><u>taken place, but for me it has been more incidental, petty stuff, but theft is theft.</u></p> <p>Researcher: What about damage to your vehicle have you had that experience?</p> <p>Participant: Yes again discipline and you're surprise to know students are – their recount of certain things- I remember this was an incident where the person was simply using the reflected mirrors in the office and dancing up so I reported it. <u>The Person threatened to mash up the lights on my vehicle</u> <u>I have cases of deflation of tyre. Sometimes you see scratches on the vehicle so those kinds of damage to property</u></p> <p><u>I also had- I forgot this one- when I first came to the school I had a rotten egg- I was at the cafeteria when a rotten egg was thrown</u></p> <p>Researcher: At you?</p> <p>Participant: Yeah</p> <p>Researcher: did it hit you?</p> <p>Participant: <u>yeah, it grazed the side of my head</u> and well most of it went into the cafeteria. I remember the students laughing so I smiled. Of course they wanted to see me react, but would not do that. <u>I smiled and went to the washroom and cleaned up myself and I left. I stayed home a few days. That made me switch from pursuing Science. So I never completed my degree in Science. I did psychology instead. So that's why I still teach lower school.</u></p> <p>Researcher: You said that happened when you just started to teach; do you think they were trying to test you?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I am from a family of teachers and I understand discipline.</u> I push work; discipline is--- you need it. So who is this new person coming in and maintaining such a—a (researcher completed- high standard), you see there is a view in the type of school we teach whether you go minimalistic, teach a reduced syllabus- you determine what they can learn or do you teach everything but slowly. I believe it's the same exam you have to teach them for, therefore for you have to go through everything slowly and you (the student) decide how much you learn, and there is discipline- certain things I believe in: you stand to greet teachers upon entry to the classroom so am very old school. Am from a family with people in their 90's my godparents, my parents, my aunts, my brothers, my sisters, they are teachers plus a policemen for a father, so you respect. So because of that I am insistent so I don't forget these are the things you have to do. And that's what- <u>we don't have follow-through.</u> We start hot and sweaty and in the end there is no consistency. So I don't think that that is liked.</p> <p>Recently I had another injury. That's with another child this</p>	<p>Threat to damage vehicle Deflated tyre scratches</p> <p>hit with a rotten egg</p> <p>repercussion- absenteeism change of career</p> <p>firm disciplinarian</p> <p>No follow through/ consistency</p>
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<p>term- in the month of February. We were doing in cooperative groups ‘Law of Reflection’ that you use pins and needles and mirrors. So I had work stations with different concepts inline – (science equipment) and <u>while I was explaining to another group, a student took the pin and kept sticking me in my elbow.</u>  <b>Researcher:</b> Why?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>other friends dared him to do it and he did it!</u> Well <b>besides having to go to emergency and going on HIV Retroviral medicine which really you sick- nauseous, all sorts of thing for a whole month- still trying to finish up those tablets. When you talk to the student they say:</b>  I don’t like you.  <b>Why:</b>  Cause you do too much work.</p> <p>So it’s like when you see exam then you would realize which is better. Should send you to an exam unprepared where you are seeing things for the first time in your life? Or you go in prepared. But to be prepared it would cost you something. Am willing to pay the price but I have already done the exam. So I have had that incident even just recently which is the one you witnessed- we were having a little conference in the lunch time. A parent visited and there was this student who was playing below the table a video game. And the response of the student was killing him! Kill him! Kill him! So the parent and I, we engage the student in a chat about how long ago we used to play with toy guns and now twenty years later, we’re seeing the proliferation and the thing about it is that <u>a student came in with branches, thick branch like this (teacher shows how thick) and began to deal a student some blows and I intervened.</u> The student was running around and I manage to – I said okay am not going to run after you but am going to take you to the office. I was able to confiscate his bag. This young man decided he wanted his bag, and pulling and tugging- small little student- all on the floor. I said okay well look you’re pulling and tugging. we’re going to the office  <b>Researcher:</b> so who was on the floor, both of you?  <b>Participant:</b> well at one point, I tumbled with the student because of how he was yanking. But if I let go bag, the force with which he was yanking he would have done damage to his head or something like that. So when that happened I tumble with the student. At least I Just feel on my knees but I almost fell flat. Then I decided this is enough because you don’t want to ‘handle the student’ but if your behaviour is putting me in physical danger, I put him in a headlock and brought him forcible to the</p>	<p>Teacher is stuck with science equipment.</p> <p>student was dared reduced effectiveness</p> <p>Indiscipline - fight</p> <p>Fight in teacher’s presence - indiscipline</p>
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<p>office. That's what you saw. That was from walking inside the classroom, room4, out in the corridor where we tumbled so I scrambled, I brought him to the office.</p> <p>There is a certain decorum a student should have. I said am not going to keep your bag; I said we're going to go to the office. If you don't accept, let's say a decision, you can appeal. Let's go to the office.</p>	
<p><b>Research Question # 2:</b></p> <p>What are teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?</p> <p>Researcher: so now tell me, in terms of the contributors, what do you think is responsible or what are the reasons why students would be violent toward their teachers?</p> <p>Participant: listen, you have to look at the ratio of numbers. You have more students by the hundreds than teachers by the tens.</p> <p><u>Now the older society the used to tell you this: you make fuss on the small things so that the students, the younger generation wouldn't even venture to think about the greater infractions. We no longer do that. So I believe that with the uhm removal of corporal punishment as a option – am not talking about corporal abuse- it left the only option to counsel/talk. Well what happens when talk fails? Talk some more or what you suspend? Or you are referred to somebody else to do what- more talk. So the students now have not been cultured along the lines of discipline because there's no consequence that they respect, that would sometimes compel them to conduct themselves in a manner while you wait on them to mature and understand or comprehend the value of instruction. So what do you say? I know this would sound like a bad term but you have a young person who have not valued discipline, fair play, justice- aka a brute. Unfortunately that --- and you have not culture that. So it has not removed violence from the system because now let's say if you have the instinct to fight ---- you have to culture that and give other methods of conflict management. And that has to mature and set in and value but my thing is this , if reason doesn't allow you to say well look this is wrong, this behaviuor is unacceptable it creates disorder in the system which requires management of so many of you. Because if so many of you run a mob, we would have to lock ourselves in the staffroom. We are literally out numbered. Now look at this, you know what I have discovered, somebody who. Like a small student with no restraint who may be angry is more, poses a greater danger than somebody who has the restraint because you see they may have limits. Researcher: what do think is responsible for that, where the student lacks restraint...?</u></p>	<p>Lack of discipline</p> <p>Removal of corporal punishment</p> <p>Lack of restraint</p> <p>Creation of a brute</p> <p>Lack of restraint and anger</p>

