THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN MANAGING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

By

MABUNDA RIVALANI VALENTIA

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Department of Social work and Criminology in the University of Pretoria, South Africa

Promoter: Prof. L.S Terblanche

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research report titled

The role of the Employee Assistance Programme in managing workplace violence: the experiences of South African Police Service Members in Greater Tzaneen Municipality

is my own work. The report has not been previously submitted by me for a degree in any university. I have given full acknowledgement to the sources I have used in the research.

Rivalani Mabunda

April 2019
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“Xikwembu a Xi Tsandzeki”
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Key concepts

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Employee Assistance Professional (EA professional)

Police Officer

Workplace

Workplace violence

Acronyms

EAP: Employee Assistance Programme

EAPA-SA: Employee Assistance Professionals Association of South Africa

EHWP: Employee Health and Wellness Programme

ICN: International Council of Nurses

ILO: International Labour Organization

PSI: Public Services International

SAP: South African Police

SAPS: South African Police Service

WHO: World Health Organisation
Abstract

The purpose of this study was mainly to explore the role of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in managing workplace violence, through looking at the experiences of SAPS members in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Workplace violence is both an academic and scientific concept which is receiving increased attention. Even though every employee should experience the workplace as a violence-free and safe environment, where he or she is able to perform his/her duties without fear of harm, this is unfortunately not the reality in most cases. Workplace violence is a reality in the present world and requires the attention of all stakeholders in the work organisation, employees, the employer as well as EAP professionals.

The literature has highlighted that workplace violence can take different forms such as physical and psychological, with experiences ranging from bullying, verbal insults, physical assaults, harassment, and intimidation, to abuse and murder (Schiff, 2010:20). Police officers are not exempted from these experiences of workplace violence. Most of the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence which have been reported in the media platforms suggest that these experiences emanate from the general public, or people who are not members of the South African Police Services (SAPS).

The qualitative research approach was utilized in this study, to conceptualise and describe the experiences of workplace violence by SAPS members; exploring the effects of workplace violence in the psycho social functioning and work performance and ; exploring the role of EAP in the managing workplace violence. The researcher used semi structured interview Schedule whereby, 15 interviews were conducted with 15 police officers. A collective case study design which focuses on different experiences of workplace violence by police officers was utilised.

The findings indicated that workplace violence is well conceptualized and understood by police officers in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The study also found that police officers experience workplace violence while conducting their daily duties such as attending complaints, doing cell inspections and apprehending alleged perpetrators of crime. Furthermore the respondent indicated that although EAP is available in the Tzaneen
cluster office, it is not effective in managing workplace violence. Various recommendations were made from the above findings. The recommendations can assist in managing workplace violence through EAP.
CHAPTER 1

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The concept of workplace violence as an academic and scientific concept is receiving increased attention. Even though every employee should experience the workplace as a violence-free and safe environment, where he or she is able to perform his/her duties without fear of harm, this is unfortunately not the reality in most cases. Workplace violence is a reality in the present world and requires the attention of all stakeholders in the work organisation, including Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) professionals. Workplace violence as a phenomenon is still largely misunderstood, although internationally, scholars and academics have conducted a number of studies in an attempt to answer the question of “Which experiences constitute workplace violence?” The researcher is of the opinion that some of the studies have failed in explaining how workplace violence can be effectively managed through EAPs.

There is no agreed definition for workplace violence. The term “workplace violence” is not commonly used in South Africa. Instead, terms like harassment, discrimination, abuse, intimidation and bullying are widely used, but ‘violence’ as such is reserved by the media and the broader South African population to almost exclusively describe physical violence (Schiff, 2010: 19). A definition that originated from South Africa in 1989 is that of Van Der Merwe (in Steinman, 2003: 6) who argues that “Violence is the application of force, action, motive or thought in such a way that a person or group is injured, controlled or destroyed in a physical, psychological or spiritual sense”. This definition is inclusive of physical and psycho-emotional violence, which will be the focus of this study.

Violence in the workplace can take different forms such as physical and psychological, with experiences ranging from bullying, verbal insults, physical assaults, harassment, and intimidation, to abuse and murder (Schiff, 2010:20). Police officers are not exempted from these experiences of workplace violence.
Most of the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence which have been reported in the media platforms suggest that these experiences emanate from the general public, or people who are not members of the South African Police Services (SAPS). Some notable headlines which have featured in the news media include the following: Police on Standby for Flare up of Violence in Reiger Park (Eye Witness News, 2017); 13 people arrested in Kwabhaca service delivery protests (SABC, 2018), as well as Service delivery protests sweep Limpopo (SABC News, 2018). All these news articles support the fact that violence does not only take place in the offices with co-workers, but also within the communities served by police officers. Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (2011:2) describe the types or classifications of workplace violence.

Research also suggests that workplace violence is not only performed by insiders (colleagues, managers or supervisors) within the work organisation, but outsiders (people who do not work in the organisation or are clients) also have the potential to showcase similar violent behaviour (Baron, Byrne & Brainscombe, 2007:322). Given this background, this research will focus on the management of violence that is caused by outsiders, or people who do not work for the SAPS. Violence between SAPS employees will be excluded from this study.

Workplace violence in this context refers to situations whereby police officers find themselves at the receiving end of clients’ violent behaviour. Verbal insults, pushing, beatings, threats and murder, are some of the experiences which may be encountered by police officers in their line of duty. This raises the question of whether police officers are safe in their line of duty or not. Furthermore, the situation becomes more difficult when it includes how to react upon experiencing such behaviours from those same persons that the police officers are entrusted to keep safe, i.e. the general public (Bruce, 2002).

Workplace violence, when seen through the scope of an Employee Assistance Programme, is a phenomenon which can have a negative impact on the work organisation and its employees. According to Gerberich, Church, McGovern, Hansen, Nachreiner, Geisser, Ryan, Mongin & Watt (2004:502), the effects of violence may include reduced
productivity, increased turn-over, absenteeism, counselling costs, decreased staff morale, reduced quality of life, disability, sleeplessness, long term physical, personal, emotional and professional effects; and nightmares and flashbacks. If the above effects are not correctly managed they can affect the productivity of the employee in the workplace.

A study of the management of workplace violence is of great importance, in order to support studies merely focusing on the phenomenon of workplace violence. For this very reason, research is essential to obtain clarity about the experiences and management of workplace violence by members of the SAPS. Such findings may result in the improvement of management strategies of workplace violence, especially through the EAP.

1.2. Defining key concepts

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** as defined by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1), “is the work organisation resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”

**Employee Assistance Professional (EA professional)** as defined by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015: 3), “is a professionally trained person providing an EAP service, including clinical EAP-specific or related tasks”

**Police Officer**, in terms of the South African Police Services (Act 68 of 1995), this refers to “any person who has been appointed to serve in the South African Police Services, whom the Minister has prescribed that he or she be deemed to be a member”. The researcher defines a Police Officer as a member of the South African Police Services.

**Workplace** refers to “all places where workers need to be or to go by reason of their work and which are under the direct or indirect control of the employer” (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006:31). For the purposes of this research, workplace includes any location in which SAPS employees are engaged in societal business activities necessary to perform their
assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, communities, buildings, parking lots, shopping centres and malls; employee/volunteer-organised social events, field locations, clients’ homes, roads and or any other setting where they conduct their duties.

**Workplace violence** is defined as “any act of physical violence, harassment, threatening and disruptive behaviour that occurs in the work site” (Kohut, 2008:240). The US Department of Justice (2005:2) defines workplace violence as “any form of conduct that intentionally creates anxiety, fear and a climate of mistrust in the workplace”. Both definitions put the phenomenon in the setting where this takes place, as being the place of work, meaning that any form of violence that one may experience which is not in the work setting, cannot be classified as workplace violence. The author further highlights the fact that workplace violence is an act which intends to yield certain consequences for the victim.

1.3. Literature review

There are a number of studies which have been conducted on workplace violence, especially in the health-related occupations that involve substantial contact with clients, such as pre-hospital care, emergency medicine and nursing (Di Martino, 2002:1; Brenda & Proffitt, 2011:7). The South African studies conducted on workplace violence are limited to the health sector. However, there is limited research that has explored the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence within SAPS. This study will therefore explore the role of EAP in dealing with violence within SAPS, as experienced by employees based in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. In order to achieve this, the study will explore violence caused by clients or people who do not work for SAPS, as well as the management thereof.

Within the SAPS, violence has been normalised. This is due to the fact that in conducting their duties, police officers sometimes resort to acts of violence. Rubber bullets and stun guns are some of the weapons used by police officers during violent protests, as a means to disperse the crowds (Bruce, 2002: sa). When such scenes are seen on television screens, they reflect the image that police are capable of inflicting violence hence, one wonders if there is any better way of managing violence in the workplace (Borcherds. 2015:7).
The effects of workplace violence on employees can cause psychological problems, as they include threats, harassment, stalking and other forms of abuse that are not inflicted physically to the victim (Jacobs & Scott, 2011:91). As a result these effects must be correctly addressed by professionals such as EA professionals, so that the personal life as well as the productivity of the employee is not affected. Even though workplace violence often manifests itself in less dramatic ways than in high profile incidents heard and seen on the news, yet even the less dramatic experiences have the potential to cause fear or harm.

Understanding the different forms of workplace violence as experienced by police officers will also help to prevent the different reactions that may be displayed. Research suggests that employees who have gone through workplace violence are more likely to be depressed and experience anxiety and less job satisfaction than their counterparts (hetty Van Emmerik, Euwema & Bakker, 2007:152). Workplace violence may be successfully managed on different levels of the workplace through timeous intervention.

1.3.1 Employee Assistance Programme

From the definition of the concept EAP above, it is evident that the EAP is structured in such a way that its primary function is to assist individual employees to handle their personal, as well as work-related problems that interfere with productivity. Violence in the workplace is one of the problems that can have a negative impact on employees, thereby affecting their productivity. In order to resolve personal and productivity issues, EAP should be implemented as a means for the prevention and therapeutic intervention of this occupational hazard (Borcherds, 2015:7).

1.3.2 The role of EAP in the management of violence

In order to understand the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence, the researcher will start by referring to the six core technologies of EAP. The six core technologies that are currently upheld by the EAPA-SA Standard Committee as indicated in the EAPA-SA (2015:1-2) are as follows:
- Training and development of, and assistance to, work organisation stakeholders (managers, supervisors and unions) seeking to effectively manage the employee who is experiencing behavioural, emotional or wellness issues; enhancing the work environment; and improving employees job performance.
- Marketing: Promotion of EAP services to managers, supervisors, unions, employees and their family members.
- Case management: Confidential and timely risk identification, assessment, motivation, referral, monitoring, follow-up and aftercare services for employees with personal and work-related concerns that may affect their job performance.
- Consultation with work organisations to pro-actively address the inherent trends resulting from personal or organisational issues.
- Stakeholder management/Networking to establish and maintain effective relations with internal and external role-players and service providers.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the value/success/impact of the EAP services relating to the work organisation and individual job performance.

Based on the above core technologies, it can be concluded that EAP is well-positioned to integrate and manage the effects of workplace violence in any work organisation. Furthermore, it can be seen as a measure capable of introducing other proactive services that can prevent workplace violence. However, in practice, EAP services are sought after by employees who have encountered workplace violence. Therefore, EAP is seen as a reactive service by the employers. According to De Falco (2001:191), EAP is referred to “as a means to respond to increased workplace violence.”

Employee Assistance professionals also form part of the important role-players in workplace violence. It is important to note that the Employee assistance professionals cannot take the sole responsibility of addressing workplace violence, but they become one of the important stakeholders. The EA professionals intervene at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
1.4 Theoretical Framework: General Aggression Model

The General Aggression Model (GAM) is a modern theory of violence which has its basis from the social learning theory, which suggests that violence is a learned form of social behaviour (Baron, Byrne & Brainscombe, 2007:305). The researcher draws her understanding from the work of Anderson and Bushman (2002a:1680), social psychologists who provided a complete account of the details of human violent behaviour. According to GAM, a chain of events which leads to violent behaviour comes from two input variables: the situational factors (frustration, insults, any kind of attack, exposure to violence or people behaving violently) and the factors relating to persons involved or person factors (these include beliefs and attitudes about violence, knowing how to fight or pre-exposure to violence).

The situational and individual differences can lead to violent behaviour through their impact on the three basic processes. First, arousal means increased physiological arousal/excitement; secondly, an affective or emotional state refers to the fact that it can cause hostile feelings and outward signs such as angry facial expressions. Finally, the psychological interpretation or cognition is where an individual will think hostile thoughts, or have violent beliefs and attitudes. Depending on the individual’s interpretation of the situation and the restraining factors, the individual can engage in a thoughtful action such as restraining his/her anger or impulsive action, which leads to explicit violent behaviour (Baron et al., 2007:306).

The researcher made use of the GAM because the researcher views workplace violence as a form of aggression where one person seeks to harm another in the work place. In order to understand the police officers’ experience of workplace violence, the study explored the factors which lead police officers to experience workplace violence. The researcher was enabled to understand whether they are situational or personal in nature. The researcher gained a deeper understanding of how violence can be dealt with by members of the SAPS and explored Police officers knowledge of the role of EAP in the management of this occupational problem. It allowed the researcher to give descriptions of the nature of workplace violence.
The researcher also explored how police officers reacted to workplace violence by checking whether their actions are thoughtful or impulsive, in order to explore ways of managing violence in the workplace.

1.5 Rationale and Problem statement

There is limited research on how police officers experience and react to violence as perpetrated by outsiders or within their work setting. The majority of available research is focused on health care workers such as nurses, emergency staff and mental health care staff. Thus, the number of South African studies conducted on workplace violence is limited to the health sector. However, there is some research that has explored the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence within SAPS. This study will therefore explore the role of EAP in managing workplace violence within SAPS, as experienced by employees based in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. In order to achieve this, the study explored violence as caused by clients or people who do not work for SAPS as well as the management thereof. Understanding the different forms of workplace violence as experienced by police officers will also help to prevent the different reactions that may be displayed.

The research problem can be formulated as follows:

The experiences of workplace violence by police officers need to be researched in order to describe what meets the criteria of workplace violence within the SAPS, as well as how it can be managed through EAP. The lack of such information results in the risk of not applying the most appropriate interventions, despite the fact that EAP services, known as Employee Health and Wellness services, are being rendered. The research question is therefore: What is the role of the EAP in addressing workplace violence experienced by the SAPS in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality? On that note, the study has the following objectives.
1.6 Goal and objectives of the study

1.6.1 Goal of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of violence towards members of the SAPS in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, as well as the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

In order to obtain the goal of the study the following objectives were formulated:

- To conceptualise and describe workplace violence as experienced by SAPS members.
- To describe the effects of violence on the psycho-social functioning and work performance of police officers in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.
- To explore the role of EAP in the management of violence as experienced SAPS members.

1.7 Ethical Issues

For the purpose of the study the researcher focused on the following ethical issues in order to avoid research abuses and to ensure that the researcher understands her responsibilities (these issues were dealt with in Chapter 1, as from a theoretical point of view:

1.7.1 Informed consent

The researcher received informed consent from 15 participants, duly signed. The information letters provided all the suitable information on the goal of the research; the expected duration of the participant’s contribution; the procedures which will be followed during the investigations; the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which the participants may be exposed as described by Strydom (In de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:117). Furthermore, the respondents were notified that the data will be stored for a period of 15 years at the University of Pretoria.
1.7.2 Violation of privacy/Anonymity/Confidentiality

The researcher ensured that the information provided by the participants especially the sensitive and personal information, is protected and not made available to anyone other than the researcher. This was done in order to ensure that no one should be able to identify the research participants afterwards as indicated by Strydom (In de Vos et al., 2011:120; Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2007:143). The researcher ensured that the information provided by the participants is handled with confidentiality. Furthermore the researcher ensured that the participants’ names are not reflected in the research study for security purposes.

1.7.3 Avoidance of harm

The fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to participants Strydom (In de Vos et al., 2011:115). The researcher took the responsibility of protecting participants against physical, emotional and any other form of harm. In this study, it was unlikely that the participants will be harmed physically. Although it was prospective that they could be harmed emotionally, all the participants showed no emotional harm. The researcher explained the purpose of the research study in a friendly manner before the interviewing began. The researcher ensured that the interviewing process was conducted in a manner that would avoid any possible harm.

1.7.4 Voluntary Participation

The research ensured that all participants were willing to participate in the study and research participants were not forced to be part of the study (Babbie, 2007:26). The researcher asked participants for their permission to participate. The researcher gave the participants the assurance that they were free to discontinue their participation in the study at any time, without explaining their reasons to the researcher. If a participant wished to terminate his/her participation in the study, the researcher will respect his/her decision. The researcher further explained to the participants that withdrawal of their participation in the study will not prejudice them from receiving services in the clinic or any government department.
1.7.5 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing sessions were held to allow the research participants to work through their experience and its impact as well as to give them an opportunity to have their questions answered and misconceptions cleared up (In de Vos et al., 2011:122). The researcher conducted the debriefing sessions with the participants after the interviews and allowed them to talk about their feelings. The researcher further ensured that the debriefing sessions take place in a supportive and friendly environment, rather than in a threatening and confined environment.

1.8 Pilot study

A Pilot study, according to Strydom (In de Vos et al., 2011:241), is done in order to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation, by allowing respondents to criticize or comment on the data collection tool. The purpose was for the researcher to identify difficulties or shortfalls on the interview schedule used. The difficulties encountered included the types as well as the frame of questions that the researcher asked. It also allowed the researcher to determine the community's likely response to the actual programme when it is implemented. The researcher used the same data collection method as in the main study. For the purpose of this research, two police officers (one from Maake and one from Tzaneen police stations) in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality were used to pilot the study.

1.9 Feasibility of the study

All the costs associated with this study as well as all the needed resources for the proposed research were incur by the researcher. The researcher made special arrangements, as the research was conducted during office hours. A written application will be made to the SAPS Head of Department, Greater Tzaneen Municipality Cluster and SAPS Provincial office, requesting permission to conduct the research. Research subjects were informed and requested to give written informed consent to participate in the study.
1.10 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2007:39), is an inquiry through which a researcher tends to collect data in the field and at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is about ensuring that the research project meets a specific quality by measuring its accuracy and precision, reliability and validity (Creswell, 2007:39). In order to achieve this, the researcher used different data sources for the study, rather than depending on a single source. In this study, 15 police officers participated in the study.

Furthermore, the researcher explored the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence in order to conceptualise workplace violence. The researcher made an interpretation of what was seen, heard and understood and these interpretations were done in isolation from the researcher’s own background, history, context and prior knowledge of workplace violence.

In addition to the above criteria, good research should ensure transferability, dependability and conformability of the findings as describe by Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:419). According to the author, transferability means that the researcher has to ensure that the findings from her study can be transferred from one specific situation or case to another. In order to achieve transferability, the study is underpinned by a theoretical framework, the General Aggression Model. The concepts and models guided data collection and analysis.

Furthermore, according to Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:420), dependability refers to questioning whether the research process is logical, well documented and audited. The researcher is of the view that workplace violence has been well documented in other settings such as health, but there is limited research which has been done with law enforcement employees such as police officers. As a result, undertaking such a study with police officers is reasonable. It will add to the existing body of knowledge about workplace violence. Finally, conformability refers to ensuring that the research instrument used is not dependent on the human skill which is also referred to as objectivity (Shenton, 2004:72).
Under conformability the researcher must ensure that the findings of the study can be confirmed by another study as indicated in auditing by Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:420). In ensuring the conformability of the study, the researcher will ensure that the study provides findings which can be collaborated and interpreted through auditing Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:420). Furthermore the researcher will assess her stereotypes and prejudice which might hinder objectivity in the study.

1.11 The Division of the Research Report

The contents of the research report are divided into five chapters as presented below:

Chapter 1: General background information on the research study

Provides an introduction to the study, the goal and objectives of the study; as well as the research question. This chapter will also highlight the problem statement and rationale of the study as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Workplace violence: a theoretical overview

Provides a theoretical overview on workplace violence, definition, types, causes and the impact of workplace violence. This chapter will also focus on management of workplace violence.

Chapter 3: The workplace environment within SAPS

Provides an overview of workplace violence within SAPS, the working conditions of SAPS members and the management of violence in the SAPS.

Chapter 4: Empirical data regarding workplace violence in the SAPS work environment

Outlines the methodological approaches employed in the study; how the sampling will be done and how the results will be analysed. The researcher will also provide a report of the results in terms of the effects of workplace violence and demographic variables and a discussion of the findings.
Chapter 5: Main findings, conclusions and recommendations

Summarises the key findings drawn from this study and provides the conclusion and recommendations from these findings.

1.12 Limitations of the study

There is vast literature internationally and locally on workplace violence, especially in the health sector, but the existing literature does not address workplace violence in the law enforcement such as SAPS nor how violence can be managed though EAP. This made information gathering process challenging.

Organisational or departmental bureaucracies such as approval to conduct the research delayed the data collection process.

SAPS Greater Tzaneen Cluster has seven police stations, only three police stations were represented during data collection as a result the findings of the study cannot be generalised.

