

**NEWSPAPER REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE  
OF**

**PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: AN ARCHIVAL STUDY**

By

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

In

**PSYCHOLOGY**

In the

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**(School of Social Science)**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

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**2015**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of MA in Psychology has not previously been submitted by me for degree at this or any other university. That it is my work in design and execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Mashabela R.P

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my dearest parents

My mother Seopjane Flora Mashabela, and my late father Morakiwa Philemon Mashabela.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to the following people who made a lasting impact in my life and in this project:

- To my heavenly Father, thank you for giving me the strength, courage and wisdom to complete this project. Honour and glory belongs to you.
- I express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr Nkeke Lesolang, and my Co- supervisor Prof Tholene Sodi, for their time, patience, guidance and for also providing invaluable expertise throughout this project.
- To my mother Seopjane, for your constant support, encouragement, love and for believing in me. I also acknowledge the financial, emotional and other support you have given me.
- To my siblings Patience, Prudence and Poeletšo Mashabela, for your constant support, encouragement, love, and also helping me to get the newspaper articles.
- To my nephew Oratile, for always putting a smile on my face.
- To Daily Sun and Sowetan newspapers for allowing me to have access to their newspaper articles. This study would not have been possible without your help.
- To Leonele from Daily Sun, for your help and your kindness.
- To Mr Kgaphola from Sowetan, for your help.
- To Lisbeth Bopape, the University of Limpopo's Social Science librarian, for helping me to get some of the newspaper articles I used in this project.
- To the University of Limpopo statistician Mr Netshidzivhani, for helping me with statistical analysis of the data.
- I am grateful for the staff of Limpopo Economic Development Environment, and Tourism (Transformation Directorate) for giving me a voucher to help me in this project.

- To my uncles (Kgwana, Rangwedi and Morakiwa), my aunts (Juliet, Sabrinah and Mosana), and their children for showing concern in this project and for constantly checking on me.
- To my grandparents Ramadimetše and Mabitše Machacha, for your love and support.
- I appreciate all my relatives, friends and fellow students who were supportive at various stages of this project.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the psychological profiles of perpetrators of domestic violence as represented in newspaper articles. An archival research approach was chosen as the appropriate design for the present study. The researcher accessed and studied all newspaper articles from two daily newspapers reporting on domestic violence over a two-year period (that is, from January 2011 up to December 2012). A total of 98 newspaper articles (sixty from the Sowetan newspaper, and 38 thirty eight from the Daily Sun newspaper) covering the period under review were retrieved. The data was captured on a self-developed data record sheet. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. The results were analysed and presented using frequency tables, descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

The results of the study showed that the majority of the victims of domestic violence were women with little education and skills. Assault, attempted murder and murder were found to be the forms of violence perpetrated against the victims. The majority of the perpetrators (70.4%) were males, with higher education and skills. Some of the perpetrators were represented in the newspaper articles as being emotionally troubled (69.4%), passively aggressive (11.2%), mentally disturbed (5.1%) and socially deviant (3.1%). The majority of the mental health problems that were associated with the perpetrators of domestic violence included depression, borderline personality and acute psychosis. A number of triggers were found to lead to domestic violence. These included family arguments, jealousy, substance abuse, and criminal behaviour. Based on the above results, the study is concluded by recommending anger and stress management as some of the programmes that the government could introduce to minimise domestic violence.

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Content pages.....	vi

## **CHAPTER 1: INRODUCTION**

1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the research problem .....	1
1.2 Research problem .....	2
1.3 Aim of the study .....	3
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.5 Operational definition of concepts.....	4

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Domestic violence in South Africa.....	6
2.2.1 Prevalence of domestic violence .....	6
2.2.2 Nature of domestic violence.....	8
2.2.3 Types of domestic violence.....	9
2.2.3.1 Physical abuse.....	9
2.2.3.2 Emotional / psychological violence.....	10

2.2.3.3 Sexual abuse.....	10
2.2.3.4 Economic abuse.....	11
2.2.4 The culture of domestic violence .....	11
2.2.5 The impact of domestic violence.....	12
2.2.5.1 Psychological impact .....	12
2.2.5.2 Physical impact .....	13
2.3 The media representations of domestic violence.....	14
2.3.1 Representations of gender in the media.....	14
2.3.2 Representations of resources available to victims.....	16
2.3.3 The impact of media representations of domestic violence on people and their psyche.....	17
2.4 The psychological profile of domestic violence perpetrators	19
2.4.1 Psychopathology.....	19
2.4.2 Personality disorders.....	20
2.4.3 Antisocial / criminal behaviour.....	21
2.4.4 Attachment.....	22
2.4.5 Anger.....	23
2.4.6 Jealousy.....	24
2.4.7 Self-esteem.....	24
2.4.8 Violence begets violence.....	25
2.4.9 Substance abuse.....	26
2.5 Domestic violence Act No. 116 and its implications for addressing domestic violence.....	27

2.5.1	Police obligations in terms of domestic violence Act.....	28
2.5.1.1	Application for a protection order.....	29
2.5.2	Stratergies to address domestic violence.....	30
2.5.2.1	Restorative justice system.....	30
2.5.2.2	The court and Thuthuzela care centers.....	31
2.6	Selected theoretical perspectives on domestic violence.....	31
2.6.1	The psychodynamic theories.....	31
2.6.2	Cognitive-behavioural theories.....	32
2.6.3	Feminist theories.....	32
2.6.4	Socio-cultural explanation of domestic violence.....	33
2.7	Theoretical framework: Disinhibition.....	33
2.8	Conclusion.....	34

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3	Introduction.....	35
3.1	Research design.....	35
3.2	Sampling.....	36
3.3	Data collection.....	37
3.3.1	Data collection instrument.....	37
3.3.2	Data collection procedure.....	37
3.4	Data analysis.....	38
3.4.1	Quantitative data analysis.....	39
3.4.2	Qualitative data analysis.....	39

3.5	Reliability, validity and objectivity.....	40
3.6	Ethical consideration.....	41
3.7	Conclusion.....	41

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

4.1	Introduction.....	42
4.2	Demographic characteristics of perpetrators of domestic violence	42
4.2.1	Category of crime.....	42
4.2.2	Number of perpetrators involved.....	43
4.2.3	Age and gender of the perpetrator.....	43
4.2.4	Level of education and occupation of perpetrator.....	44
4.2.5	Racial classification of perpetrators.....	44
4.3	Demographic characteristics of victims of domestic violence	45
4.3.1	Number of victims involved.....	45
4.3.2	Age and gender of the victims.....	45
4.3.3	Level of education and occupation of victims.....	46
4.3.4	Racial classification of victims.....	47
4.3.5	Relationship between victim and perpetrator.....	47
4.3.6	Media representations of the perpetrator.....	48
4.3.7	Media representations of the crime committed.....	49
4.3.8	Geographical location of the incident.....	49
4.4	Description of psychological themes.....	51
4.4.1	Mental health problems.....	51

4.4.2	Suicide and attempted suicide.....	52
4.4.3	Relationship problems and arguments.....	53
4.4.4	Substance abuse.....	54
4.4.5	Distress because of illnesses.....	54
4.4.6	Jealousy.....	55
4.4.7	Deviant behaviour.....	56
4.4.8	Other salient psychological themes.....	57
4.5	Summary of results.....	58
4.5.1	Demographic details.....	58
4.5.2	Emerging psychological themes.....	58
4.6	Conclusion.....	59

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

5.1	Introduction.....	60
5.2	Demographic factors and domestic violence.....	60
5.3	Psychological themes.....	61
5.4	Disinhibition theory.....	63
5.5	Some emerging hypotheses.....	64
5.6	Conclusion.....	64

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

6	Introduction.....	65
6.1	Summary of findings.....	65
6.2	Limitations of the study.....	65

6.3	Contributions and recommendations.....	66
6.4	Conclusion.....	67
	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>90</b>
	Appendix A: Data record sheet .....	90
	Appendix B: Letter to <i>Sowetan</i> Newspaper .....	94
	Appendix C: Letter to <i>Daily Sun</i> Newspaper.....	96

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background to the study, followed by a presentation of the research problem. The aim and objectives of the study are also presented. The chapter is concluded by providing some operational definition of concepts.

#### **1.1 Background to the research problem**

Worldwide, violence results in large expenditures, not only for healthcare, social and economic development, but also for other sectors, such as law enforcement, and compensation for survivors (Sethi & Butchart, 2008). In the United States of America, violence has been identified as the leading cause of mortality and morbidity (Corso, Mercy, Simon, Finkelstein & Miller, 2007). According to Yildirim, Karatas, Yilmaz, Cetin and Senel (2013), 73.4% of school children in Turkey had experienced at least one form of violence at school and victims of physical violence are mostly boys. Talas, Kocaöz and Akgüç (2011) suggested that violence is a major problem among emergency department staff in Ankara (Turkey), with up to 85.2% of the staff having been subjected to some form of violence, 41.1% to physical assault, 79.6% to verbal abuse, 55.5% to verbal threats and 15.9% to sexual harassment.

Kaminer, Grimsrud, Myer, Stein and Williams (2008) assert that the South African population is exposed to multiple forms of violence and that over a third of the population has been exposed to some form of violence. An earlier study by Liang, Flisher and Lombard (2007) has shown that over a third (36.3%) of students in Cape Town and Durban, were involved in bullying behaviour, 8.2% as bullies, 19.3% as victims and 8.7% as those that are both bullied and bully others.

According to Norman et al. (2007), South Africa faces an unprecedented burden of morbidity and mortality arising from violence and injury. Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele (2009) have also pointed out that violence and injuries are the second leading cause of death and lost disability-adjusted life years in South Africa. Cluver, Bowes and Gardner (2010) found that children who experience domestic violence are also victimized by their peer. Domestic violence also increases the risk of HIV infection among women in South Africa (Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna & Shai, 2010).

The most common forms of violence experienced by women in South Africa are physical abuse by an intimate partner and childhood physical abuse (Kaminer et al., 2008). Coliings (2011) suggested that South African children face a high risk of being exposed to domestic violence. It was found that as many as 81% of children reported that they were exposed to some form of interpersonal violence during childhood, with over 50% of participants having been exposed to more than one form of violence. Kaminer et al (2008) found an association between intimate partner violence and the greatest number of post-traumatic stress disorder cases among women in South Africa.

