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ABSTRACT

Societal revelation to all kinds of violence is much more frequent than previous decades due to news broadcasts, movies, video games, television, and books that portray violence vividly. All organizations are vulnerable to workplace violence and this formed the basis for the researcher to carry out a study on physical violence on the service quality of employees in Turkana County. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of physical violence at workplace on the service quality of employees of the County Government of Turkana County. This study was anchored on the Cognitive Adaptation Theory. The study employed a descriptive survey and correlation designs. The study targeted 2,714 respondents from the ten (10) executive departments of County Government of Turkana as at May 2018. The sampling techniques used were stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling. A sample size of 349 respondents was obtained from a target population of 2,714 respondents. The questionnaires were the main data collection instruments. These research instruments were tested for both validity and reliability and were found valid and reliable. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 22 where descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The study concluded that physical violence at the work place negatively impacts on service quality of employees and the levels of employees incivility affected the levels of productivity at the work place. The study therefore recommended that the Turkana County Government should initiate a psycho-education on the importance of having good mental health at the work place in order to promote productivity and boost employee's mental health. Secondly supervisors at the various work places in the County Government of Turkana should address the issue of employee work load.

Key Words: Physical Violence, Workplace, Service Quality of Employees and County Government of Turkana

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace violence refers to any act or threat of physical violence or threat of physical violence, provocation, pressure or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the workplace. There are several definitions of workplace violence available in literature. Richards (2003) defined as "Incidents where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted 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 "(Richards, 2003). Workplace violence includes not only physical but also non-physical violence. For example; workplace violence includes physical assault, homicide, robbery, verbal abuse, bullying/mobbing, swearing, shouting, sexual and racial harassment, name calling, threats, interfering with work tools and equipment (Essenberg, 2003). Workplace violence entails all forms of intimidations, harassment and scolding that results either in physical and psychological harm. In a study conducted in Geneva, Switzerland titled "Workplace Violence in the Health Sector" by Di Martino (2002), it was established that a strong correlation exists between work stress and violence. This implies that people with stress are likely to be violent at the workplace. The study established that the quality of the working environment, which includes its physical and organizational setting, can make a significant contribution to reducing the risks of stress and violence.

In a different study conducted in Nigeria titled, "the impact of domestic abuse on female employees' productivity in the Nigerian workforce", Oni-Ojo, Adeniji, Osibanjo, Omotayo and Hiersmac (2014) it was established that domestic abuse on female workforce in Nigeria is a criminal matter under assault in the Criminal Code in which the victim(s) can bring a civil action under the tort of assault as this affects their productivity and ultimately their overall performance and the organization at large. This confirmed the claim that violence at workplace is likely to result in losses for the company, as well

as the aggressor. In her article, Norbert (2016) indicated in her article titled, "HR Domestic violence and the workplace", that domestic violence is likely to become a serious workplace issue if not handled appropriately.

A study conducted by Gberevbie, Osibanjo, Adeniji, and Oludayo (2014) on gender discrimination and employee performance, reiterated that perceived female expected productive/performance is a function of variables such as emotional stability, psychological status and total physical/mental energy that when there is any form of violence against women, it is expected that there would be a shift in their emotional status, which tends to affect their productivity and overall performance. The multiple connections between domestic abuse and work make the workplace an important and effective avenue for domestic violence intervention (WHO, 2013).

While the issue of violence at workplace is becoming a widely known vice globally, and government agencies getting deeply involved in mitigating it, cases of violence at work have continued to be reported every now and then (Botelho, 2014). For example, in the year 2013, about 397 fatal workplace violence cases as a result of homicides were reported in the United States, which contributes to about 9% of all deaths reported in workplaces (Botelho, 2014). In Africa, the issue is of great concern because bosses are often reported to have harassed their juniors (Vigoda, 2000). While these statistics are just a snapshot of the trends of workplace violence in across the globe, Botelho (2014) argues that there are many unreported cases of workplace violence which do not lead to serious injuries.

