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THE EFFECTS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL CRIME AND VIOLENCE ON HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER BURNOUT

by

CHAD A. BUCK

Under the Direction of Sarah Cook, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

School violence is considered the most significant problem facing United States schools (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1999, 2003, 2004). Although school shootings receive the bulk of media attention, incidents such as physical assaults, property crimes, intimidation, and sexual harassment are much more common (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). In addition, little is known about the experiences of teachers. The present study examines the relationship between various types of school violence and teacher burnout. The final sample consisted of 315 high school teachers who returned surveys that assessed knowledge of direct and indirect experiences with violent acts at school over the past 12 months. Respondents also completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses was used to determine how much variance in three domains of professional burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) was accounted for by direct and indirect experiences with violence. Results suggest 1) that teachers experience and witness a broad range of violent acts (particularly sexual harassment) in their workplaces, and 2) that direct and indirect exposure to both physical and psychological forms of violence

resulted in higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Implications are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: School violence, Teacher burnout, Indirect victimization

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by

CHAD A. BUCK

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2006

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by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all teachers, particularly the teachers and staff of East Carter County High School in my hometown of Grayson, Kentucky, and to the memory of Deanna McDavid. On January 18, 1993, a student entered my high school and shot and killed Mrs. McDavid, an English teacher, and Marvin Hicks, a custodian. Witnessing the effects of this event on my former teachers, the community, and my family and friends inspired my commitment to the research and treatment of trauma survivors, both on individual and broader, systemic levels.

As a freshman in high school, I was placed in Mrs. McDavid's English class, which was composed of students who were average to below average in their academic achievement. She recognized that I had been placed in the wrong class and insisted that I be switched to a higher-level course. Although I would have likely continued to do well in the less challenging class, her dedication to her students and to providing the best education possible in a rural community with limited resources helped to facilitate my awareness and confidence in my academic skills. Teachers, who are commonly stretched to the limit by their many responsibilities, may not always take the time to recognize the needs of some students. Mrs. McDavid demanded excellence from all of those she taught, and she took the welfare of her students into account no matter how busy she became. Unfortunately, her efforts to find help for the student who killed her resulted in her death. I will always be thankful for Mrs. McDavid's role in my life. I hope that this work honors her memory with the same respect that she showed her students on a daily basis.

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I would also like to thank Ralph Smith, the president of the teacher's association that assisted me with distributing my surveys, for his endorsement and willingness to assist me throughout my data collection. I am especially thankful to Warren Thompson, my clinical supervisor, for his positive outlook, seemingly endless connections, and his role in introducing me to Mr. Smith.

My parents, as always, encouraged me to pursue my goals with patience, love, and a kindness I doubt others always experience. For a dairy farmer and a farmer's wife, they have a deep understanding of the human condition and life, in general. They taught me about the kind of person I wanted to be through their sensitivity, generosity of spirit, creativity, and unwavering belief in the good that exists in all people.

In particular, I want to thank special friends who have walked beside me, and sometimes carried me, along this difficult, but rewarding, journey: My mentor, Pauline Rose Clance, an incredible woman who inspires me in all things; Dorothy Stockard, for her wise counsel; Hal Rogers, Susan Furman, Debbara Dingman, David Yarian, and Arian Elfant, who are all excellent supervisors who I now consider colleagues and friends; La Tasha Buckner, my pop culture buddy and best friend forever; Leslie Anglin

and Chris McDavid, my fellow Grayson Escapees who always confirm my unbelievable stories of growing up in a town with people named Firebug and Sodawater; Krista Wild, my late night pal who keeps me honest; Andrea Hindes and Ndiya Nkongho, who helped in the homestretch with positive energy, Saturday morning workouts, late-night conversations, and appreciation for “fine living”; and, finally, my Nashville Posse, Ari Holtz, Lori Goldman, Kendra Gray, Sean Wilder, and Robert “Jake” Jacobs. Each provided support in the form of serious talks, comic relief, alcoholic beverages, really bad movies, Jasmine’s howling, rare steaks, Mafiaoza’s, PM, and other activities that shall go unnamed here due to space limitations and a desire for discretion. I love them dearly for providing distraction, understanding, fun, and companionship. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have each of them in my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVEATIONS

National Center for Educational Statistics……	NCES
Battered Teacher Syndrome…….	BTS
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV……..	DSM-IV
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder……..	PTSD
Maslach Burnout Inventory……..	MBI

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A school shooting in Red Lake, Minnesota on March 21, 2005 marked the 50th incident of weapons-related school violence in the Unites States to receive national and international news coverage since 1979 (School Violence Resource Center, 2005). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 71 percent of United States public schools reported violent incidents (e.g., rape, robbery, physical assault) in their school between 1999 and 2001, and teachers reported over 90,000 violent crimes occurring in their schools between 1998 and 2002 (NCES, 2004). Society, not surprisingly, considers school violence the most important problem facing schools today (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1999, 2001, 2004). Many states have drafted laws and commissioned investigations in response to growing public concern (Furlong, Babinski, Poland, & Munoz, 1996; James, 1994). In addition, localities across the country have initiated a variety of school-based violence prevention programs and anti-violence policies (e.g., Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaundry, & Samples, 1998; Goldstein & Conoley, 1997). The public now views schools, once considered safe havens from the ills of society, as battlegrounds.

Some believe that media coverage of school shootings, including on-site reporting from funerals and courtrooms, plays on the public's fear and concern and creates panic unnecessarily (Burns & Crawford, 1999). School shootings are, in fact, relatively low occurrence events (NCES, 2004). However, the media's exclusive focus on rare gun violence ignores other types of violence that occur frequently in schools, including property damage, sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, and threats of violence

(Johnson, 1999; Kingrey, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1999). The public's preoccupation with gun violence also ignores the frequency with which teachers experience violence in schools. Likewise, the vast majority of research regarding school violence focuses on students. Few studies have examined the prevalence or impact of school violence on teachers (e.g., Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1994, 1999; NCES, 1991, 1992, 2004), and these focused primarily upon extreme forms of violence, such as homicide, robbery, and rape. Little is known about the nature and scope of less physical but perhaps more pervasive types of violence, such as harassment and intimidation, which may have deleterious effects on teachers and students. For example, constant vigilance in a threatening work environment may render teachers emotionally unavailable for students, diminish job and career satisfaction, and impair psychological functioning.

Because schools are not only places of learning, but also workplaces, using a workplace violence framework may advance understanding of the impact of school violence on teachers. Workplace violence literature focuses more attention upon the impact of violence for the members of workplace as a whole, rather than on individual victims. Studies have indicated that violence in the workplace costs American businesses approximately $4.2 billion a year and up to $250,000 per episode in lost work time, employee benefits, post-trauma interventions, and legal expenses (Albrecht, 1997; Miller, 1999). Likely consequences of workplace violence include poor job performance, absenteeism, low job satisfaction, and psychological distress (Barling, 1997; Williams, Winfree, & Clinton, 1989). Largely due to the economic toll of workplace violence,

many corporations have proposed individual, workplace, and community-based violence prevention efforts (Nicoletti & Spooner, 1996).

Unlike many other workplaces, schools are not primarily moneymaking or production-based institutions. It is easier to measure lost productivity or revenue in most workplaces in order to see the aftereffects or costs of violence than to assess psychological functioning or coping strategies. The average rate of teacher victimization between 1998 and 2002 was approximately 32 thefts and 22 violent crimes for every 1,000 teachers (NCES, 2004). Recent data show that there are approximately 6.2 million teachers in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2004). If workplace violence costs United States employers approximately $250,000 per episode, that would translate to approximately $3.4 billion in lost production, disability compensation, and therapeutic intervention as a result of violent crimes against teachers. Although there are no sales figures to consult, experiencing school violence can have costly effects, both professionally and personally.

One potential effect of working in a violent environment is professional burnout (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993). First identified in the mid-1970s, burnout is defined as, “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach, 1993, p.20). In other words, burnout occurs when a person’s emotional resources are depleted through his or her interaction with others at work. S/he may develop a cynical view of recipients of services s/he provides. In addition, s/he may view accomplishments as unsatisfactory or unimportant, especially when it comes to

work with recipients of his or her services. The individual impact of burnout can reverberate throughout the workplace, resulting increased systemic stress (Friedman, 1991).

Professional burnout has been studied in a wide range of workplaces (see Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993 for review). In particular, burnout in educational settings has received a great deal of attention. Teachers work with multiple recipients of their services and can be presented with a wide range of stressors by students, other teachers, superiors, parents, and the community. Although studies have linked sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, marital status) to teachers' propensity for burnout, researchers believe that the primary cause of most cases of burnout is environmental in nature (Friedman, 1991). If the work environment is so instrumental in the development of burnout, working in a school where a teacher may directly or indirectly experience assaults, threats, or intimidation, may have significant effects on burnout in teachers. However, the current literature offers no information as to whether and how school violence may relate to teacher burnout.

To broaden understanding of school violence and its effects on teachers, this exploratory study has two goals. The first is to examine the nature and scope of teachers' experiences with school violence, ranging from having personal items ruined or stolen while on campus to physically violent acts, such as assaults. The second goal is to examine how directly or indirectly experiencing different types of violence in schools is related to teacher burnout. Examining the relation between school violence, broadly

defined, and burnout will construct a more complete picture of the impact of school violence on teachers than what is offered by the current literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining School Violence

The definition of what constitutes “school violence” has evolved as the research community has become more aware of the many dimensions inherent in the phenomenon. Initial definitions were focused on violent, criminal acts occurring on school grounds. However, as with other types of criminal activity, it became important to examine the issue in more depth. Over time, the definition of school violence has grown to include a broader range of acts that could also create a violent school environment, as well as including an understanding of the various perpetrators and victims. The following section highlights stages in the development of a broader, more comprehensive definition of school violence.

The earliest definitions of school violence focused upon acts categorized by the Federal Bureau of Investigations Uniform Crime Reports as violent and illegal (National Institute of Education, 1978). Therefore, early surveys examining violence in schools focused on traditional violent crimes, such as homicide, rape, robbery, or physical assault (NCES, 1974; National Institute of Education, 1978). This definition of school violence still informs victimization surveys to this day, which tend to focus primarily upon incidents of criminal activity without accounting for the context of the experience, who did it, and who experienced it.

