From occupational health and safety perspective workplace violence

İş sağlığı ve güvenliği bakış açısıyla "iş yerinde şiddet"

Derya Çevik Taşdemir[1] (iD)

[1] Dr., Gaziantep University, Oğuzeli Vocational High School, Gaziantep, Türkiye, deryaceviktasdemir@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-2168-6163

Abstract

This paper examines the various types of workplace violence and their causes and effects from an occupational health and safety perspective. The fact that more than one-fifth of employees worldwide have experienced workplace violence and harassment during their lifetime underscores the importance of this issue as a research topic. In addition to physical violence, the study also focuses on more complex and common phenomena, such as psychological violence. The effects of these types of violence on human relations at work and employees' psychological and physiological health are examined comprehensively. Additionally, the common causes and consequences of workplace violence, as well as strategies for preventing such violence, are discussed. The article recommends creating a healthy, safe, and supportive work environment. It is a valuable resource for employers, employees, researchers, and policymakers, aiming to raise awareness about recognising, understanding, and preventing workplace violence. This way, it seeks to mitigate the effects of workplace violence and provide a healthier working environment.

Keywords: Workplace Violence, Occupational Health and Safety, Social Policy

Jel Codes: J28, J24, I38

Öz

Bu makale, iş sağlığı ve güvenliği perspektifiyle iş yerinde şiddetin farklı türlerini, sebeplerini ve bu şiddetin etkilerini detaylı bir şekilde ele almaktadır. Dünya çapında çalışanların beşte birinden fazlasının yaşamları boyunca iş yerinde şiddete ve tacize uğraması, bu sorunun önemli bir araştırma konusu olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışmada, fiziksel şiddetin yanı sıra daha karmaşık ve yaygın olan psikolojik şiddet gibi olgulara da odaklanılmıştır. Bu şiddet türlerinin, iş yerindeki insan ilişkilerine, çalışanların psikolojik ve fizyolojik sağlığına etkileri kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Ayrıca, iş yerinde şiddetin yaygın nedenleri, sonuçları ve bu tür şiddetlerin önlenebilmesi için alınabilecek stratejiler tartışılmıştır. İş yerlerinde sağlıklı, güvenli ve destekleyici bir ortam oluşturulabilmesi adına uygulanabilecek önlemler önerilmiştir. Makale, işverenler, çalışanlar, araştırmacılar ve politika yapıcılar için değerli bir kaynak oluşturmakta olup, iş yerindeki şiddeti tanıma, anlama ve önleme konusunda farkındalık oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu sayede, iş yerinde şiddetin etkilerinin azaltılması ve daha sağlıklı bir çalışma ortamının sağlanması hedeflenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İş Yerinde Şiddet, İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliği, Sosyal Politika

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Derya Çevik Taşdemir

Introduction

Workplace violence poses a significant challenge in contemporary work environments, jeopardising the Workplace violence poses a significant challenge in today's work environments. It negatively affects workplace morale while endangering the health and safety of employees. This problem encompasses not only physical conflicts but also various forms of aggression, such as verbal, emotional, and psychological harassment. Developing safe and positive relationships among colleagues is crucial for enhancing productivity, efficiency, and overall workplace success (Çevik Taşdemir, 2019). However, violent incidents can hinder these constructive relationships and disrupt the establishment of a sustainable workplace culture.

Workplace violence threatens employees' physical and mental well-being, leading to chaos, low job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity in the workplace (Bektaş, 2023; Demirci and Çilhoroz, 2023). While physical violence causes immediate harm, psychological forms of abuse, such as mobbing, can leave long-term emotional scars. The prevalence of such negative experiences contributes to high turnover rates, poor performance, and increased organisational unrest. Therefore, combating violence in the workplace should be addressed not only as an individual health issue but also as a critical factor in organisational efficiency and sustainability.

This article examines the various forms of workplace violence from an occupational health and safety (OHS) perspective, analysing the impacts of these forms of violence on individuals and workplace dynamics. The discussion highlights the adverse effects of these violent behaviours on employee health and overall workplace harmony while also addressing the underlying causes and consequences of these incidents.

Additionally, the article highlights strategic approaches and policies to prevent workplace violence, including proactive measures that employers, managers, and employees should adopt. Effective prevention strategies are discussed, including education programs, promoting a supportive workplace culture, establishing healthy communication channels, and enhancing employee awareness. These interventions are crucial to creating safe and healthy work environments. These interventions are also vital for employees' well-being and organisations' long-term success.

The article emphasises that understanding the root causes of workplace violence and developing practical, proactive intervention strategies are vital to creating healthy, safe, and supportive work environments. Academic research and OHS policies must be expanded to recognise and effectively combat workplace violence. This article is valuable for employers, employees, researchers, and policymakers seeking to fight and raise awareness about workplace violence.

