

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Características da Violência Contra Professores de Escolas Públicas

Características de la Violencia Contra Profesores de Escuelas Públicas

Caractéristiques de la Violence Contre les Enseignants des Ecoles Publiques

10.5020/23590777.rs.v20iEsp1.e8827

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Abstract

Teaching work in Brazil suffers from structural issues, including school violence. Brazilian and international investigations on this topic tend to focus on the aggressions suffered by students. National surveys on teachers lack information on general victimization rates, the types of aggressions suffered, the perpetrators of violent acts, and the predictor variables. The research presented here had as objectives: 1) to determine the nature and dimension of the violence targeted at teachers, considering the type of aggression and the respective perpetrator, and 2) to analyze demographic aspects that are associated with the reported victimizations. 744 teachers, from nursery school and elementary education from public schools in a municipality in Ceará, participated voluntarily in a self-applicable standardized instrument. The results revealed that 62.2% of teachers reported at least one form of victimization and, of these, 42.5% indicated having suffered violent acts from students. More than half of the sample reported at least one act of verbal harassment; almost a third said they had suffered property attacks; 21.5% said they had been victims of physical aggression, and 8.6% said they had received offers of drugs. The findings indicated that there was a greater likelihood of men, as well as teachers working in elementary school stage II and teachers with effective contracts, reporting a higher frequency of violent acts. There were no differences in victimization rates when observing the race and ethnicity of the participants, except for individuals who declared themselves asian, indigenous, or who preferred not to give this information, for whom there was a greater incidence of sexist insults.

Keywords: school violence; teachers; public schools; predictors.

Resumo

O trabalho docente no Brasil sofre com questões estruturais, entre as quais está a violência escolar. As investigações brasileiras e internacionais sobre esse tema tendem a se concentrar nas agressões sofridas pelos alunos. As pesquisas nacionais sobre professores carecem de informações sobre as taxas gerais de vitimização, os tipos de agressões sofridas, os perpetradores dos atos violentos e as variáveis predictoras. A pesquisa ora apresentada teve como objetivos: 1) determinar a natureza e a dimensão da violência direcionada

a professores, considerando o tipo de agressão e o respectivo perpetrador; 2) analisar aspectos demográficos que estão associados às vitimizações relatadas. Participaram 744 professores, da educação infantil e do ensino fundamental de escolas públicas de um município cearense, que responderam voluntariamente a um instrumento padronizado autoaplicável. Os resultados revelaram que 62,2% dos professores relataram ao menos uma forma de vitimização e, destes, 42,5% indicaram ter sofrido atos violentos oriundos de alunos. Mais da metade da amostra reportou ao menos um ato de assédio verbal; quase um terço afirmou ter sofrido atentados contra a propriedade; 21,5% apontaram terem sido vítimas de agressões físicas e 8,6% afirmaram ter recebido ofertas de drogas. Os achados indicaram que havia uma maior probabilidade de homens, bem como professores que atuavam em classes de ensino fundamental II e docentes com contratos efetivos, relatarem uma frequência superior de atos violentos. Não houve diferenças nas taxas de vitimização quando se observaram a raça e a etnia dos participantes, com exceção dos indivíduos que se declararam amarelos, indígenas ou que preferiram não dar essa informação, para os quais houve uma maior incidência de insultos sexistas.

Palavras-chave: violência escolar; professores; escolas públicas; preditores

Resumen

El trabajo docente en Brasil sufre con cuestiones estructurales, entre estas está la violencia escolar. Las investigaciones brasileñas e internacionales sobre este tema tienden a centrarse en las agresiones sufridas por los alumnos. Las investigaciones nacionales sobre profesores carecen de informaciones sobre las tasas generales de victimización, los tipos de agresiones sufridas, los autores de los actos violentos y las variables previstas. La investigación aquí presentada tuvo como objetivos: 1) determinar la naturaleza y la dimensión de la violencia direccionada a profesores, considerando el tipo de agresión y el respectivo autor de la misma; 2) analizar aspectos demográficos que están asociados a las victimizaciones informadas. Participaron 744 profesores, de la enseñanza básica y de primaria de escuelas públicas de un municipio cearense, que contestaron voluntariamente a un instrumento estandarizado auto aplicable. Los resultados revelaron que 62,2% de los profesores informaron por lo menos una forma de victimización y, de estos, 42,5% indicaron haber sufrido actos violentos de parte de los alumnos. Más de la mitad de la muestra reportó por lo menos un acto de asedio verbal; casi un tercio afirmó haber sufrido atentados contra la propiedad; 21,5% apuntaron ser víctimas de agresiones físicas y 8,6% afirmaron que recibieron ofertas de drogas. Los hallazgos indicaron que había una mayor probabilidad de hombres, como también profesores que actuaban en aulas de primaria II y docentes con contratos efectivos, informaren una frecuencia superior de actos violentos. No hubo diferencia en las tasas de victimización cuando se observaron raza y la etnia de los participantes, con excepción de los individuos que se declararon amarillos, indígenas o que prefirieron no dar esta información, para los cuales hubo una mayor incidencia de insultos sexistas.

