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Qualitative exploration of workplace demands, resources and bullying among teachers in South African schools: Implications for individual and organisational well-being

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The aim of the study reported on here was to examine workplace bullying among teachers in South African schools. The research was framed by the Job Demands-Resources Model which was utilised to determine the extent of demands and resources that teachers experience and the implications thereof for creating an environment that fosters bullying and the effect of such bullying on teachers and schools. A qualitative interpretative research design was utilised. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews with 13 teachers. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to interpret the data. The findings reveal that teachers work in an environment characterised by excessive demands with ever increasing workloads and a lack of supportive resources. This environment fosters stress, anger, frustration and aggression, and increases perpetration of bullying acts, as teachers turn upon one another. The findings in this study indicate that in the aftermath of bullying, feelings of incompetence, emotional exhaustion, depression and anxiety manifest. Furthermore, teachers reported engaging in withdrawal behaviour and expressing an increased desire to leave the profession. The results of this study have serious implications for teachers' well-being and their willingness to remain within the profession. In order to protect the well-being of teachers and the overall integrity of schools there is an urgent need to increase resources and interventions to create a more conducive and healthy work environment. The need for resource provision and a re-examination of demands becomes even more evident during the era of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Keywords: individual and organisational well-being; job demands; job resources; job stress; teachers; workplace bullying

Introduction

While extensive studies have been done on workplace bullying within organisations and a large body of research on bullying between pupils in South African schools exists, there has been very little research on understanding workplace bullying between teachers in South African schools (De Wet, 2014; Georgakopoulos, Wilkin & Kent, 2011; Solomon, 2021). In addition, very little research has been done in South African schools on teacher bullying utilising the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, despite the fact that research has recognised the teaching environment to be characterised by excessive demands and low resources, thereby posing a risk to teachers experiencing bullying (Batchelor, 2019). Such research is of interest both locally and internationally as high demands and a lack of resources are global problems within schools, particularly in those countries within emerging economies where funding for education may be limited. School environments where teachers experience a lack of resources and high demands can provide a fertile ground within which bullying between teachers could flourish, thereby impacting negatively on teacher well-being. As such, the existing tension between lower funding and limited resources, compounded by high work demands within schools require urgent examination and attention.

Defining Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is defined as a form of verbal and non-verbal aggression where direct or indirect acts lead to an employee being systematically subjected to degrading and disrespectful treatment (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2010). Typical workplace bullying behaviour entails exposure to verbal aggression, physical intimidation, being attacked personally or professionally, having one's work obstructed, being overloaded with extra tasks, being given work below one's job level, being socially isolated from the rest of one's work group, having rumours spread about oneself, and/or being made the "laughing stock" by being subjected to verbal or physical acts of humiliation and denigration (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016). "Workplace bullying is conceptualised to take place relatively often, and over a period of time and is thus a chronic stressor, with persistent exposure leaving the targeted individual feeling unable to defend him or herself from the menace of such actions" (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2003, as cited in Bernstein & Trimm, 2016:2).

Consequences of Workplace Bullying

Van den Brande, Bernstein, Reknes and Baillien (2021) note that bullied individuals suffer from impaired psychological well-being, increased levels of anxiety and fear, lowered self-esteem, lowered self-efficacy and lowered belief in their professional competence. Bullying has also been implicated in mental health problems such as major depressive disorder, symptomology that resembles post-traumatic stress disorder and even suicide (Iglesias & De Bengoa Vallejo, 2012; Nielsen, Tangenc, Idsoe, Matthiesen & Magerøy, 2015). Physiological outcomes may manifest in sleep disorders and musculoskeletal problems (Hoch, Mikkelsen & Hansen, 2011). Negative individual health implications, in turn, have serious organisational outcomes as victims experience reduced job satisfaction and increased intention to leave the organisation (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Within the context of bullying, researchers have started examining the JD-R model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) in relation to workplace bullying wherein job demands can create a toxic environment in which bullying is fostered while resources (or lack thereof) could enable (or inhibit) one's ability to cope with these demands (Baillien, Neyens, De Witte & De Cuyper, 2009). Within such an environment one can distinguish between perpetrators and targets, noting that those who perpetrate are more likely to be in positions of seniority bullying junior staff or they are those who have a large cohort of individuals supporting them and they can, therefore, bully an individual on a group basis as they are supported in this behaviour by their "gang" of followers (Batchelor, 2019). Perpetration may increase when individuals are assailed by feelings of frustration, insecurity and anxiety in an environment characterised by excessive demands, job insecurity and/or a lack of supportive resources (Baillien et al., 2009; Batchelor, 2019; Denzler & Förster, 2012; Van den Broeck, Baillien & De Witte, 2011). Such individuals may resort to bullying others in order to deal with their own negative feelings. In this instance, workplace bullying is argued to be a coping mechanism used by perpetrators to express their frustration or to salvage some control over their current circumstances (Baillien et al., 2009; Batchelor, 2019; Van den Broeck et al., 2011).

