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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINOLOGY

**The experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National
Department of Social Development.**

Submitted by

SINAH MAMIKI TABANE

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. L S TERBLANCHE

Edited by Bernice Mcneil

Table of Contents

Contents	Page No
Acknowledgements.....	I
Declaration.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Key Concepts.....	IV
Acronyms.....	V
CHAPTER 1.....	1
1.1 introduction and Definition of Concepts.....	1
1.2. Literature Review.....	4
1.2.1 Types of workplace violence.....	6
1.2.2. Factors contributing to workplace violence.....	7
1.2.3. Effects of workplace violence.....	9
1.3. Theoretical Framework.....	10
1.4. Rationale and problem statement.....	12
1.4.1. Research Question.....	14
1.5. Goals and objectives.....	14
1.6. Research approach.....	15
1.7. Type of research.....	16
1.8. Research design.....	16
1.9. Research Methods.....	17
1.9.1. Study population and sampling.....	17
1.9.2. Data collection method.....	19
1.9.3. Data Analysis.....	20
1.9.4. Pilot study.....	23
10. Ethical Consideration.....	23
11. Limitations of the study.....	26



12. Chapter outline.....27

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.....29

2.1. Introduction.....29

2.2. Defining the concepts of workplace violence.....30

2.2.1. Violence.....31

2.2.2. Workplace violence.....32

2.2.3. Workplace bullying.....33

2.2.4. Sexual Harassment.....34

2.2.5. Aggression.....35

2.3 Department of Social Development as an Organization.....35

2.3.1. The vision and mission of the Department of Social Development.....36

2.4. Types of workplace violence.....38

2.4.1. External violence.....39

2.4.2. Client Initiated violence.....39

2.4.3. Internal violence.....40

2.5. The effects of workplace violence.....41

2.5.1. The effects of workplace violence on an employee.....43

2.5.1.1. Physical effects.....43

2.5.1.2. Emotional effects.....43

2.5.1.3. Psychological effects.....44

2.5.2. The effects of workplace violence to the organization.....45

2.6. Conclusion.....47

CHAPTER 3.

3. THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Introduction.....49

3.2. Ethical issues.....50

3.2.1. Confidentiality and Anonymity.....	50
3.2.2. Debriefing and counselling.....	50
3.2.3. Informed consent.....	51
3.2.4. Voluntary participation.....	51
3.3. Research Methodology.....	51
3.3.1. Research Approach.....	51
3.3.2. Research design and procedures.....	51
3.4. Profiles of participants from the Department of Social Development.....	52
3.4.1 Table 1: Illustration of profiles of participants.....	53
3.4.2 Discussion of data on profile of participants.....	55
3.4.3 Table 2: Illustration of occupational levels of participants.....	55
3.4.4. Qualifications and years of experience of participants.....	57
3.4.5. Table 3: Number of participants per branch.....	58
3.4.6. Roles and Responsibilities of branches.....	58
3.4.6.1. Corporate services.....	58
3.4.6.2. Integrated Development and NPO.....	59
3.4.6.3. Chief Operating officer.....	60
3.4.6.4. Welfare Services.....	60
3.5. Central themes.....	61
3.5.1. Table 4 Summary of themes and sub-themes.....	62
3.5.1.1 Theme 1: Understanding of the meaning of workplace violence.....	63
3.5.1.2 Sub-theme: the meaning of physical violence.....	64
3.5.1.3 Sub-theme: the meaning of verbal violence.....	65
3.5.1.4 Sub-theme: threatening behaviour.....	67
3.5.1.5 Discussion of theme 1 and sub-themes.....	66
3.5.2 Theme 2: The existence of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.....	68
3.5.2.1. Sub-theme: Reporting workplace violence.....	69

3.5.2.2. Sub-theme: Actions taken for workplace violence.....	71
3.5.2.3 Discussion of theme 2 and sub-themes.....	72
3.5.3. Theme 3: Nature of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.....	73
3.5.3.1 Sub-theme: Internal violence.....	73
3.5.3.2. Sub-theme: External violence.....	75
3.5.3.3. Discussion of theme 3 and sub-themes.....	75
3.5.4 Theme 4: The effects of workplace violence.....	77
3.5.4.1 Sub-theme: Absenteeism.....	78
3.5.4.2 Sub-theme: Physical and emotional effects.....	78
3.5.4.3 Sub-theme: Psychological effects.....	79
3.5.4.4 Discussion of theme 4 and sub-themes.....	80
3.5.5 Theme 5: factors contributing to workplace violence in DSD.....	81
3.5.5.1 Sub-theme: management styles in DSD.....	81
3.5.5.2 Sub –theme: nature of work in DSD.....	83
3.5.5.3 Sub-theme: Perceptions and attitudes.....	84
3.5.5.4 Sub-theme: Reporting procedures and policies.....	86
3.5.5.5 Discussion of theme 5 and sub-themes.....	87
3.6 Conclusion.....	87

CHAPTER 4

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

4.1 Introduction.....	89
4.2. Objective 1: The contextualization of workplace violence a phenomenon in the National Department of Social Development.....	90
4.2.1. Conclusions on the understanding of participants regarding the context of workplace violence.....	90
4.2.2. Recommendations on the participants understanding of the context of workplace violence..	92
4.3. Objective 2: to determine the nature of workplace violence in the DSD.....	92
4.3.1. Conclusions about the nature of workplace violence in DSD.....	93

4.3.1.1 Internal workplace violence.....	93
4.3.1.2 External workplace violence.....	93
4.3.2. Recommendations about the nature of workplace violence that exist in the Department of Social Development.....	94
4.4. Objective 3: The effects of workplace violence on employees of Department of Social Development.....	95
4.4.1. Conclusions on the effects workplace violence on performance.....	95
4.4.2. Conclusions on the physical and emotional effects of workplace violence.....	96
4.4.3. Conclusions on the psychological effects of workplace violence.....	97
4.4.4. Recommendations on the effects of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.....	97
4.5. Conclusions on factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.....	98
4.5.1. Conclusions on the management styles.....	98
4.5.2. Conclusions on the nature of work in DSD.....	98
4.5.3. Conclusions on the perceptions and attitudes.....	99
4.5.4. Conclusions on the reporting procedures and policies.....	100
4.6. Recommendations regarding the factors contributing to workplace violence in DSD.....	100
4.7. Concluding statement.....	101
5. List of references.....	102

6. List of Appendices

Appendix 1: semi-structured interview scheduled

Appendix 2: Informed consent

Appendix 3: Approval by ethics committee

Appendix 4: Approval by the Department of Social Development

Appendix 5: Letter from the editor



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DECLARATION

I **Sinah Mamiki Tabane**, student number 11318385 is a student enrolled with the University of Pretoria for a degree in MSW (Employee Assistance Programme) with a title of a mini-dissertation on the **Experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development**, declare that this is my own original work.

All secondary material used was carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the University of Pretoria.

I understand what plagiarism is and I'm aware of the university's policy and its implication in this regard.

SM TABANE

ABSTRACT

Workplace violence is a phenomenon which is growing and it has the potential to affect individual performance and organizational productivity. The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development. The researcher was motivated to choose this subject as a result of her observation working as Employee Health and Wellness Manager in the same Department whereby there were cases reported were related to workplace violence such as poor working relationships, conflict, work related stress and high level of mental health. Furthermore, lack of research and literature studies concerning workplace violence motivated the research. The qualitative approach was utilized and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data about the experiences of employees utilizing interview scheduled, 10 employees who were employees of the National Department of Social Development were interviewed. Purposive sampling method was used to select the suitable participants of the study who met the specific defined criteria. The type of research utilised was applied research to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence and to give meaning to it.

A collective case study was used to focus on participants who have experienced workplace violence in order to understand the types of workplace violence that were experienced, the effects it had on individuals as well as factors contributing to workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development.

Theoretical overview that was discussed focused on understanding the how the different concepts related to workplace violence is defined in literature as well as looking at the effects of workplace violence on employees and employer as well as highlighting the different types of workplace violence.

The research findings indicated that workplace violence is well conceptualised by the employees of Social Development and they understand the meaning of workplace violence. The study has also confirmed that workplace violence exists within the department and most of participants have experienced internal workplace violence.



KEY CONCEPTS

Workplace violence

Employees

Productivity

Performance

Management

Perceptions

Experiences

Environment

ACRONYMS

EHW: Employee Health and Wellness

DSD: Department of Social Development

CS: Corporate Services

COO: Chief Operating officer

NPO: Non Profit Organizations

ID: Integrated development

Title of the study

The experience of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development.

1. CHAPTER

1.1. Introduction and Definition of concept.

Workplace violence has emerged to be an alarming phenomenon that affects employees' productivity as well as their abilities to perform optimally in the workplace. Workplace violence is a natural spill over of violence that permeates society, communities and family life (Kgosimore, 2004:60). It is therefore crucial to understand that workplace violence has become a daily occupational risk for many workers in today's society. Workplace violence can strike anywhere at any time and no employee is immune to experience this phenomenon.

Workplace violence studies have been conducted globally investigating different aspects of this phenomenon; however the researcher believed that there was still a research gap, as most of these studies were conducted in the health sectors.

Bowman, Bhamjee, Eagle and Crafford (2009:301) confirmed that internationally workplace violence literature is extensive and most of the research has been conducted in the health sector, and other studies have included corporations, correctional facilities and schools. The studies that were conducted were mostly focusing on establishing the magnitude, prevalence and determinants of workplace violence; explaining and understanding the causes and effects of workplace violence and some focused on analysing a range of responses to individuals who have been

exposed to traumatic events. The researcher identified a research gap in the South African context, that there was limited information that covered workplace violence as experienced by other professions, or in other work settings, like public service departments.

South Africa as a country has a history of violence in the society, which has slowly permeated the walls of the workplace. Employers have a statutory duty towards their employees and need to ensure that all are afforded the necessary protection (Booyesen, 2010:24). In order to ensure that employees are protected in the workplace, employers need to comply with different regulations which include amongst others, The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), Occupational Health and Safety (Act 85 of 1993), Employment Equity (Act 55 of 1998) and Basic Conditions of Employment (Act no 75 of 1997). Despite all these measures in place, workplace violence may still exist in organisations and the Department of Social Development cannot be immune to workplace violence hence it became imperative for the researcher to look at experiences of employees in this Department.

In a case study conducted in Australia under a joint international programme initiated by International Labour Office (ILO), the International Council of Nurses, and the World Health Organisation (WHO), workplace violence is described as incidents where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003:5). This description gave a clear view to understand that workplace violence took place in different forms hence it was crucial to note these typologies.

Workplace violence is defined further by Di Martino (2002:4) as a single incident or cumulative incidents where employees are physically assaulted or attacked, are emotionally abused, pressurised, harassed or threatened in work-related circumstances with the likelihood of impacting on their right to dignity, physical or emotional safety, well-being, work performance and social development . It was crucial to define workplace violence broadly in this study in order to understand its nature and to clearly distinct the different behaviours displayed and its impact.

In order to understand the broader concept of workplace violence, it was also important to understand other related concepts like violence, aggression and bullying.

- Violence

Kgosimore (2007:64) in his research defined violence as verbal or non-verbal acts that are aimed at depriving the victims of their rights and dignity by hurting them physical and psychologically. These acts range from gossiping, emotional abuse and humiliation to physical assault and killing.

- Bullying

Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work or tasks and in order for the label bullying to be applied to a particular activity, the interaction has to occur repeatedly (Van Heugten, 2007:14).

In a study conducted by Van Heugten (2007:14) on workplace bullying of social workers in New Zealand, participants told of being persistently targeted with escalating oppressive behaviours, generally by superiors such as supervisors and

managers. This study confirmed that workplace violence cuts across any occupational level and is not limited to the health sector only.

- Aggression

Aggression refers to the entire range of assertive, intrusive, and attacking behaviours that are both overt and covert, such as sarcasm, self-directed attacks and dominance behaviour (Kgosimore, 2004:61). This definition highlighted a linkage between violence and aggression as it explained some of the behaviours that emerged as a result of violent situations.

The study focused on the experiences of employees of the National Department of Social Development concentrating on employees based in the Pretoria National Office. The researcher through this study explored the experiences of employees with regard to workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development and determined the nature of workplace violence experienced by employees. The study further looked at factors that contributed to workplace violence that was experienced by employees and made policy recommendations to the Department.

1.2. Literature Review

Workplace violence has become an alarming phenomenon worldwide which has affected performance and productivity within the workplace immensely. Ginn and Jean-Henry (2002:4) indicate that workplace violence is a business issue that can affect the bottom line of any organisation. Choe (2000:159) shared the same view that workplace violence is detrimental to both the employer and the employee; it causes decreased worker productivity and it results in monetary loss for businesses and the worker. In view of the above the researcher supported the fact that

workplace violence has the potential to harm both employees and organisational productivity therefore, it was important to understand the background of this phenomenon and how it is explained in literature.

It is acknowledged that South African legislation provided us with a lot of prescripts which are meant to protect employees in the workplace, however the recent mining uprisings which took place has shown us that employees are really not protected in the workplace. In the study conducted by Raphadu (2009:2) on the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the South African Police Services, there is an indication that participants experienced verbal violence through insults and threats from their colleagues, including their immediate superiors.

It is also evident in the study conducted by Kgosimore (2007:61) regarding the violence during the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union strike, that employers and employees in other workplaces became victims of striking workers when the violence spilled over into the workplace. This study has shown that issues that emanate from the workplace are also related to violence that is perpetuated against employees away from the workplace.

