

# Peace Education: A Tool for Resolving Direct and Structural Violence Against Teachers in Lukulu District

Munukayumbwa Mundia, F.M. Chipindi, Viliza Silwamba, Pilira Tembo, Alvin Chiwoyo

University of Zambia

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.150100015>

Received: 07 January 2026; Accepted: 12 January 2026; Published: 23 January 2026

## ABSTRACT:

This phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of teachers affected by direct and structural violence in the divided community of Lukulu district of the Western Province of Zambia. The objectives of this study were to; explore teachers' experiences of direct and structural violence in some selected schools of Lukulu district, investigate the causes of direct and structural violence against teachers as well as provide recommendations for resolving direct and structural violence against teachers in Lukulu district. The study was guided by the structural violence theory (Galtung, 1969), Peace education theory (Harris, 2003) and the Critical Peace education theory (Wulf, 1974). The study employed interpretive phenomenological analysis, thereby interviewing fifteen participants in the categories of five school managers and ten teachers from five purposively sampled schools.

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the findings and investigate the ways in which division, direct and structural violence against teachers affected the delivery of education, development and welfare of teachers. The study revealed that structural violence against teachers manifested in verbal abuse of teachers by senior managers, direct political violence on the teachers perceived to belong to other political parties by the ruling party cadres, violence in form of insults from pupils, parents and community members and chronic gossiping and rumour mongering which proved to be detrimental to the wellbeing of the teachers. Additionally, the study highlighted some of the causes of violence against teachers such as political interference in the running of educational institutions, corruption, bribery and favouritism; lack of transparency and accountability in the appointment of teachers to management positions and poor representation and support from respective teacher unions. Besides that, the study revealed several effects of violence against teachers such as physical injuries, loss of human life, suicide, loss of property, closure of schools, loss of teaching and learning time as teachers tend to pursue court cases against perpetrators of the violence. In view of the foregoing, this study recommended implementation of policy reforms that addresses the structural inequalities and peace education such as establishment of the directorate of peace education, development and international education at national, provincial, district and school levels that should have in its structure a national peace education, development and international education director, provincial peace education and development mentors, district peace education and development mentors and school peace education and development mentors. These officers would be critical to advancing the peace education agenda through comparative and international education advocacy.

Finally, this study contributes to Galtung (1969)'s concept of positive peace by proposing three forms of positive peace education. These are direct positive peace education, structural positive peace education and cultural positive peace education. These are critical to the resolution of direct, cultural and structural violence against teachers.

**Key Words:** Peace, Peace education, structural violence, Division, Direct violence, Positive peace, teacher welfare.

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies are increasingly becoming divided with individuals and institutions resorting to the usage of violence as a means of resolving conflicts. This pervasive use of violence which manifests in physical, systemic and symbolic forms has become a global human rights concern resulting in widespread suffering,

psychological trauma and loss of life (Cremin & Guilherme (2016), Cummings (2020)). Within this societal context, teachers are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of violence because of their public facing and engagement role within a diverse social environment.

Numerous studies affirm that violence against teachers is a growing International challenge; Shenilla 2012; Williams 2013; Cremin & Guilherme 2016; Byongook, et al (2015) and Cummings (2020). Galtung (1969)'s seminal work categories violence into direct, structural and cultural forms. Direct violence is physical in nature and involves a concrete identifiable actor while structural violence is embedded in social, political and economic systems that perpetuate harm without a clearly traceable perpetrator. Vorobej (2008) notes that structural violence results in harm but is not caused by a clearly identifiable actor.

An analysis of different scholars' work shows diversity in the epistemological and ontological landscape of peace education as a tool for resolving violent conflicts in comparative and international development education. The theoretical underpinnings of peace education revolve around structural violence theory and peace education theory, integrative peace education theory and human needs theory. Structural violence theory and peace education theory were devised by Johan Galtung while the integrative peace education theory was proposed by H.B. Danesh (2006) says that the integrative peace education theory defines peace as being a psychological, social, political, ethical and spiritual states which can be expressed in terms of interpersonal, international, intrapersonal, intergroup and global areas of human life. Katerina (2005) examined the critical theory to illuminate how critical literacy and critical pedagogy in peace education provides practical applications of transformation in terms of cultural and symbolic typologies of Critical theory is also important for delineating discrimination and oppression, critical pedagogy in peace education transcends the recognition the recognition of diversity to result in Solidarity.

Therefore, this research explores teachers experiences of direct and structural violence and investigate the factors that cause divisions among teachers. The research also recommends positive peace education as an effective tool for resolving direct and structural violence against teachers.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

Explore teachers' experiences of direct and structural violence in some selected schools of Lukulu district.

Investigate the causes of direct and structural violence against teachers in some selected schools of Lukulu district.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the teachers' experiences of direct and structural violence in some selected schools of Lukulu district?
2. What are the causes of division, direct and structural violence against teachers in Lukulu district of Zambia?
3. To provide recommendations for the resolution of direct and structural violence against teachers in Lukulu district using peace education

## **Critical Peace Education Theory**

The critical theory of peace education was developed by Wulf in 1974. Wulf (1974) says that critical peace education originates from a deep understanding of education as criticism of society and concepts such as structural violence, organized peacelessness and participation are inherent in critical peace education. Wulf (1974), postulates that the critical peace education theory examines the interdependence of international and internal social structures of power and dependence in and outside the school.

Bajaj (2013) et al postulates that critical peace education provides peace educators and researchers with the conceptual and textual resources for gaining understanding of the structural adjustments to enhancing the possibility and promise of peace education in diverse locales across the world. Bajaj and Hantzopolous (2016) says that critical peace education is anchored on three principles. Bajaj (2016) et al postulates that critical peace education theory pays attention to how unequal relations and issues of power must inform both peace education and corresponding action. Secondly, Bajaj (2016) says that the critical peace education draws from local realities and local conceptions of peace, amplifying marginalized voices through community based research, narratives, oral histories and locally generated curricular. Thirdly, critical peace education theory draws from the social reproductive theory and critical pedagogy to view schools as both potential sites of marginalization and transformation.