Workplace violence

The International Labor Organization (ILO) and WHO define workplace violence as an international problem that requires intervention policies (Yeşilbaş, 2016: 44). The ILO also sees workplace violence as an essential risk factor worldwide, along with drug use, alcohol, smoking and HIV/AIDS (Yeşilbaş, 2016: 44).

The World Violence and Health Report defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or force, whether threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, a group or society, and resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, poor development or deprivation, or having a high probability of resulting in such violence" (Krug, 2002).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) defines workplace violence according to the type of crime (assault or threat), what the victim was doing at the time of the incident (at work or while working) and the relationship between the victim and the offender. According to this definition, workplace violence includes all attacks and threats made by the public to which the victim is exposed while working (Upson, 2004).

The type of workplace violence that all employees may be exposed to may vary depending on working conditions, sector and occupation. Workplace violence usually stems from power and control dynamics. Hierarchical structures, gender differences, race, class or other social power relations can lead to workplace violence (ILO, 2020: 12).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified workplace violence into four categories: physical, psychological, sexual and racial (Ray, 2007). While it is known that physical and mental violence is common in workplaces, it is known that psychological violence is more intense, especially in forms such as mobbing and emotional harassment. All forms of workplace violence have serious negative consequences in terms of the safety climate in the workplace and reduce the motivation and job

satisfaction of employees. Everyone has the right to work with respect and dignity in a fair and equitable work environment. Several measures and interventions can be implemented to create a healthy workplace environment and prevent workplace bullying. Healthy workplaces are places where leaders and managers set an example, where an environment based on respect and cooperation is supported and where particular standards of behaviour are clearly defined (Cleary, Hunt, Walter and Robertson, 2009).

Every individual has the right to work in a manner befitting human dignity. Unfortunately, working in some professions poses serious risks to the individual's mental and physical health. One of these risks is workplace harassment or violence. Workplace harassment and violence can be expressed in different ways (Barling, Dupré and Kelloway, 2009), but they are generally behaviours committed to cause physical harm (Piquero, Piquero, Craig and Clipper, 2013).

Unfortunately, Scandinavian countries are also in a precarious position in terms of violence. High rates were observed in Scandinavian countries such as Finland (48%), Iceland (42%), Denmark (42%), Norway (42%) and Sweden (37%). In all five countries, women were significantly more likely than men to report having experienced violence, with this difference most pronounced in Denmark. The Scandinavian countries are known for having Finland, Denmark and Iceland at the top of the latest World Happiness Report (2022 rankings) and generally perform well on many social measures (WRP, 2021). However, this data is surprising as it suggests that despite these countries' high standards of living and social well-being, workplace violence is still prevalent. More than one in five people worldwide (21%) have reported experiencing some form of workplace violence or harassment in their lifetime. More than one in 10 (12%) say they have experienced this in the last year. There are also groups around the world at higher risk of experiencing specific and multiple forms of violence or harassment. Three in ten (30%) immigrant women say they have experienced some form of harassment or violence at work, compared to two in five (21%) women working in their country of birth (WRP, 2021). Studies on workplace violence in our country are not at the expected level. The inadequacy of studies on workplace violence in Turkey was revealed by the 2024 Workplace Violence and Harassment Perceptions and Experiences Research Report. The report shows that 75 per cent of employees in Turkey have been exposed to workplace violence at least once during their careers. However, there is a significant difference between the perception and reality of the types of violence, indicating a lack of awareness about workplace violence (ILO, 2024).

More than one in five (21%) people worldwide have experienced some form of workplace violence or harassment in their lifetime. More than one in 10 (12%) say they have experienced it in the past year. Across the world, groups are at higher risk of experiencing specific and multiple forms of violence or harassment. Three in ten (30%) immigrant women say they have experienced some form of workplace harassment or abuse, compared to two in five (21%) women working in their country of birth (WRP, 2021). Workplace violence is any act of physical assault or threat directed at people in the course of their work or duties (NIOSH, 2024). This definition covers acts of physical and psychological harm in the workplace. It includes a wide range of acts, from threats to harassment, assault and even murder. Employees, customers and visitors can also be subjected to this violence. According to the United States Department of Labor Statistics reports on lost work days due to workplace illnesses and injuries, workplace violence is the third leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States (OSHA, 2023).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2019 Fatal Occupational Injuries Census, approximately one in every seven fatal workplace injuries in the United States is an intentional injury inflicted by another person (BLS, 2023). Violence goes beyond physical assaults to include obscene phone calls, threats, threatening behaviour such as hitting walls or throwing objects, and verbal abuse.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), defamation is also a form of violence and creates two-way victimisation: the direct victims and the witnesses. Those who directly witness or are indirectly affected by the violence may also experience a general sense of anxiety, and victims of violence may withdraw from social relationships. Violence can cause long-term psychological and emotional damage (Distasio, 2002). These attacks not only cause physical and mental harm but can also lead to low morale, an atmosphere of fear and a decrease in the quality of work in the workplace. They also cause severe costs regarding loss of employment, compensation, and legal and procedural expenses (Holmes, 2006).

