

Teachers' knowledge, perceptions and experiences of SRGBV within a school in South Africa.

Author: Slynita Swartz-Filies (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)

Co-author: Lee-Ann Jacobs-Nzuzi Khuabi (University of Newcastle, Australia)

Background:

Although there is a extensive body of research on GBV, there is limited research regarding gender-based violence within the school environment, referred to as SRGBV. There is also limited research exploring teachers' in the the Western Cape of South Africa perceptions and experiences on SRGBV. Teachers might be both victims and perpetrators of SRGBV. SRGBV aligns with the underlying philosophy of occupational therapy practice that seeks to advocate for social justice, including the fair treatment of all individuals

Research aim

To explore teachers' knowledge, perception and experiences regarding SRGBV at a school in the Western Cape of South Africa.

Objectives

To explore teachers' knowledge of SRGBV.

To explore teachers' perception of SRGBV.

To explore teachers' experiences of SRGBV.

Methodology:

The research paradigm chosen for this study takes an interpretivist stance. According to interpretivist research paradigm, reality is "socially constructed, and no single or observable reality exists. Interpretivist research paradigms lead to qualitative studies. Exploratory research design is used in this study.

Study population and sampling

Teachers who are working in a school in the Western Cape, who were either proficient in English and/or Afrikaans.

Purposive sampling (n=6)

Data collection

Face-to-face semi structured interviews

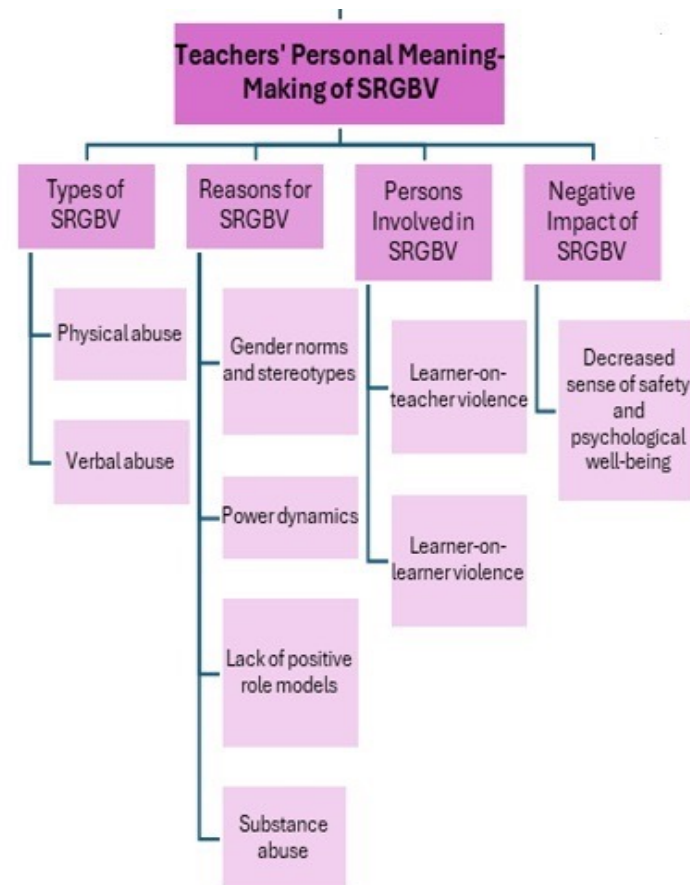
Data analysis

Data was thematically analysed using Braun and Clark's 6 phase framework.

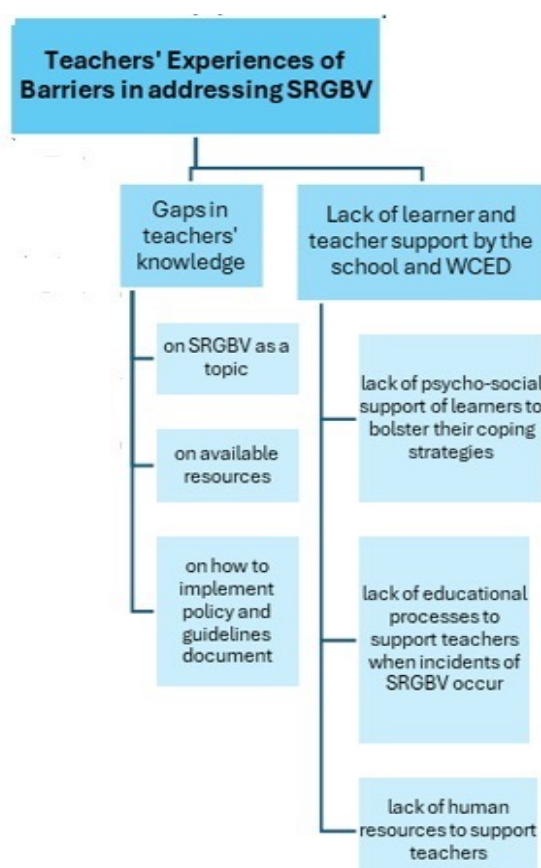
Findings

Three themes were generated from the data:

