

**THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKPLACE
VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I, **Nomakhuhla Anna Raphadu** (ID number: 7308281086082), submitted my original dissertation to the University of Pretoria, without any plagiarism and all sources have been acknowledged by means of comprehensive referencing.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my mother who raised me single-handedly and helped me to succeed in life by laying the foundation for my education.

I also dedicate this work to my late husband who always encouraged me and believed in me; I believe that wherever he is, he is resting in peace knowing that I am a hard worker who always has the interest of our beautiful daughters at heart.

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ABSTRACT

The research study investigates the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the South African Police Service. The researcher utilises a qualitative research approach in gaining deeper understanding of experiences of employees regarding workplace violence through first-hand data from the participants, as well as the meaning they attach to their experiences. The researcher uses the phenomenological design to understand and interpret meaning participants attach to experiences of workplace violence.

Unstructured one-to-one interviews and a tape recorder were used to gather data from ten (10) participants. The researcher used a qualitative analysis to grasp the richness of themes deriving from the participants' narration. The analysis involved transcribing and interpreting data. The study used both non-probability and probability sampling techniques as a sampling method. The non-probability sampling involves purposive sampling, whereas probability sampling involves systematic sampling method where the researcher selected the "first case randomly" from the list.

The empirical findings revealed that participants experienced verbal violence through insult and threat from their colleagues, including their immediate seniors. The majority of the participants that reported victimisation were in the same category of Inspector rank. Physical violence was reported by a few participants. Some participants were exposed to bullying by their superiors. The participants attached different meanings to their experiences of workplace violence. The meaning includes among others, lack of self control, lack of experience, attitudes, lack of proper communication, lack of implementation, lack of monitoring system, feelings of inferiority, cultural stereotypes, lack of leadership skills, as well as religious belief systems.

Through the data that has been gathered from the participants, it is highly recommended that the South African Police Service considers conducting workshops and seminars on effective communication and optimising relationship management in the workplace in order to prevent workplace violence.

Transparency is also recommended for any policies and procedures that are put in place, particularly on promotions and incentives, as lack of transparency tends to confuse employees. The development of policies and procedures on how to deal with workplace violence would benefit both the employees and the SAPS in eradicating workplace violence and preventing underlying issues that might impair the job performance of employees.

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LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS

- Workplace Violence
- Bullying
- Victimization
- Psychological Violence
- Mobbing
- Structural Violence
- Physical Violence
- Tribalism
- Stress
- Inferiority

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY

The experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the South African Police Service (SAPS).

1.2 CONTEXTUALISATION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines workplace violence as "the intentional use of power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group, in work-related circumstances, that either results in or has a high degree of likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation"(Kgosimore, 2005:210).

There has been some increased focus on the socio-economic cost of violence and harassment in the workplace that emphasizes **direct costs**, i.e. accidents, illness, disability, death, absenteeism and turnover; **indirect costs**, i.e. reduced job satisfaction, reduced morale, reduced commitment, reduced efficiency, reduced performance and reduced productivity; and **intangible costs**, i.e. negative impact on the company's image, creativity, working climate, openness to innovation, knowledge building, and continuous learning (Di Martino, 2005:24).

In the researcher's opinion, these kinds of costs are interrelated to each other. For example, direct costs such as accidents, illness or disability do not impact negatively only to the efficiency and performance of the organisational productivity, they also impact negatively to the well-being of the troubled employee. Therefore, the study would benefit both the South African Police

Service and the employees in enhancing productivity and well-being of the officers.

According to Di Martino (2005:24), such costs have been quantified in order to highlight the magnitude of negative impact towards the efficiency and performance of organisations. In South Africa, a study done by Kgosimore (2005:210), focused on the typologies of workplace violence. Thus, the intended study did not concentrate on quantifying violence in the workplace or dealing with typologies of workplace violence that are being experienced by employees. It rather focuses on the experiences by and impact of workplace violence on troubled employees. The rationale of doing this study seems to respond to the call that was made by Davis (2005:364) that "impact on victims of crime must continue to be the subject of research". The word 'crime' means workplace violence in this context.

Kgosimore (2005:209) states that since South Africa is a country that "enjoys a strong human rights culture, workplace violence has the potential of becoming a major human rights issue". The researcher agrees with the notion, as the South African legislative frameworks have been developed to protect employees as human beings against all forms of violence. Such legislative framework includes amongst others:

- The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996);
- The Public Service Regulations 1999 (Gazette no 20271);
- Basic Conditions of Employment (Act no 75 of 1997);
- Labour Relations (Act no 66 of 1995);
- Employment Equity (Act no 55 of 1998);
- Skills Development (Act no 97 of 1998);
- Occupational Health and Safety (Act no 85 of 1993);
- Occupational Injuries and Diseases (Act no 130 of 1993);
- Mine Health and Safety (Act no 72 of 1997);

- Medical Scheme (Act no 131 of 1998);
- Domestic Violence (Act no 116 of 1998);
- Maintenance (Act no 99 of 1998);
- Correctional Service Amendment (Act no 102 of 1997); and
- The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

The implementation of such legislative frameworks rests upon the employer in developing workplace violence programmes. "Unfortunately, employers implement many workplace violence programmes only after a violent incident challenges the complacency as many employers still underestimate or discount the risk of violence" (Wilkinson, 2001:155).

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

According to Kumar (2005:44), the quality of research depends on this crucial step, namely problem formulation. The latter is also regarded as the second step after the problem has been identified (Fouche & De Vos, 2005:99). Kumar (2005:44) identifies various steps in the process of problem formulation. The first step entails **the identification of the broad subject area of interest to the researcher**. In this study, the researcher identified workplace violence as the broad subject area.

The second step, as identified by Kumar (2005:45), involves **dissecting the broad subject area of workplace violence into sub-areas**. Such sub-areas according to workplace violence would be amongst others:

- typologies;
- rights and responsibilities of victims;
- policies and procedures;
- impact on the organization;
- impact on employees;

- causal factors for workplace violence; and so forth.

The third step involves selecting **what is of most interest** to the researcher (Kumar, 2005:45). Therefore, the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence is what the researcher had been passionate to investigate.

The last steps are **to raise a research question, formulate the objectives, assess the objectives and double-check the objectives** (Kumar, 2005:45).

According to Siegel (2001:354), workplace violence is regarded as the third most leading cause of occupational injury or death. As a result, Di Martino (2005:17) agrees with Doerner and Lab (2002:294) and Mullgn (1997) in terms of media coverage. The former stated that violence at work "is increasingly recognized as a major strategic problem attracting growing attention from the media and the public in practically all countries, as well as from the international bodies operating in this field" (Di Martino, 2005:17).

The researcher agrees with this notion, because in order for organisations or companies to develop strategic programmes of dealing with violence in the workplace, they need to first recognise the problem irrespective of whether there is media coverage and public interest or not. The researcher decided to undertake the study of violence in the workplace in order to sensitise the organisations, particularly the South African Police Service to the experience troubled employees go through due to violence in the workplace.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (1997), workplaces are currently facing a tremendous challenge of multidirectional acts of aggression against staff members, clients, and/or families, including visitors. Therefore, the South African Police Service is not immune to such challenges as it consists of Police Officers, detainees as clients, families of detainees and staff members, as well as visitors that range from service

providers to private persons. Doerner and Lab (2002:298) assert that Police Officers are the "second most victimized given the rate of violent victimization".

These last steps are integrated with the relevant content in subsequent subheadings. Due to the absence of research on workplace violence in the SAPS, the extent and experiences of the phenomenon is unknown, which results in the lack of structured intervention being implemented in order to curb workplace violence.

1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 GOAL OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study is as follows:

- To explore the phenomenon of workplace violence in the SAPS in order to make recommendations on strategies and interventions to deal with such violence.

1.4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective relevant to this intended study is descriptive research. According to Neuman (2006:35), descriptive research is "a research in which the primary purpose is to **paint a picture** using words or numbers and to present a profile, a classification of types, or an outline of steps to answer questions such as **who, when, where, and how**". This implies that in the study, the description of the specific situation of workplace violence that has been experienced by employees represents the **how** of the question, whereas, the meaning that has been attached by employees represents the **why** of the question (Fouché & De Vos, 2005a:106). The study also deals with the **who**, i.e. who is involved in the workplace violence? (Neuman, 2006:35).

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) as cited in Fouché and De Vos (2005a:106) descriptive research tends to produce a thicker description as it focuses on a more intensive examination of the phenomena and their deeper meanings.

Blaikie (2001:74) referred to descriptive research as "presenting an accurate account of some phenomenon". Such account could be expressed either in words or in numbers (Blaikie, 2001:74). Therefore, the employees of the South African Police Service were asked to describe their experiences accurately and in a more intensive manner in terms of the phenomenon of workplace violence, as a result, revealing deeper meaning to their experiences in words.

According to Kumar (2005:50), the objective of the study should be clearly explained - complete and specific in terms of the intention of the proposed study. Therefore, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- To describe workplace violence from a theoretical point of view.
- To determine the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the South African Police Service.
- To explore expectations of employees regarding assistance to themselves in order to empower them to deal with workplace violence effectively.
- To make recommendations to the South African Police Service on implementing programmes that would mitigate workplace violence.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY

According to Fouché and De Vos (2005:103), the researcher needs to take several factors into consideration during the decision-making (process) in order to obtain a formal problem formulation. These factors, as determined by Mouton and Marais as quoted by Fouché and De Vos (2005a:103), are units of analysis, the research goal as well as the research approach. The last two factors are dealt with in the subsequent paragraphs.

Bless and Hgson-Smith (in Fouché and De Vos, 2005:104) referred to a unit of analysis as a period of time whereas Mouton (1996a) as cited in Fouché and De

Vos (2005a:103-104) referred to a unit of analysis as the **what** of the study. That is, "what object, phenomenon, entity, process, or event forms part of the study"?

The researcher agrees with the notion that a unit of analysis is the **what** of the study. This seems to be relevant to the research title that has been chosen by the researcher. The South African Police Service' employees form the unit of analysis for this study. The study focuses on the impact of workplace violence on employees. Neuman (2006:580) states that the researcher should tailor the theoretical concepts, for example, violence in this context, in order to apply to employees' workplace at the South African Police Service.

Kumar (2005:46) refers to the research question as the fourth step in the formulation of the research problem. During this stage, the researcher needs to ask what it is that she needs to find out about the sub-area of the intended study. According to Blaikie (2001:60), there are three main questions, namely, **what**, **why** and **how**. Since this study is exploratory by nature, the researcher's intention was to gain insight into a phenomenon of the experiences of employees regarding of workplace violence on the South African Police Service employees (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105). The research question also covers the nature and the scope of the intended study is as follows:

- What are the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the SAPS ?

1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

The most appropriate approach for the intended study is the **qualitative research**. Qualitative research enables the researcher to gain deeper understanding of how a certain phenomenon works or exists. Trochim and Donnelly (2007:143) state that "it is difficult to learn from a quantitative study how the phenomenon is understood and experienced by the respondents, how it

interacts with other issues and factors that affect their lives". The researcher could not quantify the workplace violence as experienced by the employees, as the purpose was to achieve a deeper understanding of the workplace violence, as well as the interpretation of the detailed stories that describe the impact of workplace violence as a phenomenon (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007:142).

One of the characteristics of qualitative research, as mentioned by Fortune and Reid (in Fouché and Delpont, 2005:74) is that through qualitative research, the researcher is able to obtain first-hand data in a more holistic manner in order to understand the phenomenon. This implies that in the study, the researcher had the opportunity of gaining first-hand information from the respondents about their experience of workplace violence and the information was gathered more holistically. The researcher acquired an understanding of workplace violence as a phenomenon in the respondents' "own spoken words" through descriptive information (Fouché & Delpont, 2005:74).

According to Trochim and Donnelly (2007:143), qualitative research uses qualitative measures, which is data not recorded in numerical form. That is, qualitative data consisting of words instead of numbers. The information that was derived from the respondents was interpreted and explained from specific experiences of the employees to general experiences. As a result, patterns that became evident to some degree were recognised and described - an inductive form of reasoning (Delpont & De Vos, 2005:47). Qualitative research is also characterised by openness and flexibility (Blaikie, 2001:243).

1.7 TYPES OF RESEARCH

The type of this study is applied research. The reason is that the study is neither programme evaluation research, nor a combined quantitative and qualitative approach, nor intervention research, nor participatory action research.

Fouché and De Vos (2005:105) regard the goal of the research as either **basic** or **applied** in nature. The distinction has been made between these two goals. Basic research has been viewed as providing a foundation for knowledge and understanding, whereas applied research has been viewed as responsible in solving specific problems, such as policy problems or assisting practitioners to accomplish some tasks (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105). Neuman's (2006:25) definition of applied research has some commonalities with Fouché and De Vos (2005:105) in relation to aspects of solving practical problems and assisting practitioners in achieving some specific tasks. According to Neuman (2006:25), applied research is defined as "a research designed to offer practical solutions to a concrete problem or address the immediate and specific needs of clinicians or practitioners".