Palabras clave: violencia escolar; profesores; escuelas públicas; previsores.

Résumé

Le travail d'enseignant au Brésil a des problèmes structurels, notamment la violence à l'école. Les recherches brésiliennes et internationales sur ce sujet tendent à se concentrer sur les agressions subies par les étudiants. Les recherches nationales sur les enseignants manquent d'informations sur les taux généraux de victimisation, les types d'agressions subies, les auteurs d'actes violents et les variables prédictives. La recherche présentée ici a pour objectifs : 1) déterminer la nature et la dimension de la violence dirigée contre les enseignants, en tenant compte du type d'agression et de le respectif auteur ; 2) analyser les aspects démographiques associés aux victimisations signalées. 744 enseignants de l'enseignement préscolaire et élémentaire des écoles publiques d'une municipalité du Ceará, au Brésil, ont participé volontairement à un instrument normalisé auto-applicable. Les résultats ont révélé que 62,2% des enseignants ont signalé au moins une forme de victimisation et, parmi eux, 42,5% ont indiqué avoir subi des actes de violence de la part des élèves. Plus de la moitié de l'échantillon a signalé au moins un acte de harcèlement verbal ; près d'un tiers a déclaré avoir subi des attaques contre leurs biens ; 21,5% ont déclaré avoir été victimes d'agressions physiques et 8,6% ont déclaré avoir reçu des offres de drogue. Les résultats ont indiqué qu'il y avait une plus grande probabilité d'hommes, ainsi que d'enseignants travaillant dans les classes de l'élémentaire et les enseignants ayant des contrats perpétuels signalent une fréquence plus élevée d'actes violents. Il n'y a pas eu de différence dans les taux de victimisation lors de l'observation de la race et de l'origine ethnique des participants, à l'exception des individus qui se déclaraient jaunes, autochtones ou qui n'ont pas préféré donner ces informations. Dans ce cas, il y a eu une plus grande incidence d'insultes sexistes.

Mots-clés : violence scolaire ; enseignants ; écoles publiques ; prédicteurs.

Teaching work in Brazilian public schools, in the last decades, underwent significant changes and the demand of the classroom is not always compatible with the requirements imposed by the education system. Several of these changes led to negative consequences such as increased workload and expansion of the teacher's tasks, which in turn led to greater dissatisfaction and stress among these professionals (Oliveira, 2010). One can also mention the increase in precarious employment conditions and consequent reduction in the number of stable workers (Macedo & Lima, 2017).

Negative structural aspects are also linked to the precariousness of the schools' physical facilities, reduced quantity of teaching and consumption material, high workload and a disproportionate number of students per class (Lelis, 2012). In addition, the broad access to public school networks increased the complexity of the demands that reach the schools. However, the objective work conditions did not follow the new requirements (Assunção & Oliveira, 2009).

In this context, school violence is one aspect to be considered. This is not a new phenomenon but it reached peculiar proportions in the present: schools became the setting of extreme events, such as homicides, and teachers became easy targets of such events; ever-younger students engage in violent acts; the school, once a preserved space, became permeable to external aggressions when there are, for example, gang fights within its facilities; and, finally, the workers in these teaching institutions start to live in a constant state of tension (Charlot, 2002).

Despite being a problem that impacts the whole community, in accord with what occurs internationally (Espelage et al., 2013), assessment of school violence in Brazil tends to focus on aggressions suffered by students (Nesello et al., 2014). By focusing on teachers, studies in countries such as Belgium, Canada, United States and South Korea indicate that students are the main perpetrators of violent acts against teachers and that verbal aggressions are the most commonly reported (Espelage et al., 2013; Galand, Philippot, Petit, Born, & Buidin, 2005; McMahon et al., 2014; Moon & McCluskey, 2016; Wilson, Douglas, & Lyon, 2011).