In understanding workplace violence further in South Africa, Kennedy (2004:6) conducted a study concentrating on nurses' experiences and understanding of workplace violence in a trauma and emergency department. The study indicated that nurses are experiencing physical threats, verbal abuse and psychological and imminent violence on a regular basis. They tend to 'normalise' abusive patient behaviour because of the perception that workplace abuse comes with the territory which then resulted in under reporting. The mentioned studies further highlighted that workplace violence takes place in different forms; therefore it was important to

understand these forms in order to identify the types of workplace violence experienced by employees in the Department of Social Development.

Due to the fact that it became evident that there was a need identified to investigate and explore the experiences of other professionals in public service, the researcher proposed a study about the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development.

1.2.1 Types of workplace violence

Researchers have categorised workplace violence in order to differentiate the different types of workplace violence that exist. The experiences regarding workplace violence will differ depending on the environment and the circumstances under which employees are working. Mayhew and Chappell (2003:5) refer to the following three categories, which also appears to be the typology that is referred to by Kgosimore (2004:63):

- External violence

External violence is perpetrated against workers by persons from outside the organisation such as during armed hold ups at shops and banks. This type of violence is also called a type I (Stranger violence) and is usually committed by a stranger towards an employee (Kgosimore, 2004: 63).

- Client initiated violence

This type of violence is inflicted on workers by clients or customers such as patients assaulting nurses or in the context of the Department of Social Development instances we may refer to recipients of social grants as perpetrators. Kgosimore

(2004:63) describes this type of violence as a Type II which is a violent act by an individual who is the recipient of a service provided by a workplace.

- Internal violence

Internal violence refers to violence which occurs between workers in an organisation for example between a supervisor and employees or workers and apprentices. It is also referred to as Type III (worker-on-worker) which involves violent acts by a current or former employee on another employee. The study will seek to establish as to whether this typology exists in the National Department of Social Development.

Workplace violence can also be categorised into physical violence, psycho-social violence, bullying, sexual harassment and racial harassment. Di Martino (2002:5) affirms that not all violence is physical and further states that in recent years new evidence has emerged concerning the impact and harm caused by non-physical violence, such as psychological violence encompassing harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and mobbing. The researcher is of the opinion that psychological violence has the potential of destroying both the individual as well as productivity in the workplace.

1.2.2 Factors contributing to violence in the workplace

Workplace violence is a growing phenomenon and is one of the contributing factors towards psycho-social ailments such as stress, low morale and poor interpersonal relationships. Ginn and Jean-Henry (2002:6) are of the view that bullying has a direct effect on productivity and profits because it creates absenteeism and low morale and also may increase turnover. In understanding the experiences of employees

regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development, the study focused on the main factors which led to workplace violence.

The researcher considered the following aspects that can lead to violence in the workplace which included amongst others individual, organisational and societal factors.

- Individual factors

Individual factors relating to staff working relationships may appear as one of the contributing factors to certain types of workplace violence. It can be displayed through different attitudes toward one another, personalities and behaviours in the workplace. Individual factors may refer to a perceived threatening tone of voice or body language as well as staff attitudes. It was therefore one of the objectives of this research to investigate the factors contributing to workplace violence in the workplace.

- Organisational factors

In the climate survey conducted in the Department of Social Development (National Office) by Cassim and Cassim (2007:13) it was illustrated that there were some dimensions of conflict management, employee and management relations and lack of trust. These factors contribute a lot in straining interpersonal relationships and creating unhealthy working conditions within the Department. Factors of organisational nature may include an organisational culture of allowing bullying and harassment to thrive in the workplace.

- Societal factors

In the South African environment violence is common in our communities, which makes it easier to flow over to the working environment. Di Martino (2002:22) indicated that unemployment, high crime rates and the socio-economic situation are amongst the contributing factors to physical violence or external violence. It was important for this research to explore if societal factors had influence on the experiences of employees of the Department of Social Development.

1.2.3 The effects of workplace violence

Choe (2000:160) explains that workplace violence has long standing, far reaching negative effects on a worker and his work productivity. It is associated with job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover intention, and decreased morale throughout the entire organisation. The study confirmed that workplace violence affected the employees physically, psychologically and emotionally.

Employees who have been exposed to any form of physical assault in the workplace will experience different physiological reactions which may lead to absenteeism and low productivity in the workplace. MacIntosh (2005:903) has identified the following psychosomatic stress illnesses that one can experience due to workplace violence; headaches, tearfulness, dry throats, gastro intestinal problems, changes in body weight, sleep disturbances, diminishing energy, exhaustion, disrupted concentration and hyper vigilance.

It is evident in the discussion that workplace violence and bullying had an impact on the emotional wellbeing of employees and as a result it affects the self esteem of an employee being violated to the extent that one's performance is affected.

The prolonged emotional effects which are not being attended to may lead to the development of psychological problems. The trends identified in the EAP office indicated that there was an increase in the number of employees presented with mental health problems such as stress, depression and bipolar mood disorders which emanated as a result of work related problems. The study confirmed that the psychological symptoms experienced by some of the employees were as a result of workplace violence. Flannery (1999:105) found that the psychological effects may include constricted thinking, restricted coping, state of fear, anxiety, depression and symptoms associated with psychological trauma, especially hyper vigilance; sleep disturbances and recurring intrusive memories.

1.3. Theoretical framework

In order to explore the workplace violence phenomenon, the study utilised the systems theory as a theoretical framework to guide the discussion. A 'system' is defined as a whole, an entity composed of separate but interacting and interdependent parts (Ambrosino, Heffernan, Shuttlesworth & Ambrosino, 2005:55).

In order for an organisation to function properly, there is a need for some transactions and interactions to take place between different subsystems which will include individuals and their environment. Externally one can relate the transaction of organisations with other organisations and institutions. Internally one can see how people within the organisation perform individually and in group tasks.

An individual as a system has other subsystems that are interrelated and influence each other, which will include physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing and if one subsystem is affected, one will not be able to function appropriately in the workplace.

Ambrosino et al. (2005:55) refers to a human body as a system and realised that when one component of the human body fails to function effectively it affects the way the other subsystems function, and in turn the whole body will be affected. The transactions of individuals within the organisation are crucial in order to determine the productivity within the organisation. Workplace violence has the potential to affect the transactions within a working environment which will in turn affect productivity.

Systems theory gives an ecological perspective which looks into the person and the environment, the person's or group's needs, rights, goals and capacities and the physical and social environment within which a person or group operates (Ambrosino et.al, 2005:72). Poor interactions amongst employees create a negative environment which will prevent employees from being productive. The individual as a system has various sub-systems such as a family, friends and colleagues which they interact and relate with on a continuous basis. On the other hand the organisation views its employees as part of the systems within the organisation.

Workplace violence can affect employees' physical, psychological and emotional well-being and it may lead to low productivity and absenteeism within the organisation. Work productivity can further be diminished as violence affecting one worker will inevitably affect co-workers as well. Co-workers may be reluctant to go to work in fear that they too may be victims of violence, or they may become dissatisfied with work because the environment may be hostile (Choe, 2000:161).

The Department of Social Development as a system has various units which are interdependent on each other to assist the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives. The Department relies on its employees as well as other external

stakeholders to accomplish its vision and mission. Therefore, if these systems are not interacting well, then the organisation will not function optimally.

It was therefore imperative to consider the systems theory as a theoretical framework to explore those systems that were affected by workplace violence.

1.4. Rationale and problem statement

The National Department of Social Development has a staff establishment of 784 employees comprising of permanent staff, contract workers and interns. The core business of the Department is to create a caring and integrated system of social services that facilitates human development and improve the quality of life. The Department employs different levels which include, management, professionals and support staff.

The employees of the Department of Social Development are not immune to workplace violence as a result some of them have experienced workplace violence. It is the duty of the employer to ensure that an enabling environment is created in the workplace by ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to protect employees. It is a known fact that even though there are systems in place to protect the employees' rights in the workplace such as grievance procedures, affected employees still did not report such incidents. The question is why the employees of the National Department of Social Development are not reporting workplace violence, should such violence occur. Fear of victimisation and lack of trust in the existing systems and procedures were reported to be reasons for such unwillingness to report.

The cases of conflict between employees and their supervisors or insubordination within the Department were dealt with through Departmental grievance and

disciplinary procedures which was attended by Labour Relations Office. It was still unknown as to how many cases of workplace violence were still unreported. Despite the researcher's intent to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence at different levels within the National Department of Social Development, the intention was not to determine the extent of the phenomenon as it required a quantitative onslaught.

The Department has an established Employee Assistance Programme which is run by two social workers according to the in-house model. The reported cases included high levels of mental health and work related stress. It was further observed in the EAP office that most employees are requesting to be transferred from their units due to poor working relationships, between the colleagues and their supervisors or even colleagues at the same level. There were instances where colleagues were not communicating with each other, cases of verbal abuse as well as employees threatening to assault each other.

The researcher is employed as the Employee Health and Wellness manager of this unit; as a result the study excluded all clients who reported their cases in the EAP unit. The researcher was of the opinion that these types of cases were related to workplace violence hence the initiation of the study to explore the experiences of other employees regarding workplace violence in the Department as well to determine the effects of workplace violence on the employees.

The knowledge and understanding that the study generated enabled the researcher to identify the different types of workplace violence that exists and will help the employer to develop interventions that will deal with workplace violence and achieve

long-term benefits to improve the morale of the employees (Fouchè & Delpont, 2011:107).

The research dealt with the questions set out below.

What is the nature of workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development?

- What are the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development?

1.5. Goal and Objectives

➤ **Goal**

The goal of the study was to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence as a phenomenon in the National Department of Social Development.

➤ **Objectives**

The objectives of the research were:

- to contextualise workplace violence as a phenomenon in the National Department of Social Development.
- to determine the nature of workplace violence that may exist in the Department.
- to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development.

- to investigate the factors that may be contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

1.6. Research approach

The qualitative approach was appropriate to investigate the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. Creswell (2009:37) indicates that in the entire qualitative research process, the researcher needs to maintain a focus on learning the meaning that the participants attach to the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the research. It was therefore crucial to note that through qualitative research, the researcher was able to hear participants' views about their experiences of workplace violence. Workplace violence is a reality, and it was crucial to investigate the understanding of employees regarding this phenomenon. Qualitative researchers believe that the researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of what has been observed is critical for understanding any social phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:133).

The researcher's objectivity was maintained in the sense that the interpretations of the meaning and understanding of workplace violence as described by the participants was not influenced by the researcher's background information, history, context and prior understanding of the phenomenon (Fouchè & Delpont, 2011:65).

It was assumed that the qualitative approach was relevant to this study as it was an exploratory attempt to understand the different experiences of employees regarding workplace violence.

1.7. Type of research

The researcher utilized applied research to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence and further determine the nature of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development in order to give meaning to it. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:43) explained that applied research is aimed at addressing issues that have immediate relevance to current practices, procedures and policies. The study explored the experiences of workplace violence as observed by participants in order to address immediate problems facing the professionals in practice.

Applied research in industry has several features that distinguish it from basic research: firstly, the need for research in industry develops as a result of organisational problems (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:25). It was clear in this definition that applied research is appropriate to address workplace violence as a problem in practice, and further the research made recommendations that may influence the existing policies.

1.8. Research design

A collective case study design was used to explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:135) explained that a collective case study is applicable to learn about a little known or poorly understood situations. The researcher was of the view that workplace violence was still an unknown subject in the workplace which required exploration.

Fouchè and Schurink (2011:322) further explained that collective case study is an instrumental case study extended to a number of cases. Cases are chosen so that

comparison can be made between cases and concepts and in this way theories can also be extended. In this regard the researcher focused on employees in different units or sections who have been exposed to workplace violence.

In order to explore the experiences of employees regarding the existence of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants to express their experiences as well as views and perceptions about this phenomenon.

1.9. Research methods

1.9. 1 Study population and sampling

The study population was the employees of the Department of Social Development based in the National Office in Pretoria. The sample was drawn from the six branches of the Department and these include Integrated Development, Comprehensive Social Security and Appeals, Chief Operations Office, Finance, Welfare Services and Corporate services.

A sample is made up of elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study, or it can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which a researcher is interested (Strydom, 2011b:224). In this study the sample consisted of 10 employees comprising of 2 employees from the five (5) branches.

Purposive sampling was relevant for the study as participants had information about their observation and experiences of the phenomenon. Strydom and Delpont (2011:392) explain that purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most

characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study best. The sample was therefore drawn from the employees of the Department of Social Development and as a result an open invitation was forwarded for employees to participate voluntarily. The first two volunteers from each of the six branches were to be interviewed as a sample – total of 12 respondents.

The researcher adhered to ethical aspects; as a result informed consent was obtained from the employees to participate in the study. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study so that they could make an informed decision. The researcher made an open invitation through internal communication method of emails and intranet for all staff based in the National office which explained the purpose of the study and criteria of participants. Written informed consents were obtained from participants and the interviews proceeded only if the consent had been signed. The criteria for the purposive sampling were as follows:

- Participants were to be employed by the National Department of Social Development in the units that were being mentioned.
- Participants must have been exposed to any form of workplace violence
- Participants who have been clients in the EAP office were to be excluded
- The participants must have volunteered to participate in the study
- Participants must have been working in the Department for more than 1 year
- The participants must have signed the consent to participate in the study.

A private office in the EAP section was utilised for interviewing purposes. Confidentiality was maintained by ensuring that the information provided by the participants was not shared with anyone.

1.9.2. Data collection method

The study used semi-structured interviews as a method of collecting data in the Department of Social Development as it allowed the researcher the opportunity to follow up the other avenues that emerge in the interview. Greeff (2011:353) explains that semi-structured interviews are suitable when the topic is controversial or personal. It was therefore relevant to utilise this data collection method as workplace violence is controversial and personal.

Semi-structured interviews permit the researcher to have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule to guide the interviews. Greeff (2011:352) explains that interview schedules provide the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participants and negotiate the narrative terrain. The researcher prepared interview questions to be covered in the schedule. Open-ended questions were formulated to allow the participants to give their open views about this phenomenon.