The most recent NCES report entitled, Indicators of School Crime and Safety focuses upon crimes committed on school property (NCES, 2004). It provides useful data for understanding rates of criminal activity in United States Schools. The data were drawn from multiple sources, including surveys of students, teachers, and principals, as well as data from crime reports collected by the Bureau of Justice, National Center for Education, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Although students, teachers, and principals were surveyed as potential victims, no data exist on who perpetrated the violence. The annual rate of violent victimization for students and teachers between 1998 and 2002 was examined. Findings suggested that teachers were victims of approximately 234,000 total crimes at school. This includes 144,000 thefts and 90,000 violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault). Eighty-eight percent of the violent crimes were simple assaults. This means that most teachers who experienced a violent crime at school were threatened with bodily injury or attacked without a weapon by the perpetrator. These less violent, and perhaps more contextually relevant, events can occur every day and never be reported to the police.

More recent school violence surveys have built upon the old definition of school violence by examining property crimes, such as vandalism and theft, as well as examining intimidation, fear, and the threat of violence (Kingery, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1994). In addition, a study by the National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 1991, the most common form of violence

experienced by teachers was verbal abuse. Nearly one out of every five teachers reported being verbally abused by students. This does not include verbal abuse by staff members.

Researchers examining a broad range of U.S. workplaces describe verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, and threats as psychological violence (Kingrey, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998). Psychological violence has been found to be more prevalent than criminal acts or other forms of direct violence in workplace settings. For example, the Northwestern National Life study examined fear and violence in a broad range of American workplaces by interviewing via telephone 600 full-time U.S. workers (1997). Based on this survey, it is estimated that 22.4 million workers in the U.S. experience harassment or threats of violence each year. In fact, psychological violence was twelve times more likely to occur than physical violence.

In terms of who is experiencing school violence, past studies have suggested no significant differences in the rate of violent victimization of teachers according to their sex, instruction level, or urbanicity (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1994, 1999). However, according to the NCES report, between 1998 and 2002, there were significant differences (NCES, 2004). Male teachers were more than twice as likely as female teachers to experience violent acts while at school. High school and middle school teachers were nearly three times more likely than elementary school teachers to be victims of violent crimes. Finally, urban teachers more than twice as likely as rural or suburban teachers to experience a violent crime at school.

The NCES study (2004) is important because it includes teacher experiences with violence. However, it is significantly limited in terms of the information offered. The

NCES data on teacher experiences with violence are based upon the National Crime Victimization Survey, a self-report survey which focuses on crimes as defined by the Bureau of Justice and not as defined by school systems or those who study school violence. The NCVS is limited due to its focus on reported crimes. No information is provided with regard to threats of violence, intimidation, or harassment.

Recently, researchers and theorists have offered a more multidimensional definition of school violence that reflects the growing understanding of how non-physical or psychological forms of violence can also be detrimental. Current definitions state that school violence can be defined as any act of intimidation, threat, harassment, robbery, vandalism, physical assault (with or without a weapon and including rape and other types of sexual battery), or murder that happens on school grounds or on buses going to and from school (Capozzoli & McVey, 2000; Johnson, 1999; School Violence Resource Center, 2002). These acts may be perpetrated by students against other students, students against school personnel, school personnel against students, or school personnel against other school personnel. Although this new definition reflects the multi-dimensional nature of school violence, there are few studies that follow this broader definition of school violence.

Enhancing the Definition Using a Workplace Violence Perspective

The above-mentioned definition is an improvement over past crime-based definitions of school violence. However, the workplace violence perspective offers an even broader view of the violence that occurs in schools. Specifically, workplace violence theory considers the effects on the primary or direct victim, or the individual

who experiences a behavior as violent, as well as the effects on secondary victims. According to Barling, secondary or indirect victims are "employees who themselves were not violated but whose perceptions, fears, and expectations are changed as a result of being vicariously exposed to the violence" (1997, p.35). The idea of considering the vicarious or indirect effects of violence in the workplace is borrowed from family systems theory, where stress or traumatic stress in one family member is thought to result in systemic stress (Figley, 1998). Schools, like families, are systems where each individual serves a unique role in the system's functioning. In the case of school violence, one act of violence perpetrated against a teacher could affect multiple members within the teacher's system or environment, including co-workers and students.

Exposure to workplace violence, whether directly or indirectly experienced, can create fear (Barling, 1997; Flannery, 1996; Haynie, 1998). Fear can cause increased psychological distress and lead to negative health outcomes (Ross, 1993). In a study of British bus drivers, Duffy and McGoldrick (1990) found that approximately 70% of bus drivers reported fear of assault as a major concern. A relation between previous knowledge of other drivers who have been assaulted and fear was also found. This supports the idea that members of a workplace may become more fearful when another member of the workplace experiences a violent act.

Those who do not work with an assaulted employee may also experience increased fear. Barling (1997) builds upon Bandura's social learning theory, explaining that direct exposure to workplace violence will likely be most detrimental to the person who experiences it directly. However, others in the workplace may be vicariously or

indirectly affected to a lesser extent. Further, an employee in another city may be affected by hearing about or reading about the incident, but he or she will likely experience less distress than the employee who works in the same setting as the victim.

Using a workplace violence perspective, school violence can range from harassment to lethal violence. Direct and indirect victims can include teachers, students, schools, families, and communities. Threats of violence can come from multiple sources and not necessarily from students. Given the complexity of the phenomenon of violence in schools, it is important to also consider the historical context of the issue. The school is a microcosm of society. A review of the historical context of school violence will demonstrate that violence in schools is not only an old issue, it is an issue that changes as society's views of what constitutes violence change.

The History of Violence in Schools

Early Accounts of School Violence

The earliest reports of school violence focused primarily upon violence committed by teachers against their students (Crews & Counts, 1997). During the 1700s, Society assumed that children were inherently evil and lacked the ability to make moral judgments. Teachers corrected children's evil nature and directed them towards morality. Therefore, teachers devoted a large portion of each school day to imposing discipline. Fear, intimidation, and unconditional obedience became integrated into the classroom. Teachers punished children who did not approach their education seriously (Newman & Newman, 1980). For example, disobedient students were routinely tied to posts and beaten in front of their classmates. Teachers also employed other violent and publicly

shaming measures, such as public caning or branding. Although these measures sound extreme by today's standards, teachers were encouraged and expected to use violence as discipline by parents and community leaders. According to Regoli and Hewitt (1994), religious beliefs during this era justified violence as an avenue by which children would become moral and respectable members of the community. Because violence was viewed as acceptable by society, violence became an integral part of the educational system.

During the 1800s, expectations of proper student behavior continued to be high, and punishments were still severe (Crews & Counts, 1997). Corporal punishment involved striking students' hands, locking them in windowless closets, tying them to chairs, and twisting their ears (Baker & Rubel, 1980; Crews & Counts, 1997). Teachers were poorly trained and paid, and they worked in poor physical conditions. The majority of teachers were male, but women slowly began to join the profession. In contrast to their male counterparts, the careers of female teachers were often brief, usually starting after completion of their education and ending after marriage. Interestingly, as more women became teachers, fewer students were beaten in the classroom (Kaestle, 1983). Some scholars attribute the reduction in teacher-student violence to "female nature" or their inability to physically handle the job of correcting their students (Crews & Counts, 1997, p. 55). However, there are other explanations. The reduction in teacher-student violence could reflect increased intimidation and threats of violence toward female teachers from male students. According to Kaestle (1983), female teachers were often threatened or beaten by larger male students. Male teachers experienced far fewer threats. Because of

this, most women chose to teach primarily during the summer months because larger male students typically were working and were not in school. Therefore, it is possible that in order to protect themselves from harm, female teachers may have chosen to ignore some behaviors or avoided confrontations. This avoidance, not merely "female nature", could have contributed to the observed decline in teacher-student violence. A reduction in teacher-student violence was necessary, but at what cost? Male students who likely were victimized by male teachers were victimizing female teachers. Rather than reducing violence in the educational system, violence was re-directed towards a new target.

In addition to student-teacher violence, parent-teacher violence emerged as a problem during the 1800s (Crews & Counts, 1997). Parents who were dissatisfied with disciplinary practices would interrupt teachers' classes to intimidate and confront them. Some parents would go as far as physically assaulting teachers in their classrooms (Kaestle, 1983). The increased threat of parent-teacher violence may have served to further reduce the use of violent discipline in classrooms. Although violent disciplinary practices during this time in United States history were extreme, the use of violence to affect change reflected nature, scope and approval of violence in society during that time period.

School Violence During the Early Twentieth Century

The early twentieth century ushered in a major era of reform for education, as well as for United States (US) society. Immigration, urbanization, and industrialization increased (Crews & Counts, 1997), and with these societal changes also came reform

within the educational system. In 1900, the U.S. enacted compulsory education laws to help socialize immigrant children and to keep them out of the labor market. These laws brought greater numbers of children into the educational system, and mandated that children be in schools for longer periods of time than in the past. By 1900, almost 90 percent of elementary and secondary children were enrolled in public schools. Public schools emerged as integrative tools in the complex, modern United States, resulting expanding the curriculum to include vocational training. With the shift in focus also came a decrease in the use of corporal punishment in urban schools. More teachers were trained to increase structure in their classrooms rather than using corporal punishment to control potentially negative student behavior (Crews & Counts, 1997). However, teachers in rural school districts, who did not have access to training, continued to rely on harsh corporal punishment.

Although teachers, in general, were using less harsh punishments in classrooms than in the past, violence was still a part of schools during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, in 1917, a series of violent student demonstrations occurred in New York City Schools in response to the Gary, Indiana Plan (Newman & Newman, 1980). The Gary Plan was a platoon system, a system that sought to use time and space efficiently in schools by requiring students to attend school eight hours per day, six days per week. This plan represented a radical change in the schooling system, and, in response to this change, between 1,000 to 3,000 school children picketed and threw stones at the school windows. Students who did not join the strike were beaten and had their schoolbooks burned by protesters. Disorder spread to neighboring schools and

rioting started. Police were called in to quiet the crowd. They arrested and beat several students. Again, as in other points in U.S. history, violence was used to quell violence, reinforcing the idea that the primary avenue for correcting unruly behavior or handling conflict was to use violent or aggressive behavior.

Over the next several decades, schools continued to go through major reforms. During the 1930s, school officials established disciplinary classrooms to help those students who could not behave in traditional classrooms (Crews & Counts, 1997). Although these classes were used primarily as a way of removing disruptive pupils from regular classrooms, some consideration was given to adjusting the structure of the classroom to meet the needs of misbehaving children. During the 1940s, World War II resulted in a great deal of change throughout the United States. At the close of the war, teaching had risen to a new position of importance and recognition, resulting in more support for teachers and the development of improved teaching methods. This newfound focus on education was due in large part to the return of male veterans to the profession and the United States government's desire to surpass foreign competitors in technological development. Interestingly, reports of school violence were less prevalent. A study conducted by Goldstein, Apter, and Harootunian (1994) examined the leading causes of school discipline problems in the 1940s, indicating that the primary types of school misbehavior by students involved talking, chewing gum, making noise, and not putting paper in wastebaskets.