The police officers who participated in the study represented SAPS Greater Tzaneen, the information provided by the police officers may be limited for the protection of SAPS image.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the general background information on the research study. The following chapter will focus on theoretical overview of workplace violence.
CHAPTER 2

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Workplace violence as a phenomenon is still largely misunderstood. Although internationally scholars and academics have conducted a number of studies in an attempt to answer the question: “Which experiences constitute workplace violence?” Some of the studies have failed in explaining how workplace violence can be effectively managed. Internationally and locally the growing body of literature describing various aspects of workplace violence is mostly in the field of health care. Firstly, the existing literature in the field of workplace violence can be confusing to readers due to different ways in which the authors describe or define workplace violence. Secondly, the confusion is further worsened by what can be viewed as workplace violence in the field of healthcare which is not necessarily viewed as workplace violence in the field of policing. For example being hit or pushed by a detainee or community member may not be seen by a police officer as workplace violence, but being hit or pushed by a patient can be seen as workplace violence by a nurse.

When defining workplace violence, some of the definitions focus on specific behaviours as a result the description becomes limited and therefore excludes some of the incidents that affect employees in the workplace. Some definitions are broad and all inclusive. Furthermore, the confusion is worsened by the fact that there is no agreed worldwide definition of the phenomenon of ‘workplace violence’. The confusion is further contributed to by the fact that the existing information on workplace violence in the South African context is limited, and the available information can cause confusion to the reader when compared with the worldwide existing literature on the subject. The range of behaviours which may be included under the general heading of violence at work is very broad. But the borderline of what constitutes acceptable behaviour is often vague and cultural attitudes to what amounts to violence are so diverse, making it a very complex matter to define violence at work.
Many people may first think of violence at work as physical attacks by customers or clients on the employee, however, this is but one type or form of violence in the workplace. Violence can be psychological as well as physical (Di Martino, 2000:16). Furthermore violence may also consist of repeated actions which, by themselves may be relatively minor, but which can cumulatively come to constitute serious forms of violence such as sexual harassment, bullying or mobbing.

Furthermore, there are a number of factors that contribute to the prevalence of workplace violence namely the individual factors consisting of age and gender; the societal factors which include the socio-economic changes and levels of violent crimes in the society; the organisational factors which are, as outlined by (White, 2002:9), “excessive workload, inadequate time to complete the assigned task, poor supervision, uncertain organisational climate, insufficient authority to meet job responsibilities or functions, philosophical differences between the organisation and employee, unexpected or significant changes at work or at home, and unanswered or unresolved frustrations”. All these factors make the environment conducive to the eruption of violence.

Workplace violence, when seen through the scope of the Employee Assistance Programme, is a phenomenon which can have a negative impact on the work organisation and its employees. According to Gerberich, Church, McGovern, et al. (2004:502) the effects of violence may include reduced productivity, increased turnover, absenteeism, counselling costs, decreased staff morale, reduced quality of life, disability, sleeplessness, long term physical, personal, emotional and professional effects; nightmares and flashbacks. A study by Ngaluwe, Havenga and Sengane (2014:71) found that the physical effects of workplace violence include physical pain and emotional distress. These are some of the effects of violence in the workplace which can have a negative impact on the mental health of the victim. The effects of workplace violence which are not visible to the naked eye are the psychological effects. It is easier to ignore or remain unaware of them (Borcherds 2015:2). Additionally effects of workplace violence may vary from one individual to the next and may take different forms such as sleep disturbances, nightmare, anxiety, tearfulness, shock and depression.
This chapter will focus on reviewing the existing literature of the concept workplace violence as a phenomenon in the workplace as well as how violence can be managed in the workplace. The literature has focused more on the extent and the prevalence of workplace violence. The researcher will focus specifically on the existing literature on managing workplace violence and the role of the EAP in such management, in order to explore the experiences of SAPS members thereof. Exploring the management of workplace violence will be the main focus of this chapter, before going deeper into the role of EAP in the workplace and in the management of violence in the SAPS which will specifically be covered in the following chapter.

2.2 Defining Workplace Violence

Workplace violence in the 21st century has emerged as a significant health and safety issue causing concerns to employers and employees within different organisations. Workplace violence has existed for centuries but it was not seen as significant until it worsened to include serious offences such as murder or homicide (Jacobs & Scott, 2011:86). This view may suggest that in the past decades, workplace violence was understudied or less researched, documented or sensationalised as it is in the current decade. According to Borcherds (2015:1), in South Africa as a developing country, the phenomenon and incidents have mostly gone unrecorded. In order to understand this phenomenon that seems to be affecting different organisations and employees at different levels, the researcher will look at existing definitions, and the nature and description of this occupational hazard.

There is no worldwide uniform definition of workplace violence. In South Africa the term ‘workplace violence’ is not commonly used, rather terms like harassment, discrimination, abuse, intimidation, and bullying are widely used, but ‘violence’ as such is reserved almost exclusively, by the media and the broad South African population, to describe physical violence (Schiff, 2010; Chappell & Di Martino, 2000; Di Martino 2003).
A definition that originated from South Africa in 1989 is that of Van Der Merwe (In Steinman, 2003: 6). “Violence is the application of force, action, motive or thought in such a way that a person or group is injured, controlled or destroyed in a physical, psychological or spiritual sense”. This definition is inclusive of physical and psycho-emotional violence but narrows the full exploration of the psycho-social effects of workplace violence. This broad definition of workplace violence makes it difficult to have a true understanding of what workplace violence is.

Furthermore, limited and exclusive definitions of the workplace can cause confusion to employees, as lack of understanding of the concept may result from lack of documentation, when employees are confronted with such issues or incidents that should be reported as workplace violence. Due to lack of understanding victims of workplace violence often don’t know how to act or report it and as a result most cases or incidents go unreported. The majority of incidents that may go unreported include assaults, stalking, threats, harassment and physical or emotional abuse, but these incidents do not make headlines. Zuzelo, Curran and Zeserman (2012:113, 124) concur that only very serious incidents are reported because lesser serious incidents are seen as normal and accepted as part of the workplace scenario.

According to Gerberich, Church, McGovern, et al. (2004:495), “Workplace violence refers to violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed towards a person at work or on duty”. From this definition the physical effects as well as the psychological effects of workplace violence can be explored. Violence therefore manifests itself in physical as well as psychological manners. **Physical violence refers** to, “the use of physical force against another person or group that results in physical, sexual and psychological harm. It includes beatings, kicking, slapping, stabbing, shooting, pushing, biting and pinching” (WHO, ILO, PSI and ICN, 200:12).

**Psychological Violence means**, “intentional use of power, including threats of physical force against another person or group that can result in harm to physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. It includes verbal abuse, bullying/ mobbing, harassment and threats” (WHO, et al., 2005:12). While according to Wiskow (2003:8), physical violence includes those incidents which cause major injury, require medical assistance, require first
aid only, assault, assaultive incident, murder, fatalities, physical or sexual assault, attack and abusive behaviour. The author further indicated that psychological violence includes threats (verbal and non-verbal), threats of assaults, threats of a sexual nature, threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, verbal attack, non-verbal abuse (stalking), bullying, ‘ganging up’, harassment (including threatening letters or phone-calls), health and safety hazards, including fear and intimidation. It can be summarised from the definition above that violence ranges from physical attacks to verbal insults, bullying, mobbing and harassment, including sexual and racial harassment.

Alternatively, definitions restricting workplace violence to, for example, intended or physical assault includes the harmful effects of non-physical actions or threats, such as verbal and emotional abuse. To demonstrate this, the World Health Organisation’s definition of violence is “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or acting against oneself, another person, or against a group or a community, that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation” (World Health Organisation/WHO, 2002: 4). This is helpful in recognising that violence occurs at individual, group and community levels and acknowledges both the consequences of physical and psychological violence, making this definition by the WHO comprehensive enough to be suitable for research on violence targeting SAPS employees.

The definition used by the World Health Organisation associates intentionality with the committing of the act itself, irrespective of the outcome it produces. The inclusion of the word ‘power’ in addition to the phrase ‘use of physical force’ broadens the nature of a violent act and expands the conventional understanding of violence to include those acts that result from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation. The ‘use of power’ also serves to include neglect or acts of omission, in addition to the more obvious ways of committing violent acts. Thus, ‘the use of physical force or power’ should be understood to include all types of physical and psychological abuse, as well as murder and other abusive acts that can be inflicted on the employee.
From the above definitions the following two aspects should be noted when it comes to intentionality (WHO, 2002:5). Firstly, even though violence is distinguished from unintentional events that result in injuries, the presence of an intent to use force does not necessarily mean that there was an intent to cause damage. Indeed, there may be a considerable difference between intended behaviour and intended consequence. A perpetrator may intentionally commit an act that, by objective standards, is judged to be dangerous and highly likely to result in adverse health effects, but the perpetrator may not perceive it as such. For example, during service delivery protests whereby the SAPS may find itself in the clutches of the community.

Secondly intentionality lies in the difference between the intent to injure and the intent to use violence. Violence, in this sense is culturally determined and has been normalised. Some people mean to harm others but, based on their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, do not perceive their acts as violent. The same example applies with South Africa being known as a violent society, where communities tend to resort to violence as a way of communicating their frustration and dissatisfaction when it comes to service delivery. The culture of violence is embedded in our communities. Intentionality in workplace violence may also mean that action is taken with a hope that it would yield certain results, which is to cause pain or a sense of discomfort to the victim. The action may be intended to cause physical or psychological harm to the person or the victim.

While a uniform definition of what constitutes workplace violence remains vague, for the purpose of this study violence in the workplace includes a large variety of behaviours such as homicide, rape, robbery, wounding, assault, threats, stalking, harassment, bullying, intimidation, innuendo and deliberate silence that causes psychological and physical harm to a SAPS employee perpetrated by the service recipients or clients. SAPS service recipients or clients will include communities/community members and detainees.

The International Labour Organisation’s definition includes a large variety of behaviours such as homicide, rape, robbery, wounding, battering, stalking, harassment, bullying,
intimidation, innuendo, deliberate silence and systematic collective violence (which consists of subjecting a target employee to psychological harassment) that may all result in considerable detriment to the person's physical and psychological well-being (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006:10). Psychological Harassment/Mobbing/bullying refers to “repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee or group of employees, that creates a risk to safety and health” (WHO, 2003:12)

The term workplace violence, however, is used by many researchers to refer to a small subset of behaviours which have the intention of harm and which entail direct physical assault to the individual (Chappell & Di Martino 2006:1). Schat and Kelloway (2005:191) extended the definitions to define workplace violence as “behaviour by an individual or individuals within or outside an organisation that is intended to physically or psychologically harm a worker or workers and occurs in a work-related setting”. This includes both the physical and the psychological effects of violence on the individual. Within this definition one can conclude that there is an action taken with the hope that it yields certain results, which is to cause pain or a sense of discomfort to the victim.

From the above definitions the following two aspects should be noted when it comes to intentionality (WHO, 2002:5). Firstly, even though violence is distinguished from unintentional events that result in injuries, the presence of an intent to use force does not necessarily mean that there was an intent to cause damage. Indeed, there may be a considerable difference between intended behaviour and intended consequence. A perpetrator may intentionally commit an act that, by objective standards, is judged to be dangerous and highly likely to result in adverse health effects, but the perpetrator may not perceive it as such. Such actions may be observed during service delivery protests whereby the SAPS may find itself in the clutches of the community. Secondly intentionality lies in the difference between the intent to injure and the intent to use violence. Violence, in this sense is culturally determined and has been normalised. Some people mean to harm others but, based on their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, do not perceive their acts as violent.
The same example applies, with South Africa being known as a violent society where communities tend to resort to violence as a way of communicating their frustration and dissatisfaction when it comes to service delivery. The culture of violence is embedded in our communities.

While a uniform definition of what constitutes workplace violence remains vague, for the purpose of this study violence in the workplace includes a large variety of behaviours such as homicide, rape, robbery, wounding, assault, threat, stalking, harassment, bullying, intimidation, innuendo and deliberate silence that causes psychological and physical harm to a SAPS employee perpetrated by the service recipients or clients. SAPS service recipients or clients will include communities/community members and detainees.

2.3 Workplace Violence as a Phenomenon

There have been many studies conducted on workplace violence especially in the health-related occupations that involve substantial contact with clients, such as pre-hospital care, emergency medicine and nursing (Di Martino, 2002:1; Brenda & Proffitt, 2011:7). However, there is limited research that has been done to explore Police Officers’ experiences of workplace violence in South Africa. Workplace violence is not a phenomenon limited to the South African context as an enormous body of literature exists internationally which focuses on examining its extent.

According to Borcherds (2015:1) workplace violence is a scientific and academic concept which is currently receiving more attention locally and internationally. The increased attention in workplace violence, as noted by Estrada, Nelson, Jerre and Wikman (2010:47), is due to the fact that there is an increase in officially reported violence and that changes have occurred in the workplace that affect employees’ risks of exposure to violence. Employees are becoming more aware of what is considered acceptable behaviour in the workplace hence they are reporting violent behaviour more often. However when it comes to SAPS there is a contradiction to what may be seen as an acceptable behaviour or what is normal or abnormal behaviour in the workplace. Often police officers find themselves at the receiving end of violence while in contact with clients.
As a result police officers may not view workplace violence as a criminal act worthy of being reported. Estrada et al. (2010:50) noted that only a fraction of all violent incidents are perceived as intentional criminal acts. It becomes clear that in the area of work related violence the exposed occupational groups such as SAPS may perceive violent incidents as an everyday part of their occupational role. A police officer being pushed or threatened by a detainee or having stones thrown at him by community members during a protest may not necessarily view this as violence in the workplace. Mostly when members of the community act violently towards police officers when facing arrest, they will be charged with resisting arrest instead of being charged with assaulting a police officer.

**Sex, age and type of occupations as risk factors**

Several factors appear to increase a worker’s risk of suffering violent treatment at the workplace. Chief among these are sex, age and precarious employment. Many studies show that women are at particular risk of violence, both inside and outside the workplace (Estrada et al., 2010:51). Why are women at high risk of violent behaviour in the workplace? In the first place, women are predominant in many of the high-risk occupations, particularly as teachers, social workers, nurses and other health-care workers, as well as in banks and shops. The continued segregation of women in low-paid and low status jobs, while men prevail in better-paid, higher status jobs and supervisory positions, also contributes to the problem. Nevertheless, men tend to be at greater risk of physical assault, while women are particularly vulnerable to incidents of a sexual nature such as sexual harassment and rape as stated in Estrada et al. (2010:49).

There are many international surveys stating that both men and women are affected by workplace violence. Many women are affected by sexual harassment during the course of their working lives especially in the health sector (Chappell & Di Martino, 2001; ILO, ICN, WHO & PSI 2002). As a result of this many studies have been undertaken on sexual harassment and have documented more fully its incidence and the manner in which it can affect the work performance, career opportunities and the mental and physical state of women workers. In many cases, action has also been taken against sexual harassment at the national and enterprise levels. In the SAPS, as a male dominated field, it should be noted that it may seem as if more policemen are experiencing workplace violence than policewomen.
While no occupation is immune to workplace violence, some occupations tend to be more at risk than others. According to Gerberich, Church, McGovern et al. (2004:495) the healthcare sector is most prominent among other sectors which are at high risk. Thus even the number of South African studies conducted on workplace violence is limited to the health sector. Workplace violence should not be limited to healthcare workers only as many different occupations do experience workplace violence. In particular, workers who perform certain types of tasks appear to be at special risk of workplace violence. According (Di Martino & Musri 2001:13) these tasks include:

- handling money or valuables (cashiers, transport workers, bank and post office staff, shop assistants);
- providing care, advice, education and training (nurses, ambulance staff, social workers, teachers);
- carrying out inspection or enforcement duties (police and traffic officers, ticket inspectors);
- working with mentally disturbed, drunk or potentially violent people (prison officers, bar staff, mental health workers); and
- working alone (home visitors, taxi drivers, and domestic repair workers).

According to Di Martino & Musri (2001:13) workers working alone are at special risk of suffering physical and sexual attacks. The risk may be due to the fact that when one is alone he/she becomes vulnerable and may become an easier target for perpetrators than when the person is in a group. Secondly when a person is attacked while alone it becomes easy for the attacker to get away with the crime because in such events there will be no witnesses.

Workers who handle money are at the greatest risk because of the high levels of crime in society. Many criminals see them as targets because they have access to easy money. The number of cash in transit heists in South Africa is very high as reported by the SABC News and other media platforms such as the newspapers and social media.
While in most circumstances this type of work does not generate special problems, there are cases where exposure to the public can create a higher risk of violence. Whenever valuables are, or seem to be, within 'easy reach' there is a risk that crime, and increasingly violent crime, may be committed (Di Martino & Musri 2001:13).

Those who work with patients are at risk because frustration and anger arising from illness and pain, geriatric problems, psychiatric disorders, alcohol and substance abuse can all affect behaviour and make people verbally or physically violent (Di Martino & Musri 2001:13). As a result the health practitioners may be at the receiving end of the patient's anger and frustration and become a victim of physical or verbal assault, which are both physical as well as psychological forms of workplace violence.

2.3.1 Types of Workplace Violence

From attempts to define the facets of workplace violence, the focus now shifts towards the delineation of specific types of workplace violence. While traditional approaches suggest three main types of violence in the workplace, Bowie, Fisher and Cooper (2011:3) classify four types of workplace violence. The following types of workplace violence can be experienced by employees of an organisation as elaborated by Bowie et al. (2011:3)

2.3.1.1 External or Intrusive Violence

This type is perpetrated by persons external to the organisation and it includes violence motivated by gain, such as theft or criminal activities, and violence not motivated by obviously extrinsic gain, such as vandalism or assault. The victims are targeted, but others may be injured as a result of being present at the same time and in the same place. External or intrusive violence has the element of intentionality (WHO, 2005) because when a person (perpetrator) engages in this form of violence he does it with the hope to benefit from it. This is most likely to be seen during cash in transit heists or any other form of robberies. The intended consequence may be to rob the victim of his belongings such as money, while the unintended consequence may be that the victims will end up being physically harmed or even killed during the process. Power is more likely to be used by the perpetrator in this type of violence.
2.3.1.2 Consumer or Patient Related Violence

This usually includes employees of service-based occupations where the character of the occupation itself puts them at risk for violence from disgruntled customers, clients or patients or where factors intrinsic to carrying out the job itself (dangerous occupations such as police, security or the military) lead to a higher likelihood of violence. Violence occurs where the task is primarily carried out, and the victims are usually employees conducting their usual work routines (like policemen) who are then assaulted by a violent client or criminals. Included here are the categories of vicarious trauma experienced by employees and staff violence against those whom they ‘are expected to be serving’.

2.3.1.3 Staff Relationship Violence

Staff relationship violence occurs when the employee is placed at risk as a result of interactions between co-workers, and occurs within the context of the workplace, as a result of conflict between workers and disputes arising out of the situation at work. Workplace violence in this context may result due to organisational culture, management style and organisational strategy. Workplace violence can also be a result of current or former employees or other persons with employment-related involvement with the organisation, such as an employee’s spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, friend, relative or a person who has a dispute with an employee. Bowie (2002) defines staff relationship violence as relationship violence where the employees are themselves the aggressors, as in the case of bullying, mobbing or harassment, and consequently it is sometimes referred to as horizontal violence.

2.3.1.4 Organisational Violence

In addition to the three traditionally identified forms of violence above, a further category of violence is identified as the violence which is committed by the organisation itself (Bowie et al., 2011:3). The way in which an organisation is structured and managed can provoke violence.
This organisational violence emphasises the role the organisation can play in triggering violence by knowingly placing employees in hazardous or unpredictable situations. This violence-inducing climate can include concerns about downsizing or layoffs, chronic worker-management conflict, ineffectual communication, and unjust decisions by management.

2.3.2 Causes of Workplace Violence

There is a tendency to seek the causes of workplace violence in the individual, particularly in the high-profile cases of disgruntled employees, angry spouses or unhappy, desperate, often psychiatrically impaired people venting their anger on colleagues at the workplace. However, the phenomenon is much more complex, particularly given today’s wider definition which includes everyday psychological violence like bullying. Recognition and understanding of the variety and complexity of the factors that contribute to violence at work is a vital precursor to any effective prevention and control programme.

A goal of anyone looking into workplace violence would, more than likely, be to predictably discover what causes people to react violently. Finding exact causes would be a daunting task for anyone and is well beyond the scope of this paper. With that in mind, it would be helpful to identify work related factors that may very well contribute to a work environment that could lead to violence in the workplace. In order to be able to identify risk factors and thus prevent violence at work, it is important to understand its causes and antecedents. Kennedy (2004) categorises contributory factors to workplace violence into situational factors, individual factors, organisational factors and societal or environmental factors. Chappell and Di Martino, (2006:121-126) elaborate on these factors.