Workplace violence has been pointed out by a myriad of scholars and researchers to be having far reaching effects on the organization which may have negative impacts on it in the short-run and the long-run (Forte, 2006). For in cases of physical assault, employees may get harmed and this may prevent them from being productive in the short-run because they may get bedridden; and thus

prevent them from attending their job (Lies, 2008). On the other hand, verbal or written abuses or threats may psychologically affect the victims, and thus making them prone to reduced concentration at work; in which in extreme cases individuals may need to be taken to specialists for treatment (Lies, 2008). This is an implication, that, workplace violence has adverse effects to the victims, which to a great extent affects the entire activities within their organization because they may not be able to perform their job as expected.

Statement of the Problem

Workplace violence is among the most disturbing problems facing organizations today in the private and public sectors across the globe, including Kenya and more so Turkana County. In spite of the continued efforts through collaborations to alleviate violence in the workplaces in Kenya, the vice still continues to persist (Paludi *et al.*, 2006). The situation is even worse with the coming of county governments where public appointments are made based on tribal and ethnic connections in Kenya. The central government through various commissions has been trying to resolve the issue, but the approaches taken to mitigate this strategy have been ineffective because of lack of clear written policies or lack of implementation of policies and effective workplace management practices, which are attributed to the continued persistence of this vice (Howard, & Wech (2011). A study conducted in Nigeria by Oni-Ojo *et al.* (2014) criminalized violence among domestic workers noting that it is likely to result in high costs on the side of the aggressor. Extensive literature review has revealed that little has been studied on the influence of workplace violence (physical violence, psychological violence and workplace incivility constructs) on the service quality of employees in Turkana County, Kenya. Moreover, some studies have revealed that very few organizations are aware of workplace violence in their organizations and that workplace violence is usually underestimated in many organizations (Bowie, Fisher, Cooper and Cooper, 2012; Kerr, 2010). This

is the gap which this study sought to establish by bringing out the influence of physical violence at workplace on the service quality of employees in Turkana County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was anchored on the Cognitive Adaptation Theory which argues that resilient people are those who can maintain high self-esteem, high personal control, and high optimism in the face of challenges and trauma. Cognitive Adaptation Theory was propounded by Taylor (1983) and posits that when people go through life transitions, such as workplace violence, they adjust to their new reality. Cognitive Adaptation Theory was particularly useful in predicting successful adjustment to this transition. The adjustment process revolved around three themes: search for positive meaning in the experience or optimism, attempt to regain a sense of mastery in life, as well as an effort to enhance self-esteem. The relevance of this theory to this study is that it helped to describe how employees' behaviour is shaped by the environment which exists at the work place. It also explained and predicted the likely behaviour of employees when exposed to certain circumstances in the work place. The theory would be useful in assisting the human resource managers at the work place on how best to handle their employees with different mental cognitions by prescribing the appropriate steps to take.

Workplace violence has been pointed out by a myriad of scholars and researchers to be having far reaching effects on the organization which may have negative impacts on it in the short-run and the long-run (Forte, 2006). According to Larsen (2015) when employees are verbally or physically assaulted, they may become severely affected and thus making them unable to attend their work. For in cases of physical assault, employees may get harmed and this may prevent them from being productive in the short-run because they may get bedridden; and thus prevent them from attending their job. On the other hand, verbal or written abuses or threats may psychologically affect the

victims, and thus making them prone to reduced concentration at work; in which in extreme cases individuals may need to be taken to specialists for treatment (Lies, 2008). This is an implication, that, workplace violence has adverse effects to the victims, which to a great extent affects the entire activities within their organization because they may not be able to perform their job as expected.