It is important to consider the influence of World War II on the drop in reports of violence in schools. In addition to school crime, which still was not well-defined or

studied, other types of crime declined during this period in history. For example, homicide rates dropped from 9.7 per 100,000 people to 4.5 (Davis & Stasz, 1990). Just after the war ended, homicide rates rebounded to 11.0, 1.3 more than before the war and more than double the amount during the war. Because young men typically commit more crime than older men or women, Davis and Stasz attribute this rebound to the return of young men after the war. The drop in reports of school violence and its resurgence during the late 1950s coincide with declines and subsequent increases in violent crime in the U.S. In addition, the war presented a common threat for all of society. This threat could have served as a diversion from the injustices that occurred within the educational system or the interpersonal problems that occurred within classrooms. It is unclear why reports of violence in schools dropped during this period in history, but evidence indicates that schools are products of society, and changes in society affect school environments.

School Violence During the 1950s to 1980s

By the 1950s, a renewed sense of nationalism spread throughout U.S. society in response to World War II and communism. The perceived goal of schools was to maintain society and to perpetuate the ‘American way of life.” The 1950s were considered one of the fastest changing decades in U.S. history, and the population increased rapidly. During this time, schools became overcrowded and a shortage of well-qualified teachers emerged. School desegregation became a primary focus during the mid-1950s, and protests in and around schools became common (Crews & Counts, 1997).

Burgen and Rubel (1980), wrote that this decade marked the beginnings of the public's awareness of violence in schools, particularly schools in major urban centers. Students, teachers, and administrators all experienced increased harassment, intimidation, and assault. During this decade, buildings were defaced, vandalized, and burned beyond repair with alarming frequency. Equipment and supplies were stolen or damaged. The problems became so apparent by the mid-1950s that the U.S. Senate conducted hearings in cities throughout the nation to determine the scope of the problem (Crews & Counts, 1997).

By the mid-to-late 1960s, the media began to draw attention to numerous disciplinary infractions that were occurring in U.S. schools (Burgan & Rubel, 1980). In response to the media's coverage, Congress held extensive hearings on the problem of school violence and vandalism in the late 1960s (Crews & Counts, 1997). The first school safety plans were established during this time. Parents served as hall monitors and peer leadership programs were established. By the early 1970s, nearly all school systems in urban areas with populations over 100,000 had implemented some form of school security in response to criminal and violent student behavior (Burgan & Rubel, 1980).

Fear of crime was a major focus during the 1970s (Crews & Counts, 1997). Many people questioned the safety of their homes, neighborhoods, and their schools. In 1974, a school safety study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics after the first time, use the acronym consistently indicated that 70,000 teachers were assaulted, annually. A small number of these assaults resulted in death. In addition, 757 major school districts in urban areas reported approximately 200 school-related student

deaths in one year. These districts also reported 12,000 armed robberies, 270,000 burglaries, 204,000 assaults, and 9,000 rapes in U.S. schools in 1974. The same study indicated that the annual cost of vandalism in public schools in 1974 was $600,000 per school district.

Another national survey conducted during the 1970s supported the findings of the National Center for Education Statistics. Congress initiated the survey, and the subsequent report was entitled Violent School-Safe Schools (National Institute of Education, 1978). The purpose of the study was to determine the number of schools nationwide that were affected by crime or violence, the type and seriousness of those crimes, and best methods of prevention. This study was significant because it was the first to include the experiences of teachers, students, and staff members in schools in large cities, small cities, suburban areas, and rural areas. Statistical estimates based upon results from surveys distributed to over 4,000 schools across the country indicated that about 8 percent of the nation's schools have a serious crime problem. In addition, approximately one of every 200 secondary school teachers reported a physical assault each month between 1970 and 1977. Students were more likely to be attacked than teachers, but teachers were five times more likely to experience serious injury. One fourth of all schools were subject to vandalism between 1970 and 1977. Also, 10 percent of schools were burglarized. Finally, results of 10 case studies, indicated that the most important factors in making schools safer included organizational leadership by principals and teachers, as well as involvement of the community in promoting safe environments.

Although incidents of school violence continued during the 1980s, they received less media attention than in the 1970s. In a nationally representative sample of public school teachers, 44 percent reported more disruptive classroom behavior in 1986-87 than five years before (National School Safety Center, 1992). Almost a third indicated having given serious consideration to leaving teaching because of student misbehavior. In addition, almost 20 percent surveyed indicated a student had threatened them at some point in their teaching career.

According to the Pepperdine University National School Safety Center (1991), during a 6-month period in the 1988-89 school year, more than 400,000 students experienced violent crimes at school, including assault, robbery, and rape. An even more disturbing finding was that 430,000 students armed themselves for protection. Interestingly, the presence of metal detectors, restroom monitors, visitor badges, and other security measures were associated with an increase in the students' fear of danger within their schools.

The mid-1990s to Present

Widespread media coverage of lethal gun violence in American public schools began in the mid-1990s. In 1997, a 16-year-old male student shot nine students at his high school in Pearl, Mississippi. Two died. Two months later, a 14-year-old boy in West Paducah, Kentucky killed three students and wounded five when he opened fire during a student prayer circle. In 1998, two male students shot and killed four students and a teacher in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The most infamous incident of lethal gun violence occurred on April 20, 1999 when two male students opened fire at Columbine High

School in Littleton, Colorado, killing a teacher and 12 classmates before taking their own lives. A month later, a 15-year-old male student wounded six students at Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia. (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Capozzoli & McVey, 2000; Kenney & Watson, 1998). Several other incidences of lethal gun violence in schools have been reported since 1999. In March 2001, there were four school shootings in four different states in less than four weeks (Bower, 2001). The most recent shooting in Red Lake, Minnesota resulted in 10 deaths, including the 16-year-old perpetrator, his grandfather and his grandfather's companion, a teacher, a security guard, and five students (Indystar, 2005).

Incidents of lethal gun violence heightened the public's concern about safety in schools. School boards have adopted violence prevention plans and programs, hired school safety officers, and installed metal detectors (Goldstein & Conoley, 1997). With each passing decade, researchers have increased efforts to address this issue. However, both school boards and researchers have failed to focus on how school violence impacts teachers.

Exploring the Effects of School Violence on Teachers

It has been established that research focusing on teachers is minimal. However, examination of existing research and studies in related areas offers some possible effects of school on teachers. Studies of criminal victimization, trauma exposure and recovery, and teacher stress and burnout indicate a wide range of potential outcomes of exposure to school violence.

Few studies exist that describe the range of reactions that may follow exposure to school violence. Bloch (1978) was one of the first researchers to investigate the issue. He observed teachers in inner city schools during the late 1970s who sought treatment following physical assaults due to severe psychological impairment. Many of the teachers exhibited anxiety, insecurity, nightmares, excessive startle response, phobias, cognitive impairment, and conversion symptoms. Although talking about experiences has been found to be an important aspect of recovery (Davis and Friedman, 1985), 68 percent of the 253 teachers Bloch studied were discouraged by their principals from talking about the incident with other members of the faculty (Bloch, 1978). Reportedly, principals' primary goal after a teacher's assault was to keep news from spreading. Many teachers reported feeling dehumanized and blamed for the incident by their principals and were discouraged from filing police reports. As a result of his work with this population, Bloch developed the idea of "Battered Teacher Syndrome" (BTS), which described teachers' constant exposure to violence in schools as resulting in symptoms that are akin to the DSM-IV criteria for PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). However, the concept of BTS has not been developed since its appearance in the literature during the 1970s. Descriptions of the syndrome are found rarely outside of anecdotal accounts in non-scientific editorials or brief references in the education and school psychology literature.

Surprisingly, few others have studied the effects of violence on teachers. In a 1987 case study, Collison and colleagues described events following the murder of a principal and wounding of two teachers and a student at a junior high school. Although

the focus was on the pupil response team at the school, they described the difficulty that the team and teachers in the school had with having to deal with their own feelings of grief in addition to helping students. A year and a half after the event, some teachers were still reporting recurrent nightmares related to the event. In addition, feelings of hostility and interpersonal conflict emerged. The problems with this case study are that the authors are merely commenting on what occurred, and there is no indication of how many teachers were affected by the shooting, or the extent of their impairment. No standardized measures of trauma were used and there is a lack of sociodemographic data on the teachers.

In 2002, Ting, Sanders, and Smith developed a Teacher's Reactions to School Violence (TRSV) scale with hopes of addressing some of the many limitations of the extant literature. The results focused upon scale development rather than the effects of experiencing school violence. However, the preliminary findings indicated that direct exposure to violence may result in psychological distress and professional numbness or apathy. Unfortunately, the study was conducted using a small, convenience sample and did not differentiate between direct and indirect experiences.

Criminal Victimization and Trauma

Although the existing literature on school violence and its effects on teachers is limited, knowledge obtained from studies of criminal victimization and trauma offers information regarding the more extreme types of violence that teachers may experience. Criminal victimization is a stressful life event. Cognitive theorists attribute the distress that follows criminal victimization to inadequate processing of the traumatic event.

Specifically, it has been theorized that the shattering of basic assumptions which victims hold about themselves and the world results in a failure to deal with traumatic events effectively (Janoff-Bulman, 1985).

Studies on criminal victimization have shown that experiencing direct victimization can have serious psychological repercussions (e.g., Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979; Frieze et al, 1987; Norris & Kaniasty, 1994). Some psychological symptoms that have been found include depression, anxiety, hostility, as well as posttraumatic stress (e.g., Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979; Kilpatrick et al., 1985; Norris & Kaniasty, 1994). Feelings of vulnerability, the erosion of trust, feelings of alienation, and fear have also been found to result from criminal victimization and trauma (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983; Vaux, 1988; Thompson & Norris, 1992).

Research on exposure to traumatic events indicates traumatic responses are positively related to the severity of the traumatic experience (e.g., Kilpatrick, Saunders, Vernonen, Best, & Von, 1987; Norris & Kaniasty, 1994; van der Kolk, 1987). Carlson and Dalenberg (2000) offer that the severity of the traumatic experience has the greatest influence on the individual's response to trauma based upon the event's intensity, nature and duration because these aspects affect the individual's feelings of control and his or her perceptions of the event as negative. In the case of school violence, an incident of school violence that resulted in death or injury would likely result in more distressed teachers than an incident of theft or intimidation.