There are also important indicators of aggression from members of the educational teams, such as other teachers and principals (Galand et al., 2005; McMahon et al., 2014). The prevalence of aggressions can reach up to 80% of the teachers if one considers those that suffered at least one violent act in the period surveyed by the studies (McMahon et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011).

Among the national studies considering teachers, the findings of Levandoski, Ogg, and Cardoso (2011), which are restricted to aggressions from students, show that 87% of the participants said to have suffered violent acts and that verbal insults are predominant. Data regarding the state of São Paulo (Sindicato dos Professores do Ensino Oficial do Estado de São Paulo [APEOESP], n.d.), in 2017, state that 44% of the interviewed teachers reported having suffered aggressions within the school. There was also the indication that verbal attacks are the most frequent and that, in general, students are the main protagonists of aggression. Additionally, insults were more commonly directed to men and to those teaching in high school.

The study of Gasparini, Barreto, and Assunção (2006) highlights that the aggressors that most frequently were mentioned by the teachers were the students. A similar result was found by Medeiros, Assunção, and Barreto (2012). The findings of Ferreira, Latorre, and Giannini (2011) indicated indiscipline as the type of violence most commonly mentioned by teachers.

Understanding the violence against teachers also includes understanding the contextual and demographic aspects that act as predictors of the suffered victimizations. Gender has been associated with aggression (Galand et al., 2005; McMahon et al., 2014; Moon & McCluskey, 2016), as well as ethnical, racial (McMahon et al., 2014) and immigration issues (Galand et al., 2005). The level of education was also shown to be a relevant predictor (Galand et al., 2005; Moon & McCluskey, 2016). Other associated factors are school location (urban or rural – McMahon et al., 2014); atmosphere developed by the teacher in the classroom (Moon & McCluskey, 2016); marital status; work in more than one teaching institution (Levandovski et al., 2011); institutional support provided by managers and relationship with colleagues (Galand et al., 2005).

In addition to the reduced number of studies, the understanding of violence directed to teachers in Brazil is limited because the studies do not always provide data on general victimization rates or characterize and measure the types of aggression. There are also situations in which the investigation is focused on the teacher-student dyad and there is no questioning about other possible aggressors in the school environment or information about the perpetrators of the violent acts is not surveyed. Investigations addressing variables that can predict violence are also scarce.

Considering the mentioned gaps, this study aimed to: 1) assess the nature and dimension of the violence directed to teachers, considering the type of aggression and its respective perpetrators; 2) analyze the demographic aspects associated with the informed victimizations. We considered the variables gender, race/ethnicity, level of education and employment status. Understanding the incidence and the characteristics of school violence may help create prevention strategies, and elaborate effective interventions to face the problem, which harms the educators' physical and mental health, as well as the maintenance of their workforce (Reddy, Espelage, Anderman, Kanrich, & McMahon, 2018).

Method

Participants

The non-probability sample consisted of 744 teachers working in public schools of a municipality of the state of Ceará, Brazil. Their age varied between 18 and 59 years ($M = 35.67$; $SD = 8.94$). Women (77.3%) made up most of the participants. Black and brown people made up 71% of the respondents. On average, the family income was R\$ 2383.22 ($SD = 1426.61$); the time working as a teacher in the municipal network was 9.34 years ($SD = 6.99$); and the whole experience as a teacher reached 12.21 years ($SD = 7.56$).

Most teachers were bound to the public network by temporary contracts (71.9%). Regarding the level of education, the participants were distributed in the following manner: 39% worked in Elementary School II, 31.3% in Elementary School I, 25% in Early Childhood Education, 3.1% in Adult Education and 1.6% were dedicated to the Special Education Service directed to the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Instruments

The used questionnaire consisted of demographic questions and the following tools: Victimization Questionnaire (Galand, Philippot, Buidin, & Lecocq, 2004; Galand et al., 2005), Work Context Assessment Scale and Work-Related Injury Scale (Mendes, Ferreira, and Cruz, 2007). Here, we present the results regarding the demographic questions and the Victimization Questionnaire.

Regarding demographic questions, teachers were asked about their birth date, gender, family income, level of education in which they acted, among other aspects. In the Victimization Questionnaire, the participants were asked the following: "Mark the option that better corresponds to the frequency in which the situations described below occurred with you during the current and previous school semesters". Thirteen victimization types were listed, namely: rumors; mockery; racist insults; sexist insults; intimidation, threats or moral harassment; theft; robbery; damage to personal objects; threat with weapons or daily objects; extortion; hits (punches, kicks etc.); nonconsensual sexual touches or caresses; and drug offer.