The researcher agrees with the authors in terms of these two goals overlapping with each other. For example, the goal of the study on workplace violence on employees in the South African Police Service is aimed at gaining knowledge and understanding in terms of experiences and the meaning attached by the victims to those experiences of workplace violence. That is, the study has a potential of knowledge development as stated by Fouché and De Vos (2005:106).

Nevertheless, the study has an applied research goal as it is aimed at defeating workplace violence by making a difference from what has been gathered from employees, for example, gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences and the impact workplace violence have on employees (Babbie: 2005:25).

The results obtained from the study as applied research, would assist in making decisions on the appropriate intervention, or developing new programmes that could deal with workplace violence in the South African Police Service. Consequently, the audience and consumers of applied research as described by Neuman (2006:25) would be the decision makers, practitioners as well as

committee members (responding to workplace violence) in the South African Police Service that would be responsible in tailoring the programmes in accordance to the **what** and the **how** of workplace violence.

1.8 PILOT STUDY

1.8.1 FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

Strydom (2005:209) describes a feasibility study as a "valuable way of gaining practical knowledge of and insight into a certain research area". The researcher conducted a pilot study in the same location as intended for the main investigation. This helped to gain understanding of the practical situation in terms of time to be spent on interviewing respondents (three [3] sessions for each respondent), availability of respondents, as well as the costs that could possibly be incurred when visiting Police Station for interviews. The researcher conducted the pilot study after the relevant authorities in the SAPS granted written permission (see annexure "A").

1.8.2 PILOT TEST OF THE DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:45) defines a pilot study as the "process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested". (Strydom, 2005:206) This implies that the researcher needs to test whether the main investigation would be successful through the implementation of the pilot study.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) as cited in Strydom (2005:206) further define the pilot study as "a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate". This definition highlights the importance of pilot testing and indicates that it should be implemented on a small scale.

The researcher conducted a pilot study with two (2) respondents in the South African Police Service, utilising the same procedures intended for the main study. That is, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique to obtain the respondents as well as unstructured one-to-one interviews were conducted at three (3) sessions each. These two (2) respondents were not included in the main investigation as respondents. The pilot study was conducted after the researcher obtained written permission to conduct the study from the relevant authorities in the South African Police Service.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Phenomenology was accepted as the most appropriate research design for the study. Creswell (in Fouché, 2005:270) defines phenomenological study as "a study that describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept for various individuals". On the other hand, Trochim and Donnelly (2007:180) define phenomenology as "a philosophical perspective as well as an approach to qualitative methodology that focuses on people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world". Creswell (in Fouché, 2005:270) shares the same view in terms of experiences and interpretations or meaning as the main focus of phenomenological study.

The aim of this study design is to understand and interpret meaning that respondents would provide in terms of their everyday lives, that is, workplace violence. The experiences of members of the South African Police Service on workplace violence were reduced to a central meaning or an essence of the experience Moustakas(1994) as cited in Fouché (2005:270).

In the main investigation, after the pilot study, the researcher identified multiple individuals who had experienced the same phenomenon (Fouché, 2005:270). Employees who experienced workplace violence were identified to participate in the intended study. The researcher was also flexible in terms of soliciting more

information from respondents until a saturation point had been reached. Fouché (2005:270) states that the researcher should collect information systematically that would result in the analysis of the meanings and themes, and would then lead to a general description of the experience of workplace violence.

1.9.1 DATA-COLLECTION METHOD

The unstructured one-to-one interview had been appropriate for gathering information on the deeper understanding of the experiences of workplace violence on the South African Police Service members. According to Kumar (2005:123), an interview is referred to as a person-to-person interaction, or one-to-more with the aim of gaining specific information.

Trochim and Donnelly (2007:147) define unstructured interviewing as "an interviewing method that uses no predetermined interview protocol or survey and in which the interview questions emerge and evolve as the interview proceeds". This implies that this kind of interviewing does not allow the researcher to have an instrument such as a questionnaire in order to elicit information from respondents. The questions asked are derived from what the respondents are providing as information, rather than what the researcher perceives as what the respondent experienced in terms of workplace violence. Therefore, "the more structured interviews are the less visible are meaning-making linkages" according to Holstein & Gubrium (1995) as cited in Greeff (2005:292).

According to Greeff (2005:292), Kumar (2005:124) and Blaikie (2001:234), the unstructured one-to-one interview is sometimes referred to as the in-depth interview and as "a conversation with a purpose". This implies that the researcher had to establish a conversation with the respondent with the intention of obtaining information for a particular phenomenon. Through the conversation, the researcher gained deeper understanding of the impact of workplace violence on the South African Police Service members.

The recorded and written recounts of experiences and events of the respondents are described in a more real and substantial manner in order to attain an understanding of the respondents' point of view or situation (Greeff, 2005:293). Trochim and Donnelly (2007:146) are in consensus with Greeff (2005:293) in terms of recording information. In-depth interviewing, as it is also referred to as unstructured interviewing, gathers information through the use of recordings such as amongst others, audio-recordings, video-recordings and written notes (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007:146). The study utilised audio-recordings as well as written notes to gather information from the respondents.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) as cited in Greeff (2005:293), the respondents are responsible for their own perspectives. Trochim and Donnelly (2007:147) agree with Kumar (2005:123) and Greeff (2005:293) with the notion of flexibility in using unstructured interviewing. The researcher should possess a skill of striking a balance between flexibility and consistency when collecting information (Greeff, 2005:293). This implies that the researcher should allow respondents to provide information in their own perspective, while at the same time ensuring that uniformity is somehow maintained in terms of questions asked that would elicit deeper and detailed information. For example, the respondents that would be relating their stories would definitely differ from each other in terms of expressing themselves. Therefore, the researcher had been flexible in accommodating each participant while at the same time focusing on eliciting information that would be comparable in terms of themes during the information analysis. Greeff (2005:293) advised that the researcher using this kind of information collection should be engaged; "willingness on the part of the researcher to understand the participant's response to a question in the wider context of the interview as a whole".

The researcher prepared a format and process of the unstructured interviews in advance (Greeff, 2005:293). The researcher also required assistance from a specialist in the field of study, as well as selected respondents in formulating

questions that were answered during the unstructured interview (Greeff, 2005:293). Such questions were stated by Rubin and Rubin (1995) as cited in Greeff (2005:293), as consisting of mainly three types, namely:

- the main question;
- probing questions; and
- follow-up questions.

Greeff (2005:293) advises that the researcher should prepare several open questions in advance. In this study, the researcher prepared open-ended questions (see Annexure A) in advance, such as the main question: "Could you please tell me more about your experience of workplace violence?"; probing questions such as: "Could you please tell me more about...?" and "Tell me what happened when...?"; and follow-up questions such as: "You mentioned that ... could you explain how that happened?". Kumar (2005:123) stresses the fact that the researcher should formulate these questions, to be raised in the discussion with the respondents, in advance.

The study also utilised the descriptive phenomenological psychological method that was developed by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), as cited in Trochim and Donnelly (2007:180) in collecting information from the respondents. The first step had been to interview respondents regarding workplace violence. The second step in information gathering had been transcribing or preparing raw data for the review. Trochim and Donnelly (2007:147) emphasize the importance of phenomenological study as serving a purpose of addressing, amongst others, sensitive issues such as workplace violence.

According to Greeff (2005:287), the researcher faces a challenge of establishing rapport with the respondents in order to obtain sensitive information. The study applied interviewing techniques and guidelines for the researcher that had been adapted from Seidman as quoted by Greeff (2005:288-289). The researcher

took into consideration the communication techniques that are required by the researcher as stated by Greeff (2005:289-290). Finally, the researcher also avoided the common pitfalls in interviewing that are discussed by Field and Morse (in Greeff, 2005:290-291).

In relation to the number of respondents that partook in the study, Greeff (2005:294) states two criteria for **enough** respondents. The first criterion is **sufficiency** that determines the sufficient number of respondents in order to reflect their range and sites in which others, who are not involved in the study, would be able to relate to (Greeff, 2005:294). The second criterion is **saturation of information** that entails the inability of the researcher to gather new information. That is, the researcher is hearing the same aspects repeatedly (Seidman(1998) as quoted byGreeff, 2005:294). The number of respondents that had been requested to participate in the study was a maximum of ten (10) people, depending on the issue of a "saturation" point.

The researcher arranged the interview setting with the South African Police Service. This was done in writing to perform follow-ups and confirmation in advance. The office of the Employee Assistance Service was requested for interviews as the researcher assumed that they were private rooms in which interruptions would be eliminated. Alternatively, the researcher requested the SAPS to use a more comfortable and private office that would not pose any threat to respondents as well as one would be accessible to them. The researcher arrived an hour before the scheduled time in order to arrange comfortable seating for both the researcher and the respondents, with the assistance of the officer who had been assigned to help the researcher (Greeff, 2005:294-295).

When conducting the unstructured interview, the researcher began by breaking the ice in providing a pleasant welcome and to establish a rapport. The most important parts that needed to be addressed with the respondents before the

interview could take place, had been the issue of explaining the purpose of the study, the time allocated for the interview, the expected interview sessions, issues with regard to confidentiality, methods that would be used to record information, obtaining written consent for both the utilisation of the audio-recorder, as well as consent for participating in the study after providing an explanation of their right to withdraw at any stage of the study, if they wish to do so. (Greeff, 2005:295). A time period of 15 minutes was provided for the abovementioned logistical matters.

Greeff (2005:295) further elaborates on the conduction of the unstructured interview by stating that the researcher should be able to apply skills of opening up the respondent and to obtain expressive and clear ideas from respondents, as well as encouraging respondents to elaborate and focus on issues at hand. The researcher will also listen to both implicit and explicit meanings in the explanation and description of the respondents as per advice provided by Greeff (2005:295).

The researcher also followed a suggestion that was provided by Seidman (1998) as cited in Greeff (2005:295-296), in using three (3) separate series for each respondent that would take one (1) hour each. The first part dealt with the establishment of the context of the respondents' experiences in terms of workplace violence, followed by the second part, i.e. reconstruction of the details of their experiences within the context in which the workplace violence occurred as well as encouraging the respondents to reflect on the meaning they attach to their experiences of workplace violence.

Finally, the last series ended with the researcher providing a summary of the major points, enquiring from the respondents any questions that they might have had for the researcher, providing some contact details in case the respondent need to contact the researcher, as well as expressing appreciation for the respondent's valuable contributions, his/her time and participation (Greeff, 2005:296).

1.9.2 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Greeff (2005:299), qualitative analysis is utilised to grasp the richness of themes deriving from the respondents' talk. According to Patton (2002) as cited in De Vos (2005:333), qualitative analysis "transform data into findings through reducing the volume of raw information, shifting from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal". De Vos (2005:333) defines data analysis as "the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data". Greeff (2005:299) advises that the process of transcribing and analysing information should take place as soon as information has been gathered. This kind of data analysis has the strength of creative features and enjoyable processes, though it seems to be messy, ambiguous and time-consuming (De Vos, 2005:333).

The data collection was analysed according to the Creswell (1998) analytic spiral, as cited in De Vos (2005: 334). The first process of qualitative data analysis that was used by the researcher was the planning for recording information (De Vos, 2005:334). In order for data analysis to be efficient, the researcher negotiated and requested permission through written consent from the participant to use an audio recorder to collect information. Permission had been obtained from each respondent as part of the informed consent form. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) as cited in De Vos (2005:335), the researcher should plan ahead a system of retrieving information easily through colour coding that would assist to trace information such as dates.

The process of reading and writing memos entailed tasks whereby the researcher listed all the information available, as well as writing memos in the margins of the transcripts (De Vos, 2005:337). Creswell (1998) as cited in De Vos (2005:337), refers to such memos as short phrases, ideas or key concepts that occur to the reader.

After the researcher had completed the process of reading and writing memos, categories, themes and patterns were generated that represent "the heart of quality information analysis". This process entails identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief." (De Vos, 2005:337-338).

Creswell (1998) as cited in De Vos (2005:338), classifying information means "taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes, or dimensions of information". This implies that the researcher must classify information according to themes and sub-themes. The researcher will then interpret the information in order to make sense of the information collected through formulating an opinion of what is going on with the employees who experience workplace violence (De Vos, 2005:338).

The last step in the information analysis was the search for alternative explanations in order to identify and describe them to demonstrate explanations for the experience of workplace violence (De Vos, 2005:339).

1.10 DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

The researcher used both the non-probability and probability sampling technique as a sampling method. It was unlikely to randomise respondents (Strydom & Delport, 2005:328) in the study as the phenomenon that was studied focused only on those respondents who had experienced workplace violence. Therefore, the population of the study is members of the South African Police Service stationed at a particular Police Station. As a result, the sample consists of employees of the South African Police Service who experienced workplace violence. Neuman (2006:219) defines a sample as "a smaller set of cases a researcher selects from a larger pool and generalizes to the population".

The study utilised both the purposive sampling and systematic sampling method. Neuman (2006:222) defines purposive sampling as "a non-random sample in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of a highly specific and difficult-to-reach population". The researcher used subjective information (Neuman, 2006:222) that would be gathered from the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) of the South African Police Service in the identification of employees who experienced workplace violence. The researcher requested the assistance of the EAS from the SAPS in a letter asking permission from the relevant authorities (see Annexure B). Another method that was utilised by the researcher had been to approach the Departmental Labour Unions in the identification of the respondents to participate in the study.