Prior stressful experiences can affect responses to trauma exposure in two ways. First, prior experiences with stressful life events may serve to make an individual

“tougher’ or more resistant to subsequent stressful life events (Dienstbier, 1989). Although little empirical data supports this theory, literature on teacher stress and burnout suggests that a similar effect can be seen in levels of job satisfaction, an indicator of teacher stress. Younger teachers have been found to have less job satisfaction than older teachers (Williams, Winfree, & Clinton, 1989). Theoretically, the primary reason that younger teachers have less satisfaction is because they lack experience with the educational system and working with disorderly children and have not yet developed effective coping.

Prior stressful events may also impair one’s ability to cope with trauma (Carlson & Dalenberg, 2000). When a person experiences an event that they have experienced as traumatic in the past, the association with the previous event may affect their view of the current event, resulting in increased risk of developing a traumatic stress reaction. Just as teachers are not immune to school violence, they are not immune to becoming victims of other types of trauma in their homes or in their communities. According to U.S. Department of Justice statistics, the general population reported 8.4 million crimes of violence and 5.6 million attempts or threats of violence in 1998 (2000). Given these estimates, it is likely that teachers have experienced non-school-related trauma that may in turn affect their responses to acts of violence at school.

Ethnocultural factors also influence trauma responses. Culture greatly influences how symptoms are expressed (Gusman, et al, 1996). Although most research relating to trauma responses has focused on White, middle to upper class Americans, there is research indicating that symptoms may vary according to different cultural experiences

and backgrounds (Marsella, Friedman, Gerrity, & Scurfield, 1996). For example, trauma victims from cultures where the expression of emotion is not socially acceptable may present with more somatic complaints than other symptoms of trauma. However, research has indicated that although some symptoms may be expressed differently, the basic elements of trauma, such as re-experiencing and avoidance responses, are universal (Carlson & Rosser-Hogan, 1994).

A person's ethnocultural background and the beliefs and attitudes associated with that background may help to shape his or her interpretation of an event as violent or traumatic, as well as his or her reactions to the event (de Silva, 1999). In cultures where individualism and self-determination are highly valued, individuals who experience traumatic events may have greater difficulty maintaining a sense of self-esteem or self-worth (Bard & Sangrey, 1986). The idea of turning to others for support may be too difficult for the individual to accept, and he or she may develop feelings of self-blame, shame, and guilt.

Differing views toward aggression as well as ethnic conflicts may also present a problem for teachers, especially in urban areas that tend to be more racially heterogeneous (Feshbach & Fesbach, 1998). Social prejudices may result in increased aggression amongst students, which affects the school as a whole. Witnessing student-to-student violence could be a traumatic experience for some teachers, as well as the students.

In recent years, researchers have begun to focus attention on the effects of witnessing or indirectly hearing about "real life" violent events. Most of these studies

focus on youth who are exposed to or have heard about violence violence (see Buka, Stichick, Birdthistle, & Earls, 2001 for review). An issue amongst these studies is how to define "witnessing" or indirect exposure to violence. Some focus on eye-witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or threats of physical harm (Shakoor & Chalmers, 1991). Others focus on whether or not individuals hear gunshots or screams associated with a violent event (Campbell & Schwarz, 1996) or include property crimes, such as theft and vandalism (Lai, 1999). Researchers also have examined the effects having knowledge of another's victimization (Bell & Jenkins, 1993). Buka, et al (2001) recommended a broad definition of "witnessing" or "indirectly experiencing" violence that incorporates elements of each of these studies.

A number of studies, focusing on adolescents, have found that males are more likely than females to be victims and witnesses of violence (e.g., Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Gladstein, Rusonis, & Heald, 1992; Singer et al, 1995). Studies also have indicated that older children, children of minority ethnic status, and children from urban neighborhoods are more likely to witness violence. Potential effects of witnessing violence or of indirect exposure to violence include, depression, substance abuse, and posttraumatic stress symptomatology (Buka, et al, 2001).

While the focus on much of the witnessing or indirect violence literature has been on youth exposed to violence, the limited research on adults has provided significant findings. For example, a study of exposure to violence and PTSD symptomatology among abortion clinic workers found that even while controlling for significant life circumstances and stressors outside the clinic setting, indirect experiences or witnessing

violence in the workplace was a significant predictor if PTSD (Fitzpatrick & Wilson, 1999). In this study, "witnessing" was defined as seeing something occur or hearing about a colleague's experience. Direct exposure to violence included being yelled at, called names, or threatened by protesters, experiencing bomb threats and intimidating phone calls, and physical attacks. Most of the 71 abortion clinic workers sampled directly experienced or indirectly witnessed harassment, with only 6% experiencing a physical attack. Interestingly, the relation between witnessing/indirect acts of violence and PTSD was stronger than the relation between direct victimization and PTSD.

These findings suggest that direct and indirect victimization is an important area of study when examining potentially stressful workplaces. For teachers, observing fights amongst students, experiencing or witnessing verbal abuse or harassment, as well as direct experiences of violence in school settings may lead to psychological distress similar to that experienced by workers in other helping professions, such as clinics, and the children with whom they work.

Teacher Stress and Burnout

Given the limits of the research on violence in schools and teachers, it is also necessary to consider other teacher-related research and its implications for understanding potential responses to working in a violent environment. For example, during the 1980s, teacher stress and burnout became an important issue for investigation. Kyriacou (1987) defines teacher stress as "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression, resulting from aspects of his [or her] work as a teacher" (p. 146). He describes teacher burnout as "the

syndrome resulting from prolonged teacher stress, primarily characterized by physical, emotional, and attitudinal exhaustion."

Kyriacou's definition of burnout is similar to those proposed by early investigators of the phenomenon, such as Freudenberger (1974, 1975) and Maslach (1976). Freudenberger coined the term, "burnout" to describe healthcare workers who were physically and psychologically depleted. Subsequent studies over the past two decades have examined the experiences of nurses and physicians, as well as teachers, social workers, police officers, and therapists (e.g., Maslach and Jackson, 1884, 1986; Pines and Aronson, 1988; Farber 1991). There is no universally accepted definition of burnout (Byrne, 1999). However, most empirical studies of the phenomenon rely upon a multidimensional, three-component structure proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1984, 1986). This structure has been examined within several diverse professional populations, including elementary, intermediate, and secondary school teachers (e.g., Beck and Garigulo, 1983; Byrne, 1991, 1993, 1994; Gold, 1984; Iwanicki and Schwab, 1981).

Maslach and Jackson developed their multidimensional model by conceptualizing the phenomenon as an individual stress experience that occurs within the context of interpersonal relationships (Maslach, 1999). This conceptualization allows for an understanding of how stress affects a person's sense of themselves as well as their perceptions of those whom they serve. According to Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1986), burnout includes three components relating to experienced stress, evaluation of others, and the evaluation of the self as a result of exposure to stressful work environments. They define burnout as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion (stress-

component), depersonalization (other-evaluation component), and reduced personal accomplishment (self-evaluation component). According to this conceptualization, burnout can occur in anyone who works with people in some capacity. Therefore, burnout is not a phenomenon associated exclusively with any one particular human service population.

Following Maslach and Jackson's conceptualization of burnout, the three components offer a broader understanding of what can occur when a person is under job stress (1981, 1986). Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's personal resources. It could also be described as wearing out or feeling debilitated, depleted, or fatigued. Depersonalization refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people. Those people are typically those receiving services or care from the individual. Depersonalization could be described as a loss of idealism, irritability, or cynical attitudes about those who receive one's services. Finally, reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work. This could also be described as reduced productivity or capability.

The model developed by Maslach and Jackson proposed that stressful experiences at work can result in altered emotional responses, a change in how one views the world, and a change in one's feelings of accomplishment and worth. This definition is similar to how researchers have conceptualized individual responses to traumatic life events. As mentioned earlier, it has been theorized that exposure to trauma results in a shattering of basic assumptions about the benevolence and safety of the world and alters one's view of

his or herself, as well as his or her ability to cope effectively (Janoff-Bulman, 1985). The potential outcome of this alteration is the development of PTSD. PTSD is a severe response to more severe types of stress, but both burnout and PTSD are potential responses to stress within the work environment. While PTSD may be a result of extreme types of school violence, such as shootings and other violent crimes, it could be theorized that burnout could be another potential response along the continuum.

Assuming the before-mentioned definitions are accurate, experiences of school violence could lead to teacher stress and burnout. Ting, Sanders, and Smith (2002) assert this in their study of a potential scale for measuring teachers' reactions to school violence, but they used a small, convenience sample. Despite that limitation, it is not unreasonable to believe that a violent act, be it physical or psychological, could be considered a catalyst for "unpleasant emotions," apathy, or burnout. Psychological violence could play an important role in burnout given that criticism, threats, intimidation, and sexual harassment present threats to one's sense of self. Teacher stress is believed to be associated with the teacher's sense of threat and control in a given situation (Kyriacou, 1987). Physical and psychological violence, such as sexual harassment, represent a threat to the self in relation to others. If a teacher is threatened and does not have a sense of control in the situation, then the teacher's own identity may be challenged, resulting in stress and potentially burnout.

Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler (1986) found that feelings of personal accomplishment were highest for teachers in supportive atmospheres. A feeling of personal accomplishment is linked to feelings of self-esteem and control. Although the

authors were not studying effects of violence, one might assume that teachers in more supportive school atmospheres that are perceived as safe may be less prone to traumatic responses or burnout.

Teachers who have a strong professional identity often are less likely to experience burnout (Hoffman, 1996; Kremer & Hofman, 1985). This finding offers another perspective on the effects of school violence. The increase in efforts to prevent school violence has resulted in teachers having to take on roles that they may not have been trained to take. For example, teachers may have to take on the role of grief counselor following a death in the school (Collison, et al, 1987). Managing one's own grief while assisting children as they attempt to cope with loss is not something typically taught in a person's preparation to become a teacher (Reid & Dixon, 1999). Because it represents a new role to the teacher, the combined stress of the loss and feelings of inadequacy could contribute to burnout.

According to Hoffman (1996), violence or the threat of violence has a direct impact on the way teachers and students work together in the classroom. If a teacher is stressed or is experiencing burnout, then s/he is less likely to engage the class or provide motivation for a child who is struggling (Kyriacou, 1987). This has been referred to as professional numbing or apathy. In some cases, students may become frustrated with teachers who are disconnected from their class. Anger and violence may also emerge, thus perpetuating the cycle of violence and increasing the teacher's stress and burnout.