<p>Participant: Culturing. Because you see the thing about this – you know about sanctions-</p> <p>Researcher: yes</p> <p>Participant: <u>and sometimes what you can do , you put a pleasant reward to promote a particular type of beahior or you can administer something unpleasant.</u></p> <p>Researcher: so that sanction you are talking about should come from whom or what</p> <p>Participant: <u>I see it as socialization of the young so you have adults (researcher interrupts)</u></p> <p>Researcher: <u>by whom</u></p> <p>Participant: <u>it is a combined effect, the home, school, church, police, everyone; we are adults; these are children; these are the people who will be taking care of us when we are old. We have to pass on to them the kind of discipline that is necessary.</u></p> <p>Researcher: <u>so do think the school is doing a good job at that?</u></p> <p>Participant: <u>N—o. No because you see it is systemic I can tell you that if have any kind of incident with a student, the minute that let’s say you should hit the student, you have lost your case. It has nothing to do with cause and effect; it has nothing to with that and when you see that children now have realised that we are like toothless dogs that- we really have no means of really ensuring some kind of compliance and sometimes they do not have the reasoning to see the wisdom of what is being shared. So that diffusion of the boundary where there is a place for adults in the society and a place for children, and understanding my role to pass on as an adult, children understanding that value to learn because am going to be learning to take over the responsibilities the adults around going to surrender and I must be ready. I must be ready; I must be competent. That’s not happening.</u></p> <p><u>And when you look at home, we have become so money driven that the time really train children and our society does not hold parents responsible for how the children come out and what they do in the society because for example, after you know you have worked for that hard earned money you can be fine for infractions of your children you might make a more concert effort not to just provide things, but to form. I think it’s about lack of formation.</u> This is what is happening you see teachers we now have to protect our interest because a child can uhm – given instance of defamation of character- I could have lost my job.</p> <p><u>Or you know that now in the system, it’s a losing battle so you find that you withdraw. You only deal with things that absolutely outrageous. But now we have gone from dealing with the simple to waiting until things are monstrosities</u> and that’s the point when you will want to now put them into a new center when the</p>	<p>No consequences</p> <p>Lack of Socialization</p> <p>Diffusion of boundaries between adult and children</p> <p>Lack training at home</p> <p>Lack of parental accountability</p> <p>losing battle for teacher / only deal with outrageous situations</p> <p>adults failed</p>
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<p>old people tell you nip it in the bud stage. <u>I think the adults have really failed because the children are supposed to be formed.</u>          Children are supposed to be taught; they are supposed to be formed; they do not know it and sometimes you may incentives or sanctions accordingly  <u>Researcher: and when you adults I want you to be more specific for the purpose of the research</u>  <u>Participant: parents, teachers, police, ministers of spiritual- everything that role model authority- that moral authority is no longer there. So primary socializing is parents and teachers not empowered too.</u></p> <p><u>And now teachers not having the value to care for the children as they would want other people to care for their children.</u> I am not so convinced that everyone in the system really belongs to the teaching system. I am not even convinced that everyone who has children really suitable. But this the reality but in terms of that kind of vocation versus job. There is a measure of - People have already resigned before they have sent in their retirement or resignation papers. Why I say that, in the sense of they're conservative. We protect our little space ....  <u>Researcher: but what caused that</u>  <u>Participant: two things- I think it's the systemic change, I think like if you wanted to remove corporal punishment you needed to replace it with something. The replacement must take place alongside the old until it strengthens. You can just pull something and leave nothing. I think that is one thing.</u></p> <p>Different application of rules-----One got suspension, the other got a talk for the same offense.          People are confused as to what the standard is and I don't think the interview system is really sorting out those who hold values  <u>Researcher: the interview of ---?</u>          Participant: teachers  <u>Researcher: o -okay the hiring process</u>          Participant: yes because you see everything is relative but people have negotiable and non negotiable let's someone coming from a strict Christian background, that would be different from some who doesn't. and if you are the interviewer, how would you screen out... how could you send someone in the school who would display honesty to children?  <u>Researcher: so tell about administration's contribution and involvement in all of this</u>          Participant: now one of our administrators- the is a difference between being an administrator for all systems of the school and the health and well being of all systems of the school versus one</p>	<p>to nurture</p> <p>absence of moral authority primary socialization</p> <p>lack caring teachers</p> <p>Removal of corporal punishment without any replacement</p> <p>teacher values</p>
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<p>that wants to be a counselor. A counsellor's duty is to represent the students. They are advocate for the student. So that administrator was sooo proo student, I don't know if may be with that it won the trust of students to give information about teachers or whatever, but ( researcher interrupts)</p> <p>Researcher: before you continue, do you think it is bad to be pro student?</p> <p>Participant: Is pro student the right word? (Teacher questions himself) what I mean pro student is this that the students' word is held above even that of the supervisors on the ground which would be the teachers so you are more a skeptic of the teacher versus a student. So like for example that thing where the student said I turn her over in the car, that administrator said, "well I was not there" because he was on holidays so he's not dealing with it. Now you could have been pro student and concerned about how a student would make these kinds of allegations because it speaks to character.</p> <p>Researcher: so how would you describe administration?</p> <p>Participant: well administration has changed so now there is no equity, no consistency</p> <p>Researcher: so there continues to be inconsistency?</p> <p>Participant: <u>yes but with the former administrator a student with a sad story could get away with almost anything. Then you have waiving of the consequences, no upholding of the discipline matrix. But now you have inconsistency which becomes vague so that even though there is a discipline matrix you find that uhm, its application is vague. When it is supposed to be more transparent, more equitable, irrespective so that the children know that a particular action could bring a good consequence or bad. It ends up being weak.</u></p> <p>Talks about Prismatic society where we have the façade of business- shop front- but behind the scenes the conduct is not as government --- it's a personal , family kind of – so a prism causes light to change direction so it appears bend. So we bend rules accordingly so we have kinda personalized ... what I is personalized am giving my own opinion --- <u>the children therefore no longer see strict system accept when they get to the prison and in the hands of the police because just as the parents prepare children for school and we would take over and prepare for society and further reinforce what is taught at home, we are sending them unprepared.</u> For example a student was discovered with alcoholic beverage and the student was place on suspension. A teacher went a begged for the student because people were coming to the students home so they didn't want the child to get</p>	<p>Lack of consequences Flexible rules</p> <p>Weak administration</p> <p>School not preparing the students</p>
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<p>in trouble at home. (Which meant child was unsupervised at home) so the teacher thought it was best to let the student come back to school so that they wouldn't have that interference in the community. But, here you have a student with alcohol being sent back up to the classroom and therefore there was no consequence –the consequence was removed for coming to school with alcohol. That happened carnival Thursday and by carnival Tuesday the student was arrested for a knife. So <u>we make them fair game for the next socialization agency. And sometimes when I go YTC I see so many of our students , I can name them. There are students you think they have dropped out of school but no they got caught! We didn't teach them that there are consequences for actions</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> So you think the school is doing a disservice to the children.</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> they are doing no service. No service is just as bad as a disservice because people do not perceive themselves as bad. They perceive themselves as in the system they are trying. But you have to have a vision for the children of what they would become--- but when you have this vague system where they do not even know what is tolerable, what is right, what is wrong and you have leveled off the playing field –teacher-student you can't even distinguish. So it's total chaos, it's so vague and it's so rudderless. We don't discipline students because we don't like students we discipline to form.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> are there gangs in the school?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>gangs – I've heard there are students who belong to gangs in the community- the external- and there was a case where a student got in a fight and they were unconscious and we they number of people who came in representing and when you listen to the discourse you realize that its really retribution for out there. So sometimes you have to careful how you given names for student even that thing with the cell phone they call people in so I believe it is present in the community so you have gang representatives in the school. Whether they are formalized in a gang I can't tell. I see there are some people who float about the school in suspicious manner. I think the attraction was the drugs. Their involvement is drugs in the school.</u></p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> do you have any evidence of that?</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> <u>well, I will tell you something, it is so organized that there are look-outs. So like I saw something suspicious and as I walked toward the boys toilet to investigate. Another student made a B-line so by the time when I got there whatever, however, they disposed of.</u></p>	<p>Students end up in prison</p> <p>Gangs in community reflected in school</p> <p>Organized gang –like behaviour</p>
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<p><u>If go down to the last IA Block you smell the thing and there are signs, the darkened lips and so on. It is a kind of a loafing gang in the school even if you're in form 5.</u></p>	Evidence of drug use
<p>Researcher: <u>what is that word you used?</u> Participant: <u>loafing – they just- floaters – no directions. Even if there is exam next week it doesn't change because I think their sensibility is been captured by something else but to get concrete</u></p>	Floaters
<p>Researcher: <u>Sir how would you describe the general tone of the school?</u></p>	
<p>Participant: <u>I say it is fair because it is not a productive tone. It's just like I said, rudderless, it doesn't show direction for the majority so within there people just get lost. There is no inspirational leader to drive them to a new culture.</u></p>	Unproductive tone
<p>We have shifted from part time to full time, I mean that has brought some of its benefits but he evening shift had more collegiality than what exists now. We had a greater sense --- because we like each other. <u>I remember when I got that rotten egg people boycotted the graduation which was joint. So I like coming to school and we even had a birthday club. So that even though things were tough with the student, the students understood that we liked each other ,we had a greater unified staff ..</u> <u>The collegiality that was once there is not there.</u></p>	Collegiality  Lack of collegiality
<p>You cannot manage children if you have distrust of the staff. And if you own employers distrust you</p>	
<p>Researcher: <u>when you say employers who do you mean?</u></p>	
<p>Participant: the Ministry</p>	
<p>Researcher: <u>this is interesting Sir how does the ministry of education demonstrate distrust of teachers?</u></p>	
<p>Participant: <u>in terms of the analysis of the cases that come before you, you have to start from the point of the goodwill of the teacher and then look for discrepancies. Our system is based on evaluation; we have reflective practitioners. So you know a system is not working but you can't be toting it blindly.</u></p>	
<p>Researcher: <u>do you think think teachers feel valued in this system?</u></p>	
<p>No! I don't because the honour the teacher had that would have echoed within the society is not there.</p>	
<p><u>Does the ministry see that the thing is failing and therefore as a ministry overarching, even if it is to stand up and say, he is failing, that my staff is under undue stress, pressure, yeah?</u></p>	Failing education system
<p><u>Trying to manage masses, than, than you speak in a way that they are wrong, and you give blanket rights to the student - cause</u></p>	