The criteria for selecting the respondents were based on any employee who is employed by the South African Police Service, stationed at the particular Police Station, irrespective of race, gender, educational level, age, etc., who once or repeatedly experienced workplace violence (either physical or psychological including bullying). This process was done after the researcher had received permission from the South African Police Service to do the research.

The researcher compiled a list of 35 employees through purposive sampling method within a timeframe of two (2) weeks in order to select the respondents that participated in the study. The systematic sampling method was then used in selecting the "first case randomly" (Strydom, 2005:200) from the list. The researcher selected the subsequent nine (9) respondents using the interval of three (3). That is, each third employee from the alphabetical list was selected to participate in the study.

1.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics is defined as "a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group that is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistance and students". (Strydom, 2005:57). Neuman (2006: 129) views ethical issues as "concerns, dilemmas, and conflicts that arise over the proper way to conduct research". This implies that ethical codes provide the researcher with an appropriate and proper manner in which to conduct research.

The ethical issues that are relevant to this study are:

- avoidance of harm;
- informed consent;
- violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality;
- actions and competence of researchers;
- release or publication of the findings; and
- debriefing of respondents.

1.11.1 AVOIDANCE OF HARM

The researcher is obliged to protect respondents against emotional harm. Since the respondents related their experiences that could trigger unresolved issues or flashbacks of the incident, the researcher predicted and prepared for emotional assistance through the South African Police Service Employee Assistance Service (EAS). The researcher informed every respondent, prior to his or her participation in the study, about the potential emotional impact of the study (Strydom, 2005:58).

1.11.2 INFORMED CONSENT

Hakim (2000) as cited in Strydom (2005:59), views informed consent as "a necessary condition". The researcher provided a written informed consent form (see Annexure C) to all respondents that indicated explicitly the goal of the study, procedures that were to be followed during the study (including usage of an audio recorder), the possible advantages and disadvantages (including possible harm), as well as the credibility of the researcher (Strydom, 2005:59). Neuman (2000:96) is in consensus with Hakim (2000) as cited in Strydom (2005:59), in terms of providing full information regarding the intended study. Every respondent was requested to sign the relevant informed consent form and a copy was handed to each of the respondents.

1.11.3 VIOLATION OF PRIVACY / ANONYMITY / CONFIDENTIALITY

Strydom (2005:61) differentiates between privacy and confidentiality as follows: the former deals with *personal privacy* whereas the latter deals *with handling of information in a confidential manner*. The researcher ensured privacy of respondents by not revealing their personal details. For example, numbers were assigned to the respondents and their real names will not be used in order to maintain anonymity. Neuman (2000:98) asserts that the researcher should protect privacy by not disclosing a subject's identity after information has been collected. In this study, anonymity has been implemented on the research findings.

Confidentiality means *information* "may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public". (Neuman, 2000:99) This implies that only informed consent forms contain personal details of the respondents and the researcher will not release the signed informed consent.

1.11.4 ACTIONS AND COMPETENCE OF RESEARCHERS

According to Strydom (2005:63), "researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation". The researcher acquired extensive skills through the research methodology module to undertake professional research. In addition to that, the former has been allocated a Supervisor who possesses adequate skills and impeccable experience in the field of research to guide the researcher.

The researcher needs to be well equipped in order to evaluate any possible risks and advantages, as well as be prompt in keeping promises made to the respondents (Strydom, 2005:64). The researcher agrees with Strydom (2005:63-64) in respect of the notion that the researcher is ethically obliged to perform her investigation in a correct action and with a correct attitude. The latter could be demonstrated only if the researcher is competent in undertaking the proposed investigation.

1.11.5 COOPERATION WITH CONTRIBUTORS

Strydom (2005:64) argues that research projects "are often so expensive and comprehensive that the researcher cannot handle them financially and in terms of time on his own". The researcher agrees with this notion as the investigation required extensive travelling to the sessions that were held with the respondents, communication with the proposed population (telephone, e-mails and fax), audio recording equipment, laptop and stationery for written notes and copies, transcription, software for a computer that would have the "core systems for coding and locating units of text, audio as well as reporting". (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007:290) All these matters have a financial implication and there was a possibility that the researcher would need sponsorships to assist with the study.

Neuman (2006:143) is in consensus with Strydom (2005:65) in terms of engaging a sponsor in clarifying the ethical issues in advance. The researcher agrees as

these would assist in curbing misunderstandings and demands that might cripple the relationship between the researcher and the sponsor. The researcher intended to enter into a written contract with the sponsor (if applicable) in order to eliminate prescriptions and misunderstandings.

The researcher acknowledges the Employee Assistance Service in the SAPS for their envisaged contributions in providing debriefing to the respondents. They were consulted in advance to determine their identifying details. The researcher also acknowledges contributions of other participants including the editor for the research report.

1.11.6 RELEASE OR PUBLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

Blaikie (2001:69) agrees with Strydom (2005:65) that the researcher is ethically obliged to admit the shortcomings and limitations to the readers. Strydom (2005:65) further offers some guidelines on the release and publication of the findings that include among others:

The final report should be accurate, objective, clear, unambiguous and contain all essential information.

- Avoidance of biasness.
- Recognition of sources consulted to avoid plagiarism.
- Informing the respondents about the findings in an objective and simple manner.

The researcher implemented the guidelines offered in a proposed investigation. Written permission was obtained from the SAPS before the actual publication of findings, with particular acknowledgement to the respondents to also demonstrate recognition and gratitude for their participation in the study (Strydom, 2005:66). The findings were maintained confidentiality in a manner that did not divulge the names of the respondents in the investigation. The findings are submitted for publication by the researcher as a student of the

University of Pretoria, whilst the complete dissertation is electronically accessible on the World Wide Web.

1.11.7 DEBRIEFING OF RESPONDENTS

According to Judd *et al.* (1991) as cited in Strydom (2005:66), "debriefing sessions during which subjects get the opportunity, after the study, to work through their experience and its aftermath, is one possible way in which the researcher can assist subjects and minimize harm". The research might have triggered some emotions from the respondents, as they were expected to relive their experiences of workplace violence. Debriefing assisted them in dealing with those experiences.

Salkind (2000) as cited in Strydom (2005:66), advises on the easiest way to debrief the respondents. That is, discussing their feelings about the study immediately after the session. This implied that the researcher allocated time for each respondent to be debriefed immediately after each session. Each respondent had three (3) sessions as well as three (3) debriefings. The researcher had been ethically obliged to refer the respondents to the Employee Assistance Service (South African Police Service) for debriefing and therapy, if the need arose. The Employee Assistance Service possesses the necessary skills that would assist in terminating and withdrawing the therapy to those respondents who benefited from the therapeutic aspects of the research (Strydom, 2005:67). Finally, the researcher was ethically obliged to debrief the respondents in order to rectify any misperceptions that might have been caused by the study, after the study had been completed (Strydom, 2005:67).

1.12 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPT

1.12.1 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Bowie (2005:163) defines workplace violence as "a perceived or actual verbal abuse, emotional threat, physical attack or misuse of power upon an individual's

person or property, or against a work group or organization by another individual, group or organization while undertaking work-related duties". This definition implies that workplace violence may take either one or more of these forms of violence as the misuse of power by an individual or organisation may impact negatively on the emotional status of the employee.

The troubled employee may either perceive emotional threat or experience actual emotional threat. For example, an assertive employee may experience emotional threat that might prohibit him or her to express own views and feelings. The definition also implies that workplace violence is viewed in terms of its relation to work-related duties.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), workplace violence is *the* "intentional use of power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group, in work-related circumstances, that either results in or has a high degree of likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation". (Kgosimore, 2005:210)

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines workplace violence as "violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed toward persons at work or on duty" (Doerner & Lab, 2002:295). Doerner and Lab (2002:295) refer to workplace violence as "issues of intimidation, harassment, or verbal aggression".

The Australian National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) defines workplace violence as "the attempt or actual exercise by a person of any force so as to cause injury to a worker, including any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe he or she is at risk". (Kgosimore, 2005:210)

The researcher defines workplace violence as 'any act of physical or non-physical (abuse, bullying, threats, and intimidation) violence that is experienced by the employee in a workplace while executing his/her duties. The violence is likely to impair the occupational and social functioning of the employee which may result in a decrease in organisational productivity and the employee's well-being'.

CHAPTER 2

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher deals with the empirical findings derived from the phenomenological study of ten (10) Participants interviewed in the South African Police Service in particular Police Station. The process of the research was characterized by the researcher convening a meeting with the Superintendent for MIC that was assigned by the Station Commissioner to assist in terms of being a point of entry to recruit employees to participate in the research. The outcome of the meeting identified the internal stakeholders that needed to be informed about the research. Thereafter, the Superintendent coordinated stakeholders and the ones that attended were chaplain, employee assistance Service officer as well as the shop steward for POPCRU. The latter was briefed about the research and the method that was going to be used in identifying and recruiting multiple individuals who have experienced workplace violence.

The internal stakeholders were requested to assist by using purposive sampling method in identifying the Participants. The challenge experienced by the researcher was a delay from the stakeholders in providing the lists at an agreed timeline of interested Participants. Thereafter, the researcher convened another meeting with the Superintendent to brainstorm on other strategies to be used to recruit employees. The agreement was then reached that the researcher should attend the Police Officers' Parade and be provided with a 10 minutes slot to brief the employees about the research. The researcher developed the recruitment lists that included the contact details of interested employees. This strategy was

very successful and confidentiality was emphasized by the researcher during the briefing sessions.

The researcher managed to get 35 employees who were willing to participate in the study. After having employees from different shifts and office-bearers, the researcher then used a systematic sampling method to select two (2) Participants for pilot study and ten (10) Participants for actual study. The Participants were listed alphabetically and the first Participant on the list was selected randomly, thereafter the researcher used an interval of three in which each third employee from the list was selected to participate. The researcher made telephonic contact with each Participant to schedule the date and time for interview.

2.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The researcher utilized qualitative research approach in gathering data from the Participants. The rationale behind utilizing the qualitative approach was to gain a deeper understanding of experiences of workplace violence through first-hand data from the participants as well as the meaning they attach to their experiences.

2.2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The researcher utilized unstructured one-to-one interviews and a tape recorder to gather data from the Participants. Initially, the interviews were structured to take place in three (3) separate sessions for each participant, but through pilot test, the researcher learned that the data that was supposed to be gathered from the second and third interviews were automatically gathered and related by the participants during the pilot test. During the first interview, the researcher was able to establish the context of the participants in terms of their experiences of workplace violence, and reconstruction of their experience in details as well as

reflection on the meaning they attach to their experiences of workplace violence. The researcher consulted and discussed the issue with her Supervisor immediately after discovering that. The agreement was then reached that the actual structure of the interviews should be adjusted to one (1) session for each participant.

2.3 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Participant No.	Age in years	Gender	Race	Position	Years in Service	Highest Qualification
Participant 1	39	Male	Indian	Sergeant	5 yrs	Diploma
Participant 2	24	Female	Black	Reservist	1 yr	Matric
Participant 3	44	Male	Black	Inspector	18 yrs	Diploma
Participant 4	45	Male	White	Inspector	18 yrs	Matric
Participant 5	46	Male	Black	Inspector	24 yrs	Diploma
Participant 6	40	Female	Black	Superintendent	18 yrs	Diploma
Participant 7	43	Male	White	Inspector	20 yrs	Matric
Participant 8	38	Male	Black	Sergeant	8 yrs	Matric
Participant 9	46	Male	Black	Inspector	15 yrs	Degree
Participant 10	42	Male	Black	Inspector	14 yrs	Diploma

Table 1: List of participants

2.4 CENTRAL THEMES

2.4.1 NATURE/ EXTENT OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

2.4.1.1 Verbal violence

The majority of participants mentioned that they have experienced emotional abuse in relation to verbal violence, vulgar language and insults from their colleagues (**Participants 1,2,4,5,6,8,9 and 10**). The statements from participants that support emotional abuse include among others, “Vulgar language and insults that I don’t know my work, you know... insults...” and “He would start swearing the other member because he didn’t clean the car...” **Participants 6 and 8** stated that they are not treated like adults as some of the Commanders normally use the statement such as “hey, just shut up... you are talking nonsense”. **Participant 1** tends to differ with **Participants 6 and 8** in terms of vulgar language that is normally used against each other (employees). To the former, vulgar language “is a way of life”.

2.4.1.2 Insubordination

It has been gathered that not only employees experienced workplace violence. **Participant 4** stated that the employees who are usually placed in guard duties (Hospital) usually fight with their Superiors that post them there. This is supported by the statement from **Participant 4** that “But he’s required to work there, but he doesn’t wanna work there... then conflicts start there...” **Participants 4 and 8** argue that the posting of members to work in place that they do not want to work in can be done purposefully by their Commanders to spite them. **Participant 4 stated** “the Commanders maybe sometimes spiteful to post the members there...” and **Participant 8** stated “ So, it is their way of making things... you talk too much, you can be removed to where you don’t want to be...”