2.3.2.1 Individual factors

According to Di Martino (2002:21), in the Bulgarian report they found the patients’ individual characteristics was a factor leading to physical or psychological violence at the workplace. An increasing aggressiveness in the patients’ behaviour was observed. Enraged, angry or distraught for one reason or another, alcohol- or drug-affected patients are the chief cause of violence in the health institutions or facilities.
The growing number of patients suffering from acute or chronic mental disorders, who remain outside mental institutions without any adequate follow-up treatment due to the prevailing poor situation of society, family and the healthcare system, constitute a threat to healthcare personnel.

According to Schindeler (2014:375) the power imbalance between the victim and the perpetrator play a role in the occurrence of workplace violence. The researcher concurs with this view as people holding the possession of power may violate the less powerful person intentionally, further believing that such a person cannot report them anywhere. The author explained that in most cases the victim feels disempowered therefore unable to defend her or himself. Furthermore irrespective of the status or relationship with the perpetrator, the victim has no confidence in his or her ability to defend him/herself or to take action as a result of seeing the perpetrator as more powerful.

2.3.2.2 Societal/Environmental Factors

The following factors may, individually or in combination, influence the risk of violence in a given society: levels of violent crime in society and the socio-economic situation. They may be seen as factors that worsen the violence between SAPS and their clients or communities serviced by SAPS. According to Di Martino (2002:22) a period of transition characterised by poverty, unemployment and a high crime rate among both healthcare personnel and patients, the socio-economic situation in the country is mentioned as a factor generating physical violence. According to Schindeler (2014:375) the state of affairs in South Africa which is known as a violent society with violent crimes having high numbers, can be a contributory factor. Workplace violence flourishes in an environment where it is allowed to exist unfettered. The latter raises the question of whether the society itself is doing enough to address violence or has it normalised violent crime.
2.3.2.3 Situational factors

Some work situations appear to be particularly associated with an enhanced risk of violence. Working in contact with the public, such as being at the interface between the organisation and the general public, increases the risk of exposure to violence.

2.3.2.4 Organisational Factors

Poor work distribution is another factor influencing levels of violence. Thus, where the workload is excessive or unevenly distributed, situations may be created that bring about a violent reaction from clients. Change, economic uncertainty, downsizing and tougher competition for promotion, often combined with budget cuts, are all factors that are associated with higher levels of aggression and violence in the workplace. The culture and climate at the workplace, such as an increased risk of threats and fear of becoming a victim of violence, have been found in situations where there is a lack of harmony within a work group and where there is little or no support from fellow-workers. Increased attention should be given to the general culture of the workplace. An ‘open’ working environment, where dialogue and communication are extensively exercised, may help defuse the risks of stress and violence. In contrast, a ‘closed’ authoritarian working environment where people work in isolation, with mutual suspicion and defensive attitudes towards external people, may increase the risk of stress and violence. (Di Martino & Musri, 2001:15)

The researcher concurs with the above author’s viewpoint and concludes that in an organisation where the culture is based on tolerance, equal opportunities and cooperation, such an organisation can contribute to the establishment of a working climate where violence and stress have little input. People will become warm towards each other and there will be less competition for opportunities. Contrary to the above statement, if the organisational culture is that of discrimination and segregation explicitly or implicitly, the behaviours and relationships of the organisation’s employees will be totally different from those of tolerance, equal opportunities and cooperation. The organisation’s members may become emotionally cold, isolated as well as competitive and everyone will be minding their own business.
In addition to the above, Kelleher (as cited in White, 2002:9) lists nine elements that directly impact the work environment: “excessive workload, inadequate time to complete the assigned task, poor supervision, uncertain organisational climate, insufficient authority to meet job responsibilities or functions, philosophical differences between the organisation and employee, unexpected or significant changes at work or at home, and unanswered or unresolved frustrations”. The above organisational conditions can be seen as critical factors in the creation of an atmosphere conducive to workplace violence.

The Bulgarian report for the study conducted by Di Martino (2002) emphasises that the workplace in the health sector is characterised by inefficient organisations and bad working conditions including a 12-hour working day, work intensification due to insufficient personnel, understaffed night work teams which necessitates the need to work alone at night and excessive paper work that needs to be done in compliance with the requirements of the National Health Insurance Fund. These result in long lines of patients waiting to be attended to. As a result they become irritable and aggressive due to the long wait.

Schindeler (2014:375) also found that across all perspectives there was a uniform recognition of the primacy/supremacy of the organisation as a responsible partner in workplace violence. This means that the organisation itself may be viewed as also playing a leading role in the creation of workplace violence. Whether as a matter of indirect or direct obligation, the organisation has a responsibility to prevent the occurrence of such violence. The organisation should have measures in place to check whether its efforts to address or combat workplace violence are successful. It is argued that pathologising the perpetrator and the victim without identifying and addressing the role organisation plays in enabling or fostering such violence, undermines the effective prevention.

2.3.3 Impact of Workplace Violence

Like a stone thrown into water, physical and psychological violence at work not only has an immediate effect on the victim, but also expands in progressively larger ripples,
affecting other people directly or indirectly, as well as the employer or work organisation, the significant others outside the work setting and the community (Gerberich et al., 2004:502). According to Timm and Chandler (2002:1) violence can have devastating effects on the productivity of the organisation and the quality of life of the employees. However the impact and cost of violence at work needs to be considered at a number of different levels:

- At the individual level, where the suffering and humiliation resulting from violence usually lead to a lack of motivation, loss of confidence and reduced self-esteem, depression and anger, anxiety and irritability. In the same way as with stress, if the causes of violence are not eliminated, or its effects contained by adequate intervention, these symptoms are likely to develop into physical illness, psychological disorders, tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse. They may even culminate in occupational accidents, invalidity and even suicide.

- At the workplace, where violence causes immediate and often long-term disruption to interpersonal relationships, the organisation of work and the overall working environment. Employers bear the direct cost of lost work and having to improve security measures. They are also likely to bear the indirect costs of reduced efficiency and productivity, the deterioration of product quality, loss in company image and a reduction in the number of clients.

- At the community level, where the costs of violence include health care and long-term rehabilitation costs for the reintegration of victims, unemployment and retraining costs for victims who lose their jobs as a result of such violence, and disability and invalidity costs where the working capacities of the victims are impaired by violence at work.

According to Gerberich, Church, McGovern, et al. (2004:502) the effects of violence may include reduced productivity, increased turnover, absenteeism, counselling costs, decreased staff morale, reduced quality of life, disability, sleeplessness, long term physical, personal and emotional and professional effects; nightmares and flashbacks. There is limited research available on the effects of workplace violence on employees, more especially on the effects of threats, harassment, stalking and other forms of abuse that are not inflicted physically to the victim, according to Jacobs and Scott (2011:91).
This may contribute to a narrow view of what the effects of such incidents can be on an employee, therefore causing it to be disregarded as a form of workplace violence that can have a negative effect when experienced by an employee. Workplace violence often manifests itself in less dramatic ways than in high profile incidents as heard and seen on the news, but even the less dramatic experiences have the potential to cause fear or harm. Understanding different forms of workplace violence as experienced by Police officers will also help prevent different reactions that may be displayed. Research suggests that employees who have gone through the experience of workplace violence are more likely to be depressed, create anxiety and have less job satisfaction than their counterparts (hetty Van Emmerik, Euwema & Bakker, 2007:152).

2.4 Management of Workplace Violence

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act No. 85 of 1993) forces organisations to share responsibility with regard to the health and well-being of employees. Employers are also cautious with regard to any legal steps that could be taken against them in terms of the above-mentioned act, but also in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act No. 75 of 1997) and the Labour Relations Act (Act No. 66 of 1995). From the provisions of these Acts it becomes a mandate to any work organisation including SAPS to preserve workers’ health and safety which in turn increases the organisation’s ability to attain its goals. Preserving workers’ health and safety means addressing both their physical and mental needs. This implies that employers acknowledge that healthy employees are more productive and they contribute better towards achieving the goals of the organisation. For example the goal of maintaining law and order in the SAPS will not be attainable if all the police officers are off work due to the effects of workplace violence.

Ensuring the health and safety of employees further entails having intervention strategies in place that will assist in the management of any situation, including workplace violence which can have a negative impact on the psychological as well as the physical well-being of police officers.
Workplace violence as one of the occupational hazards also requires prevention and protection as well as intervention strategies in place that will be effective in the management of its effects as well as impact on the employees. This includes having policies as well as therapeutic services within SAPS that focus on the management of workplace violence. However ensuring the health and safety of employees should not only be seen as the responsibility of the SAPS Department alone, a police officer is also responsible for his or her own safety. The prevention and intervention strategies as well as the stakeholders who are responsible for management of workplace violence will be explained below.

2.4.1 Preventative Measures in respect to Workplace Violence

The prevention strategy should indicate both proactive and reactive measures for the work organisation. Various authors have agreed that there are a number of factors or variables that are key in the effective management of workplace violence (Kelley & Mullen, 2006; Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). Leadership, recruitment, screening and selection, training, discipline and performance appraisal are all key in the effective management of workplace violence. These aspects will be explained below:

2.4.1.1 Leadership or management

Kelley and Mullen (2006:500) have noted that a responsive strategy to violence prevention begins with having an organisation’s leadership that is responsible for the minimisation of the potential risks before violence occurs, ensuring a behavioural and emotional response so that healing can take place. As noted, workplace violence can take place in any given organisation; therefore it becomes the role of the leadership to prevent it. Furthermore the leadership members of any given organisation are responsible for creating a culture in an organisation that does not tolerate or promote violence. Therefore the leadership should be responsible for creating an anti-violence working environment.
Furthermore, as noted in the International Labour Organization/ILO, International Council of Nurses (ICN), WHO and Public Services International/PSI (2002:6) employers can offer additional protections such as the following:

- Indicate what employees should do if they witness or are subjected to workplace violence, and how they should protect themselves.
- Secure the workplace. Where appropriate to the business, install video surveillance, extra lighting and alarm systems and minimize access by outsiders through identification badges, electronic keys and guards.
- Equip field staff with cellular phones and hand-held alarms or noise devices and require them to prepare a daily work plan and keep a contact person informed of their location throughout the day. Keep employer provided vehicles properly maintained.
- Instruct employees not to enter any location where they feel unsafe. Introduce a ‘buddy system’ or provide a backup service to assist police officers as in potentially dangerous situations or at night.
- Develop policies and procedures covering visits by police officers. Address the conduct of home visits, the presence of others in the home during visits and the worker’s right to refuse to provide services in a clearly hazardous situation.
- Provide safety education for police officers so that they know what conduct is not acceptable.

2.4.1.2 Recruitment

Each and every employee requires a responsible employer who will ensure the protection and safety in the work place. According to Kelley and Mullen (2006:500) if the prospective employee perceives that the employer does not have the adequate or well managed crisis response plans, they are likely to reject positions in the organisation. Apart from their perceptions, if a prospective employee has heard from the current employee of a particular organisation about violent incidents which were not handled well, the prospective employee is less likely to consider the organisation as an employer of choice, thereby impacting negatively on the Organisation’s ability to attract new talent and skilled workers.
Finally, the organisation with poor workplace violence management programmes is less likely to be considered as a prime employer by potential recruits. Having a good profile and effective workplace violence programmes puts the organisation on the top of the list of well sought after organisations to work for by potential recruits, as it is more appealing to them. It also assures the recruit that if he/she works for the organisation his/her safety is of importance to the organisation.

2.4.1.3 Screening and Selection of prospective employees

Screening which is done at the initial employment interviews is seen as a preventative or proactive measure in the management of workplace violence (Chappbell & Di Martino, 2006). The researcher fully concurs with the authors that prevention of workplace violence can start at the initial employment interview by doing thorough reference checks of prospective employees, which means verifying all history and behaviour of a prospective new employee. Furthermore Kelley and Mullen (2006:502) stated that screening, pre-employment testing and carefully structured job interviews may assist in identifying potential offenders before they are employed by the organisation. Hence in South Africa when one applies for employment, mostly in government and private institutions, security clearance is of prime importance.

For those who are found to have previous convictions the dream of working may fade away as they may be viewed as unsuitable for the workforce or unwanted by the organisations. For Kelley and Mullen (2006:502), the selection of a prospective employee is a matter of controversy as labour legislation prohibits organisations from using variables of dispositional and attitudinal types. In addition demographic variables are sometimes the best predictors of workplace violence (Kelley & Mullen 2006:501). What should be considered relevant during the selection is the interaction between the individual and the organisation.
2.4.1.4 Training

Training has been suggested as an effective strategy in the functional management of workplace violence by various researchers (Schat & Kelloway, 2006; Chappell & Di Martino, 2006; Kelley & Mullen, 2006). The study training of Schat & Kelloway provided empirical evidence aimed at managing workplace violence. Their study training was not intended for those who were directly affected by violence, but for those employees who had vicariously experienced violence. It was found that this training appeared to improve the emotional and somatic well-being, and therefore serves as a therapeutic role for those suffering vicarious traumatisation.

The training programme should focus on the following aspects related to workplace violence: the types of workplace violence, risk assessment, intervention strategies both by the individual, the organisation and the environment, as well as intervention after the event. This will raise awareness at the site of the employee as well as identify the role he or she needs to play towards the prevention of workplace violence. As noted earlier preventing workplace violence is the responsibility of everyone. Furthermore employees can, through training, also be encouraged to take protective measures, even though this cannot guarantee that an employee will not become victims of workplace violence. According to the ILO, ICN, WHO and PSI (2002:7), the following steps can help reduce the odds of becoming a victim of workplace violence:

- Learn how to recognize, avoid or diffuse potentially violent situations by attending personal safety training programmes. It should be noted that when an employee is able to recognise the danger at hand he or she will be able to employ the strategies that will ensure his/her safety as well as the safety of others.
- Alert supervisors to any concerns about safety or security and report all incidents immediately in writing. This will assist in minimising the incidents of workplace violence that go unreported, which in turn have been seen as acceptable by the victims.
- Avoid traveling alone into unfamiliar locations or situations whenever possible. One person is more vulnerable to fall victim of an attack than two or a group of
people. In addition, in instances where reporting may be done there will be eye witnesses.

- Carry required identification into community settings. When people know who you are the possibility of being attacked can be minimised.

Finally, training plans on relevant policies related to the workplace should also be made a part of the intervention plan. Employees’ behaviour should also be assessed and attention given to details. Policies addressing workplace violence have to be formulated and clearly communicated to employees, supervisors and management in the workplace. Policies should be accompanied by clear operational procedures and guidelines for effective implementation of the policy (EAPA-SA, 2015). It is critical to ensure that all employees know the policy and understand that all claims of workplace violence will be investigated and remedied.

2.4.1.5 Discipline

Discipline can act as a buffer against violence perpetrated by the employee to the community and visa versa, as well as being a promoter at the same time. According to Kelley and Mullen (2006:504) both the administration of discipline and the lack thereof may be a contributory factor. Kelley and Mullen also noted that there is little research available on the matter. However they have indicated that discipline itself gives rise to workplace aggression, as a result organisations should work toward raising awareness of employees to the fact that it is part of its culture to reprimand unwanted employees’ actions, such as aggression in the workplace.

2.4.1.6 Performance appraisal

Borcherds (2015:73) noted that aggressive reactions often occur just prior to performance appraisals. During this phase, tensions, disappointment and dissatisfaction may be visible in many organisations. Kelley and Mullen (2006:504) argue that given the importance of managing perceptions of unfairness, the appropriate actions and attitudes of managers throughout the appraisal process can be a tool in the prevention of workplace violence or aggression. This view suggests that there should be a clear communication between the employees and managers.
Furthermore if a manager displays a negative or aggressive attitude towards employees, the employees are more likely to respond in the same manner. Therefore managers should be cautious at all times and demonstrate a positive attitude in order to diffuse a potentially explosive situation with the employees.

2.4.2 Therapeutic Interventions to Support Victims of Workplace Violence

In every workplace there has to be continuous preparedness and plans to effectively deal with workplace violence. The need for preparedness calls for different stakeholders teaming up and making the establishment of a safe workplace one of the top priorities in their organisation. Keeping a safe working environment should not only be the responsibility of occupational health and safety officers, but it should be inclusive of all employees working within the organisation. The researcher’s view that everyone should be responsible for safety is outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which states that “every employee has the right to a safe working environment”

Employee Assistance Professionals also form part of the important role players in the management of workplace violence. It is important to note that the Employee Assistance Professionals cannot take on the responsibility of addressing workplace violence, but they become one of the important stakeholders in the management of workplace violence. The supervisor, however, plays a crucial role in ensuring that EAP services are utilised by the employees in order for the employees to receive the needed intervention. The role of the supervisor in the management of workplace violence includes the following:

2.4.2.1 Identification

A police officer who has experienced violence in the workplace is a challenged/troubled employee. According to the standards document of EAPA-SA (2005:8) a troubled employee is “an employee suffering from any personal or work-related problem, resulting in a lack of optimal economic and social functioning”. In any work organisation a supervisor needs to be able to identify a troubled employee to ensure effective intervention. According to Tiner (2006:26), the supervisor should take note of the changes in work patterns, deterioration in work performance, violations of policy and any issues that compromise the safety of the work environment.
Unacceptable work performance is therefore sub-standard performance, or the result of a decline in the quality of work. Behaviour that disrupts normal work functions and the work environment is also unacceptable. A troubled employee is therefore a challenged employee who allows personal or work-related problems to negatively impact on his/her work performance.

2.4.2.2 Documentation

A supervisor should, according to Tiner (2006:26), provide written, factual, objective and confidential information that focuses only on job performance. Before a supervisor confronts a troubled employee regarding his/her behaviour, all the facts must be documented.

2.4.2.3 Constructive Confrontation

Cagney (2006:18) reiterates that the supervisor is in a good position to identify employee problems by noticing deterioration in work performance, confronting the employee, breaking through the denial, and using the employment contract as leverage to encourage the employee to take action. When a supervisor confronts an employee it must be done with the purpose of assisting the employee to notice and acknowledge his own deterioration in work performance.

2.4.2.4 Referral

Supervisors should have a full understanding the EAP referral process. It should become part of the supervisor’s toolbox for dealing with challenging job performance situations (Beidel & Brennan, 2006:29). The implication is that without supervisors playing the role of referral, EAP might fail in assisting the challenged employee. Blair (2004:35) agrees by saying that supervisors are essential to the EAP, since they are the first to notice any drop or change in work performance and the early identification of problems is the key to the success of the EAP.

Apart from having an understanding of the EAP, supervisors must have knowledge of problems and when to refer as well as the types of referrals that can be made. It should
be noted as per the definition of EAP, that referral to EAP should be done when the supervisor has noticed a decline in the supervisee’s productivity or when the supervisee is undergoing personal problems and when the supervisor has observed that there may be something amiss with the supervisee (EAPA-SA,2010).

Emener, Hutchison and Richard (2003:56), stated that EAP referrals can be classified as self-referral, informal supervisor referral and formal supervisor referrals.

2.4.2.4.1 Self-referral

Emener, et al. (2003:56) mention that self-referrals occur when an employee voluntarily seeks assistance from the EAP on their own. When employees contact the EAP directly, supervisors are not aware and not involved in the counselling process. Self-referrals are initiated by employees who are aware of a problem or are experiencing enough discomfort to seek help. The employee possesses some level of insight or is at least motivated to obtain relief. No feedback is given to the employer or supervisor with this type of referral (Management referrals, 2006:20).

2.4.2.4.2 Informal Supervisor Referrals

Cagney (2006:19) describes informal referrals as those that often occur in response to pressure from supervisors who are reluctant to take supervisory action. Both employees and supervisors prefer this informal referral, which occurs without an official record of job performance. Tiner (2006:26) states that in an informal referral the supervisor may inform the employee of the benefits provided by the EAP. The supervisor can suggest or recommend the EAP to the challenged employee, but with this type of referral the supervisor will not receive any feedback. On the other hand, when an employee brings a personal problem to the attention of the supervisor, but work performance and attendance is still within acceptable standards, the supervisor can still encourage the employee to use the EAP (Emener et al., 2003:56).

2.4.2.4.3 Formal Supervisor Referrals

A formal or mandatory referral is considered to be mitigation, since it is an alternative consequence to the loss of employment or serious disciplinary action (Management
referrals, 2006:21). When an employee has a job performance problem that is observed and documented, Tiner (2006:25) indicates that the supervisor is provided with a valuable and practical tool for handling the challenged employee and to help retain a formerly productive worker. In a formal referral process as noted by Tiner (2006:26), it is essential that the supervisor uses the following components to help the challenged employee:

- Identification of changes in work performance if the employee’s behaviour has negatively affected work performance.
- Documentation of factual objective information concerning job performance whereby behaviour must be documented in detail, including time and place.
- Expectations of work performance that need to improve.
- Prediction of a timeline for improvement.
- Consequences and actions to follow through if job performance does not improve.
- The employee has been given the chance to access the EAP voluntarily.

The supervisor is given feedback by the EA professional on the progress and the attendance of the employee. No clinical information should be disclosed to the supervisor.