in some systems the customer is always right, but we are teachers.

Researcher: So this is an issue of injustice or justice, do you see it like that?

Participant: Yeah! Because, the thing about it is this, nobody really wants to stand up and call it what it is and if we cant do that then there will be no change. Look at A.A, you have to admit “ I am an alcoholic,” you understand?

Researcher: That’s right.

Participant: So that nobody is willing to say, listen we have tried this and this and when I look at the outcomes we got long ago and look at the outcomes now, it has failed!

Researcher: Yeah!

Participant: Rather than you send the message that teachers have failed, once you give the student the right irregardless ( Regardless) you tell the teacher we have nobody to represent us and therefore we are not going to really lay down our lives which we used to do, long ago for anybody because there is no one really for us, I mean even if we have a union and all these things, but our employers... in other words we just baby sitters.

Researcher: O.K

Participant: it is sad, so the profession I was once proud of, its like it’s really just very politicized we do the politically correct thing, but it has not worked, because even if we choose an American system, they have a greater system of accountability than ours; they catch their criminals, they are sure, but in our system we know we could get away and that’s it, so they have not stood with teachers and therefore it communicates to the environment that not even the ministry believes in you. And therefore you have a few cases that have been amplified but it’s not even representative of the whole, but because you have amplified that the whole system now has begun to tweak and adjust to suit; that no one really has our back.

My intervention may be wrong but it may be from a motive of goodwill and not abuse. So now you see a lot of things and you just let it go or you count your battles. The last time two girls were fighting and a student was trying to pickpocket.

Researcher: Pick Pocket you?

Participant: Yeah, I had my money in my pocket and I felt a hand go in, yeah? That’s how opportunistic it is...

Researcher: Two students were fighting...

Participant: two girls fighting and I intervened because again you have your negotiables and your non negotiables, but it really looked bad because it was girls uniform... but in trying to part the fight, I felt a hand take money out my pocket.