The issue of workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development is controversial; as a result semi-structured interviews allowed the participants an opportunity to share their experiences regarding workplace violence. Interviews were conducted in a separate office, away from the EAP office to allow participants to be fully engaged in the interviews.

In administering the interviews, the researcher needed to be engaged in order to understand the participants' responses thoroughly therefore their perspectives should be recorded. It was acknowledged that some of the participants may have been clients in the EAP office which may impact on the objectivity and ethics of the study, therefore such employees were not allowed to participate. Greeff (2011:348)

explains that these types of interviews are used to elicit information in order to achieve understanding of the participant's point of view or situation. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and were transcribed for purposes of the analysis.

1.9.3. Data analysis

In determining whether the collected data will address the research question and achieve the set goal and objectives, it was essential to analyse the data that has been collected. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:140) established that the central task during data analysis is to identify common themes in people's descriptions of their experiences. It was relevant in the study to identify themes from the responses of the participants' experiences of workplace violence and also to analyse data according to themes.

The process of qualitative data analysis was followed to ensure that the collected data was analysed to record the perceptions, experiences and knowledge of participants regarding workplace violence. Schurink, Fouche`and De Vos (2011: 403) described the process of qualitative data analysis as it outlined by Cresswell. The researcher followed this process, as it allowed the researcher the opportunity to absorb the general description of the phenomenon. The process is divided into three categories and these have sub-categories that explain each category. The process will include: preparing and organising the data, reducing the data and visualising, representing and displaying the data.

The data in this study was analysed according to the mentioned process. However, consideration was given to some limitations that affected the participation of the participants.

Preparing and analysing data

When preparing and organising data the researcher ensured that all the necessary precautions were taken care of before the recording took place. The interviews were recorded as per each participant's voluntary consent. Schurink, Fouche`and De Vos (2011:403) has indicated that special attention needs to be paid to the consideration that data recording strategies will be used that fit the setting and the research participants sensitivities, and this will only be used with their consent. The participants were alerted about the recording device that was utilised and this tool was only used per participants consent. The process of collecting data was finalised first before it was analysed. The researcher wrote memo's to capture the ideas and perceptions raised during the interviews.

Generating categories and coding data

The researcher in reading and writing memos w formulated themes and subthemes to distinguish the responses according to different categories. The researcher determined the number of categories. In order to achieve the purpose of the study the researcher looked at the objectives of the study, and the themes were formulated according to these objectives. The coding process will then follow after themes have been identified, to understand how the employees perceive workplace violence and their experiences regarding the existence of this phenomenon.

Presenting Data

The researcher wrote the final narrative of all the work that has been done presenting in a form of qualitative manuscript. Schurink, Fouche`and De Vos (2011:419) illustrates that crafting a qualitative manuscript is a process through

which the writer clarifies how data and concepts fit together. The experiences of different employees were grouped together, to gain an understanding of the nature of workplace violence that has been highlighted.

In order to illustrate trustworthiness of the study, the researcher ensured that the quality of the research is evaluated by assessing the four criteria as described by Schurink, Fouchè and De Vos (2011:419) as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Data was collected from various participants working in different units in order for the researcher to determine if the responses give the same meaning. The researcher reflected on what the participants has indicated during the interviews.

The researcher did not identify a need to change the design during the analysis or any changing conditions of the phenomenon of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

In ensuring credibility the researcher reflected the participant's views in such a way that information shared is well represented and constructed. Schurink, Fouchè and De Vos (2011:420) indicated that the researcher in terms of transferability will need to determine whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another. Due to the fact that multiple cases were used in this study the findings can be generalised.

Schurink, Fouchè and De Vos (2011:420) explained that dependability ensures that the research is logical, well documented and audited. The researcher ensured that the documents are well presented and audited. In this regard the researcher used the independent assessor to edit the report before it is presented.

In conforming to the ethical aspects, the researcher made the evidence of the findings available for any evaluation if need be to ensure objectivity of the report.

1.9.4 Pilot study

A pilot study is described as a small study conducted prior to a large piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instrument and analysis are adequate and appropriate (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2000:155). In order to determine whether the semi-structured interviews were appropriate for the study and whether it can obtain relevant data the researcher conducted a pilot test.

As a pilot test for the study, two participants were selected and informed of the purpose of the pilot test. The participants for the pilot test were also selected through an open invitation that was circulated to recruit volunteers to participate in the study. The participants for the pilot test were excluded to participate in the actual study and in the final data analysis.

The purpose of the pilot test was to assist the researcher to identify whether there are problems regarding the semi-structured interview schedule as well as its appropriateness for the study. It gave the researcher the opportunity to change the method of interview questions. It is through the pilot study that the researcher was able to identify the feasibility of the study.

1.10. Ethical considerations

In order to present scientific work, the researcher adhered to different ethical considerations. Ethics are defined by Strydom (2011a:114) as “a set of principles which is suggested by an individual or group is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct

towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”.

The researcher adhered to the ethical issues discussed below, which also compels the researcher to be committed to professional ethics.

1.10.1 Avoidance of harm

In order to avoid harm to the participants in the study, the researcher explained the possible impact of the investigation and advised the participants of their right to withdraw from participating if they wished. In the study there was a possibility of having participants who were vulnerable due to their previous encounters with workplace violence. The participants were reassured of the confidentiality regarding any information they shared regarding incidents of workplace violence to avoid any harm that may be caused by sharing the details.

1.10.2 Voluntary participation

The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and thus they could withdraw at any time during the process. The researcher I explained the purpose of the study to the participants in the beginning of the study so that they could make an informed decision about participating in the research.

1.10.3 Informed consent

It was crucial for the participants to give written informed consent as proof that the participants were informed of all the necessary processes that will transpire during the investigation. Strydom (2011a:117) explains that obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of the participants' involvement, the procedures which will be

followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed, and the credibility of the researcher have all been explained to participants. The informed consent forms were all signed by participants after the process has been explained.

1.10.4 Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher ensured that the privacy of participants was maintained by ensuring that the names and details of the participants are not revealed to anyone in the Department without their consent. Strydom (2011a:119) emphasises that confidentiality can be viewed as an essential part of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to private information. The researcher will ensure that transcripts are confidentially kept to ensure that it is only the researcher who has access to this information.

1.10.5 Debriefing of participants

Strydom (2011a:122) emphasises the importance of debriefing and states that debriefing sessions after the study is crucial, during which subjects have the opportunity to work through their experience and its aftermath. Arrangements were made with the internal Employee Assistance Practitioner to offer such a service if need be and participants were informed about this arrangements.

1.10.6 Actions and competence of the researcher

The researcher upholds to the ethical conduct of the profession and ensured that the ethical issues of research are adhered to. Strydom (2011a:123) indicates that the entire research project must run its course in an ethically correct manner. The researcher applied the knowledge acquired in literature competently to ensure that

the sampling procedures are conducted accordingly as per the guidelines of the method or criteria that was utilised to select the sample. The researcher used interviewing skills and techniques to probe and reflect during the interviews and data will be analysed accordingly.

1.10.7. Publication of findings

The findings of the study were compiled in an objective and accurate manner. No false or fabricated data was published. Strydom (2011a:126) maintains that subjects should be informed about the findings in an objective manner without offering too many details or impairing the principle of confidentiality. Limitations of the study will be covered in the final report. The University of Pretoria and the National Department of Social Development will be provided with the report. Data will be stored at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Social Work and Criminology for 15 years.

1.11 Limitation of the study

There are several limitations that are relevant to the study. These limitations will be discussed briefly as follows;

- The study population consisted of only 10 participants out of the 12 who could meet the criteria of the sample required out of 12 that were expected, it is therefore unclear as to what extent their experiences of workplace violence can be generalized for the National Department of Social Development including Provinces.
- The study initially intended to have two (2) participants in each of the six branches of the Department however there was no response received from the branches of Finance and comprehensive Social Security and Appeals.

- The participation of senior management in the study was minimal as a result the experiences of employees at that level were not captured, and therefore it is unclear as to whether workplace violence exists at that level in the organization.
- The department has currently undergone a restructuring process therefore it may have affected the participation as units were shifted around.

1.12. Chapter Outline

The structure of the dissertation is set out below.

Chapter 1

Introduction and background

The introduction provided an overview of the reasons for the initiation of the research topic in the Department of Social Development. The background explained how the research was conducted in terms of attaining the main goal and objectives of the research. The chapter further explained how the research was designed and the methods that were utilised to conduct the research.

Chapter 2

Literature review

In the literature review the study is categorised according to different headings and sub-headings to gather all the information relevant for the study of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

- Definition of concepts of workplace violence

- Factors contributing to workplace violence
- The effects of workplace violence
- The types of workplace violence

The system's theory was covered in the literature review in order to contextualise the relevance thereof as a theoretical framework for the study and to demonstrate how the workplace as a system can be influenced by workplace violence.

Chapter 3

Empirical findings on workplace violence in the Department of Social Development

In this chapter the research findings were discussed according to the themes that were identified. The research methodology that was used was discussed as well as the responses as they emanated from the participants through the empirical results, covering their experiences and the factors that contributed to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. The summary of the report was covered to indicate if the objectives of the study have been achieved or not.

Chapter 4

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter the researcher drew conclusions from the study. Furthermore recommendations will be made to the National Department of Social Development, which may influence the revision of the existing policies.

In the next chapter, a theoretical overview on workplace violence will be presented

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

2.1. Introduction

The current uprisings in the South African industrial and mining sectors have raised concern over the safety and protection of employees in different workplaces. It has been observed that the South African communities are experiencing high rate of violence which manifest itself in different forms. The workplace is not an exception when it comes to violence as it also part of the system and therefore one way or the other it spills over to the work-environment. Kgosimore (2007:62) support this view and states that in South Africa the phenomenon of workplace violence remains an enigma, it remains relatively unknown and under researched, notwithstanding the passing of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and other progressive legislation to support it like Domestic Violence (Act 116 of 1998) and the Labour Relations (Act 66 of 1995), to protect the human rights of people as ordinary citizens and as workers.

It is the view of the researcher that in the public service not much has been said about workplace violence; however the reality of workplace violence cannot be ignored. In the study conducted by Kennedy (2004:6) on nurse's experiences and understanding of workplace violence in a trauma and emergency department, it indicated that nurses are experiencing physical threats, verbal abuse and psychological and imminent violence on a regular basis. This study depicts that there is an element of workplace violence in the public service although it has not been

explored in other professions within the public service. It has however been evident in the transport industry that workplace violence exists and it affects the passengers as well. The study conducted by Chapell(1998:19) has revealed that there is a growing awareness in many countries that violence in the workplace includes a range of behaviours such as physical violence, psychological violence, sexual harassment and bullying. The researcher therefore initiated the study to look at the experiences of employees in the National Department of Social Development.

There has been growing recognition internationally that workplace violence across all occupational sectors has reached epidemic levels. A case study in Australia on Workplace violence in the health sector illustrates that the patterns of violence experienced by Australian health care workers were likely to be complex as their experience of workplace violence varied from verbal abuse, threats and assaults (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003:37).

In order to understand workplace violence it is important to look at how it is has been defined in literature. The effects of workplace violence on employees and employer will also be looked at, as well as understanding the different types of workplace violence.

2.2 DEFINING THE CONCEPTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The concept of workplace violence is complex to define as it is interpreted differently depending how the employer and employee view circumstances leading to the display of different behaviours related to violence in the workplace. The individual and the employer or organisation are viewed theoretically as systems that are interrelated, therefore the individuals are affected by other sub-systems which may influence ones behaviour in the workplace. In some instance the style of

management may depicts some form of workplace violence and employees turns to normalise such situation.

The researcher is of the view that if concepts are clearly defined, then it will be easy to make conclusions. The following concepts which the researcher believes that they are related to workplace violence will be defined;

2.2.1 VIOLENCE

Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, actual or threatened against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (Kgosimore, 2004: 61). This definition encompasses the different forms of violence that can affect both the individual and the group and further indicates the effects of violence.

In understanding violence further, Steinman (2003:4) explains that violence is divided into different sub-types which includes; self-directed violence e.g. suicidal behaviour and self abuse, such as self mutilation or suicide, interpersonal violence e.g. violence between family members and intimate partners and collective violence e.g. which refers to violence between members of one group against members of another group in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives. The above mentioned elements of violence illustrate physical and psychological violence. Violence has the potential of creating a hostile environment if it persist and also destroys relationships amongst individuals. Kgosimore (2004:60) is of the view that violence has been an important element throughout most of human history, as it is a revelation of how societies develop the culture of violence and sustain it through beliefs, traditions and practices that are passed from one generation to another .It is

important to understand the concept of violence relating to the workplace as it is the focus of the study.

2.2.2 WORPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence is a natural spill over into the workplace of the violence that permeates society, communities and family life. It has become a daily occupational risk and hazards and part of the job for many workers in today's society (Kgosimore, 2004: 60). Workplace violence has been conceptualised in the South African context as incidents where employee(s) are physically or emotionally abused, harassed, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work, involving explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, wellbeing and health (Martino, 2002:4).

The researcher is of the view that understanding the meaning of workplace violence assisted in identifying the incidents of workplace violence as explained by participants, understanding its effects and plan preventive measures. Defining the concept of workplace violence enabled the researcher to make conclusions and recommendations about workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. In the current literature, workplace violence is described within the parameters of physical or verbal assault or physical and non-physical violence (Hagney, Tuckett, Parker, & Eley; 2010:189). The physical and psychological violence appears as the elements of workplace violence that needed to be confirmed through research.

