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# Educators' experiences of school violence.

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# Educators' experiences of school violence

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393-151

As submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

**MASTER OF PSYCHOLOGY**

in the subject of

**COMMUNITY-BASED COUNSELLING**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF WITSWATERSRAND**

**SUPERVISOR: TANYA GRAHAM**

# DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Shenaaz Pahad, hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Educators' experiences of school violence" is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or at any other institution.

Signed on the day ___ of _____ 2010, Johannesburg, South Africa.

_____

Shenaaz Pahad

*This research is dedicated to all those who have taught me in life*

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> People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within. (*Elizabeth Kubler Ross)*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AAP | American Academy of Paediatrics |
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CJCP | Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention |
| CPA | Centre for Peace Action |
| CSVR | Centre for Violence and Reconciliation |
| CVILP | Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| HPCSA | Health Profession Council of South Africa |
| HSRC | Human Sciences Research Council |
| LINCISS | Learner Incident and Injury Surveillance System |
| MRC | Medical Research Council |
| NAS/UWT | National Association of School Masters and the Union of Women Teachers |
| NCAPCS | National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools |
| NCES | National Centre for Education Statistics |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| PTSD | Post-traumatic stress disorder |
| SABC | South African Broadcasting Commission |
| SACE | South African Council of Educators |
| SAPS | South African Police Services |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SSAIR | South African Institute of Race Relations |
| Stats SA | Statistics South Africa |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNISA | University of South Africa |
| US | United States |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WITS | University of Witswatersrand |

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore South African educators' subjective experiences of school violence within their schools. Educators' experiences as victims and perpetrators of school violence were examined to gain an understanding of the definitions, contributing factors, impacts and incidents of school violence. An interpretive qualitative research method was used and interviews were conducted with 12 educators selected from two government schools in the low-income community of Alexandra. Participants' data was then analysed using a thematic content analysis. The findings suggest that current definitions of school violence are too narrow and require expansion so as to include all acts of school violence, victim-perpetrator relationships beyond the confines of the school. Violence in schools was found to increase educators' dysfunctional coping mechanisms, absenteeism, attrition, burnout and to compromise teaching efficacy and the performance of school. Using Brofenbrenner's Ecological Approach the principal conclusion of this study was that school violence is a result of the interplay between individual, familial, school, communal and societal factors.



*School violence, learners, educators, school environment, Alexandra*