Unwillingness to intervene

Pick pocketing

<p>Researcher: Wow! Participant: I am telling you.</p> <p>Researcher: Anyway Sir we have to move on. We've been here a while and I must go to the final question. Participant: Oh Shocks!</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Research Question # 3:</b> <p>How do teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?</p> <p>Researcher: that ok, I know you said a lot and I'm really grateful for that, but the last question really has to do with repercussions. How has it affected you? I know I could pull out some of what you said but I want you to articulate briefly for me.</p> <p>Participant: one, <u>I changed profession, so I'm only in teaching because ...</u></p> <p>Researcher: You changed profession?</p> <p>Participant: <u>Well, yeah. My academic skill set from science. I changed degrees, I teach lower school. I was supposed to complete my science degree so that I could teach upper school. I am a T1 secondary. I changed to psychology so I could be a counsellor any day and I changed to mediation any day. I can leave anytime, so I have had to put a backup plan B and C for my life so I have the employment options other than teaching</u> because you see the only way now if you don't get dignity being communicated to you, my own way of protecting- that is me say saying am not a teacher because I have no options. I am a teacher because I like it; I like teaching but also have other employment opportunity that I could easily go in to. Unfortunately, they don't offer my subject area in the teaching or else I would be teaching that, so change of profession.</p> <p><u>... I am more cautious in my ... in terms of my assertiveness as a male teacher.</u></p> <p>I have become a little bit more marginal in the sense that I pick my battles and sometimes when I look at my classroom I recognize the things people would have gotten away with and (teacher chuckles) you teach those who want to learn and those who don't want to yuh occa---sionally would pull them up let them</p> </li> </ul>	<p>Change of profession</p> <p>More guarded</p> <p>More cautious</p> <p>Less of an enforcer</p>

<p>be because... <u>it has changed my perspectives of my job, my sense of self esteem- that psycho-emotional- my sense of self efficacy .</u>  <u>Sometimes I don't feel to go to work. Right now I am feeling like I want a sabbatical. I have asked for a year off from being a form teacher because I have had classes that made no difference.</u></p> <p><u>That's why I said I walk the corridor either sad or saddened when I have to discipline children.</u> The collegiality that was once there is not there.</p> <p>Researcher: when you say pick your battles, you mean you decide which... tell me?  Participant: <u>if you are going to intervene or not because you can be cussed; you can be... all sorts of things- insulted, all sorts of things. So you know from teaching the students from which you have that kind of responsiveness so you will follow through with those children because you seem to have made an impact on them so you continue to mentor them</u> whilst with others -----  --  Researcher: What about fear. Are you sometimes fearful?  Participant: <u>Fear, well yeah! I'll say there is fear because I am -- - how you say, fear in the sense of I would want to be consistent right through because sometimes, you see, I will tell you, and you will ignore me, so is not that I am not telling other people put away your phone or whatever but when the student says 'no' well that's a no. with other others you will go the further distance.</u> So I have reached the point where I would let you know it's my responsibility to let you know you are breaking the rule. I commend you whenever, offer you exam tips whatever, but I am- sometimes you eat your humble salt that students will not be responsive, disregard – <u>because sometimes you go and report it, observing the chain of command and many times nothing comes out of that.</u></p> <p>I will say fear in the sense that that there are days when you come in and you are resilient; and there are days when you come in and you are positive so you have a wider coverage because of the resilience. And then there are days when you just, you know that you can take anymore or much more. And it may not necessarily be the school; it may be other factors, so okay you say, let me not rock the boat for my own safety, so I will be more conservative. <u>So that's the second thing in the sense that I would have been more unshaken no matter what, who, whatever in times gone because I have lost all my cases with the Ministry where students are still in the same class and you have to teach</u></p>	<p>Affected self esteem/ self efficacy  Loss of interest  Time away from students</p> <p>sad</p> <p>Pick your battles</p> <p>Decide whether or not to intervene</p> <p>Fear of correcting students</p> <p>Non action of admin</p> <p>Changed attitude/ lack of admin support</p>
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<p><u>them</u></p> <p>Researcher: Are these students who were violent towards you?</p> <p>Participant: Yeah, Yeah Yeah! I know how to eat humble pie because you don't keep score so much on students because you are still a teacher but you know the past, the history. Once I have had to say to a student I cannot do a recommendation for you. However, if I see improvement in the student then I waiver</p> <p>Researcher: what about --- I remember you talk earlier about getting that kick in you back. What about kind of effect that had on you?</p> <p>Participant: that was a girl who did that. I didn't seek medical with that one</p> <p>Researcher: What about time off. Do you sometimes have to take time off as a result of stress of feeling of....</p> <p>Participant: yeah, you know what I realized? The day when I feel like I can't make it and I disobey that, is the day I get in trouble. I don't know if that's a warning or that I am not resilient to what the day will bring in terms of my tolerance level. <u>So sometimes I may for example, on a Monday morning before lunch I don't have classes so I may not come out until after lunch for that one class I have in the evening. That is the effort to give yourself a little ease from.. Easier transition into the work week. My enthusiasm I think is a little less because in that same situation where I had to restrain the student, there was another student who was walking behind and making the comment "that's why sometimes people does get shoot." or something like that. A teacher even had a dream that I died- got killed on the compound- so you have some food for thought because I have little children now and uhm I have nine more years so I say ill try to make my thirty-three and a third. I won't stay unless ---I am beginning to wonder if it makes sense because there is a despondency of the system not really changing because nobody is willing to speak up and call a spade a spade.</u></p> <p><u>Now you hearing about teachers being threatened and on hit list and you see how people are just being .... No value. So you know the threat is real- you can't dismiss that. when you say you can hate a teacher because they doing too much work, it's not making sense. To the extent that you are poking me – that could wipe out myself, my family. I feel extremely tired because there is very little that perks you up in this system.</u></p> <p>Researcher: ok Sir thank you for you kind and willing participation</p>	<p>absenteeism</p> <p>Less enthusiasm</p> <p>Death threat</p> <p>Despondency with the system</p> <p>Lack of enthusiasm</p>
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<b>Clarification questions</b>	
<p>Researcher: Did you incur any cost when the child stuck you with the pin?</p> <p>Participant: well I couldn't afford it so I ended up having to go to the --- (name of ) Health Centre where I could have gotten attention and medication free. So because of that there has been <u>loss of time teaching learning time.</u></p> <p><u>Because of the medication I couldn't do anything- all my project with UWI – I also had to make students papers and I just couldn't function. So I was late with submitting students' report.</u></p> <p>Researcher: What about cost for damages to your vehicle?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I handled that cost.</u> The school, hahaha that would be the day!</p>	<p>Loss of time Affected teacher performance</p> <p>Cost for damages</p>