The critical peace education theory helped us to interrogate how direct and structural violence against teachers affect education and development. As Galtung (1969) rightly said that structural violence does not only hurt the body but mind and spirit as well. Therefore by exploring teachers experiences of direct and structural violence in Lukulu district, the study will help to identify structures churning out violence in the ministry of education and recommend measures to mitigate and transform the situation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review conducted showed some theoretical foundations of the scholarly research on peace education as a tool for resolving violence and division against teachers. This literature review comprises two parts which are the teachers experiences of direct and structural violence as well as the causes of direct and structural violence against teachers.

### **Teachers Experiences of Direct and Structural Violence in Lukulu District**

Okeke & Simpiwe (2024) using phenomenological case study investigated teachers' experience of school violence in South Africa. The findings of this study showed that experiences of school violence emotionally stressed and demotivate the participants who were interviewed. Although data revealed that the teachers in the study expressed strong feelings of insecurity and disappointment with the teaching profession, the study was too general and broad in scope.

Bounds & Jenkins (2018) investigated the problem of teacher directed violence in the United States of America. Although this study is relevant to the discourse of violence against teachers, the methodology used is not in consonant with the one being in my study.

Murungaih (2023) explored the Nigerian teachers' educational beliefs through a phenomenological study of their lived experiences. The above mentioned study focused on lived experiences using the Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) portraiture, a social science research method that is derived from the phenomenological design. The study focused on post violence peace building and did not apply peace education which is the main gist of my research.

Byonkook (2015) et al did a study which explored the negative consequence of victimization and factors associated with victimized teachers' emotional distress in a South Korean context. This study established that students' verbal and contact physical aggression are highly correlated with teachers' emotional distress. Additionally, the study found that the teachers' gender, student-oriented approach, and several incident characteristics (number of offending students, direct settlement with offending students) are significant predictors of emotional distress caused by either students' verbal threat or non-contact aggressive behaviors.

Byonkook et al (2015) did another study whose findings show that the extent of reports of victimization to school authorities by victimized teachers was considerably high. Nevertheless, the study further noted that a huge number of victimized educators held views to the effect that school intervention authorities' intervention violent incidents were ineffective and inadequate.

Kreke (2020) analyzed how primary school teachers recognize violent behavior and how they execute moral education in the areas of the specific structural reasons for violence. This study indicated that the majority of teachers have appropriate pedagogical knowledge to recognize the specific structural reasons for violence and are able to identify the appropriate moral education or support strategy to address the identified violent or disruptive behavior. Nevertheless, the study is focused on the use of moral education for addressing structural vi

### **Causes of Direct and Structural Violence Against Teachers in Lukulu District**

Sukyadi et al (2017) analyzed the causative factors of violence against teachers and the preventive measures aimed at stopping the violence against teachers from reoccurring. The highlighted study employed in-depth interview, observation and focus group discussion as research methods. The findings of this study indicated that communication errors and conceptual differences in enforcing rules were the identified causes of violence against teachers. However, this study concentrated on school based factors as being the causes of violence against teachers and neglected to employ peace education as an important tool for resolving such conflict against teachers. .

Theodora (2020) investigated the various types and consequences of violence against teachers as well as the teachers' perceptions about the factors that motivate students to engage in violent behaviors against them. In addition to the above, relevant data of this study was collected through semi-structured interviews while analysis of data was done through conventional context analysis. The results of the above mentioned study from the interviews shows that violence against teachers experienced in both indirect and direct forms. While the consequences were noted to have an impact on the teachers' psychological wellbeing, as well as their private lives, the learners and therefore a myriad components of the entire school climate.

Marko Prpić (2021) analyzed the connection between experiencing violent behavior of students directed at teachers and school climate. This research was anchored on four hypotheses, which negate the relationship between violent behavior of students directed at teachers and various dimensions of school climate. The research sample included 451 students who were secondary finalists in schools located in Zagreb. The findings of this study suggested that there is a statistically significant difference in the perception of three out of four dimensions of school climate between the students who have experience with violent behavior of students directed at teachers and those students who do not have such experience. Furthermore, the results indicate that the students who have experience with violent behavior of students directed at teachers assess students' autonomy more negatively. While this study is relevant to the discourse of violence against teachers, it does not show how peace education can be used to resolve such conflict.

### **GAPS FROM THE LITERATURE:**

An analysis of different scholars' work shows diversity in the epistemological and ontological landscape of peace education as tool for resolving violent conflicts in comparative and international development education. Nevertheless, the reviewed literature does not give hope in terms of resolving the problem of direct and structural violence against teachers. On the contrary, studies on violence against teachers have always concentrated on violence in general as opposed to having a specific focus on direct and structural forms of violence.

Furth more, the reviewed related literature shows that the theoretical underpinning of peace education have always revolved around the structural violence theory, peace education theory and the human needs theory. My study is different because it uses the Peace education theory, Critical peace education theory and the structural violence theory to explore the concepts of division, direct and structural violence against teachers some selected schools of in Lukulu district.