Types of workplace violence

Workplace violence might first present itself as a minor incident, often manifesting through harmful Workplace violence. It may initially appear as a minor incident and is usually followed by negative

comments, inappropriate behaviours, or disrespectful attitudes. However, these seemingly insignificant behaviours can escalate into more serious forms of physical or psychological violence over time. This issue encompasses a range of concerns, including not only physical attacks but also psychological harassment, mobbing, verbal insults, and threats. Therefore, it is essential to analyse workplace violence by categorising it according to its type (Nowrouzi-Kia, Isidro, Chai, Usuba and Chen, 2019).

Types of workplace violence by source

When workplace violence is categorised according to its source, violence is examined in four basic types. The first type is "Criminal Intent", known as Type 1. In this type, the perpetrator of violence has no relationship with the business; violent behaviours with criminal intent (Phillips, 2016). Incidents such as robbery or entering the workplace to commit other crimes, as well as violence against taxi drivers, account for the majority of fatalities resulting from workplace violence. Type II occurs with the "Client/Client" relationship. In this type, the perpetrator resorts to violence while receiving service. In specific sectors, violence originating from clients or customers can occur routinely, and it constitutes a significant portion of nonfatal injuries related to workplace violence. The third type, "Worker-on-Worker" (Type III), involves both the victim and the perpetrator being associated with the workplace or employment (McPhaul and Lipscomb, 2004; Bhattacharjee, 2021). In this type of violence, the attacker may be a manager, former employee or any employee and includes verbal and physical threats or physical attacks. Type IV, called "Personal Relationship," occurs when the aggressor has a personal relationship with the victim of violence but no connection to the business. These are usually domestic violence cases. The perpetrator may be an abusive spouse or partner, a relative, friend, or employee with a personal relationship with a current or former employee. Type IV is one of the most common types of workplace violence (OSHA, 2023).

Types of workplace violence according to violent behaviour

Workplace violence can manifest itself in a wide range of different forms depending on the behaviour. In this article, it is explained as physical violence, psychological violence, mobbing, sexual harassment, racial harassment and threats.

Physical violence

Violence in the workplace can manifest itself in a wide range of different forms; it comes in various forms, from psychological violence such as profane language, threats and bullying to physical assault and murder (Wassell, 2009). Physical violence is defined as actions directed against an individual or group, causing physical harm and involving the direct use of force. This type of violence includes behaviours such as beating, kicking, slapping, stabbing, shooting, pushing, biting and pinching (Wiskow, 2003: 9). Work stress can be an important antecedent of physical violence against employees, especially in some sectors such as the healthcare sector (Li, Li, Qiu and Xiao, 2020). According to definitions by occupational safety organisations in different countries, physical violence can lead to serious injuries, attacks requiring medical attention and incidents such as murder or physical abuse (Wiskow, 2003: 9). Physical violence can cause not only physical injuries but also long-term damage to the victim's mental health, which can negatively affect work performance and personal well-being. This type of violence can lead to physical, sexual or psychological harm to both individuals and groups. In particular, physical violence can be defined as behaviours such as beating, kicking, slapping, stabbing, shooting, pushing, biting and pinching, and these types of actions constitute the most serious forms of workplace violence (Wiskow, 2019; Li et al., 2020).

The effects of physical violence are not limited to bodily injuries. The psychological consequences of this violence are pretty significant. These effects can occur immediately or over time (Eurofond, 2013). This situation reveals that workplace violence is a multidimensional phenomenon and that not only physical harm but also psychological and emotional traumas should be taken into consideration.

Research conducted in Turkey shows that approximately one-third of employees are exposed to forms of physical violence at their workplaces. In addition, there are findings that men are more likely to encounter physical violence (ILO, 2024). This suggests that gender-based differences may influence experiences of workplace violence, with men generally being at higher risk.