2.2.3 WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work tasks. Workplace bullying is defined by Cunniff and Mostert (2012:3) as repeated actions and practices that are directed to one or more workers, which are all unwanted by the victim, which may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence and distress, and that may interfere with job performance and cause an unpleasant working environment. It is clear from this definition that workplace bullying is the negative behaviour that an employee may display to colleagues.

Workplace bullying has devastating physical and psychological effects on employees which may also create negative effects on productivity of the organization. Cunniff & Mostert (2012:3) indicated that it manifest itself in various behaviours which include amongst others;

- public humiliation
- verbal abuse
- social exclusion
- intimidation
- inaccurate accusations
- spreading rumours
- ignoring people for long periods
- undermining victims due to professional status

The researcher is of the view that bullying occurs over a certain period of time hence it is also supported in literature that, it is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts (Van Heugten, 2007:16). This definition indicates the distinction between workplace violence and bullying as it states that it escalates, whereas workplace violence may occur over one incident. This view is supported by the definition of workplace bullying as provided by (Ncongwane,2012:2) that workplace bullying usually emphasize exposure to a range of repeated and enduring negative acts directed towards one or more targets who typically end up unable to defend themselves.

Bullying then becomes one form of workplace violence, which was not the focus of discussion for this as it seeks to understand experiences of employees regarding workplace violence broadly.

2.2.4 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Definition of sexual harassment:

- The legal definition of sexual harassment is “unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive and affects working conditions or creates a hostile work environment.” It is also a form of sexual discrimination (Protection from Harassment Act, No 17 of 2011).
- The conduct of the harasser must either be **severe** or it must be **pervasive** to be sexual harassment. A single incident is probably not sexual harassment unless it is severe i.e. physical. It may also not be

severe or pervasive but continually mild i.e. every day compliments with sexual overtone, or everyday conversation with sexual overtone.

- Sexual harassment is not restricted to a manager/ supervisor/ subordinate relationship, it could also involve co-workers, persons seeking employment, clients, suppliers, vendors, visitors, independent contractors or anyone else who conducts, attempts or solicited business with the organization. Koritsas et.al(2010: 260) highlighted that sexual harassment is any form of propositioning or unwelcome sexual attention from a patient/client, their friends, family member, other professionals or work colleague. The two definitions provided the same meaning of sexual harassment which included the possibility of the perpetrator being the family member or a friend.

2.2.5 AGGRESSION

Aggression refers to the entire range of assertive, intrusive, and attacking behaviours that are both overt and covert, such as sarcasm, self-directed attacks and dominance behaviour (Kgosimore, 2004:61). This definition gives a linkage between violence and aggression as it explains some of the behaviours that may emerge as a result of violent situations.

2.3. THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS AN ORGANISATION

The study is conducted in the National Department of Social Development, hence it is crucial to understand its mandate in Government, and therefore for the purpose of this study the vision and mission of the Department will be outlined to understand what it strives to achieve.

The Department of Social Development remains firm on its objective of improving the quality of life for all our people and is on course in the realisation of its vision which is to build a caring society together. In pursuit of this vision, the Department will continue to provide comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and quality social development services to fight vulnerability and poverty (Climate Survey Report, 2015:5).

The Department of Social Development derives its basic mandate from section 27 of the South African Constitution, which states that all South Africans have a right to sufficient food and water as well as social security, including appropriate social assistance to people who are unable to support themselves and their dependants, and other measures, within the bounds of its available resources, to progressively realise these rights (DSD App, 2015: 2). The above mentioned mandate gave rise to the establishment of the following branches; Welfare services, Integrated development, Comprehensive social security to assist in developing the strategy, policies and programmes aimed at addressing poverty. In supporting these branches then there was a need for other branches like corporate services and Chief operating office to offer administrative support to the entire Department.

The current staff establishment of the National Office is 957, and Women dominating at 604 and 353 males. The numbers has grown due to the merging of the two Departments as compared to 700 employees when the study was approved.

The Department realises that its greatest asset is its Human Resources; hence it was important to create supportive structures such as Employee Assistance Programme for continuous support.

2.3.1 THE VISION AND MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- **VISION**

A caring and integrated system of Social services that facilitate human development and improve the quality of life.

- **MISSION**

To ensure the provision of comprehensive social services which protect the poor and vulnerable within the framework of the South African constitution and subsequent legislation; create an enabling environment for sustainable development; and delivery integrated, sustainable and quality services in partnership with all those committed to building a caring society (Climate Survey Report, 2012:5).

In order to ensure that the department uphold this vision and mission, there is a need to create an enabling environment and ensure that employees are productive. The work in the Department involves developing policies and programmes that must be cascaded down to Provinces for implementation as a result it requires extensive travelling by employees to ensure monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes on the ground In 2007 the Department of Social development conducted a corporate climate survey which aimed to curb the high turnover rate that the department experienced and recommend a retention strategy (Cassim & Cassim, 2007:12).

2.4. THE TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence may surface in different forms and all have the potential to cause harm. Steinman (2003:21) indicated in the study conducted that 61,9% of all health care workers in South Africa experienced at least one incident of physical or psychological violence. It is noted that physical and psychological violence are the two types of violence that are often referred to in most studies, the researcher will explore how the other researchers have described the types of workplace violence.

Kgosimore (2004:62) highlighted that workplace violence ranges from soft violence to extreme violence. The soft violence referring to violent acts such as abuse of power, false accusations, discrimination/racism, sexual harassment, rumours, threats/ intimidation and verbal abuse. Extreme violence includes homicide, suicide, sexual assault, physical abuse, disruptive behaviour and the destruction of property. It is acknowledged that working circumstances differ, which makes it clear that employees will also experience different types of workplace violence depending on their work settings.

Mayhew & Chappell (2003:5) have described workplace violence according to 3 basic typologies which includes;

- External violence;
- Client-initiated violence ;and
- Internal violence

Kgosimore (2004:60) have similar typologies of workplace violence which is outlined as follows;

- Type I- Criminal intent (attributed to strangers)
- Type II- Customer or client

- Type III- Worker -on-worker
- Type IV- domestic or personal relationship violence

The two typologies outlined, are similar in nature and therefore the researcher will use them interchangeably to explain them further.

2.4.1 EXTERNAL VIOLENCE

External violence is perpetrated against workers by persons from outside the organisation such as armed robbery at shops and banks (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003:5). This is the type of violence which is usually an external service recipient or stranger attacking the employee or employer. Kgosimore (2004:60) refers to this type as Type I workplace violence which has criminal intent and intrusive violence; it is committed by a stranger to an employee. It is further explained that the perpetrator does not have any legitimate relationship with the establishment and the motive is usually robbery, sabotage or terrorism. This type of workplace violence occurs in incidents such as bank robberies, taxi violence and police attacks where the employee ends up being the victim of workplace violence.

The poverty levels in communities has increased the level of crime in communities therefore, most private and public services offered to the communities are at risk of being violated through hijackings and robberies and that leaves employees and employers being traumatised and working at a loss than making profit.

2.4.2 CLIENT INITIATED VIOLENCE

Client initiated violence is inflicted on workers by the customers or clients, such as patients assaulting nurses (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003:5). This type of workplace violence occurs in organizations that are working with clients, whereby clients due to

not being satisfied with the services may become violent or harass employees. Kgosimore (2004:63) refers to this workplace violence as type II or customer-client violence which is a violent act by an individual who is a recipient of a service provided by the affected workplace or the victim during the course of a business transaction or business relationship.

The researcher is of the view that this type of workplace violence and all the other types can manifest itself through physical violence and psychological violence. Steinman (2003:41) described physical violence as physical attacks with or without a weapon and psychological violence as verbal abuse, bullying or mobbing, racial harassment and sexual harassment.

The public sector as well experienced type II or Client initiated workplace violence in different sectors. Most of the studies conducted on workplace violence in the health sectors have identified this type of workplace violence as well. In the specific study conducted in the health sector by Kennedy (2004:13) it depicts certain aggressive behaviour and physical abuse experienced by health practitioners interacting with the public. The range of aggressive behaviour reported include being grabbed, punched, pushed, pinched, scratched, kicked, stabbed with scissors and pulled by the hair. The research further indicated that the assaults that involved physical contact were mostly ascribed to psychotic behaviour of the patient or behaviour that stemmed from the patient's substance abuse or alcohol intoxication.

2.4.3 INTERNAL VIOLENCE

Internal violence occurs between workers in an organisation, for example between supervisor and employee, or workers and apprentices (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003:5). This type of research is referred to as type III or worker-on-worker violence which

involves violent acts by current or former employee on another employee (Kgosimore, 2004:63). This type of violence stems from interpersonal or work related conflict that has not been managed properly.

The internal workplace violence may involve; a once-off physical act of violence that result in a physical or emotional injury, initiation rites perpetrated on new employees, such as apprentices or some form of harassment or bullying that continues over time (Mayhew & Chappell, 2003: 9). Different forms of type III workplace violence as referred to by Kgosimore (2004:60) may occur from an employee to employee which can be physical and psychological including:

- Threatening behaviour- such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects.
- Verbal or written threats- any expression of intent to inflict harm
- Harassment- any behaviour that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses. This includes offensive words, gestures, intimidation, bullying, or other inappropriate activities.

Van Heugten (2007:17) in a study of workplace bullying of social workers conducted in New Zealand has identified that the following forms of bullying occurred in the social work profession:

- Social exclusion was common in all settings and experienced on a daily basis.
- Deliberate exclusion from meetings and consultations, and humiliations during team meetings.
- Non social work managers who took excessive control over, and interfered with social work practice.

- Multi disciplinary meetings, social workers employed in the health sector being bullied by other health practitioners.

The above mentioned forms of bullying gives an indication that workplace violence occurs in different forms and professionals are also exposed to some form of violence during their line of duty.

2.5. THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

In order to address the phenomenon of violence in the workplace, it is necessary to understand the effects that violence has on the employee as well as within the organization. Choe (2000:160) explains that workplace violence has long standing, far reaching negative effects on a worker and his work productivity. It is associated with job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover intention, and low morale throughout the entire organization.

Ginn and Jean-Henry (2002:6) also support this view and further explain that the workplace violence has direct financial costs to the organisation and poses several kinds of legal problems to the employers. The employers have legal obligation to protect employees against violence in the workplace. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, backed by the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, with its strong emphasis on the Bill of Rights, have gone a long way in eradicating the abuse and exploitation of workers in the public and private places that serves the public (Kgosimore, 2004:64).

2.5.1 THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE ON THE EMPLOYEE

Workplace violence can affect employees physically, psychologically and emotionally.

2.5.1.1 PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Employees who have been exposed to any form of violence in the workplace may experience different physiological reactions leading to absenteeism and low productivity. MacIntosh (2005:903) has identified the following psychosomatic stress illnesses that one can experience due to workplace violence: headaches, tearfulness, dry throats, and gastro-intestinal problems, changes in body weight, sleep disturbances, diminishing energy exhaustion, disrupted concentration and hyper vigilance.

The above mentioned effects may be experienced by employees at all levels within the organization. It is not always employees at lower levels that are experiencing workplace violence, even employees at management levels still experience some form of workplace violence from their superiors.

2.5.1.2 EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

Workplace violence and bullying has impact on the emotional wellbeing of employees and as a result it will affect the self esteem of an employee being violated to the extent that one's performance is affected. McIntosh (2005:903) in his study has identified the following symptoms; fear, increasing lack of joy or hope, declining confidence, anger, depression, and a feeling of disappointment with self. The emotional responses grow over a period of time when one experiences any violence of some sort.

Emotions which are not defused properly and on time turn to be normalised by individuals experiencing such violence. Ambrosino, Heffernan, Shuttlesworth & Ambrosino(2005:55) refers to a human body as a system and realised that when one component of the human body fails to function effectively it affects the way the other subsystems function, and in turn the whole body will be affected. The emotional effects of workplace violence may affect how an employee interacts with other sub systems such as family, children.

Bowman, Bahmjee, Eagle and Crafford (2009: 302) support this view by indicating that violence at work is considered not simply an individual problem that happens from time to time, but a structural problem with much wider socio-economic, cultural and organizational causes.

2.5.1.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The prolonged emotional effects of which are not attended to may lead to the development of psychological effects. The psychological effects of workplace violence have the potential of changing employees' behaviour. Kennedy(2004:19) confirmed that psychological effects are concerning as in severe cases victims may often feel shame and guilt, tend to blame themselves and replay incidents repeatedly in their mind wondering if they could have done anything differently as a result they may suffer from Post traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Flannery (1999:105) identified the following psychological effects; constricted thinking, restricted coping, state of fear, anxiety, depression and symptoms associated with psychological trauma, especially hyper vigilance, sleep disturbances and recurring intrusive memories. The study conducted by Bowman et.al. (2009: 302) reported that psychological consequences of exposure to violence while working in South Africa include depression in health care workers, a range of stress related and significant levels of thoughts of suicide in South African Policing personnel and post- traumatic stress disorder to fidelity guards. Raphadu (2009:2) in her study conducted regarding the experiences of employees in the South African Police Services, participants' experienced verbal violence through insults and threats from their colleagues, including immediate superiors. The psychological effects of workplace violence have greater impact on the performance of employees and productivity of the organisation.

2.5.2. THE EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE TO THE ORGANIZATION

In the organizations, workplace violence causes immediate and often long term disruption to interpersonal relationships, the organization and the overall working environment. It is evident as the recent uprisings in the industrial and mining sectors have caused a lot of disruptions and loss in profit. Di Martino (2002:3) in a country case study of workplace violence in the health sector for Brazil, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Portugal, South Africa, Thailand and Australia stipulates that enormous costs of violence at work for the individual, the workplace and the community at large is becoming more and more apparent. The study further concluded that workplace violence negatively affects the performance and efficiency of the organizations in the following ways:

- Conditions professionals to be overcautious, resulting in professional behaviour and consumes too many resources unnecessarily;
- Leads to an increase on the number of professionals reporting sick
- Increase in absence on grounds of sickness results in lower productivity, less staff being available for work overtime and overwork for the personnel remaining on duty;
- Results in lower motivation, professional dissatisfaction and poor performance;
- Leads to increased turn -over and general absenteeism;
- Reduces the quality of individual and institutional care; has negative repercussions on the image of the institution.