## **1.2 Research problem**

The news media has a powerful effect on societies generally in transmitting information, setting agendas, and influencing behaviour of the public and private sectors and of communities and individuals (Sweet & Doyle, 2008). Chermak and Chapman (2007) provided evidence that violent crimes as presented in the media are more salient. Genovesi, Donaldson, Morrison and Olson (2010) have pointed out that newspapers have an important media influence that can shape and direct public perceptions regarding violent deaths. Fountain (2008) also found that news portrayal influences reader response whilst news framing is effective in persuading readers to respond in different ways.

As pointed out earlier, South Africa has considerably high rates of violent crimes. For example, the crime statistics report of the financial year 2011/2012 shows that there are 15 609 cases of murder, 14 859 of attempted murder, 192 651 of assault grievous bodily harm, 181 670 of common assault and 64 514 cases of sexual assault reported to the police (South African Police Service, 2012). Some of the people who are victimized do not report the cases to the police, and this shows that there might still be other criminal cases that have occurred.

In a number of cases of violence, newspapers often reflect the age and gender of the offender and the victim as well as the method used to commit the violent crime. In other cases, the emotional state of the offender, victim or witness is also mentioned. For example, Mnguni (2012b) reported about a school shooting and mentioned the age of the victim and how he was killed. The report showed that a counsellor was to visit the traumatized pupil who witnessed an incidence of violence. Selebi (2013) mentioned the gender of a person who was killed and how she was killed. In line with the prevailing trends regarding the representation of violence in the media, the researcher in the present study explored newspaper representations of the psychological profile of domestic violence perpetrators with a view to identify psychological themes that are embedded.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study was to explore the psychological profiles of perpetrators of domestic violence as represented in newspaper articles.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study**

- To profile the demographic characteristics of the perpetrators of family violence as portrayed in the newspapers;
- To profile the demographic characteristics of the victims of family violence as portrayed in the newspapers;
- To identify and document the media representations of the psychological profile of the perpetrators of domestic violence ; and,
- To identify and document other salient psychological themes that emerge from the analysis of the newspaper articles on domestic violence.

## **1.5 Operational definition of concepts**

### **1.5.1 Psychological profile**

This is a description of the likely character, behaviour and interests of an individual based on evidence collected about him/her. The concept is commonly used in forensic psychology to refer to a likely description of character, behaviour and interests of a violent criminal that is based on evidence collected from the place where a crime was committed (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, n.d). In the context of the present study, psychological profile refers to the character, behaviour and interests of perpetrators of domestic violence as represented in the newspapers (Sowetan and Daily Sun) that were selected as the sources of data.

### **1.5.2 Newspapers**

The Oxford Advanced Learner 's Dictionary (2010) defines newspapers as the set of large printed sheets of paper containing news, articles advertisements, published every day or every week. In the context of the present study, newspapers refer to the two South African daily newspapers (Sowetan and Daily Sun) that were selected as the sources of data.

### **1.5.3 Representations**

The act of presenting somebody / something in a particular way (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010). In the context of the present study a representations will be understood to mean portrayal of someone.

### **1.5.4 Perpetrator**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010) defines perpetrator as someone who commits a crime. In the context of the present study a perpetrator will be understood to mean a person who commits a criminal act against a family member.

### **1.5.5 Domestic violence**

Domestic Violence means physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence, or any other controlling or abusive behavior towards a complainant, where such conduct harms, or may cause imminent harm to, the safety, health or wellbeing of the complainant (Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998). In the context of the present study domestic violence will be understood to include violence within the family such as spousal abuse, child abuse and elderly abuse. Domestic violence includes verbal, emotional, financial, physical and sexual abuse.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a brief overview of the study. The aim of the study, objectives and key concepts in the study were also discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide relevant literature review relating to the topic of study. This section focuses on domestic violence in South Africa, the media representations of violence and the psychological profile of domestic violence perpetrators. This will be followed by a presentation of selected psychological theories on domestic violence. A theoretical framework that has guided the researcher in the present study will also be presented.

#### **2.2 Domestic violence in South Africa**

##### **2.2.1 Prevalence of domestic violence**

Statistics on domestic violence are difficult to obtain mainly because it is not a crime as such, and police statistics reflect only reported crimes, such as assault, rape or malicious damage to property, etc (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003).

A fairly recent crime report shows that all of the seven categories of serious crimes (namely, murder, attempted murder, sexual offenses, assault grievous bodily harm, common assault, aggravated robbery and common robbery) have witnessed a decline from 1819 incidents in 2004/2005 to 1233 incidents in 2011/2012 (South African Police Service, 2012). This represents a decrease of 35.5 % from 2004/2005 to 2011/2012. The report shows that the rate of murder is 31 per 100 000 population, thus reflecting a decrease of 27.6 % from 2004/2005 to 2011/2012. In the case of sexual assault, the rate is 18 per 100 000 population. According to the Institute for Security Studies (2012), looking at the current rate at which murder is decreasing, it will take South Africa around 36 years before the murder rate reflects the international average of seven murders per 100 000.

According to Mathews (2010), a high number of women (50.3%) in South Africa are killed by their intimate partners. Women who are in their 30s are mostly affected by domestic violence. This could be attributed to the fact that women at these ages are reproductively active, and they need to negotiate issues around contraceptive use, protected versus unprotected sex (Dala & Dawad, 2011). Using a retrospective national study in a sample of 25 mortuaries, Abrahams et al. (2009) found that most women are killed by their current or ex-intimate partners in these cases.

Research has shown that intimate partner violence against pregnant women is common in South Africa. For example, Modiba, Baliki, Mmalasa, Reineke and Nsiki (2011) found that prevalence of domestic violence amongst pregnant women was (41%) in a sample of 163 women in a public hospital in Gauteng Province. Hoque, Hoque and Kader (2009) also found that (31%) of pregnant women in a rural population (KwaZulu-Natal) experience domestic violence by an intimate partner. The most common types of domestic violence experienced by these women are physical and psychological violence (Matseke, Peltzer & Mlambo, 2012; Hoque et al., 2009).

Both men and women experience domestic violence but women are more likely to report being victimized than men. Gass, Stein, Williams and Seedat (2011) found that although the rates for perpetration of domestic violence are similar for women (25.2%) and for men (26.5%), only 20.9% of men reported being victimized. In addition, the study done by Stein et al. (2009) showed that perpetrators of domestic violence are more likely to be females. Pretorius and Botha (2009) found that most women who perpetrate intimate partner violence do so as an act of self-defence.

### **2.2.2 Nature of domestic violence**

The pervasive violence in post-apartheid South Africa may be the legacy of the country's socio-political history of apartheid and violent repression, combined with on going socioeconomic inequality and deprivation (Kaminer et al., 2008). Poverty and inequality are crucial social dynamics that have contributed to South Africa's burden of violent injury. They are inseparably related to other key drivers such as the dominant patriarchal constructions of masculinity and the inter-generational cycling of violence (Seedat et al., 2009). Female inequality within the patriarchal societies are the main cause of intimate partner violence. Gender roles defined by society and taught to individuals during childhood are thought to place men in positions of power over women. Socially defined gender roles lead to victimization of women and perpetration of violence against women by men (Bell & Naugle, 2008). Seedat et al. (2009) further noted that risk-taking, exposure to abuse in childhood, weak parenting, access to firearms and the wide spread alcohol misuse all contribute to perpetration of violence.

Abrahams, Jewkes and Mathews (2010) pointed out that the ownership of legal firearms is a risk factor for murder of intimate partners. While illegal fire arms are more likely to be used in violent crimes, legal firearms are used for the killing of an intimate partner.

Substance use (drinking problem and drug use) is associated with the severity of physical violence perpetrated against women by an intimate partner (Peltzer & Pengpid, 2013). Men who experience physical abuse during childhood or were exposed to interparental violence are at a greater risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence in adulthood (Gupta et al., 2008; Stein et al., 2009).

Domestic violence is a kind of violence common in South Africa (Idemudia & Makhubela, 2011), but men and women are at risk of different types of violence (Kaminer et al., 2008). South African men are most at risk of being victims of criminal violence, followed by

childhood physical abuse. This trend is in contrast to that of women who are mostly at risk of intimate partner violence. While women are most at risk of being victims of physical assault by an intimate partner, followed by childhood physical abuse and they are at a lesser risk of sexual violence or experiencing a physical assault that is not domestic (Kaminer et al., 2008).

Risk factors associated with domestic violence perpetration in males include cohabitation, low income early and adult onset of mood disorders, risk factors in female perpetrators include low educational attainment and early onset alcohol abuse/ dependence (Gass et al., 2011).

### **2.2.3 Types of domestic violence**

#### **2.2.3.1 Physical abuse**

Research has shown that physical abuse is common in intimate relationships (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). South African women are most at risk of being victims of physical assault by an intimate partner (Kaminer et al., 2008). Women who are exposed to domestic violence report types of violence such as hitting and kicking (Slabbert & Green, 2013). Both men and women experience physical abuse by an intimate partner. The abuse experienced include: a partner throwing things to hit the other partner, pushing, grabbing, dragging or kicking, hitting, punching, strangling and using a knife or gun against the partner (Wong, Huang, DiGangi, Thompson & Smith, 2008). The study done by Peltzer and Pengpid (2013) found that women reported greater instances of physical intimate partner abuse when the perpetrator is a problem drinker and a drug user. According to Gupta, Silverman, Hemenway, Acevedo-Garcia, Stein and Williams (2008) younger men are more likely to abuse their partners physically than older men. Physical abuse is a predictor of post-traumatic stress disorder (Peltzer, Pengpid, McFarlane & Banyini, 2013).