Psychological violence

In addition to physical violence, psychological violence is also common in workplaces. Psychological violence includes acts such as insults, threats, attacks, verbal harassment and bullying and can cause mental, emotional, spiritual and social harm (Li, Xing, Qiao, Fang, Ma, Jiao and Liu, 2018; Mento, Silvestri, Bruno, Muscatello, Cedro, Pandolfo and Zoccali, 2020: 1). Definitions of psychological violence include various elements such as threats of attack, sexual threats, threatening behaviour, verbal

harassment and bullying (Wiskow, 2003: 9). Psychological violence can disrupt the mental health of victims, reduce their motivation and damage relationships in the workplace. In addition, this type of violence can negatively affect the general working environment in the workplace in the long term and cause significant deterioration in the emotional well-being of employees. Psychological violence is quite common in Turkey, and almost half of all employees, regardless of gender, are exposed to psychological violence. It is known that women in managerial positions are exposed to psychological violence more frequently than men in managerial positions and women who are not in managerial positions (ILO, 2024).

Mobbing

Mobbing is defined as the long-term, systematic and repeated implementation of intentional, damaging, degrading, humiliating, exclusionary or degrading actions against a specific employee (Kolodej, 1999: 2). Mobbing can manifest itself in the workplace with constant criticism, isolation, excessive demands, meaningless work tasks and threats (Kolodej, 2012). Mobbing behaviours usually occur at least once a week and can continue for six months or longer (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996: 252). Such systematic attacks can harm the victims both psychologically and socially. Leymann (1990: 119) stated that the long-term effects of mobbing include the victim's difficulty in finding a job and social exclusion.

Tınaz (2006) emphasises that mobbing victims may encounter the following situations in the workplace:

- The employee's belongings are lost or damaged but not replaced.

- Increasing disagreements among coworkers and employees, avoiding communication with each other.

- Excluding the employee from essential business developments and news, spreading rumours and negative gossip about them.

- Assigning work below their competence or working on tasks unrelated to their expertise.

The situations pointed out by Tınaz (2006) show that mobbing is not only an individual experience but also a comprehensive problem affecting the social dynamics in the workplace. Loss or damage to employees' personal belongings not only means a violation of the individual's living space but also a weakening of that individual's position in the workplace. Avoiding communication and increasing disagreements threaten cooperation within the team, reduce overall productivity and negatively affect the mental climate in the workplace. Exclusion of the employee and the spread of negative rumours reveal the social exclusion and discrimination dimension of mobbing, damage the individual's self-confidence and may cause them to distance themselves from work. Assigning work unrelated to their expertise means preventing personal satisfaction and professional development. In this context, mobbing is a complex and multidimensional problem that threatens not only the psychological health of individuals but also the general atmosphere in the workplace.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual behaviour and requests towards a person in the workplace. This type of harassment can occur due to gender-based discrimination or reasons such as gender identity or sexual orientation. It can cause the victim to feel uncomfortable, fearful or insecure (Michailidou and Mavromoustaki, 2023). Sexual harassment can be carried out physically, verbally or visually and can seriously negatively affect the victim's performance and mental health in the workplace. Workplace violence can create emotional stress, a tendency to remain silent and a sense of guilt in the victim. The effects of sexual harassment on victims are profound. Such behaviours can cause victims to feel unsafe in the workplace and negatively affect their general mental health. This can result in leaving their job or career decline, leading to poor performance. In addition, the fact that victims feel guilty about the harassment they experience paves the way for such behaviours to continue. The tendency to remain silent in the workplace poses a threat to the psychological health of the individual and causes harassers to go unpunished. In this context, sexual harassment is not only an individual problem in the workplace but also a systematic source of inequality and injustice (Cortina and Areguin, 2021). It is known that approximately one-quarter of women in our country have been subjected to sexual violence at least once in their lives; this rate is more than twice that of men, and they experience discrimination based on their clothing or appearance more frequently (ILO 2024).

Racial harassment

Racist harassment refers to the discrimination of an employee based on identity factors such as race, ethnicity, colour, religion, or national origin. Racist harassment in the workplace usually manifests itself in the form of verbal insults, threats, derogatory jokes, and physical attacks (Krieger, Waterman, Hartman, Bates, Stoddard, Quinn and Barbeau, 2006: 52). Such behaviours negatively affect the health

of the victims harm workplace relationships, and overall productivity. While racist harassment includes overt hostile behaviours such as exclusion from work and social activities, racial slurs, and jokes about ethnicity (Schneider, Hitlan and Radhakrishnan, 2000), more common are displays of disrespect that do not directly refer to race or ethnicity. Such behaviours include indirect discriminatory actions such as unprofessional addresses and communication styles (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta and Magley, 2013). Victims of racist harassment may feel excluded or unsafe in the workplace as a result of such behaviours, which can negatively affect the overall workplace atmosphere and reduce employee job satisfaction and motivation (Robotham and Cortina., 2021).