In finding a balance between individual performance and organizational productivity the Employee assistance programme plays a pivotal role in ensuring that both the individual and organizational needs are attended to. The EAP through management consultation should be able to present the trends in the organization relating to workplace violence and provide alternative solutions to be implemented.

The organization can suffer immense losses due to one or two people who do not adhere to company's policies and procedures. Work productivity is further decreased because violence affecting one worker will inevitably affect co-workers as well. Co-workers may be reluctant to go to work in fear that they too may be victims of violence, or dissatisfied with work because the environment may be hostile (Choe, 1999:161). The researcher is of the view that the effects of workplace violence on the organization may be detrimental to the organization, therefore the relevant prevention strategies need to be looked at to deal with workplace violence.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The intention of this chapter was to look at what is entailed in literature in as far as workplace violence is concerned but mainly looking into the following aspects

- how the concept has been defined in literature;
- the types of workplace violence; and
- the effects of workplace violence on the employee and the organization.

It was however noted during the compilation of this literature that the information on international studies conducted is available but there was limited information with regard to South African literature on workplace violence. Most of the studies were conducted in the health sector of which mostly agree on the typologies of workplace violence.

The different authors have also outlined the effects of workplace violence in terms of the physical effects, emotional and psychological effects which is important to understand. The effects as presented give a clear understanding that an individual is a system which has sub-systems that are interrelated and connected to each other. If one sub-system is affected then the system cannot function effectively. Literature indicates that the effects of workplace violence are detrimental to both the individual and the organisation.

The researcher will further be looking into the factors that may be contributing to workplace violence if it exists in the Department of Social Development depending on the experiences of employees as presented in the empirical study which will be chapter 3 of this study. The experiences will be expanded with the available literature to support or differ from participants' views. It was crucial to also discuss the vision

and mission of the Department of Social Development as a background to understand what the Department's position is.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher aims to discuss the empirical research findings derived from the collective case study of 10 participants interviewed in the National Department of Social Development in Pretoria with the aim of understanding the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence. The empirical findings will also include the research methodology, ethical issues relevant to the study as well as problems encountered and detailed presentation of the empirical data collected.

The intention of the study was to draw a sample of 12 participants comprising of 2 employees from the six branches of the Department of Social Development however due to the slow response only 10 employees volunteered to participate. The internal communication was used to request volunteers to participate in the study and a request was sent to everyone in the Department. Constant reminders were forwarded to all staff and at the end 13 responded however only 10 could meet the characteristics of the sample required for the study. The 3 participants were not considered due to the fact that they were still clients in the EAP office; therefore their participation in the study would have been unethical.

The representation came from the following branches; Corporate Services, Welfare Services, Integrated Services, Non Profit organization(NPO) and Chief Operations Office (COO). There was no response received from the Finance and

Comprehensive Social Security. Purposive sampling was applied to determine the sample as the study required employees who have been exposed or experienced workplace violence. The criteria as set out in the research proposal were followed to request volunteers to participate.

3.2. ETHICAL ISSUES

It was imperative that the researcher should emphasize the ethical considerations to ensure that participants are comfortable with sharing their experiences with regard to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

3.2.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The participants were assured during the interviews that their names will not be disclosed in the report and they will not be forced or obligated to answer any question that will make them feel uncomfortable. The participants were granted the opportunity to withdraw from participating if at any point they feel that they cannot continue with the interview.

It was highlighted during the interviews that the recordings of the interviews will be kept confidential and stored at the University of Pretoria for 15 years.

3.2.2 Debriefing /counselling

The collective case study was focusing on employees who have experienced or had been affected by workplace violence as a result it was possible that some of the affected participants may require counselling after the interviews. Provision for counselling was provided for participants who will like to attend counselling to be attended by a colleague or be referred externally if there is a need.

3.2.3. Informed consent

The purpose of the study was explained to all participants and they were all requested to sign the informed consent form which explained how the interviews will unfold.

3.2.4 Voluntary Participation

The participants who took part in the study volunteered to participate by sending their names in response to the request forwarded by internal communications for volunteers to participate in the study. A period of one month was allocated for employees to send their response as due to the nature of work in the Department of Social Development most employees travel a lot.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative approach was used to investigate the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. The approach was appropriate for the study to understand the meaning that participants attach to their experiences of workplace violence.

3.3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The participants were employees who have experienced workplace violence as a result collective case study was used as a research design for this study. The researcher utilized collective case study as the researcher believed that workplace violence is still an unknown subject in the public services, as a result it

was imperative that cases should be studied to understand the meaning the employees attach to workplace violence.

The semi-structured interviews were relevant as workplace violence is controversial and personal. An interview schedule was compiled to assist in guiding the interview. The open-ended interview questions were formulated to allow the participants to give an open view about their experiences of workplace violence. The interview schedule was piloted with one participant and it was discovered that the period allocated per interview is long as a results 15-20 minutes were scheduled for each participants.

A voice recorder was used during the interviews however consent to record the interview was approved by the participants. All the participants were informed during the interviews that the recordings of the interview will be stored at the University of Pretoria as raw data for possible future research and archival purposes.

3.4. PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Participants had been grouped according to their Branches and they were numbered per branch. The branches were abbreviated as follows Corporate services (C.S), Integrated development (I.D), Non Profit Organization (NPO), Welfare services (W.S) and Chief Operating Office (COO). The aim of categorising the participants according to the branches was to understand their experiences of workplace violence within their different work settings and how the types of work they perform in the department had effect on their experiences.

3.4.1 Table 1: illustrate the profile of participants from the National Department of Social development who shared their experiences with regard to workplace violence.

Branch	Participants	Gender	Race	Position	Years of Experience	Qualifications
Corporate Services (C.S)	C.S.1	F	Coloured	Principal HR Practitioner	2 years	National Diploma Human Resource Management
	C.S.2	F	Black	Assistant-Director: External Events	22 years	Diploma in Public Relation/ Events Management
	C.S.3	F	White	Assistant Director	6 years	Post graduate Diploma in Labour Relations
Integrated Development (I.D)	I.D.1	F	Black	Deputy Director: Policy	11 years	BA Social Work



				Developme nt		
	I.D.2	F	Black	Project Coordinator	9 years	B Social Science
Welfare Services (W.S)	W.S.1	F	Black	Assistant Director: Social Work Policy Developer	7 years	BA Social Work, Masters in HIV/AIDS policy Developme nt
	W.S	M	Black	Assistant Director: Disability	4yrs	B Social Science (SW)
COO Customer care	COO 1	F	Black	Complaint Process Officer	8years	Administrati on and Business Communica tion (Unisa)
COO Gender	COO2	F	Indian	Deputy- Director: Gender	4years	Masters Degree Sustainable Developme nt
Non-Profit	NPO1	F	Black	Deputy-	8 yrs	BA Social

Organizati on (NPO)				Director: NPO Registration		Science
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3.4.2 Discussion of data on profile of Participants

It was crucial to profile the participants according to gender and race in order to understand the contributing factors towards workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. The participants who took part in the study were mostly women; this may be as a result of the nature of work within the welfare sector as it attracts mostly women. Only 1 male participant took part in the study. The current departmental employment equity report indicates that women are predominant with 604 and 353 males in the National Department of Social Development. The statistics changed since the inception of the study as the restructuring process that took place was as a result of the merging Department of women and disabilities with the Department of Social Development which took place after elections,

The participants represented various racial groups which gives an indication that the employee experienced workplace violence irrespective of their race in the Department.

3.4.3 Table 2 illustrates the Positions of participants from various Branches.

Branch	Number of participants	Positions/level
Corporate services	3	1 X Assistant Director(level 9) 1 X Practitioner (level 8)

		1X Assistant Director(level9)
Integrated Development	2	1 X Deputy Director (Level 11) 1 X Assistant manager (Level 9)
Non profit Organization(NPO)	1	1 X Deputy-Director(Level 11)
COO(customer care & Gender)	2	1 X Senior admin (level 7) 1 X Deputy Director (level 11)
Welfare Services	2	2 X Assistant Director(level 9)

The participants who volunteered to participate were mostly professionals on middle management positions who are responsible to ensure that programmes and policies are developed and implemented in the department. They are responsible to perform operational duties, manage staff but they are not at senior management positions. There was poor response from the administration and support staff which suggests that some may be as a result of being in fear of victimization. There was no response from the senior management personnel.

The researcher believed that it was necessary to profile the positions of participants in order to explore the different experiences of employees with regard to workplace violence at different levels in the Department.

3.4.4 Qualifications and years of experience of participants

Participants were mostly professional who were able to express their own views and experiences of workplace violence. Two (2) participants had Masters Degrees, 3 participants were qualified social workers, 2 participants had Social Sciences Degree, 2 participants had National diplomas in Human resource, 1 participant had National diploma in Public Relations and Events Management and 1 participant was in possession of Administration and Business Communication Diploma.

The above mentioned categories of employees can articulate themselves well and have the knowledge of what workplace violence is. It was evident during the interviews that they understood the different types of workplace violence as they could provide incidents that are very much related to workplace violence. However it appeared that despite the knowledge and understanding of workplace violence they still became victims.

Participants were mostly employees who have more than 5 years in the Department as a result they could relate to incidents that happened as far as 5 years ago and its impact on the current situation in the workplace.

The participants indicated that they've learned to develop their own coping mechanisms as nothing will be done if workplace violence is reported.

3.4.5 Participants according to Branches/Chief Directorates in the Department of Social Development.

Table 3: illustrate the number of participants according to various Branches

Branches	Number of participants
Corporate Services	3
Integrated Development	2
Non –Profit Organizations	1
COO	2
Welfare services	2

The study focus on employees of the National Department of Social Development from the six branches which includes, Integrated Development, Comprehensive Social Security and Appeals, Chief Operations Office, Finance, Welfare Services and Corporate Services.

The response received from the participants who volunteered to participate in the study as listed in table 3 illustrate that there was no response from Comprehensive social security and finance however the new branch which was added on was Non-Profit organization.

3.4.6 Roles and Responsibilities of Branches

3.4.6.1 Corporate Services

The Branch Corporate Services consist of 4 Chief Directorates which includes, Human Capital Management, Legal services, Information management, systems and technology, as well as Communications. The main function of the

Corporate Services branch is to provide support to the line function in achieving the vision and mission of the Department of Social Development. The supportive role played by corporate support include ensuring that the line function are supplied with the human resources that are well equipped with the skills and knowledge to implement programmes of the department as well as being provided with the technological support they need.

The 3 participants who volunteered to participate in the study from the branch of corporate services were from the Human Capital management and Communications.

Due to the nature of work of the Department it is expected that employees from the Corporate Services Branch must interact with the community to support the line function as a result, it exposes some employees to external violence.

3.4.6.2 Integrated Development and Non Profit Organization

The integrated development branch consists of 3 Chief Directorates which include HIV/AIDS, Community development and social mobilization and Non profit organizations. The Non Profit organization has recently being restructured to be a Branch with 2 Chief Directorates; NPO Registrations and NPO monitoring and compliance. The main function of the Integrated Development Branch is to develop policies, programmes and systems that can be implemented by different Provinces. It also includes training the different Non Government Organizations (NGO's) as well as monitoring and evaluating implementation. The employees interact a lot with the community as well as other professional in the provinces.

The researcher is of the view that because of different experiences of workplace violence shared by employees within the same branch, it cannot be concluded that that internal workplace violence exist within the Branch of Integrated Development.

3.4.6.3 Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The Branch COO is a very small branch within the department which mainly focus on developing internal systems and procedures to ensure that other units within the department comply with Public Service Policies. It consists of 4 Chief Directorates which include Strategy and Performance Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Customer Care and Gender and Women and Empowerment units. Their responsibilities entail interacting with internal staff to ensure that reports are done and systems are in place. Customer Care within this branch is the only unit that interact a lot with the community who are mostly dissatisfied with service delivery in Provinces. All the client or service recipients who come to the Department are registered by customer care at the reception area.

In summary the employees at customer care unit are more exposed to workplace violence on daily basis as employees must interact with dissatisfied communities due Department of Social Development service delivery in the Provinces.

3.4.6.4 Welfare Services

The Welfare services branch is the main function of the department which is responsible for achieving the core mandate of the department. This branch mainly employs qualified social workers who are policy and programme

developers. They also implement these policies and programmes in provinces by training other social workers and institutions. The branch consists of 3 chief directorates which includes; victim empowerment, welfare services and transformation, substance abuse.

The employees in the Welfare Services interact a lot with service providers such as consultants, programme developers, speakers and other professionals.

The researcher is of the view that the employees in this branch are more pressured to deliver and during their interaction with service providers they encounter a lot of problems such as consultants who fail to deliver, poor quality work from service providers. It is however expected of them to establish a good relationship with these service providers to ensure that the key performance areas are achieved efficiency and efficiency. If such pressure is experienced employees become more stressed which then affect their interpersonal relationships. Two of the employees from this branch who volunteered to participate could not be interviewed as they did not meet the criteria for the sampling as they were still clients in the EAP office.

3.5. CENTRALTHEMES

The information gathered during the interviews was categorised into themes and sub-themes. The researcher developed themes according to the objectives of the study. Verbatim quotes have been used to support the data that will be presented to understand the experiences of employees of the Department of Social Development with regard to workplace violence.