Additionally, this study has been inspired by the fact that although studies have been done in peace and conflict studies on peace education as a conflict resolution tool, no study has been undertaken in comparative education and international development education to resolve the problem of division, direct and structural violence against teachers. The absence of research in comparative education and International development education that seeks

to address the problem of direct and structural violence against teachers inspired my undertaking of this study. As notable from the reviewed literature, although studies in the past have been done on peace education, no study has been done on structural and direct forms of violence against teachers in Zambia. Therefore, it is envisaged that the findings from this study will be used to resolve the effects of direct and structural violence against teachers that is currently lacking in the reviewed literature. The reviewed literature is also void of a specific peace education theory that speaks to the resolution of direct and structural violence against teachers. This study will fill this theoretical research gap by coming up with a comparative education and international development education theory that seeks to promote peace education as a conflict resolution tool of direct and structural violence against teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed interpretive phenomenological analysis thereby interviewing 15 participants in the categories of five school managers and ten teachers from purposively sampled schools. Observation of the participants in their natural environment was also used. Interpretive phenomenological analysis is an answer to qualitative enquiry (Samantha et al, 2016). As indicated above interpretive phenomenological analysis is used to examine and explore individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon. Kamla (2017) interpretive phenomenological analysis as a qualitative research approach which examines ways in which people give meaning to their life experiences. In relation to the above, Husserl (1970) notes that examination of everyday experiences is possible if there is a step back from the natural attitude. Step back from the natural attitude according to Pnina (2011:17) implies being unreflectively immersed in the taken for granted world. Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) and Husserl (1970) postulate that interpretive phenomenological analysis is a methodological framework that has evolved into a process that seeks reality in the expressions of individuals' lived experiences of a named phenomenon.

## FINDINGS:

### Explore the Teachers Experiences of Direct Violence in Some Selected Schools of Lukulu District

In this section, we focus on teachers' experiences of direct violence in some selected schools of Lukulu district. We share the main themes of direct violence such as the teachers' experiences of violence in their interactions with administrators, peers, learners, parents, religion, politics and the economy. Specifically teachers' experiences of direct violence include being victims of gossip, targets of political hooliganism, religious violence, parental aggression and community violence.

**Gossiping:** The study found that there is chronic gossiping and rumour mongering that goes on in the schools. This chronic gossiping puts peace at stake. The vile gossip that go on particularly among the female teachers and the boasting about spouses and the like were noted to be a source of altercations among the teachers.

Like prejudice, positive and negative gossiping is generated and sustained by the gossiping clubs in schools. Positive gossiping was noted not to be destructive to the reputation, integrity and credibility of the person being gossiped and thus no violence is reported. However, violence against teachers due to gossiping was mostly experienced when vile gossip was sent out. Respondent A particularly shared a quite injurious experience about vile gossip as below

“Couple X working at this school are wallowing in nothing but endless loans. They are really deep in loans. Look, yesterday the wife went to buy soya chunks. “Uh, they just eat soya chunks every day. Actually they just beans, vegetables and soya chunks. Recently, the husband was sued by Shylock for failure to pay pack a huge debt.

The culture of gossiping in schools, as always is with violence, breeds more violence. According to Booma et al (2024) gossiping can negatively affect the educational climate by enhancing and sustaining behaviors of mistrust and anxiety, which adversely affects teaching effectiveness and student engagement. As shared by the respondents, the teachers who gossip other teachers in the staffroom give nicknames to the persons they enjoy

gossiping about to avoid any mention of real names. Now, more trouble is created once the nicknamed gets to know their nick names. For example, a fight ensued between a teacher and deputy head teacher at Mendai Primary School when the latter came to know that he had been nicknamed "Rhino". Years later their relationship was never the same; it had irreversibly and irretrievably broken down.

This study notes that education managers are in most cases the targets and victims of vile gossip. From the narratives of the respondents, education managers are usually labelled as thieves, womanizers, prostitutes, witches and satanists by the teachers and some community members. For example, at one of the schools that was visited, the former Head teacher (now retired) reported experiencing being hounded out of the school by irate residents on account of false gossip that he misappropriates the school grant whilst not..

Because of the school grants that government has been disbursing in schools, there have been community perceptions that school managers are misusing the said grants. According to the respondents this has had the effect of bringing conflicts between the teachers and the school administration and between the school administration and the community.

**Insults:** Teachers from the purposively selected schools shared their experiences of violence in the context of insults. Different kinds of insults are heaped on teachers as learnt from the respondents. The teachers and education managers suffer insults from three different sources. These are from pupils, parents and community members.

Pupils insult teachers for different reasons. Mostly they are insulted during sports events. This is usually when they are performing their roles as referees or Umpires. If a team that they are supporting during interschools loses, the blame is put on the teacher and is as a result insulted and in some cases even physically manhandled.

Parents come to the school to hear disciplinary cases due to the malignant behavior of their children. Unfortunately some parents instead of providing parental advice to their children, they end up in a bitter exchange of words with the teachers; hurling insults and threats at the teachers. For example respondent F shared that:

A certain boy that I teach once came to class carrying a knife and wearing boots. Then I tried to counsel him against carrying knives to class. He answered back and said "you are actually one of the teachers that I don't fear in this school. I reported the case to the Head teacher who in turn invited the parents. When the parents came, they played boss, demeaned everyone and issued threats and insults to everyone.

**Political Violence:** Some managers also experience direct violence as a result of politics. For example respondent F shared that

"The other issue is that during elections I was picked to be one of the poll staff in 2021 elections and attended aptitude tests. I became number 1 and given a double stream station. I was immediately dropped publicly and given a very small polling station with less than 50 voters. This made my life so difficult such that the Ruling party cadres could harass me and my family publicly that immediately after 2021 elections I was going to join my family in the village to look after animals. Up to now I still can't believe that PF is out of office. Because the harm they caused to my life."(Interview 006, February, 2025)

**Abusive Education Managers:** It was noted that some administrators or education managers used abusive words against their subordinates. Tired of being verbally abused and threatened, a newly recruited teacher had no option but to resign his job. Tearfully, he said:

"Don't worry about everything that you have heard,, the thing is that I have failed to work with the head teacher I tried but I think I reached at a point of just letting go of my career... I could not work in a place where I'm always frustrated ; being mistreated and being charged with letters all the time. About the education of the orphan I was keeping, God will always be there for us, I will try to find other ways to raise her start up tuition fees as long as her CAMFED people will offer"...(Interview , 007, February, 2025)

## Teachers' Experiences of Structural Violence in Some Selected Schools of Lukulu District

Structural violence against teachers was defined as being the ways in which organizational structures impact the lives of teachers in a school. With the above definition in mind, i will now show how this kind of violence affects teachers in selected schools of Lukulu district. Many of the participants acknowledged that this type of violence is very difficult to detect as it is indirect and is deeply rooted within the structures of the organization (Ministry of Education) and thus sustaining the forces that generate suffering against teachers.