Laws in force to prevent racial discrimination worldwide prohibit discrimination in hiring, firing, compensation, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, social rights, and all other aspects of employment ("EEOC", 2024). There are some legal regulations and practices in Turkey to combat racist harassment and discrimination. In Turkey, Labor Law No. 4857 includes rules to ensure that employees are not subject to discrimination. However, there are serious problems in the effective implementation of these laws and in the ability of employees to exercise their rights. In Turkey, cases of discrimination based on ethnic origin and religion are more common among male employees than women (ILO, 2024).

Although racist harassment cases are often not openly voiced in the workplace, it is seen that individuals of different ethnic origins, especially immigrants and minority groups, are subject to discriminatory treatment. For example, some employees may face exclusion or mistreatment in the workplace due to their different ethnic origins. This situation not only has psychological effects but also leads to an environment that reduces productivity in the workplace. In this context, employers should create an inclusive work environment that respects employee rights.

Threat

Threats are verbal threats and progressive behaviours of direct violence intended to create fear of physical Threats are verbal threats and direct violent staged behaviours that aim to create fear of physical or psychological harm to an employee in the workplace. Such threats can seriously affect the safety of employees in the workplace and create an adverse safety climate in the general work environment (Rudkjoebing, Bungum, Flachs, Eller, Borritz, Aust and Bonde, 2020). Threats, especially when combined with physical violence, can have long-term psychological effects on victims.

Some states in the United States have made it a legal requirement for employers to implement workplace violence prevention programs. These programs aim to conduct risk assessments, take preventive measures, and prevent serious workplace hazards to ensure employees' safety (OSHA, 2023).

In our country, it is known that approximately one-third of employees are exposed to threats during their working lives (ILO, 2024). On the other hand, no comprehensive program is implemented for threats, and there is a general fight against threats and workplace violence.

Stages of workplace violence

Different theories and models explain the stages of workplace violence (Leymann, 1996; Van de Vliert, 1998). The process usually begins when the employee is exposed to negative behaviour and cannot overcome the difficulty (Leymann, 1990). Einarsen, Raknes, Matthiesen and Hellesøy (1994) grouped the stages of workplace violence into four. These are exposure to aggressive behaviour, violence, stigmatisation, and severe trauma (Einarsen et al., 1994). In the first stage, the victim is exposed to indirect and subtle negative behaviours that are difficult to detect (Björkqvist, 1992). Later, these behaviours become more frequent and more direct and eventually escalate into an incident of workplace violence (Leymann, 1990). In the third stage, the victim is socially stigmatised, which significantly affects their physical and psychological health (Einarsen, 1999; Hogh, Mikkelsen and Hansen (2011). In the final stage, the victim experiences feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that may lead to leaving the workplace (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper, 2011; Leymann, 1996; Glambek, Skogstad and Einarsen, 2015; Reknes, Notelaers, Iliescu and Einarsen, 2021).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) divides the stages of violence into five stages. The first stage, "Confusion," is characterised by disorientation or distraction with uncertainty about the following action. In the second stage, "Frustration," behaviours manifest themselves with impatience and resistance to information. In the third stage, the victim may feel a sense of defeat in their efforts to achieve success. In the blaming stage, the perpetrator tends to shift the blame for the problems onto others. They blame the victim for issues that have nothing to do with them, find fault or fault in their actions, and lead to an increase in potentially dangerous behaviours. The fourth stage, anger, is characterised by visible changes in posture and demeanour. Actions may include hitting, pointing,

yelling, or screaming. The final stage, hostility, involves uncontrollable behaviours such as physical threats or actions. Physical aggression or property destruction may also occur at this stage ("FEMA", 2023).

Consequences of workplace violence

Workplace violence ranges from verbal harassment to physical assaults on people in the workplace or on duty. Violence can occur in any workplace and among all types of employees. The effects of workplace violence can range from psychological problems to physical injuries and even death ("NIOSH", 2024). Psychologically aggressive behaviours often precede physical violence. The costs to employers in the United States are in the millions due to employee absenteeism, medical expenses, theft and litigation costs (Dillon, 2012).

Leymann (1990) categorised the consequences of psychological violence as follows.

- Social: Social: Social isolation, stigmatisation, decreased participation in the workforce, social maladjustment and loss of coping systems may occur.

- Psychological: Helplessness and a feeling of complete helplessness, great anger due to lack of legal remedies, great anxiety and hopelessness may be seen in this category.

- Psychosomatic and psychiatric: Depressions, hyperactivity, suicides, and psychosomatic illnesses may be seen in this category. It is known that there are suspicions that the experiences resulting from this social situation have an effect on the immune system, and there is even strong evidence that some cancer cases are the result of psychological violence.

- Economic Consequences for the Institution and Society: It is known that long-term sick leave has significant economic consequences, such as inefficiency problems, production losses, medical expenses and court costs, and also has a significant negative impact on health and safety in the workplace.