Workplace violence leads to adverse effects on the productivity of an organization as a result of the reduced performance capacity of the affected individuals. At the bottom-line, workplace violence reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of activities within the organizations affected, and thus can adversely affect the achievement of their goals and objectives (Dillon, 2012). Based on a study conducted by Hunt and Hughey (2010), when organizations experience extreme cases of violence in their workplaces, they easily lose their competitive edge because the affected individuals may not be in a position to perform effectively as anticipated; and thus leading to the overall reduced productivity within the organization. The findings by Hunt and Hughey are critical since they enrich this study in many ways. Through their study, it is easily understood why many organizations in Turkana County are unable to achieve their desired goals and objectives. Many organizations in the county are unable to serve the interests of the public because of the internal wrangles that at times results in violence.

A 2005 study using data from a national telephone survey of 8,000 women about their experiences with violence found that women experiencing physical intimate partner violence victimization reported an average of 7.2 days of work-related lost productivity and 33.9 days in productivity losses associated with household chores, child care, school, volunteer activities, and social/recreational activities (CIPD, 2014). In this study, 98 percent had difficulty concentrating on work tasks; 96 percent reported that domestic abuse affected their ability to perform their job duties; 87 percent received harassing phone calls at work; 78 percent reported

being late to work because of abuse; and 60 percent lost their jobs due to domestic abuse. It was concluded that domestic abuse causes a significant loss of paid and unpaid work time, lost work productivity, and safety hazards for employees. As a result, efforts by employers to prevent domestic violence can positively impact their bottom line.

Various studies have been undertaken to investigate the influence of workplace violence on the productivity of employees. For example, according to a 2014 press release from the Nigerian Police Force, nearly one in four large private industry establishments (with more than 1,000 employees) reported at least one incidence of workplace violence, including threats and assaults, in the past year (Gberevbie, Osibanjo, Adeniji and Oludayo, 2014).

Moreover, Howard and Wech (2011) pointed out that workplace violence usually has adverse effects on the financial performance of the organization. In cases of workplace violence, the victims may move to the court to demand compensation and in most cases the organizations ends up paying the affected employee(s) whenever an organization has not insured its employees. Moreover, costs associated with lawsuits are also incurred by the affected organizations, and this is also another financial impact that an organization experiences when some of its employees are involved in workplace violence (Bowie et al, 2012). Certainly, the loss of workforce through workplace violence may negatively affect the financial position of the organization as a result of decreased productivity, and also increasing the costs associated with hiring and training of new workforce to replace the lost ones (Kerr, 2010). From this perspective, therefore, it can be argued that workplace violence adversely affects the financial performance of the affected organizations.

In extreme cases of workplace violence, Howard and Wech (2011) argued that an organization may experience the loss of some of its talented workforce as a result of death or permanent

injuries/deformities. As a result of the loss, organizations may not be able to perform some activities executed by the lost individuals in cases where the specific talents possessed by the lost individuals are rare and not easy to find (Mullins, 2007; Schuler and Jackson, 2007). This implies that, workplace violence is a serious vice which may adversely affect the usual performance of an organization in cases where extremely key and rare talents/skills are lost through death or injuries to the affected employees. As such, it can be argued that workplace violence does not only happen to an individual or group of few individuals, but affects the entire organization.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed both descriptive survey and correlation designs. The study was carried out in the County Government of Turkana. The study targeted 2,714 respondents from the ten (10) executive departments of County Government of Turkana. A sample size of 349 respondents was obtained from a target population of 2,714 respondents. The sampling techniques used were stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling. The sample size of a survey refers to the number of units chosen from which data is gathered (Lavrakas, 2008). The sample size was selected using Slovin's formula, written as: $n = \frac{N}{1 + E^2 N}$; where n = sample size; N = total population of members (2,714); E = Tolerance level of confidence or probability level of $\alpha=0.05$. Primary data (quantitative data) was collected by use of