The items in the Victimization Questionnaire were evaluated on a five-point scale ("Never", "Once", "Twice", "Three times" and "Four times or more"). Additionally, the items were presented in details and, whenever possible, also defined according to the Brazilian legislation in order to assure that the respondents understood the situations that they may have experienced (for example: "Have you ever been a victim of sexist insults (someone used derogatory words regarding gender or sexual orientation with the intention to offend you)?").

Soon after, if such a situation had been experienced at least once, the respondent was asked to indicate the aggressor. The list of perpetrators consisted of "Student"; "Parents or guardians"; "Teacher"; "Principal or coordinator"; "Support personnel (gatekeeper, janitor, cook etc.)"; "Member of the community in which the school is located"; and "Other".

Procedures

Data collection

We used a standardized and self-applicable tool. First, the teachers were asked to read the Informed Consent Form. After agreeing with the voluntary cooperation, the participants were asked to answer the questionnaire. The Education Secretariat of the city in which the study was conducted promoted the study with the teachers and informed its objectives, requested the cooperation and explained that the researchers of the study were available to clarify any doubt.

Data analysis

The subjects were initially grouped into two classes: teachers that did not suffer victimization and teachers that indicated at least one aggression in the current and former school semester, so that the victimization variable was dichotomous. Additionally, following the suggestion of Galand et al. (2005), the 13 aggression types were grouped into four categories: verbal harassment (for example: "Has someone ever spread rumors about you (told false stories about you)?"); attacks on property (for example: "Has someone ever, intentionally, damaged objects belonging to you (car, motorcycle, bicycle, clothes, cellphone, purse etc.)?"); physical assaults (for example: "Have you ever been extorted (forced to give money or an object under threat)?") and drug offer, which had only one item ("Has someone ever offered you drugs?").

By means of the program IBM SPSS Statistics (version 22), we applied percentages to examine the frequency in which teachers reported having suffered aggression in each category across the 13 violent acts and by perpetrator. We also used

percentages to assess the relationship between the aggression types and the demographic variables (gender, race/ethnicity, level of education and employment status).

A binary logistic regression (Agresti & Finlay, 2012) is used with dichotomous variables such as the one proposed regarding the victimization variable. These analyses were conducted to evaluate the probability of the teachers to suffer aggression according to demographic variables, so that 13 evaluations were produced, one for each aggression type. The following encoding was used: 0 = teachers that did not suffer victimization; 1 = teachers that indicated at least one aggression. Thus, we determined how each independent variable (gender, race/ethnicity, level of education and employment status) was associated with the output variables.

With this procedure, it was possible to consider the predictor variables individually, while others could be controlled in each model. We applied dummy encoding to the independent variables to examine the differences between groups, so that female, white, early childhood education and temporary employment were taken as reference groups in all the tested models.

Ethical Considerations

The project was evaluated by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Ceará and authorized under the number 2.266.460 according to all directives and regulatory norms described in the resolution CNS 510/2016.

Results

Regarding the victimization prevalence among teachers, 62.2% of the respondents stated having suffered at least one violent act in the period covered by the research (current and previous school semester). More than half of the sample indicated at least one act regarding verbal harassment, almost one third stated having suffered attacks on property, 21.5% indicated having been victims of physical attacks and 8.6% stated having received drug offers. Additionally, 5.5% of the teachers suffered at least one violent act in each of the indicated categories.

Considering the teachers that said to have suffered at least one victimization, most (42.5%) referred to violent acts from students, followed by others (38.9%), colleagues (31.5%), community members (19%), principals or coordinators (17.7%), parents or guardians (13.8%) and support personnel (6.3%). Considering the identifiable perpetrators, the victimization rates caused by students (4%–58%) were the highest. Considerable rates were also perceived as coming from principals or coordinators (1%–41%) and other teachers (3%–33%).

The violent acts from students were distributed across all categories. Regarding principals and coordinators, as well as teachers, offenses seem to concentrate around verbal harassment but there is some incidence of physical assault. Table 1 shows the victimization rates per aggression type and per perpetrator.