Poor administrative leadership and a lack of community involvement are environmental factors that have been found to increase the likelihood of burnout in

teachers. In a review of over 18 studies of teacher burnout, a majority of the studies found that schools with administrations characterized as providing inconsistent feedback, poor support, and/or minimal collaboration between teachers and school officials had higher rates of burnout (see Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi, and Leithwood, 1999 for review). In addition, conflict between the school and the community has been found to be a significant source of teacher stress (Miller, 1999). When the community was characterized as uninvolved or unwelcome in the schools, teachers reported feeling isolated and unsupported in their disciplinary choices. When there was community involvement described as combative or limiting, teachers reported more apathy and that they felt unsupported. Appropriate community involvement buffered the emergence of burnout. These two factors share a common function for teachers. If the teacher experiences the school climate as supportive and collaborative, and the involvement of the community is both present and affirming of the teacher's choices, then teachers are not left in isolation. Professional and personal isolation have been linked to increased risk of burnout (Farber, 1999). In a work environment where teachers have little adult contact for a six-hour or more workday, the importance of supportive community involvement and administrative leadership is rather intuitive. If the teacher experiences violence, then these factors should be even more important in terms of buffering the development of emotional distress and/or professional burnout.

Summary and Research Questions

Throughout this paper, the limitations of the existing literature on school violence and teachers have been presented. Definitions of school violence vary, and most studies

focus on the experiences of children. The few that do include the experiences of teachers are primarily prevalence-based with no consideration of potential effects of direct or indirect experiences of school violence (e.g., Metropolitan Insurance Company, 1999; NCES, 2000, 2004). The few studies that have examined the effects of school-based trauma on teachers are outdated and based upon groups of teachers who were specifically referred for evaluation due to their level of impairment (Bloch, 1979; Bloch & Bloch, 1980), or do not provide sociodemographic data on the teachers who were studied (Collison et al, 1987). The use of convenience samples compromises the generalizability of these studies (e.g., Ting, et al., 2002). Furthermore, no standardized measures of potential outcomes, such as burnout, were used. This study represents a first step towards addressing some of the limitations of the current knowledge on school violence and its effects on teachers.

This exploratory study has two primary goals. The first is to determine the nature and scope of psychological and physical forms of school violence experienced by a sample of teachers working in a city in a southeastern state in the United States. I hypothesized that less violent acts (e.g., property crimes, harassment) would be reported more frequently than physically violent acts in schools. Along those lines, I hypothesized that teachers would make fewer reports of experiences of direct violence than experiences of indirect violence. In addition, given previous research, it was hypothesized that most teachers would feel safe in their schools. The second goal is to determine what effect, if any, does directly or indirectly experiencing school violence have on teacher burnout. It was hypothesized that direct exposure to school violence would positively predict

increased teacher burnout on all three domains of burnout. In addition, it was hypothesized that indirect or vicarious exposure to violence would also positively predict burnout, but to a lesser extent.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Participants and Procedures

The design was cross-sectional, with data collection occurring in 13 metropolitan area public high schools during the month of May 2004 in a southeastern city with a population of over 500,000 (United States Census, 2000). Public high schools were defined as those schools teaching grades 9 through 12. The school district used for this study is one of the 50 largest school districts in the United States, and it includes both urban and suburban schools. There are 21 high schools, in total. However, there are four alternative schools for behavior-disordered children that teach grades K through 12, two schools that teach K through 12 and serve only children with physical or developmental disabilities, one school that focuses on gifted children, and one school consisting of both middle and high school students. These eight schools were eliminated from data collection due to serving special populations, having small numbers of teachers and students (i.e., 30 students and 2 teachers), or including grades other than 9 through 12. In total, these eight eliminated schools had 176 teachers, ranging from 5 to 60 teachers per school.

The remaining 13 public high schools had a total of 1,136 teachers, ranging from 40 to 150 teachers, and serving a total of 17,886 students. School size in this metropolitan school district ranges from 640 to 2,550 students, with an average student

population of 1,376. The student to teacher ratio ranges from 18.5 to 1 to 26.6 to 1. The schools in this district represent a range of sociodemographic characteristics, such as race, income-level, and education. Teachers are predominantly female (70%), and most teachers identify as White, non-Hispanic (60%) (Metropolitan Education Association, 2005).

All teachers at each eligible public high school received a survey. The local chapter of the National Education Association endorsed the study and assisted in the distribution and collection of surveys through school mail. All surveys received by the association office were placed in a sealed box upon receipt by the association secretary, and no member or officer of the association had access to the collected surveys. The association is volunteer-operated and is involved in the promotion of education and the profession of teaching. Association representatives from each public high school in the district received a letter from the president of the association, on association letterhead, requesting that they distribute surveys to all teachers at their schools. Each representative also received a package of M&Ms for their aid in distributing surveys. All representatives agreed to distribute surveys. Each representative then received packages containing survey materials for each teacher in their school. Survey materials were sent in individual, re-sealable envelopes. Each envelope contained the following: a cover letter from the association president and the primary investigator that described the study; a three-page, front and back, survey; and a sealed package of tea as a token of appreciation. Association representatives distributed the envelopes using school faculty mailboxes. Respondents were informed, via the cover letter, that the survey would take

approximately 15 minutes to complete and that they should return the completed surveys in the provided, re-sealable envelopes to the association office, via school mail, within two weeks. Respondents were assured that their data would be anonymous and that all data would be reported in aggregate form. Respondents were also informed of the minimal potential risks of completing the survey.

Measures

The 61-item survey was composed of (a) a 22-item measure of teacher burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory for Educators, (b) a 14-item school climate questionnaire, (c) a 10-item exposure to school violence questionnaire, and (d) a 15-item demographics questionnaire.

Measure of Teacher Burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI is the most widely used measure of burnout and has been used with various occupational groups, including teachers (Winnubst, 1993). When used with teachers, the term "recipients" is substituted with "students" in each item. This slight adaptation has been found to preserve the meaning of the MBI's three subscales, and the reliability and validity of the MBI has been repeatedly demonstrated in many studies (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981; Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Corcoran, 1995). For example, in Iwanicki and Schwab's (1981) study of teacher burnout, internal reliability estimates for the three subscales of the MBI were .90 for emotional exhaustion, .76 for depersonalization, and .76 for personal accomplishment.

Respondents were asked to describe how frequently they experience particular feelings about their work, using a 7-point scale (0 = "Never" to 6 = "Every Day") The 9-

item *emotional exhaustion* subscale measures feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources (Maslach, 1999). An example statement used in this subscale is, "I feel emotionally drained from work?" The internal reliability for the subscale was .89. The 5-item *depersonalization* subscale measures how often the teacher experiences negative or excessively detached responses to other people. An example of a statement used in this subscale is, "I have become more callous toward people since I took this job." This subscales' internal reliability was .73. Finally, the 8-item *lack of personal accomplishment* subscale refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence, motivation, and successful achievement in one's work. An example of a statement used in this subscale is, "I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job." The internal reliability for the subscale was .76.

School Climate. Other factors within the school environment may affect burnout in high school teachers. In order to control statistically for these, a brief measure of school climate was included. Given the length of the original measure, two selected subscales of the 79-item School Climate Survey – School Staff Version by Haynes, Emmons, and Comer (1993) were used to measure factors related to school climate -- leadership and school-community relations. These subscales were included because lack of effective leadership and feelings of isolation from the community relate highly with increased professional burnout (Miller, 1999). The *leadership* subscale consists of eight items, with an internal reliability of .84. A sample statement from this subscale is "Administrators have respect for teachers." The *school-community relations* subscale consists of six items, with an internal reliability of .81. A sample statement from this

subscale is “There is good community involvement in the life of the school.” Respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with these statements using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree).

Assessment of School Violence. A School Violence Questionnaire, developed by the primary investigator, was used to assess exposure to school violence within the past 12 months. The questionnaire was reviewed by a sample of 15 high school teachers in a city comparable to the sample in terms of size and sociodemographic characteristics. These teachers were associates of the president of the teachers’ association located in the city from which the sample was drawn, and they volunteered to review the questionnaire with no compensation. Ages ranged from 23 to 50. These teachers were asked for feedback on the types of events that should be included in the measure and the ease of completing the instrument. Upon review of the teachers’ feedback, I selected 10 types of school violence capture the most important types of events experienced by high school teachers. Therefore, no additional types were included. The 10 types of school crime or violence that were included ranged from psychologically violent incidents, such as threats or sexual harassment, to physically violent acts, such as injury with a weapon. For each type of violence, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they experienced the event or if they know of another teacher or a student who also experienced the event. For example, one question asks, “In the last 12 months, have you, another teacher, or a student been threatened with serious physical harm on school grounds?” The alpha for the direct exposure items was .58. The alpha for indirect exposure items was .78.

Demographic Variables. Given that sociodemographic variables have been found to relate to burnout, these factors will be included in order to control for extraneous variance. *Age* was scored in years, and *sex* was scored 0 = *male* and 1 = *female*. *Education* was defined using four categories (e.g, 1 = Associate's Degree, 4 = Doctoral Degree). It was then recoded into a dichotomous variable (0 = Bachelor's degree or less, 1 = Master's degree or more). *Marital Status* was also transformed into a dichotomous variable (0 = *never married, widowed, separated/divorced*, 1 = *married*). *Majority/Minority Status* was defined using 7 categories (e.g., 1 = *African American*, 7 = *Other*). Given that most respondents fell into either the White or African-American categories, the variable was recoded (0 = White, 1 = African-American or other). Overall experience in teaching and length of time teaching at current school were measured in years. Number of students taught and number of students in each class were also be requested. Finally, "Yes" or "No" questions regarding feelings of safety in the school, membership in teachers' associations, and school policies and programs on violence were included (see Appendix I). The safety variable, "Do you feel safe in your school?" was included as a measure of severity given that the school violence questionnaire did not request information on how the event affected them.

Data Analytic Strategy

First, descriptive data for the sample were determined. Second, to analyze the effects of direct and indirect exposure to school violence on teacher burnout, a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were utilized. Three regressions (one for each burnout variable) were conducted. Possible confounds were controlled for by entering

background variables (e.g., age, sex, majority/minority status, marital status, education, years teaching, years teaching at current school, number of classes taught per day, and number of students taught per day) as the first step in each regression. In the second step, the school climate variables were entered. In the third step, teachers' perception of safety in their school was entered. In the fourth step, total indirect violence (events happening to other teachers and students) was entered. Finally, total direct violence (events happening to the teacher) was entered.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The goals of the analysis were to: (1) describe the types of school violence events that respondents experienced, both directly and indirectly, over the past 12 months; and (2) using a multiple regression framework and controlling for important burnout predictors, examine the relation between exposure to direct and indirect violence and burnout among high school teachers.