Considering the above-mentioned arguments, the advantage of using the JD-R model in relation to workplace bullying among teachers in South African schools is relevant as the environment within which South African teachers work is one comprised of a severe lack of job resources amid an ever-increasing list of job demands (Batchelor, 2019; De Wet & Jacobs, 2013; Simbula, Panari, Guglielmi & Fraccaroli, 2012; Solomon, 2021; Van Tonder & Fourie, 2015).

The environmental context and job demands and resources within South African schools

Post 1994, with the demise of apartheid, schools in South Africa underwent extensive political and societal transformations, which has led to continuous, yet often ineffectual changes being made to government educational policies. This has significantly affected the job demands of teachers without supplying the necessary job resources (Batchelor, 2019; De Wet & Jacobs, 2013; Montgomery, Mostert & Jackson, 2005; Solomon, 2021). These job demands include, but are not limited to the following: extremely high learner-teacher ratios; high workloads due to an increase in the school population; an increase in diversity in school populations; an increase in problematic child behavioural cases due to the increase in socioeconomic ills and crime within

broader communities; role ambiguity as there are constant changes within the profession about the scope of syllabi; a lack of career development and promotional opportunities; a low salary amid the ever-increasing cost of living; difficult interactions with external bodies such as parents of students as well as student bodies, and a performance appraisal systems amid the lack of resources (Batchelor, 2019; Billet, Turner, Martin & Fogelgarn, 2020; Santavirta, Solovieva & Theorell, 2007; Van Tonder & Fourie, 2015).

It is noted that South African teachers are working in toxic environments characterised by disgruntled, overworked, and stressed teachers (Jacobs, 2014). These conditions are particularly apparent and far more intense within schools located in poor environments, which are known to be under-resourced and are fraught with moral degradation, violence, lawlessness, and economic despair (Harber & Muthukrishna, 2000; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Prinsloo, 2008; South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). Within such schools, demands are excessively high on teachers who are expected to work with a lack of resources to meet performance outcomes (Batchelor, 2019; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Prinsloo, 2008; South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). Jacobs (2014) notes that in schools where despair and disrespect prevail, teachers often turn on one another. While research does exist on teachers and workplace bullying and there are numerous media reports and anecdotal evidence that exist on the topic, which highlight the high degree of bullying and violence occurring in schools, to our knowledge, academic research on workplace bullying, done within a framework of examining job demands and resources among teachers in South African schools, is lacking. Consequently, the current research examined teachers and workplace bullying within this theoretical framework.

Method

Based on the above history and literature, a descriptive and exploratory qualitative research design was utilised in this study. The purpose of a descriptive research design is to provide an accurate and precise detailed description of an individual, group, situation or social setting (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This research study was exploratory in nature as it explored the possible contribution that job demands and a lack of resources may have on the development and escalation of workplace bullying among teachers in the schooling context. In addition, it explored the implications of such bullying on teachers' health and well-being. Guided by the JD-R theoretical framework, with this study we aimed to explore how high job demands and low resources could contribute to teachers' experience of workplace

bullying and the relationship that their experiences of workplace bullying may have on their health, that is, their psychological and physiological well-being. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 teachers in Gauteng who had experienced workplace bullying within a school, by colleagues and/or supervisors. Previous literature pertaining to workplace bullying and the JD-R model were utilised to inform and guide the construction of the semi-structured interview schedule (Batchelor, 2019).

Ethics

The study was approved by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee (HREC), Protocol Number (H18/06/07). In addition, the Gauteng Department of Education approved our request to approach principals and staff in schools in the Gauteng area.