2.4.1.3 Threats

Participants 1, 4 and 9 mentioned that they even witness employees being threatened by their co-workers. **Participant 4** stated that “Normally, I haven’t seen serious things, most is just slapping each other and one incident, or one member threatened to shoot the other member”. **Participant 6** stated that due to traumatic violence she endured from her Superior, she even threatened to kill the alleged perpetrator of workplace violence.

2.4.1.4 Victimisation

Participants 3, 5, 9 and 10 mentioned that the kind of workplace violence they are experiencing is lack of opportunities of being promoted to the next rank. They seem to blame the system and their superiors in purposefully denying them the opportunity to be promoted to the next level. **Participant 9** stated the statement that support purposive blockage of being promoted and claimed to be cited by one of the superiors, “do you think I can promote you, it means I would give much of authority to you... you argue with me while you are still in this level...if I promote you, it means I bring you even closer to me, I would then give much of the authority to come and argue with me...” the other statement stated by **Participant 9** says “... and it’s not me alone and there’s a lot of guys I know that they studied... one is a professor... they are sitting in those ranks without being promoted or shortlisted when they apply”

2.4.1.5 Physical violence

Participants 1 and 7 mentioned that they have experienced workplace violence with the suspects through exchanging bullets while attempting to arrest them. **Participant 7** stated that “...I just saw the guy hanging out “baa...baa...baa...baa... (making sound of the gun) and he started shooting at us...so we fight back...” **Participants 1, 4, and 9** stated that they had an experience of physical violence that was perpetuated by their colleagues against them. **Participant 9** mentioned that “ ... at a later stage, another guy, a friend to this one ... approached me, it started again and he ended up pushing me around

and he said I must go... and I said where I am supposed to go because we are all here for a ...”

2.4.1.6 Violence as a coping mechanism

Participants 1, 2 and 9 indicated that they had arguments with their colleagues that resulted into violence. **Participant 1** stated that “The argument takes place and arguments lead to certain things..., so... it’s there... is everyday thing. The only way to deal with is violence, so it’s very rife in the Police and ehh... first we always like experience it on more than one occasion...”

2.4.1.7 Bullying and Mobbing

Participants 2, 6, 8, 9 and 10 mentioned that they experienced bullying by their Superiors as a form of workplace violence. **Participant 6** stated that “Then my senior laughed and said ‘Today... I’m going to catch a big fish’. He called me a big fish now...” **Participants 2 and 9** stated that they have experienced mobbing as a form of workplace violence where the community members complained about their poor service and the superior was not willing to hear their side of the story. As a result, Superiors tend to take drastic measures without providing them with the opportunity to respond and explain their side of the story. **Participant 2** stated that “...they go straight to the Charge office to speak to the Commander of the shift that day, the Commander will go straight to Director and will take the matter to Director, instead of saying, no... Let’s just sit down and talk about this...”

2.4.1.8 Disciplinary measures as a form of workplace violence

Participant 9 mentioned that “... they would take disciplinary steps without hearing you”

2.4.1.9 Tribalism as a form of workplace violence

Participant 10 mentioned that he experienced tribalism as a form of workplace violence

2.4.2 DISCUSSION OF DATA ON THE NATURE OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

It has been gathered that the use of vulgar language is rife among the police officers when communicating to each other. Most of the participants expressed such kind of emotional violence as derogatory and showing disrespect to them. Nevertheless, Participant 1 argues that vulgar language is seen as part of their communication. The data also revealed that superiors are also the victims of workplace violence as they sometimes experience insubordination perpetuated by the members they supervise. According to the data, some superiors tend to misuse their power by placing employees to undesirable working conditions if they need to punish those employees.

It has been gathered that it is possible for the victim of workplace violence to become the perpetrator in the quest to revenge to the person. Most of the participants are occupying Inspectors' rank for more than 9 years. They tend to be demoralized as the Department does not provide them with reasons for not be promoted to Captainship after several attempts to apply and the kind of qualifications they are possessing. Their observations on the manner in which the panel members promote some of their colleagues whom they claim do not even have standard 10 results in them labeling the panel members as corrupt and practicing nepotism. They also attribute this to victimization against them as they view themselves as employees that challenges the management openly should need arises.

It seems as if majority of participants that were involved in exchanging bullets with the suspects while performing their duties do not recognize that as a workplace violence. Some participants even mentioned that this form part of their daily functions and somebody have to be out there to arrest the suspects. It appeared from the data that arguments are inevitably. Therefore, the manner in

which an individual respond to that arguments determines whether workplace violence erupt or not.

Most of the participants indicated that they have experienced bullying and mobbing from their superiors as a result they are expected to respect them regardless of what they are experiencing. It has been gathered from the data that when complaints come against the participants, they are not given the opportunity to state their version, instead management make conclusions and judgments without proper consultation that sometimes lead into disciplinary measures against them. It has been gathered that tribalism among the employees is happening, though it has not been explicitly stated by most of the participants.

2.4.3 MEANINGS EMPLOYEES ATTACH TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

2.4.3.1 Lack of self control as a cause of workplace violence

According to **Participant 1**, employees perpetuate workplace violence against their colleagues because they lack self control when they are faced with challenges of engaging themselves in arguments. **Participant 1** further stated that arguments are inevitable in the workplace because “people would always have differences... different viewpoints, sometimes you have to accommodate other people because of the views...”

2.4.3.2 Lack of experience as a cause of workplace violence

Participants 1 and 9 share the same viewpoint that lack of experience in the police might pose a serious threat to employees being exposed to workplace violence such as being shot by the suspects as new employees tend to rush to scene of crimes, being “excited and adrenalin is pumping”. The meaning **Participant 7** attached to exchanging bullets with the suspects while executing his work tends to differ with **Participant 1**. The latter believe that only young and inexperienced police officers always rush to crime of scenes because of excitement and adrenalin that is pumping, whereas **Participant 7** is 20 years in

service and still feeling the same adrenalin when rushing to scene of crimes. **Participant 7** stated that “That’s why I have joined the Police, I like the action, and I like the adrenalin...”

2.4.3.3 Attitude as a cause of workplace violence

Participant 2 agreed with **Participant 6** as they both attached attitude as the meaning to workplace violence. She stated that the attitude of other members within the Police perpetuate the workplace violence.

2.4.3.4 Lack of proper communication as a cause of workplace violence

According to **Participant 4**, Commanders tend to fail to motivate their members and communicate to them in a correct manner when they need to post them in guard duties (hospitals). As a result, members misunderstood the purpose and rationale behind their posting and workplace violence becomes inevitably.

2.4.3.5 Lack of implementation as a cause of workplace violence

The meaning that **Participant 3** attaches to workplace violence is in consensus with **Participants 5 and 9** in terms of the lack of implementation regarding the criteria the Department has developed in promoting members to the next level and providing them with incentives. They have attributed their inability to be promoted to corruption and nepotism that they allege is taking place within the panel members that are responsible for promotions. **Participant 5** stated that “There’s a certain guy, who hasn’t got that Standard 10, and I once helped him at one stage filling the application form and all that..., he ended up getting the post...” **Participant 5** mentioned that “So, in some instances, they do follow it, but somewhere they don’t follow it... so, that’s why you end up being confused not knowing exactly what is needed”, whereas **Participant 9** stated that “Uhh... there are no criteria... because I once complained and asked about the criteria, and no one knows how they select, you don’t know... there are no clear guidelines...”

2.4.3.6 Lack of proper monitoring system as a cause of workplace violence

Participant 5 further attributed victimization through depriving promotions to lack of proper monitoring system as he mentioned that “so, nobody is trying to see whether that is followed correctly or what...”

2.4.3.7 Feelings of Inferiority as a cause of workplace violence

According to **Participant 6**, Superiors tend to feel threatened by the experience and capabilities of their junior members as a result perpetuating workplace violence against them.

2.4.3.8 Cultural Stereotypes as a cause of workplace violence

Participant 6 further attached her experiences of workplace violence to the cultural stereotypes that are still hold by the majority of male counterparts that women are incapable of holding higher positions and being leaders.

2.4.3.9 Physical stature as a cause of workplace violence

The interesting meaning **Participant 6** attached to workplace violence is that people who are shorter in physical stature tend to “think here and now... they don’t think for the future... they’ve got that brain of them that is too short”.

2.4.3.10 Lack of leadership skills as a cause of workplace violence

According to **Participant 8**, lack of leadership skills from Commanders contributes to workplace violence. He further blamed the State in a sense that when transformation of the Police Force to South African Police Service took place, they did not implement the transformation process as desired because some of the Commanders are still behaving and practicing the old system style of doing things such as instructing members in an unacceptable manner.

2.4.3.11 Lack of respect as a cause of workplace violence

Participant 8 further attributed the meaning of workplace violence perpetuated by the some of the Commanders to lack of respect. This is supported by the statement that “being my senior...it doesn’t mean that you are my God or whatever... because I’m also an adult, I’m also the human... and I’m the husband just like you... the only thing that here at work... we work according to seniority... so you are my senior”

2.4.3.12 Intolerable personality

Participant 10 attached meaning of workplace violence to the personality of each individual member. He implied that employees need to understand each other’s personality as there are other people who “can’t lower their voice when talking to people... he or she cannot talk to people properly” as a result members might complain of being bullied through shouting.

2.4.3.13 Spiritual belief system

Participant 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 view the police work as “calling” from God. They perceive themselves as being sent by God with a purpose of making a difference to the community. **Participant 5** attach the meaning of his workplace violence (victimization) to his Christianity stating that “...let me say as a Christian, so I just consol myself that ehh... the time will come, maybe it’s not yet time, so let me not force matters... because if I force matters and it’s not the time which God has said it for me, so I might end up being in trouble. **Participant 6** concluded by acknowledging the power of God in overcoming her experiences of workplace violence as she stated that “If it wasn’t for God, I would have not been working right now...”

2.4.4 DISCUSSION OF DATA ON THE MEANING EMPLOYEES ATTACH TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

It has been gathered that most of the participants that complained about lack of promotions and incentives have been occupying the rank Inspector for several

years. Some seem to know that there is criteria in place that the Department follows in allocating promotional posts and incentives to deserving members while at the same time they claim that the criteria in place is not being followed in some of the instances. They seem to be confused with the result that they draw their own conclusions based on hearsay from their colleagues in terms of corruption and nepotism.

A participant mentioned that he does not have prove that would support his perception of corruption and nepotism unless the member that told him how he was promoted is willing to come clean in order to provide supporting facts. It has been gathered that the participant tends to have ambiguous ideas regarding the promotions. It appeared that he is against nepotism yet hopes that if one of his friends becomes promoted, his own promotion will be guaranteed. This is extracted from his statement: "...some of my friends, if they can be promoted, I know they can uplift me...".

It has been gathered that the South African Police Service was predominated by male managers (Commanders). During the transformation process, some of the female employees were provided with opportunities to lead their units and as a result created tension among some of their male counterparts. It was gathered from the data that the male superiors felt threatened and their cultural prejudice that "a woman's place is in the kitchen" tended to cloud their judgments and actions. Some superiors resorted to bullying and mobbing the female Commander.

It has been gathered that some of the participants view their management as lacking leadership skills. They claimed to had even gone to an extreme in asking one of the superiors whether management are provided with opportunity to undergo leadership courses. They seem to lack trust in how the managers conduct themselves in matters affecting them, such as poor communication and the manner in which superiors respond to their issues. The data also revealed

that is it expected from the junior member to “respect” the senior member. This respect seem to be one-sided as participants view superiors as lacking respect towards them yet it is a “must” to respect them.

2.4.5 AVAILABLE INTERVENTION & SERVICE

2.4.5.1 Management accessibility

According to **Participants 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8**, the intervention that is in place for employees when they need assistance is the accessibility and approachability of some of the Commanders and the Station Commissioner. **Participants 3 and 8** further highlighted that they have the “liberty as Police Officers to submit grievances and are allowed to do that”. **Participant 9** tends to disagree as he mentioned that “they can just say over the media their doors are open but there are no doors that are open. If I go there to make appointment, they would never, never keep that appointment”.

2.4.5.2 Psychological and Spiritual Service

In terms of psychological Service they can access, **Participants 1, 2 and 6** mentioned that they know of the Station Social Workers whereas **Participants 1 and 8** stated that they know of the availability of the Chaplains as providing support to employees in need.

2.4.5.3 Credibility of Service available

Participants 6 and 8 stated clearly that they lack confidence in the manner in which the Station Social Workers operate as **Participant 6** mentioned: “No, I did go to, the Social Worker and then we sat down and it was difficult for me to be free to ... , because most of the Social Workers at work...you discuss something with them... I don’t know whether they act professionally or what... you will hear something being discussed in the offices”.

2.4.6 DISCUSSION OF DATA ON THE AVAILABLE INTERVENTION AND SERVICE

It has been gathered that the South African Police Service in particular Police Station has an open door policy whereby employees can access management to discuss issues they feel are important to them. Nevertheless, some members view management as having such a policy but not implementing it as they tend to deprive them the opportunity to discuss issues by postponing their appointments. There seem to be lack of understanding and visibility in terms of psychological Service employees are entitled to use. Some participants seem to lack trust in the manner the station Social Workers are conducting themselves.