<p><u>good reason</u> for you being late. So this particular child, well the school had a—ahm an atmosphere that was different. It's a little calmer now but <u>the atmosphere was very- – I will have to say disorganized. They didn't do anything, they run around the place</u></p> <p>Researcher: and before you continue, hold your thought; tell me some more about that disorganized atmosphere.</p> <p>Participant: ok. <u>It was that children would leave the classroom and run to the office to find out this and find out that, tell this one something- the structure- they didn't have an understanding that when the bell rings it actually means something. They know it means something but then they could get away with anything else all around. So this particular</u> day there was an incident happening outside of the classroom. Most of the boys were inside- strangely enough when I am in class the boys don't give me trouble-most the boys were inside. This particular girl and one or two were outside.</p> <p>Researcher: Just now, what was the nature of the incident outside, do you know?</p> <p>Participant: <u>some fight!</u> But it had nothing to do with the children in our class. <u>So I said if you leave this classroom and go outside, do not come back because what is out there doesn't concern anybody in here. She stepped out and went about her business and she enjoyed herself.</u> So when she was coming back I said to her you are not coming here. I spoke to you before you left and you made a choice so go back out "YOU CANT STOP ME!" (student's words). She came in anyway to take bag. I said GET OUT! And she was leaving, but when she saw the bin, <u>she just took the bin and fling it back at me and that was it.</u> So after that we try to deal with a parent-teacher conference. The mother was not too--- the mother probably wanted somebody to blame—and ahm--- I was a bit surprised because <u>the child in particular is normally a very quiet child so I was surprised by that...</u></p> <p>Researcher: <u>by her action?</u></p> <p>Participant: (nodding her head) and I was surprised by the mother's attitude, but when the situation was resolved the dean of that level decided that she would move her from the classroom she was in and put her in another classroom.</p> <p>Researcher: <u>you didn't request that did you?</u></p> <p>Participant: no, I didn't</p> <p>Researcher: <u>would have felt comfortable with her being in the classroom?</u></p> <p>Participant: I thought it would be better for her to be in another classroom because of what it would have said to the</p>	<p>discipline</p> <p>Disorganized climate/student disengagement</p> <p>Lack of structure/ disorganization</p> <p>Indiscipline</p> <p>Lack of respect for authority</p> <p>Disobey instruction</p> <p>Throwing objects at the teacher</p> <p>Not normally aggressive</p>
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<p>right in front of a teacher,- that was yesterday- a form one child. They had some little rift. I don't know what it was about and I am speaking to him and he walks up to the other child and just slapped him. The other child now, instead of saying what happened he is saying, "Miss just leave him, just leave him." So I think he is afraid of saying anything. <u>He's afraid of Miss going to the office with this because in his mind this could only get worse; it can't get better.</u></p> <p>Researcher: okay miss you spoke about the incident with the child and the dustbin and you explained that you understood why she (teacher interrupted)</p> <p>Participant: I didn't understand right away,eh.</p> <p>Researcher: but eventually came around and realise that she has family issues so that might be a reason why you think she might have done something like that.</p> <p>Participant: yes</p>	<p>Atmosphere of fear</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 2:</b></li> </ul> <p>Researcher: But what other reasons you think might be responsible for student being violent toward their teachers?</p> <p>Participant: <u>some teachers seem to operate as though they are on the same level with the students. We don't have like a consistent way of representing ourselves to the students. Some of us (teachers) want to be their (students) friends which people may think it helps. some of us are disrespectful ourselves</u> (researcher interrupts)</p> <p>Researcher: you mean teachers are disrespectful to students?</p> <p>Participant: <u>yes. There is not a clear distinction in who is in charge, this is an authority figure, and this is a student. We don't have that distinction anymore. There is a kind of blurred line where anything goes. Anything goes in terms of what you say to each other – in both directions- and sometimes anything goes in terms of where- so the respect is broken down.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Okay so how would you describe the culture of the school? The climate or atmosphere of the school.</p> <p>Participant: The culture ( appears unsure of the question)</p> <p>Researcher: uhm, would you say it's a good culture where students are encouraged to focus on their learning they are expected to exhibit a high standard of work; is that the kind of culture which exists here?</p> <p>Participant: ooh! that probably isn't the culture. In fact when I came I heard this is ----- ( name of the school) and I didn't understand what that meant. Last week I have</p>	<p>Lack of boundaries</p> <p>Teacher disrespect</p> <p>Lax discipline</p>

<p>experience where I took some children out. I told the driver what time I'd like him to be here and he came when he wanted and his response is: ----- (name of the school) children does always be late. He had a discussion with somebody else and that's the conclusion they came to. Now, if I am paying you and I tell you to come at 7.00 it does not matter what anybody else says, you should be here at seven because my children where on time because I spoke to them and told that this is what I want. Outside of that, there are lots of little pockets where people say this ----- *name of the school)- I don't understand that. There was another incident <u>where I wanted to do something with some children and ahm I didn't get the encouragement.</u> It seemed as though some people felt we couldn't do it. They can't do it if we tell them they can't! Only when it started coming together, then you see people kinda – when they think it will work that's when they get on board. But we need to tell the children, even if they don't believe it, tell them you could do more. So that's the culture; it's not – we don't tell the children that they could do more.</p>	<p>Lack of support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Question # 3:</b>  <b>Researcher: tell me, am not too sure if I captured it but how did you feel about that experience with the child who struck you?</b>  <b>Participant: I felt like why am I doing this? (researcher interrupted)</b>  <b>Researcher: doing what</b>  <b>Participant: <u>Teaching! Why am I doing this; I don't deserve this! I am giving my best; am early for class all the time,.. I started going through everything that I do and kept second guessing myself- What is it that I did to encourage this behaviour? And ahm, I think it changed me a little bit.</u></b>  <b>Researcher: in what way</b>  <b>Participant: in the ahm I feel like am not.. like I was saying yesterday because I saw another incident with another teacher and a child yesterday .. (researcher interrupts)</b>  <b>Researcher: Just now, what was the nature of that incident?</b>  <b>Participant: the teacher kind of lost it for a few minutes and really put some slaps on that person. <u>But I was thinking that I would not be too forceful; I would be present, always doing what I am supposed to do and if you want it, you would come in because that's what you come to school for and I will give all that I could afford to give you, even extras, but am not going to go looking for anybody to bring them back. That's it.</u></b></li> </ul>	<p>Seconding guessing herself</p> <p>Less forceful Do only what is required</p>

**Researcher:** so you have adjusted yourself to suit. Ok. And how do you feel about disciplining children on a whole, even those you do not teach?

**Participant:** there are children that you could look at and recognize that if you told them something they would understand. So even if you don't teach them, and you tell them that's not the way to do that they would listen. So I don't have a problem disciplining children I don't teach. Some people you could see that they are not going to accept that kind of- they won't accept it from their parents; they won't accept it from their teachers sometimes so that would be a bit of a challenge.