Table 1
Teacher victimization according to aggression type and perpetrator

Aggression type	n (%) ^a Reported at least 1 aggression	Perpetrator (%) ^b						
		Student	Parents or guardians	Teacher	Principal or coordinator	Support Personnel	Community member	Other
Verbal Harassment	399 (53.6)							
Rumors	302 (40.6)	12.3	12.6	32.8	10.6	4.6	10.3	16.9
Mockery	220 (29.6)	31.8	3.6	23.2	10.9	2.3	6.8	21.4
Racist insults	96 (12.9)	19.8	10.4	11.5	6.3	3.1	13.5	35.4
Sexist insults	71 (9.5)	23.9	0.0	23.9	2.8	2.8	14.1	32.4
Intimidation, threats or moral harassment	178 (23.9)	31.9	13.2	5.5	22.0	2.7	6.0	18.7
Attack on property	247 (33.2)							
Theft	150 (20.2)	32.0	2.7	2.7	0.0	4.0	14.0	44.7
Robbery	101 (13.6)	9.9	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	14.9	72.3
Damage to personal objects	141 (19)	51.1	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.7	9.2	33.3
Physical assaults	160 (21.5)							
Threat with weapons or objects	83 (11.2)	45.8	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	6.0	45.8

Table 1

Teacher victimization according to aggression type and perpetrator (continuation)

Extorsion	66 (8.9)	4.5	3.0	9.1	40.9	0.0	6.1	36.4
Hits (punches, kicks etc.)	82 (11)	58.5	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	3.7	35.4
Sexual touches or caresses	48 (6.5)	29.2	0.0	4.2	2.1	0.0	4.2	60.4
Drug offer	64 (8.6)	28.1	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	15.6	53.1

^aBased on the whole sample. ^bPercentage based on teachers that suffered at least one of the specified aggression types.

Considering the relationship between aggression and demographic variables, as seen in Table 2, men had higher indices of victimization regarding verbal harassment, physical assault and drug offer. On the other hand, there were similar attacks on property, except for the item about damage to personal objects, in which male teachers had a higher aggression incidence. In general, the victimization indicators were similar when considering ethnical and racial differences, excluding sexist insults. Asian and indigenous teachers, and those that preferred not to inform their ethnicity, grouped in the category other, suffered such aggressions more frequently.

Teachers acting in Elementary School II suffered higher rates in almost all aggression types. The exception included theft and robbery, in which the percentage was similar in all levels of education, and extorsion, which had higher indices among teachers of early childhood education. Regarding employment status, regular teachers had higher rates in all categories except sexist insults and robbery, in which the rate was higher among teachers with temporary contracts, and drug offer, in which the incidence was similar between both groups.

Table 2

Victimization among the demographic variables: percentage of teachers that indicated at least one aggression

Aggression type	Gender		Race/ethnicity			Level of education				Employment status	
	Male	Female	White	Black/ Brown	Other ^a	ECE ^b	ESI ^c	ESII ^d	Other ^e	Regular	Temporary
Verbal Harassment											
Rumors	54.4	36.5	43.0	40.0	38.6	36.0	40.3	46.2	20.0	49.8	37.0
Mockery	46.2	24.7	32.0	28.6	31.8	26.3	21.9	40.3	8.6	32.5	28.4
Racist insults	21.9	10.3	13.4	12.7	13.6	10.8	11.2	16.2	8.6	15.8	11.8
Sexist insults	21.3	6.1	11.0	8.3	18.2	4.3	6.4	16.6	0.0	8.6	9.9
Intimidation, threats or moral harassment	34.3	20.9	28.5	22.2	27.3	19.4	18.5	33.1	8.6	33.5	20.2
Attack on property											
Theft	20.7	20.0	20.3	20.1	20.5	18.3	18.5	23.1	17.1	24.9	18.3
Robbery	14.8	13.2	11.6	14.0	15.9	14.0	13.7	13.8	8.6	12.0	14.2
Damage to personal objects	36.7	13.7	22.7	18.2	13.6	11.3	14.6	28.6	8.6	21.5	17.9
Physical assaults											
Threat with weapons or objects	17.8	9.2	12.2	10.8	11.4	8.1	11.2	14.5	0.0	12.9	10.5
Extorsion	13.0	7.7	8.7	8.3	15.9	12.4	6.4	9.7	0.0	13.9	6.9
Hits (punches, kicks etc.)	13.6	10.3	9.3	11.4	13.6	10.8	11.6	11.7	2.9	16.7	8.8
Sexual touches or caresses	12.4	4.7	5.2	6.6	9.1	7.5	2.6	9.3	2.9	7.7	6.0
Drug offer	22.5	4.5	9.3	8.1	11.4	3.2	5.6	15.2	2.9	8.6	8.6

Note. Percentage based on the sample as a whole. ^aAsian, indigenous, not informed. ^bEarly childhood education. ^cElementary School I. ^dElementary School II. ^eAdult Education and Special Education Service.