2.4.3 The role of EAP in the management of workplace violence

EAP can be a useful management tool in managing an employee’s violent behaviour in the workplace. The benefit of an EAP to supervisors is an opportunity to consult with EAP when confronted with a challenged employee. EAP benefits both the employer and the employees. For the employer EAP also helps the supervisor to keep professional boundaries intact in the workplace. It is important that supervisors maintain their role of supervising employees because, if they become too involved in personal issues, then they will lose their essential focus of supervising work performance.

Sutherland and Cooper (2000:224) elaborate further that the ultimate benefit of the EAP is to improve job performance; to improve changes of employee retention, with savings in recruitment, training costs and expertise protection; to reduce managerial workloads resulting from problem employees shared with EAP; to treat disciplinary and dismissal issues more precisely, constructively and humanely; and to improve financial control of labour costs.
The researcher believes that investing in employees through the EAP will save a lot of time for the employers because they are not only be an easily accessible assistance but employees in turn will see that the organisation values them and thus there will be an increase in retention of employees. It is therefore important that all managers are fully aware of the programme so that it can assist them in directing challenged employees to the service.

Furthermore EAP is a support system for the employees who are willing to seek help in times of challenges. Joseph and Injodey (2006:31) believe that when stress, distress, substance abuse or depression takes hold, it begins to interfere with an employee’s work. Employees need help in recovering quickly from such challenges. Tiner (2006:25) states that with proper treatment arranged through an EAP, many challenged employees can be restored to a satisfactory level of job performance. As these authors have indicated that a satisfactory level of job performance can be restored through the EAP, the researcher believes that this could even be done by employees themselves if they could be empowered early to know that asking for help is not a weakness.

Finally, Joseph and Injodey (2006:31) indicate that an EAP gives the organisation an option to save a good employee and maintain his productivity. Helping workers toward being more fully functioning individuals will have a positive impact on productivity. It has been experienced that, with the existence of the EAP programme which is designed to assist troubled employees and their immediate family members, worker morale tends to increase and be more positive. Sutherland and Cooper (2000:224) agree that the EAP enhances employee morale.

2.4.3.1 The roles of EA Professionals

In the management of workplace violence Employee Assistance Professionals also play a crucial role whereby they become responsible for prevention, therapeutic as well as follow up and aftercare services to police officers who have experienced workplace violence. In order to assist in the management of workplace violence EA Professionals must play the following roles:
2.4.3.1.1 The Primary role of Employee Assistance Professionals

At primary level, Employee Assistance Professionals have the responsibility to raise awareness and warn the employer and employees where the signs and symptoms of violence exist. The responsibility lies with the EA Professionals, in line with EAPA-SA Standards and guidelines and ethical principles guiding helping professions, to report if there is any threat of harm to an employee or other people directly or indirectly related to the employee. This responsibility to warn supersedes the principle of confidentiality only if there is an element of harm; on the other hand EA Professionals are never expected to breach confidentiality of their clients for any other reason except safety (Richard, Emener & Hutchison 2009:158).

Employee Assistance Professionals often have the advantage of interacting with workplace violence perpetrators as clients, sometimes where the perpetrator is already a client; giving Employee Assistance Professionals an advantage to identify signs and symptoms before the perpetrator's colleagues and managers. The identification of signs and symptoms also becomes one of the important primary roles of Employee Assistance Professionals. This also creates an opportunity for the professionals to assess the situation and start preparing for possible solutions and plans to prevent an act of violence from happening. In addition to these primary roles Employee Assistance Professionals may also make very valuable suggestions about the victim or perpetrator's state of mind and make relevant recommendations for treatment and extra support needed from community based resources such as police and depression clinics (Richard et al., 2009:159).

2.4.3.1.2 Secondary role of Employee Assistance Professionals

The EA Professional may help with crisis response plans, such as trauma defusing and debriefing, including offering short term therapy to the victims of workplace violence. They can also contact relevant agencies and departments to assist in the crisis situation. Employee Assistance Professionals are usually in the helping professions such as social work, psychology and medicine, which are associated with the high ability to have a highly positive influence and are thus considered to be change agents.
The above indicates that in situations where there may be an outbreak of violence in the workplace they can play a role in influencing positive change as they may already have a relationship with employees in a crisis situation, making it easier for them to become a good resource for a work organisation in handling a crisis situation (Chernis & Goleman, 2001:170). The intervention of Employee Assistance Professionals may assist in calming the situation as they may have prior professional interactions with other organisations that assist in crisis intervention. Furthermore, having a professional relationship with other stakeholders can speed up intervention at a time of a crisis.

2.4.3.1.3 The tertiary role of Employee Assistance Professionals

Employee Assistance professionals may also play a role in creating workplace violence intervention plans, strategies and policies to address this occupational hazard. As they are part of the organisational plans or strategies in response to workplace violence they can formulate a threat assessment team. Employee Assistance Professionals may also become part of the threat assessment team as part of their tertiary role. The role of the threat assessment team is defined by (Richard et al., 2009:159) as follows:

- Information gathering – this helps in starting to put a puzzle together. This involves gathering of information that may be readily available about the person making threats and the one who is being threatened.
- Interviewing – this is an exercise conducted by the threat assessment team to learn the connection between the potential perpetrator and his or her targets. This may include personal and professional connections inside and outside of the work environment.
- Evaluating the implications of interview findings for the organisation and fellow employees.
- Decision making regarding what needs to be done at that point in time and in future to inform and clarify allocation of roles in managing violent behaviours and actions.
• Following up on the situation to allow the team to continue monitoring people and their behaviours so that emotions do not run high again, presenting a risk for the violent situation to escalate.

2.4.3.2 Role players in the management of workplace violence

To prevent and address workplace violence different role players have to come on board as workplace violence should be seen as everyone’s business to promote a safe workplace at all times. As an intervention strategy, employees should also be encouraged to make use of EAP services which may readily be available in the work organisation. The strategy should be comprehensive and indicate elimination of negative impacts of workplace violence on the organisation’s productivity, profitability and morale resulting in tense management and employee relationships.

Over and above the role played by Employee Assistance Practitioners on secondary and tertiary levels, the crisis management team or threat assessment team is made up of the following people and their roles are illustrated as follows by Minor (1994:15):

• Senior managers – to designate a spokesperson and a senior manager to be responsible for organising a team response to the crisis.
• Security personnel – to provide input on current security measures for prevention and intervention.
• Medical personnel – to render their expert services in the assessment of substance abuse and medical conditions.
• Legal advisors – to provide expertise on steps to take to protect employees and also to reduce potential liabilities by informing and training managers on current employment laws.
• HR Managers – to provide inputs about assessments, organisational change and its effects and to make recommendations on policies and procedures for a safe workplace.
• EAPs – to help identify high risk employees, provide counselling to employees and their families and to conduct group counselling sessions after major organisational change and violent events. Also to provide training on stress management, substance abuse and identification of mental illnesses.
• Public Relations – experts to handle media to protect the image of the company.
• Community representatives such as police and fire fighters for immediate assistance in a crisis.
• Investigators to do background checks of threat makers and to determine criminal history and current living circumstances and provide protection to threatened employees.

2.5 Conclusion

There is room of expansion in the management of workplace violence in South Africa due to the perception that workplace violence is on the increase. Knowledge and awareness of violence in any given organisation is vital as it has the potential to affect employees in different ways such as psychological and physical ways. Workplace violence can affect the employee, the work organisation and community as a whole. To an employee it has the potential to affect productivity in the work place. Having the full understanding of violence in the workplace will lead to effective ways of managing it or may prevent it all together. This will require that all relevant stakeholders come together to prevent it as workplace violence should be seen as everyone’s business to thus promote a safe workplace at all times.
CHAPTER 3

THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN SAPS

3.1 Introduction

The South African Police Services (SAPS) renders an essential service to the members of the public and as a result they must at all times be available to discharge their duties promptly and efficiently. The role of policing can be stressful and exposes the police officers to danger as the levels of crime in a country like South Africa is reported to be high as indicated in the SAPS Annual Report 2017/18. Furthermore police officers often work long hours in the hope of bringing those who have violated the laws to face the heavy hand of the law. Police officers are often involved in cases which can affect their emotional well-being which include attending gruesome murder scenes or rape cases.

In some instances when police officers are performing their duties, SAPS members often find themselves fighting with the communities they are expected to service and keep safe as well as those they have apprehended. The community’s violent attacks on police officers have a negative influence on the experience of authority and lowers self-confidence, contributing to a lack of control in the policing situation, damaging community-police relations and impairing the image of the SAPS as a whole (Smit & Cilliers, 1998). Police officers do encounter violence in the line of their work and such violence often leaves SAPS employees with physical and psychological effects, which can have a negative impact on the productivity or work performance of an employee.

As a result of the operational nature of policing services and the demanding conditions under which police services are working in South Africa in general, the SAPS acknowledges its responsibility to create an environment that is safe to the citizens. In order to achieve such an environment Employee Assistance Programme(s)/EAPs are offered as a means of employee support to promote employee wellness and to create a working environment that is conducive to an effective and efficient delivery of such services. This research explores the role of EAPs in managing workplace violence in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The focus will be on the three Police stations which are
some of the facilities established by the South African Police Service (SAPS) to reduce crime in parts of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

3.2 The working conditions of SAPS members

According to Schiff (2010:63) the word ‘police’, is derived from the Greek word ‘politeia’, which originally applied to the general instruments of government and the police of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, in those times, officials were charged with a mandate far wider than we would recognize in policing today, which encompassed governmental tasks of law and order. In modern societies the police are intended to serve as a central component of government’s, and society’s, attempts to control and limit violence and crime. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:1331) states that the police will ‘prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain public order, protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and uphold and enforce the law.’ The idea that police prevent crime has been widely embraced.

On a general level the police engage with the task of dealing with the problem of crime through activities such as responding to crime reports, investigation of crime and other activities, in part orientated towards crime prevention, such as patrolling. Most of the time while they are at work, police officers are involved in activities such as driving in cars or walking on the streets, maintaining observation in one or the other place, speaking to or interviewing people and taking down statements or writing reports (Bruce 2000:5).

According to Leggett (2002:59), “the structures and duties of the police vary greatly between countries”. Leggett describes the role of policing very broadly. According to Leggett (2002:59), in practice this means that the SAPS is responsible for maintaining law and order, security and protection of public buildings and dignitaries, transportation of prisoners, serving subpoenas and court orders, certifying documents as well as assisting victims of domestic violence. All the above duties are done in public platforms and may expose police officers to harm which can be perpetuated by the general public.

According to the Police Services Act the modern policing mandate of police officers, includes the protection of life and property, preservation of the peace and prevention and
detection of crime. Over years, the objectives of policing have remained largely unchanged, and a significant component of police culture revolves around a police official’s ability to identify and apprehend offenders, with an accompanying emphasis on results such as arrests and charges. Arresting a person who wants to slip away from the mighty hand of the law can also make police officers more vulnerable to physical attacks and even more drastically, being killed while trying to effect that arrest.

3.2.1 Characteristics of policing

Police officers are exposed to a number of challenging work conditions, and these conditions differ based on the actual job title of the officer. Police detectives, uniformed police officers, special agents and police inspectors can all encounter different working conditions. Police officers encounter dangerous situations daily, as their work involves pursuing criminals, either in a vehicle or on foot. In addition, they are also exposed to the dangers of gunfire exchange, as well as accidents resulting from their own firearms. Because pursuing suspects often results in high-speed chases, the police officer is at risk of being involved in a motor vehicle accident (Milano, 2017:sa). Motor vehicle accidents may result in an injury on duty as well as loss of life.

Furthermore there are various features that distinguish police officers from other occupations. Police work is multifaceted, stressful, difficult and dangerous. Moreover, police officers are in constant confrontation with the human face of our country’s most severe social problems, such as high levels of crime, which almost inevitably causes some police officers to have a blurred view of the public they are supposed to serve. The general expectation is that the police officers must handle the pressure of dealing with the violence that is experienced when performing their duties. In performing police work the following characteristics in the role of policing can be seen:

3.2.1.1 The police role embraces extreme danger

Every employee should see the workplace as a violence-free and safe environment where he/she is able to perform his/her duties without fear of harm. The workplace should be seen as a violence-free environment but in policing safety from harm cannot be guaranteed. This is so because police work exposes the individual to unpredictable
danger (Schiff, 2010:67) which may include being assaulted, being shot, having to watch the death of a colleague in the line of duty, killing of suspects or injury on duty (Mostert, 2008:2). Even though police officers face danger on a daily basis they still have a sense of personal authority over and responsibility to ensure the safety of the society as whole.

Ensuring safety of the community does not mean that police officers become immune to the violence that can be perpetrated by those they must keep safe. According to Mostert (2008:2), police officers may also be vulnerable to attacks from the communities they serve. Most of the attacks on police officers by the community are seen during service delivery protest which are more common in South Africa as well as during the apprehension of offenders. The South African general public is more likely to have stones thrown at SAPS officers, be pushed and assaulted or threatened and even killed. In most instances police officers, as a way of dispersing the crowds, use rubber bullets and stunt grenades. But in some instances life ammunition is often used as a way of shielding themselves from the immediate danger. In the face of perceived danger police officers are more likely to be prepared to use force to defend themselves, an ability which is seen by police as a crucial feature of the ways in which police command respect and exercise their authority (Warren & James, 2000).

Furthermore in a life-or-death situation, the officer is confronted with the knowledge that another person may interfere with his or her autonomy, and remove the ability to control or command (Schiff, 2010:67). Therefore the police officer is more likely to respond to such situations in a manner that will hopefully defend and protect the officer. Being exposed to death, carnage and hatred or outright violence from the public whom the police officer has sworn to protect, may result in a loss of the police officer’s sense of responsibility, causing the officer to act violently.

It can be concluded that Police Officers express a universal anxiety of becoming victims of violence, particularly, as the work environment of the South African police officer differs from that of other countries in terms of the social, political and economic problems and the danger of exposure to unrest and violence which is noticeably higher in the South African context (Schiff, 2010:67).
3.2.1.2 Police work is highly stressful

The nature of services provided by SAPS, for example attending to gruesome accidents, murder scenes, incidents of rape and public violence to mention a few, are stressful and can affect the individual employees negatively. Schiff has indicated that these incidents can have negative implications on employees’ work performance and experience has shown that, if not attended to urgently, they might lead to employees frequently booking off sick. SAPS, as the employer, therefore, must ensure that its employees are healthy physically and mentally and are productive and perform their duties in terms of the mandatory performance standards.

According to Amaranto, Steinberg, Castalleno and Mitchell (2003:48); Pienaar and Rothman (2006:72) and Mostert (2008:2), police work has been identified as a stressful occupation, particularly in the South African context, because the police officers employed in the SAPS are exposed to a variety of stressors that differ significantly from stressors experienced by employees in the general population. Stresses experienced by police officers in the line of duty include violent incidents such as shootings, hostage crises and traumatic incidents such as injured victims, child victims and corpses. On a daily basis, police officers confront a wide range of traumatic stressors, such as unique levels of violence and involvement in potentially life-threatening violent circumstances.

According to Schiff (2010:74), “stresses in police work occur because of the nature of the work experience itself”. Similar to other occupations, interdepartmental practices are a continuous source of distress in police work: the rigid structure, lack of involvement in decision-making, lack of managerial support, a discipline-oriented philosophy associated with interpersonal conflict and criticism from others, and unfair punishment are cited by authors as being particularly stressful. Yet police officers are faced with another major stressor not experienced by other occupations: not only are there organisational and role pressures, but also environmental work factors such as danger and violence that contribute to the overall stress load (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006:75).
Recently, Dempsey and Forst (2013:169) broadened this into four general categories of stress with which police officers are faced:

- External stress, or threats of real danger, such as aggressive criminal behaviour;
- Organisational stress, produced by elements in the militaristic character of the police organisation;
- Personal stress produced by the interpersonal characteristics of belonging to the police organisation such as interpersonal conflict; and
- Operational stress, caused by daily confrontation with criminal elements of society or tragic circumstances, lack of recognition for engaging in a difficult and dangerous job, and awareness of legal liability for actions performed while on duty.

For the police officer, the organisational problems in combination with a sense of personal vulnerability to danger can be particularly distressing. The stress because of job demands (the nature of the work) and lack of resources (the organisational deficiencies) are strongly interlinked; since not having resources makes it more difficult to deal with crisis situations, a lack of resources probably increases the stress related to job demands (Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006:76). The extent to which stress from either routine or traumatic events develops may depend on two factors: first, the resources and support available to the individual; and second, the individual’s ability and willingness to utilise those resources and support.

Pienaar and Rothmann (2006:76) found that lack of functional support within an organisation, which manifests in lack of recognition, lack of resources and poor remuneration for officers, places extreme demands on the emotional resources of the officer. Police officers’ main sources of stress are on the organisational and climate subscale, including staff shortages, insufficient resources or finances and poor quality equipment for performing jobs not specified by the job description, interpersonal conflict, characteristics of the organisation itself such as authoritarian structure, lack of consultation, communication or participation in decisions affecting daily work tasks, lack of administrative support, continuous organisational change, a punishment-centred philosophy and unfair discipline (Loftus, 2009; Pienaar & Rothmann, 2006:76).
All the above factors can have a negative impact on the physical health of police officers. As Waters and Ussery (2007:172) noted: “the fact that police officers begin their careers in excellent physical health and retire early or die from job related stressors demonstrates the cost of continuous pressure and the need for ongoing emotional adjustment”. This view may suggest that it’s either a police officer shapes up or ships out or he copes with the situation or retires from his role of policing.

3.2.1.3 The police role promotes emotional denial and emotional suppression.

As part of the role, a police officer needs to be in constant emotional control and not show any feelings, even in the most highly charged emotional circumstances (Amaranto et al., 2003:48). Therefore, emotions become unspeakable within the police culture. The strong group socialisation processes within the organisation cause police officers to view their own emotions as “an occupational weakness or hazard, with the potential to impair their ability to perform their duties effectively” (Prograbin & Poole, 1991: 397). Consequently, they develop reservations or uncertainty in dealing with their own emotions and a collective misconception of the feelings of their fellow officers. Confronting difficult, emotionally-charged situations on a daily basis leads officers to question whether the intensity of their emotions is related to the given circumstances; as a result, they are more likely to define their emotional reactions through comparisons with other officers who have been in similar situations (Schiff, 2010:70).

The venting of emotions is perceived as a hazard to the professionalism of the police officer, yet any other individuals may feel that expressing themselves, is a desirability for psychological health (Howard et al., 2000), which places police officers in an extraordinarily difficult position. Whilst strict emotional denial can function as a necessary survival mechanism by shielding the officer in a physically and psychologically hazardous environment, it can result in the repression of, and separation from, any emotions that are experienced, and lead to shame produced by the need to seek help (Schiff 2010:70). Hence, police officers shy away from seeking professional help from social workers and psychologists even if such intervention is needed.
Furthermore Schiff has stated that the police officers’ emotional confessions may be perceived as revealing a possible lack of competence on the part of the officer. Constant alertness against fear and emotions is difficult to maintain and results in the use of other defense mechanisms. The most common mechanism used by police officers may include humour, sarcasm, identification with one’s group, self-medication with alcohol or drugs, and the rare ventilation of traumatic events (only when in the company of fellow police officers), to be used as defenses against denied emotions (McCafferty, McCafferty & McCafferty 1992). Police officers tend to emphasize their physical strength, roughness and invulnerability to danger (a view of the self-inherent in the police culture), which leads to using the method of denial as a mechanism for coping with traumatic stress (McCafferty et al., 1992).

In the South African Police Services, the phenomenon is often referred to as the ‘boys don’t cry’ syndrome (Schiff, 2010:70). Schiff further indicated that when police officers are exposed to events which are traumatic in nature, which may include workplace violence, they often retreat into a denial-avoidance process. This is a defensive strategy against both the intrusive and disturbed arousal effects caused by the exposure. Prolonged exposure to trauma may lead to defensive behaviour or emotional numbing, which reflects a psychological need to deny the impact of the distress. In an attempt to yield to the ideals of emotional fortitude, police officers continue to keep up a brave front so that it appears they are unaffected by such incidents. These police officers may be seen as time ticking bombs, where if anything triggers those emotions they are more likely to explode those bottled up emotions.

The venting of emotions even if it is in a cynical manner to a supportive, accepting audience may lead to a reduction of stress inherent in the role of policing. In order to diffuse the impact of negative experiences, those personal feelings and reactions that cannot be denied, a police officer is more likely to disclose such emotions in informal interactions with colleagues, in which black humour is often used to elicit support (Loftus, 2009; Kop & Euwema, 2001) The grim story-telling is used as a means of facing the realities of messy and demeaning processes.
According to Schiff (2010:71) “If emotions are expressed in a grimly humorous fashion, they do not pose the same threat to perceived competence, permitting the officer to maintain an appearance of control and rationality”. Although often perceived by outsiders as irrelevant, the use of humour in this way may still be an effective way of expressing emotions, because colleagues are made aware of what the officer is going through, even if it is vented in a witty or mocking way, therefore others may be able to offer support.