### **2.2.3.2 Emotional/ psychological abuse**

Emotional abuse is experienced by women in intimate relationships (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Emotional abuse experienced by women include, insulting, shouting, name calling, belittling in front of children and unfaithfulness on the part of their partners. Men who are unfaithful have sexual relationships with other women, have several girlfriends, while others have children with other women. Emotional abuse is often experienced as being worse than the physical abuse (Slabbert & Green, 2013). Having a partner with alcohol drinking problems and drug use is associated with psychological intimate partner abuse (Peltzer & Pengpid, 2013). Modiba, Baliki, Mmalasa and Nsiki (2011) found that emotional abuse is common amongst pregnant women attending an antenatal clinic in a public hospital in Gauteng province. They suggested that this could be because during pregnancy, women are more vulnerable to economic pressures because of the addition of a new family member. A study conducted by Peltzer, Pengpid, McFarlane and Banyini (2013) showed that economic abuse towards an intimate partner (in particular, threats of mild violence) is a predictor of depression.

### **2.2.3.3 Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is common in South Africa (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Women are sexually abused by their intimate partners, at times referred to as sexual objects (Slabbert & Green, 2013). Sexual violence is the type of abuse reported least often during pregnancy (Modiba, Baliki, Mmalasa & Nsiki, 2011). Pengpid and Peltzer (2013) found that sexual abuse is associated with sexually transmitted infection. The study done by Pengpid, McFarlane and Banyini (2013) showed that sexual abuse by an intimate partner is a predictor of post-traumatic stress disorder.

#### **2.2.3.4 Economic abuse**

Economic abuse by an intimate partner is experienced by women (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Some abused women do not have control over their money, as their partners control all the finances in the family. They hand their salaries to their partners who often misuse it and there will be no money for necessities such as school fees. Others are denied access to bank accounts or credit cards (Slabbert & Green, 2013).

Some of the victims of domestic violence experience all the types of domestic violence simultaneously. According to Slabbert & Green (2013) physical abuse goes hand in hand with emotional abuse.

#### **2.2.4 The culture of domestic violence**

According to Romito and Grassi (2007), the overall injury death rate of 157.8 per 100 000 population is nearly twice the global average, and the rate of homicide of women by intimate partners is six times the global average. The two authors suggest that the excess health problems among women may be a result of more intense or more frequent experiences of violence. Jewkes et al., (2010) found that intimate partner violence increases the risk of incidents of HIV infection in young people. Sareen, Pagura and Grant (2009) have also pointed out that there is a strong association between intimate partner violence and HIV among women.

Intimate partner violence is associated with drug use which is common among coloured persons in Cape Town and the use of this drug places the user at an increased risk of engaging in sexual risk behaviour which in turn increases the risk for HIV (Meade et al., 2012).

## **2.2.5 The impact of domestic violence**

### **2.2.5.1 Psychological impact**

Violence against women has a far deeper impact than the immediate harm caused. Its devastating consequences are seen on the women who experience it and traumatic effects on those who witness it which in most instances are children (Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2005).

Children who experience domestic violence are at an increased risk of being bullied either at school or in their community (Cluver et al., 2010).

South Africa has a high rate of unemployment and poverty. Most people live in small shacks with no privacy and children constantly witness violent arguments between parents. The long term exposure to violence is traumatic with adolescents reporting symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as confusion, anger as well as fear (Kubeka, 2008).

Exposure to domestic violence in adolescents affects identity development. For example, Makhubela (2012) found that adolescent university students who are exposed to domestic violence both as direct victims of abuse and as witnesses of domestic violence have lower scores for identity development when compared with those from non-violent families. Similarly, Idemudia and Makhubela (2011) conducted a study to compare adolescents exposed to domestic violence and the non-exposed group on adolescent identity development in a university setting in Limpopo (South Africa). The results of the study showed that adolescents who are exposed to interparental domestic violence encounter identity problems, which in turn influences problematic gender roles, gender identity development and the development of self-concept as they grow.

Exposure to direct victimization in domestic settings is associated with greater post-traumatic stress symptom severity in Xhosa speaking adolescent boys (Kaminer, Hardy, Heath, Mosdell & Bawa, 2013). Women who are victims of violence by an intimate partner experience

psychological problems such as depression and suicide attempts. Some women who experience domestic violence resort to substance use as a way of coping with the abuse (Pretorius & Botha, 2009). Most women with a history of domestic violence experience post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. Physical and sexual violence predicts post-traumatic stress disorder while psychological abuse in particular, threats of mild violence predicts depression (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2013).

Using data from the cross-sectional, nationally representative South African Stress and Health study, Gass, Stein, Williams and Seedat (2010) assessed exposure to intimate partner violence, health-risk behaviours, health-seeking behaviours and chronic physical illness among a sample of 1 229 married and cohabiting couple. The results of the study revealed that women with a history of intimate partner violence have a higher probability than non-abused women of exhibiting health-risk behaviours, including smoking, alcohol and cannabis use, and non-medical use of sedatives and analgesics. Furthermore, there was no association between experiencing intimate partner violence and chronic illness.

#### **2.2.5.2 Physical impact**

Most of the victims of domestic violence require medical attention at least twice. Some of them reported that they have permanent physical injuries, while others reported that they have contracted HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. Other consequences are infertility, unwanted pregnancies, abortions and miscarriages (Development Research Africa and CSIR Defence, Peace, Safety and Security Unit, 2008). Domestic violence victims develop various medical conditions that include, asthma, high blood pressure, heart problems, spastic colons, arthritis, ulcers, high cholesterol levels, cancer and anaemia (Pretorius & Botha, 2009).

## **2.3 The media representations of domestic violence**

### **2.3.1 Representations of gender in the media**

The media is not a neutral role player in shaping perceptions of crime. Its representation of crime and violence depends in part on the identity and editorial policies of particular media organs (i.e. specific newspapers, magazines or television stations among others). In order to survive, the media depends on maintaining readership/listenership/viewership figures and coverage that is given to crime and violence. This is shaped by what editors and journalists believe will be of interest to their readers (The Centre for the Study of Violence, 2007).

Gender is one of the elements likely to be represented in a biased way in the media, with women portrayed as the main victims of violence (Valcea, 2011). According to Cavaglion (2008), there are certain narratives which the public recognise from the journalist reports. For example, mothers who have killed their children are more likely to be viewed as suffering from mental disorders and thus deserving of cure when compared to fathers who would be perceived as perpetrators deserving punishment. Another study by Cavaglion (2009) found that the press tends not to use descriptors reflecting purported madness or social distress of the male perpetrators. Rather than discussing extenuating circumstances based on mental disorder or social distress, the media tends to portray the actions of fathers' who killed their children as premeditated and rational.

Oxman-Martinez, Marinescu and Bohard (2009) analyzed the specificities of gender representation in newspapers' portrayals of violence against women and children in Romania and Canadian newspapers. The study revealed that gender is the characteristic which is mostly portrayed about the perpetrators of violence and they disregard other important characteristics such as age, level of education, occupation, ethnicity and others. Both newspapers covered the legal constraints of violence acts against women and children but

they were used more in the Canadian newspapers than in the Romania newspapers (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2009). Carlyle, Slater and Chakroff (2011) pointed out that the characteristics of the intimate partner violence incident which are included in the newspapers, such as the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim and whether there is a history of intimate partner violence in the relationship can have important implication.

Noh, Lee and Feltey (2010) found that the predominant social construction of battered women who kill is one of female deviants who are either mad or bad. The study by Toffoletti (2007) suggested that newspaper reports rely on gender stereotypes to depict females as passive transgressors who are likely to have some form of psychopathology.

Nettleton (2011) found that the media tends to represent women in incidents of domestic violence as individuals who are guilty of choosing wrong men in their lives. On the other hand, men are represented as inept at managing their emotional lives and unable to contain their actions to fit within the bounds of civility. Research has shown that newspaper representations of young people who commit violent acts focus on their social group membership. For example, Stoyanova (2012) found that Bulgarian newspapers mention gender, ethnic group and geographical area of young offenders.

Cecil (2007) examined four popular crime dramas to understand how women are portrayed and the images with these characters. The results revealed that female offenders are portrayed as being violent and driven by greed, revenge and most commonly by love (i.e. most of the female offenders committed their crimes either to protect a loved one or ensure that someone would continue to love them).

Black (2009) did a content analysis on Irish Times, Irish Daily Star, Evening Herald and Irish Independent to find how female offenders are represented in Irish newspapers. A number of the newspaper articles focused on the mental state of the perpetrator. Out of a sample of 234

articles, 26 mentioned the female perpetrator's mental state. Ethnicity also emerged most prominently in the newspaper articles.

According to Carlyle et al. (2011) newspaper representations of intimate partner violence tend to focus on the individual ignoring social factors that perpetuate violence. By doing so victims may be more likely to feel blamed for their own victimization. Taylor (2009) found that coverage of femicide victims in the newspaper articles tend to blame the victim and acquit the perpetrator, by using negative language to describe the victim as being the one to be blamed for their victimization. Similarly, the study done by Fairbairn and Dawson (2013) found that coverage of male-perpetrated intimate partner murder continues to employ victim blaming news frame. Furthermore, Nettleton (2011) found that men's and women's magazines blame women for choosing the wrong man while men are not blamed for hitting women.

Newspaper articles when reporting about domestic violence rely on the police as their sources for getting information and they leave other important sources such as the people who know the victim and perpetrator. This places the case within the context of law enforcement rather than the context of domestic violence as a social problem (Bullock & Cubert, 2002).

### **2.3.2 Representations of resources available to victims**

Some researcher have pointed out that it is very important to include coverage of resources that are available in the community for victims when reporting about domestic violence. Carlyle et al. (2011) found that only 5% of articles reporting intimate partner violence incidents provided any information regarding resources such as shelters, web sites, hotline services, or other forms of victim services such as advocacy and counseling. They suggested that by omitting any mention of such societal resources, the stories leave the victim as the sole party responsible for finding solutions and decrease the public

knowledge about these important services. Other researchers have noted that the media portray the role of the government and police authority in bringing the perpetrator to justice (Das, 2012). Other newspaper articles represent domestic violence as a social problem which is very important. For example, talking about the pervasiveness of domestic violence, including information about resources for readers who may be in violent relationships and mechanisms in place to protect victims from domestic violence (Gillespie, Richards, Givens & Smith, 2013).