Homicides resulting from workplace violence are a significant cause of death among employees. Still, the impact and cost of this significantly outweigh the prevalence of near-miss incidents, physical assaults, harassing behaviour and threats of violence, many of which go unreported and unnoticed. Violence is not only a criminal justice problem, nor is it a problem that includes deviant behaviour related to alcohol, drugs or mental illness (Warshaw and Messite, 1996).

In the United States, workplace violence has become the second most common fatal incident (Al-Qadi, 2021: 1). Employees who are exposed to workplace violence report feeling inadequate, helpless, overwhelmed, anxious, frustrated, angry, irritable, and guilty (Gerberich, Church, McGovern, Hansen, Nachreiner, Geisser and Watt, 2004; Lanza, 2006). These individuals also report post-traumatic stress, low job satisfaction, and deterioration in personal relationships (Laschinger and Nosko, 2015; Laschinger, Wong and Grau, 2012). These negative emotions lead to decreased work productivity, absenteeism (Fujishiro, Gee and De Castro, 2011), and costs (Brann and Hartley, 2017). A similar situation is observed in our country. It has been determined that employees who are perceived as targets of workplace violence have low levels of work commitment and job satisfaction. Furthermore, exposure to violence has been determined to be the main factor causing job loss, regardless of employment status and gender (ILO, 2024).

Prevention strategies for workplace violence

In the event of micro-scale violence in the workplace, the procedure recommended by Leymann (1990) is as follows:

1. The parties must first agree that mediation will take place.

2. The employee is provided with a representative from the union or a consulting firm. (It is recommended that there be a representative for the employee and the employer. Personal conflicts between opposing parties should not be allowed during mediation.)

3. The parties and those involved in the mediation process should attend training on the research results.

4. The mediator tries to moderate the parties' expectations while going back and forth with suggestions. (It is common for each party to demand complete surrender by the other, in which case a conciliatory solution is necessary).

5. A mediation agreement is reached between the parties.

6. In many cases, the parties may need rehabilitation. In this case, the parties to the violence should be rehabilitated.

However, from a macro perspective, the steps that need to be taken go far beyond what we have listed. According to Leadbetter and Paterson (2004), many organisations tend to adopt denial and ignorance when it comes to violence. Denial and ignoring can mean avoiding the problem. In this context, the first step in dealing with violence is to be aware of the violence and accept that the problem exists (Leadbetter and Paterson, 2004).

Since workplace violence occurs in different situations, interventions must be developed specifically for that situation. Therefore, interventions that include the perspectives of employees and managers should be created by analysing the conditions well and considering the organisational culture. Administrative interventions targeting organisational risk factors rather than individual risk factors are likely more successful. In addition, developing workplace interventions should be guided by social and behavioural theories (Runyan, Zakocs and Zwerling, 2000). The following strategies can be implemented to prevent workplace violence:

Workplace Assessment and Risk Analysis: This strategy aims to identify potential hazards in workplaces, analyse risks, and take adequate measures. A workplace assessment and risk analysis is the identification of potential hazards in the workplace, such as workplace stressors or harassment, and the analysis of possible risks following the identified hazards. Employee participation in this process ensures a comprehensive assessment and increases employee commitment. A workplace assessment and risk analysis can be an effective strategy for preventing violence because it identifies potential hazards, ensures effective measures against them, and increases employee safety.

Zero Tolerance: In order to combat workplace violence, which is a serious problem, and to reduce harassment and aggression towards employees, the policy implemented in developed countries such as the United Kingdom can be used as an essential tool in preventing violence (Chirico, Capitanelli, Bollo, Ferrari and Acquadro Maran, 2021). A zero-tolerance policy serves the following three purposes (Paniagua, Bond and Sallah, 2009):

• Raising awareness that violence is not tolerated;

• Reassuring employees that measures are being taken to provide a safe working environment;

• Creating the perception that severe sanctions will be taken against those who commit violence.

This must be clearly stated in the workplace safety culture. In organisations where employees are devalued, disempowered, and feel disenfranchised as victims of violence, it is unlikely that the employee will be motivated or continue to work effectively (Patterson, Leadbetter and Miller, 2005: 811). Therefore, establishing a zero-tolerance policy against violence is one of the best protections. Under such a policy, any act of violence can result in the immediate dismissal of the violent employee or removal from the workplace by a third party.

Employee Empowerment and Training: It is recommended that employees be empowered and trained against workplace violence as a way to cope with violence and stand firm in the face of violence. Training can play a valuable role in developing employees' skills in recognising and preventing conflict situations and dealing with physical violence more safely. Employees should be trained to avoid violence before it occurs (Patterson et al., 2005: 811). Education and training efforts should be tailored to the target audience's needs and learning styles in the work environment. For example, employees in mental health settings may benefit from training in control and restraint, while employees working in retail stores late at night may need to learn how to respond to an armed robber. Attention should also be paid to interpersonal relationships and the violence likely to occur. Second, depending on the type of violence, proactive interventions should be developed to change the factors thought to be the cause of the violence (Runyan et al., 2000).