Regarding the logistic regression analysis (Table 3), by considering how gender influences the risk of suffering a violent act (by taking into account race/ethnicity, level of education and employment status), we observed that male teachers were more prone to inform the occurrence of rumors, mockery, racist insults, sexist insults, intimidation, threats, moral harassment,

damage to personal objects, extortion, nonconsensual sexual touches or caresses and drug offer than female teachers. There were no gender differences among the other acts.

Regarding ethnicity and race, considering gender, level of education and employment status, the data indicated that there were differences in relation to victimization only in sexist insults. In this case, there is a higher propensity for those in the category other to suffer victimization when compared to subjects that stated to be white.

The results also indicated that, regarding level of education an taking into account gender, race/ethnicity and employment status, teachers from Elementary School II, when compared to teachers of Early Childhood Education, had a greater tendency to report the occurrence of the following acts: sexist insults, intimidation, threats or moral harassment and damage to personal objects. Considering the same comparison parameter, teachers of Elementary School I showed a lower tendency to report extortion and sexual touches or caresses. Similarly, teachers acting with Adult Education and Special Education Service, belonging to the category other, were less willing to communicate the occurrence of mockery. Finally, regarding employment status and taking into account gender, race/ethnicity and level of education, the data indicated that regular teachers, in comparison with temporary teachers, were more prone to report rumors, intimidation, threats or moral harassment, theft, extortion and hits (punches, kicks etc.).

Table 3
Logistic regression for demographic variables as aggression predictors

		Verbal Harassment		
			OR	IC 95%
Rumors	Gender (female)	Male	2,07***	[1,40; 3,07]
		Black/Brown	1,00	[0,70; 1,44]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Other	1,10	[0,54; 2,21]
		Elementary School I	1,12	[0,75; 1,68]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)	Elementary School II	1,19	[0,78; 1,83]
		Other	0,44	[0,18; 1,09]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,76***	[1,26; 2,47]
Mockery	Gender (female)	Male	2,18***	[1,45; 3,28]
		Black/Brown	0,94	[0,64; 1,40]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Other	1,27	[0,60; 2,67]
		Elementary School I	0,72	[0,46; 1,14]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)	Elementary School II	1,38	[0,88; 2,17]
		Other	0,23*	[0,07; 0,81]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,34	[0,93; 1,93]
Racist insults	Gender (female)	Male	2,43***	[1,43; 4,13]
		Black/Brown	1,05	[0,62; 1,77]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Other	1,32	[0,49; 3,56]
		Elementary School I	0,94	[0,50; 1,77]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)	Elementary School II	1,10	[0,58; 2,09]
		Other	0,70	[0,19; 2,57]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,55	[0,96; 2,49]
Sexist insults	Gender (female)	Male	3,03***	[1,69; 5,42]
		Black/Brown	0,83	[0,45; 1,50]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Other	2,72*	[1,03; 7,17]
		Elementary School I	1,37	[0,56; 3,35]
	Nível de ensino (Educação infantil)	Elementary School II	2,58*	[1,10; 6,05]
		Other	0,00	[0,00; 0,00]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	0,99	[0,54; 1,79]
Intimidation, threats or moral harassment	Gender (female)	Male	1,56*	[1,01; 2,41]
		Black/Brown	0,85	[0,57; 1,28]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Other	1,27	[0,58; 2,77]
		Elementary School I	0,88	[0,54; 1,46]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)	Elementary School II	1,88**	[1,15; 3,09]
		Other	0,45	[0,13; 1,58]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	2,25***	[1,54; 3,28]

Nota. OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval. **p* <.05. ***p* <.01. ****p* <.001

Table 3
 Logistic regression for demographic variables as aggression predictors (continuation)