Several factors or causes such as unfavorable policies, lack of a legal framework that protects teachers, non-representative trade unions, nepotism, corruption, poverty, poor conditions of service and failure to respect the terms and conditions of service by the employer were identified as being responsible for structural violence against teachers in Lukulu district. Therefore, below we share some of the teachers' experiences of structural violence in line with some of the above mentioned themes.

**Unfavourable Policies:** The respondents shared that the Ministry of Education which happens to be their employer doesn't seem to have policies that protect the welfare of teachers. Respondent A had this to say about the above.

"I don't know what really to say about this but look. We don't just have policies in place that specifically target to empower us as teachers. My experience having taught for twenty five years is that as teachers in Zambia we have been neglected. Our parliamentarians have failed over the years to come with policies that protect the teachers from all forms of violence by society and the employer. In my view, this is important because it would have been protecting teachers who suffer structural violence at work. Quite right, I know that there are laws that regulate the general conduct of education in Zambia but these laws only spell out what punishment should be meted to a teacher who commits an offence; they don't tell us what the teacher ought to enjoy as a result of his employment. For example, you see, I have been teaching for twenty five years and recently graduated with my bachelor's degree but the system cannot upgrade my salary and there is no where I can complain. Had such things been properly enshrined in the constitution, life would have been great for me and many others who have chosen to share their lives with kids as educators. Just like we have the teaching profession act of 2013, we should also have the Peace education act'.(Interview 001, February, 2025)

**Non-Representative Trade Unions:** It was noted that the teachers and the education managers purposively selected to participate in the study were members of the teacher unions such as the Basic Education Teachers Union of Zambia, Zambia National Teachers Union and Secondary Education Teachers Union of Zambia. However, the respondents narrated that their leaders were not efficient and effective in representing them. In particular, respondent C shared his experience as follows:

"I have been teaching for twenty two years but have a sad experience to share with regards to the topic of structural violence. I belong to a union called Betuz and also belong to the Head teachers Association of Zambia by virtue of my position as an education manager. My situation is that I was made to act as a head teacher at a certain school within the district. Later on, I substantively got appointed as a senior teacher and thereafter I was confirmed as a deputy Head teacher while acting as a Head teacher. Unfortunately I got involved in an accident that left with a permanent disability and then I got transferred to another school and the letter of transfer was written as "you are being transferred in the same capacity as deputy head teacher". I was made to act under some one ignoring the fact that I had acted as a head teacher for a period exceeding the probation period for substantive promotion and as a result should have been confirmed in my previous position as head teacher. My employer completely forgot that I had acted for four years. This is very painful considering that the accident I had occurred while I was traveling on duty and subsequently left me physically challenged, without any compensation or confirmation in my previous position where I was made to act for four years. To make matters worse, I am placed in a school that is ten kilometers away from the central business area. Being a disabled educator and manager, I expected the office of the District Education Board Secretary to transfer me to a school within township. The office doesn't seem to pay attention to these issues despite bringing them to their attention. The union is also aware about these issues but it looks like they have failed to handle them. My conclusion is that the union where I belong has failed to represent me and have these issues sorted out."(Interview, 002, February, 2025)

**Authoritarianism by Education Managers:** Authoritarian practices by some education managers were blamed for the generation and sustenance of structural violence. Respondent B shared with this researcher how he was tormented by his administrators until he was left with no option but to resign. He shared his experience as follows.

"I was deployed at my school in 2021 as one of the thirty thousand newly recruited teachers. I loved my job and worked very hard. During my time as a teacher I successfully managed to maintain a high pass rate in the subjects I was teaching for two consecutive years. However, I was humiliated by my administrators. The Head teacher would shout at me like a baby and on one occasion she told me that I was nothing to her; she said she was older than me and my mother and therefore could not tolerate any nonsense from me. I said nothing but was deeply hurt and devastated by the harsh words. As a young teacher, I needed guidance and not humiliation." One day I broke down in tears and decided never to return to work. I wrote a resignation letter and left the Ministry of Education. It was a difficult decision to make but I had no option but to leave as I could not withstand the hostile environment at work. "(Interview, 003, February, 2025)

**Expensive Loans:** Expensive loans are one of the causes of pain and suffering among teachers. The expensive loans from banks, shylocks and other lending institutions make the net pay for teachers to be very little. Chituta (2024) postulates that while loans offered a means for essential purchases and temporary financial relief, they often contributed to a cycle of indebtedness and psychological discomfort. Challenges included high stress levels, reduced net pays, indebtedness, increased divorce and suicide case (Hope Chituta, 2024). Respondents from the purposively selected schools said they had suffered structural violence and complained about expensive loans that were being given out to them by banks. Additionally, respondent C shared that she had applied for a loan from a local bank. Unfortunately, the bank got about three percent of the money through insurance, administration and arrangement fees. She said

"Other than just deducting the agreed loan repayment amount the bank ended up confiscating my whole salary. I was denied access to my salary for a period of five months. This lack of a salary as a result of the loan deductions brought deep suffering to me and my household. In this painful situation, I had nowhere to run to. I contacted my union and the office of the District Education Board Secretary for assistance but they could not help the situation. The deductions only stopped after the loan was fully repaid.