### **2.3.3 The impact of media representations of domestic violence on people and their psyche**

A number of studies have indicated that violence portrayed in the media can have adverse psychological problems for both children and adults, in particular behavioural problems. A study done by Bushman and Huesmann (2006) found that exposure to media violence is positively related to subsequent aggressive behaviour, aggressive ideas, arousal, and anger. Short term effects of exposure to media violence are greater for adults while long term effects are greater for children. In addition, viewing of violent programming by preschool boys is associated with subsequent aggressive behaviour (Christakis & Zimmerman, 2007). Repeated exposure to media violence desensitize viewers to media violence, individuals who view violent media enjoy the violence portrayed and they tend to feel less sympathetic towards the victims of violence (Fanti, Vanman, Henrich & Avraamides, 2009). Exposure to media violence makes the individual to become numb to the pain and suffering of others and less helpful to injured victims (Bushman & Anderson, 2009).

Guo et al. (2013) investigated the cognitive and neural mechanism underlying the modulation of empathic responses to other's pain by short-term media violence exposure among women aged from 19 to 30. Their findings indicated that exposure to short-term violence

reduces empathy for pain such that individuals who view violent video rate other people's pain to be less painful as compared to individuals who view non-violent video. At the neural level reduced activation in regions encoding emotional dimension of other's pain was observed after participants were exposed to a violent video.

Furthermore, Coyne, Nelson, Graham-Kevan, Keister and Grant's (2011) study suggest that physical aggression viewed on television predict engagement in physical aggression for men, while relational aggression viewed on television predicts perpetration of romantic relational aggression for both men and women. Exposure to different types of media aggression is related to romantic relational aggression in individuals with psychopathology.

In another study Krahe and Moller (2011) examined the relation between habitual exposure to violent content in different media genres and teacher-rated aggression and prosocial behaviour in a sample of adolescents in Germany. The results revealed that there is a relationship between media violence exposure and teacher-rated aggression and no direct negative link to prosocial behaviour was found. In another study Krahe and Moller (2010) examined the longitudinal associations between habitual usage of violent media genres and aggression as well as empathy in a sample of adolescents in Germany. Self reports of habitual violent media usage are related to self-report of physical and relational aggression and empathy over a period of twelve months.

Kohlman et al. (2014) states that as the media continues to perpetuate representations of domestic violence as trivial and comical, it will be further normalized and desensitized in the public view. They further suggested that using sexist humor, offensive and prejudicial humor, jokes promoting destruction to victims of domestic violence allow society to view this type of violence as more acceptable.

## **2.4 The psychological profile of domestic violence perpetrators**

### **2.4.1 Psychopathology**

According to Khosravipour et al. (2011) individual pathology plays an important role in marital violence perpetration. Spidel, Greaves, Nicholls and Goldenson (2013) found a high prevalence of cluster B personality disorders among females who perpetrate intimate partner violence.

Stanford, Houston and Baldrige (2008) used Impulsive/Premeditated Aggression scale along with a battery of relevant self-report measures in a sample of men convicted of domestic violence and court ordered into an intervention program. The study was done to extent past research that has investigated the concept of perpetrators subtypes based on the nature of the violent behaviour. The results showed that those whose perpetration was classified as impulsive reported more serious psychopathology, while those whose perpetration was classified as premeditated scored higher on psychopathic traits (Stanford et al, 2008).

Other researchers have found that some psychosocial factors mediate the association between adverse childhood experiences and intimate partner violence. For example, Mair, Cunradi and Todd (2012) found that male's anxiety and impulsivity and female's depression are positively related to male-to-female partner violence while male's depression and frequency of intoxication and female's depression are positively related to female-to-male partner violence.

Research indicates that perpetration of domestic violence is related to post-traumatic stress disorder. A study conducted by Hundt and Holohan, (2012) found that there is a link between post-traumatic stress disorder and perpetration of intimate partner violence. In addition, the study done by Taft, Street, Marshall, Dowdall & Riggs (2007) found that post-traumatic stress disorder is associated with physical assault and psychological aggression perpetration towards an

intimate partner among men. In addition, Clift and Dutton (2011) argued that trauma symptoms are associated with psychological abuse towards an intimate partner.

Adolescents who physically and or verbally abuse their parents have more problems at school (adaptation, disruptive behaviours and learning difficulties) and are more likely to have received individual and family psychological treatment (Ibabe & Jaureguizar, 2010).

#### **2.4.2 Personality disorders**

According to the literature, domestic violence perpetration is associated with personality problems. For example, Ross and Babcock (2009) personality disordered perpetrators are more violent towards their partners and inflict more injuries than the non-diagnosed, control group. Stanford, Conklin, Helfritz and Kockler (2007) found that perpetrators of spousal/ partner violence met criteria for personality disorders (antisocial and narcissistic personality disorders). The study done by Clift and Dutton (2011) found a relationship between borderline personality organization and perpetration of psychological abuse towards an intimate partner by women.

Borderline personality disorder is also associated with perpetration of domestic violence. Most men who are violent towards their partners have reported borderline personality features (Mauricio & Lopez, 2009). The study by Hines (2008) found that borderline personality traits predict physical, psychological and sexual intimate partner aggression. This is also supported by Weinstein, Gleason and Oltmans (2012) who found that borderline symptoms are related to self-reported partner aggression, although this is moderated by gender. However, Hines (2008) found that gender did not moderate the association between borderline personality organization and intimate partner violence. Higher cluster A personality disorder traits predict intimate partner violence in men and higher cluster B personality traits in

women predicts intimate partner violence in women (Thornton, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2010).

Men's and women's risk factors for intimate partner violence may be different (Thornton et al., 2010). Ross and Babcock (2009) suggested that violence perpetrated by men with different personality disorders differ in its function. Borderline personality disorder/comorbid men appear to use violence more reactively (impulsive), while antisocial personality disordered men tend to use violence both proactively (premeditated) and reactively (impulsive).

### **2.4.3 Antisocial /Criminal behaviour**

Family violence is associated with antisocial personality disorder (Hill & Nathan, 2008). Enduring antisocial traits are associated with men's lifetime perpetration of intimate partner violence (Harris, Hilton & Rice, 2011). Antisocial traits, engaging in conduct disordered and delinquent behaviours early in life are all associated with later perpetration of intimate partner violence (Boyle, O'Leary, Rosenbaum & Hassett-Walker, 2008). Contrary to that, Weinstein et al. (2012) did not find a relationship between partner aggression and features of antisocial personality disorder

Shorey et al., (2012) examined whether men and women differ in their criminal arrest histories and whether history of arrests is associated with more frequent psychological and physical aggression perpetration. The results of the study showed that men and women arrested for domestic violence have previous arrest and histories of domestic violence. Men are more likely to have been previously arrested for different offenses, including alcohol-related offenses, domestic violence involving someone other than a partner, robbery and etc. Arrest histories are associated with physical and psychological aggression perpetration against an intimate partner for men.

Females with reported youth violence perpetration are at an increased risk of later intimate partner perpetration (Renner & Whitney, 2012). Men who bullied their peers in childhood are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence as adults (Falb et al., 2011).

Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis, Browne and Ostapuk (2007) investigated the characteristics associated with mothers and fathers who maltreat their child and each other in comparison to parents who only maltreat their child. They found that fathers who perpetrate both partner and child maltreatment have factors associated with development of criminogenic lifestyle when compared to fathers who perpetrate child maltreatment only. Furthermore, these fathers show more antisocial characteristics when compared with mothers who perpetrate both partner and child maltreatment.

#### **2.4.4 Attachment**

Attachment is regarded as playing a role in perpetration of intimate partner violence. Attachment behaviours predict the use of violence in marital relationships (Godbout, Dutton, Lussier & Sabourin, 2009). Dutton and White (2012) argued that attachment problems constitute the majority of psychological predictor of intimate partner violence by increasing the likelihood of aggression in adulthood.

The study done by (Mauricio & Lopez, 2009) suggests that most men who are violent towards their intimate partners are both anxiously and avoidantly attached. Dumas, Pearson, Elgin and McKinley (2008) examined the relationship between attachment styles and intimate partner violence in a sample of 70 couples. The results of the study show that a combination of male attachment avoidant with female attachment anxiety is associated with both male and female violence. When controlling for partner violence, the relationship between attachment and violence is significant for males only. Similarly, the study done by Godbout et al. (2009) found that men's use of violence

towards their intimate partner is related to their own avoidant attachment and their partner's anxious attachment. Furthermore, parental violence in the family of origin predicts both the development of insecure attachment behaviours and intimate partner violence.

According to Taft, Schumm, Marshall, Panuzio and Holtzworth-Munroe (2008) men who experience parental rejection in their childhood become perpetrators of psychological and physical abuse towards an intimate partner in adulthood. Similarly, Clift and Dutton (2011) found an association between parental rejection and psychological abuse towards an intimate partner.

#### **2.4.5 Anger**

A few studies have suggested that there is a link between anger and perpetration of domestic violence. For example, Foran and O'Leary (2008) found an association between anger and domestic violence. Similarly, the study done by Clift and Dutton (2011) also found an association between anger and perpetration of psychological abuse towards an intimate partner by women. Oberleitner, Mandel and Easton (2013) argued that individuals who are high on anger expression report more physical and verbal violence towards an intimate partner as compared to those who are not high on anger expression. The study by Turcotte-Seabury (2010) has found that both women and men who witnessed violence between parents have limited anger management ability and that this limited anger management abilities increases the level of violence in intimate relationships. Fenton and Rathus (2010) suggest that anger, frustration, tensions or embarrassment are related to domestic violence perpetration among males. The motive for women who perpetrate physical aggression towards their partners is to show anger (Leisring, 2012).

Shorey, Brasfield, Febres and Stuart (2011) examined the association between intimate partner psychological and physical aggression perpetration, impulsivity, and trait anger among women arrested for domestic violence. Their findings showed that both trait anger and impulsivity are significantly associated with physical and psychological intimate partner violence and aggression. Similarly, Caetano, Vaeth and Ramisetty-Mikler (2008) found an association between impulsivity and male- to-female partner violence.

