

Effects of Student Violence on Teachers in Northern Territory Schools

Abstract

The escalation of violence within schools is a growing issue of national and international significance. Nevertheless, the issue of student violence against teachers (SVAT) has received limited attention. While this topic is receiving increasing attention on a global scale, it remains in its nascent phase in the Australian context. There have been concerning reports of violence directed towards teachers in Australian schools in the past decade, particularly in the Northern Territory (NT). The current study sought to determine which teachers in NT schools were impacted by student violence, how it affected them, and what factors encouraged them to stay in the profession. The study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the significant distress experienced by educators resulting from student aggression together with the background of children impacted by trauma. The research was carried out in two stages, with the first stage including the identification of educators who were affected by student violence through an online short survey, and the second stage included interviews with those teachers. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. The research presents the narratives of thirteen schoolteachers who lived through the SVAT in their careers, as gathered through in-depth interviews. The study found that various covert and overt forms of SVAT caused distress although coping strategies enabled many teachers to remain in the profession. The findings will be disseminated to a broader audience through conference presentations and articles, enabling policymakers, Ministers of Education, and school principals to access them.