Part I: Describing the Sample, Types of Violence Experienced, and Teacher Safety and Awareness of School Violence, Policies, and Programs

Sample Characteristics

Of those respondents who returned surveys, 10 respondents provided incomplete data and six, three of whom also had incomplete data, reported no direct or indirect experiences with school violence. Therefore, 13 respondents were not included in analyses. The total sample included 315 respondents, of whom 200 (64%) were female. The sample's mean age in years was 44.04 (SD = 11.5, range = 24-73). Regarding majority/minority status, the majority of respondents identified themselves as

White/Caucasian (68.3%), followed by Black/African-American (25.1%), and other ethnic/racial backgrounds, such as Hispanic/Latino(a) (2.9%). In terms of marital status, 60.0% were married, 22.2% had never been married, 10.5% were divorced, 2.9% were widowed, 2.5% were co-habitating, and 1.9% were separated. In terms of education, the majority had earned at least a Master's degree (67.6%), followed by at least a Bachelor's degree (28.6%), or a Doctoral degree (3.8%). The sample's mean years teaching was 15.4 (SD = 10.59, range = 1-41). The mean years teaching at the respondent's current school was 8.08 (SD = 7.30, range = 1-31). The mean number of classes taught per day was 4.70 (SD = .95, range = 1-6), and the mean number of students taught per day was 110.44 (SD = 33.17, range = 11-200). Seventy-one percent of the sample endorsed membership in a teachers' association.

Sociodemographic data are similar to national averages for teachers in metropolitan school districts. According to a study examining national trends in the teacher workforce, females made up nearly 60% of all public high school teachers during the 1999-2000 school year (NCES, 2005). In addition, the average age of all teachers was 42-years-old, 95% had Bachelor's degrees or higher, and the average years teaching was 14 years. These averages are also consistent with averages for public high school teachers in the sampled school district (Metropolitan Education Association, 2005).

<u>What Types of Violence Are Teachers Experiencing?</u>

Table 1 presents data related to respondents' reported exposure to specific acts of violence on school grounds. The first column represents the percentage of respondents reporting direct experiences with violent acts, the second and third columns represent the

percentage of respondents reporting knowledge of other teachers and students who experienced one of the acts specified, respectively. The final two columns represent the percentage of reported total indirect victimization for the sample and the percentage of reported total victimization (reported direct plus indirect experiences), respectively.

The percentages in Table 1 show a considerable number of the sample reported direct and indirect exposure to violence among high school teachers. Respondents reported more exposure to forms of violence that were more psychological in nature, such as having property stolen or vandalized, sexual harassment, threats of harm, and having to evacuate the building due to a bomb threat. In the case of teachers reporting actual physical assaults, nine percent reported being victims of this very direct form of violence. Only 1% reported sexual assaults, and there were no incidents of shootings or stabbings reported as being directly experienced by teachers or other teachers. Respondents reported more indirect exposure to more physical and serious forms of violence, with most reporting knowledge of students who experienced violence. For example, few respondents reported direct experience with sexual assault on school grounds. However, 20% of the sample reported knowing of a student who had experienced this form of violence in the past 12 months. Respondents reported both direct and indirect experiences with a variety of violent acts. These two types of experiences were not mutually exclusive; all respondents who reported direct experiences also reported indirect experiences.

Table 1. Percentage of Sample Reporting Knowledge of Direct and/or Indirect Experiences with School Violence (*N* = 315)

School Violence Items	% Direct Experience	% Indirect: Another Teacher	% Indirect: Student	% Indirect Experience	% Direct and Indirect Experience
Property was stolen	25	55	60	60	85
Property was vandalized	33	51	34	50	83
Saw someone with a weapon	13	16	23	22	35
Experienced sexual harassment	31	24	55	55	86
Touched in sexually-inappropriate way	4	6	38	38	42
Threatened with serious physical harm	25	28	49	49	74
Slapped, punched, or hit	9	30	60	59	68
Evacuated during a bomb threat	44	31	30	31	75
Sexually assaulted	1	1	20	20	21
Shot or stabbed	0	0	5	5	5

Traditionally, the focus of collected school violence data has been on direct experiences with violent acts, namely physical attacks, sexual assaults, and shootings or stabbings. The sample reported a total of 2,490 violent acts. That equals nearly 8 direct

and indirect experiences per respondent. Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of total direct violence accounted for by the three traditionally-studied violent acts. When combining these three violent acts into one category, these acts account for only 5% of the overall violence experienced, directly, by the sample. Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of total violence, divided by direct and indirect experiences. There were 583 direct and 1907 indirect experiences (758 experienced by other teachers and 1149 experienced by students) with violence in their schools.

Figure 1. Total Direct Experiences with School Violence, Divided by Type (Total Direct Experiences = 583).

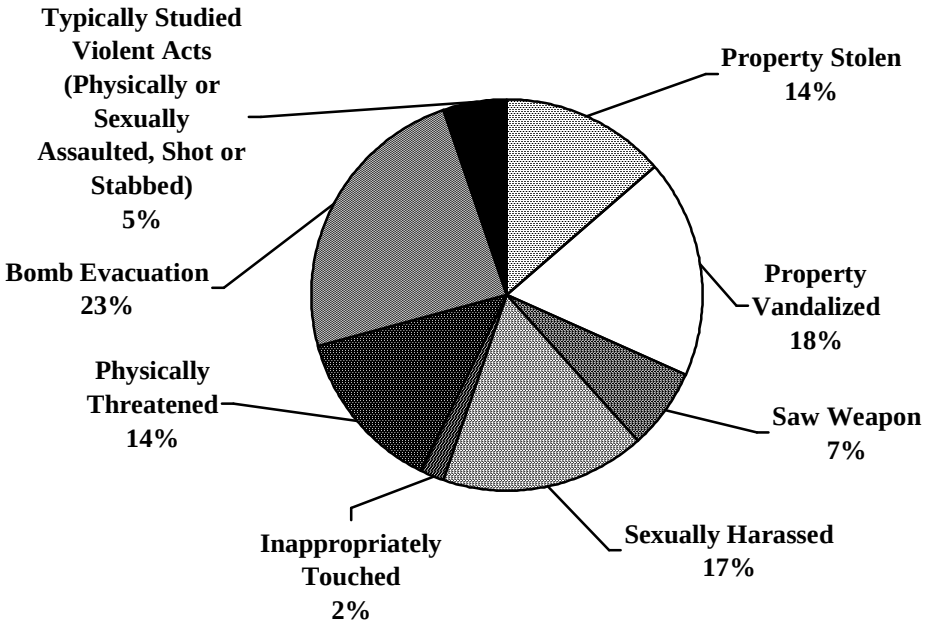
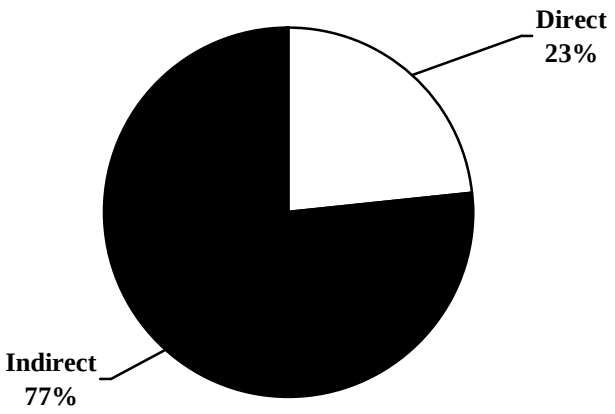


Figure 2. Total Experiences with School Violence, Divided by Direct and Indirect Experiences (Total Experiences Reported = 2,490)



Teachers' Feelings of Safety and Awareness of Violence Prevention in Their Schools

Although a majority of respondents (84%) reported the presence of a violence prevention policy in their schools, 49% reported that they do not feel safe and 42% reported a belief that violence is not addressed as it occurs. Also, 43% reported no awareness of a prevention program used in their school. It is important to note that according to the State Board of Education, each school in the school district has a general violence prevention policy, as well as programs focusing on character education and community partnerships to support adolescents at risk for violence due to poverty and other socioeconomic factors (Tennessee Board of Education, 2005).

Part II: Determining the Relation between School Violence and Teacher Burnout

The final portion of the analysis was to determine whether direct or indirect experiences with violence related to the development of burnout in high school teachers. Table 2 presents Pearson correlations for all study variables, and Table 3 presents descriptive data for the predictor and outcome variables. Significant correlations identified potential covariates. Sex was positively correlated with Personal Accomplishment and negatively correlated with Depersonalization. Age and Years at Current School were positively correlated with Depersonalization, and Education and the Number of Classes Taught were positively correlated to Emotional Exhaustion. The Number of Students Taught, Community Relations, Feeling Safe, and Direct Exposure were positively correlated with Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. Overall, these results did not suggest testing the same model for all dependent variables.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Study Variables (*N* = 315).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex	1.00	-.04	-.09	-.06	-.05	-.11	*.12	-.02	.07	-.08	.01	*-.23	*.17
2. Age		1.00	*.40	*.60	.11	.02	*-.15	.01	*-.20	*-.12	-.03	*-.17	.01
3. Education			1.00	*.30	.07	.08	.04	.04	-.03	.05	*.15	.06	-.04
4. Years at Current School				1.00	*.21	.10	*-.15	*.11	*-.21	*-.20	-.06	*-.16	-.04
5. # of Classes Taught					1.00	*.34	-.00	-.01	.04	-.03	*.15	.09	.01
6. # of Students Taught						1.00	-.10	.04	.00	.07	*.23	*.22	-.09
7. Community Relations							1.00	*-.15	*.12	*.13	*.12	*.13	-.03
8. Feel Safe								1.00	*-.22	*-.31	*-.32	*-.30	.08
9. Indirect Exposure									1.00	*.44	*.22	*.23	-.07
10. Direct Exposure										1.00	*.32	*.32	-.10
11. Emotional Exhaustion											1.00	*.61	*-.29
12. Depersonalization												1.00	*-.42
13. Personal Accomplishment													1.00

*$p < .05$

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor and Outcome Variables (*N* = 315).