However, while emotional detachment can be a valuable advantage in policing, it may not be the best way of functioning privately or in the family. This is so because social bonds are created through sharing of emotions. According to Howard, Tuffin and Stephens (2000) for police officers to ventilate their feelings, certain contingencies and circumstances must be met. For any disclosure to occur, though, trust in a colleague’s discretion is imperative, and relationships developed over time involving shared interests, the colleague’s maturity or gender might be the only facilitators of confession (Howard et al., 2000).

3.2.1.4 Police officers work long hours

In the South African context, Section 9 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act 75 of 1997), indicates that the maximum normal working time for an employee below the threshold is 45 hours per week. This would mean a maximum of nine hours in a day, if the employee works for five days or fewer in a week and eight hours in a day, if the employee works for more than five days in a week. However, when it comes to the police officers, the possibility is that they might be working more hours than the average employee in other organisations. The reason is because law enforcement agencies operate 24 hours per day and seven days a week. This may mean that a police officer has to be available during any time of the day or night, whenever he is needed. Hence within police work employees are more likely to work shifts.

According to Milano (2017: [sa]) officers usually work a 40-hour week; however, they are frequently required to work rotating shifts. They are also required to work weekends and holidays; and police investigators and detectives are sometimes mandated to work
for extended hours while an active investigation is under way. As a result this can have a negative effect on the psychological and physical aspects of the police officer. Police officers have always had to deal with fatigue arising not merely from shift work but also from lengthy and sometimes erratic work hours and other aspects of working conditions. Shift work is an important source of fatigue for police and other workers because their natural circadian rhythms enhance alertness during daylight hours and encourage sleep at night. The highest alertness for most people occurs during the morning and in the late afternoon/early evening hours when energy levels are elevated, eyes focus more easily, and physical abilities and coordination peak. When circadian rhythms dip as evening wears on, waves of sleepiness wash over us; appetites diminish, recollection dulls, reaction times slow and we fall asleep.

As a consequence, officers on night shifts struggle to stay awake when their bodies want to sleep and then later try to fall asleep at home when they are naturally primed to be most alert (Vila, Marrison & Kenney, 2002: 6). Recent research reveals that some officers within most police agencies are highly fatigued at work, yet few U.S. police agencies exert much control over the factors that cause officer fatigue. According to Vila et al. (2002:5) “Fatigue is a mental and/or physical state resulting from insufficient good quality sleep or from prolonged or intense physical, emotional or mental effort that tends to decrease alertness, impair performance potential, worsen moods and interfere with decision making”. Thus, we can expect excess fatigue to adversely affect police officers’ performance, health and safety; their relations with the public; and the quality of their discretionary decisions as indicated by Vila et al. (2002:5).

### 3.3 Workplace Violence in the SAPS environment

If the term violence is taken to mean “the intentional use of force to produce injury or damage to persons or property” (Coady, James, & Miller, 2000: 4), then police officers have long been empowered to act violently. They have been given this power so that they may maintain order and enforce the laws against those who would violate both order and laws. In many cases, police violence is a response to the violence of the offender (Schiff 2010:87).
According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, use of force is the “amount of effort required by police to compel compliance by an unwilling subject” (National Institute of Justice/ NIJ, 2012). The general approach is that police officers should not use more force than is necessary to maintain control of an incident, to carry out an arrest or to protect the public and/or themselves from imminent danger (NIJ, 2012). Several factors are involved in deciding whether or not to use force, including the location of the encounter, the type of people involved, their mental capabilities, and whether or not drugs and alcohol are involved (Taylor & Woods, 2010:268). In South Africa, Section 49 of the Criminal Procedures Act, (Act No. 51 of 1977) provides a legal structure governing use of lethal force. Official definitions provide police officers with criteria that are helpful in determining whether it is appropriate to use force and the parameters for the type of force to use in particular situations.

The definitions are outlined in agency policies and guidelines and are often referred to as the ‘use of force continuum’ (Terrill & Paoline, 2012: 8), which ranges from verbal and physical restraint, less lethal force and controlled lethal force (U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2012). In South Africa the SAPS has also embraced less lethal force which can include the use of pepper spray, teargas, stunt grenades and sometimes live ammunition during the clashes with community members. Use of force by the police has the potential to cause injuries to both the suspects and officers during these encounters. For the police officer the injuries can cause physical pain as well as having a psychological impact on the officer. The impact may cause the police officers to be absent from work or to book off to nurse the injuries. In addition, police officers who have been injured on duty may express anxiety about returning to work as police officers, or may not be able to return at all due to psychological distress (Plani, Bowley & Goosen, 2003:583). Apart from causing injuries, the use of force may result in fatalities. The suspect or the police officer is equally likely to be killed in the process.

Finally, police officers find themselves in a dilemma when it comes to the issue of the use of force or violence. On the one hand they must be part of the solution to the problem of violence in society, while on the other hand police agencies appear prone to becoming part of this problem. These views are supported by Bruce (2000:5) who stated: “The SAPS, itself contributes to the problem of violence in the South African society”.
Of the high number of people killed, injured and otherwise physically assaulted in South Africa, some (the total number cannot be known) are at the hands of members of the SAPS. According to Bruce some of these incidents are lawful police actions but many others (some of which may nevertheless appear in official records as lawful police actions) are not.

### 3.3.1 Factors that expose police officers to violence

There are specific factors within South African Police Services that can be seen to be contributing to the violence that is experienced by police officers in the workplace. These factors include the following:

#### 3.3.1.1 The historical legacy of Police brutality

The work of the police is characterised by the potential need for recourse to the use of force which is associated with the risk of police resorting to unnecessary and/or unlawful violence. Historically, policing in South Africa has been characterised by an over reliance on the use of force. According to Bruce (2005:11) before South Africa became a democratic state in 1994, the then South African Police (SAP) were widely associated with a heavy reliance on the use of force and high levels of brutality. This brutality was largely directed against black South Africans. Brewer (1994:301) points to statistics recording large numbers of people killed and wounded by the SAP, and large amounts of money paid out in compensation inter alia for assaults and injuries as evidence which helps to explain the SAP’s ‘reputation for violence and brutality’. This trend appears to continue, because the SAPS is also known for its violence and brutality.

In support of the above mentioned statement, Brogden and Shearing (1993: 16) state that during the years of apartheid the policing of the SAP ‘ensured that sustained brutality’ was a central feature of ‘the black South African experience’. Furthermore after democracy, with the police transiting from SAP to SAPS the police brutality has continued. Thirdly it appears reasonable to assume that forms of ‘victimisation’ of SAPS members may themselves feed into violence by SAPS members. Not only do high levels of fear encourage an over-reliance on force but desensitisation or lack of sensitivity may also feed into brutality by members of the service. At the same time it appears plausible that
police violence may contribute to increasing levels of violence against SAPS members. Thus for instance a suspect who at some point has been brutalised by members of the police service may be more likely to justify his killing of members of the service.

In addition, a suspect who believes that if he is apprehended by the police he is likely to be tortured or killed, may be more likely to feel that it is justified to go to whatever lengths necessary to avoid being apprehended by the police. Where the police are known to be brutal this may also discourage community members from assisting them. As Geller and Toch (1996:315) remark, “The dangers to officers in subsequent incidents might grow if suspects, enraged or afraid due to stories they have heard about police brutality, become ‘cop fighters’, and if bystanders, who could assist an officer in need (at least by calling for backup), decline to offer such help”. The police are therefore not necessarily simply part of the solution to the problem of violence. Their actions may impact in adverse ways on the ‘culture’ within which violence takes place in society and may feed into societal cycles of violence.

### 3.3.1.2 High levels of violent crime in the society

Members of the SAPS are not only perpetrators of violence but also disproportionately suffer the consequences of violence. Thus on one level SAPS members suffer excessively as the direct victims of violence (Bruce 2000:22). This is an indication that Police officers themselves become targeted by criminals and in the process become injured or sometimes lose their lives. The SAPS Annual Report 2014/2015 financial year, states that 1537 police officers were attacked resulting in 86 murders (this includes 35 on duty and 51 off duty). SAPS Annual Report 2017/18 indicates a total number of 85 police members were murdered on and off duty, during 2017/2018, including 29 members on duty and 56 members off duty, compared to 83, in 2016/2017. Statistics indicate an increase of 14,29% in the murder of police members, while off duty. In 2016/2017, a total of 49 members were murdered off duty. Most of the incidents where members were killed on duty include: when attending to complaints, when arresting suspects and the off duty members were killed mostly during armed robberies and vehicle hijackings.

Apart from their Oath to protect and uphold the law, police officers are not only physically attacked, threatened, or harassed but they are also killed in the line of duty.
Workplace violent acts such as murder do not only affect police officers, but even the safety of the communities they service. In 2014/2015 in Limpopo alone 7 police officials were killed. The number is one too many as the Ratio of policing is 1:368 people (SAPS Annual Report: 2014/2015). When calculated the number indicates that 2576 individuals will not have access to the protection provided by police officers. As far as cop killing is concerned, one can conclude that these murders occur during the ordinary performance of police duties, such as responding to a complaint, investigating a case, following up on information, doing a search or apprehending a suspect. It may be assumed that a primary motive of the ‘killers’ will be to evade apprehension.

In addition to the above reason, research has indicated that ‘robbery of the police officials’ (both on and off duty) can be another reason why police officers are murdered (SAPS Annual report 2014/2015). A key concern of the research conducted thus far has been to attempt to ascertain the motives behind the attacks. In this regard initiatives towards engaging with these deaths have to some extent become ‘stuck’ on the question of, to what extent, robbery of a firearm (usually the service pistol) is in fact the primary motive for many of these attacks or killings of police officers? It is apparent that in a significant number of these murders (83 of the 455), the firearm of the murdered member have been stolen. Where police members are in possession of firearms, robbery of one kind or another is often the motive for the attack. The carrying of firearms by SAPS members, both on and off duty, may result in a situation where SAPS members are not only targeted by offenders but also, due to the access to firearms, the number of confrontations in which they are involved tends to escalate. Current levels of violent crime in South Africa also imply that members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) need to be equipped physically and psychologically to use force effectively.

3.3.1.3 Loss of trust in the police by the community

South Africa appears to be in a situation where public trust in the police is declining, while fear and mistrust of the police is on the increase (Burger, 2011:13). Political commentator, Justice Malala, captured this state of affairs in an article titled: Our cops can’t be trusted: Too many police linked to too many gangsters and killers.
The statement that he is ‘afraid of the police’ and that ‘some of them seem to be at the centre of some of the most heinous crimes and ominous acts’ gives expression to the impact of increasingly negative reports of police conduct, including acts of corruption, brutality, torture and indifference. Both perceptions and incidents of police brutality and abuse of authority are likely to have a negative impact on the legitimacy of the police.

Police practices may affect public opinion either directly (via police contacts with citizens) or indirectly (via perceived police job performance, media coverage of incidents involving the police), as stated by Weitzer and Tuch (2005:281). Several factors have been identified which are related to police activity. According to Weitzer and Tuch (2005:281) the following factors are determinants of public satisfaction with the police: police effectiveness in fighting crime, community policing in one’s neighborhood, media reports on police actions, the scope of police misconduct as perceived by citizens, and personal and vicarious experiences with police officers. These factors will be explained below (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005:282-283)

3.3.1.3.1 Lack of Police effectiveness in crime-control.

It is possible that many people evaluate the police primarily in terms of their performance, or perceived performance, with regard to fighting crime, because citizens regard crime control as the principal function of the police. If the police in a particular city are viewed as doing a poor job of dealing with crime, this perception may have a strong negative influence on their overall opinion of the city’s police department and vice versa for those who believe the police are doing a good job with respect to crime-control (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005:282).

3.3.1.3.2 Community policing termed Community Policing Forums in SA

Neighborhoods with community policing might have better relations with the police than areas lacking community policing. In theory, community policing involves residents and police officers working together to identify problems and solutions to crime, which should foster improved relations between two parties and thus reduce the incidence of police abuse of citizens (Weitz & Tuch, 2005:285).
3.3.1.3.3 Media coverage of the police.

It is reasonable to expect citizen perceptions of the police to be influenced by news media reports on police actions or by television depictions of policing in dramas or other kinds. On the negative side, the media frequently reports on questionable police behaviour. A few studies have found that attitudes toward police appear to be influenced by media coverage of incidents of police misconduct. Negative views of the police rise during or immediately after news coverage of brutality incidents. If exposure to media reports on one incident of abuse lowers public approval of the police, it might be predicted that cumulative exposure to media coverage of separate instances of police misconduct will have an even stronger effect on citizens’ opinions of the police (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005:282) Additionally if it is reported that frequent exposure to media coverage of misconduct (i.e. police corruption, excessive force, verbal abuse) increases citizens’ beliefs that police misconduct is widespread in their communities, then it is also possible that such exposure has the same effect on the overall satisfaction with the police. As a result, the greater the level of exposure to negative reports on the police, the lower the satisfaction.

3.3.1.3.4 Police misconduct.

According to Weitzer & Tuch (2005:282) People who believe that officers are frequently involved in wrongdoing or who believe that police misconduct is widespread in their city may be less satisfied with their city’s police. There is some debate in the literature as to whether global or diffuse support for the police is tied to or relatively independent of views on specific policing issues

3.3.1.3.5 Citizen experiences with police.

Research indicates that citizens’ contacts with police officers have at least some influence on general satisfaction with the police (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005:283). Unpleasant experiences tend to have a stronger effect than positive contacts, with the former, increasing negative opinions of the police. When police threaten individuals in an uncivil harsh or unfair manner, this experience colours not only their assessment of the immediate encounter but also their overall opinion of the police.
Although it can also be argued that personal experience is not a necessary condition for evaluating the police. Firstly, most people seldom interact with police officers which may suggest that their views of the police are shaped largely by factors other than personal contacts. For instance, more people believe that police verbally and physically abuse citizens than the actual number who report a personal experience involving these actions. Secondly, some people hold negative opinions of the police officers even though they have had no contact with officers. And thirdly, positive contacts with police officers do not necessarily change into favourable attitudes. People who have had a good encounter with the police may still hold very critical or negative views of the police, and experiences themselves may be coloured by pre-existing opinions of the police. In short, personal contact clearly affects some individuals’ attitudes toward the police, but other people are obviously influenced by other factors.

3.4 Management of Workplace Violence within the SAPS environment.

Considering the nature and dynamics of workplace violence, it would be unfair and irresponsible to leave the management of workplace violence entirely to the employer. However, management must ensure that EAP services are implemented and accessible to its employees. Within the SAPS, EAP services have been implemented and are of benefit to both the employee and the employer.

3.4.1 Implementation of EAP within SAPS

The SAPS, like many other public institutions, has acknowledged its responsibility towards its employees and therefore the institutionalisation of EAP in 2003 was a result of such an acknowledgement. The nature of services provided by SAPS, for example attending to gruesome accidents, murder scenes, incidents of rape, to mention a few, are stressful in nature and have various negative consequences for individual employees. These incidents have negative implications on employees' work performance, and experience has shown that if not attended to urgently it might lead to employees frequently booking off sick. The SAPS, as the employer, must therefore, ensure that its employees are healthy physically and mentally, and are productive and perform their duties in terms of the requisite performance standard.
The SAPS renders an essential service to the members of the public and as a result they must at all times be available to discharge their duties promptly and efficiently. The fundamental goal of Public Administration as a field of study, amongst others, is to advance the management of public institutions, to ensure that policies are implemented and to guide the behaviour of public officials. The SAPS is a public institution in which government policies are implemented and where public officials render a service to the society. The employees of SAPS are public administrators that perform an essential public service (safety and security). In order for these employees to effectively and efficiently perform their duties, their well-being is of the utmost importance. Therefore, EAP services are necessary to lower absenteeism and increase productivity. Employees who experience personal and work-related problems can be referred to consult with EAP practitioners, from whom they are able to receive immediate assistance.

The need for the EAP in the SAPS was necessitated by a number of factors. According to a SAPS circular (2007), the management of the SAPS noted the need for EAPs due to problems relating to, amongst others, ill-discipline, corruption, fraud and poor service delivery. According to Nielsen (2007:4) 57% of complainants in 2006, reported crimes to the police and felt that during their interaction with the police they were treated badly and that the police appeared uninterested in the complaints that they were reporting. More than a third of the complainants had little confidence in the police and this resulted in them not reporting the crime, and those who did report crime (61%) blamed police inefficiency for not responding to their complaints, though they had been officially reported (Geldenhuys, 2003:4). Not only is it the problems related to poor service delivery that necessitates the need for EAPs, but also the problems in the internal policing environment. Many problems experienced by police employees of the SAPS include committing suicide, employees taking packages at an early age, and frequent sick leave, all of which impact negatively on the ability of the SAPS to deliver its services.
EAPs are termed Employee Health and Wellness Programmes (EHWP) within the SAPS (Rajin, 2012:13). Most private and public sector institutions’ EAPs are staffed with professionals who have the expertise to attend to a variety of employee work-related problems. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), as defined by the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1), is “the work organisation’s resources, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”.

It is evident in the definition above that the EAP is structured in such a way that its primary function is to assist individual employees to handle their personal, as well as work-related problems that interfere with productivity. Violence in the workplace is one of the problems that can have a negative impact on employees, thereby affecting their productivity. In order to resolve personal and productivity issues, EAP should be implemented as a means for the prevention of and intervention in this occupational hazard.

Although the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) of the SAPS is a suitable vehicle to address these problems, Allers (In De Winnaar & Taute, 2014:1) states that, as far as seeking help is concerned, there is a culture amongst police members of ‘boys don’t cry’. Therefore a police officer on his own might never seek help from an EAP professional as this will show his or her level of weakness. The author further asserts that within SAPS there is nearly no internal support for members who are confronted with shocking experiences on a continuous basis. The statement seems to imply that referral by supervisors of troubled/challenged employees to the EAP is not enough as such employees are left to deal with such experiences on their own; they are not supported by their seniors/supervisors.

The EAP specialises in early identification of challenged employees, intervention to address problems and the re-instatement of employees in the workplace. Super employee and to deal with him/her appropriately visors work with employees on a daily basis and they are the first to identify a challenged.
Supervisors know the nature of the work and tasks of the employees, and they can easily identify when an employee’s productivity and the quality of his/her work is on the decline (De Winnaar & Taute, 2014:1). In practice, it is evident that supervisors in the SAPS are often unable to identify challenged employees early enough and subsequently to refer them timeously to the EAP.

It also often happens that the supervisor wants to fulfil the role of a social worker in assessing the challenged employee and addressing his/her problems. When members are eventually referred to the EAP, their problems are already in an advanced state, which complicates the management of the problem and in turn leads to the necessity of long-term intervention. This raises a few questions. Firstly, are supervisors within SAP trained or do they have the necessary skills to intervene when they see that the employee’s productivity has declined. Secondly, are the EAPs within SAPS visible and accessible to employees. How is the EAP marketed to the employees? How often are the EAP services utilised in the management of workplace violence? Looking at the Tzaneen cluster, it has seven police stations namely: Tzaneen, Ritavi, Maake, Letsietele, Modjadjiiskloof, Mokwakwaila and Bolobedu. The EAP services are situated within the Tzaneen CBD in the Cluster Commander’s office. The implication is the EAP services are not easily accessible to Police officers working outside the Tzaneen CBD.

3.4.2 The benefits of using EAP in the management of workplace violence

Volpe (In Yende, 2005:36) identifies four sets of benefits of EAPs to both employers and employees. These are briefly explained below.

Firstly, EAPs may be used as a strategic tool in the development and retention of employees, because it reduces absenteeism in the workplace. The EAP is a cost-effective way to promote productivity, increase morale and decrease medical expense and promote employee health and well-being.

Secondly, if implemented appropriately, EAPs have the potential to provide considerable relief to the management and employees in both public and private sector
Institutions. This is particularly relevant to South African conditions in which employees face different kinds of stressful conditions.

Thirdly, EAPs are both beneficial to employees and employers. In terms of the benefit to employees, they are able to receive appropriate assessment and counselling for personal problems. In terms of the employer’s benefit, EAPs are an indication that employers care for their employees. In addition, the use of EAPs may result in an increase in the level of productivity and morale.

Fourthly, EAPs are cost-effective and may lead to improved employee relations, occupational health and safety, humanistic concerns, corporate social responsiveness, family benefits, improved work performance, physical health and job boredom that all affect work performance. The programmes have become valuable and are seen by employers as tools to enhance productivity.