The themes and sub-themes as identified in the study are illustrated in the table below;

3.5.1 Table 4 Summary of themes and sub-themes

Number	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Understanding of the meaning of workplace violence	1.1 Understanding of the meaning of Verbal workplace violence 1.2 Understanding of the meaning of Physical workplace Violence 1.3 Threatening behaviour
2	The existence of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.	2.1 reported workplace violence 2.2 Actions taken on reported workplace violence
3	Nature of Workplace Violence in the Department of Social Development	3.3 Internal Violence from the managers and colleagues 3.4 External Violence from the clients/service recipients
4	Effects of Workplace violence on employees of the Department of Social Development.	4.1 Absenteeism 4.2 Physical and emotional effects 4.3 Psychological effects

5	Factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development	<p>5.1 Management Style in DSD</p> <p>5.2 Nature of work in DSD</p> <p>5.3 Perceptions and attitudes</p> <p>5.4 Reporting Procedures and Policies</p>
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3.5.1.1 Theme1: Understanding of the meaning of workplace violence

The first theme identified in the data collected was the participants' understanding of the meaning of workplace violence.

The participants gave their own perspective regarding the understanding of workplace violence. The participants understood the meaning of workplace violence and elaborated by differentiating the types of workplace violence. Participants C.S 1, I.D 1, I.D 2, and NPO 1 understood workplace violence as being verbal violence and physical violence and in their responses they elaborated adequately on both of them. The other participants gave a broad view about workplace violence further explained it as “*ill-treatment in the workplace, intimidation and closely related to bullying*”. In this definition the researcher could identify the different types of workplace violence mentioned.

The following sub- themes were identified;

3.5.1.2 Sub-theme: The meaning of physical workplace violence

The understanding of workplace violence as being physical was highlighted by all participants. It was further observed that participants relate workplace violence to physical violence as it is more evident or visible when it occurs than the other types of violence. The participants understood the meaning of physical violence as follows; **Participant I.D 2 highlighted that, “It can come in various forms, the obvious being manhandled or slapped”** and participant COO1 supported this view point by indicated that, **“it can be any fight, intimidation, threats happening in the workplace”**.

The researcher derives an understanding from the following viewpoints that physical workplace violence is well understood and can be explained. The meaning of physical violence can further be explored by relating it to the incidents whereby employees are physically attacked. Kgosimore (2004:62) elaborated that physical violence is the extreme violence whereby it involves incidents such as homicide, suicide, sexual assault, physical abuse, disruptive behaviour and the destruction of property.

The participant W.S 1 shared her experiences with regard to physical workplace violence as follows **“Workplace violence is when one is attacked in a verbal manner or it can also lead to physical. I’m saying this because I was once a victim few months after I joined the department”**. the participant further explained the incident that occurred and led to physical workplace violence by highlighting **that “I’ve experienced verbal workplace violence which almost led to physical violence; the physical part didn’t**

take place it almost happened, I worked with a colleague whom I heard later from the corridors that she is bipolar, one day she got angry and accused me of not taking instructions. She went back to her office and borrowed a scissor coming direct to me as if she wanted to stab me with a scissor so I just stood up and look at her and I didn't run". The participants' experience of the physical attack by a colleague can be related to physical violence as the intention was there, however stopped before it happened.

3.5.1.3 Sub-Theme: The meaning of Verbal violence

Participants gave the perspective and meaning with regard to verbal violence as a phenomenon in the workplace. The understanding that was given by most participants refers to inappropriate use of words or use of demeaning word that may affect your wellbeing. Participant C.S.3 elaborated on the meaning of verbal violence as follows; ***"I think it is closely related to bullying, not always physical but also violence with words can also be a terrible thing"*** the same viewpoint was shared by participant C.S 2 who explained that workplace violence can come in different forms ***"It can come in various forms, the obvious being manhandled or slapped, the other one is a subtle one, where you just not emotionally well after being addressed by a colleague, junior or senior by the way that may have communicated to you. Feeling violated, your rights being comprised"***.

In further understanding the meaning of verbal workplace violence some participants went further to share their experiences of verbal workplace violence which indicate some utterances and behaviours which make one to

come to the conclusion that they have experienced workplace violence. Participant I.D 1 indicated the following with regard to her experiences of verbal workplace violence; ***“In my previous position within the same chief directorate, I was a secretary so I worked with manager who was very abusive, in the sense that she used to bang tables in order to put sense to what she was saying. She used to take out her frustrations by banging tables and that made me very sad”.***

The participants who shared their experiences with verbal workplace violence that occurred internally between sub-ordinates and managers indicated that verbal violence experienced happened within their units and they have experienced the following: participant C.S 2 ***“The 2nd incident when the unit had a strategic plan over the weekend I did not attend due to family commitment, and my manager called me in the office after the meeting and start threatening me and indicated that I was paranoid. She doesn’t talk to me properly like other staff members.***

In a recent incident she physically grabbed me during the external event in front of people without talking to me properly and I ended up with bruises that lasted for some time”.

3.5.1.4 Sub-theme: Threatening behaviour

Threatening behaviour emerged as a sub-theme when participants articulated their understanding of the meaning of workplace violence. The participants shared their views with regard to how they have been threatened by their managers as well as clients who receive services in the Department of Social Development. Participants C.S. 2, I.D 1, COO1, shared during the interviews

how they have received threats from their managers. Participants I.D 2 indicated that she was threatened by her supervisors, “***She used to take out her frustrations by banging tables and that made me very sad***”. The similar experience was shared by participant C.S .2 who indicated that; “***when I was assigned a project and half way through the planning I was removed by my manager without reasons***”.

It appeared further during the interviews that employees who suffered internal workplace violence was as a result of managers using their power to manage them, this was shared by participant COO1 who highlighted that; “***Anyone can be a victim of it, in our department managers have powers and authority and we are scared of them.***”

3.5.1.3 Discussion of theme1 and sub-themes

The understanding of the meaning of workplace violence was shared broadly by participants. In support of the understanding shared by participants, the researcher will share the view that participants understood what workplace violence is because they could relate incidents that were associated with workplace violence. The participants were able to elaborate on workplace violence by sharing their experiences in the Department of Social Development. The description of workplace violence was elaborated extensively by participants as they share their experiences with regard to the behaviours they related to workplace violence. Romano, Levi-Minzi, Rugala, & Van Hasselt (2011: 3) indicated that workplace violence has received attention from the public, mental health experts, and law enforcement professional with a wide range of acts which include violent behaviours and threats of violence. The

experiences as related by participants confirms the different types of behaviours from management and co-workers that relates to workplace violence.

3.5.2.Theme 2: The existence of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

In understanding the meaning of workplace violence as well as the experiences shared, the participants were asked if they know if workplace violence exist in the Department of Social Development. This has emerged as a theme because participants were able to support their views that workplace violence exist in the department participant.C.S.1, C.S.2, I.D.1 agrees that there is workplace violence in the department. Whereas Participant I.D.2 elaborated further by indicating that ***“I think where there is people they’ll always be possibilities violence the difference will be the level of violence. The way that it is handled, sometimes they are kept under the carpet and sometimes people are embarrassed to talk about it. It is very rare that environment can be without violence as we are of different personalities and backgrounds and environments that we are being socialised in”.***

The participants who work mostly with communities shared their experiences with external violence experienced and indicated that the nature of the work exposed them to violence from the communities. This view was shared by participant COO.1 and NPO.1 who indicated that; ***“We are actually vulnerable from workplace violence, as we are mainly working with clients and we are not sure of their state of mind. Their applications may be declined and***

they may not understand and they end up being verbally violent or throwing tantrums.”

The above-mentioned facts and experiences are indicative of the fact that workplace violence exist in the department both internally and externally. This discussion further raised the question as to whether is workplace violence reported or is there any actions taken with regard to the participants experiencing of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

3.5.2.1 Sub- theme: Reporting Workplace Violence

In order to ascertain the views and experiences of the participants, the researcher saw it necessary to acquire information as to whether participants reports workplace violence in the department. The issue of reporting workplace violence became relevant to discuss as a sub-theme under theme of the existence of workplace violence as it verifies the experiences of participants and also assist in identifying the factors that leads to employees not reporting workplace violence. Participant C.S.1 reported the incident of workplace violence to the supervisor and she was supported to deal with the matter, however Participant C.S.2 shared a different view with regard to reporting she indicated the following, ***“A formal letter was provided to the manager but did not reply to the letter. Action taken; No actions taken for internal violence, I’m using avoidance I just keep on running away from my manager”***. Participant I.D.1, I.D.2 and NPO.1, indicated that they did not report their experiences of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development as a result of the following reasons;

“No, as I didn’t know where to report as she was threatening me so I decided to keep it to myself”. (Participant I.D.1)

“I was afraid that if I address it with other superiors I was going to be removed from the unit as I was always threatened”. (Participant I.D.1)

“No, I did not report to anyone as my superiors were also affected. There was no one to report to as there are no clear processes to identify such violence and report. No options to seek support as a result you just don’t know where to start.” (Participant I.D.2)

“No, as my supervisor was not available at that time, but I’ve never reported to him”. (Participant NPO1)

Participant C.S. 3 indicated the following ***“I think even if I report what are they are going to do about it”***

The participants views with regard to reporting workplace violence varies as some felt that it was not easy to report as workplace violence was experienced internally where their supervisor were involved as a result they were afraid to report. Whereas other participants felt that even if they have reported workplace violence nothing has been done. Participant C.S.2 went further by stating that; ***“Labour relations should attend to reported cases fairly between the manager and subordinate and proper and fair feedback to be given. Labour relation is only supporting managers and not addressing issues fairly”.***

3.5.2.2 Sub theme: Action taken on reported workplace violence

The sub theme emerged as a result of the responses from the participants whom had indicated that workplace violence have been reported, therefore this sub theme will focus on what actions has been taken with the reported workplace violence. It will further look into the reasons why participants did not report workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

It was evident that some of the participants knew the procedures to report workplace violence whereas some have no idea as to where to report. The participants who reported internal workplace violence indicated that there was no action taken. Participant C.S.1 indicated that **“No action from management side, the matter was just resolved between me and the official”**. Participant C.S 2 highlighted that **“No actions taken for internal violence, I’m using avoidance I just keep on running away from my manager.**

The participants gave an indication that they have reported the workplace violence to Labour relations however they were not satisfied with the interventions of Labour Relations. This view was supported by Participant W.S 1 who indicated that **“ I took the matter to labour relations but it didn’t work out as the union representative indicates that I should present evidence that she is bipolar”**. The actions taken with the issues of internal workplace violence did not satisfy the participants as a result it left some of them unhappy with the reporting procedures.

The participants COO 1 shared her experiences with regard to external workplace violence as follows **“We deal with clients that are angry due to**

the dissatisfaction with service so they give us verbal threats. They tell us about their rights and how they voted in the country". The same sentiments were shared by participant NPO1 who explained that ***"We are actually vulnerable from workplace violence, as we are mainly working with clients and we are not sure of their state of mind. Their applications may be declined and they may not understand and they end up being verbally violent or throwing tantrums"***. The above mentioned experiences regarding external violence were reported however the participants did not share anything regarding the actions taken to resolve their issues.

3.5.2.3 Discussion of theme and sub themes

The existence of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development was confirmed by participants who could share their experiences with regard to reporting internal and external workplace violence. It further provides an indication that employees do not understand the reporting procedures and those who have reported do not have trust with the internal measures available to deal with workplace violence. Romano et al.(2011:5) indicates that most companies must create a climate of trust within their organizations that allows their employees to come forward to report troubling behaviours. The experiences shared by participants illustrate that even if workplace violence is reported in the Department of Social Development there is still no action taken. The researcher is of the view that the protection of employees in the workplace is a human rights issue and this view is supported by Steinman (2003:22) that workplace violence is an infringement of human rights, having dignity and

respect adequately enhanced in labour laws and corporate culture requires commitment, advocacy and the voice of the victims.

3.5.3 Themes 3: Nature of Workplace Violence in the Department of Social Development.

This theme emerged as the researcher wanted to understand the nature of workplace violence that exist in the National Department of Social Development. The first theme that was discussed gave a view of how the participants understood workplace violence, therefore in this theme the discussion will be mainly focusing on the nature of workplace violence that exist in the department. The researcher is of the view that when we understand the nature of workplace violence then it becomes easy to identify the interventions, which is however not the intention of the study.

Most participants experienced internal workplace violence however some were able to share their experiences with the external workplace violence experienced. The internal and external workplace violence will therefore be discussed as sub-themes under this theme.

3.5.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: Internal Violence

The internal workplace violence occurs in a work setting whereby employees are engaged in interpersonal or work-related conflict that has not been managed properly. Participants have indicated during the interviews that they have experienced internal workplace violence. Participant ID2 shared her experiences with regard to internal workplace violence as follows “The **way**

that our manager used to address us in meetings; she will use words like monkeys. She used threats like I'll expel you from my unit". The same sentiments were shared by participant WS 2 who indicated that he was intimidated in the workplace as a result he ended up being in serious conflict with his manager. ***"I had serious conflict with my manager and she has indicated in many occasions that I must decide if I want the job or not, which for me was very intimidating and abusive"***. The abovementioned experience illustrates that the participant was intimidated in the workplace by the supervisor. Participant COO 1 has also shared the same view regarding intimidation as the nature of workplace violence by indicating that ***"In our department managers have powers and authority and we are scared of them"***.

It appears that some participants have experienced internal workplace violence once however it had greater impact. Participant C.S 3 indicates that ***"What scared me more is how managers treats you by pulling you down make you feel bad by belittling you and make you feel like a mouse in the corner"***.