questionnaires. The study ensured both content and construct validity were achieved. Reliability test was carried out and the results showed that a Cronbach alpha of coefficient of 0.790 was attained implying that the research instrument was reliable. Analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used mainly the means and standard deviations; while inferential statistics employed linear regression analysis. Inferential statistics were used to test research hypotheses at p-value of 5% (0.05) at confidence interval of 95%.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of physical violence at workplace on the service quality of employees of the County Government of Turkana County. Physical Violence refers to the use of physical force against another person or group that results in physical harm sexual or psychological harm. It can include beating, kicking, slapping, stabbing, shooting, pushing, biting, and/or pinching, among others. The statements were anchored on a five point Likert-type scale. The respondents were required to state their level of agreement with six (6) statements relating to downsizing and performance of employees, where, 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. The results were as shown in Table 1. Seven (7) variables out of eleven (11) from factor analysis results on physical violence were used in the analysis since their cut-offs were good (>0.63 , that was very good).

Table 1: Factor Analysis Results for Physical Violence

Variables	Initial	Extraction
Cases of ethnic violence are reported at workplace	1.000	0.669
I have experienced threats and occasionally physical assaults from my fellow workers	1.000	0.751
Physical assault in the organization as a result of jealousy, nepotism and grudge affected are common at workplace	1.000	0.816
Sexual harassment affects workers' productivity	1.000	0.761
I have been physically assaulted by a weapon at workplace	1.000	0.850
Workers have sustained physical injuries at workplace as a result of physical violence	1.000	0.699
There are cases of verbal abuse are common and often led to physical assault	1.000	0.775

N= 2,714, n = 219, Researcher, 2018

Descriptive statistics was carried out on the seven (7) variables on physical violence in the County Government of Turkana and the results tabulated in Table 2. Results revealed that cases of physical violence were reported often at workplace (mean = 4.4246; std.dev = 0.93525); workers had sustained physical injuries at workplace as a result of physical violence (mean = 4.172; std.dev = 1.0098); sexual harassment affected workers' productivity (mean = 4.1292; std.dev = 0.96637); there were cases of suicidal attempt at workplace as a result of physical assault (mean = 4.1200; std. dev = 0.93347); They had experienced physical abuse from their fellow workers (mean = 3.9569; std.dev = 1.19334); physical assault in the organization had affected

workers' productivity (mean = 2.6923; std. dev = 1.34397) and they had been physically assaulted by a weapon at workplace (mean = 2.6031; std. dev = 1.54140). It was noted that the last two variables had the lowest mean scores, that is, physical assault in the organization had affected workers' productivity and they had been physically assaulted by a weapon at workplace. It was also observed that the means and the standard deviations for the remaining five variables did not vary significantly; were very close, showing that the responses on the questions asked did not vary significantly (had similar responses) threats, jealousy over promotion/competition; ethnic violence; gender insensitivity and culture.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Physical Violence

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cases of ethnic violence are reported at workplace	325	1.00	5.00	4.4246	0.93525
I have experienced threats and occasionally physical assaults from my fellow workers	325	1.00	5.00	3.9569	1.19334
Physical assault in the organization as a result of jealousy, nepotism and grudge affected are common at workplace	325	1.00	5.00	2.6923	1.34397
Sexual harassment affects workers' productivity	325	2.00	5.00	4.1292	0.96637
I have been physically assaulted by a weapon at workplace	325	1.00	5.00	4.6031	1.54140
Workers have sustained physical injuries at workplace as a result of physical violence	325	1.0	5.0	4.172	1.0098
There are cases of verbal abuse are common and often led to physical assault	325	1.00	5.00	4.1200	0.93347
Valid N (list wise)	325				