Participants

The sample consisted of 13 teachers (10 females and three males) in Gauteng who indicated that they had experienced workplace bullying. The gender composition of the sample, although unequal, is typical within bullying literature, as there is often an underreporting of males who have experienced bullying due to reasons such as the fear of being perceived of as weak and vulnerable (De Vos, 2013). Participants were between the ages of 23 and 56. The sample included participants who identified their race as Black African ($n = 3$), White ($n = 3$), Coloured ($n = 5$), and Indian ($n = 2$). The sample also included teachers from schools with predominantly low quintiles (Quintile 1 = 10) and (Quintile 2 = 3). A quintile is used as a method to assess the degree to which schools are well resourced or under-resourced, which is accorded by the South Africa Department of Education. This system categorises schools into five groups (quintiles) based on the wealth of its surrounding community. Schools in the poorest communities are Quintile 1 schools while schools serving the wealthiest communities are Quintile 5 schools. Thus, participants within this study were by and large within schools that were under-resourced.

Data Analyses

Thematic content analysis (TCA) was used to analyse the data collected from the interviews. This type of analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data (Anderson, 2007). TCA, coined by Braun and Clarke (2013), refers to the systematic identification of themes and patterns across a data set. This analysis allowed us to highlight similarities and differences across transcripts, reveal significant underlying information, and provided us with an opportunity to generate comprehensive themes. In doing so, a rich description of the data was ensured, which allowed

us to develop an enhanced understanding of the research topic.

Findings and Discussion

A number of key themes were identified based on the analysis of the data. The themes are outlined below and tended to unfold and cascade as series of escalating circumstances that fostered bullying and led, ultimately, to manifestations of poor individual and organisational well-being. A discussion of each theme in relation to the literature is provided.

Theme 1: Schools as Pressure Cooker Environments: Excessive Demands and Work Overload

All participants acknowledged that the work environment was characterised by excessive demands and work overload.

The workload is hectic, the reason that I say hectic is because I teach and mark 11 different classes (Participant N).

Participant D stated:

Having 40 children per classroom and teaching two grades at the same time, so having eight classes in a day is a heavy load of work. You have to make sure that all eight classes stay up-to-date with the content which is ridiculous in scope, and you must stay up to date with all the paperwork, planning and marking.

Similarly, Participant N stated, "Almost all of our personal time goes into school ... it's after-hours that we need to lesson plan, that we need to mark, that we need to assess."

... you work with restricted time and incredible pressure and yet you have learners that you have to accommodate and a million other responsibilities (Participant P).

Simbula et al. (2012) and Stoeber and Rennert (2008) note that teaching is a profession characterised by excessively demanding conditions which are often coupled with extremely limited resources to cope with the demands. Research has, therefore, identified the teaching profession as being one of the most stressful work environments (Department for Education, 2018; De Wet, 2014; Georgakopoulos et al., 2011). Within South Africa, the curriculum coverage expected of teachers has vastly increased in scope. Teachers are expected to teach an increasing number of subjects to an ever-increasing number of learners, which results in a concomitant increase in workload (Simbula et al., 2012).

Spill-over of community problems into the school environment

A subtheme of excessive demands was external environmental demands. South African teachers, particularly those working in schools that reside in communities where poverty prevails, suffer the spill-over effects of community problems into the school environment (Billet et al., 2020; Kalam, Franck, Jainodien, Petersen, Silo & Turnbull,

2016; Potgieter-Groot, Visser & Lubbe-De Beer, 2012; Prinsloo, 2008; Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Teachers noted that socio-economic community problems such as poverty, a lack of social cohesion in communities and the abdication of parenting by learners' parents spilt over from the outside in to compound teachers' workload (Kourkoutas & Wolhuter, 2013). In addition, learners who have witnessed violence in their communities become bullies not only to other pupils, but they bully teachers as well (Magwedze, 2018; Malingo, 2018; Manyane, 2017; Miya, 2018). In this regard, Tin (2020) notes that learner-to-teacher bullying can compound stress and burnout. Thus, teacher exhaustion arising from excessive demands is further compounded by the societal ills that pervade the communities within which their schools are situated.