**Researcher:** have you ever seen students committing violent acts to other teachers?

**Participant:** physically, umh--- once only

**Researcher:** what was the nature of that incident

**Participant:** they stuck the person with a pin

**Researcher:** the child stuck the teacher with a pin

**Participant:** yes

**Researcher:** okay so that's physically have you observed any other, like verbally?

**Participant:** yes, the shouting and the cursing. There are some children, they have no boundaries, they have no boundaries, so it doesn't matter who it is, the pricip, there is no handle to any body's name, like Mr so and so, so they would just say anything – loud, aggressive

**Researcher:** what about sexual harassment of students against teachers?

**Participant:** I have not experienced a lot of it but I know it existed. I also know that some teachers –I don't know if they too young or they are pretending not to know that they are dealing with young men who are experiencing puberty and a lot of changes- hormone raging and so you need to adjust yourself to that. If you are in school --- adjust yourself – your dress and so on and how you interact with them as well

**Researcher:** okay what about gangs, gang violence; do we have gangs in this school?

**Participant:** I am not fully aware that uhm.. it depends on what you consider a gang because there are groups of girls ... they probably won't be identified as a gang per se but that's how they operate.

**Researcher:** what are some of the things they do?

**Participant:** continuously attack other girls on face book, physically, it's a constant thing... they make a story sometimes the story isn't true, they bring other girls from

Discipline only children who are likely to obey

Shouting and cursing, aggressive behaviour  
Lack of respect for adult

Teachers lack of professionalism in dress

Indiscipline

outside to wait for somebody in Curepe or bring an older sister or nonsense like that.

**Researcher: do these behaviours trickle down to teachers?**

**Participant: I have not heard anything like that happening to any teacher**

**Researcher: what about absenteeism? Teachers being absent from classes**

**Participant: I think there are particular classes especially the form ones where the children they are always.. they yearn for somebody to come to them so if- I had the experience of going to a particular class, and the children would say, “Miss yuh coming to we?” like they want somebody to come to them; they want to see a teacher because they haven’t seen a teacher for like 3-4 periods. And sometimes people are in the class but I am not sure what they are doing.**

**Researcher: Alright Miss, but how do you think we could address this problem of student violence against teachers?**

**Participant: violence against teachers is a little bit difficult because sometimes the children are cultured into violence. They talk to you, they don’t mean anything but they don’t know another way to speak. So you might take it as aggression and to them, “dat is how I does talk” so a lot of talking needs to be done for them to understand that this is not the way you always talk and that’s not the way you speak to everybody even if that’s what happens at home. In terms of the school, I think a lot of things that happen, the incidents we have could be curtailed if the structure-if we are all on the same page because there are some excellent teachers who go to all their classes and who speak to the students about issues other than the subject matter, but then we have a lot of people who look like they doing something and they really aren’t doing anything.**

**Researcher: you mentioned early about teachers wanting to be friends with the students but tell about the kind of relationships teachers should have with students**

**Participant a relationship where a child would trust that you are working in their best interest. Now sometimes students would tell you things and you don’t want to be against any particular person, you don’t want to unprofessional but you hear what they think and based on they think they don’t take us seriously; they don’t take us seriously. They feel they could get away with.. It’s just so and so. We could do a lot more and it doesn’t mean that we have to have a lot of money to do or any big policy document.**

Absenteeism

**Researcher: but you would agree that policies are important**

**Participant: some policies are important because we have some extremes some children you know they not right; you know their home environment is not right, and there is no teacher who could fix that; they could be the best teacher on the planet some children cannot be reached because of how they have been nurtured and the nurturing does not stop when they come to school it's a continuous thing. They have eight hours here and then they go back to the same situation at home**

**Researcher: okay Miss that was the final question. I thank you for sharing your candid and honest views on this issue**

## Ms Salvry

## Colour coding key

Research Sub question 1

Research Sub question 2

Research Sub question 3

Rae Data	Codes
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>Researcher: Am happy that you agreed to be part of this study, and as I said before your perspectives on this topic is very valuable to the study as it will help me, the researcher to understand more deeply this issue of student violence against teachers. So you have read and signed the informed consent form, so we are ready to begin. So first question- I know some people, women in particular are cagey about their ages, so if you don't want to give me the exact thing, give me a range. The question is, how old are you?</p> <p>Participant: 30</p> <p>Researcher: Okay and what is your highest level of qualification</p> <p>Participant: Well normal B Sc</p> <p>Researcher: Okay and how long have you been a teacher?</p> <p>Participant: Approximately four years</p> <p>Researcher: And have you been here all this time?</p> <p>Participant: Yes</p> <p>Researcher: Okay so this was your first teaching appointment?</p> <p>Participant: yes</p> <p>Researcher: Okay. Now what do you understand about the term student violence against teachers?</p> <p>Participant: well violence could be physical or verbal, even mental. It depends on how the student portray it to the teacher.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Research Question # 1:</b></li> </ul> <p><i>How do teachers at the school under study describe their experiences of student violence perpetrated against teachers?</i></p> <p>Researcher: Okay and based on what you have said, have you ever been treated in any violent manner by students?</p> <p>Participant: <u>yes it had one incident; it was sexual harassment.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Okay---could you tell me about that?</p>	<p>Sexual harassment</p>