The fact that the psychological Service' offices are located in the management building result in them losing trust in the Service and identifying them as part of management that might jeopardise confidentiality when sensitive information is shared. The rumours around the Station regarding personal issues that were shared by employees might be due to the fact that employees share the same information with their colleagues before consulting the psychological Service or the fact that the psychological Service, e.g. of the Social Worker is not adhering to the Ethical Code of Conduct (confidentiality) as governed by the South African Council for Social Service Profession (SACSSP). The structure of their offices within the management building contributes to the lack of trust from the participants. The latter seem to assume that the Social Workers are serving the interests of management rather than that of the employees.

2.4.7 PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

2.4.7.1 Ongoing support and training

Participant 1 recommended that employees need to receive ongoing counseling including seminars and workshops that can be conducted at least monthly in order to equip employees with skills on how to control and handle certain situations, such as arguments that might lead to workplace violence.

2.4.7.2 Compromise

Participant 1 further recommended that employees need to accommodate one another and reach some compromise for example: “I don’t smoke and he smokes..., you have to compromise, maybe stop the vehicle every hour, then he doesn’t smoke in the vehicle, so it’s a thing of compromise...”.

2.4.7.3 Proper approach

According to **Participants 2, 4 and 10**, it is very crucial to approach a person in the right manner and even request a private conversation with the colleague or senior to address issues that cause misunderstanding.

2.4.7.4 Communication

Participants 4 and 8 are in agreement with each other in recommending that managers or seniors need to create time in order to talk and listen to their members that would benefit in sharing ideas and experiences.

2.4.7.5 Proper placement

Participant 4 further recommended that in the cases where members refuse to be placed in other posts, seniors should be able to identify the kind of posts each member is interested to work in. He cited: “You have people who like certain posts, like you find one man, he likes working in an office and another man likes working outside, maybe if they can just talk to people...”.

2.4.7.6 Transparency on promotions and incentives

Participants 5 and 9 recommended that there should be clear criteria in terms of who qualifies to receive incentives and promotions. **Participant 9** recommended that if there is not enough money to provide incentives to all employees, “at least they should said maybe... this year, these people will get the money in order to run around to all people at the Station... not the same people getting the money, over and over again”. He further recommended that management should be

transparent to those employees interested to know what is going on in the particular department such as allocation of incentives and promotions.

2.4.7.7 Feedback system

Participant 5 emphasised a need for feedback by managers to those who did not succeed in getting promotions and incentives in order to rectify their mistakes in the future, if any.

2.4.7.8 Leadership course for management

According to **Participant 8**, it is vital that seniors attend leadership courses.

2.4.7.9 Visibility and accessibility of the Station Social Worker

Participant 8 further recommended that the Station Social Worker be placed with the employees rather than with the managers in order to be easily accessible to all employees when they need assistance.

2.4.8 DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been gathered that some of the causes for workplace violence can be eliminated by ongoing counseling, seminars and workshops. It is assumed that the victim of workplace violence will have solace by dealing with their experiences professionally through counseling. This would also assist in breaking the vicious cycle of the victims striving to be perpetrators in the quench to revenge. The seminars and workshops recommended by participants are said to equip employees with skills on how to deal with conflict that might result in workplace violence. There seems to be no intervention in place in terms of seminars and workshops in the South African Police Service, in which employees can be equipped with skills, hence the recommendation. The recommended seminars and workshops are envisaged to deal with issues among others, proper approach and communication.

The recommendations from participants also focused on proper placement of employees when they are recruited into the South African Police Service. This implies that the Department needs to consider looking at the interest of the employee regarding a particular post rather than focusing on the skills the employee possesses. This is based on the assumption that some employees are much more comfortable and interested in working outside the office and if those employees are placed inside the office, they tend to become frustrated and bored and as a result perpetuate working violence against their colleagues and/or seniors.

It has been gathered from the data that there is no transparency in the manner in which promotions and incentives are implemented. The participants also seem to feel that the lack of transparency is caused by irregularities within the panel members that decide on who is supposed to be promoted and receive incentives. In terms of the latter, since they seem to feel that all employees deserve to receive incentives, they seem to feel that it would be better if they rotate incentives to all employees rather than observing the same employees receiving them year after year. In terms of promotions, it has been gathered that the South African Police Service at the Police Station can improve and eliminate victimisation by providing feedback to employees that have applied for posts advertised internally. This implies that the panel member would need to have concrete reasons and proper justification for employees that they viewed as not qualified to be promoted.

The leadership course for management that was recommended by some participants indicates that lack of leadership skills impact on and contribute negatively to workplace violence. Through leadership courses, the management would be able to deal with diverse critical and challenging issues that face employees on a daily basis without exacerbating the situation at hand. It is also assumed that managers that have leadership skills would be more confident in communicating with their subordinates without having feelings of inferiority that

might result to workplace violence such as bullying. It appeared from the data that the Station Social Worker is not visible to employees and to those few that are aware of her existence; they identify her role as part of management that serves only management interest. As a result, the Station Social Worker needs to be placed near the Community Service Centre where the employees can easily obtain confidential access and identify with the Social Worker.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The data reflected that the majority of the participants experienced verbal violence, victimisation through deprivation of promotional opportunities and incentives as well as bullying and mobbing. They seem to view their workplace violence as caused by among others, lack of self control, lack of proper communication, lack of implementation and monitoring systems in terms of criteria (promotions and incentives), feelings of inferiority, cultural stereotypes, physical stature, lack of leadership skills, and lack of respect. Some participants indicated that they have witnessed insubordination and threats committed to their colleagues, physical violence, disciplinary measures, and tribalism. It has been gathered that they seem to attribute such experiences to lack of experience, attitude and intolerable personalities.

It appears that the South African Police Service at the Police Station has services in place in terms of emotional intervention (Social Worker) and spiritual intervention (Chaplain) that employees might access in terms of need should they experience emotional issues such as workplace violence. This implies that the Department needs to focus on assisting these professionals to regain trust from members in order to be utilised as envisaged, perhaps through placing them where they can be easily accessible to all employees.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES REGARDING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The rationale behind this chapter is to present workplace violence from a theoretical point of view. The definition of workplace violence will be reflected in this chapter. The emphasis will be placed on the nature or extent of workplace violence theoretically, as well as the causal factors of workplace violence. According to Di Martino (2002:6), “the magnitude of the problem” of workplace violence, i.e. that 78% participants reported that they had experienced workplace violence “at least once during their careers”, is a matter to be dealt with.

The study that was done by Steinman (2003:3) examines “the extent of workplace violence, factors that may contribute to violence and explore the most suitable strategies and appropriate policies to prevent and address violence in the workplace”. Consequently, this study focuses on the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence, as well as the nature and extent of workplace violence in the South African Police Service.

It was found that in South Africa, particularly, in the health sector, experiences of psychological violence were neither reported nor attended to when reported as there were no actions taken against the perpetrators. As a result, victims tend to feel demoralised and dissatisfied. For example, the one participant stated: “It is abundantly clear that health care workers have very good reason to be dissatisfied with the manner in which psychological violence is handled”. The counts where management offered counseling and gave employees the opportunity to speak about the incidents were very unsatisfactory. Employers do not investigate workplace violence adequately and perpetrators get away with it. Unions, associations, and the community also lag behind in supporting the

victims of workplace violence. Unions play, in fact, an insignificant role in protecting their members against workplace violence. Victims mostly report incidents to their managers and colleagues, with the exception of sexual and racial harassment where it appears that victims have less opportunity to be open about their situation” (Di Martino, 2002:29). The participants from the South African Police Service at the Police Station are in consensus with employees from the health sector as they are also provided with the opportunity to receive counseling from the Station Social Worker, but are not satisfied with the processes and procedure of intervention. The fact that only sexual harassment and sometimes, racial harassment, e.g. bullying in the workplace is so subtle, it tends to be ignored by management who actually needs to take action to deal with it; perhaps because there are neither legislations nor policies governing such violence in comparison to sexual harassment and racial harassment.

3.2 DEFINITION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Steinman (2003:4) mentions a definition that was coined by the stakeholders she invited to meetings, i.e. the CCMA, Trade Unions in the Health Sector, Trade Unions Federations and other interested parties being “incidents where employee(s) are physically or emotionally abused, harassed, threatened or assaulted (overt, covert, direct, indirect) in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health”. The researcher views the inclusion of ‘commuting to and from work’ as applying to some sectors and not covering most sectors in a sense that if an employee get injured while traveling to and from work, irrespective of whether the incident is work-related or not, such employee is not eligible to claim for compensation as it happened before and after working hours. Nevertheless, the definition seems to be applicable in the South African Police Service as most of the time Police Officers are transported to and from work by state vehicles.

The Work Trauma Foundation [SA] defines workplace violence as “single or cumulative incidents where employee(s) are physically assaulted or attacked, are emotionally abused, pressurized, harassed or threatened (overtly, covertly, directly, indirectly) in work-related circumstances with the likelihood of impacting on their right to dignity, physical or emotional safety, well-being, work performance and social development”. The researcher tends to agree with the notion that such incidents might impair job performance and social development. The employees that are greatly experiencing workplace violence, tend to be preoccupied with their experiences and lack the level of morale to continue with their normal work. In the South African Police Service, participants in this study reported that they have low morale due to victimisation which they are experiencing in terms of promotional posts. As a result, some realised that there is no reason for them to develop themselves as they are often overlooked for promotion and those that are seen not to be developing themselves are provided with the promotional opportunities.

The World Health Organization [SA] defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against oneself or a group of people, that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (Steinman, 2003:4). The researcher tends to agree with the notion of ‘intentional use’ as most of the perpetrators of workplace violence tends to violate employees’ rights with an intention to make them feel that they are having power over them. As a result, power vested in them tends to be misused.

The similarities in these three definitions are the elements of incidents being either physically or emotionally. The latter implies the invisibility of the incidents as they tend to affect the psychological aspect of a human being. The first two definitions correlate with each other in terms of the characteristics of the workplace violence that entails harassment, threat, and assault. The World Health Organization [SA] highlighted an interesting connotation to workplace

violence as “intentional”. The researcher views this statement to mean that the incident of workplace violence should have an intentional base in order to qualify as workplace violence. The Constitution of South Africa, Chapter 2, stipulates that “every human being has a right to dignity” (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, [SA]). The World Health Organization correlates with the abovementioned clause that workplace violence might have a negative impact on the employee’s right to dignity as the victims of workplace violence tend to feel embarrassed and as a result lose their self-esteem due to the negative experiences.

The researcher’s definition of workplace violence is: “Any act of physical or non-physical (abuse, bullying, threats, and intimidation) violence that is experienced by the employee in the workplace while executing his/her duties. The violence is likely to impair the occupational and social functioning of the employee, which may result in a decrease in organisational productivity and the employee’s well-being”.

3.3 NATURE OR EXTENT OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

3.3.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

According to Premji (2008), psychological harassment, as well as bullying is the two common forms of psychological violence that are experienced by employees. Premji (2008) further describes psychological harassment as “repeated words, actions or gestures that result in a person losing his/her dignity, physical or psychological dignity or that may compromise his/her rights, entail unfavorable working conditions or result to even dismissal”. Examples of psychological violence include, among others, ridicule, constant criticism, gossip, as well as ostracism. The researcher tends to agree with the notion that an employee who is subjected to repeated violence might view the working conditions as threatening to his or her psychological well-being and as a result it affects job performance that might lead to disciplinary measures against him or her, or even

dismissal. The impairment of job performance might be based on the victim's preoccupation about the repeated psychological violence against him/her. For example, one participant in the South African Police Service mentioned that she was documenting each and every aspect of her experiences and as a result it might sidetrack her in terms of focusing on the actual job execution as her intention was to build up more evidence that might be used in future to defend herself.

Paterson *et al.* (1997) as cited in Jackson, Clare and Mannix (2002:15), states the difficulty of defining bullying as it depends on whether the aggression and hostility is open and overt in nature or whether it is subtle and covert in a form of rumor - mongering and exclusion. The researcher tends to disagree with the author in terms of defining bullying. Though it appears that there is no universal definition of bullying, there are commonalities in respect to characteristics of the incidents. Such experiences are highly determined by the victims rather than perpetrators of workplace violence.

3.3.1.1 Bullying

Edmonds (2008) affirms that most employees experience workplace bullying at some point in their careers. According to Einarsen *et al.* (1994b:20), workplace bullying is defined as "bullying that emerges when one or several individuals persistently over a period of time perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions" (Hoel and Cooper, [SA]). Tersptra and Baker (1991) as cited in Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]), argue that workplace bullying is subjective in nature as there seems to be a discrepancy in the interpretation and perception of the behavior. They further highlighted an example that a person might experience an incident that may be considered mildly by some people and yet be seen so extremely offensive by the individual that it warrants a grievance. In the South African Police Service, it was gathered that some participants view insults as a normal communication pattern

that is acceptable within the working environment, whereas others expressed deeper discontentment with the use of insults to them as it shows lack of respect and disregard for human beings.