Participant G noted that:

The learners that we have, they come from a specific social background and that in itself brings a whole lot of psychological problems and barriers with it. If we look at most of our learners, most of our learners come from families where there is extreme poverty. So, the child comes to school not having something to eat, not knowing where the next meal is coming from. The child comes from a family where education is not valued. You have to deal with youngsters in terms of substance abuse ... before they arrive at school some have already taken in something, whether its dagga or alcohol. So how do you begin to deal with these issues and the challenge that we have, ... we are expected to provide support to these learners, but we do not have the skills? Nobody has taught us how to be social workers, to be lawyers, to be doctors to be all those things that are expected of us.

Being confronted with these situations has resulted in participants feeling emotionally, physically, and mentally drained: "I must admit it tends to drain you emotionally, because what can you as a teacher really do?" (Participant O).

Thus, the common law principle is that teachers conduct their duties in *loco parentis* which refers to the teachers acting as parents when the learner arrives at school (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). Some of the responsibilities and challenges that teachers face include student ill-discipline, a lack of parental involvement, a poor orientation towards school and learning, low achievement, juvenile crime and violence, and physical, sexual and substance abuse (Kalam et al., 2016).

Theme 2: Lack of Resources

Two sub-themes emerged under lack of resources, namely: lack of control and autonomy, and lack of support.

Lack of control and autonomy

The excessive overload of teachers is due to top-down changes by educational departments at provincial and national level, and teachers are not

consulted in any way about these changes. Teachers are not afforded any opportunity to participate in any decision-making pertaining to their workload and the content of their work. Subjected to a very rigid bureaucratic decision-making process they have a lack of control over the curriculum selection, development, and implementation (Blom, 2018). The curriculum is developed and changed every time a perceived problem or gap in knowledge occurs, without their input. These changes are implemented without adequate teacher training, a lack of consultation and a poor roll-out plan (Blom, 2018).

Participant G noted that

teachers are constantly changing, adapting and committing. Teachers are being told by people that are sitting either in the offices somewhere, who are coming up with their wonderful and brilliant ideas that has an impact in terms of teaching on the ground. We as teachers know that their changes make no sense to what is actually happening on the ground.

Lack of support

Teachers reported that they had little or no decision-making authority regarding changes to curriculum and that there were no organisational resources to assist them with their constantly changing and onerous workloads. This lack of supportive resources compounded their experience of overload. Although school-based support teams have been established (Makoelle, 2014), in practice, these support structures appear to be rendered completely ineffective as the demands of schools outweigh the inherent capacity of the structures (Makoelle, 2014).

According to Participant M:

There's definitely no support, no one will pat you on the back if you're had a good lesson or learners have enjoyed your lesson or if learners have improved on their test. There is no one to say well done and even if you not doing so well or if you do something wrong it is just like whatever. They will reprimand you before they help you, so there's not much support or guidance.

It thus appears that teachers receive little to no empathy, support and guidance and are expected to survive and manage on their own (Batchelor, 2019). In such environments where demands are excessive and where resources are lacking, the climate created is one where frustration and exhaustion are more likely to seep in and where increased bullying perpetration and targeting of one another becomes even more likely (Van den Broeck et al., 2011).

Theme 3: Perpetrators and Victims and the Frustration-aggression Hypothesis

It was noted by many participants that those that were more senior were able to vent their frustration and aggression on weaker, more junior staff.

Participant M noted that “[t]hey know that as a new teacher, we don’t know much so maybe they think we are stupid and weak.” Participant B who was bullied by a senior teacher perceived the bullying to be a coping strategy employed by the perpetrator to deal with the stressful environment.

I think it’s a stressful environment, so bullies take out all their angst and frustration onto those who they know are weaker or in a position of less power. Everyone adopts different coping mechanisms and I guess that was hers.

Participant P indicated that “[i]t is easier to find an outlet to lash out at someone else and often you find that many (seniors) bully their subordinates into doing their work to gain some control over their lives.”