The teacher's experiences of structural violence also revealed the practice of illegalities by insurance companies. (Interview, 004, February, 2025)

Structural violence against teachers in the selected schools also showed its tentacles in the way teachers were being paid their salary related allowances. The respondents narrated that they were a lot of discrepancies in the payment of salary related allowances. For example respondent D shared as indicated below:

"I was teaching in a remote school and was therefore entitled to being paid remote hardship allowance but was never paid the money. I later came to discover that a secondary school teacher based in town was given the pay point number which should have been given to me as a primary school teacher and was therefore receiving the remote hardship allowance which I should have been receiving. " After much struggle, I was put on the pay point of another remote school and was subsequently paid the remote hardship allowance but without any arrears. So I lost arrears for a period of four years. A year ago, I was transferred from the remote school to a peri urban school. No sooner had I arrived at my new place of work than the system effected some recoveries of remote hardship allowance. To make matters worse, an insurance company also encroached on my payslip and started deducting huge amounts of money. This put me under a lot of financial stress as I am sponsoring my son who is studying at a certain University. (Interview, 005, February, 2025)

### **Causes of Direct and Structural Violence Against Teachers in Lukulu District**

**Political Interference:** Political interference was cited as being one of the causes of direct violence in the purposively selected schools of Lukulu district where the research was undertaken. It was learnt that the participants were in the past directly attacked by carders of the former ruling party (the Patriotic Front). Respondent J shared that he had suffered abuse in his execution of duty as a primary school head teacher at the hands of the ruthless carders. He shared his experience as below

"I will never ever forget how the Patriotic Front - PF Regime traumatized my life and family. I was targeted as a civil servant on the basis that I was a half Tonga who could be supporting opposition UPND party. The situation worsened when the then Ruling Patriotic Front party parliamentary aspiring candidate wanted to grab School land at my former School in Lukulu district of Western province in 2020 at his home village and his former primary school. I was Deputy Head teacher of the named school in his own village. The traditional leadership and the entire Community opposed him and stood with The PTA. Unfortunately I didn't know that the then Head teacher was a supporter of the then ruling party and any move the PTA made the information reached the encroacher through the Head teacher. The situation got worse in 2021 when the then ruling party adopted the same man. I was made to be transferred immediately through the directive from the higher authorities. In a space of 2 months I was given 2 transfers, initiated by the ruling party taking me out of places where they had a bit of support.

As they were still looking for such a place. The thing became worse as His entire home Community turned against the ruling party because of his behaviors. This prompted several visitation from the Permanent Secretary -Western province directly campaigning for their candidates in order to win support from his relatives. The then Foreign affairs minister also visited the area. I was openly told to resign and join politics to continue supporting my fellow Tonga or being fired after elections. When they saw that their support was very negative. The PS ordered DEBS office to transfer me immediately 2 months before elections. The vehicle to transport me was organized by PS' office. The day the vehicle came i was on way to Mongu to attend the funeral of a relative in Mongu. I was ordered to get out of the vehicle or be fired immediately. I was forced to drop out of the vehicle and jumped into another vehicle back to my school to get transported to a new station. This was a painful move. I was transported immediately to a school which ends at Grade and I had my 2 sons in grade 12 who were very much affected. All my livestock and harvest were just left in the hands of a person I urgently organized to take care of the same and some of my properties got lost. "(Interview, February, 2025).

According to Jose (2023) politicization of education causes policy instability, bipartisan divide, lack of objectivity, inequitable education, lack of teacher and academic freedom as well as loss of trust. Political affiliations as shown above complicate teachers' lives as well their profession in politically polarized communities, teachers are often accused of aligning with one faction or another, regardless of their actual stance. Phiri et al. (2023) noted that some teachers are targeted simply because they are perceived as influential figures in the community. This perception can lead to threats, harassment, or even physical attacks during politically charged periods. Teachers in such settings are forced to navigate complex social dynamics while maintaining their professional responsibilities

One of the respondents narrated that direct violence against teachers despite being a wide spread scourge, is not given due attention by the authorities. This makes it difficult to ascertain the full extent of the problem and difficult to prescribe solutions to the problem. The failure to effectively and efficiently address the problem of direct violence against teachers, give reports or under reporting it also creates a culture that sustains and perpetuates this type of violence as well as bringing to the fore the core challenges faced by the teachers in keeping up discipline while protecting their own well-being. Understanding its prevalence and causes is essential for creating safer school environments.

**POVERTY:** Additionally, physical violence against teachers is prevalent in some of the selected areas of Lukulu district, where poverty levels are high. Some of the poverty stricken youths, engage in killing and beating people including teachers for money. The killing of one of several headteachers and teachers at some schools gives credence to this assertion. For example, respondent F narrated as below:

"I was a teacher at one point in Lukulu West Constituency now called Mitete district when I experienced the gruesome murder of my head teacher. What exactly happened is that I we were playing football with him and other team members when the worst happened. While we were playing football, we saw two men wearing masks suddenly running into the field of play. The two men were wearing masks and cutting a gun and an axe. Suddenly, they shot at him in full view of the huge crowd that was watching. He fell on the ground and then the murderers started axing him. They hacked him to pieces as the crowd disappeared into the bushes for fear of being gunned down. This gruesome murder of my head teacher left me traumatized. I immediately sought a transfer from

there to here and changed my name. My official name at the office and the one I am known by the community are different. This was all done to disguise myself from the assailants. "(Interview: 2025)

**Over Crowded Classrooms:** The other identified factors are overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and the stress levels of students and parents contribute to these incidents (ZNUT, 2023). The respondents also argued that they sometimes become victims of unintended frustrations that are rooted in broader societal issues. For example, respondent E shared that her school had been experiencing cases of theft.