Di Martino (2000: 2) describes bullying as “the constituting of offensive behavior through vindictive, cruel, malicious or humiliating attempts to undermine an individual or groups of employees through such activities as making life difficult for those who have the potential to do the bully’s job better, shouting at staff to get things done, insisting that the 'bully’s way is the right way', refusing to delegate because the bully feels no one else can be trusted, and punishing others by constant criticism or removing their responsibilities for being too competent”. The researcher views the definition as implying that bullying is an intentional action of the perpetrator through his or her attempts to undermine a person or group of people in order to render them miserable. It also implies that the perpetrator in this context possesses more power over the victim, for instance, a line manager violating the right to dignity of his or her subordinates.

Jackson et al. (2002: 15) argue that although bullying can take place in various situations and among employees occupying the same rank and status, it is dominantly “carried out by line managers to their subordinate staff” who hold more power over other employees. Rayner *et al.* (2002), as cited in Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA]) substantiated this by stating that such managers tend to “systematically and over time subject subordinates to highly aggressive or demeaning behavior”. The imbalance of power between managers and employees seem to portray the formal power structure within the organisation itself that might in turn be abused or “exploited” by the manager (Einarsen, [SA]:10-11). In the South African Police Service, for example, the Superintendent - as he or she possesses more power than the Captain in terms of the rank structure - might misuse the formal structure of the institution to bully Captains that are supposed to take orders and instructions from him or her. Steinman [SA], as cited in Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]), referred to these perpetrators as

“Hyena Bosses” in which their behavior include among others, “yelling, screaming, and throwing tantrums”.

Niedl (1995) as cited in the Work Trauma Foundation [SA], agreed with Tersprtra and Baker (1991) as cited in Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA]) and Einarsen (2000b), as cited in Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA]:9) that bullying depends on the perception of the recipient (victim) in terms of the frequency, nature, and effect of the unwanted behavior, especially when the victim is unable to defend him/herself. The researcher understands that only the victim could classify the acts against him or her as being bullying if those acts tend to threaten his or her well-being and leads to defending him/herself. In the South African Police Service, participants expressed despair in dealing with bullying as they are unable to defend themselves because their seniors have much power over what happens to them. For example, the senior has the power to place an employee wherever he or she wants without taking into consideration what the employee needs. To some extent, such placements are being practiced as a form of disciplining the employee indirectly.

Leymann (1990) as quoted by Einarsen in the Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]), argues that the behavior of bullying commonly happens almost every day in working life, hence the effect can be harmful and humiliating to the victim. It has been gathered from the data that participants do experience bullying almost every day in their working lives. The effects depend on how the victim interprets the incidents. For example, some participants view their victimisation as being deprived of the promotional posts and degrading of their intellectual capabilities and educational development, whereas others view them as part of normal life because it means that it is not yet time for them to be granted promotional posts. Einarsen *et al.*, (1994) maintains that it is not the nature of bullying itself that have a remarkable effect to the victim, rather its frequency and other attributes such as “situational factors relating to power, differences or inescapable interactions as well as intentionality of the acts”. The researcher agrees with the

author as the attributes seem to be linked to the manager who possess power in situations in which subordinates are compelled to interact with him or her as part of the job routine and as a result the manager have the advantage of constantly bullying an employee.

Leymann (1990b) as cited in Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]), the frequency of bullying tends to impose unbearable pressure on the coping mechanisms of the victim and may result in a victim being less capable of performing his or her expected duties and become more “vulnerable and a deserving target” (Einarsen, 2000b: 8 in Einarsen *et al.*, [SA]). The researcher is in consensus with the author that since the victim’s job performance may be affected by bullying, for example, constant criticism that results in him or her no longer being able to perform as is expected of him or her in the workplace, the perpetrator might capitalise on the poor performance that was caused by him or her (perpetrator) and continue to bully the victim as “vulnerable and deserving”. As a result, the effects of workplace bullying tend to result into “invisible scars” suffered by a victim as postulated by Steinman ([SA]) in Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]). The researcher agrees with the author that since the victim cannot prove bullying, especially constant criticism and ridicules, the scars that the victim endures tend to be invisible and unbearable.

Erickson and Williams-Evans (2000) as cited in Jackson *et al.* (2002:15), state a different view in terms of the frequency, namely that because of the frequency and nature of bullying, the majority of nurses believes that workplace violence is part of their daily job and it indicates acceptance of these misbehavior. It is therefore assimilated into their workplace culture. The same acceptance was evident from the participants in the Police Sector, i.e. some accepted the manner in which they exchanged insults with one another during communication as part of their work functioning. On the other side, Monthly Theme on Bullying in the Workplace ([SA]) views most organisations as lacking a clear code of conduct that can address the problem and as a result, rationalise the experience of

workplace violence as “personality conflict” or “a communication problem”, particularly if it happens between the manager and the subordinate. The South African Police Service is not immune to such negligence as there are no policies and procedures governing workplace violence.

This argument is based on the “abuse of power” as maintained by Ellis ([SA]), as cited by the Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]), that the bully often has authority over the victim and is the same person that the victims have to forward his or her grievance, should he or she have the courage to do that. The South African Police Service is characterised by hierarchical ranking which employees has to follow. Such ranking might create a barrier whereby the immediate supervisor is the perpetrator of such violence. Consequently, the employee might experience difficulty in reporting such incidents. At the particular Police Station, however, there is an open door policy in which the Station Commissioner allows employees to visit her office irrespective of ranks. The participants expressed a lack of trust in the policy as the outcome is often undesirable, meaning that there is no feedback provided to them by the Station Commissioner regarding their concerns.

Paterson *et al.* (1997) as cited in Jackson *et al.* (2002:15), mention several kind of behaviors that constitute bullying, which includes among others: “intimidation, threats, ridicule (in front of colleagues), withholding information, inequitable roster practices, rumour mongering, blocking opportunities for promotion and training, removing responsibilities, and misuse of power to incite others to marginalise and exclude the victim”. It appears from the abovementioned behaviours of bullying that intentional blockage of promotional opportunities, that has been cited by some of the participants, is classified as a form of bullying in which they occupy one rank (Inspector) for several years despite several attempts at applications to better themselves.

Monthly Theme on Bullying in the Workplace [SA] adds other kinds of behaviours associated with bullying, i.e. “refusing to delegate because they don’t trust anyone...”. In the South African Police Service one participant mentioned that her Senior deprived her an opportunity to act in his position while he (the Senior) was off-duty; he rather preferred to appoint a person who was a junior to her to act in that position. The researcher seems to understand that this kind of bullying is intentionally as the senior is in a position to choose whom to trust.

Steinman ([SA]) as cited in the Work Trauma Foundation, further adds behaviour such as “insults, interrupting talk or work, teasing, sarcasm and false accusations, flaunting status, mood swings, ignoring a person, aggressive posturing, undermining a person, trumping up charges against co-workers as well as colleagues in ganging up against a co-worker”. In the South African Police Service one participant reported that her experiences of workplace violence were so intense that it resulted into her senior laying charges against her that were later dropped. Her experiences appeared to also involve other co-workers ganging up against her in meetings by undermining and disregarding her inputs as the senior had more power and authority over them. Subtle and discrete behavior such as “not greeting” the victim, tends to be unnoticeable to others yet have the same devastating effect on the victim (Einarsen, 1999; Neuberger, 1999 in Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA])). The same participant mentioned that her senior went to the extent of not greeting her when he was supposed to greet her.

The Norwegian survey as quoted by Einarsen *et al.*, (1994a) in Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]), revealed the interesting views of seven (7) different trade unions (both victims and observers) in that they regard “lack of constructive leadership, lack of possibilities to monitor and control their own task as well as high level of role conflict” characteristics of workplace bullying. On the other hand, the Finnish survey revealed that “poor information flow, an authoritative way of settling, differences of opinion, lack of discussions about goal and tasks and lack of

opportunities to influence matters affecting oneself” are also regarded as features of workplace bullying (Vartia (1996) as quoted by Einarsen *et al.* ([SA])). These two surveys seem to correlate with each other as they imply that managers who are lacking leadership skills tend to bully employees as they might feel frustrated on how to handle some of the work situations that challenge their intellectual and emotional capabilities. In the South African Police Service, some participants view some of the managers as lacking leadership skills with the result that they tend to feel undermined by the subordinate who openly challenge some of the work procedures. Thereafter, the managers resort to bullying the employees rather than engaging the employee to come up with a suitable mechanism to deal with the particular situation.

3.3.1.1.1 Predatory bullying

Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA]):18), describe “predatory bullying” as a kind of bullying in which the victim has done nothing wrong to trigger the behavior of the bully. They further state that the victim is “accidentally” caught up in a situation in which the bully (predator) is exhibiting power to exploit the weakness of a victim. They further labeled such managers as “petty tyranny” because they tend to be obsessed with their powers over subordinates and therefore belittle them without due consideration for using an authoritarian style of leadership. The researcher interprets this as an implication that the perpetrator might be struggling with his or her own issues (such as frustrations of handling challenging working conditions) and as a result, bully those employees who seem to be “weak” when displaying his or her frustrations.

It is interesting to note that a person or victim might be singled out from the group if he or she is perceived as belonging to a certain group that has no recognised representation in the dominant organisational culture (Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]):18). In the South African Police Service, the management positions were perceived to be male-oriented before transformation took place. As a result, there may be some employees who might feel threatened by affirmation of women in

leadership roles and bully them just to prove a point that they are perceived to have power over them. The subcategories of “predatory bullying” according to Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]:19), include among others a “destructive and aggressive leadership style, being singled out as a scapegoat as well as acting out of prejudice”. At the Police Station, one senior participant cited that she was singled out as she was the only black woman who occupied a high rank in conjunction with her male counterparts. Consequently, she became the victim of prejudice.

3.3.1.1.2 Dispute-related bullying

Einarsen (1999) and Zapf and Gross(2001) as cited in Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]), dispute-related bullying is “highly escalated interpersonal conflicts”. They further argue that though conflicts and struggles are regarded as a normal part of life where interaction is taking place between human beings, if such conflicts and struggles involve persistent aggressive behaviors, it becomes bullying. That is, the frequency and duration of aggressive behaviors (Leymann, (1996) as quoted by Einarsen *et al.*, ([SA]:19)) in which one party is unable to defend him or herself (Zapf(1999a) as quoted by Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]:19)). In the South African Police Service, it has been gathered that dispute-related bullying can be avoided in some circumstances. For example, in the South African Police Service, Police Officers are at liberty to request to be placed with another partner should they experience irreconcilable disputes with the current partner as they often work in pairs or in small groups.

Van de Vliert(1998) as cited in Einarsen *et al.* ([SA]: 19), reflects an example that if “the social climate at work turns sour and creates differences that may escalate into harsh personalized conflicts and even ‘office wars’, where the total destruction of the opponent is seen as the ultimate goal to be gained by the parties”. The researcher derives that this example implies that such kind of bullying might be caused by unresolved conflicts and failure to compromise that might lead to a bully seeking faults and exaggerating mistakes from the victim to

lay a charge or even destroy through dismissal. In the South African Police Service, personality conflicts are inevitable as employees are working in pairs as partners or as small group of employees. Therefore, the Police Station seems to have a mechanism in place to change or replace partners should the need arises.

3.3.1.2 Mobbing

Mobbing is another form of psychological workplace violence as indicated by Di Martino (2000:2). This act or behaviour involves ganging up on a person by subjecting the victim to psychological harassment that include among others “negative criticism or remarks, isolating a victim from social activities or contacts, gossiping or spreading false information about the victim (Di Martino, 2000:2). In the South African Police Service, such form of bullying occurred in a situation where a female manager is seen as a threat by some of her male counterparts; as a result they gang up against her through malicious acts and spreading false information alleging that she obtained a managerial post through “sleeping with the male manager”.

3.3.2 STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

The World Trauma Foundation ([SA]) defines structural violence as “the intentional use of power and/or organizational systems and structures or laws against an individual or entity (employer, management, shareholders, employee, group of employees, client, government, unions) to carry out a covert or unethical agenda, enforce change or indulge in unfair practices to the disadvantage of the affected individual or entity”. The researcher understands this definition as implying that employee/s might experience structural violence through the systems such as procedures that are put in place by the institution. Such systems might be used by those in power to serve their personal interest rather than institutional interest in becoming unfairly to certain employees. In the South African Police Service, some of the managers that are responsible to promote

employees to higher ranks might apply the procedures unfairly to those employees they want to block for promotional opportunities.

There seems to be a correlation between structural violence and organisational violence. Mayhew and Chappell (2001) as cited in Kgosimore (2005:213), refer to organisational workplace violence as "...it occurs where an organization, by omission or commission, creates an environment where job insecurity fears are rampant, overwork is expected, resources are restricted, and reports of intimidation and threatening behavior are ignored". The lack of proper systems developed by the organisation or institution to address workplace violence seem to equates to the realisation that the organisation or employer is the perpetrator of workplace violence because they are being negligent in addressing such incidents.