### 3.4.3 Managing workplace violence by SAPS employees

In order to effectively manage workplace violence as experienced by police officers by the clients or communities serviced by SAPS, police officers should have the full understanding of when to use force or violence. South Africa, as we know, is affected by high levels of crime. Therefore it might be assumed that members of the SAPS, in so far as they may sometimes encounter situations where they regard it as necessary to use force to respond to such violence, they should do so only in situations that are connected with crime. Furthermore, levels of serious crime may encourage the police to disregard 'less serious' problems. Nevertheless in general it can still be said that where members of the SAPS use force this might be for anyone or a combination of the following purposes as indicated by Bruce (2000:35):

- Law enforcement (where the use of force is primarily directed to securing an arrest)
- Preventing threats either of injury or to human life
- Maintaining the peace or public order
David Bruce, formally of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), has been advocating what he calls the ‘professional use of force’ by police for a number of years (Bruce, 2011). Much of his focus has been on Section 49 of the Criminal Procedures Act, Act No. 51 of 1977) which provides a legal structure governing use of lethal force. Bruce believes that what the SAPS needs is a ‘use of force policy’ to ensure that officials use force ‘professionally’. He believes that Section 49 offers only a minimum threshold for acceptable conduct and that relying on it alone is restrictive and will not be effective in the management of violence. A policy for the proper or ‘professional’ use of force, together with a supportive management environment, would allow police to better reflect on, and so refine, their use of force, resulting in less abuse.

A 2011 pamphlet produced by Bruce on behalf of the CSVR, the ISS and the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), proposed a four point definition of the professional exercise of force by police:

- It should be guided by the law and the concern to protect human life.
- It emphasises the avoidance of unnecessary force.
- Where force is necessary, using the minimum amount of force required.
- The Police Service must monitor the use of force.

Through Bruce’s work, the ‘professional use of force’ has become central to civil society conceptualisations of a professional police agency. Bruce believes that respectful and fair treatment of civilians can undo the culture of violence that is entrenched in some South African communities (Bruce, 2011). Furthermore, he argues that many young men have developed postures that are unfriendly to official institutions like the police, and are encouraged by a community-wide uncertainty towards police in some high-crime areas. Fair, measured policing that employs only ‘professional’ and legal force, is likely to contribute to greater legitimacy for the police in the eyes of such men. In this sense, ‘professionalism’ relates to the measured, considered, legal and minimal use of force.

In the US, Tyler has suggested that to impact on social order the police must be widely accepted as legitimate by citizenry, together with the state authority and its laws (Tyler, 2004:85).
This perspective is supported by research in the UK, which found that civilians are more likely to comply with police because they feel they should (they perceive police and the state as legitimate), rather than to avoid the threat of punishment (Hough, Jackson, Bradford, Myhill, & Quinton, 2010:206). Therefore in South Africa this may suggest that like elsewhere, trust in police fairness is an important influence on South African’s legitimacy judgment, and unlike other contexts, and the link between concerns about crime, effectiveness and legitimacy are especially strong (Bradford, Hua, Jackson, & Roberts, 2013:12). Similarly, focus groups conducted in three South African metropolitan areas suggested civilians want police to treat them fairly, more than they want police officials who are tough on crime (Faull, 2011). This ‘integrated focus’ on improving the management of the use of force makes sense for several reasons:

Firstly, it is to be doubted that initiatives towards preventing violence by the police will win credibility with members of the police service unless they are combined with measures, such as EAP, which are also intended to deal with the problems of victimisation of SAPS members. Secondly, the victimisation of police officers may be a factor which feeds into problems of low morale in the service. If the concern is to improve the effectiveness of the police, then it makes sense to tackle problems, such as the victimisation of the police, which undermine morale and which can later cause unproductivity of the police officer.

Thirdly it appears reasonable to assume that the different forms of victimisation of SAPS members may themselves result in violence by SAPS members. Not only may high levels of fear encourage an over-reliance on force but desensitisation may also result in brutality by members of the service. At the same time it appears reasonable that police violence may contribute to the increasing levels of violence against SAPS members.

Thus for instance a suspect who at some point has been brutalised by members of the police service may be more likely to justify the killing of members of the service to him/herself. In addition, a suspect who believes that if he is apprehended by the police he is likely to be tortured or killed may be more likely to feel that it is justified to go to whatever lengths are necessary to avoid being apprehended by the police. Where the police are known to be brutal this may also discourage community members from assisting them in times of need.
The police officers are therefore part of the solution to the problem of violence. Their actions may impact in diverse ways on the ‘culture’ within which violence takes place in society and may feed into societal cycles of violence. Police officers’ actions towards community members may encourage or discourage violence by community members towards them.

3.5 Conclusion

The main intention of this chapter was to explain the working conditions of SAPS members, workplace violence in the SAPS environment and management of workplace violence within the SAPS environment. Through the discussions in this chapter, it became evident that there is an abundance of research on the police’s experiences of workplace violence from people who do not work for SAPS or the community. More authors have described the role of policing to be stressful and dangerous, which as a result exposes the officer to both physical and psychological harm, which can then impact negatively on the employee’s job performance. It further indicates how the role of policing promotes emotional denial and suppression making it more difficult for individual employees to seek professional help even when such services are needed.

Furthermore research is abundant on the objectives that employers aim to achieve with implementing EAP and the reasons behind employers’ involvement in implementing EAPs. SAPS as an employer also has a mandate to ensure that its employees are physically and emotionally ready to discharge the much needed services to various communities. This mandate necessitated the implementation of EHWP within SAPS to ensure that employers and employees benefit from implementing EAPs.

A major conclusion that can be drawn from the discussions in this chapter is that managing work violence must start within the SAPS itself (the employer and employees) with regard to the negative way in which they conduct their duties in the communities. Hence there is a lack of trust by the communities towards the police officers. The historical legacies as well as the high levels of crime in the communities also act as some of the risk factors that predispose police officers to workplace violence.
From the discussions it also emerges that EAPs are a critical component of the success of institutions, in particular the public institutions’ abilities to deliver services which meet expectations. EAPs have a direct link with both individual and organisational performance. In this case, managers must ensure that employees are referred to the EAPs to receive appropriate assistance. Supervisory training can be a means to address this challenge. The well-being of the employees determines the well-being of the institutions they serve.
CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL DATA REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE SAPS WORK ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

Workplace violence is a persistent and universal problem affecting both male and female employees in the workplace (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006; Timm Chandler, 2002). In this chapter, data that was collected from participants in the SAPS based on their experiences of workplace violence and how it is managed through EAP, will be analysed. The researcher will also link what the participants said to literature concerning all the themes that were identified. Furthermore, the researcher will also give direct quotations from the interviews with the participants on a selective basis, in order to support any conclusions and interpretations.

4.2 Research Methodology

4.2.1 Research Approach

The approach that was followed in the study by the researcher was qualitative in order to explore the role of EAP in managing workplace violence, through exploring the experiences of police officers based in Greater Tzaneen. The researcher went to three different police stations in order to interview the research participants for data collection on the subject (Creswell, 2007:42). The instrument used for data collection was a self-developed semi-structured interview schedule. The researcher interviewed all the 15 participants herself; the researcher kept her focus on learning the meaning participants hold about a problem or issue, and did not focus on the meaning which she had acquired from literature.

4.2.2 Type of research

For this study the researcher made use of applied research. Applied research focuses on the solving of problems in the workplace, and its findings contribute to knowledge developments which will assist EAP professionals and practitioners to effectively manage workplace violence in Fouché and de Vos (In de Vos et al, 2011:95).
4.2.3 Research design

The researcher applied the collective case study research design. Fouché and Schurink (In de Vos et al., 2011:322) defines a collective case study as an instrumental case study extended to a number of cases. The researcher ensured that the 15 police officers who had experienced workplace violence participated in the study. The researcher conceptualized the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence. Furthermore the researcher immersed herself in the activities of police officers in order to obtain familiarity with their social worlds, to look for patterns in the participant’s lives, words and actions as described by Fouché and Schurink (In de Vos et al., 2011:321). The study explored the experiences of workplace violence on the police officers and its impact on their job performance and the work organisation. Furthermore, the role of EAP in the management of violence in the workplace was validated.

4.2.4 Research methods

4.2.4.1 Study population and sampling

For the purpose of this study, the population included the police officers working within the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, who have experienced workplace violence. The researcher used non-probability sampling. In this case, the researcher did not know the total number of SAPS employees who had experienced workplace violence, thus, purposive sampling was used to select a sample. Purposive sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. The researcher engaged with 15 police officers: 5 from Maake, 5 from Tzaneen and 5 from Ritavi Police Stations. The specific criteria the researcher used in selection of a sample was:

- Police officers who have previously experienced workplace violence at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and are working at Maake, Tzaneen or Ritavi police stations.
- The police officers who have been full-time employees of the South African Police Services for more than two years.
- Officers who are in daily contact with the general public.
The researcher marketed her research within all SAPS offices, at the same time inviting all the respondents who meet the criteria to participate, using the information letter that includes the goals and objectives of the study. This was done during morning parades in all three police stations. Those interested were given an opportunity to provide their contact numbers to enable the researcher to contact them in order to schedule interviews. Furthermore, when those officers were contacted, the purpose, method, ethics and benefits of the study were explained to them. The first five prospective participants from each police station, who voluntarily consented to be part of the study, were selected.

4.2.4.2 Data collection method

The researcher used individual semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study. Creswell (2007:57) indicates that this method is designed to describe the subjective, actual lived experiences of people and to comprehend the meaning they attach to their experiences of violence in the workplace. Through this, the researcher hoped to gain an understanding of the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence and the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence. The researcher interviewed each participant individually, in order for the researcher to understand and describe workplace violence as experienced by police officers, working at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality police stations.

4.2.4.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process whereby the researcher uses a range of approaches or procedures to extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected from the people and situation they are investigating (Maree, 2007:99). It entailed the researcher finding explanations of what workplace violence is and what the role of EAP is in the management of workplace violence. The researcher followed a particular process to achieve this. Creswell’s description of data analysis was followed as outlined by Schurink, Fouche and de Vos, (In de Vos et al., 2011:403-404) and is discussed as follows:
Step 1: Planning for recording data

Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:404) state that the planning for recording of data is the first step of data analysis; the researcher should plan for the recording of data in a manner that is appropriate to the setting and research participants. The researcher kept the interviews short and straightforward. These interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule whereby notes were taken and interviews were tape recorded with the consent of participants.

Step 2: Data Collection and preliminary analysis

The second step is called data collection and preliminary analyses which includes double exploration. Data was analysed in the field during data collection and also analysed away from the study field after data collection Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:405). The researcher made use of data analysis away from the study field.

Step 3: Management of data

Managing data as the third step, often referred to as the intensive data analysis phase and it is the first step in data analysis away from the site Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:408). The researcher managed and organised the collected data in file folders whereby the researcher compiled a file for each participant.

Step 4: Reading and Writing memos

The researcher continued to analyse the data by reading transcripts repeatedly in order to be submerged in the details, and to get a sense of the interviews as a whole, before breaking it into parts Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al.,2011:409)

Step 5: Generating categories and coding the data

This process involves noting regularities in the setting or people chosen for the study. The researcher identified the significant, grounded categories of meanings held by the participants in the setting phase. The researcher then created themes and sub-themes in order to categorise the data collected.
The researcher applied coding to those categories and themes, and diligently and thoroughly marked passages in the data using codes. The codes were in the form of numbers, coloured dots or abbreviations of key words Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:411)

Step 6: Testing emergent understanding and searching for alternative explanations

The researcher tested emergent understandings and searched for alternative explanations. Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:415) mention that this entails a search through the collected data whereby one challenges the understanding, searches for negative instances of patterns and incorporates these into larger constructs. The researcher went through the data repeatedly and evaluated the usefulness of the data collected and determined if it answers the research question being explored.

Step 7: Interpreting and developing typologies

This involves making sense of the data and the lessons learned. It can be based on hunches, insights, intuition, interpretation through social science constructs or ideas or a combination of personal views and a social science construct or idea as indicated in Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:416). Themes and sub-themes were generated in order to answer the research question. The data collected was reported in a theme and sub-theme format, where the researcher described workplace violence and the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence in the SAPS.

Step 8: Writing the report

The final step involves packaging what was found in the form of text, table or figure as indicated by Schurink, Fouche and de Vos (In de Vos et al., 2011:418). A complete research report was written by the researcher and submitted to the institution of higher learning and other stakeholders relevant for the study in question.

4.3 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The empirical findings are divided into the following four sections:
### Section A: Demographic information of the research participant

### Table 1: Demographical data of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years of service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Constable</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Warrant officer</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Warrant Officer</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Constable</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Warrant Officer</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Black</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Warrant officer</td>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2 Section B: Qualitative research findings regarding workplace violence

In this section the researcher concentrates on the analysis of the data that was collected. Themes regarding workplace violence resulting from empirical data have been formulated and the findings will be discussed in detail underneath.

Table 2: Summary of identified themes regarding workplace violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: The participants’ understanding of workplace violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.1: Workplace violence is violence by Clients towards SAPS members/officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.2: Workplace violence is violence between employees/colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 1.3: Workplace violence refers to accidents in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: The police officers’ experiences of workplace violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.1: Working with the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.2: Loss of trust in the police by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 2.3: Suspects wanting to evade apprehension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-theme 2.4: Community wanting to take the law into their own hands

Sub-theme 2.5: High levels of crime in the society

Sub-theme 2.6: Lack of resources

Sub-theme 2.7: The mental status of the perpetrator of violence

Sub-theme 2.8: Type of weapon used

Theme 3: The impact the police officers’ experiences of workplace violence

Sub-theme 3.1: An employee experiences fear

Sub-theme 3.2: Victims of workplace violence may experience physical pain

Sub-theme 3.3: Anger

Sub-theme 3.4: Temporary incapacity leave

Theme 4: The coping mechanism employed by police officers

Sub-theme 4.1: Support from colleagues

Sub-theme 4.2: Counselling services by the EAP

Sub-theme 4.3: Private counselling services

**Theme1: The participants’ understanding of workplace violence.**

The focus of this section is on the Police officers’ understanding of the term workplace violence and the researcher also wanted them to verbalise their own experiences regarding workplace violence by their clients. The researcher asked participants what their understanding of workplace violence is.
Sub-theme 1.1: Workplace violence is violence by clients towards SAPS members/officers.

Participant 1 indicated that “workplace violence is when while you are attending clients and they become violent to you. The situation you face in your everyday activities.” Participant 10 shared a similar line of thought and stated that workplace violence refers to “when you attend complaints in the community as police officers you are not safe. The people who called you to come and assist or the community as a whole may attack you”. Participant 6 indicated that workplace violence is “when you attend complaints and you get attacked by the criminals”. Participant 12 reported that “workplace violence has to do with harm that is caused by the people we service”.

Discussion

According to Bowie et al. (2011:3) this form of violence is known as consumer or patient related violence. This form of violence can happen to any employees of service-based occupations, where the character of the occupation itself puts them at risk for violence from disgruntled customers, clients or patients or where factors intrinsic to carrying out the job itself lead to a higher likelihood of violence. From the information gathered many police officers were attacked by community members, and detainees. They were attacked while rendering their services to the attackers. Police officers highlighted that they will be called to attend complaints in the communities only to end up being attacked. This gives the impression that if police officers are attacked in the communities, it can hinder their ability to provide their services to those particular communities. This will in turn affect the community-police relations.

Sub-theme 1.2: Workplace violence is violence between employees/colleagues

Participant 11 indicated that “workplace violence is fighting and disagreements between employees in the workplace”.
Discussion

This description of workplace violence, shows another type of workplace violence which according to Bowie, (2011:3) is ‘Staff Relationship Violence’. Staff relationship violence occurs when the employee is placed at risk as a result of interactions between co-workers, and occurs within the context of the workplace, as a result of conflict between workers and disputes arising out of the situation at work. Bowie (2011) defines staff relationship violence as relationship violence where the employees are themselves the aggressors, as in the case of bullying, mobbing or harassment, and consequently it is sometimes referred to as horizontal violence. This form of violence does happen within the SAPS but it is not the focus of this study.

Sub-theme 1.3: Workplace violence refers to accidents in the workplace

Participant 14 stated that “workplace violence has to do with the accidents that you encounter in the workplace”.

Discussion

The above description of workplace violence is not suitable enough for workplace violence as some of the incidents that can happen in the workplace may not necessarily be seen as workplace violence. For example falling from a chair while in the office and sustaining injuries is not workplace violence. It appears that all fifteen police officers were able to define the aspects of workplace violence. Although they did not use the World Health Organisation’s (2002) definition of workplace violence, they indicated some sense of understanding the concept. The world health organisation’s definitions emphasises ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 2002:4). The elements highlighted in the WHO’s definition were left out in the participants’ definition of the concept. The elements include ‘Intentionality’ and ‘use of physical power’.
Theme 2: The police officers’ experience of workplace violence

The researcher asked the participants to verbalise their own experience of workplace violence.

Sub-theme 2.1: Working with the community and detainees or the public

The second question needed the police officers to describe their own experiences of workplace violence. Participant 2 stated “I was once threatened by a detainee” For example, Participant 11 also reported that “We were once attended a mob justice case where in the community had apprehended an alleged perpetrator. In most cases the community is very angry because the police are there to save the alleged perpetrator from the community”.

Discussion

From the data collected nine out of 15 police officers reported that they were attacked when attending to complaints, three out of 15 reported that they were attacked while trying to apprehend or arrest alleged perpetrators. The final three were attacked by detainees in police cells while doing cell inspections. It can be concluded that the majority of attacks on the police officers happen while they are attending to complaints from the community. Ensuring safety of the community does not mean that police officers become immune to the violence that can be perpetrated by those they must keep safe. According to Mostert (2008:2), police officers may also be vulnerable to attacks from the communities they serve. The work of policing itself exposes police officers to danger, whereby police officers become targets and victims of workplace violence.

Sub-theme 2.2: Loss of trust in the police by the community

This factor contributes to the workplace violence experienced by the police officers. Two police officers reported that the community no longer trust the police. According to Participant 11 “The community has lost trust on the police”. Participant 13 said “The community has lost trust on the police and the justice system. The lack of understanding that when a person is arrested that person is innocent until proven guilty and the person
is entitled to receive bail. To the community once a person is arrested he or she is guilty”.

Discussion

From the data collected it is evident that the community’s loss of trust in the police contributes to the workplace violence experienced by the police officers. Two police officers reported that the community members no longer trust the police. From the above statement one can draw the conclusion that police conduct may have led the community to lose trust in them. South Africa appears to be in a situation where public trust in the police is declining, while fear and mistrust of the police is on the increase (Burger, 2011:13). Political commentator, Justice Malala, captured this state of affairs in an article titled: ‘our cops can’t be trusted: Too many police linked to too many gangsters and killers’.

Sub-theme 2.3: Suspects wanting to evade apprehension

Participant 15 highlighted that “When people have committed offences they don’t wait to be arrested”. Participant 4 stated “You see we are working with the criminals and when you want to arrest then they fight back”. Participant 9 said “A person does not surrender easily when facing arrest as a result he or she may become angry and the relatives may fight you as a police officer”. Participant 11 indicated “Prior experience of prison life by the perpetrator makes them reluctant and fight another arrest”. Participant 9 stated “When you arrest a person they fight or beat you. It happens a lot in our line of work”.

Discussion

From the interviews conducted, it is clear that police officers have experienced violence which can be regarded as life threatening in the line of duty. The description of the above participants shows that we live in a society where a person will do anything in his power, including killing, to avoid being arrested. It also highlights the fact that police officers face extreme danger in their line of work, even though there is a strong need that every employee should see the workplace as a violence-free and safe environment where he/she is able to perform his/her duties without fear of harm. However, in policing, safety from harm cannot be guaranteed.
This is so because police work exposes the individual to unpredictable danger (Schiff, 2010:67) which may include being assaulted, being shot, having to watch the death of a colleague in the line of duty, killing of suspects or injury on duty (Mostert, 2008:2).

**Sub-theme 2.4: Community wanting to take the law into their own hands**

Participant 11 also reported that “We once attended a mob justice case where in the community had apprehended an alleged perpetrator”. Participant 14 highlighted that “I once attendant a complaint where an old woman was accused of witchcraft by the community”.

**Discussion**

From the two incidents it appears that the police officers were there to protect the person who the community was accusing of wrong doing. From the description by participant 11, the community had apprehended a suspect or an alleged perpetrator and they become angry with the police for saving the perpetrator from ‘mob justice’. If the police had arrived late, maybe the alleged perpetrator would have been killed at the hands of the community. The role of police officers of bringing those who have violated the law to justice might then not have been fulfilled. The question here is if the community takes the law into their own hands, are we not heading towards a ‘state of lawlessness’? In a state of lawlessness, the people will do as they please and thereby escalate crime levels. From the second description the person was accused of witchcraft for which the community might not have tangible evidence and which cannot be proven in a court of law. According to the Criminal Procedure Act accusing someone of witchcraft is an offence; therefore both these scenarios indicate that in some instances the mob violates the law when taking the law into their own hands.

**Sub-theme 2.5: High levels of crime in the society**

Participant 5 stated “I was at work one day and we received a complaint of business robbery”. Participant 12 reported that “One that still pains me is when I attended a
Business robbery and found that the owner was shot.” Participant 13 stated “the society itself is violent. They don’t tolerant things and other people”. Participant 10 reported that “A member of the community was once stabbed to death. We went to the scene as police officers”. Participant 6 reported that “We received a complaint that there is a person in a gate of the tavern who appears to be dead in a nearby village”.