Other researchers have found a link between shame and guilt cognition and intimate partner violence. Hundt and Holohan (2012) noted that shame contribute most to distinguishing perpetrators of intimate partner violence.

#### **2.4.6 Jealousy**

Research has shown that jealousy is related to domestic violence, in particular perpetration of intimate partner violence. For example, Foran and O'Leary (2008) found that jealousy is one of the motives for partner violence among women (Leisring, 2012). Whether induced by a specific relationship event or due to personality characteristics, jealousy may function as a critical provoker of intimate partner violence. Fenton and Rathus (2010) noted that some men use violence out of jealousy in intimate relationships as a response to perceived infidelity. According to Ansara and Hindin (2009) the most commonly cited reason for perpetration of physical aggression in intimate relationships among both women and men is jealousy.

#### **2.4.7 Self Esteem**

Some studies have suggested that there is a link between domestic violence and self-esteem. For example, Renner and Whitney (2012) found that lower self-esteem among males increases the odds of

intimate partner violence. Ibabe and Jaureguizar (2010) suggest that adolescents who physically and or verbally abuse their parents have lower self-esteem.

#### **2.4.8 Violence begets violence**

Research has shown that violent behaviour promotes other violent behaviour even at the slightest provocation (Caulkins, Feichtinger, Tragler & Veliov, 2007). Incidents of childhood abuse have been commonly cited as risk factors for later victimization and perpetration (Renner & Whitney, 2012). A study was done by Renner and Whitney (2012) to identify common and unique risk factors for intimate partner violence among young adults in relationships. The results indicated that reported childhood sexual abuse is associated with intimate partner violence perpetration in males, as compared to males who were not abused. For female, reported childhood neglect is associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence in adulthood, as compared to females who reported no intimate partner violence. Eng , Li, Mulsoy & Fischer (2010) suggest that history of family violence among women is associated with emotional violence and they use their experiences of witnessing or encountering violence in the past to protect themselves from being beaten by their partners.

In a study to investigate the relationship between childhood exposure to violence and characteristics of male domestic violence offenders. Murrell, Christoff and Henning (2007) found that male perpetrators who were abused during childhood are more likely to abuse children than those who were not abused. This is supported by the study of Kocacik, Kutlar and Erselcan (2007) which also found that psychological factors such as being abused or having witnessed violence as a child, is significantly associated with domestic violence.

Men who had witnessed domestic violence in childhood commit more frequent and severe domestic violence offenses than men who had not witnessed domestic violence in childhood (Murrell et al., 2007). Similarly, Hill and Nathan (2008) found that partner violence is predicted by having been exposed to interparental violence during childhood. In addition, Turcotte-Seabury (2010) found that both women and men who witnessed violence between parents are at a high risk of becoming perpetrators of intimate partner violence. The study further shows that witnessing interparental violence is associated with limited anger management abilities which in turn are associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence.

Caetano et al. (2008) suggest that those who are victimized by their intimate partners also become aggressors to their partners either immediately or sometime after that. In addition Kachaeva, Dmitrieva, Rumantseva and Drikina (2008) found that women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner have murdered their partners. They have also displaced pathological altruistic motivation of murder of their children. Furthermore, Damant et al. (2010) argued that women's abuse of their children can be seen as a consequences of their own experiences of domestic violence.

#### **2.4.9 Substance abuse**

Numerous studies have linked substance abuse with partner aggression, in particular alcohol abuse (Cunradi, Ames & Moore, 2008; Eng et al., 2010; Zhan et al., 2011). A study done by Stanford et al. (2007) found that perpetrators of spousal/ partner violence met criteria for alcohol abuse. In addition the study done by Babu and Kar (2010) also found that husband's alcoholism is a significant predictor of perpetration of all types of domestic violence.

Men with reported higher levels of problem drinking are more likely to be severely physically aggressive towards their partners when compared to men who report lower levels of problem drinking (Foran & O'Leary, 2008). This is supported by the study done by Waller et al. (2013) which found that high alcohol outlet density is associated with having perpetrated physical only male-to- female partner violence. In addition, Zhan et al. (2011) found that individuals who usually drink on the street or at parks are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence.

Moore et al. (2008) conducted a meta analysis that reviewed literature on the relationship between drug use and intimate partner aggression. The study revealed that other types of drugs may place people at greater risk of partner aggression. Cocaine and marijuana were identified as having a significant association with partner aggression but cocaine was found to be more strongly linked to psychological, physical and sexual aggression. Furthermore, the study done by Lipsky and Caetano (2011) reported an association between substance use, including binge and heavy drinking, drug abuse and partner violence. Similarly, Chermack et al. (2008) also found that there is a relationship between alcohol binge drinking, cocaine, marijuana, illicit opiate/sedative use and aggression in intimate partner relationships.

## **2.5 Domestic Violence Act No.116 of 1998 and its implications for addressing domestic violence**

The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) of 1996 established crimes of violence against women and children as a national priority and a number of legislative reforms have been instituted in this area. This included passing the Domestic Violence Act (no. 116 of 1998).

Other such reforms include mandatory minimum sentences for specific types of rape (Criminal Law Amendment Act 1997) and the tightening of the bail conditions for those charged with rape (Criminal Procedure

Second Amendment Act 1997). National Policy Guideline for Handling Victims of Sexual Offences, aimed to improve victim's experiences of the criminal justice system by providing protocols for officials in the police, health, welfare, and justice systems and prison were finalised in 1998 (Bendall, 2010).

The purpose of the Domestic Violence Act is to afford the victims of domestic violence maximum protection from domestic abuse that the law can provide. It also introduces measures that seek to ensure that relevant organs of state give full effect to the provisions of the Act, thereby conveying that the state is committed to eliminate domestic violence (Vetten, 2005).

The Domestic Violence Act sets out a broad range of behaviours that constitute domestic violence. These include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse, stalking, intimidation, harassment, damage to property, unauthorized access to the complainant's property, as well as any other controlling or abusive behaviour that may cause harm to the safety, health or well being of the complainant (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003). The Act also extends the notion of 'domestic relationship', affording to protection to married couples; same-sex relationships; couples who are (or were) in a dating, engagement or customary relationship, including an actual or perceived relationship; any person in an intimate relationship; parents of a child; and people who do or have recently shared a residence (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003).

### **2.5.1 Police obligations in terms of Domestic Violence Act**

The Domestic Violence Act and national instructions place a number of obligations on the police. The police are required to take a statement when the victim reports domestic violence at the police station. They also have an obligation to come to the place where the incident happened if they are called (Frederick & Cherith, 2014). They are required to explain to the complainants that they are there to provide

whatever assistance the circumstances require, which may include helping the complainant to find suitable shelter or obtain medical treatment. They should also inform the complainant of her/ his right to apply for a protection order, as well as lay criminal charges (Vetten, 2005). Police officers are obliged to serve notice on the abuser to appear in court, serve protection orders; arrest an abuser who has breached a protection order, or committed crime (Vetten, 2005).

They should seize any firearm or dangerous weapon that the abuser might have with him that is a threat to the victim. The domestic violence incident must be registered in the police station register and the police officer must keep a copy of the protection order on record (Frederick & Cherith, 2014).

#### **2.5.1.1 Application for a protection order**

A person may apply for a protection order in terms of the Domestic Violence Act if abused by someone with whom they are in a domestic relationship. They can also apply for a protection order on behalf of someone else who is a victim of domestic violence but must have the person 's written permission, unless the person is younger than 18. Any person who is concerned that someone is being abused, including a social worker, teacher, a health worker or police service member can apply for a protection order on behalf of the victim. Application for a protection order is done at the domestic violence section of the nearest magistrate's court, or the magistrate's court that is closer to the abuser (Frederick & Cherith, 2014).

## **2.5.2 Strategies to address domestic violence**

Victim empowerment aims to restore the loss or damage caused by criminal acts and their consequences of the event, to leave it behind and suffer no further loss damage (National Policy Guidelines for Victim Empowerment, n.d).

Victims have different needs for empowerment and support, in order to enable disempowered victims to recover from exposure to crime and violence, such needs must be met through a well- managed, integrated, multidisciplinary team approach. The empowerment of victims in a holistic manner reduces secondary victimization, encourage co-operation with the criminal justice process, reinforces socially desirable behaviour and acts as a deterrent to offenders or potential offenders (National Policy Guidelines for Victim Empowerment, n.d).

### **2.5.2.1 Restorative justice system**

Restorative justice focuses on crime as an act against the individual or community rather than as an act against the state. It is a process whereby the victim and offender are treated in an equitable manner and justice is seen and felt to be done. Crucial in this theory is dialogue between the offender and the victim. The person who has harmed take responsibility for their actions and the person who has been harmed may take a central role in the process (National Policy Guidelines for Victim Empowerment, n.d). In addition, the victim receives an apology and reparation directly or indirectly from the person who has caused them harm. Restorative approaches seek a balanced approach to the needs of the victim, wrongdoer and the community through processes that preserve the safety and dignity of all (National Policy Guidelines for Victim Empowerment, n.d).

Families are often dependent on the income generated by the male, if he is imprisoned either awaiting trial or afterwards, the family is likely to

suffer from the consequent loss of income. Mediation brings the opportunity to look beyond the crime as its cause. The offender may be referred for counseling if the offense is linked to alcohol (Dissel & Ngubeni, 2003).

### **2.5.2.2 The court and Thuthuzela care centers**

In terms of addressing sexual abuse, specialized sexual offences courts and Thuthuzela care centers have been set up. The courts are aimed at reducing secondary victimization of domestic violence victims by improving the management of cases through the courts and to allow for more effective prosecutions by trained prosecutors (Bendall, 2010).

The Thuthuzela centers act as one-stop service centers where victims service providers including, the police, counselor, doctor and prosecutor are available in one location. Their aim is to reduce secondary victimization, improve conviction rates and reduce the cycle time for finalization of cases (Bendall, 2010).