<p>Participant: Ah what happened – the student – he taped me walking towards my vehicle but when he was walking to the vehicle, he was talking while taping and saying that he will ‘f’ me and he will do that! And it so happened that another teacher go hold of his phone and he (the teacher) was going through the videos and that came up so then I was aware that, that it have that threat there for me.</p> <p>Researcher: oka-ay</p> <p>Participant: <u>So after that I did my part- made the report; made everybody aware..</u></p> <p>Researcher: Everybody, meaning...</p> <p>Participant: <u>TTUTA, admin, the teachers that yes- I would be staying away from that student</u></p> <p>Researcher: Oka—ay but how was it handled?</p> <p>Participant: uhm, <u>I would say poorly. Because he still on the school compound normal and it’s up to me as an individual to stay away from the student.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Okaa-ay this student is at what level?</p> <p>Participant: he is in form five now</p> <p>Researcher: Apart from that incident what about insult. Has any student ever insulted you or defamed you?</p> <p>Participant: Well I have the ones who are disrespectful. <u>They would want to through words at you and say, what it they does say, boy (teacher tries to recall the expression)- “monkey know which tree to climb” so you know that comes like they throwing a threat towards you.</u> But in that way you have to look at the student because probably that is what they hear every day. So then you would tell the form teacher and all of that, and they will punish the child but at the same time not everything is because of the child.</p> <p>Researcher: Oh okay so that ...</p> <p>Participant: Because if you look at their background and especially ... that happened last week with a student - but the <u>thing is he going through a difficult time home where the parents not financially stable so I guess he probably lashing out because of that</u></p> <p>Researcher: So you didn’t take it seriously as any serious threat, that incident</p> <p>Participant: No I reported it to the form teacher and then she informed me what was happening in that home. So well she dealt with it.</p> <p>Researcher: But are there instances where you felt really threatened?</p> <p>Participant: No</p> <p>Researcher: What about damage to your vehicle?</p> <p>Participant: no never had that</p>	<p>Avoiding student</p> <p>Dissatisfied with the handling</p> <p>Students throw words</p> <p>home Background</p>
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<p>Researcher: Do you know of any situation where teachers' vehicles were damaged on the compound by students.</p> <p>Participant: yes I have one where the children- I think they were fighting close to a vehicle and they end up hitting the teacher's car- it dent but nothing came out of that as well.</p> <p>Researcher: When you say nothing came out of it what do you mean?</p> <p>Participant: The parent they didn't take- well how I should say ...</p> <p>Researcher: well what I would like to know is if the teacher took any action against it?</p> <p>Participant: Uhm she informed the parent and that they will have to pay but further like if they did, am not too sure if they did.</p>	
<p>• <b>Research Question # 2:</b></p> <p>What are teachers' views on the reasons for student violence directed toward teachers at the school under study?</p> <p>Researcher: Alright uhm well you spoke about sexual harassment, you spoke about uhm verbal threats which you didn't take seriously, what do you think (and I know you mentioned some aspect of the home being responsible and the child's situation/problem) but do you think there are other reasons why students may perpetrate violence against their teacher?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I think uhm one major factor is their household and their parenting because if the parents are not adults the children don't have anybody to look up to because sometimes when the parents come in they behave just as the children so they will do exactly as what their parents do.</u></p> <p>Researcher: What about the school itself do you think the school can contribute in any way to students being violent toward their teachers?</p> <p>Participant: <u>Well one thing is that we don't have a playfield so 1. they don't have anywhere to exert all their energy- I think that's that, and then I think there is no – some rules are not strict enough to have a certain order in school. even like coming to school late that – the children see that as not important because they will come to school nine o'clock, half nine, walk in normal to school, stop to have breakfast then come to school so all of that not having a proper hold of them they feel that they have an upper hand.</u></p> <p>Researcher: And do you think teachers in anyway contribute to that?</p> <p>Participant: Y---esss. <u>It have probably a few teachers who probably not in class when they suppose to be and then well I</u></p>	<p>Immature Parents</p> <p>No playing field</p> <p>Flexible rules</p> <p>Lack of enforcement</p> <p>Absenteeism</p>

<p><u>have some who just probably late to class and it could be too that they dealing with other issues with children in the office.</u></p> <p>Researcher: How would you describe the climate or the culture of the school?</p> <p>Participant: Well, the culture is very--- what should I say modern. <u>But at the same time they don't know how to use the energy that the children have – they more active but it have no where for them to use the energy,</u> so it think that is it.</p> <p>Researcher: Alright uhm, what about administration and the support they give to staff in regard to how they deal with student violence against teachers; what would you say about that?</p> <p>Participant: <u>Sometimes they take it too lightly because some students who overdo it- I don't want to call names- but certain students from my class they tend to go overboard and like they have control of the people in admin.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Give me an example of what you mean by: go overboard.</p> <p>Participant: <u>They always in the office for wrong doing – cursing, walking out on teachers, back chatting with teachers and still even the children in fights.</u></p> <p><u>All they doing is parent coming back, parent coming back and suspension, and to me suspension is a waste of time because they would just go home, spend time home and when they come back- yes “I get suspended and I big,” understand? So I don't see that helping they need something other than suspension.</u></p> <p>Researcher: Okay so what do you think could help?</p> <p>Participant: I think if they find like different institutions where they still get their education but probably they could use the energy that they have in probably another field. Or in a more controlled environment – probably it could work.</p>	<p>Undirected energy</p> <p>Students in control/Weak admin</p> <p>Indiscipline</p> <p>Need for stiffer consequences</p>
<p>• <b>Research Question # 3:</b></p> <p><i>How do teachers explain the repercussions of student violence committed against teachers at the school under study?</i></p> <p>Researcher: Okay uhm, tell me about how student violence affects teachers. Think about your own personal experience. When that incident happened with the child being sexually abusive toward you, how did that make you feel?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I felt unsafe and well I didn't expect that from him so it made me feel unsafe to around the student because that time it was on the third floor and you don't have any security on each floor so if something happen to me- and that class was full of boys too and they would talk amongst themselves because it was a good few of them who was in the video itself. He was voicing</u></p>	<p>Unsafe feeling</p>

<p><u>his opinion and they were agreeing</u></p> <p>Researcher: What was his opinion again?</p> <p>Participant: That uhm, I sweet and he will “f” me. I believe if he gets the chance he will so.. And he still in school up to now! So I find that wasn’t handled properly. Because after that it had incidences where he ended up being in front the court for weapon and all of that, right so I feel unsafe still up till today. So if I see him I go somewhere else.</p> <p>Researcher: But do you have to teach his class?</p> <p>Participant: no because that was <u>in form three so when they picked subjects I asked if he would not be in my class.</u></p> <p>Researcher: So that’s the only incident that causes you to feel unsafe. Did you at anytime feel like leaving the profession because of that</p> <p>Participant: no</p> <p>Researcher: Going back a bit when the incident happened were you teaching his class at the time?</p> <p>Participant: yes</p> <p>Researcher: how did you deal with the idea of going to class knowing he is in that class?</p> <p>Participant: <u>Well I made it clear to administration, TTUTA that I would not be going to that class if he is in the classroom. So I wasn’t feeling safe at all.</u></p> <p>Researcher: And what? Is it that when you had your class time he would leave or you just didn’t go to class?</p> <p>Participant: <u>I carried my class to the lab. I made an announcement for my class to come to the lab and we have our class there. I talked to the HOD and asked if it is okay that I stay closer to this side and he is not to come in the class.</u></p> <p>Researcher: And did you know where he was at that time?</p> <p>Participant: no</p> <p>Researcher: Okay uhm, do feel in anyway inhibited in terms of disciplining students? Or do you feel comfortable disciplining students at this school?</p> <p>Participant: No. <u>To an extent because you know you have your, well what you could do – you have lines, then you have suspension and talk to the parents but uhm, I find that is not enough. I find teachers don’t have enough that they could do. You know even if they have like detention centres or something- that will help! Just sending them home not really impacting</u></p> <p>Researcher: okay I think that’s it Miss. Once again I thank you for your willing and honest participation.</p>	<p>Dissatisfied with manner situation was handled</p> <p>Unwilling to teach the student</p> <p>Unwillingness to teach student</p> <p>Not enough options for disciplining students</p>
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**Appendix E**