Mayhew and Chappell (2003:5) have indicated that internal workplace violence occurs between workers in an organization for example between supervisors and employees, or workers and apprentices. The internal workplace violence which was experienced by participants was mostly verbal however participant W.S 1 shared her experiences with internal violence which was physical as follows ***"I've experienced verbal workplace violence which almost led to physical violence; the physical part didn't take place it almost happened as I was almost stabbed by colleague with scissors"***. The experiences

shared by participants regarding internal workplace violence is mostly verbal violence and it occurred between supervisors and employees which then support the fact that workplace violence exist in the National Department of Social Development.

3.5.3.2 Sub-theme: External Violence

The external workplace violence occurs when the external service recipient or a stranger attack the employee or the employer. This type of workplace violence occurs in organisations that are working with clients, whereby clients due to dissatisfaction with the service may become violent physically or verbally to the employees. The nature of the work in the National Department of Social Development requires the employees to interact with the community as a result employees become vulnerable to workplace violence.

The employees who participated in the study and are working directly with the communities are Customer Care, Non-profit organizations and communications external events. Participant C.S 2, NPO 1 and COO1 have been victims of external violence. Participant COO 1 indicated that “***We deal with clients that are angry due to the dissatisfaction with service so they give us verbal threats. They tell us about their rights and how they voted in the country***”. Participant NPO 1 shared the same sentiments with regard to external workplace violence, “***we are actually vulnerable from workplace violence, as we are mainly working with clients and we are not sure of their state of mind. Their applications may be declined and they may not understand and they end up being verbally violent or throwing tantrums***”.

The above mentioned participants have shared their experiences with regard to workplace violence and indicated that their vulnerability is due to their type of work. Kennedy (2004:13) indicated that external workplace violence can depict certain aggressive behaviour which include grabbed, punched, pushed, pinched, scratched, kicked, stabbed with scissors.

As employees interact with the communities, they sometimes encounter external workplace violence from the angry communities and Participant C.S.2 has indicated her experiences with external workplace violence as follows “***The community members attacked us during briefing meetings demanding answers like strike because people not happy because of service providers used.***”

3.5.3.3 Discussion of theme and sub- themes

The nature of workplace violence experienced by participants in this study was both internal and external workplace violence. The different typologies of workplace violence have been explained by different researchers as employees experience workplace violence differently depending on their work settings. Internal workplace violence appeared to be the common one experienced by most participants in the National Department of Social Development. This typology of workplace violence is explained by Kgosimore (2004:64) as Type III/ worker-on-worker violence described as relationship violence, which involves violent acts by current or former employee on another employee. External workplace violence emerged to be another type of workplace that was experienced by employees who are in contact with the communities. This type of workplace violence is described as type II or customer-client violence.

3.5.4 Theme 4: Effects of Workplace violence on performance

The effects of workplace violence emerged as a theme to be discussed as it looks into the impact of workplace violence on employees' performance. The participants were able to share how workplace violence has affected their performance as well as their wellbeing. It has been confirmed by Choe (2000:160) that workplace violence has long standing, far reaching negative effects on a worker and his work productivity. The effects of workplace violence will impact on both the individuals as well as the organizational wellbeing. The participants have shared different effect which then emerged as sub-themes to be discussed further.

3.5.4.1 Sub-theme: Absenteeism

Absenteeism emerged as the common effects suffered by participants who have experienced internal workplace violence coming from their supervisors. Participants CS 2, CS 3, ID 2 and COO 1 have shared their experiences as to how workplace violence has affected their performance at work. Participant CS 2 indicated that ***“Internal violence affect my performance; I don’t feel like coming to work, as I’m not happy at work, always late and poor concentration at work”***. The same sentiments were shared by participant ID 2 who explained the following when asked how did workplace violence affect her performance ***“Yes, it affected me because I used to be absent a lot without taking leave. I was not effective in the office. It affected me to the extent that I ended up resigning as I couldn’t stand the behaviour anymore and sacrificed my permanent position to contract position.”***

The 2 participants have illustrated the impact of workplace violence on productivity due to absenteeism which came as a result of workplace violence. Participant COO1 also experienced the same effects by indicating the following ***“I started to be absent from work without taking leave, I was always taking sick leaves”***. The above mentioned experiences as shared by participants illustrates that employees resort to utilising sick leave inappropriately as a way of being away from work due to unpleasant work experiences which results in abuse of sick leave.

3.5.4.2 Sub-theme: Physical and emotional effects

The effects of workplace violence have greater impact on the wellbeing of employees as a result the employees end up developing physical and emotional effects. The physical and emotional effects of workplace violence have been identified by MacIntosh (2005:903) as psychosomatic stress illnesses which includes amongst others, headaches, tearfulness, dry throats, gastro intestinal problems, changes in body weights, sleep disturbances, diminishing energy exhaustion, disrupted concentration and hyper vigilance. The above mentioned effects are just a few mentioned however there can be more. The participants who have suffered physical and emotional effects have mentioned some of these effects to confirm that workplace violence have such effects.

Participant CS 2, ID 1, COO1, CS 3 confirmed during the interviews that they have experienced physical and emotional effects of workplace violence and participant ID 1 indicated the following about the physical effects ***“I used to***

consult a lot and diagnosed of depression as a result I was on anti-depressants". Emotional effect suffered by participant ID 1 included "***I was always crying in the office couldn't face my manager at work***". Similar effects were experienced by participant COO1 who shared that "***Yes, I developed headaches and depression and I was very angry but still need my job so I couldn't do anything.***"

Emotions that are not defused properly and on time turn to be normalised by individuals experiencing such violence. Participants CS 2 and COO2 who have also experienced workplace violence they indicated that they ended up developing survival skills just to cope in an unhealthy environment. Participant CS 2 highlighted that "***I've learned to deal with it and learned not to take things hard. I've learned a strategy to deal with it by finding someone to talk to***". The participants indicated that they also end up utilising avoidance tactics just to avoid being in such a situation. Participants COO2 indicated that "***Emotionally being in that environment is very stressful and affected me as I'm always tense you don't want to be in that environment***".

3.5.4.3 Sub theme: 3 Psychological effects

Kennedy(2004:19) confirmed that psychological effects are concerning as in severe cases victims may often feel shame and guilt, tend to blame themselves and replay incidents repeatedly in their mind wondering if they could have done anything differently as a result they may suffer post traumatic stress disorder. This illustrates the long term effects of physical and emotional effects of workplace violence. Participants CS 3, CS 2, ID 1 and COO1 illustrated the psychological effects of workplace violence. Participants CS 3 indicated that

“Yes it affected me to an extent that I landed in hospital, as I have bipolar. I had bipolar before but such traumatic incidents make matters worse. She went further to share that “I experience anxiety, sometimes I don’t remember things, sometimes I just look at him and tears will just be rolling as I’m holding myself not to say anything? Tears is coming from your inner soul, u know coming from another place you just hold yourself”. Participants CS 2 has indicated that she was psychologically affected “I used to consult a lot and diagnosed of depression as a result I was on anti-depressants”.

The psychological effects of workplace violence have greater impact on the performance of employees and productivity of the organization. The above mentioned two experiences shared by participants give a clear view that psychological effects of workplace violence are immense and have affect both the individual and organizational wellbeing.

3.5.4.4 Discussion of theme and sub themes

The effects of workplace violence cannot be underestimated as it has been proven during the interviews that participants suffered the physical, emotional as well as the psychological effects of workplace violence. The effects of workplace violence needs to be given attention as it has the potential of also affecting work productivity and creating a very hostile work environment. The participants who have experienced physical, emotional and psychological effects acknowledged that the impact thereof have also affected their working relationships with their colleagues and managers within the same units.

3.5.5 Theme: 5 Factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development

The last theme identified from the data collected was the participants' views regarding factors contributing to workplace violence. The researcher observed during the interviews that participants are aware of what may be the contributing factors to workplace violence within the Department of Social Development. The contributing factors were mentioned by participants and the researcher summarised these factors into sub-themes for further discussion. The following sub-themes were identified; management style, nature of work in the Department of Social Development, reporting procedures and policies.

3.5.5.1. Sub-theme: Management Style in DSD

Management style in DSD was identified as one of the contributing factors to workplace violence. The researcher notes that the participants' views regarding the factors contributing to workplace violence were mostly related to management style. The participants who have experienced internal workplace violence indicated that it was mainly from their supervisors. Participant CS 2, ID 1, ID 2, COO1, COO2, and CS 3 have experienced internal workplace violence and identified management style as a contributing factor. The views as stated by participants confirm the negative dimensions which came as a result of a climate survey conducted in the Department;

The climate survey identified few negative dimensions indicating that;

- Only 41.6% of employees are satisfied with the current workplace climate,

- The most negative ranked dimension is employee /management relations.
- Lack of effective conflict management and failure to implement an effective performance management and development system (Cassim & Cassim, 2007:13).

The above mentioned survey referred to was conducted in 2007 however in 2015 the participants were still referring to employee/ management relations as contributing factor to workplace violence. Participant COO2 has described working environment as follows; ***my director and deputy director are constantly fighting each other and screaming at each other from the first day I joined the department they were screaming at each other in the meeting. I asked myself a question as to whether I want to work in such circumstances where adults unprofessionally scream at each other***". This clearly indicates poor employee/management relations which has greater impact to the performance of the whole unit. The researcher during the interviews identified management style that is autocratic in some units whereby participants have indicated some of the incidents that depicts such. Participant ID 1 has explained that she was afraid of her manager "***I was afraid that if I address it with other superiors I was going to be removed from the unit as I was always threatened***". Threats and intimidations appeared a lot during the interviews which clearly indicates that participants who have experienced internal workplace violence where threatened by their managers.

The researcher also identified that participants indicated that the issue of conflict management is not taken seriously as some of the decisions taken by

management to resolve conflict did not satisfy all parties involved. Participant CS2 and WS 1 are dissatisfied about some of the decision taken to manage conflict that led to workplace violence. Participant CS 2 has indicated that **“Labour relation is only supporting managers and not addressing issues fairly.** Participant WS 1 shared the following sentiments when she encountered conflict which led to workplace violence **“I felt that my colleague was protected as the chief director was indicating that I want to choose my own supervisors. She didn’t consider my safety as a public servant.**

Improper communication appeared to be another contributing factor identified by participants who have also experienced external workplace violence. Participants CS1 indicated that **“I think from management side there should be proper communication to limit this type of incident. They should take note of time constraints when giving tasks so that it should not come to this point”.** Participant ID 2 shared a different view when it comes to management styles and indicated that **“Government as a political establishment, managers tends to be under pressure to be recognized for their work, to be seen as managers who can perform but at the same time not being equipped in terms of management and leadership to deal and control with such situation. They believe that it is about who you know”.**

3.5.5.2 Sub-theme: Nature of work in DSD

The nature of work in the Department of Social Development expose its employees to the community and its mandate requires that employees should provide a comprehensive, integrated and quality Social Development services to the communities. In order to achieve this mandate employees are expected

to perform under pressure. The societal as well as political pressures find its way to permeate the workplace. The researcher identified that participants were mostly referring to work pressure as one of the contributing factors of workplace violence. The participants who have experienced external workplace violence mentioned their vulnerability due to the nature of work. Participant NPO 1 indicates that “***We are actually vulnerable from workplace violence, as we are mainly working with clients and we are not sure of their state of mind. Their applications may be declined and they may not understand and they end up being verbally violent or throwing tantrums***”. Participant COO 1 also alluded to this vulnerability by highlighting that “***We deal with clients that are angry due to the dissatisfaction with service so they give us verbal threats. They tell us about their rights and how they voted in the country***”. It is therefore important that managers should possess adequate competencies to deal with such conflict and work pressures.

3.5.5.3 Sub-theme: Perceptions and attitudes

The perceptions and attitudes of people differ in a workplace and as a result failure to accept that individuals are different it often leads to conflict. Perceptions refer to how different individuals perceive things. The communities served by the Department of Social development have different expectations and perceptions about the services rendered. This became evident when Participants who have experienced external workplace violence shared their experiences. Participant COO1 during her interview indicated that the service recipients have different *perceptions* “***They tell us about their rights and how they voted in the country.***”

It appeared that due to the different personalities in different units then the certain perceptions and attitude developed while employees are performing their duties. It came out during the interviews that some participants were capable of dealing with workplace violence experienced whereas the others did not even attempt to deal with it. Participant CS 3 indicated the past experiences of managers contribute a lot to how they treat subordinates. **“He indicated that when he was still young he once worked with a white supervisor, and he gave him so much trouble”**. An element of racism was identified during the interview as the participant could relate some of the comments which were racial during their engagements. Participant CS 3 further indicated that **“He will always say I’m talking bull. I sometimes think because he is Xhosa that is the way they speak to women because they are men**”. The perception created impacts a lot on how employees relate in the workplace.

Participant CS 2 also indicated that perception and attitudes contributes to workplace violence. The comments from participant CS.2 suggest that employees in the Department of Social development experiences workplace violence **“Employees of DSD are suffering emotionally and are afraid to speak out as they are afraid of being victimized”**. This view was also supported by participants COO1 and COO 2 by indicating that **“Anyone can be a victim of workplace violence, in our department managers have powers and authority and we are scared of them”**.

The researcher discovered during the interviews that the use of power and authority by senior managers appeared often during the interviews with participants which then become the contributing factor to workplace violence. The experiences of participants have indicated that the employees who have

experienced internal workplace violence were intimidated and threatened by managers.

3.6.5.4 Sub theme: Reporting Procedures and Policies

The researcher explored if employees are aware of any existing reporting procedures and policies relating to workplace violence. This was crucial as it will give an indication as to whether there are reporting procedures and policies guiding workplace violence in the Department. The following views were shared by participants when the issue of reporting workplace violence were explored; Participants CS 1, CS 2, COO1, COO 2, CS 3 and WS 1 reported workplace violence formally through the labour relations procedures of the department. They however have expressed their dissatisfaction with the reporting procedures and the manner in which their matters were handled.