"She said on night three gun men came to her school and stole solar accessories such a battery, solar panels and an inventor. So we heard them getting the last solar panel from the rooftop. Hearing the noise from the rooftop we organized ourselves as teachers to catch the notorious thieves. Unfortunately, they gave us two warning gunshots which left us scampering for fear of our losing our dear lives. While we ran for our lives, the robbers went away with the solar items. A police report was made but no arrests were effected. (Interview: February, 2025)

The above shared experiences emphasize the critical need for specific and targeted interventions that are aimed at protecting teachers from the systemic shocks that are contributing to such forms of direct violence. As observed above, the complex societal issues seem to have an effect on the safety and well-being of teachers within the schools.

The incidents of direct violence were reported to be mostly occurring during exacting of disciplinary actions or over conflicts arising from poor academic performance (interview, 2025). For example, enforcing school rules or addressing behavioral concerns can escalate into physical confrontations, especially in schools lacking effective management strategies (Mwansa & Kalaba, 2021). Furthermore, as I have noted elsewhere in this document that teachers in Zambia generally operate in an environment that does not have a legal framework that supports and protects them from harm. According to Respondent A(2025), confrontations between teachers and students sometimes can result into some episodes of violence particularly when pupils feel unfairly treated, hated, hurt and humiliated.

### **Causes of Structural Violence Against Teachers in Some Selected Schools of Lukulu District**

Non-representative teacher unions. Despite teachers subscribing to different unions, the respondents submitted that the proliferation of unions within the education sector in Zambia has led to unions losing their bargaining power as a result of the divisions. The narrative by respondent A that teachers in the district experience various challenges as poor accommodation, lack of access to a clean water supply for rural teachers and poor mobile network connectivity deprives teachers of their happiness and opportunity to enjoy quality of life. Nevertheless, the respondents' bemoaned lack of representation and support from their respective trade unions even when they have been officially notified. An in depth interview with respondent A further revealed that unions also perpetuate structural violence against teachers by excluding from accessing opportunities within the union. For example, it was shared by the above mentioned respondent that despite claiming to be advocates for better conditions of service for teachers trade unions in the education sector do not advertise job opportunities in order to give an equal opportunity to all qualified members to participate.

Given the above position, non-representative trade unions can be construed to be silent agents of structural violence for several reasons. Firstly, although they are sometimes invited by management to sit in for their members, the outcome does not in most cases favor their members. Secondly, they are mainly preoccupied with commerce interests at the expense of their members. For example, respondent O shared that he was wondering that instead of building the capacity of the district union leaders so as to enable them effectively represent the membership, the top range executive members were busy poaching members from the other unions in exchange for chitenges, calendars and dust coats while their already existent members were gnashing their teeth in misery and agony due to deprivation of good leadership.

Thirdly the respondents narrated that union leaders are involved in external and internal wrangles for money, positions and influence. According to respondent B says that the internal fights are usually due to hunger for money and positions and while the external fights are mainly for recruitment of new members.

These non-representative and responsive trade union leaders are responsible for the pain that their members go through at the hands of hostile school leaders while they are busy marketing their union. The damage done to teachers as a result of such predatory practices by teacher unions is deep. .

## Corruption

Corruption is an endemic problem in the education sector in Zambia that continues to cripple the system. Corruption in the education sector can be defined as “the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services, and, as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (Hallak and Poisson, 2007). Corruption covers a wide range of activities, such as: favoritism; nepotism; clientelism; soliciting or extortion of bribes; and embezzlement of public goods, among others. Furthermore, the IEP(2015) conducted an analysis on peace and corruption and found that there is a statistically significant relationship between peace and corruption.

Teachers are often victims of corrupt practices, which undermine their well-being and professional growth. These practices create systemic barriers that prevent teachers from achieving their full potential, perpetuating cycles of inequality and injustice within the education system. Addressing corruption is critical to creating a fair and equitable environment for teachers and improving the quality of education in Zambia.

**Misappropriation of Funds:** Funds allocated for teacher welfare and school infrastructure are often misappropriated by corrupt officials. A report by the Basic Education Teachers' Union of Zambia (2020) highlighted cases where funds for teacher housing and school construction were diverted for personal use. For example, some school administrators have been found to embezzle funds meant for teacher allowances or school supplies.

The misappropriation of funds not only deprives teachers of the resources they need to perform their duties effectively but also erodes trust in the education system. Teachers who are denied their rightful allowances or work in dilapidated schools due to corruption feel undervalued and demoralized. This creates a sense of injustice and undermines their commitment to their profession. To address this issue, there is a need for stronger oversight and accountability mechanisms, ensuring that funds are used for their intended purposes and that corrupt officials are held accountable.

**Bribery and Favoritism:** Teachers may be forced to pay bribes to secure promotions, transfers, or other benefits. Additionally, respondent B (2025) attested that many teachers paid bribes to school administrators and union officials in order to get transfers or to be promoted. For example, an online message that was floating on a BETUZ WhatsApp group for Lukulu posted by one of the members who complained about corruption in the upgrading of teachers showed that the culture of paying bribes to get upgraded was unfair. The message posted specifically read as " If you cannot pay k7,000,14,000 or k25,000 you cannot be upgraded, DEBS and PEOs offices have become so corrupt such that the year of completion is not even considered."( Observation: February, 2025)

The prevalence of bribery and favoritism creates a culture of structural violence where inequality and injustice are seen as a normal way of life; perpetuating suffering, misery and anguish, as teachers who cannot afford to pay bribes are denied opportunities for promotion or other work related opportunities. This not only affects their professional growth but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and exclusion. For example, a teacher from a low-income background may be unable to pay bribes and thus remain stuck in a rural school with limited resources and opportunities. The paying of bribes by some teachers in order to be transferred to urban schools or to be promoted to higher positions of responsibility reinforces and sustains horrible images of structural violence

However, respondent C suggested that this issue can be addressed by replicating the strategy at the University of Zambia of having integrity committees. The integrity committees may help to instill an air of transparency and patriotism that is needed to foster a merit-based system for promotions and transfers as well as ensuring that management decisions on promotion of staff are based on experience, qualifications and performance as opposed to the alleged payment of bribes or personal connections.