Anticipating High-Risk Events: Taking a proactive approach to violence, Identifying high-risk events in advance and developing effective interventions in this context can help prevent violence and minimise the harm that may occur as a result of violence. In this context, technological solutions such as security cameras, alarms, social media analysis, and other monitoring tools can be used to predict high-risk events in the workplace. In addition, sensitivity training and awareness programs among employees can strengthen reporting processes about possible risk factors. The response strategy should include measures to prevent escalation through rapid response and effective communication protocols. This strategy aims to minimise violence and make work environments safer by emphasising cooperation and coordination at all stages, from identifying potential risks to the response process. A proactive approach to violence is both more humane than a reactive approach and more rational compared to the material and moral damages of violence.

Anticipating high-risk events in advance and taking the necessary precautions can reduce possible violent incidents in the sector. For example, engineering measures that can increase the safety of employees interacting with customers, clients, or patients include barriers such as counters, desks, or tables, transparent, unbreakable partitions, and locked doors with windows. In addition, in workplaces where the nature of the work is appropriate and where hazardous work is performed, a well-designed security system should be in place to ensure safety. For example, irrelevant access can be restricted with ID cards. In addition, metal detectors may be recommended to detect people carrying weapons in some cases. Electronic systems triggered by strategically positioned "panic buttons" can speed up the response process by sending audible and/or visual signals to the immediate vicinity and the security station in case of a problem (Warshaw and Messite, 1996). In addition, additional measures can be taken on a sectoral basis. Training is of great importance for the safety of employees in the health sector. Healthcare workers should be taught how to react in situations where they may encounter violence and should be provided with crisis management skills. In addition, employing security guards and establishing rapid response systems such as alarm systems are essential measures to prevent violent incidents. Structural measures are also effective in increasing security. The risk of violence can be reduced with structural measures such as glass partitions, security barriers and closed areas in patient rooms, emergency rooms and other critical areas (Lim, Jeffree, Saupin, Giloi, and Lukman, 2022).

In the education sector, psychological support mechanisms should be established for teachers before and after violence in schools. Education programs should be organised to detect violent behaviours early during student interaction. Security cameras and observation systems that will allow teachers to detect violence early can be established to prevent violence in schools. In addition, activating guidance services can be essential in avoiding violent incidents among students. Employees who interact directly with customers should be trained against potential threats in the retail sector. Employees should be made aware of how to respond to violent incidents. In addition, security cameras, alarm systems, and security personnel can help prevent violent incidents. Protocols to be followed when faced with violent behaviour from customers should be determined, and procedures should be established for customers who display aggressive behaviour. Workers in heavy industry and construction sectors are at higher risk of encountering violence. Therefore, increased security measures are necessary. For example, clear markings in areas and safe passageways can help prevent accidents and violence. It is also essential for managers to communicate regularly with employees and to create secure channels of recourse against violence (Kim, 2022). In transportation sectors such as taxi and bus driving, using security measures such as bulletproof partitions, emergency buttons and GPS tracking systems in vehicles for drivers can effectively prevent violence (Schwendau, 2017).

Conclusion

Workplace violence negatively affects not only the health and well-being of individuals but also the safety climate (Edward, Ousey, Warelow and Lui, 2014). Therefore, workplace violence is the subject of this article, which examines its various dimensions in depth and offers multiple perspectives to understand the causes and consequences of this phenomenon. It explores the effects of physical, emotional, verbal and psychological violence on workplace relations and the well-being of employees. It also addresses effective strategies to prevent workplace violence and offers suggestions for creating a healthy work environment. The article is an inspiring source for taking conscious steps towards creating a more just, safe and supportive atmosphere in the workplace. In this context, it makes an essential contribution to the existing literature. It is important to remember that every employee deserves to work in a respectful environment and that this article aims to guide stakeholders in achieving this goal. The research supports the development of policies to prevent workplace violence by providing practical application guidelines for employers and managers and serves as an essential reference for future research. Thus, it contributes to a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the management of workplace violence from an OHS perspective. In addition, it aims to protect the psychological and physical well-being of employees and to promote the creation of a safe working environment by providing strategies and suggestions to prevent violence in the workplace in terms of OHS.