## **2.6 Selected theoretical perspectives on domestic violence**

### **2.6.1 Psychodynamic theories**

According to (Fairbairn, 1952, as cited in Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, n.d) object relations theory, individuals are motivated from childhood by the need for significant relationships with others. These relationships play an important role in the development of the psychic. Individuals develop mental representations of themselves, others and the relationships between themselves and others and the mental representations carry over and influence interpersonal relationships throughout life (Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, n.d). Insufficient nurturing in childhood may result in the search to fulfill dependency needs as an adult, which could lead to relationships in which one is either a victim or

the abuser (Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, n.d). Based on this theory, it could therefore be suggested that a perpetrator of domestic violence did not receive adequate nurturing during childhood.

### **2.6.2 Cognitive- behavioural theories**

Three dominant cognitive behaviour theories (namely, social learning theory, theory of reactive aggression and theory of learned helplessness theories) have been used to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence. For example, the social learning theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977 posits that social behaviour is learned through observing and imitation others. Aggressive behaviour is learned through operant conditioning and observing behaviour in role models. As children grow up they receive information from others regarding their own behaviour. They then develop standards for judging their own behaviour and look for models who match the standards. Children who grow up in violent families may learn the violent behaviours, imitate those behaviours and repeat the behaviours in future relationships (Akers, 2000, as cited in Rahmatian, 2009; Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, n.d). Based on social learning theory, it can therefore be concluded that perpetrators of domestic violence grew up in abusive families where they either observed or experienced violence.

### **2.6.3 Feminist theories**

The main emphasis of feminist perspective is on the patriarchal nature of society and gender inequality. Almost all of the African society was patriarchal and women were subordinates. Domestic violence is the result of the pervasive inequality between men and women (Bowman, 2003) and violence is used for power and control, Corvo and Johnson, 2003 (as cited in Corvo & Johnson, 2013).

#### **2.6.4 Socio-cultural explanation of domestic violence**

In modern Africa, Domestic violence is mostly attributed to the culture of “violence” (Bowman, 2003). According to Bowman (2003) violence is accepted as a way of resolving problems and this is linked to colonisation. Civil wars maintained this culture of violence. This is particularly relevant in South Africa where there has been post-apartheid increases in violence specifically directed at women. The cultural explanations of domestic violence in countries like United States can be linked to poverty and “gun culture” (Bowman, 2003). What the theory suggests is that perpetrators of violence are nurtured by socio-cultural environment that contributes to their criminal behaviour.

#### **2.7 Theoretical framework: Disinhibition theory**

The researcher in the present study adopted the disinhibition theory as a theoretical lens through which the phenomenon of domestic violence portrayed in the media was understood. The disinhibition theory posits that alcohol consumption is linked to violent behaviour through its psychological effects, as it releases an individual's violent impulses and tendencies, and suppresses inhibitions. Alcohol affects the central nervous system by releasing inhibitions that depress brain function or suppress super-ego function, thereby allowing the expression of rage Kantor and Straus, 1987 (as cited in Van Rooy & Mufune, n.d). There may be similarities between the specific blood chemistry changes evident under a generalized stress reaction such as battering and those found in alcoholics, Walker, 1979 (as cited in Van Rooy and Mufune, n.d). What the theory suggests is that there is a high likelihood that a perpetrator of domestic violence may be under the influence of alcohol.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of domestic violence in the South African context. It appears that domestic violence is prevalent in the country. The country places this type of crime as a priority as there are many legislatives that were formed to addresses domestic violence.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the means by which the current study was undertaken. The choices for research design and sampling method are motivated. The chapter provides a discussion on data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis, and on issues related to reliability and validity. The ethical considerations followed when undertaking the current study are also discussed.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This was an archival study that sought to profile the characteristics of the perpetrators of family violence, and to identify and document the psychological discourses around this particular phenomenon. The researcher used the archival research method to investigate representation of domestic violence in two South African daily newspapers. According to Jones (2010) archival data may be thought of as any sort of information (previously collected by others) that is amenable to systematic study. The archival data or records may be in the form of documents (television programmes, art) etc. In the present study, the researcher used documents that are in the form of archived newspaper reports for the period of two years (i.e. 2011 and 2012). In so doing, the research produced qualitative data that was documented and presented descriptively. On the other hand, the researcher used the quantitative approach to analyse the newspaper reports with a view to gleaning the psychological meaning embedded therein.

Consequently, the study adopted a mixed method approach. According to Palinkas et al., (2011), mixed method designs focus on collecting, analyzing, and merging both qualitative and quantitative data into one or more studies. The use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research issues than either approach alone (Palinkas et al., 2011). When undertaking mixed

methods study, the researcher uses qualitative research methods for one phase or stage of a research study and quantitative research methods for the other phase or stage of the research study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

### **3.2 Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used in this study, specifically the total population sampling. Purposive sampling is the procedure where in which the researcher chooses the participants (Slabbert & Green, 2013). The researcher chooses subjects with a specific goal of focusing on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest (Mugera, 2013). Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique where you choose to examine the entire population that have a particular set of characteristics (Mugera, 2013).

According to Mugera (2013) the advantages of purposive sampling are that it has a wide range of sampling techniques that can be used to achieve the goal of the wide range of qualitative research designs that researchers use. The sampling techniques have different goals that can provide researchers with the justification to make generalizations from the sample that is being studied, whether such generalisations are theoretical, analytic and / or logical in nature (Mugera, 2013). Qualitative research designs can involve multiple phases, with each phase building on the previous one. Different types of sampling techniques may be required at each phase in such instances. Purposive sampling is useful in these instances because it provides a range of non-probability sampling techniques for the researcher to draw on (Mugera, 2013).

The disadvantages of purposive sampling are that it can be highly prone to researcher bias, irrespective of the type of purposive sampling used. The idea that a purposive sample has been created based on the judgment of the researcher is not a good defense when it comes to

reducing possible researcher biases (Mugera, 2013). However, the judgmental, subjective component of purposive sampling is only a major disadvantage when such judgments are ill-conceived (Mugera, 2013).

The subjectivity and non-probability based nature of unit selection selecting people, cases, etc. in purposive sampling means that, it can be difficult to convince the reader that the judgment used to select units to study was appropriate. For this reason, it can also be difficult to convince the reader that the researcher achieved theoretical / analytical and logical generalization (Mugera, 2013).

### **3.3 Data collection**

#### **3.3.1 Data collection instrument**

A data record sheet (see Appendix A) designed by the researcher was used to collect the data. The data record, among others, covered the following topics: the demographic characteristics of the perpetrators and the victims, relationships between the perpetrator and victim, representations of the crime and the perpetrator and description of other psychological themes.

#### **3.3.2 Data collection procedure**

Two South African daily newspapers (namely, Sowetan and Daily Sun) were identified and selected as the potential sources of archival data for the present study.

The researcher approached the owners of the two newspapers and explained the purpose of the study to them, in order to get access to the newspaper articles. Permission was then granted to access the newspaper articles. The researcher went through all the newspaper articles of 2011 and 2012 and all newspaper articles containing

domestic violence were studied. These newspapers were selected based on their wide circulation and high readership figures 125 490 for *Sowetan* and 414 280 for *Daily Sun* when compared to other newspapers (The Press in South Africa, n.d.) that have lower circulation. All the daily issues of the *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun* newspapers that contained representations of domestic violence from January 2011 to December 2012 were accessed, and retrieved. All in all, a total of 98 such articles (*Sowetan* = 60; *Daily Sun* = 38) were retrieved.

After a pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the data record sheet, the researcher commenced with the major study. The data obtained from the newspapers were plotted on the data record sheet. In the cases where all the newspapers covered the same story, only one story was included in order to avoid having similar stories.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

According to Jones (2010) when doing document analysis, clear criteria must be established before the researcher can analyse the documents. This involves crafting broad research objectives and searching for appropriate previously existing data sets that might be best used to address these research objectives. In other words, the researcher is expected to identify patterns in the data and to make decisions about how to organize, classify, interrelate, compare, and display the information. Similarly, in the present study the researcher studied and analysed the content and trends with regard to domestic violence, patterns were identified in the data and to get the emerging psychological themes.

### **3.4.1 Quantitative data analysis**

The quantitative results of the study were analysed using the IBM SPSS and presented using frequency tables, descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

### **3.4.2 Qualitative data analysis**

The qualitative results of the study were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is used to study a broad range of texts from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and form of films, TV programs and editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines (Macnamara, 2005). It is also known as a method of analyzing documents (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). The researcher strives to make sense of the data and to learn 'what is going on'. In the current study the newspaper articles were read and re-read, the aim was to become immersed in the data in order to make sense of the data. The following steps of content analysis as recommended by Elo and Kyngas (2007) were followed:

#### **a. Prepare the data**

The analysis started with selecting the units of analysis (MacCain, 1988, as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2007). The researcher defined the units of analysis, which are the data record sheets that contain psychological themes on domestic violence.

#### **b. Coding the data**

The data was coded by writing down keywords/themes that were identified. The coding frame included, mental health problems, suicide and attempted suicide, relationship problems and arguments, substance abuse, distress because of illnesses, jealousy and deviant behavior. Coding frame is a set of groups into which answers to a question can be divided. The coding frame was generated from the

subset of the data. Every data record sheet was read more than once to identify all the themes.

### **c. Categorising the data and drawing conclusions from the data**

The data was then put in to categories after coding was done, this was done in order to draw conclusions from the coded data. Themes that have similar meanings were categorized together to make sense. According to Cavanagh 1997 (as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2007) the purpose of creating categories is to provide a means of describing the phenomenon, to increase understanding and to generate knowledge.

## **3.5 Reliability and validity**

One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocol may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Pilot study is done to ensure that a research instrument can be used properly and that the information obtained is consistent (Simon, 2011). Fink and Kosekoff (cited in Simon, 2011) argued that when pilot-testing look out for a failure to answer questions and respondents giving several answers to the same question, these may be indications that the instrument is unreliable and needs revision.