Discussion

From the information gathered Police officers have often been exposed to violence while attending complains of crime that has already happened or is still in progress. The level of crime in the society is so high that even criminals are able to formulate false stories to lure the police officers, often with the result that police officers are killed or robbed of their service pistols. According to Schindeler (2014:375) the state of affairs in South Africa which is known as a violent society with violent crimes having high numbers, can be a contributory factor. Workplace violence flourishes in an environment where it is allowed to exist unfettered. SAPS members suffer excessively as the direct victims of violence (Bruce 2000:22).

Sub-theme 2.6: Lack of resources

Participant 8 stated “In most cases you find that police officers are needed in specific areas and they cannot go due to the fact that they are short staffed and there are no police vehicles to take them. Whenever they attend complains in most cases they go as pairs which makes them vulnerable to a mob attacks”.

Discussion

From the data collected police officers believe that service delivery is being hindered due to the shortage of police officers or personnel and vehicles. The lack of resources creates a negative view of police officers by clients who in turn then become violent towards them. The researcher found that resources such as personnel and vehicles are ‘key’ in enabling the police officers to provide better services.
Sub-theme 2.7: The mental status of the perpetrator of violence

Participant 1 stated “I once attended a complaint of two mental ill persons, who become more violent and I could not manage them because of their mental status”.

Discussion

The characteristics of the perpetrator of workplace violence should also be taken into consideration. One police officer reported that the mental status of the perpetrator does contribute to workplace violence.

Sub-theme 2.8: Type of weapon used

Participant 11 explained that “In most cases you will find the community throwing stones at the police and the vehicles. A stone can hit you in such circumstances. A stone once hit me and I was seriously injured”. Participant 15 stated that “He pulled a gun from his trousers and he shot me”. Participant 9 said “It was a fist fight and the public tried to hold me back. The public was holding me and I was holding the suspect. My clothes were torn in the process”. Participant 2 stated “I was once threatened by a detainee”.

Discussion

From the interviews it was found that the type of ‘weapon’ used to attack police officers included stones, guns, razors, verbal threats, human waste, other random objects and bare hands. It can be concluded that a gun is associated with serious injuries and even possible loss of life. Any object, including stones and fist fights, may result in physical pain to the police officer. Threats are used in instances when one wants to evoke fear in the next person. When faeces is used, it gives an impression that the perpetrator no longer has respect for the police officers. From the findings of this study the type of violence faced by police officers is both physical and psychological in nature.

Theme 3: The impact of workplace violence on SAPS members

This section explored how workplace violence has impacted on the police officers productivity at work. The researcher asked participants how their experience of workplace violence affects them.
Sub-theme 3.1: An employee experiences fear

Participant 5 reported that “Even though you do go to work normally, but whenever I attend other complaints similar to what I have experienced, I tend to have fear thinking that maybe some of the suspect are still inside the building”. Similarly, Participant 6 stated that “Even now I still live in fear, when you see a person who is untidy you become suspicious of the person”. This participant further indicated that “You tend to be suspicious of everyone and constantly have flashbacks, If you hear a banging sound you jump as it resembles a gun”.

Sub-theme 3.2: Victims of workplace violence may experience physical pain

Participant 7 reported that “I was brutally assaulted, injured on my ribs and bleeding”. Participant 8 also reported that “I sustained physical injuries on the chest because we were fighting”.

Sub-theme 3.3: Anger

According to Participant 3 “In most cases the detainees provoke you so that you can react. Once we visited the cells, one of the detainees went to the toilet, he took the poop or faeces after and splash me with it”. Participant 3 also highlighted that “you can be angry, but you have to understand that it is some of the challenges one encounters in the workplace. In such circumstances self-control is necessary”.

Sub-theme 3.4: Temporary capacity leave

Participant 12 reported “I had to take some days off work as a result of my experience”. Similarly Participant 15 also indicated “after being shot I spent one and half months in hospital as I was unable to walk. I spent more days at home after being released from hospital”.

Discussion

From the data collected it is clear that police officers who have gone through the experience of workplace violence have experienced fear, anger and physical pain and need to take some days off work.
From the interviews conducted five out of fifteen police officers reported to have experienced physical pain. Some of their experiences led police officers to undergo medical treatment and a lengthy rehabilitation process. Workplace violence can affect other people directly or indirectly, including the employer or work organisation, the significant others outside the work setting (family members of the victim and the community. It appears that some experiences of workplace violence have caused police officers to be away from work for over a month, which in turn affected the service delivery in the communities serviced by these police officers. Some reported to have spent days, weeks and months in hospital. Furthermore police officers reported to have spent further days at home after being discharged from hospital. Timm and Chandler (2002:1) highlighted that violence can have devastating effects on the productivity of the organisation and the quality of life of the employees. In order to curb violence from escalating a police officer may be forced to reserve his/her reaction or expression of emotions, as a result enhancing what other authors have called emotional denial and suppression as indicated by Amaranto, Steinberg, Castellano & Mitchell (2003:48).

**Theme 4: The coping mechanism employed by police officers**

The researcher wanted to find out from the participants the kind of intervention they had received after their experience of workplace violence.

**Sub-theme 4.1: Support from colleagues**

Participant 10 revealed that “In the police station where I work they don’t care about anyone. In this police station… ehh, that’s why I say when you do your work they say good boy you are in trouble no one will assists you”.

**Sub-theme 4.2: Counselling services by the EAP**

Participant 4 indicated “If you need psychologist you tell your commander. But I did nothing after the incident. I just continued to live my life”. Participant 12 reported that he tried to arrange something: “I reported this to my superiors to arrange EAP services for me but I was sent from pillar to post
I was told that they would come to render counselling services but they never came. I waited for them to no avail. As a result I had to seek counselling services from my church”.

**Sub-theme 4.3: Private counselling services**

Participant 7 also reported, “I had to arrange to see private social workers because I was not coping at work. I had to use my own medical aid. Furthermore the commander did nothing in order to assist us. I believe they were aware of what had happened to us. The person who is in charge of arranging the EHW services did not arrange for us. If that was not done what next?”

**Discussion**

From the data collected only three police officers out of 15 received EAP services after their experience of workplace violence. These three police officers reported that the services were arranged through their SAPS supervisors or commanders. The other twelve participants did not receive any assistance from EAP. It can be concluded the SAPS commanders supervising the other twelve police officers did not arrange the EAP on their behalf. Two police officers out of the twelve reported that they had to arrange the debriefing sessions on their own. This, in turn, gives the impression that the police officers did need intervention and when the employer failed to ensure provision they sought it on their own.

Additionally, the participants who did not seek intervention might have to force themselves to block the experience from their minds. For someone who hears such statements being uttered by a person who has been in a traumatic event it may appear be negligence on the side of the police officer. However, there can be a change of opinion when it comes to the way EAP services are accessed within SAPS. It seems as if there is a misunderstanding and confusion on the referral process. The majority of the police officers interviewed believe it is the supervisor’s responsibility to arrange for EAP services. The information received from the interviews has led the researcher to question the visibility of
EAP/EHWP professionals and practitioners when it comes to ‘marketing’ their services to the employees in the SAPS Greater Tzaneen Municipality as a whole. If the EAP is well marketed it will clear the confusion and misunderstanding concerning the referral process.

4.4.3 Section C: Findings regarding Employee Assistance Programme

This section focuses on EAP. The themes identified in this section will be discussed below.

Table 3 Summary of identified themes regarding EAP

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<th>THEMES</th>
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<td>Theme 7: Referral to EAP for victims of workplace violence</td>
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<td>Sub-theme 7.1: Formal referral by supervisors/commanders</td>
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<td>Sub-theme 7.2: Self-referral</td>
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Theme 5: The participants’ understanding of EAP/EHW

The researcher wanted to understand the participants’ understanding of EAP by asking the participants to tell her in their own words what their understanding of Employee Assistance Programme is. Participant 1 stated that “I do not have much information. EWH are social workers who offer counselling to the police officers. They come to the parades in the morning to offer counselling. Sometimes they come with other health practitioners to offer health and wellness services”. Participant 2 indicated that “EWH are social workers who offer counselling to the police officers who have been victims of traumatic events”.  

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Discussion

All of the 15 participants were able to give a definition of what EAP is in their own way of understanding it. Even though the definitions given vary from that of the EAPSA-SA (2010:1) which refers to EAP as, “the work organisation resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues”. The definition by all the respondents highlights that the EAP is seen as a response mechanism after police officers have gone through the experience of workplace violence. From the description given by the police officers it is obvious that the EAP within SAPS services is sought after by employees who have encountered workplace violence. Therefore, EAP is seen as a reactive service by the employer. According to De Falco (2001:191), EAP is referred to ‘as a means to respond to increased workplace violence’.

Theme 6: The role of the EAP in the SAPS

The researcher wanted to find out if the police officers were aware of the availability of EAPs and their roles within SAPS.

Sub-theme 6.1: Lack of available EAP officers

The researcher asked the participants if they knew about the Employee Assistance Programme within their department and what their functions are. Participant 8 stated that “In our cluster office we have social workers who assist police officers with counselling after they experience traumatic. They were there before and I heard they left. Now there are new ones. I don’t know how they work as I have not get the opportunity to know how to consult them”. Participant 9 said “They may be available in other clusters but I have never seen them in our cluster. I have never heard anyone talking about them. There once came someone in our office I don’t know or recall. I think he was talking about health or wellness”.

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Participant 11 stated that “When it started the EHW were formally introduced to us, in case a person is experiencing marital, financial, they are involved in rendering such services”.

**Sub-theme 6.2: Lack of performance by EAP officers**

Participant 12 stated “On paper I know their mandate is to render counselling services and assist us when we meet challenges such as when I am bereaved. But according to my observations the EHWs are not working. I have worked in Johannesburg they are just the same”. Participant 13 said “Yes I do, they are available to offer debriefing session when you have attended serious scenes in the line of duty. But in practice it does not happen. No one will call the EHW to come and assist you”.

**Discussion**

From the data collected, it is evident that fourteen of the police officers are aware of the availability of EAP within the Tzaneen cluster. From the descriptions given by the participants of the roles of EAP it is clear that the police officers’ knowledge of the core technologies of EAP is limited to only case management. The other four core technologies namely: Training and development, Marketing, Consultation with work organisations, Stakeholder management and Monitoring and Evaluation may not be implemented thoroughly. From the finding regarding the lack of visibility of the EAP, the researcher has concluded that the EAP may not be functional within the SAPS. A well-functioning EAP is one that ensures that all the core technologies of EAP are implemented for effective intervention.

**Theme 7: Referral to EAP services for victims of workplace violence**

The researcher wanted to find out how the police officers who have gone through the experience of workplace violence access the EAP.

**Sub-theme 7.1: Formal referral by supervisors/commanders**

The researcher asked participants how EAP or EHW services were accessed. According to Participant 3, “In most cases when we have problems we report to our commanders and they are in a possession to contact the EAP when we need them”.

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Participant 12 highlighted that “I did consult with EAP after my incident because my understanding is that your next commander is the one who has to arrange on your behalf”.

Discussion

Most police officers are of the view that EAPs are accessed through their station commanders only, hence the under-utilisation of the service. From the above it can be concluded that EAP services are not well marketed within the SAPS since police officers are not aware of the option of self-referral. 13 out of 15 police officers reported that they can have access to the EAP through the shift commander. Furthermore some of the commanders may not have the necessary knowledge on how to refer employees to the EAP. For effective utilisation of the EAP by victims of workplace violence, supervisors should have a full understanding of the EAP referral process. It should become part of the supervisor’s toolbox for dealing with challenging job performance situations (Beidel & Brennan, 2006:29). The implication is that without supervisors playing the role of referrers, EAP might fail in assisting the challenged employees. Blair (2004:35) agrees by saying that supervisors are essential to the EAP, since they are the first to notice any drop or change in work performance and the early identification of problems is the key to the success of the EAP.

Sub-theme 7.2: Self-referral

Participant 1 said EAP service is accessible, “like now I can call and they come as long as is assist me”.

Discussion

Apart from accessing EAP through supervisory referral, Police officers should have the knowledge that EAP can be accessed through self-referral. From the interviews conducted only three police officers out of 15 knew that they can personally contact EAP personnel if they need assistance. From the above statements from the research participants it can be noted that within the SAPS, EAP professionals and practitioners
are available all the time to assist employees. Furthermore the researcher has concluded that they are more responsive than preventive.

4.4.4 Section D: Findings regarding Intervention Measures

This section focuses on intervention measures that can be used by SAPS in managing workplace violence. The themes identified will be explained below.

Table 4: Summary of intervention Measures

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<th>THEMES</th>
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<td>Sub-theme 8.5: Policies</td>
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<td>Sub-theme 8.6: Availability of the EAP at station level</td>
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**Theme 8: Management of Workplace Violence**

The researcher wanted to find out from the police officers which intervention strategies can be used to manage workplace violence. This section includes exploring the strategies that can be put in place to manage workplace violence and those that are already in place.

**Sub-theme 8.1: Attending to complaints in pairs**

Participant 11 indicated “When we attend complaints we go in pairs which assists in improving the vulnerability. Even now you are still being sent to attend serious cases as
a pair. Hence the community is able to see that you are vulnerable. If they are a mob they can do what they want to do knowing that you cannot prevent them”. Participant 2 indicated “In most cases we work in pairs, which helps because we are able to protect each other. This is a strategy that it’s in place now”.

Discussion

From the data collected it appears that working with a partner is one of the strategies that is in place to manage workplace violence in the SAPS. This strategy will not be effective under circumstances where violence is perpetrated by people who are armoured with guns. It was also found that in a situation where a gun is used to attack police officers, some of the police officers will flee from the scene. Police officers tend to run away in an attempt to escape the possible emanate danger which is more likely to result in serious injuries, sometimes even death. Furthermore when police officers attend crime scenes in pairs it exposes them to the possibility of being attacked.

Sub-theme 8.2: Training

Participant 2 recommended that “There should be more training on how to manage workplace violence” Participant 1 stated “I wish if they could come maybe for a week to implement some sort of training, because normally when they come and it’s just a matter of minutes in most cases. You just sit with them maybe for 10 minutes. Maybe they can give you an individual appointment. But normally they come to the parade for the whole shift”.

Discussion

Training was identified as important in the management of workplace violence. Six police officers reported that training is one of the strategies that can be put in place to help officers manage workplace violence The people interviewed admitted that they have received training on how to deal with violence as part of SAPS training but not from EAP professionals. The training programme should focus on the following aspects related to workplace violence: the types of workplace violence, risk assessment, intervention strategies both by the individual, the organisation and the environment, as well as intervention after the event.
This will raise awareness at the site of the employee as well as identify the role he or she needs to play towards the prevention of workplace violence. As noted earlier preventing workplace violence is the responsibility of everyone. Furthermore employees can, through training, also be encouraged to take protective measures, even though this cannot guarantee that they will not become victims of workplace violence.

**Sub-theme 8.3: Recruitment of more police officers**

Participant 10 indicated that “I think if there can be a large number of police officers or man power will enable us to perform different tasks simultaneously. It will also increase the response time of police officers when attending complaints. Mostly communities complain that police officers take time to respond to their complaints. Furthermore having more police officers attending complaints will make them less vulnerable to mob attacks unlike if there is two or four police officers versus the community”.

**Discussion**

Three police officers indicated that recruitment of prospective police officers is essential in managing workplace violence. From the information gathered police are of the opinion that SAPS should employ more police officers. Having more police officers enables them to perform different tasks simultaneously. It will also assist in enhancing the police visibility in different communities as well as accelerating response time when complaints are reported to the SAPS.

**Theme 8.4: Public education**

Participant 5 indicated “There must be community outreach programmes that focus on teaching community members on how the police officers work the community must have the commanders and sector commanders number so that they can call whenever they are experiencing challenges”. Participant 14 suggested “If it was possible, the community should be empowered to understand how SAPS operate”. Similarly Participant 15 stated that “I think educating the public on the role of police officers. This can be achieved through radios and other media platforms”.

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Discussion

From the data collected three police officers suggested that public education through television, radios and other media platforms is essential. Public education can assist the community in knowing the roles and responsibilities of police officers. It will further assist in improving the relationship between the community and police officers.

Sub-theme 8.5: Policies

Participant 13 suggested that “If they were to say that whenever a police officer attends a traumatic scene debriefing should be compulsory”.

Discussion

Two police officers indicated that there should be policies in place that explain the management of workplace violence. If it becomes compulsory to go under debriefing it means police offices will be able to report all their incidents of workplace violence. This will increase the utilisation of EAP services. This also implies that EAP policies should be well communicated to everyone in the work organisation for enhanced effectiveness.

Sub-theme 8.6: Availability of EAP at station level

Participant 4 stated that “Social workers and Psychologists should be available in every police station daily to the police station, so that they can see the danger we face daily. Before the parade they can render sessions with us. They should also render sessions with us daily after work”. Participant 11 also reported “We do need the EHW services maybe on station level. In most cases especially in our line of work one can encounter two or three challenges in a month. Such challenges will make you feel that you need professional help, but due to the logistics, you are forced to deal with such challenges on your own”.

Discussion

From the data collected two police officers suggested that there should be an EAP professional in each station.
Information gathered revealed that police officers need EAP services in each police station in order for them to deal with their experiences of workplace violence in the fastest time possible. For the Greater Tzaneen Cluster the EAPs are stationed at the cluster office which means that in some instances they are not readily available when their services are sought by police officers. Within the Tzaneen Cluster, the EAP or EHW office services over seven police stations, namely: Tzaneen, Maake, Ritavi, Letsietele, Modjadjiskloof, Kgapane and Mokwakwaila police stations. All these police stations combined have over 900 police officers.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented the analysis of the data generated via semi-structured interviews. The data was collected using audio tape and was transcribed thereafter. The responses were grouped, quantified and the most common responses were presented as themes. The discussion of the findings followed, in which the results were linked with information revealed during the literature review. The Data was presented in four sections, namely, the demographic details of participants, workplace violence, EAP services and management of workplace violence. In the following chapter, the conclusions and recommendations arising from the outcomes of this research will be presented. Recommendations that will be made for further studies are presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5
KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have provided an overview of the research study. Chapter two of the study discussed the literature on defining the concept workplace violence, workplace violence as a phenomenon, types of workplace violence and the contributory factors to workplace violence, the impact of workplace violence and the management of workplace violence. Chapter three of the study the focused on the working conditions of SAPS members, workplace violence within the SAPS as well as the management of workplace violence. The previous chapters also looked at the methodology that was followed and the analysis of data that was collected. This chapter will summarise the research report by discussing the key findings of the overall research study according to the themes and subthemes identified. Conclusions will be made from each theme as well as recommendations.

The following were the objectives of the study and they were achieved in the literature study and empirical findings whereby the researcher developed themes and subthemes.

- To conceptualise and describe workplace violence as experienced by SAPS members
- To describe the effects of violence on the psycho-social functioning and work performance of police officers
- To explore the role of EAP in the management of violence as experienced by SAPS members

5.2 OBJECTIVE 1: To conceptualise and describe workplace violence as experienced by SAPS members.

This objective aimed at determining whether police officers had an understanding of workplace violence as a phenomenon.
The objective was achieved in section B of the interview. Police officers were asked to define the term workplace violence in order to address this objective. They were further asked to verbalise their experiences of workplace violence.

5.2.1 Conclusions regarding the meaning of workplace violence

Workplace violence means violence by clients towards SAPS Members

This type of violence which is known as consumer-patient related violence was found to be mostly experienced by police officers due to the nature of their work. Policing exposes police officers to violence from the detainees, alleged perpetrators and the community or general public.

Workplace violence refers to violence between employees/colleagues

This is known as staff-relationship violence and is mostly seen in the interaction between people who work for the same organisation due to any situation that may arise while at work. This form of violence may be happening in the SAPS, however, it is not the focus of this study.

Workplace violence refers to accidents in the workplace

An accident in the workplace can not necessarily be seen as workplace violence if there is no intentional use of force or power to cause harm to self or others.

The findings of this study indicate that the police have full knowledge of the phenomenon in terms of definition because of their experiences. The police officers’ definitions were, however, not very similar to the World Health Organisation’s definition, which can be understood, since these respondents were not professionals in the humanities. The police officers mentioned that violence is an act that is done by detainees or community members which can result in police officers being physically hurt. Some elements in the WHO’s definition were not included in the police officer’s definition. The WHO's definition emphasises ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation’.
The mentioned elements highlighted in the WHO’s definition were not covered by the police officers’ definition of the concept.

5.2.2 Conclusions regarding factors that contribute to the police officers experience of workplace violence

Police officers were able to relate the stories and describe the incidents of violence as perpetrated by their clients, detainees and the community as a whole. There are several factors which were found to be contributing to the attacks on police officers, namely:

Working with the public

The study found that most of the attacks on police officers happen in the communities serviced by police officers with the community members being the perpetrators. The attacks on the police officers happen while they are attending to complaints in the communities, while apprehending or arresting alleged perpetrators and by detainees in police cells while doing cell inspections.

Loss of trust in the police by the community

The community no longer trusts the police officers or the criminal justice system. The conduct of the police officers was found to be contributing to this factor.