			Attack on property	
			OR	IC 95%
Theft	Gender (female)	Male	0,89	[0,56; 1,44]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	1,08
	Other		1,11	[0,48; 2,56]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	1,02
		Elementary School II	1,50	[0,90; 2,50]
		Other	1,07	[0,41; 2,82]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,56*	[1,05; 2,31]
Robbery	Gender (female)	Male	1,18	[0,68; 2,06]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	1,23
	Other		1,47	[0,57; 3,78]
	Nível de ensino (Educação infantil)		Elementary School I	0,99
		Elementary School II	0,91	[0,50; 1,65]
		Other	0,52	[0,15; 1,84]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	0,82	[0,50; 1,35]
Damage to personal objects	Gender (female)	Male	2,77***	[1,77; 4,34]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	0,87
	Other		0,72	[0,27; 1,90]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	1,17
		Elementary School II	2,00*	[1,12; 3,58]
		Other	0,64	[0,18; 2,35]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,45	[0,95; 2,22]
			Physical assaults	
			OR	IC 95%
Threat with weapons or objects	Gender (female)	Male	1,94*	[1,10; 3,40]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	0,99
	Other		1,21	[0,42; 3,51]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	1,33
		Elementary School II	1,45	[0,73; 2,91]
		Other	0,00	[0,00; 0,00]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,32	[0,79; 2,19]
Extorsion	Gender (female)	Male	2,57**	[1,30; 5,06]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	1,07
	Other		2,72	[0,99; 7,46]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	0,44*
		Elementary School II	0,53	[0,26; 1,08]
		Other	0,00	[0,00; 0,00]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	2,30**	[1,34; 3,94]
Hits (punches, kicks etc.)	Gender (female)	Male	1,53	[0,84; 2,78]
		Raça/etnia (branco)	Black/Brown	1,48
	Other		2,06	[0,74; 5,76]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	1,08
		Elementary School II	1,05	[0,54; 2,04]
		Other	0,27	[0,03; 2,11]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	2,20**	[1,35; 3,57]
Sexual touches or caresses	Gender (female)	Male	2,93**	[1,41; 6,12]
		Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	1,42
	Other		2,33	[0,65; 8,29]
	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)		Elementary School I	0,29**
		Elementary School II	0,79	[0,35; 1,80]
		Other	0,29	[0,04; 2,37]
	Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,57	[0,82; 3,02]

Nota. OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 3
 Logistic regression for demographic variables as aggression predictors (continuation)

	Gender (female)	Male	4,57***	[2,47; 8,47]
	Race/ethnicity (white)	Black/Brown	1,02	[0,54; 1,94]
		Other	2,04	[0,65; 6,38]
Drug offer	Level of education (Early Childhood Education)	Elementary School I	1,44	[0,53; 3,94]
		Elementary School II	2,48	[0,94; 6,53]
		Other	0,58	[0,07; 5,19]
		Employment status (temporary)	Regular	1,27

Nota. OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The results showed that six in every ten teachers that took part in the study suffered at least one aggression in the semester in which the investigation was conducted and in the previous one. This indicates a victimization rate below that found in international assessments (McMahon et al., 2014; Wilson et al. (2011), as well as in relation to what was found in the study of Levandoski et al. (2011) with teachers in the Brazilian state of Paraná. On the other hand, this incidence is above that found in the state of São Paulo (APEOESP, n.d.).

Although not directly comparable, considering methodological specificities, these data indicate important discrepancies between different Brazilian regions. The divergences may be associated with cultural and socio-economic differences that create variation in the perception of what is considered an act of violence and in the type of interaction that is established between the different subjects that make up the school. It is supposed that they also reflect the diversity in social vulnerability that permeates the communities in which the institutions are located.

The results show that verbal harassment was the most reported victimization, followed by attacks on property and physical assault. This distribution is similar to the one found by McMahon et al. (2014) and converges with the perspective that verbal aggressions tend to be more prominent, as informed, for example, by Galand et al. (2005).

In accord with national (for example Gasparini et al., 2006) and international data (for example Wilson et al., 2011), students were the main perpetrators of aggressions, committing, particularly, offenses associated with verbal harassment, especially intimidation, threats or moral harassment and mockery. Other teachers and principals or coordinators also appeared as aggressors, similarly to what was found by Galand et al. (2005) and McMahon et al. (2014). Regarding these two groups, similarly to students, verbal harassment prevailed. Regarding superiors, there was a prevalence of intimidations and, regarding colleagues, the highest incidence was of rumors.

A higher rate of aggression from students is expected considering that they have more contact with the teachers on a daily basis. Additionally, the type of relationship that is established between teachers and students allows for more possibilities of conflicts due to disciplinary issues in the classroom (Ferreira, Santos, & Rosso, 2016) and the established hierarchical relationship, among other aspects. In this respect, the significant incidence of aggressions from colleagues and managers is remarkable since, at first, the opportunities for conflict are scarcer.