The other participants did not report workplace violence experienced in the department as they were in fear of victimization as a result they consulted externally to find a way of surviving the situations. Participants ID 1, ID 2, and CS 3 did not report workplace violence despite knowing the reporting procedures as they did not have confidence in the internal reporting procedures.

When exploring whether participants understood the internal policies available to report such incidents. The researcher explored this angle with aim of understanding if participants are aware of the existing policies that may assist to deal with workplace violence. Most participants could only refer to sexual harassment policy as the only policy they are aware of.

3.5.5.5 Discussion of theme and sub- themes

The factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development differ, as a result employees highlighted just a few based on their experiences. Koritsas, Coles & Boyle (2008:269) indicates that factors that predict violence vary, depending on the form of violence and these factors can be used to develop interventions aimed at preventing and managing workplace violence. Management style as a contributing factor to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development has been confirmed through the experiences shared by participants. The nature of work in various Branches as explained by participants exposes them to workplace violence.

3.6. CONCLUSION

The researcher can conclude that based on the experiences of participants, it is clear that workplace violence exists in the National Department of Social Development. The employees are vulnerable to workplace violence due to the nature of work; however, internal workplace violence is eminent presenting itself in different forms like, bullying, emotional abuse and harassment.

The employees lack confidence in the existing structures like, Labour relations including management intervention strategies available to address issues of workplace violence.

Based on the statement extracted from participants it is clear that workplace violence it is still unreported in fear of victimization. The professionals including support staff understand clearly what workplace violence is and despite the

knowledge they still work under unhealthy working conditions in fear of being victimized.

The Department of Social Development is female dominated and therefore the study revealed that workplace violence that occurred it is amongst women themselves and minimal cases of workplace violence perpetuated by men were reported.

The study concludes that the effects of workplace violence are detrimental to the organization due to poor working relations, conflict and are detrimental to the individual wellbeing due to increased absenteeism due to abuse of sick leave.

The study has revealed the contributing factors of workplace violence in the Department; therefore interventions, strategies and policies need to be in place to attend to issues regarded as contributors of workplace violence.

In the next chapter, key findings conclusions and recommendations will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the key findings will be discussed while focusing on the aims and objectives of the study. The conclusions will be drawn from the data analysis presented in Chapter 3. Conclusions and recommendations are structured according to the findings as they relate to sections of the semi-structured interview schedule where themes and sub-themes were identified from the data presented by participants.

The goal of the study was focusing on exploring the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. The study was motivated by the researcher's observation that employees may be experiencing workplace violence; therefore there was a need to explore these experiences further and explore the type of workplace violence experienced by employees in the Department of Social Development.

The following were the objectives of the study and were achieved through the literature study and empirical findings whereby themes and sub-themes were also developed;

- To contextualise workplace violence as a phenomenon in the National Department of Social Development.
- To determine the nature of workplace violence that may exist in the Department.

- To explore the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the National Department of Social Development.
- To investigate the factors that may be contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

4.2 Objective 1: The contextualization of workplace violence as a phenomenon in the National Department of Social Development.

This objective was aimed at capturing the understanding of employees regarding the phenomenon of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development. The objective was covered in the section B of the semi-structured interview.

4.2.1 .Conclusions on the understanding of participants regarding the context of workplace violence.

The participants understood the meaning of workplace violence and could elaborate more on their understanding through their experiences of workplace violence. The meaning of workplace violence could be explained according to the following sub-theme that emerged during the interviews;

- **Physical violence**
 - Physical violence appeared common in the participants' responses and mostly understood it as a form of workplace violence that involves physical attacks, fights and it is visible when it occurs.
 - Physical violence appeared not to be a common phenomenon in the Department of Social Development however there were few incidents of threats of physical violence that occurred.

- The researcher will therefore conclude that physical violence is not a common phenomenon in the Department of Social Development as the participants could not relate any experiences or occurrences of physical violence.
- **Verbal violence**
 - It was common during the interviews that participants mostly shared the same sentiments when it comes to verbal violence.
 - Verbal violence appeared as a common phenomenon in the Department of Social Development as participants experiences were mostly related to verbal violence.
 - The participants understood verbal violence as a form of workplace violence whereby managers ill-treat staff in the work environment through some emotionally abusive words and actions.
 - Employees who have experienced verbal violence indicated the following common behaviours; bullying, verbal threats and emotional abuse.
 - The researcher will therefore conclude that verbal violence is a common phenomenon as the participants' experiences have indicated that some of the employees in DSD are victims of verbal violence.
 - Verbal workplace violence as it explained by participants through the interviews it is mostly perpetuated by managers towards their subordinates.
 - Verbal workplace violence appeared in all ranks, levels or positions, even if the Department employs qualified professionals, the element of verbal workplace violence still occurs.

4.2.2 Recommendations on the employees understanding regarding the context of the workplace violence.

- Workplace violence is clearly understood by participants and the distinction between physical workplace violence and verbal workplace violence is explained clearly.
- The existence of verbal workplace violence is eminent therefore it is recommended that awareness should be raised in the Department of Social Development about the behaviours that perpetuates workplace violence.
- Verbal workplace violence is clearly understood by participants however this phenomenon and experiences of employees at all levels should be explained to the top management of the Department of Social Development.
- The responses as received from participants' indicate that verbal workplace violence experienced was mostly from managers to subordinates or junior level staff.

4.3. Objective 2: to determine the nature of workplace violence that may exist in the Department.

This objective was aimed at determining the types of workplace violence that participants have experienced in the Department of Social Development. In determining the types of workplace violence that exist the researcher distinguished between the internal workplace violence and external workplace violence. The objective was covered in Section C of the semi-structured interview.

4.3.1 Conclusions about the nature of workplace violence that exist in the Department of Social Development.

4.3.1.1 Internal workplace violence

- The study concludes that internal workplace violence occurs in the Department of Social Development and the experiences of participants have indicated the different forms of internal workplace violence. The most common forms of internal violence that occurred include verbal violence, intimidation and bullying.
- The participants have indicated a high level of internal violence perpetuated by managers to colleagues, which then becomes the management style in the Department of Social Development and employees adapt to this type of management style.
- The study further concludes that the participants' experiences of internal workplace violence are indicating the need for interventions that will change the working environment of the Department of Social Development.
- The researcher is of the view that due to high workload in the Department employees are pressurised to perform, as a result conflict arises often due to these work pressures. Internal workplace violence becomes a phenomenon that emerged due to failure to deal with the sources of conflict in the workplace.

4.3.1.2 External Workplace violence

- The study revealed that external workplace violence is not a common phenomenon in the Department of Social Development.
- The nature of work in the Department of Social Development exposes employees to external workplace violence as they are expected to interact with the communities.

- The study further indicates that although employees are in contact with the communities the risks of external workplace violence is always controlled as a result it minimises their risks of being victims of external workplace violence.
- The study revealed that the employees in contact with the communities are mostly in the Branch: Non Profit Organization, External events, customer care. The participants from these branches have indicated some threats of external workplace violence however; it was controlled and managed properly.
- It is evident that employees who have experienced threats of external violence are not aware of the procedures to report such violence as well as measures to prevent such occurrences.

4.3.2 Recommendations about the nature of workplace violence that exist in the Department of Social Development.

It is clear and evident that workplace violence occurs in the Department of Social Development, mainly internally than externally. Measures to address internal workplace violence must be explored by the top management of the Department to create a healthy, good working environment.

The study therefore recommends the following measures to address the nature of workplace violence that exist in the Department of Social Development;

- Clear reporting procedures for workplace violence must be developed for the employees of Social Development when they are performing their duties internally and externally.
- Review of the current reporting procedures such as grievance procedures to include the reporting of workplace violence.

- Reporting and creating awareness to the management of the Department of Social Development about the existence of workplace violence, its impact on productivity and measures that can be taken to address workplace violence.

4.4 Objective 3: Conclusions on the effects of workplace violence on employees of Department of Social Development.

In order to explore the effects of workplace violence the objective looked at how the workplace violence affects employees, performance, physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. This objective was therefore also covered under Section C of the Semi structured interview schedule.

The researcher therefore has drawn the following conclusions with regard to the effects of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development;

4.4.1 Conclusions on the effects of workplace violence on performance

- The study revealed that workplace violence had impact on the performance of employees who have experienced it in the Department.
- Workplace violence affected productivity in other units within the Department.
- Absenteeism has become the common effect of workplace violence which has a greater impact on the organizations productivity.
- The abuse of sick leave appeared to be common to all the employees who have experienced workplace violence.
- Workplace violence has created low staff morale to employees who have experienced it and to those who have been exposed to.

- Workplace violence created poor working relationships which led to conflict in the workplace.

4.4.2 Conclusions on the physical and emotional effects of workplace violence.

The physical and emotional effects of workplace violence appeared with common symptoms throughout the study indicating that workplace violence has greater impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing of individuals in the workplace.

- The study concludes that employees who have experienced workplace violence in the Department of Social Development have developed physical and emotional effects of workplace violence.
- Absenteeism and the abuse of sick leave has become a common effect which all the employees who have experienced workplace violence has resorted to.
- The common physical and emotional effects of workplace violence that appeared include depression, headaches, emotional outbursts, anxiety and stress.
- The employees who have experienced workplace violence for a long period have developed survival strategies which include avoidance and consulting externally or seeking external professional advice to deal with the situation.
- Employees have lost trust in reporting workplace violence as the interventions always favours the managers.

4.4.3 Conclusions on the Psychological effects of workplace violence.

- The psychological effects of workplace violence appeared to be common as a result of emotional encounters that employees experienced for a longer period of time.
- The study revealed that employees who have been in the environment whereby workplace violence exists are less productive and often absent themselves from work due to stress related illnesses.
- The psychological effects of workplace violence have created an environment whereby there is low staff morale as the employee develops lack of confidence and trust to management.
- The common psychological effects that employees experienced after exposure to workplace violence includes; mental health illnesses like depression, bipolar and stress.
- The study has revealed that the psychological effects of workplace violence have a long term impact and are detrimental to the good working relations amongst employees and their managers.

4.4.4 Recommendations on the effects of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development

- Educational programme and awareness on workplace violence to the entire staff of Department of Social Development.
- The outsourced model of EAP is recommended to address the need for referral to the psychologists to address the mental health effects of workplace violence.

4.5 Conclusions on factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

The study has revealed that factors contributing to workplace violence in the Department of Social Development are more related to the sub-themes that emerged and the finding therefore confirms the sub-themes as they are discussed in the previous chapter.

4.5.1 Conclusions on the Management style

- The management style in the Department has been characterized by participants as the major contributing factors of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.
- The existence of workplace violence has created poor employee-management working relations in the department.
- The study findings conclusively identified that conflict between managers and subordinates occurs often in the Department as a result of work pressure.
- The internal workplace violence occurs mainly as a result of poor management style whereby employees are often victimised when they raise issues of unfair treatment in the workplace.

4.5.2 Conclusions on the nature of work in DSD

- The study revealed that the nature of work in the Department of Social Development exposes employees to external workplace violence as employees are expected to continuously interact with the communities

and participate in community events like Imbizos, dialogues and awareness campaigns.

- Power and authority is often imposed to staff which then create poor working environment in the Department and it is a sign that employees experiences internal workplace violence.
- Employees working in the units like NPO, Customer Care, external events are more vulnerable to external workplace violence.

4.5.3 Conclusions on perceptions and attitudes

- The study revealed that employees are under the perception that they are under pressure to deliver services to the communities and there expectation from the community members that employees must deliver services according to their own expectation.
- There is a perception that employees are suffering emotionally and mostly are not coming forward and as a result they just keep it to themselves.
- There is a perception that managers are superior and they have power and authority.
- The employees generally presented negative attitudes towards the management of the department mainly because they do not address issues that appear to be creating conflict in the workplace.
- Some of the employees' attitudes affect the performance of the team as they are being bullied to accept some of the behaviours and attitude of other managers and subordinates in the workplace.

4.5.4 Conclusions on reporting procedures and policies

- The study has revealed that there is poor communication in the department which often lead to conflict in the workplace.
- It appears that there are unclear reporting procedures for workplace violence in the department which then delays the interventions.
- The reported cases are not receiving the necessary attention and are not treated fairly at all times.
- The employees displayed lack of trust to the existing internal structures available to report workplace violence.
- Unavailability of clear guidelines and policies addressing workplace violence in the Department of Social Development.

4.6 Recommendations regarding the factors contributing to workplace violence in the workplace.

- The study recommends that issues of management styles should be investigated further through another climate survey so that the conclusions can be verified and confirmed.
- Workplace violence has greater impact on working relationships which creates a hostile working environment hence it will be essential for the department to introduce workplace violence awareness programmes.
- Workplace violence should form part of the activities addressed by Employee health and wellness programmes and labour relations units.
- The department is rendering programmes for the communities which can also be implemented internally like gender mainstreaming, and

families, therefore the internal resources can also be used to intervene in implementing proactive interventions for workplace violence.

- The report of this study should be presented to management to be used as a resource to plan further interventions.

4.7 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The study has confirmed the existence of workplace violence within the National Department of Social Development. Workplace violence is broadly understood by employees from various levels of the Department of Social Development. The experiences of employees have been presented as evidence that this phenomenon exist internally however there is still the possibility of external workplace violence to occur in the Department. The effects of workplace violence are detrimental to the performance of employees as well as the productivity of the organization.

The study has made some contribution towards understanding the experiences that employees have been through, however further investigations regarding the experiences of employees on external workplace violence is recommended. The development of clear policies on the management of workplace violence in the Department of Social Development is recommended.

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6. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule

Appendix 2: Informed consent

Appendix 3: Approval by ethics committee

Appendix 4: Approval by the Department of Social Development

Appendix 5: Letter from the editor