To ensure reliability and validity the researcher did a pilot study. Pre-testing the questionnaire thus enhanced its reliability and validity (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). According to Evans (2007) running a pilot study is a very important aspect in a research project. It allows the researcher to spot flaws in the methodology before conducting the study. The researcher analysed 20 data record sheets before the actual research investigation can take place. This was done so that the data record sheet could be modified before the actual research

investigation can commence. The results of the pilot investigation did not form part of the major study.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

This was an archival study that did not involve any direct interaction with the victims and perpetrators of violence. However, in keeping with good ethical conduct, the researcher sought and obtained ethical approval for the undertaking of the study from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee. The researcher also asked for access to the newspaper articles from the media houses owning the the two newspapers. In plotting the information on the data record sheet, the researcher ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the perpetrators and victims whose names might have been reflected in the newspaper articles was maintained.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The chapter provided a presentation of the research methods that were used in the present study, including the research design, data collection and data analysis methods, issues relating to reliability and validity and the ethical issues involved.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the demographic characteristics of the perpetrators and victims of family violence. This will be followed by the description of media representations of the psychological profile of the perpetrators of domestic violence and other salient psychological themes that emerged from the analysis of the newspaper articles.

#### 4.2 Demographic characteristics of perpetrators of domestic violence.

##### 4.2.1 Table 1: Category of crime

Category of crime	Frequency	Percentage
Murder	60	61.2
Assault	12	12.3
Attempted murder	12	12.3
Murder and attempted murder	10	10.2
Assault and sexual offense	1	1.0
Murder and assault	1	1.0
Sexual offense	1	1.0
Sexual offense and murder	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the domestic violence cases (61.2 %) were murder, followed by assault (12.3%) as well as attempted murder, assault and sexual offense, sexual offense and murder (1.0%).

#### 4.2.2 Table 2: Number of perpetrators involved

Number of perpetrators involved	Frequency	Percentage
One	96	98.0
Two	1	1.0
More than two	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 above shows that in the majority of cases of domestic violence, only one perpetrator (98.0%) was involved. A relatively small number of cases involved more than one perpetrator (1%).

#### 4.2.3 Table 3: Age of the perpetrator

Age of perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
Adult	97	99.0
Child	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.2.4 Table 4: Gender of the perpetrator

Gender of perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
Male	69	70.4
Female	27	27.6
Male and female	2	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the age and gender distribution of the perpetrators, with the majority (99.0%) of perpetrators being adult whilst only a relatively small number of acts of domestic violence were committed by children (1%). With regard to gender, most perpetrators (70.4 %) were males, with females making up the remaining 27.6%.

#### 4.2.5 Table 5: Level of education and occupation of perpetrator

Level of education of perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
Below matric	1	1.0
Post matric	16	16.3
Unspecified	81	82.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Occupation of perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
Skilled	26	26.5
Unskilled	17	17.3
Unspecified	55	56.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 presents the level of education and occupation of perpetrators of family violence. 82.7% of domestic violence cases did not specify the level of education of perpetrators, (16.3%) of perpetrators had passed matric and only (1.0%) of the perpetrators was below matric. The majority of the cases (56.1%) of domestic violence did not specify the occupation of perpetrators, (26.5%) of perpetrators were skilled while only (17.3%) of the perpetrators were unskilled.

#### 4.2.6 Figure 1: Racial classification of perpetrators

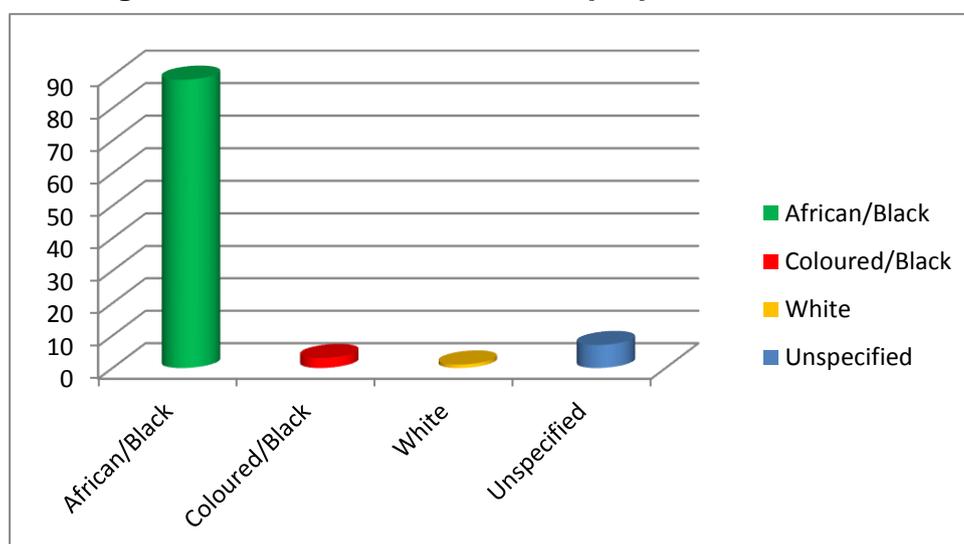


Figure 1 shows the racial classification of the perpetrators. The majority of the perpetrators of family violence were African/Black (89.8%), whilst a small number (1%) was made up of individuals classified as white. The low number of white perpetrators of domestic violence could be attributed to the fact that the the two daily newspapers largely focus their reporting on incidents in the African/Black communities.

### 4.3 Demographic characteristics of the victims of domestic violence

#### 4.3.1 Table 6: Number of victims involved

<b>Number of victims involved</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One	71	72.4
Two	16	16.3
More than two	11	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows that most of domestic violence cases involved only one victim (72.4%) with those involving more than two victims accounting for less than 25%.

#### 4.3.2 Table 7: Age and gender of victims

<b>Age of victim</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Adult	54	55.1
Child	33	33.7
Adult and Child	11	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Gender of victim</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	26	26.5
Female	59	60.2
Male and female	12	12.2
Unspecified	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 presents the age and gender distribution of victims. A high percentage (55.1 %) of victims were adults. Thirty three percent (33.7%) of the victims were children. With regard to gender, most of victims were females (60.2 %), whilst males constituted a relatively small percentage (26.5%).

#### 4.3.3 Table 8: Level of education and occupation of victims

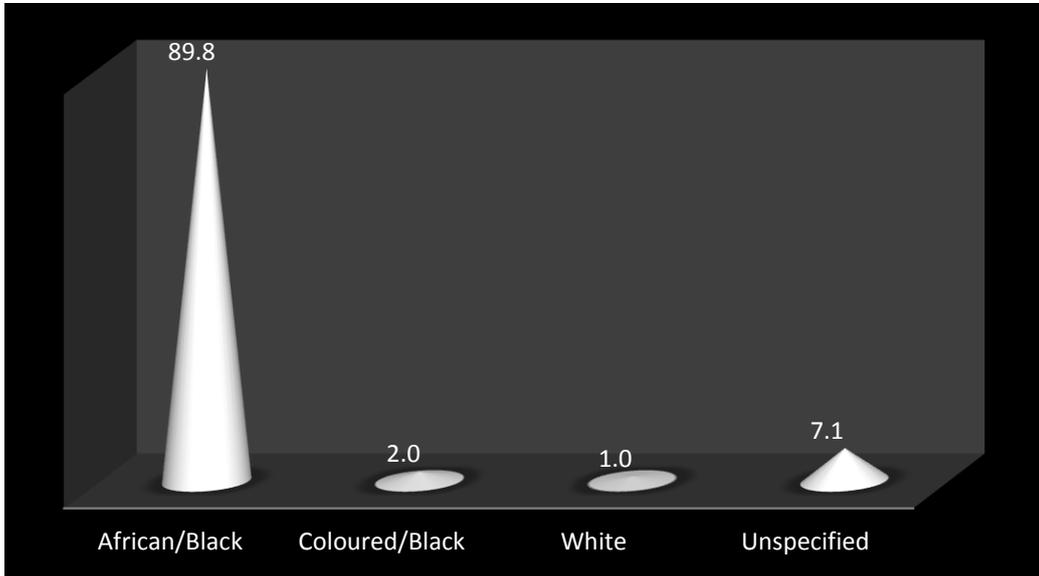
<b>Level of education of victim</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below matric	42	42.9
Post matric	7	7.1
Unspecified	49	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Occupation of victim</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Skilled	11	11.2
Unskilled	45	45.9
Unspecified	42	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 presents the level of education and occupation of victims. The majority of cases of domestic violence did not reflect the level of education of the victims (50.0%). The above table shows that a high percentage of the victims' educational level was below matric (42.9%), while only 7.1% were reflected to have passed matric. Most of victims

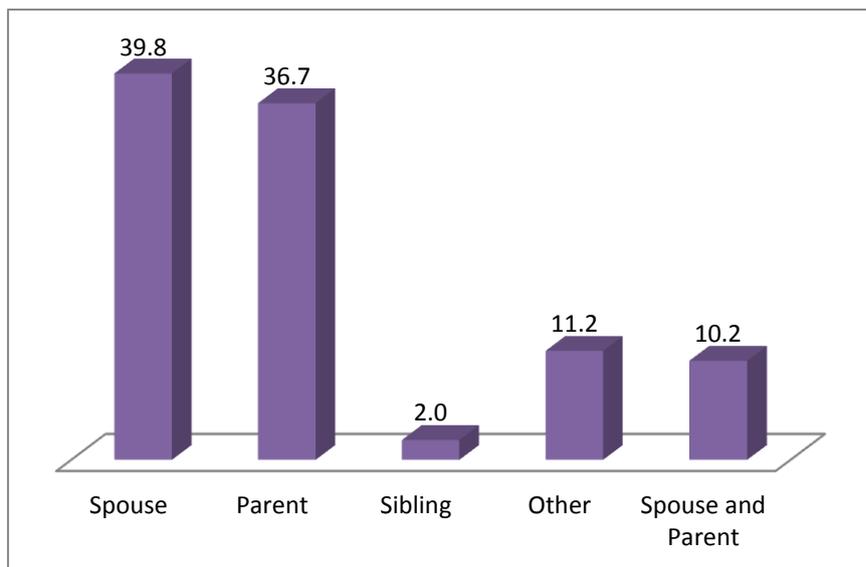
were unskilled (45.9%), whilst for a considerable number of cases there was no reflection of the level of skill.

4.3.4 Figure 2: Racial classification of victims



With regard to the race of victims, the figure above shows that 89% of the victims were African/Black, whilst those classified as white constituted only 1%.