Table 2: Themes Formed from Codes Used to Answer Research Sub question1

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes (Combination of Codes )</b>
slander, Insults, defamation, homophobic Language, verbal death threat	<b>Verbal Violence</b>
Stalking, hitting , kicked in the back, Stuck with pin,	<b>Physical Violence</b>
Sexual harassment	<b>Sexual violence</b>
Rude and disrespectful behaviour, obscene language and gestures	<b>Covert Violence</b>
Stolen items, thefts	<b>Direct /covert</b>
Damage to vehicle, deflated tyres, scratches property	<b>Direct /Overt Violence</b>
False accusations	<b>Social Violence</b>
Defamation using internet	<b>Technological Violence</b>

Table 3: Themes Formed from Codes Used to Answer Research Sub #2

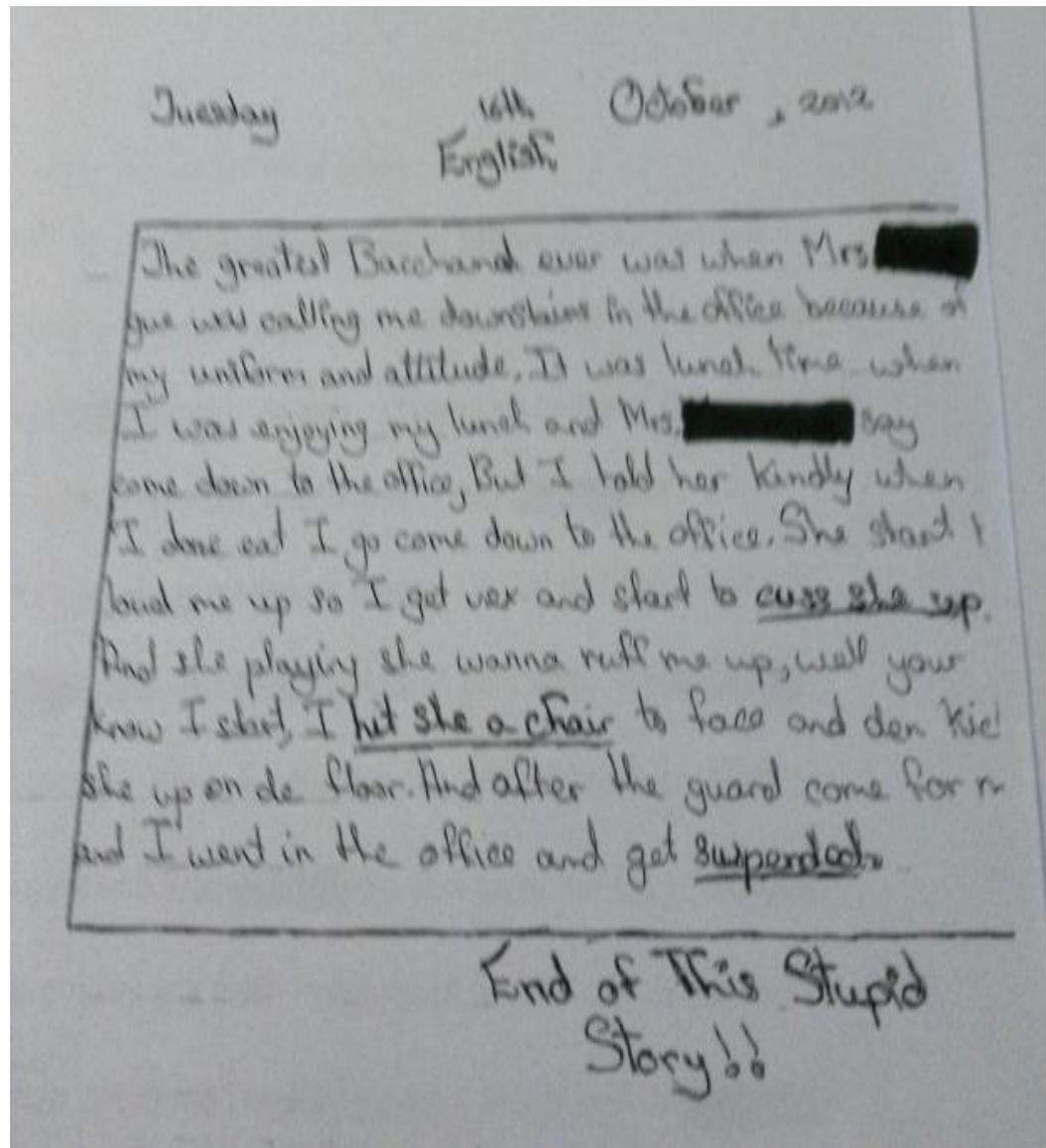
Codes	Themes
Lack of restraint, lack of values and morality, anger, gangs, indiscipline, pockets of students with ill intentions, drugs	Individual traits
Broken family, Lack of supervision for children, Latch-keyed children, family responsibility, immature parents, lack of parental accountability, Lack training at home	Family background
Chaotic school, Unproductive tone, negative, toxic atmosphere, not conducive to teaching/learning, lack of structure/ disorganization, lack of collegiality, student disengagement, lax discipline, diffusion of boundaries between adult and children, flexible rules/lack of enforcement, lack of follow through/ inconsistency, need for stiffer consequences, lack of consequences  Weak administration, lacks leadership, students in control,  teacher personality, lack of caring teachers, teachers want to be friends with students, teachers lack of professionalism in dress, teacher disrespect for student,  inability to channel students energy, no playing field, students' lack of interests	School  climate   Weak administration  Teacher behaviours  Needs and interest of students
removal of corporal punishment without any replacement, not enough options for disciplining students, back to the drawing board	Limited options to Discipline
lack of socialization, adults failed to nature absence of moral authority, Failing education system,	Failed system
Social media /bad habit of defaming others while hiding their identity makes it acceptable in reality	Social Media

Table 4: Themes Formed from Codes used to Answer Research Sub question 3

Codes	Themes (combination of codes)
Affected self esteem/ self efficacy, Loss of interest, extreme tiredness, fear, despondency, second guessing, frustration, Despondency, saddened,	Psycho-emotional
Little that perks up, less enthusiasm, need for time off, loss of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waning Motivation</li> </ul>
Unsafe, fear for safety, feeling unsafe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>
Less tolerant, greater tolerance for aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerance</li> </ul>
Changed profession, considered career change	Career Change
Absenteeism, unwillingness to teach perpetrators	Avoidance
Death threat,	Risk to life
Compensation, cost of repairing damaged vehicle	Cost
Affected teacher performance, ill-health loss of time	Loss of Teaching/Learning Time and efficiency
More cautious, less of an enforcer, less inclined to discipline, Changed attitude, Choose who to correct, Pick your battles, Fear of correcting student	Weakened Capacity to Discipline

## Appendix F

## Exhibit 1: Student's Essay



## Exhibit 2: Student's Facebook Message