N=2,714, n =325, Researcher, 2018

The means of physical violence and service quality of employees were correlated and the results illustrated in the Table 3. Results signposted that physical violence had a strong negative and significant correlation with service quality of employees ($r = -0.687$; $p\text{-value}=0.000$) in the County Government of Turkana. Regression results revealed that the relationship of physical violence and service quality of employees was linear, negative and significant. The coefficient of determination, R-square of 0.513 implied that 51.3% of the variations in service quality of

employees were accounted for by physical violence at workplace. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) value of physical violence and service quality of employees was -0.428 , correlation coefficient (β) of -0.687 and with a t-test of -8.118 and F-test value of 40.906 and significance level of $p\text{-value}<0.05$, which further confirmed existence of a significant and strong negative linear correlation of physical violence and service quality of employees of County Government of Turkana. This indicated that a unit change in physical violence would result to change in service quality of

employees of County Government of Turkana by - 0.428 in the same direction. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, physical violence was significant in predicating the degree of service quality of employees in the County Government of Turkana. The model for this

relationship was: service quality of employees = 4.154 - 0.428. Therefore these results suggested that service quality of employees was damaged by workplace violence in the County Government of Turkana.

Table 3: Correlation between Physical Violence and Service Quality of Employees

		Physical Violence	Service Quality of Employee
Physical Violence	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	324	
Service Quality of Employee	Pearson Correlation	-0.687**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	324	324

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Regression Results of Physical Violence and Service Quality of Employees

Model Summary^c										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics					
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	
1	0.716a	0.513	0.500	0.62634	0.513	40.906	8	311	0.000	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Violence										
b. Dependent Variable: Service Quality of Employee										
ANOVA^a										
Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.				
1	Regression	128.380	8	16.048	40.906	0.000 ^b				
	Residual	122.007	311	0.392						
	Total	250.387	319							
a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality of Employee										
b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Violence										
Coefficients^a										
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.			
	B	S.E.		Beta						
1	(Constant)	4.154	0.263			15.790	0.000			
	Downsizing	-0.428	0.050	-0.687		-8.118	0.000			

Significance level ≤ 0.05

These results were consistent with what Howard and Wech (2011) pointed out concerning workplace violence and financial performance of the organization. They noted that workplace violence usually has adverse effects on the financial performance of the organization. In cases of workplace violence, the victims may move to the court to demand compensation and in most cases the organizations ends up paying the affected employee(s) whenever an organization has not insured its employees. Moreover, costs associated

lawsuits were also incurred by the affected organizations, and this was also another financial impact that an organization experiences when some of its employees are involved in workplace violence (Bowie *et al.*, 2012). Certainly, the loss of workforce through workplace violence may negatively affect the financial position of the organization as a result of decreased productivity, and also increasing the costs associated with hiring and training of new workforce to replace the lost ones (Kerr, 2010). From this perspective, therefore,

it was argued that workplace violence adversely affects the financial performance of the affected organizations.

Similarly, studies by Hunt and Hughey (2010) and Dillon (2012) do confirm that workplace violence leads to adverse effects on the productivity of an organization as a result of the reduced performance capacity of the affected individuals. At the bottom-line, workplace violence reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of activities within the organizations affected, and thus can adversely affect the achievement of their goals and objectives (Dillon, 2012). When organizations experience extreme cases of violence in their workplaces, they easily lose their competitive edge because the affected individuals may not be in a position to perform effectively as anticipated; and thus leading to the overall reduced productivity within the organization.

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that the physical violence had negative and significant association with the service quality of employees in the County Government of

Turkana. It was concluded that a unit increase in physical violence would lead to a decrease in the service quality of employees in the County Government of Turkana. It was recommended that County Government of Turkana should enforce positive violence prevention climate at workplace to address physical violence and enhance employee service quality. The study suggests that improvement in the quality of life may lead to an effective reduction of the damages in job performance caused by workplace violence. Workplace violence could weaken the employee service quality through interfering with quality of life of these employees at workplace. Therefore interventions should be put in place to address violence at workplace to improve employee service quality such as education and training about coping with workplace violence. Providing education and training about workplace violence is likely to increase employee service quality increase. Therefore, there is room for improvement to prevent and relieve workplace violence by education and training.

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