Researchers note that bullying others is also a way of restoring control when one feels overburdened (Baillien et al., 2009; Bernstein & Trimm, 2016; Van den Broeck et al., 2011). The enactment of this pattern of perpetration and victimisation is supported by the literature which notes that power differentials enable those in more senior positions to target those that are more junior (Branch, Ramsay & Barker, 2013; Samnani, 2013). In addition, the literature notes that for perpetrators, that is, those with seniority, by targeting juniors or those that they perceive to be weak and vulnerable, they are better able to cope with their anger and frustration that is precipitated by excessive demands and insufficient resources. (Van den Broeck et al., 2011).

Theme 4: Exhaustion and Burnout

As provided by the JD-R model, excessive work demands and a lack of organisational support, accompanied by exposure to bullying, may manifest in exhaustion and burnout. The JD-R model argues that job demands may deplete employees’ energy resources, which can lead to a number of outcomes, two of which are exhaustion and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Billet et al., 2020; Muniz, Ariza-Montes & Leal-Rodríguez, 2020; Solomon, 2021; Tin, 2020). Participants in this study unanimously expressed their exhaustion.

My brain is exhausted [so] please excuse me if I can’t answer some questions, I can’t think anymore. I’m as good as dead the way I am so tired ... [the job] tends to drain you emotionally, because what can you as a teacher really do? (Participant O)

Similarly, Participant E indicated that “[i]t’s physically and emotionally, mentally, spiritually draining.”

Theme 5: Suffering the Aftermath: Broken Victims and Work Disengagement

Workplace bullying results in teachers experiencing an array of psychological effects, due to their exposure to bullying behaviour. These manifest mainly in the form of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and feelings of incompetence.

Furthermore, bullying of teachers lead to disengagement from work, absenteeism and an increased desire to leave the organisation (Batchelor, 2019).

With regard to the psychological aftermath, respondents noted as follows:

I felt so depressed and on edge, I felt so belittled and so stressed and anxious that I would pull my hair out (Participant N).

I was so miserable, hopeless, stressed, upset and I even began crying in class in front of learners (Participant N).

Echoing this, Participant, A said: “I would just cry anywhere, honestly, sometimes even in class with learners seated there” (Participant A).

Most of the participants also indicated that workplace bullying affected how they perceived their teaching skills. Participants were emotionally diminished by the bullying experience and began to question their own self-worth.

It made me feel like I’m not competent or I’m not qualified to be a teacher, maybe it is true that teaching is not really meant for me (Participant N).

Throughout the data collection process, it became clear that most participants were engaging in absenteeism, with some intending to resign from the teaching profession and actively searching for other work:

I would get up in the morning and say, ‘I’m not going’, and just not go to work. It just made me feel like I do not want to be there. So, to avoid everything I would just stay at home. (Participant N)

I was always sick. I would be booked off. I would stay out of work for like 5 or 6 months or 3 months ... I’m taking anti-depressants (Participant E).

I will definitely resign as soon as I find something else (Participant A).

These manifested outcomes align to research that demonstrates that workplace bullying manifests in deleterious individual health and poor organisational outcomes (Bernstein & Trimm, 2016). Targets of workplace bullying have been found to suffer from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, decreased levels of job satisfaction and motivation, which in turn has negative consequences on the productivity of employees and result in a substantial increase in absenteeism and turnover rates (Dehue, Bolman, Völlink & Pouwelse, 2012; Jamshaid, Malik & Perveen, 2021; Paul & Kee, 2020).

Given that South Africa is currently faced with a serious shortage of skilled teachers (Jackson, Rothman & Van De Vijver, 2006), the aftermath of bullying in terms of absenteeism and turnover has extremely negative long-term ramifications for schools (Batchelor, 2019). An increase in absenteeism often goes hand in hand with an increase in intentions to leave the organisation. However, intentions to leave an organisation is not an indicator of actual turnover, as not all employees who would like to quit, are able to do so, or to do

so immediately, due to financial constraints. Therefore, participants were more likely to use absenteeism as an intermediate coping mechanism, which may illuminate the desire of targets to eventually leave the organisation as soon as possible. The teaching profession may thus be crippled by workplace bullying as it leads to increases in sick leave, staff turnover, a lack of employee loyalty, and an overall lack of teacher commitment. Losing employees in a specialised field such as teaching where suitably qualified graduates are scarce may be particularly detrimental, especially when a replacement is not readily available (Batchelor, 2019).