Variables	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
School Climate			
Community Relations	12-26	17.92	2.38
Safety			
Feeling Safe	0-1	.51	.50
Violence Exposure			
Total Indirect Exposure	0-18	6.12	3.75
Total Direct Exposure	0-8	1.89	1.73
Teacher Burnout			
Emotional Exhaustion	1-53	25.97	11.73
Depersonalization	0-27	8.56	6.28
Personal Accomplishment	9-48	35.32	7.37

Violence and Its Effects on Teachers: Regression Analyses

In order to determine the relation between exposure to school violence and teacher burnout, a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used. The analysis sample was the same for all regressions. Three regressions, one for each subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, were conducted. Possible confounds were controlled for by entering relevant background variable (e.g., sex, age, marital status,

majority/minority status, years teaching) at the first step and the school climate variable at the second step. In the third step, the variable addressing respondents' feelings of safety in their school was added. In the fourth step, the frequency of indirect exposure to violence was entered. Finally, the frequency of direct exposure to violence was entered in the fifth step. The results of the regression analyses for the different burnout subscales are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment (*N* = 315).

	Emotional Exhaustion			Depersonalization			Personal Accomplishment		
Variables	**β**	**SE**	**ΔR²**	**B**	**SE**	**ΔR²**	**β**	**SE**	**ΔR²**
Step 1									
Sex				*-2.87	.65		*2.65	.86	
Age				-.06	.03		.03	.04	
Education	3.34	1.31							
Yrs at School				*-.03	.05				
# Classes	.90	.66							
#of Students Taught	*.07	.02							
			*.07			*.14			*.03
Step 2									
Community Relations	.30	.25		.26	.13				
			*.02			*.02			0.00
Step 3									
Felt Safe	*-5.72	1.25		-2.81	.66		.90	.87	
			*.10			*.08			.01
Step 4									
Total Indirect Experience	.26	.18		*.15	.09		-.11	.13	
			*.02			*.02			.01
Step 5									
Total Direct Experience	*1.26	.39		*.53	.21		-.16	.28	
			*.03			*.02			.00
Final R^2	***.24**			***.27**			**.04**		
Final Adj R^2	***.22**			***.25**			**.03**		

* $p = .0$

Predicting Emotional Exhaustion. The final model accounted for approximately 24% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Background variables accounted for 7% of the variance in emotional exhaustion, and community relations accounted for an additional 2%. Feeling safe on school grounds had a significant main effect and contributed 10% additional variance in emotional exhaustion. Feeling unsafe resulted in higher emotional exhaustion: $\beta = -5.72$, $p < .05$. Total indirect exposure also had a significant main effect ($\beta = .26$) and accounted for an additional 2% of the variance. Finally, total direct exposure to school violence had a significant main effect ($\beta = 1.26$) and accounted for 3% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Teachers who reported an experience with more types of school violence reported higher emotional exhaustion.

Predicting Depersonalization. Sex had a significant main effect on depersonalization ($\beta = -2.87$). Male teachers reported higher depersonalization than female teachers. Feeling safe on school grounds also had a significant main effect, with those reporting feeling more unsafe having higher depersonalization ($\beta = -2.81$). Indirect exposure and direct exposure resulted in a significant main effects ($\beta = .15$, $\beta = .53$), with more reported indirect and direct experiences with types of school violence resulting in higher depersonalization.

The final model accounted for approximately 27% of the variance in depersonalization. For depersonalization, the background variables accounted for 14% additional variance. School climate accounted for 2%, feeling safe accounted for 8%, indirect exposure accounted for 2%, and direct exposure also accounted for 2% of the variance in depersonalization.

Predicting Personal Accomplishment. The only predictor variable with a significant main effect was sex ($\beta = 2.65$). Females experienced less loss of personal accomplishment than men. The model accounted for 4% of the variance in personal accomplishment. Background variables accounted for 3% of the variance.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

This study examined the effects of exposure to school violence on high school teacher burnout. Whereas previous studies either neglected to examine school violence and its effects on teachers or focused upon criminal victimization data rather than other types of more psychologically violent events, a goal of this study was to identify a broader range of what teachers may experience and examine potential outcomes of those experiences. This approach allowed for a more detailed examination of the phenomenon of school violence. Although shootings and more violent experiences are indeed low occurrence events, the results of this study support an expanded definition of school violence and accounts for many other types of violent events that occur on school grounds every day. Specifically, the data suggest that teachers were more likely to experience psychologically violent acts than physically violent acts, but they were aware of students and other teachers who had experienced physical violence. Direct and indirect exposure to violence, both psychological and physical, resulted in higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. These data suggest that high school teachers are exposed to a great deal of violence within their work environments, and that exposure could lead to significant professional burnout.

What do Teachers Experience?

In this study, teachers directly experienced a broad range of violent acts. These acts were both psychological and physical in nature. As suggested by past studies, direct experiences of severe, physical violence were rare. However, the types of experiences reported by the sample reflect experiences suggestive of working in a threatening work environment (Kingrey, Coggeshall, & Alford, 1998). Having to evacuate schools due to bomb threats, having property vandalized or stolen, being threatened with serious physical harm, and sexual harassment were each experienced, directly, by at least a quarter of the sample.

Indirect exposure to violence was higher for every type of school violence, with the exception of evacuating due to bomb threats. Although most teachers in this study did not experience physical violence directly, they reported witnessing or knowing of other teachers and students in their schools who did experience physical violence. A third of the teachers reported knowing of another teacher in their school who was slapped, punched, or hit in their school. Further, two-thirds of the sample reported knowing of students who experienced this form of violence, and over a third reported knowing of students who were touched in a sexually-inappropriate manner. Teachers were also aware of other teachers and students experiencing a great deal of non-physical or psychological violence. For example, 55% knew of teachers who had property stolen, and 55% knew of students who were sexually harassed.

None of the schools in this study experienced a school shooting. Physical violence was typically low, except for students who were in fights. Although physical

violence was not as common, the teachers did not experience their workplace as safe. Over half of the teachers reported not feeling safe in their schools, despite the presence of school violence prevention policies and programs. However, while most teachers (84%) knew of violence prevention policies, only 57% reported the presence of prevention programs. This suggests that teachers know that the school system has a general stance on school violence, but a significant portion of those teachers do not see prevention in action in their schools. In addition, most prevention policies and programs target the physical types of violence and not the more psychological forms (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaundry, & Samples, 1998; Goldstein & Conoley, 1997). Schools will likely respond to threats of direct violence, but there is little in place to prevent experiences such as sexual harassment or intimidation. For example, policies that are in place regarding sexual harassment are rarely enforced due to failure to recognize sexual harassment as threatening, differing definitions of sexual harassment, or concerns over parent or community responses to such events (Goldstein & Conoley, 1997). When tolerance or avoidance of a problem such as sexual harassment in schools is present, this increases the potential for further violence in the school by creating a culture of violence. As reflected in the findings of this study, the teaching profession is predominantly female. Over a third of the teachers experienced sexual harassment by a student, a colleague, a staff member, or an administrator while at school. Although participants were not asked to identify the victim-offender relationship for any of the violent acts, there is a strong indication that a culture that does not support prevention of sexual harassment is present in the school system. Taken together, this would suggest that addressing psychological

violence, particularly in the form of sexual harassment, is a major issue for school administrators and a potentially harmful experience for many teachers and students within the school system.

What Are the Consequences of Experiencing School Violence?

In general, older, male teachers who had been teaching longer had higher burnout. This supports previous research on teacher burnout that did not examine school violence as a contributing factor (Friedman, 1991; Sarros & Sarros, 1992; Tuettemann & Punch, 1992). Marital status, which is often seen as a buffer to burnout, also did not have a significant effect.

The most notable finding of this study is that feeling unsafe and experiencing violence can result in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization amongst high school teachers. Given that a review of the literature resulted in finding no studies that examined burnout as an outcome of school violence, there are no studies with which to compare these findings. However, previous studies suggest that burnout is common following exposure to violence in other workplaces (Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993). In this study, direct exposure accounted for 3% and 2% of the variance in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, respectively. In other words, exposure to violence or the threat of violence resulted in decreased emotional resources and teachers adopting a cynical view or detached manner of relating to their students. These issues were further complicated by the fact that the teachers described feeling unsafe at work. Feeling unsafe at work accounted for an additional 10% and 8% of the variance in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, respectively.

Taken together, these findings provide evidence for further examining the relation between exposure to violence and effects on teachers' psychological functioning. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are similar to symptoms of PTSD, such as numbing and avoidance. Perhaps burnout can be the result of prolonged exposure to a violent environment. Trauma results in feelings of vulnerability, the erosion of trust, feelings of alienation, and fear (Janoff-Bulman & Frieze, 1983; Thompson & Norris, 1992; Vaux, 1988). Emotional numbing is a coping mechanism for avoiding awareness of those feelings. Although PTSD was not examined in this study, these results suggest that teachers may become emotionally exhausted and move towards depersonalization as a way of dealing with continued reminders of trauma or feeling unsafe in their workplace.

The formation of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in teachers can lead to many problems in the classroom and the school as a whole (Heus & Diekstra, 1999). Feelings of exhaustion, hostility, and dislike do not make working with pupils any easier. The teacher's ability and interest in solving student problems, patience in dealing with those who are struggling to understand concepts, and motivation to put forth extra effort is compromised. The teacher has few resources to call upon for dealing with daily hassles, and this can perpetuate burnout until it is a chronic condition. A burned out teacher is less likely to intervene in student disagreements or feel connected to students. For many children, particularly in more disadvantaged areas, teachers represent stable and reliable adult figures. If the teacher is burned out, then that teacher's ability to serve as a role model or guide for students is compromised. Students may experience this as disinterest and fail to function at the level of which they are capable.

Interestingly, although emotional exhaustion and depersonalization can result in lowered interest or belief in student accomplishment, the results indicate little contributed to teachers developing negative views of their personal accomplishments. None of the predictor variables other than sex of the teacher related to reduced personal accomplishment. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in (perceived) successful achievement, which is usually accompanied by reduced feelings of competence and self-esteem (Heus & Diekstra, 1999). Therefore, teachers in this study do not feel incompetent or think badly about themselves as a result of experiencing violence in their school. Although they are affected by violence, it does not compromise their view of themselves as successful teachers. This may be a result of resistance to acknowledge such things in a survey or perhaps the teachers' are defending against the idea that they are failures.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study has several notable strengths. The primary strength is that it addresses the experiences of teachers who are often ignored in school violence studies. In addition, it includes psychologically and physically violent acts instead of focusing on physically violent acts such as rape or physical and sexual assault. Taking this further, the study included both direct and indirect or vicarious experiences with violence. Finally, this study used standardized measures to determine the psychological effects of exposure to both direct and indirect violence in schools.