Lack of transparency and Poor accountability mechanisms: Corruption thrives in environments where there is a lack of accountability and transparency. Issues such as unfair promotion practices, prolonged stagnation in job groups, and lack of transparent procedures for career advancement have been reported. A report by Transparency International Zambia (2022) found that many education officials were not held accountable for corrupt practices, perpetuating a culture of impunity. For example, some officials who are found guilty of corruption are simply transferred to other positions rather than being prosecuted.

The lack of accountability not only emboldens corrupt officials but also discourages teachers from reporting corruption, as they fear retaliation or lack confidence in the system. This creates a culture of silence and complicity, where corrupt practices go unchecked and continue to harm the education system. To address this issue, there is a need for stronger enforcement of anti-corruption laws and the establishment of independent oversight bodies to investigate and prosecute corrupt officials.

Effect on Teacher Performance and Morale: Corruption undermines teacher morale and creates a sense of injustice. A submission by respondent B through the BETUZ What Sapp group comprising of all members in Lukulu district indicates that many teachers feel demoralized and disempowered by the corrupt practices they encounter in the pursuit of transfers and other opportunities within their work environment. Respondent B specifically wrote

" I thank you my leader for your observations and recommendation to add on, teachers on positions for administrative convenience to be confirmed as you know that motivation plays a role in development. Head teachers should be motivated being the engine or instructional leader of the school. The system should normalize the issue of acting by unfreezing the frozen positions some officers have acted for years but Acting period is now 3 months \*Some have acted for 10 years on administrative convenience. If the officer is not performing why keeping him in such in a position? Drop and appoint one who can do the work and confirm. If one is kept meaning is performing and equal to the task and should be confirmed. It's quite frustrating. I feel School managers should be motivated (confirmation) the points raised above are true be put in place and we will see even the performance will tick in the province we don't want position 10 always, some officer are frustrated because in the community are known that they are head teachers yet the system does not recognize them as head teachers. Where is the problem? When retirement come one retire in a different positions after serving for years, I beg this issue to be looked at otherwise will be criticizing each other that they are not serious with work."

The above clearly shows how structural violence has contributed to the build up of demoralization among teachers in Lukulu district. This demoralization may affect their ability to effectively and efficiently perform their duties and thus contribute to high levels of poor performance among the learners.

Moving forward, corruption tortures the minds of the affected individual teachers as well as deprives them of an income. The torturing of the affected teachers minds implies that corruption has a psychological toll on the victims. This psychological impact of corruption on teachers cannot be over emphasized. For example, respondents who shared their lived experiences with me about how corruption has hurt them said they felt powerless excluded, robbed and, leading to a decline in their motivation and commitment to their profession. This not only affects their performance but also creates a negative work environment, where mistrust and resentment may prevail.

As Galtung (1969) postulate through his structural violence theory and since structural violence against teachers happens within the structures of the Ministry of Education, there is a need for systemic reforms that promote transparency, fairness, accountability and integrity in the Ministry of Education. As earlier mentioned above, integrity committees like those at the University of Zambia may greatly help to create an environment that helps teachers to become what they can become and thus derive maximum benefit from their environment and most importantly contribute to positively to the productivity of their organization. More supportive and empowering environment for teachers.

These corrupt practices create systemic barriers that prevent teachers from achieving their full potential. Therefore, I recommend that corruption in the education sector be addressed through advertising of vacant positions by the Teaching Service Commission so as to give an equal and fair play and opportunity to all

candidates who qualify for the positions. Furthermore, peace education programs should be broad enough in scope in order to include topics that help to promote transparency as well strengthen accountability, and promote inclusivity. Additionally, positive peace education may help in creating a fair and equitable environment in which all teachers achieve their full potential. This way we can enhance teacher motivation and morale as well as improve the quality of teaching and learning, and this build a more sustainable, just and inclusive society.

### Positive Peace Education

Having explored teachers' experiences of direct and structural violence as well as the causes of direct and structural violence, we propose positive peace education as an important tool for resolving direct and structural violence. . Gultang (1996) suggests that there is cultural violence, direct violence, and structural violence, there are equally three types of positive peace education. These are direct positive peace education, cultural positive peace education and structural positive peace education. Positive peace education (PPE) builds on Johan Galtung's (1969) theory of positive peace, which emphasizes the importance of addressing not only direct violence, but also structural and cultural violence, to achieve sustainable peace. positive peace education

(PPE) seeks to move beyond the absence of direct violence to address the deeper structural and cultural roots of injustice and exclusion, including poverty, racism, colonization, patriarchy, and exploitative attitudes to the environment.<sup>1</sup>The ideas behind the concept of positive peace education is that when people are exposed to the ideals of positive peace education, they will have enlightened minds that can critically and clearly respond to issues of all forms of violence in a peaceful manner and thus behave as human beings who as per the IEP's positive peace frame work do business happily and peacefully(because the environment is sound), share information freely, accept and respect the rights of others, attain low levels of corrupt activities, have good relations with their neighbors and can equitably share resources with fellow citizens. The above mentioned eight pillars of positive peace are key in reducing community conflict that may have subsequent adverse effects on the well-being of teachers.

As stated earlier above, there are three types of positive peace education which I suggest as follows; direct positive peace education, cultural positive peace education and structural positive peace education. Direct positive peace education entails direct actions of peace aimed at mitigating direct violence. Examples of direct positive peace according to Galtung (1996) are physical and verbal kindness that are relevant and good to the body of others and self. Love is the epitome of this: a union of bodies, minds and spirits (Galtung, 1996:32).