When considering gender differences, men informed higher victimization rates in all types of verbal harassment and in all types of physical assault except for being hit by punches, kicks, among others. In the category attacks on property, the item damage to personal objects is mentioned more frequently by male teachers in comparison with what was reported by female teachers. Drug offer in the school environment was also mostly directed to male teachers.

These data differ from Moon and McCluskey (2016), where men reported fewer verbal aggressions, and from Galand et al. (2005), whose results indicated that female teachers are more subject to the occurrence of disciplinary incidents. On the other hand, the prevalence of aggressions directed to men is close to what was found by APEOESP (n.d.) and by McMahon et al. (2014). The explanation given by the latter for this condition seems to be applicable here: gender stereotypes may make men expose themselves to risk situations, such as stopping fights and responding to insults, which would make them more susceptible to aggression.

The victimization indices were not dissimilar when observing ethnical and racial differences; the group that included Asian and indigenous people, and those that did not inform race, however, stated to have suffered a higher rate of sexist insults. Understanding these data would require a specific study relating gender, ethnical and racial relationships to school violence.

The analysis of the level of education, in general, showed that teachers working with students of more advanced years reported more aggression. This result differs from Galand et al. (2005), whose study indicated that teachers dedicated to higher education levels reported fewer disciplinary occurrences, and from Moon & McCluskey (2016) whose investigation pointed out that teachers working in elementary school were more prone to report verbal victimization. Considering the finding that students were the main

perpetrators of aggressions, the discussion around this subject seems to be associated with the age of the students because it is assumed that the higher the year in which they are, the older they will be. The data seem to reflect a cultural trend in which a less confrontational relationship is established with younger students and that the possibility of an impasse increases as they grow old.

Finally, when we look at the employment status, regular teachers had a greater tendency to report aggression. Regarding this result, one can think that the temporary contract constitutes a precarious employment link (Macedo & Lima, 2017). Thus, it was expected that this employment status would have a higher vulnerability to violent situations and a more negative general perception by the teachers.

On the other hand, the assessment of these teachers may have gone in the opposite direction because the job offer is scarce and the existing work conditions in a municipality of the countryside are unfavorable. That is to say, the precarious condition of a public school is better than unemployment and better than other existing job offers. Thus, the experienced violent situations would be minimized when, for example, intimidation by the managers and coordinators occurred. Teachers with regular contracts, public servants with stability, in turn, would have more possibilities to question the work conditions and take the suffered aggressions with the gravity that they deserve.

Final Considerations

This study aimed to characterize and measure violence suffered by teachers that work in public schools of a municipality in the state of Ceará, Brazil. It also aimed to analyze how the variables gender, ethnicity/race, level of education and employment status act as aggression predictors.

The results showed a general victimization rate of 62.2%. Moral harassment was predominant and students were the most commonly reported perpetrators. In general, men, as well as teachers acting in classes of Elementary School II and teachers with regular job contracts reported having suffered a higher frequency of violent acts. There was no difference in the victimization rates when the race and the ethnicity of the participants were considered, except for individuals that declared to be Asian, indigenous or that preferred not to declare their ethnicity, who showed a higher incidence of sexist insults.

One of the study's limitations was the fact that it was conducted with a non-random sample that was restricted to a local reality, which hinders the process of generalizing the findings for a wider context. The study also had a reduced number of contextual variables that could explain the occurrence of violent acts. Data regarding victimization could be analyzed from the number of students per classroom, mean performance of the students in standardized evaluations, perception of the type of relationship between teachers and students, strategies to confront violence in schools, characteristics of the community in which the school is inserted, among others.

Concerning the possibility of further investigations, we see the necessity to conduct a study that can clarify the dimension of the aggressions against teachers in a national level, so that it would be possible to understand the variation of the indices between different Brazilian states. In a similar direction, it would be relevant to analyze violence in other education levels (High School and University). Additionally, qualitative studies may reveal important aspects of how teachers experience and confront school violence.

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Como citar:

Pinheiro, F. P. H. A., Belo, R. P., Feijão, A. R. C., & Pereira, A. A. (2020). Characteristics of Violence Against Public School Teachers. *Revista Subjetividades*, 20(Esp 1. Relações Intergrupais: Preconceito e Exclusão Social), e8827. <http://doi.org/10.5020/23590777.rs.v20iEsp1.e8827>

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Recebido em: 01/01/2019

Revisado em: 20/08/2019

Aceito em: 18/11/2019

Publicado online: 20/05/2020