Workplace violence exposure can have numerous negative consequences, including reduced personal safety, job insecurity, fear, decreased job performance and job satisfaction, emotional commitment, intention to leave, psychological distress, emotional burnout, depression, physical well-being, and concerns about interpersonal relationships (Piquero et al., 2013). Therefore, developing policies and strategies to prevent workplace violence and harassment is crucial to maintaining employee productivity and physical and psychological well-being. Basic descriptive data on the types and sources of workplace violence will not only help build theoretical frameworks but also provide insights to design more effective interventions to prevent such victimisation. Recent research suggests that health-

related interventions, such as healthy lifestyle programs (Gebhardt and Crump, 1990), stress management interventions (Limm, Gündel, Heinmüller, Marten-Mittag, Nater, Siegrist and Angerer 2011), and multivitamin supplements (Stough, Scholey, Lloyd, Spong, Myers and Downey, 2011), can reduce workplace stress (Piquero et al., 2013). In this context, focusing on stress-reducing practices in the workplace can potentially minimise violence. Additionally, organisations that promote fair work cultures and zero tolerance for workplace aggression are more likely to reduce violence (Dillon, 2012).

The article provides employers, managers and policymakers with recommendations to prevent workplace violence. Preventing violence is essential not only for protecting the psychological and physical health of employees but also for increasing organisational productivity. To achieve this, employees need training in recognising workplace violence, learning coping mechanisms and reporting possible incidents. Organising awareness seminars and workshops will improve employees' knowledge and skills. In addition, managers should be equipped with leadership skills and strategies to deal with violence through specialised training programs. Providing psychological support and counselling services to employees who are exposed to workplace violence will contribute to creating a safe communication environment, allowing them to share their negative experiences and seek help when necessary. Another critical step is developing clear, enforceable policies to prevent and address workplace violence. These policies should include definitions of workplace violence, reporting procedures and disciplinary measures to ensure that all employees are informed and encouraged to comply with these guidelines. In addition, creating clear and effective communication channels will make it easier for employees to voice their concerns and ensure a trusting relationship between management and staff. It is also essential to identify potential risks of workplace violence and develop strategies to reduce these risks. The physical layout of the workplace, safety precautions and workflows can be assessed to minimise the potential for violence. In addition, implementing employee well-being programmes can help staff manage stress and build personal resilience. The fact that women are more likely to experience sexual harassment and men more likely to experience physical violence in the workplace highlights the need to develop gender-based policies and measures. Effectively implementing these strategies is crucial to creating a healthy work environment. A proactive approach to preventing workplace violence will ensure employee safety, increase organisational productivity, and improve workplace quality.

In Turkey, the OHS Law No. 6331 states that employers are obliged to ensure the health and safety of their employees. In this context, employers are required to identify risks in the workplace and take preventive measures. In addition, employers are encouraged to take the necessary measures to protect employees from threats and violence they may be exposed to in the workplace, and a zero-tolerance policy against violence in the workplace is encouraged. 90 per cent of employees in our country state that their institutions do not provide sufficient information about violence in the workplace (ILO, 2024). This situation reveals that support and awareness-raising efforts regarding violence in the workplace are lacking. A large portion of individuals who witness violence prefer to remain silent and passive, which prevents victims from receiving the necessary support. Union membership provides protection against forms of violence, especially sexual violence and discrimination. Workplace violence negatively affects employees' job satisfaction, commitment to their work, and general well-being (ILO, 2024). Given the negative consequences of workplace violence victimisation, researchers and policymakers need to move beyond documenting the prevalence of this phenomenon.

Future research should focus on assessing the factors that predict workplace violence and harassment, and understanding these risk factors is critical to advancing and developing theoretical frameworks. This article conceptualises workplace violence, emphasising the need to create and implement proactive policies to prevent violence. It is recommended that future researchers adopt an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the behaviours of perpetrators and conduct exploratory studies using both quantitative and qualitative research methods to get to the root of these actions. In addition, the dynamics, such as perpetrators' characteristics and motivations and the social, cultural, and economic factors that drive such behaviours, need to be examined in more depth.

In this context, a detailed study of violence in different sectors, such as healthcare, heavy industry, education, and retail, is essential for studies. It is recommended that the views of various stakeholders, such as employees and managers, be considered in such studies. In addition, studies examining the social effects of workplace violence and the reflections of these effects on social norms are of great importance in better understanding the phenomenon and developing potential solutions. Considering the gaps in the existing literature, it is observed that there is a limited number of studies in this area, especially in our country. Cross-cultural analyses can provide more in-depth information on how workplace violence is shaped in different cultural and social contexts. Such analyses will contribute to

developing workplace violence prevention strategies from a universal perspective. The results of the studies should constitute an essential resource for policymakers and employers in developing strategies to prevent workplace violence and guiding them in implementing these strategies. As a result, it should not be forgotten that efforts to combat workplace violence will be strengthened by creating a safe and healthy work environment.

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