3.3.3 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Premji (2008) states that physical violence is the most evident form of workplace violence. Such violent behaviour includes among others: hitting, kicking, spitting, serious injuries, as well as murder. The researcher agrees with the author, as physical violence can leave scars that are detectable compared to emotional scars that cannot be seen. The Canadian Centre for Occupational and Safety ([SA]) added shoving and pushing as other behaviours of physical violence. According to Rugala and Isaacs ([SA]:13), "homicide and physical assault are on the continuum". The researcher tends to disagree with the author as homicide and physical assault occur in isolated and very rare circumstances. The perpetrators of this violence are easily apprehended and dealt with according to disciplinary procedures and criminal laws. Whereas with emotional violence, as it occurs frequently, tend to be on the continuum as there are no procedures and legislations in place to deal with the perpetrators of such violence.

3.3.4 TRIBALISM

Ronfeldt (2006) argues that tribalism, either good or bad, exists everywhere and as a result it is often ignored and given some other terminologies. In the South African Police Service, tribalism takes place in a manner that a certain ethnic group would be favoured and would have an advantage over other ethnic groups. This happens if the senior is of a particular group and exhibits favouritism to employees sharing the same ethnic group with him or her. According to Neales (1997) as cited in West and Lay ([SA]: 200), tribalism is referred to as “a systematic violence towards one victim that seems to involve overly macho behavior, completed with initiation rites and a strong element of power mixed in [...]. There is a fine line between a joke and serious violence – and these bosses have been pretty immune from any form of retribution, so the cycle of violence is perpetuated”.

In situations where tribalism exists, there is “no formal chief, though a ‘big man’ may arise. Democracy may appear in tribal councils, but it is not liberal, since it does not tolerate minority rights and dissidents views once a consensus emerges” (Ronfeldt, 2006). The researcher tends to agree with the author taking into consideration the working context; there is no ‘formal chief’ and the particular ethnic group dominates automatically without any formal recognition by the authorities. The minority group in the working environment becomes isolated and discriminated upon. Ronfeldt (2006) further maintains that employees who are engaging in this form of violence often view themselves as the “realm of virtue” and as a result might treat those that seem indifferent to them differently and even brutally. This treatment might be extremely negative.

3.4 CAUSES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

3.4.1 STRESS

Braverman (1999) as cited in Doerner and Lab (2002: 301), stress seems to be the “key factor in workplace victimisation among co-workers” and involves

different sources that include among others, the workplace itself. The researcher assumes that co-workers not only refer to employees of the same level, it also cuts across all levels including supervisors and managers. Doerner and Lab (2002:302) cited an example of the source of stress and stated it might be caused by a “competition for position or the feeling that another, less worthy employee obtained a desired position”. This example tends to fit exactly with what was related by some of the participants in the South African Police Service whereby they alleged that co-workers, who seem not to qualify to be promoted to Captains (as they possess lower qualifications than them), were promoted and the others were overlooked and treated unfairly by the Department; there was no feedback given to them regarding their inabilities to be promoted. As a result, such occurrences might “contradict the individual’s self image towards the job and also *visa versa* the job to his/her place in the work environment. Thus, the individual may feel betrayed and unfairly treated by the ‘job’ and others in the place of employment” (Doerner & Lab, 2002: 302). The researcher views this argument in the light of the vicious cycle of workplace violence. It appears that some of the victims of workplace violence might end up being perpetrators as the focus tend to be placed on the presented problem which is bullying in this context, and neglecting the causal or underlying factors. In the South African Police Service, some of the Inspectors that were deprived promotional opportunities by their managers might display their frustrations to their subordinates through perpetuating workplace violence such as bullying.

3.4.2 FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY

Steinman ([SA]) as cited in the Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]), states that most employees tend to rely on their job position to form a foundation for their self-esteem. As a result, if such self-esteem is threatened, they tend to be more likely to bully those subordinates that they assume possess much greater capabilities and skills compared to them. She further cautioned that such behaviour,

including “lust for power, incompetence, feeling of entitlement, fear, anger and sheer opportunism” need to be discouraged and be “stopped” through legislation if possible, as they tend to destroy the individual and the organisation.

3.4.3 LACK OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Mathiason as quoted by Barrier (1995: 23) states that organisations need to have management (leadership) styles that would allow employees and managers to communicate with one another and therefore as a result, employees would be determined to report threats and managers would be in a position to clearly communicate the organisation’s values. Consequently, good management and a healthy workplace would be in a position to demonstrate strong interpersonal skills (Watkins, 2005:7).

3.5 MANAGING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Kinney(in Barrier,1995: 23) warns perpetrators of workplace violence in most organisations that their “days of the back-room bully are numbered”. Watkins (2003:7) states that “employers are beginning to take steps to make bullying as unthinkable as sexual harassment or drunkenness in the workplace”. The researcher tends to agree with the authors as it appears that it is time for all organisations to take a stand against workplace violence. Currently, most South African organisations recognise sexual harassment as a dismissal offence and there are policies in place that deal with the problem. On the other hand, there are limited, if any, policies that are in place dealing with workplace violence.

Mathiason as quoted by Barrier (1995:19) advises and emphasises the importance of the organisations taking precautions to prevent workplace violence instead of reactive measures once the incidents have taken place. Ellis, ([SA]) in Work Trauma Foundation ([SA]), advises the employers and organisations that they have a “legal duty of care and a duty to provide a safe system of work”. Mantell(in Barrier,1995, 20) argues that most companies are still in denial in

acknowledging workplace violence as “they don’t want to be known as doing anything, because they’re afraid the public will think they’ve got a problem”. Kinney(in Barrier,1995:20) emphasises consultation with employees when developing an anti-violence strategy in the workplace; it is crucial to engage them in the process through either “questionnaires or focus groups”.

3.5.1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Braverman (1999) as cited in Doerner and Lab (2002:305), employers need to develop clear policies and procedures that would “guide all elements of the work environment” including workplace violence. The researcher tends to agree with the notion of the development of policies and procedures that would mitigate workplace violence. Such policies need to be communicated clearly to all employees and as a result it must be adhered to in all situations involving workplace violence. This would assist the employers and organisations to discipline the perpetrator within a fairly and acceptable frame of reference.

3.5.2 RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYEES

Schifman(in Barrier,1995:20), warns that “if you hire the wrong person, you’ve already lost half of the battle. Small businesses should try to screen out potential employees whose histories show a propensity to violence”. Mathiason(in Barrier,1995:20), agrees with the notion and added that “a background check can be done by outside service providers should the company doubt its resource capabilities”. Losey as quoted by Barrier (1995:20), disagrees with the notion and states that the “background check may reveal no criminal record and perpetrators typically don’t provide a lot of signal upfront”. The researcher views a background check as having limited, if any, impact in identifying perpetrators of workplace violence. This is based on the assumptions that any employee can perpetuate workplace violence without having a criminal record. As for workplace violence, there are no policies and legislations governing that and as a result it becomes impossible to record and charge perpetrators.

On the other hand, Chappell and Di Martino (1998) as cited in Doerner and Lab (2002:305), argue that pre-employment tests, drug and alcohol screening and similar measures can be conducted during the selection and screening of employees in order to identify potential problematic employees. The researcher tends to agree with the authors in terms of administering those tests but also cautions not to entirely rely on them alone; perpetrators of workplace violence might be anybody, including victims of violence, if not provided with the proper emotional interventions after exposed to workplace experiences. The victims might be perpetrators based on their quest to take revenge on what they have experienced in the past. In the South African Police Service, one of the participants that was experiencing bullying from his senior (superintendent) mentioned that she felt a need to revenge to the perpetrator once she is afforded promotion to then have power over the perpetrator. As a result, workplace violence becomes a vicious cycle. The screening tests might have limitations in identifying such risk as human behaviour evolves overtime.

3.5.3 TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES

Policies and procedures should be imparted through providing training to all employees regarding the key components of the said policies and procedures. The training needs to focus on, among other issues, defining what constitutes workplace violence in the SAPS, what protocols are involved when experiencing workplace violence, what disciplinary measures to be taken against perpetrators, what interventions are available for victims of workplace violence, and principles involved in interventions.

Chappell and Di Martino (1998) as cited in Doerner and Lab (2002:305), state that it is crucial to train employees in aspects of interpersonal and communication skills in order to recognise and defuse situations that might lead to destructive and chaotic confrontations. The researcher agrees with this notion as most participants in the South African Police Service alluded to lack of communication as one of the causal factors for workplace violence. This also implies that not

only employees need to undergo such training; managers need to partake in order to lead by example. The researcher views communication as a two-way street in a sense that either employee or manager needs to be equipped with skills on how to approach and handle different situations. The training can also assist in the transformation of the dictatorship style that is still evident in some of the seniors within the South African Police Service. Such dictatorship style seems to contribute negatively to workplace violence as some of the participants expressed that they are neither treated as adults nor human beings when seniors uttered words such as: "...shut up, you are talking nonsense".

3.5.4 ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Braverman (1999) as cited in Doerner and Lab (2002:305), states that access to medical and mental health need to be developed in order to assist both the employer and the employee through "assessing and addressing potential problem situations and individuals". The researcher is of the view that this needs a multi-disciplinary approach when intervening in workplace violence. The South African Police Service' current structure of Employee Assistance Service includes Psychological Service, Social Work Service and Spiritual Service. The researcher suggests the integration of Organisational Development Service to form part of a multi-disciplinary approach in order to come up with organisational structures that can eliminate workplace violence.

Losey (in Barrier,1995:22), "employees may feel more comfortable in such (violence incidence) situations in turning to an Employee Assistance Service run by an outside firm because of the greater assurance that their problems will be treated confidentially". The researcher agrees with the author in context whereby the Employee Assistance Service, when placed within the management structure, it contributes to a loss of confidence by employees because the employees view them as serving management's interests rather than the employees' interest. This has been supported by the evidence gathered from some of the South African Police Service employees (participants) who revealed

a lack of trust in the Station Social Worker due to the fact that the service is not structured in a manner that is easily accessible to employees who need intervention.

Blythe and Stivarius (2003:25) view Employee Assistance Service as employee advocates who play a crucial role and are guided by strict confidentiality principles. Their role is to provide mental health services to employees and as such is limited in their role to “manage a potential threat of violence situation”. The researcher tends to agree with the authors as the Employee Assistance Service' role has limitations in terms of controlling the threats of workplace violence. The researcher views the Employee Assistance Service' role as reactive in nature as it provides the necessary emotional intervention to victims and perpetrators of workplace violence. Nevertheless, Employee Assistance Service can assist organisations in developing policies for anti- bullying/violence (Watkins, 2003:7).

3.5.5 THE CARING ORGANISATION

Doerner and Lab (2002:294) argue that the employer might have failed the victims of workplace violence due to ignorance rather than an uncaring attitude as the need to develop protective strategies seemed to be less important. The researcher views the author's argument as not clarifying the basis for the employer to take care of its employees. The researcher is of the opinion that ignorance does not exempt any employer to be liable. That is, ignorance seems to have the same negative connotation as an uncaring attitude.

Barrier (1995:22) advises organisations to adopt a “zero tolerance” policy with regard to workplace violence. The author further cautions that this does not mean that perpetrators should be dismissed, but that they rather need discipline as most of them would be long-serving employees in that organisation. Mantell(in Barrier,1995:22), agrees and adds that “perpetrators should be treated as adults with problems to solve, instead of as kids who have misbehaved and therefore

have to be punished”. The researcher tends to agree with the authors because perpetrators need to be treated with respect and dignity in order to ascertain the causal factor to their behavior. The researcher also believes that through corrective discipline, the perpetrators would learn a lesson that would break a vicious cycle compared to punishment that can result in hostility and even worse violence such as homicides.

3.6 SUMMARY

It has been gathered that the nature and extent of workplace violence which employees experience include, among others, psychological violence - which entails bullying (either predatory bullying or dispute-related bullying) as well as mobbing. Some employees might experience structural violence, physical violence as well as tribalism. There are causes of workplace violence that were discovered in this chapter, namely stress, feelings of inferiority, and lack of leadership skills. It would be advisable for organisations to manage workplace violence through the development of policies and procedures, proper recruitment of employees through background checks, training of employees regarding key components of policies and procedures, providing access to medical and mental health support to victims of workplace violence, as well as demonstrating a ‘caring’ attitude to employees by adopting a “zero tolerance’ policy with regard to workplace violence.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The rationale behind the study on workplace violence was to gather first hand information on experiences of employees regarding the phenomenon in the South African Police Service. The data was gathered from volunteer participants that related their experiences as well as meaning attached to their experiences of workplace violence. The researcher had developed interest in the field of workplace violence as she is a survivor of such experiences and needed to afford the victims of workplace violence with the opportunity to relate their ordeals and provide recommendations that might eradicate this scourge.

4.2 VERBAL VIOLENCE

4.2.1 CONCLUSION

The majority of participants reported that they have experienced verbal violence as a form of insult and threat from their colleagues including immediate supervisors. Most of the participants expressed that they feel degraded by the insults as it shows lack of respect to human beings and also a lack of maturity. It is evident that the working conditions of the Police Officers and socialisation through the pre-1994 election system reinforced the behavior as acceptable. Nevertheless, the majority seems to be uncomfortable with emotional violence.