Suspects wanting to evade apprehension

The study found that people who want to evade arrest can kill a police officer as a result. The study found that police officers were often shot and beaten by the alleged suspects. It is clear that police officers have experienced violence which can be regarded as life threatening, in the line of duty. The study found that people who are facing arrest will do anything in their power, including killing a police officer, to avoid being arrested. It also highlights the fact that police officers face extreme danger in their line of work. Even though there is a strong need that every employee should see the workplace as a violence-free and safe environment where he/she is able to perform his/her duties without fear of harm. However, in policing, safety from harm cannot be guaranteed.
Community wanting to take the law into their own hands. The study found that in most cases the community members want to take the law into their own hands. The community may arrest an alleged perpetrator in the hope of initiating what is known as mob justice. When the police officers attend such scenes they are more likely to be attacked. This is due to the fact that the police are seen as protecting the safety of the alleged perpetrator. Furthermore, mob justice can prevent police officers from bringing those who have violated the law, to face the mighty hand of the law. Some of the cases where the mob seeks justice may fail when taken to a court of law due to lack of evidence. This may include being accused of witchcraft.

High levels of crime in the society

The study found that police officers have been exposed to violence while attending to complaints of crime that have happened or are still in progress. Preventing crime is one of the roles inherent in policing. The levels of crime in society are so high that criminals are easily able to formulate false stories to lure police officers into an attack, often resulting in the police officers being killed or robbed of their service pistols or being brutally attacked by the criminals.

Lack of resources

Police officers believe that service delivery is being hindered due to the shortage of police officers or personnel and vehicles. Lack of resources in turn creates a negative view of police officers by clients who will then become violent towards them. The researcher found that adequate resources such as personnel and vehicles are ‘key’ in enabling the SAPS to provide better services to the community effectively and efficiently.

The mental status of the perpetrator

The study found that police officers are vulnerable to attacks that can be caused by people who are suffering from mental illness.

The type of weapon used

The study found that the type of weapons used to attack police officers includes stones, guns, razors, verbal threats, human waste, other objects and bare hands.
It can be concluded that a gun is associated with serious injuries and even possible loss of life. Any objects, including stones and feast fights, may result in physical pain to the police officer. Threats are used in instances when one wants to evoke fear in the next person. When faeces is used, it gives the impression that the perpetrator no longer has respect for the police officers. From the findings of this study the type of violence faced by police officers is both physical and psychological in nature.

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding the impact of workplace violence on the police officers

The impact of workplace violence does not only affect the police officers but also their significant others, the work organisation as well as the community serviced by the police officers. Police officers, when they have experienced workplace violence, are more likely to experience the following:

**Fear**

Police officers experience fear as a result of being exposed to traumatic events which may be life threatening to themselves or from having watched colleagues being killed while performing their duties.

**Physical pain**

Police have suffered physical pain due to being shot at, cut with razors and beaten by the detainees, suspects or community members.

**Anger**

Police officers who have experienced workplace violence are likely to be angry as a result of being provoked by the detainees or community members.

**Temporary Leave**

Police officers often have to take sick leave or incapacity leave. Some of the experiences have compelled police officers to seek medical attention and to undergo lengthy rehabilitation processes. They often have to stay at home after being discharged from hospital.
5.2.4 Conclusions on the coping mechanisms employed by police officers

Support from colleagues

Police officers reported to have not received adequate support from their colleagues. The police officers were left to deal with the experiences on their own. Allers (in De Winnaar & Taute, 2014:1) further asserts that within the SAPS there is almost no internal support for members who are confronted with shocking experiences on a continuous basis. The statement seems to imply that referral by supervisors of troubled/challenged employees to the EAP is not enough as such employees are left to deal with these experiences on their own; they are not supported by their seniors/supervisors. From the information gathered within the SAPS, support for the employee and referral to the EAP by the supervisor does not seem to have happened for the majority of those employees who have experienced workplace violence.

Limitation on counselling services by EAP

The supervisors or shift commanders only arranged intervention for a few police officers who have experienced workplace violence. Counselling services were not arranged for all the victims of workplace violence.

Private counselling

The police officers who were not coping well with their experiences have reported that they sought intervention from private social workers. The rest of the police officers did not receive any professional intervention but carried on as if nothing had happened. Lack of intervention for police officers may be viewed as negligence towards the police officers. However, the findings have revealed that the police officers lack a full understanding of the EAP/EHW referral process.
5.2.5 Recommendations on the employees’ understanding of workplace violence

It is recommended that efforts need to be put forward by the management at SAPS to deal with client-initiated workplace violence which compromises the safety, health and well-being of the employees as well as the significant others including the communities serviced by the SAPS.

The SAPS should initiate educational and awareness programmes to all police officers in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. Effective measures for this can be done through the EAP/EHW.

Furthermore, clear reporting procedures for police officers who have experienced workplace violence should be developed. The researcher’s recommendation to the society, especially clients, detainees and the community at large, is that they should strive to be empowered through knowledge about the services offered by the police officers. Clients should be aware of the processes to lodge grievances against the SAPS if they are not satisfied with the services.

5.3 OBJECTIVE 2: To describe the effects of violence on the psycho-social functioning and work performance of police officers.

The objective focused on the impact workplace violence has on police officers. This was covered in Section B of the interview.

5.3.1 Conclusions regarding the effects of violence on the psychosocial functioning and work performance of police officers

The findings showed that all 15 police officers were affected either psychologically, emotionally, socially or physically by workplace violence. Timm and Chandler (2002:1) highlighted that violence can have devastating effects on the productivity of the organisation and the quality of life of the employees. The findings of this study have shown that workplace violence left police officers with fear, anger, injuries and being unable to report to work. Police officers have reported that fear has imposed restrictions in the way they are supposed to feel and act on duty, meaning that their right to freedom has been restricted.
5.3.2 Recommendations regarding the effects of violence on the psychosocial functioning and work performance of police officers.

The employee and the employer share equal responsibility in ensuring safety in the workplace. The employer must preserve workers’ health and safety which in turn increases the organisation’s ability to attain its goals.

5.4 OBJECTIVE 3: To explore the role of EAP in the management of violence

5.4.1 Conclusions regarding understanding of EAP

The majority of participants described the EAP as a more reactive or a response mechanism such as being there to offer services after a traumatic event has occurred, or when a police officer faces challenges, and explain the EAP as being a comforter during times of personal, family and work related problems. The police officers’ definition of workplace violence differs from that of EAPA-SA. The definition by EAPA-SA (2010:1) refers to EAP as “the work organisation resource, based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues.

5.4.2 Conclusions regarding the roles of EAP

From the findings discussed above, it can be concluded that although police officers experience workplace violence, they do not receive the necessary interventions to deal with the impact especially through professionals such as EAP.

Lack of available EAP officers

Police officers are aware of the EAP/EHWP within the SAPS and they are situated at the cluster office. However, it was reported that the EAP is not visible enough in all police stations as the majority participants reported that they did not know that the EHWP is available in their cluster.
Lack of performance by EAP

The police officers reported having never attended training conducted by EAP practitioners, let alone training that is aimed at addressing the management of workplace violence. It seems as if within the SAPS, police officers are not aware of the core technologies of EAP, namely: Training and development, Marketing, Case management, Consultation with work organisations, Stakeholder management, Monitoring and evaluation. From the finding that highlights the lack of visibility of EAP, a respondent has concluded that the EAP may not be functional within the SAPS in the Greater Tzaneen cluster. A well-functioning EAP should demonstrate the execution of all the EAP core technologies for effective intervention.

5.4.3 Conclusions regarding referral to EAP

In the SAPS, greater Tzaneen, there is under utilisation of EAP services by police officers who have experienced workplace violence. Although the EAP is available at the cluster officer there seems to be confusion regarding the referral process. Another factor that may be the cause of under utilisation is that EAP services are not marketed within the SAPS so that police officers who experience traumatic events will know where they can be assisted. Finally, the police officers themselves don’t want to seek help. Although the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) of the SAPS is a suitable vehicle to address these problems, Allers (in De Winnaar & Taute, 2014:1) states that, as far as seeking help is concerned, there is a culture amongst police members of ‘cowboys don’t cry’. Hence from the information gathered, only two police officers sought intervention on their own, the rest of these police officers simply carried on with their lives. Therefore a police officer might never seek help on his own from an EAP professional as he/she perceives that this will show his/her level of weakness.

Formal referral by supervisors

When police officers were asked about how they access EAP services, from their responses it become clear that there is a belief that their commander’s approval and permission has to be granted. Many police officers seem to have the belief that EHWS is accessible only through their commanders.
As a result EAP is not seen for what it is, a resource for the SAPS for the benefit of all its employees. Police officers therefore depend on supervisory referral and not self-referral.

**Self-referral**

Self-referrals are initiated by employees who are aware of a problem or are experiencing enough discomfort to cause them to seek help. The study found that the majority of police officers in Greater Tzaneen lack knowledge of the self-referral process.

### 5.4.4 Recommendations on themes regarding EAP

With regard to the police officers, the researcher recommends that they should report every incident of workplace violence to management, regardless of the severity. Records should be kept by commanders and appropriate action should be taken. It is also recommended that there be employee counselling services after any instances of workplace violence and EAP professionals should ensure that all the core technologies of the EAP are implemented within the SAPS to ensure effective delivery thereof. Implementation of the EAP core technologies will in turn contribute to effective management of workplace challenges that affect the productivity of police officers, including managing workplace violence. The EAP services should be well marketed within the SAPS so that police officers who experience traumatic events will know where they can be assisted. Intervention by the EAP professional should start at prevention where training can be conducted with police officers on different aspects, including managing violence.

### 5.4.5 Conclusions regarding strategies that can assist in the management of workplace violence

The prevention strategy should indicate both proactive and reactive measures for the work organisation. Various authors have agreed that there are a number of factors or variables that are key to the effective management of workplace violence (Kelley & Mullen, 2006; Champell and Di Martino, 2006). Leadership, recruitment, screening and selection, training, discipline and performance appraisal are all key to the effective management of workplace violence.
5.4.5.1 Conclusions regarding measures that are currently in place to manage workplace violence

The findings of this study revealed that the foremost measure that is currently used to manage workplace violence in the SAPS includes:

Attending to complaints in pairs

The study found that police officers often work in pairs in order to combat or to prevent workplace violence. This strategy is however not effective especially during community or mob gatherings since it shows the vulnerability issues. However it was found that in most instances, despite working in pairs during a confrontation with violence which may be viewed as life threatening, one partner may opt to run away leaving the other partner on his/her own.

5.4.5.2 Conclusions regarding measures that can be put in place to manage workplace violence

The police officers suggested that the following measures may be effective in managing consumer or client initiated violence:

Training

The police officers suggested preventative measures that can be put in place to manage workplace violence, the foremost being training by EAP practitioners. Police officers reported that as part of the work of policing they received tactical training such as the use of force or minimum force when dealing with violent people. However, none of the police officers were trained on the management of workplace violence through the EAP. The training programme should focus on the following aspects related to workplace violence: the types of workplace violence, risk assessment, intervention strategies both by the individual, the organisation and the environment, as well as intervention after the event. Such training will raise awareness at the site of the employee as well as identify the role he or she needs to play towards the prevention of workplace violence. As noted earlier, preventing workplace violence is the responsibility of everyone.
Furthermore employees can, through training, also be encouraged to take protective measures, even though this cannot guarantee that they will not become victims of workplace violence.

**Recruitment**

Secondly it was suggested, there should be recruitment of more police officers. In most cases when police officers attend to complaints in pairs, it makes them more vulnerable to community attacks. Having more police officers will enable them to perform different tasks simultaneously. It will also assist in enhancing the police visibility in different communities as well as to speed up the response time when complaints are reported to the SAPS.

**Public education**

The third intervention measure suggested is public education on the roles and functions of police officers. Police officers suggested that public education through television, radio and other media platforms is essential. Public education will further assist in improving the relationship between the community and police officers.

**Policies**

The police officers suggested that there should be policies in place that deal with the management of workplace violence. Policies that address workplace violence issues are of paramount importance. If it becomes compulsory, through policies, to attend debriefing sessions, it means police officers will be able to report all their incidents of workplace violence. Such policies will increase the utilisation of EAP services. This also implies that EAP policies should be communicated effectively to everyone in the work organisation.

**Availability of EAP at station level**

Police officers suggested that there should be an EAP professional at each station. Police officers need EAP services at each police station in order for them to deal with all their experiences of workplace violence in the fastest time possible.
From this study it was revealed that the EAP/EHWP is situated in the cluster office which services over seven police stations. This implies that the EAP professionals and practitioners may not be readily available when their services are sought in these police stations.

5.4.5.3 Recommendations regarding management of workplace violence

Promotion of a safe and violence-free working environment is the responsibility of everyone. The recommendations here are directed at the police officers and commanders, EAP/EHWP professionals and practitioners at the SAPS, society, policy makers, professionals/social workers and future researchers. Furthermore, in-service training on the management of workplace violence is recommended. The training should be conducted by the EAP practitioners to assist police officers in dealing with the psychological and emotional effects of workplace violence. The National Department should allocate enough funding to address personnel and human resource challenges within the SAPS. The budget should be distributed based on the needs of each provincial, regional and local SAPS office.

Furthermore, police officers should conduct campaigns which will educate the communities about the services offered within the SAPS and the limitations thereof in terms of scope of operation. It is recommended that the development of a departmental policy and strategy to control and manage client initiated violence be established. The policy should outline the risk identification, risk assessment and risk control processes. The existing occupational health and safety legislation such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Labour Relation Act and the Code of Conduct for Employees, only address employee-on-employee workplace violence.

It is recommended that intervention strategies such as the EAP should be enhanced so that it will assist in the management of workplace violence. Workplace violence, as one of the occupational hazards, also requires prevention and protection as well as intervention strategies in place that will be effective in the management of its effects as well as impact on the employees. This includes having policies as well as therapeutic services within the SAPS that focus on the management of workplace violence.
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher will submit a copy of the research report to the South African Police Services for consideration of the implementation of certain recommendations from the study to mitigate against the incidences of violence experienced by police officers. It is recommended that further research with a larger sample in the Limpopo province would be undertaken to give a better insight into the extent of the research problem. Further research needs be conducted, which may focus on evaluating the implementation of EAP/EHWS within SAPS nationally. As recognition of the problem of growing workplace violence, improved policies and strategies within the SAPS should emerge. It is the researcher’s belief that should all these recommendations be taken into consideration, the phenomenon of client-initiated violence will be well understood and could be better managed.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The overall aim of the study was to explore the experiences of violence towards members of the SAPS in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, as well as the role of EAP in the management of workplace violence. It can be concluded that indeed police officers do experience violence that is initiated by the people they serve. No intervention is received from EAP/EHWP due to the confusion regarding the referral process. It is recommended that the SAPS should develop policies with clear guidelines on how police officers should handle client initiated violence.
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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance
Dear Ms Mabunda

Project: The role of the Employee Assistant Programme in managing workplace violence: The experience of South African Police Services members in the greater Tzaneen Municipality
Researcher: VR Mabunda
Supervisor: Prof LS Terblanche
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 16264887(GW20180911 HS)

Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

The resubmitted application was approved by the Research Ethics Committee on 27 September 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za
cc: Prof LS Terblanche (Supervisor)
    Prof A Lombard (HoD)
Appendix B: Permission to conduct research: National and Provincial SAPS
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: THE ROLE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES (EAP) IN MANAGING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: RV MABUNDA

A. 1. The above subject matter refers.

2. The researcher, Ms RV Mabunda, is conducting a study with the aim to explore the experiences of violence towards members of the South African Police Service in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, as well as the role of the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) in the management of workplace violence.

3. The researcher is requesting permission to interview a total of fifteen (15) police members working at Greater Tzaneen Municipality Police Stations, namely Maake, Tzaneen and Ritavi. Five (5) respondents will be interviewed per station.

4. The proposal was perused according to National Instruction 1 of 2006. This office recommends that permission be granted for the research study, subject to the final approval and further arrangements by the offices of the Provincial Commissioner: Limpopo.

5. We hereby request the final approval by your office if you concur with our recommendation. Your office is also at liberty to set terms and conditions to the researcher to ensure that compliance standards are adhered to during the research process and that research has impact to the organisation.
6. If approval granted by your office, this office will obtain a signed undertaking from researcher prior to the commencement of the research which will include your terms and conditions if there are any and the following:

6.1. The research will be conducted at his/her exclusive cost.

6.2 The researcher will conduct the research without the disruption of the duties of members of the Service and where it is necessary for the research goals, research procedures or research instruments to disrupt the duties of a member, prior arrangements must be made with the commander of such member.

6.3 The researcher should bear in mind that participation in the interviews must be on a voluntary basis.

6.4 The information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential.

6.5 The researcher will provide an annotated copy of the research work to the Service.

7. If approval granted by your office, for smooth coordination of research process between your office and the researcher, the following information is kindly requested to be forwarded to our office:

- **Contact person:** Rank, Initials and Surname.
- **Contact details:** Office telephone number and email address.

8. A copy of the approval (if granted) and signed undertaking as per paragraph 6 supra to be provided to this office within 21 days after receipt of this letter.

9. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

B. 1. Copy for your information.

[Signature]

LIEUTENANT GENERAL
DISSAL CMMISSIONER: RESEARCH BM
DR ZULU

DATE: ;nj [eJi o] -SO
A. VR MABUNDA  
P.O Box 4941  
GIYANI  
0826

8. Cluster Commander (Major General Mathebula)  
TZANEEN CLUSTER  
South African Police Service  
Limpopo Province

C. The Station Commander  
SAPS MAAKE  
South African Police Service  
Limpopo Province

D. The Station Commander  
SAPS TZANEEN  
South African Police Service  
Limpopo Province

E. The Station Commander  
SAPS RITAVI  
South African Police Service  
Limpopo Province

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) IN MANAGING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) MEMBERS IN THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: RV MABUNDA.

A.1. Your authority to conduct the above research is hereby granted.

2. Things to be considered by the researcher:-

• The research will be done at your own cost;
• The research will be conducted without any disruption of official duties;
  ▪ The information provided to the researcher by the SAPS to be treated strictly
    confidential as possible;
• Participation in the interviews to be done voluntary so;
• SAPS expect you to donate an annotated copy of the research done for service
  improvement.

C. Copy for your information.

D. The researcher has been granted the authority to conduct research on the
  abovementioned topic at your station, It will be appreciated if you can assist the
  researcher were it is possible.

3. Hoping you will find everything in order

[Signature]

MAJOR GENERAL

L- MAJOR GENERAL

PROVINCE

ROVINCE

JP SCHEEPERS

Date: „JOH“ -0 -
Appendix C: Informed consent
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

PARTICIPANT’S NAME: __________________________
DATE: __________________________

I hereby wish to confirm my willingness to participate in a research project, according to the following details:

1. Title of the study: ‘The role of the employee assistance programme in managing workplace violence: the experiences of South African Police Service members in the Greater Tzaneen municipality’.

2. Goal of the study: The study is aimed at exploring the role of EAP in managing workplace violence amongst SAPS employees in Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The final results will be used to propose recommendations to the role-players (government, employers and unions) on the way forward.

3. Procedures: The investigator will first conduct a literature review on the topic. Thereafter, interviews will be held with a group of people who are seen to be representative of the relevant population.

4. Risks and discomfort: There are no envisaged risks and discomfort due to participation in this study. However if a need arises for intervention, plans are in place to ensure that necessary services are provided.

5. Benefits: Benefits are seen as adding knowledge to the practice of EAP in general with particular emphasis to the South African Police Services

6. Participant’s rights: I may withdraw from participation in the study at any time.

7. Financial compensation: There will be no financial compensation for participation in the study.
8. **Confidentiality:** The confidentiality of participants in this study will be ensured through the application of ethical principles as required by the Department of Social Work and Criminology of the University of Pretoria.

**FOR ANY QUESTIONS AND/OR ENQUIRIES:**

Contact the investigator at: 083 401 2729 at any time during the day.

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in the envisaged study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

----------------------------------------------
SIGNATURE OF RESPONDENT
----------------------------------------------
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR
Appendix D: Interview Schedule
TITLE OF THE STUDY: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME IN MANAGING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: THE EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE IN THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
1. What position do you currently occupy in the department?
2. Gender
3. Age
4. For how long have you been working for the department?

SECTION B: REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.
5. What is workplace violence in your own understanding?
6. Describe your own experience of workplace violence?
7. Describe how you reacted to the experience of workplace violence?
8. How did you manage the effects of work violence?

SECTION C: REGARDING EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
9. Tell me in your own words what is your understanding of Employee Assistance Programme.
10. Do you know about Employee Assistance Programme within your department and what are they functions?
11. How often do you consult with Employee Assistance Programme services?
12. Are the Employee Assistance Programme accessible to you?
13. How do you access the Employee Assistance Programmes?

SECTION D: INTERVENTION MEASURES
14. What strategies are currently in place to manage workplace violence?
15. What are the strategies that can be put in place to manage violence in the workplace?