Structural positive peace education on the other hand refers to the process of educating the human mind in order to help resolve the problems of segmentation, marginalization, exclusion, penetration and fragmentation within organizations. According to Galtung(1996) structural positive peace is significant because it helps in ensuring that there is freedom instead of repression, there is equity instead of exploitation, dialogue instead of penetration, integration instead of segmentation, solidarity instead of fragmentation and participation, participation instead of marginalization. Structural positive peace education is key in resolving structural violence related problems that affect teachers.

Cultural positive peace education is important for resolving cultural violence. Cultural positive peace education refers to a process of teaching and learning that helps the educands to get rid of cultures that generate, perpetuate and sustain violence against teachers. Similarly, Galtung (1996) points out that cultural positive peace upholds the legitimation of peace as opposed to the legitimation of violence. In other words this entails the building of a culture of positive peace through education. Therefore, cultural positive peace education would consist of transformation of conflicts through the building of a culture of positive peace through religion, the media, the law, language, art and science (Galtung, 1996: 32).

---

<sup>1</sup> Aizat Arystanbek, Assemgul Bukutova, Gulbagira Toleu, Lynne Parmenter, Hilary Cremin, Assylzhan Ospanbek, Implementing positive peace education in schools: A systematic literature review of global practices, Educational Research Review, Volume 50, 2026, 100759, ISSN 1747-938X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2025.100759>

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that direct violence against teachers manifests itself in form of political violence, insults, gossiping and verbal abuse by some abusive education managers. While structural violence against teachers presents itself in form of expensive loans, poor working conditions of service, corruption and nepotism. Additionally, the study, proposes positive peace education as a framework for resolving cultural, direct and structural forms of violence against teachers. Finally, the study concludes that direct, cultural and structural positive peace education is critical for the improvement of teachers' quality of life, performance and wellbeing.

## REFERENCES

1. Artênio Garbin, Adriana Alves Costa, Cléa Garbin, Tania Adas Saliba : Violence against Teachers of public elementary II schools, July 2016, Archives of health investigation, 5(3) DOI:10.21270/archi.v5i3.1322
2. Aizat Arystanbek, Assemgul Bukutova, Gulbagira Toleu, Lynne Parmenter, Hilary Cremin, Assylzhan Ospanbek, Implementing positive peace education in schools: A systematic literature review of global practices, Educational Research Review, Volume 50, 2026, 100759, ISSN 1747-938X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2025.100759> ace. In: Lee, H., Kaak, P. (eds)
3. Bajaj, M. (2008). Critical Peace Education. In M. Bajaj, (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of Peace Education. New York: Colombia Teacher's College.
4. Byongook Moon; Morash, Merry; June Oh Jang; Seokjin Jeong(2015) Violence Against Teachers in South Korea: Negative Consequences and Factors Leading to Emotional Distress, Violence & Victims 30 (2), 2015
5. Byongook Moon, Merry Morash, John McCluskey(2021): Student violence directed against teachers: Victimized teachers' reports to school officials and satisfaction with school responses, Journal of interpersonal violence 36 (13-14), NP7264-NP7283, 2021
6. Benoît Galand, Catherine Lecocq, Pierre Philippot(2007): School violence and teacher professional disengagement, British Journal of Educational Psychology 77 (2), 465-477,
7. Charity Okeke, Simphiwe Windvoelu(2024): Teachers' lived experiences of school violence and their coping strategies, October 2024, Perspectives in Education 42(1):148-161 DOI:10.38140/pie.v42i1.7210, University of the Free State.
8. Christina Bounds & Lyndsay N. Jenkins(2018)Teacher-Directed Violence and Stress: the Role of School Setting, California Association of School Psychologists.
9. Danesh, H.B.(1986), Unity: The creative foundation of peace. Ottawa and Toronto, Canada: Bahá'í Studies Publications and Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
10. Faruk Hadžić(2022): Conference: Book of Proceedings, Journal article, 3rd International Congress on Gifted Youth and Sustainability of the Education (ICGYSE), Young Wise Publishing Journals At: Antalya, Field/Topic - Social Science Education.
11. Guetta, S. (2020). Educating Toward a Culture of Peace Through an Innovative Teaching Method. In: Balvin, N., Christie, D.J. (eds) Children and Peace. Peace Psychology Book Series. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22176-8\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22176-8_15)
12. Hope Chituta( 2024): Effect of Personal Bank Loans on Teachers Livelihoods: A Dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in Business administration.
13. Janez Krek(2020): Structural Reasons for School Violence and Education Strategies, Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal 10 (2), 145-173, 2020
14. Johan Galtung (1969): Violence, Peace, and Peace Research, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167-191, Sage Publications, Ltd. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>
15. M. Harris (2004): Peace education theory, Journal of Peace Education, 1:1, 5-20,
16. Didi Sukyadi, Elly Malihah, Achmad Hufad, Lingga Utami and Rengga Akbar Munggaran(2017): Violence Against Teachers, Why Does It Happen? Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, January 2017, DOI:10.5220/0007099204010406

17. Martin Otundo Richard: The Impact of Poor Working Conditions, Corruption, and Harassment on Teachers' Well-being and Professional Performance in Kwale County: A Case Study of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Nairobi, Kenya.
18. Terzoudi, T(2020): Violence Against Teachers in Sweden: The hidden side of School Violence. Degree project in Criminology 30 Credits. Malmö University: Faculty of Health and Society, Department of Criminology, 2020.
19. Marko Prpić( 2021): Students' Violence Against Teachers in Relation to School Climate, VARSTVOSLOVJE,Journal of CriminalJustice and Security, year 21no. 4 pp. 405–425.