Limitations

Limitations of the study pertain to the nature of the sample, which was predominantly female. This may reflect the gender bias that is evident in bullying where males are reluctant to admit that they have been targeted and may, therefore, not have been willing to be interviewed. In addition, the teachers sampled were mainly from disadvantaged schools as identified by their schools' ranking as Quintile 1 ($n = 10$) and 2 ($n = 3$) schools.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that to prevent workplace bullying there has to be an active implementation of actions aimed to improve the work environment of teachers. At present, a draft code of conduct has been drawn up that aims to address workplace bullying within organisations in South Africa. This code is still under review and open to public submissions, but it is hoped that such a document, in its final form, may contribute to a code of conduct within schools in order to address workplace bullying among teachers. Although this code of conduct is generalised to apply to all types of workplaces, seeing that schools are "workplace sites" in which teachers are "employees", the code will have application to school settings.

Until such a time as the code of conduct is legislated, we put forward a number of recommendations. A reduction of job demands and an increase of job resources may be relevant in preventing or reducing workplace bullying among teachers, however, this may not always be feasible (Batchelor, 2019). Given the extremely limited financial resources available to the South African Government and thereby to the Department of Education, the funding required to employ more teachers, and thus reduce the demand placed upon teachers who are teaching overly large classes in under-resourced schools, may not always be possible. However, providing training to teachers as part of their teacher-training curriculum on how

to cope better with their job demands once they qualify, may be useful.

From this study it became evident that schools should also increase job resources, such as job autonomy, by increasing teacher's decision-making abilities – especially as it relates to the curriculum and scope of practice. This can be achieved through regular consultation with representatives from schools regarding the development and implementation of the curriculum that teachers are expected to cover. The development of leadership skills, coaching, and mentoring skills are also vital within the teaching field, as within many schools a number of teachers will become managers within their professional careers, namely heads of department and principals. Such training would provide them with the opportunity to gain a skills set that will assist them in managing other teachers. Thus, with regard to bullying, training new teachers on how to cope with the stress of job demands and on constructive leadership skills once in the profession would create awareness of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable with regard to leadership and collegial behaviour.

Future Research Recommendations

With regard to future research, schools in higher quintiles with greater resources also need to be studied to determine if there is a lesser pattern of bullying behaviour in such schools. It may also be worthwhile to explore perpetrator accounts of workplace bullying to determine their understanding of the phenomenon. Researchers could explore perpetrator perspectives on why they engage in such behaviour and make recommendations on how to address workplace bullying. It may also be worthwhile to determine how particular demographic factors such as race, gender and tenure affect perceptions of job demands and resources, and consequently experiences of workplace bullying.

From this study it appears that new teachers felt that the perpetrators who targeted them were more often senior teachers. Therefore, it might be useful to explore whether tenure within schools do impact experiences of workplace bullying and to explore the perceptions that perpetrators have of new teachers (Batchelor, 2019). It is also noted that there has been a significant escalation of learner-to-teacher bullying (De Wet, 2010), a phenomenon that fell beyond the scope of this research. Within recent times, this phenomenon has received a substantial amount of attention from South African journalists and on social media sites with video evidence of learners being violent towards teachers going viral (Magwedze, 2018; Malingo, 2018; Manyane, 2017; Miya, 2018). Thus, this is a phenomenon that needs to be urgently explored. It is also suggested that a longitudinal study be conducted to determine

whether the intentions to leave teaching expressed by teachers become a lived reality within South African schools. It would also be worthwhile to determine the reasons why teachers have left the profession to determine the link that it may have to job demands, a lack of resources, and workplace bullying.

Finally, the landscape under COVID-19 has radically altered the face of teaching and schooling. Schooling has come to a halt and the lack of resources in lower quintile schools has illustrated the immense digital divide that exists and precludes those in poorer schools from continuing with adequate home schooling online. The fallout that will result from months of missed schooling is expected to further exacerbate the demands that teachers will face as schools return to the “new normal”, which will probably be particularly evident in low-resourced schools within poor communities. This has thus opened a new and exploratory field of study that is currently ongoing in which research is being concentrated on examining the new demands and negative outcomes that are placed on teachers educating during the COVID-19 pandemic and within a post-COVID world.

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Authors' Contributions

CB wrote the manuscript. TB collected and analysed the data with the assistance of CB.

Notes

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