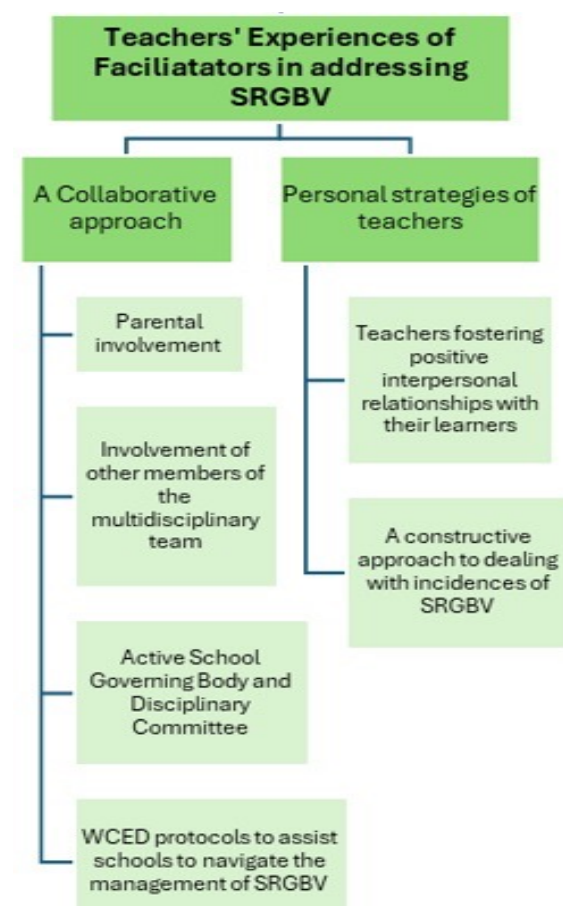
Theme 1: Teachers' personal meaning- making of SRGBV (knowledge, perception and experiences)



Theme 2: Teachers' experiences of the barriers in addressing SRGBV



Theme 3: Teachers' experiences of the facilitators addressing SRGBV



Discussion:

The main contributing factors to SRGBV:

- gender norms and stereotypes,
- role models of the learners,
- power dynamics as well as,
- substance use.



Gender norms and stereotypes has been identified as perpetuating the power dynamics present in the school environment. Teachers identified that learner-on-learner and learner-on-teacher (usually male learners) violence took place in their school, however, there were no reports on teacher-on-learner violence.

Power dynamics greatly influence the SRGBV. Girls/female learners are more susceptible to violence as a result of the power dynamics present in society. Participants indicated that cultural influence shapes learners' perception of male and female, thus contributing to power dynamics, as gender norms and stereotypes perpetuate these dynamics.

Substance use significantly influenced learners' behavior, those under the influence of marijuana becoming more aggressive, often leading to bullying and other violent acts. These learners were more likely to be perpetrators of SRGBV.

Negative role models: In the environments where learners live they are often exposed to and brought up with negative role models. This largely contributes to the overall behavior of the learner and the likelihood of them to become perpetrators of SRGBV.

Barriers which make it more difficult for the teachers to address SRGBV:

- Lack of knowledge regarding the topic of SRGBV,
- resources available to address SRGBV and
- the implementation of policy and guideline documents

Facilitators in addressing SRGBV:

Collaborative approach

- Parents, families and communities,
- Multidisciplinary team members
- Teachers' own personal strategies including positive interpersonal relationships with learners

Conclusion:

Occupational therapists possess the necessary competencies and are often uniquely positioned within school settings to address SRGBV, and thereby can contribute to a more inclusive, equitable and responsive school-based support system.

**School-related gender-based violence
any act or threat of SEXUAL,
PHYSICAL or PSYCHOLOGICAL
violence happening in and around
schools, as a result of gender norms
and stereotypes and enforced by
unequal power dynamics.**



UNGEI!
United Nations Girls'
Education Initiative