The main weakness of this study is its generalizability outside the southeastern city that was used to obtain the sample. Although all high school teachers were surveyed,

they were all part of the same school system, with the same policies, and, generally, the same sociodemographic characteristics. There is a significant lack of ethnic diversity, and this sample is not comparable to a sample that could be drawn from multiple or larger cities. In order to address this issue, future studies should be conducted in states in different regions of the United States that have varied policies and more diverse sociodemographic characteristics.

The study also did not include a way to determine who was perpetrating the violence reported by the teachers. It is important to stress that the experiences reported could have been perpetrated by other staff members, administrators, parents, and other individuals in contact with the teachers on the school grounds. The focus of the study was on what created a violent workplace for the teachers. Future studies should examine victim-offender relationship. Issues such as sexual harassment occur in many workplaces where students are not present. It stands to reason that the sexual harassment experienced by the teachers may have been perpetrated by others in the work setting.

The study was conducted in May 2004. This was not an optimal time for data collection because it was the end of the school year when most teachers were busy finalizing grades and getting ready for summer break. While offering a natural point to reflect on the events of the past year, it no doubt affected the results. It also may have affected the return rate of the surveys. Besides the factor of timing of survey distribution, limited research funds prohibited a second wave of survey distribution that may have resulted in a higher *N*. Future studies should be conducted at different times in the school

year and use follow-up mailings or other methods for distributing the survey to the most people and gaining a higher rate of return.

Another weakness is that the school violence questionnaire did not include a way for respondents to rate the level of severity or their own perceived impairment due to exposure to a violent act. Including the question, “Do you feel safe in your school?” was an attempt to address this. However, a more direct question following each type of school violence listed on the questionnaire would have been better. This was not possible in this study due to desire to shorten the time needed to complete the survey and limited financial resources.

Finally, the study is also cross-sectional and relies on self-report. The cross-sectional nature of the study, while cost-effective, results in a need to interpret the findings with caution. It is difficult to say whether or not burnout indeed existed before or following exposure to direct or indirect violence. Longitudinal studies with pre- and post-exposure assessment would offer clearer insight into how violence in schools affects teacher burnout. In addition, participants were asked to retrospectively describe experiences over a school year. Given that this study examined a broad range of experiences that are not typically associated with a violent school environment, there is a strong possibility that the teachers’ recall did not reflect the actual number of violent events occurring over the school year. In addition, there was no way to compare teachers’ self report with actual reported incidents due to the school system’s focus on criminal acts and lack of consideration of indirect experiences.

Summary and Implications

Within the limits of the methodology, these findings offer preliminary information that suggests that teachers experience a wide range of acts that create a violent work environment, and that exposure to school violence may increase burnout in high school teachers. Teachers were more likely to experience psychologically violent acts than physically violent acts, but they were aware of students and other teachers who had experienced physical violence. Direct exposure to violence, both psychological and physical, resulted in higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Future studies should include other measures of psychological functioning, such as standardized measures of trauma symptoms, depression, and anxiety. It makes intuitive sense that teachers would experience increased symptoms such as these, but there has been no effort to study this empirically. Doing so was beyond the scope of this study, but it would offer much more information as to the potential needs of high school teachers who experience violence.

These findings have significant implications. The range of violent acts reported sheds light upon the breadth of what teachers are experiencing on a daily basis in their workplaces. Current policies and programs do little to address more psychological forms of violence in schools. The focus on shootings that has been a part of United States culture for over a decade may be serving to keep the real problems that occur in schools unknown. Shootings, even when they do occur, are isolated events. Psychological violence can be more insidious and, therefore, more dangerous. Schools, to some extent, can prepare for shootings. However, it is hard to prevent threats and harassment. As of now, the best weapon against threats and harassment is educating the public as to what is

experienced in schools. Perhaps once society becomes aware of how a culture of violence is created, change may be possible. Programs addressing the needs of all parts of the school, including staff, faculty, and students, is needed. Rather than portraying a stance of apathy and resignation, the need for change should be recognized and supported.

Unlike other businesses that respond with employee assistance programs and vacation time, teachers work within a system that is already poorly funded and rarely offers such benefits. Teachers have few resources as it is. Exposure to a violent work environment compromises those and depletes them. Psychological difficulties that pre-existed teaching in a violent environment or difficulties that have nothing to do with school violence may be exacerbated by burnout. Relationships may suffer in addition to classrooms. Teachers are called upon to shape the world. If they are compromised, it stands to reason that student accomplishment and development will also be compromised.

Based upon a review of the literature, this is the first study to attempt to examine the outcome of school violence exposure on teachers. Studies focusing on students are needed, but violence affects everyone within the school, including those who work there. The view of schools as safe havens has changed. Be it due to sensationalized media coverage of shootings, direct exposure to violence, or some other factor, schools are no longer viewed as immune or protected from violence. In order to address the issue of school violence, the experiences of all its victims should be heard. This study is a first step towards increasing understanding of the scope and effects of school violence. School systems should realize that shootings and more high-profile events only represent

part of what is experienced in today's schools. Developing knowledge of those experiences is a key element towards more effective prevention and intervention.

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APPENDIX

Dear Teacher:

We have an opportunity to help a student who wants to help us. I hope you'll take a moment to participate in this worthwhile study.

Ralph Smith, MEA President

My name is Chad Buck, and I am a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. I am also a staff therapist and assessment coordinator at the Vanderbilt University Psychological and Counseling Center. I am writing to request your participation in my doctoral dissertation study, which examines how exposure to threats and violence in the school environment may affect professional burnout.

The problem of school violence is quite important to me because one of my high school teachers was a victim of school violence in Grayson, Ky in 1993. I witnessed firsthand how the events affected teachers in our school system. I have enclosed three brief surveys that ask questions about exposure to or awareness of a range of violent acts on school grounds, teachers' feelings about their work, as well as questions about standard demographic information.

This is a busy time of year for teachers, so I have designed the survey to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Findings from these surveys will be compiled and could be used to inform decisions regarding the personal and professional well being of educators.

I hope to gather responses from high school teachers working in Metropolitan City. Your assistance is vital to the success of this project. By completing and returning your survey you indicate your voluntary consent to participate and your understanding that there is no personal risk directly involved with this research.

Your responses will be anonymous. All results and analyses will be reported in aggregate form so that it will not be possible to identify any individual or institution. I would greatly appreciate receiving your responses within 2 weeks. As a small token of appreciation, I have included a tea bag for you to enjoy as you take a moment out of your busy day to assist me in this project. Please return your completed survey in the envelope provided via school mail to the MEA office.

If you have any questions or problems that arise in connection with this study, please feel free to contact me at 615-322-2571 or via email at chad.a.buck@vanderbilt.edu. Thank you in advance for your time and your help.

Sincerely,

Chad A. Buck, MA, LPC

The following are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way *about your job*. If you have never had this feeling, circle "0" (zero). If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by circling the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

How Often:	0 Never	1 A few times a year or less	2 Once a month or less	3 A few times a month	4 Once a week	5 A few times a week	6 Every day
1B. I feel emotionally drained from my work.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2B. I feel used up at the end of the workday.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3B. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4B. I can easily understand how my students feel about things.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5B. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6B. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7B. I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8B. I feel burned out from my work.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9B. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10B. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11B. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12B. I feel very energetic.							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

13B. I feel frustrated by my job.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

14B. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

15B. I don't really care what happens to some students.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

16B. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

17B. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

18B. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

19B. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

20B. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

21B. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

22B. I feel students blame me for some of their problems.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

The following are 14 statements about the involvement of administration and the community in your school. Please read each statement carefully and indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by checking <u>one</u> of the five response boxes.

23L. Administrators here respect the teachers.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

24L. The principal has little contact with the teachers.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

25L. The principal visits teachers' classrooms regularly.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

26L. The principal provides constructive feedback to teachers about their performance.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

27L. The principal sets the direction of this school.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

28L. It is clear that the principal facilitates and guides the management process in the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

29L. The school's administration is sensitive and responsive to the needs of students.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

30L. The principal usually makes decisions concerning the school without consulting teachers.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

31C. Community members are unsupportive of school activities.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

32C. Community members are unwelcome in the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

33C. The relationship between the school and the community is good.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

34C. The school reaches out to the community.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

35C. There is good community involvement in the life of the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

36C. Members of the community work closely with school staff to improve the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

The following are questions concerning various kinds of violence that may have occurred in your school. If the event was not experienced by anyone in your school or you are unsure, please check the box under "N/A, or Not Sure." Otherwise, *please check the box if you, another teacher, or a student at your school experienced the event over the last 12 months.* Remember, this is a confidential survey and no one will know that these are your answers.

In the last 12 months, have you, another teacher, or a student…

		You	Another Teacher	Student	N/A, or Not sure
37V.	Had property (e.g., purse, wallet) stolen while at school.				
38V.	Had property vandalized or purposely damaged while at school.				
39V.	Seen a person with a weapon (other than police, military, or security officers) while on school grounds.				
40V.	Experienced sexually-inappropriate comments or gestures while on school grounds.				
41V.	Been touched in a sexually-inappropriate way while on school grounds.				
42V.	Been threatened with serious physical harm on school grounds.				
43V.	Been slapped, punched, or hit by someone on school grounds.				
44V.	Had to evacuate school due to a bomb threat.				
45V.	Been sexually assaulted while at school.				
46V.	Been shot or stabbed at school.				

Please check the appropriate box or write in the space provided for each of the following questions about yourself and your school.

47X. Are you male or female? Male Female

48X. What is the year of your birth? _____
Year

49X. What is your current marital status?

Never Married
Married
Co-habitating
Separated
Divorced
Widowed

50X. What is the highest degree you have earned?
Associate's Degree
Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree
Doctoral Degree

51X. How many years have you been a teacher?

(Please write in). _____years

52X. How many years have you been a teacher at your current school?

(Please write in). _____years

53X. How many classes do you teach? _____

54X. Approximately, how many students do you teach? _____

55X. Which best describes your racial background?

White/Caucasian
Black/African-American
Hispanic/Latino(a)
Asian or Pacific Islander
Native American
Other

56X. What is your school's zip code? _____

57X. Are you a member of teachers' association? Yes No

58X. Do you feel safe in your school? Yes No

59X. Does your school address violence when it occurs? Yes No

60X. Does your school have a school violence policy? Yes No

61X. Does your school have a violence prevention program? Yes No

Thank you for participating in this study. I appreciate your taking this time. Please put the questionnaire back into the provided interoffice envelope and send it, via school mail, to the MEA office today!