4.2.2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that workshops on effective communication and optimising relationships be organised and provided to all employees in the South African Police Service, including management. These workshops would equip members with skills that would eradicate workplace violence. It is also recommended that a policy be developed in the form of a consultative process that would deal with the

procedures to be taken against those employees that violate the dignity of their colleagues through verbal violence. The latter should be defined clearly and should be explained to all employees to understand. The policy should also entail programmes of emotional interventions for both the victim and the perpetrator. The latter should also be provided with emotional interventions in order to deal with the causal factors of the unacceptable behavior. The emotional intervention should be voluntarily for the perpetrator to encourage the taking of ownership in solving his or her own problems.

4.3 VICTIMISATION

4.3.1 CONCLUSION

The majority of the participants who reported victimisation were in the same category of rank of Inspector. These participants mentioned that they are exposed to victimisation as they are being denied the opportunity to move to the next rank after several attempts of applying for internal positions. The participants seem to believe that they are purposefully being deprived of such opportunities; some of their superiors confirmed that the participants would not be provided with the ranks as participants seem to challenge the superiors in many work-related issues. These participants also believe that some of their colleagues do not deserve to be promoted to Captains as they possess lower qualifications and have less experience than the participants. The participants' conclusion is that the panel members that are responsible for promotional posts have influence on their superiors and they seem to be 'corrupt' and are practicing 'nepotism'. Nevertheless, the participants have explicitly stated that they do not have evidence that can support the participants' claims.

The majority of the participants, who reported victimisation by being deprived with the opportunities for promotions, stated that there are processes and procedures in place that management, in particular panel members, should follow when promoting employees. Victimised members believe that such

processes and procedures are ignored in some circumstances and such processes and procedures are not communicated to them. They also strongly verbalised their concern for lack of feedback in terms of their applications being declined. Some of the participants further indicated that they do not even go far in the process, i.e. being short-listed; they allege that panel members want to cover up for future investigations should they short-list them with employees with lower qualifications and lack of experience. Victimised members further indicated that there seems to be independent panels that perform the promotion process, but they seem to mistrust such panels as they argue that members of these panels communicate with their superiors prior to the selection process. The participants who reported they experienced victimisation indicated that they feel demoralised in executing their work functions.

4.3.2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the South African Police Service, should be transparent on issues pertaining internal promotions. The lack of transparency seems to cause mistrust in management and in panel members in particular. Though minimum requirements for the internal posts are specified to employees, the outcome of the appointments in those positions - without the said requirements - seem to contradict the process and procedures and confuse participants even more. It is further recommended that the evaluation and monitoring systems for promotions be implemented in order to deal with the loopholes that might undermine the efforts of the South African Police Service in implementing affirmative action.

It appears that the participants do not receive feedback as they are not on the short list in the first place. The South African Police Service should also look at a retention strategy and skills development management for employees, especially those who have been serving more than 20 years ("Baby Boomers"), as they possess some skills that can be imparted to newly trained police officers (Generation X and Y). There should be development of processes and

procedures in managing the skills development of employees. The establishment of small projects within the Station would encourage long-service employees like Inspectors to utilise the skills and knowledge that would also eradicate the feelings of being demoralised as they seem to be performing one duty for several years that results into boredom and burn-out. The boredom and burn-out might impair job performance of the affected participants and the South African Police Service might lose millions due to absenteeism and presenteeism. A skills audit should be conducted among all employees in order to determine their knowledge, skills, and the attitudes of the employees in those particular ranks should be assessed.

4.4 PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

4.4.1 CONCLUSION

Physical violence was reported by few participants. The participants who mentioned physical violence against suspects or members of the community stated that they do not view such incidences as workplace violence. The participants seem to view such incidences as part of their daily work as they are supposed to apprehend the suspects. They seem to be alert and ready when confronting members of the community. The physical violence that was reported by some participants was incidents like being 'pushed' and one witnessed a member being 'slapped' by his colleague. Some participants reported that some employees perpetuate workplace violence mainly because they are unable to cope with the challenges of the arguments. The latter seem to be inevitable, especially when human beings are involved and interact with each other in conflict situations.

4.4.2 RECOMMENDATION

it is recommended that when developing a policy on workplace violence, special emphasis should be placed on defining behaviours that can constitute workplace violence, including physical violence such as ‘pushing’ and ‘slapping’. The policy should also deal with the procedures on how to report such incidents and the necessary steps to be taken against perpetrators of workplace violence, particularly physical violence. The development, implementation, and monitoring of the policy on workplace violence would assist in eradicating behaviours that might escalate into something worse, like homicides. Both the victim and the perpetrator should be provided with the opportunity to deal with these experiences professionally through emotional intervention and other relevant programmes like anger management for perpetrators. The communication skills programmes would also assist employees to handle arguments in a more appropriate manner and avoid violence due to lack of skills. It is also recommended that the South African Police Service should also look at establishing a safe working environment for all employees.

4.5 BULLYING AND MOBBING

4.5.1 CONCLUSION

Some participants were exposed to bullying by their superiors. The latter exposed participants with an attempt to undermine their capabilities and to exert power over them. Participants expressed despair in dealing with bullying as they were unable to defend themselves because of the power the seniors have over them. It appeared that bullying can lead to homicide as one of the participants indicated that she was threatening to kill the perpetrator. Some participants mentioned that their seniors bully them by placing them in undesirable working conditions like working on ‘guard duty’ as a form of punishment. Mobbing appeared to be experienced by some participants as superiors have the power to influence other employees to mob against one or group of employees. There seem to be lack of consultation of employees to matters pertaining to them, for

example, when community members complained about poor service of certain members, management seem to draw conclusions and judgments without hearing the version of the participant concerned.

4.5.2 RECOMMENDATION

Though the study is not intending to quantify workplace violence, it appears that workplace violence is rife at the Police Station. It is recommended that workshops and seminars be conducted on issues of workplace violence, particularly bullying. The South African Police Service should also utilise professionals in the field of workplace violence to assist them in developing programmes that would eradicate the scourge. It is further recommended that management be sensitised in terms of human rights as stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa.

The victims of workplace violence should undergo intensive psychotherapy in order to deal with unresolved issues derived from the incidents. To provide such opportunities to victims of workplace violence to undergo psychotherapy would assist in breaking the vicious cycle as they often tend to want to revenge their perpetrators should they be provided with the opportunity to have power over them. The same applies to perpetrators as they may be dealing with unresolved issues that might be displayed as destructive behavior to other people. Such interventions should be purely voluntary in nature as both the victim and perpetrator should take initiative to resolve their experiences before it affects their job performance. It is further recommended that managers should consult with their employees when receiving complaints from the community in order to provide them with the opportunity to defend themselves prior to conclusions and judgments. The development of policies against workplace violence would assist in eradicating and dealing with the incidences should they occur.

4.6 MEANING EMPLOYEES ATTACH TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

4.6.1 CONCLUSION

The participants attach different meanings to their experiences of workplace violence. Some participants view their perpetrators as having feelings of inferiority in terms of their capabilities, which results into them bullying their subordinates. Other participants view management as lacking leadership skills to handle challenging situations. One participant mentioned that he attached his experiences of workplace violence to his religious belief system; i.e. 'it is not yet time to be promoted to the next rank'. The majority of participants who reported victimisation due to deprivation of promotional posts attached meaning to their experiences in terms of panel members responsible for promotions and management as characterised by 'corruption' and 'nepotism'.

4.6.2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the South African Police Service develop a mechanism to provide feedback to those employees who applied for promotional posts in order to deal with the allegations that were mentioned. Nevertheless, as it would not be practical for the Department to provide feedback to all employees who had applied for promotion, such feedback can be limited to those that were short-listed. The feedback strategy would also assist in strengthening communication channels that both the employees and management would feel comfortable to access in imparting information and to manage concerns that might need attention. It is further recommended that a proper monitoring system be implemented in terms of evaluation of the decisions taken by the panel members to determine whether such decisions were fair and appropriate. The South African Police Service, should also strengthen their programmes on capacity management on leadership skills for the benefit of both the Department and the employees, including the managers concerned. The programmes would equip them with the necessary skills to handle and deal with the different dynamics of human beings as employees.

4.7 AVAILABLE INTERVENTION AND SERVICE

4.7.1 CONCLUSION

The majority of participants stated that there seems to be an ‘open door policy’ in the South African Police Service. The senior management seems to be easier accessible when one needs to share some ideas and/or concerns. Nevertheless, participants have indicated that there is no follow-up or feedback provided to them after consulting with management. One participant expressed his dissatisfaction on the manner in which such policy is being implemented.

The availability of the Station Social Worker and Chaplain seems to be unsatisfactory to most of the participants. They tend not to be certain whether their availability is to assist them as employees or to serve the interests of management. The issue of lack of confidentiality was also highlighted by some participants as they suspect that the Station Social Worker discloses their personal issues to management.

4.7.2 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that senior management should provide relevant follow-ups and feedback to employees concerned, in order to encourage them to consult should the need arises. This would also assist in restoring the trust of the employees that their issues are being taken seriously. It is further recommended that the Station Social Worker and the Chaplain need to strategise on mechanisms to raise awareness to the employees about the kind of Service they are entitled to receive as well as emphasising the issue of confidentiality. It is further recommended that they need to look at the issue of their office location in terms of user–friendliness. A climate study should also be conducted in order to determine how the employees feel about the Department and their Service in particular. The former can be outsourced in order to avoid biasness and lack of trust from employees that might yield negative responses.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The nature and prevalence of violence in the workplace, as experienced by members of the SAPS, have been confirmed by an analytical theoretical study. The solution to the problem of violence in the workplace was confirmed to be embedded in the formulation of policies, selective recruitment of employees, provision of training and support, as well as the acceptance of a “zero tolerance” policy with regard to workplace violence.

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ANNEXURE A: DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

“Could you please tell me more about your experience of workplace violence?”

PROBING QUESTIONS

“Could you please tell me more about...?”

“Tell me what happened when...?”

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

“You mentioned that... could you explain how that happened?”

ANNEXURE B: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE SAPS(DOCUMENT ATTACHED)

2008 Jun 24 8:55

HP LASERJET FAX

P. 1

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS



SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Private Bag Braamfontein x 57

Verwysing Reference	38331365
Navrae Enquiries	S/Supt PS Naicker SAC D Mathule
Telefoon Telephone	011-274-7566 011 274 7806
Faksnommer Fax number	011-274-7565

THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER
GAUTENG PROVINCE
PARKTOWN
2193

9 June 2008

- A. The Station Commissioner
Benoni SAPS
South African Police Services
GAUTENG
- B. Ms. N.A Raphadu
Careways Group
Block K Central Park
16th Road
Midrand

APPOINTMENT TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW AT NATIONAL , PROVINCE, STATIONS AND UNITS LEVEL: GAUTENG.

1. Ms. Raphadu is employed at the Careways Group as a Co-operate Wellbeing Consultant, and registered with the University of Pretoria in the faculty of Humanities.
2. The attached document is an Information Note to conduct an interview on the Experience of Employees regarding Workplace Violence in the South African Police Service.
3. The study aims to:
 - ▶ To describe workplace violence from a theoretical point of view.
 - ▶ To determine the experience of workplace violence on employees of the South African Police Service, specially at the Benoni SAPS
 - ▶ To explore the nature and extent of workplace in the South African Police Service.
 - ▶ To make recommendations to the South African Police Service on implementing programmes that would mitigate workplace violence.
4. The researcher's intention is to gain insight into a phenomena of the impact of workplace violence on the South African Police Service employees.

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Respondent's name:

.....

1 December 2008

Principal Investigator: Ms A Raphadu

Institution: University of Pretoria

Ref. Prof Terblanche

Tel. 012 420-3292

Fax. 012 420-2093

Email: lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I hereby give consent for participation in a research project according to details provided below:

1. **Title of Study:** The experiences of employees regarding workplace violence in the South African Police Services
2. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of employees regarding workplace violence as well as the nature and extent of workplace violence in SAPS
3. **Procedures:** Data will be collected through means of an unstructured interview which will take about 1 hour. The researcher will audiotape the interview and data will be transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. The research will be conducted at a venue that will be agreed upon by the researcher as well as the relevant authorities at SAPS.
4. **Risks and Discomforts:** There are no known physical risks or discomforts associated with this project, although certain negative emotions may be experienced due to reliving the experiences of the workplace violence. If counselling is indicated, the researcher will arrange for the necessary referral to a professional working for the Employee Assistance Services of the SAPS.
5. **Benefits:** I understand there are no known direct benefits to me for participating in this study. However, the results of the study may help researchers gain a better understanding of what the experiences are, regarding workplace violence as well as the nature and extent of workplace violence in the SAPS.
6. **Participant's Rights:** I am participating in this study voluntarily and I may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
7. **Financial Compensation:** I will not be compensated in anyway for my participation in the study.
8. **Confidentiality:** In order for the researcher to record exactly what I say during the interview, a tape recorder will be used. The tape will be listened to only by the Principal Investigator and authorized members of the research team at the University of Pretoria. I understand that the records and transcripts will be kept confidential unless I ask that they be released. Such records will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years according to the policy set by the University of Pretoria. Data may also be used for future research, but under the same conditions.
9. **Release of findings:** The findings of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

If I have any questions or concerns, I can call Anna Raphadu at (079) 699 4576 at any time during office hours.

I understand my rights as a research participant and I voluntarily consent to participation in this study, I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this informed consent letter.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER

DATE