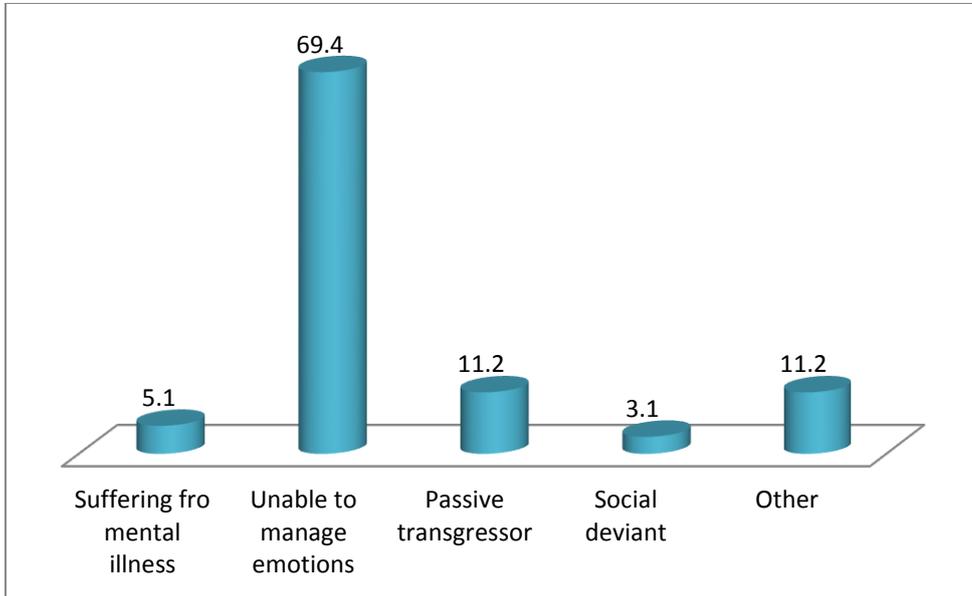
4.3.5 Figure 3: Relationship between victim and perpetrator



Most of the cases of domestic violence (39.8%) were found to have been committed by the spouse of the victim. Thirty six percent (36.7%)

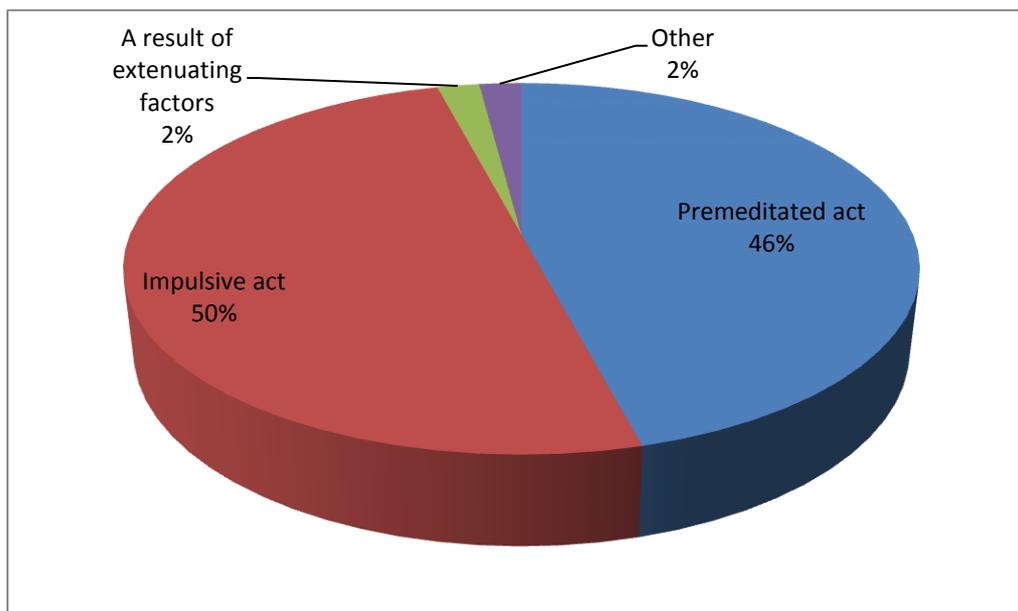
of the cases were perpetrated by parents of the victim, whilst 11.2% were perpetrated by other members of the family.

4.3.6 Figure 4: Media representations of the perpetrator



The majority of the perpetrators of domestic violence (69.4%) were portrayed as individuals who were unable to manage their emotions, whilst others were portrayed as passively aggressive (11.2%), mentally disturbed (5.1%) or socially deviant (3.1%).

4.3.7 Figure 5: Media representations of the crime committed



The study found that most of the cases of domestic violence crimes (50%) were committed as a result of what is portrayed as impulsive acts, premeditated acts (46%) or as a result of extenuating factors (2%).

4.3.8 Table 9: Geographical location of the incident. (Province and district)

Province	Frequency	Percentage
Gauteng	37	37.8
Limpopo	15	15.3
North West	11	11.2
Mpumalanga	10	10.2
Free State	7	7.1
Western Cape	7	7.1
KwaZulu Natal	5	5.1
Eastern Cape	4	4.1
Unspecified	2	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>District</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
City of Johannesburg	15	15.3
City of Tshwane	14	14.1
Ekurhuleni	4	4.1
West rand	2	2.0
Sedibeng	2	2.0
Capricorn	3	3.1
Sekhukhune	3	3.1
Vhembe	3	3.1
Mopani	3	3.1
Waterberg	3	3.1
Bojanala Platinum	5	5.1
Ngaka Modiri Molema	4	4.1
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati	2	2.0
Nkangala	6	6.1
Ehlazeni	2	2.0
Gert Sibande	2	2.0
Thabo Mofutsanyana	3	3.1
Motheo	2	2.0
Xhariep	1	1.0
Lejweleputswa	1	1.0
City of Cape Town	7	7.1
Umgungundlovu	2	2.0
Durban	2	2.0
Kwa Msane	1	1.0
Amathole	2	2.0
Kwazakhele	1	1.0
O.R Tambo	1	1.0
Unspecified	2	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

The study found that Gauteng was the province with the highest rate of reported domestic violence (37.8%). Most of the incidents in this particular province (15.3%) happened in the City of Johannesburg, followed by City of Tshwane (14.1%), and Ekurhuleni with only 4.1% of the cases. Limpopo was reported as the province with the second highest levels of domestic violence (15.3%), with North West standing at (11.2%), and Mpumalanga at 10.2%. The Free State and Western Cape stood at 7.1%, KwaZulu Natal was at (5.1%), with Eastern Cape as a province with the lowest incidents of domestic violence (4.1%).

#### **4.4 Description of the psychological themes**

This section covers the salient psychological themes that emerged from the analysis of the newspaper articles.

##### **4.4.1 Mental health problems**

The findings of the present study suggest that some of the perpetrators of domestic violence suffer from mental problems as represented in the newspaper articles. Some of the mental health problems revealed by the current study include:

*“A woman killed her five children. She said she was severely depressed because she was unemployed and her partner was abusive towards her children. She also said she could not take it anymore as she had to feed and assist her disabled child and her youngest child who was 2 years. She was sent to two psychiatric institutions for mental observation and she was diagnosed with acute psychosis (Maponya, 2012).”*

*“A mother who suffered from borderline personality disorder put an agricultural chemical pesticide into her daughter’s porridge after she refused to drink poisoned milk. She was angry after her mother told her to take time off from her studies to take care of the baby (South African Press Association, 2012a).”*

*“A woman who suffered from major depression stabbed her son and cut off his ear and genitals to make it look like a muthi murder; she then took him to an abandoned house. She battled financially as she didn’t receive any support (South African Press Association, 2011a).”*

*“A mentally challenged man who uses drugs, abuse his mother and he sold most of his mother’s property for drugs. He had been bullying his mother for 12 years (Jeranji, 2012).”*

*“A mentally unstable man, who uses drugs, assaulted his father. He sometimes holds his father hostage and demand money to buy drugs (Mnguni, 2012b).”*

Based on the above statements, it seems that perpetrators of domestic violence have mental health problems including, acute psychosis, borderline personality disorder and major depression.

#### **4.4.2 Suicide and attempted suicide**

Some of the salient psychological themes include suicide. There were reports that suggested that some of the people who perpetrated domestic violence attempted or committed suicide. The following statements indicate some of the cases that included suicide by the perpetrator.

*“A husband stabbed his wife to death and he was later found hanging from the rafters of a dilapidated house (Selebi, 2012).”*

*“A women who once attempted suicide, stabbed her one-year-old daughter to death. Her mother was not aware of her reported substance abuse (drug use), Tshehle, 2012c.”*

*“A couple were allegedly arguing about their relationship when the man murdered his two sons and his partner. He then committed suicide (South African Press Association, 2012e).”*

*“A couple had relationship problems and the man killed his wife and their children, a knife and spade were found next to their bodies, it is believed he was under the influence of substances as a zol of dagga and a bottle of alcohol were found in the house. The man tried to commit suicide by drinking battery acid (Obose, 2012).”*

*“A man found his wife in bed with another man. He locked himself and his two sons in their house doused it with petrol and they all died. (Tshehle, 2012d).”*

Based on the above statements, it appears that some of the perpetrators of domestic violence were suicidal, with a few having tried to, commit suicide. Some of them also kill other members of the family.

For example, the man may kill the wife or children, and in some instance they kill the whole family.

#### **4.4.3 Relationship problems and arguments**

Some of the domestic violence incidents involved spouses. These criminal acts seemed to have been committed following arguments and/or relationship/marital problems. This could suggest that relationship problems have the potential to trigger acts of domestic violence. Furthermore, it does appear that in some cases, violence is used as a way to resolve their problems.

*“A man shot his wife to death. The couple were experiencing relationship problems and their relationship was tumultuous. The man has been physically and emotionally abusive towards his wife. (Tshehle, 2012b).”*

*“A couple were allegedly arguing about their relationship when the man murdered his two sons and his partner. He then committed suicide (South African Press Association, 2012e).”*

*“A woman stabbed her husband to death during a domestic dispute (South African Press Association, 2012b).”*

*“A man killed his wife after a quarrel between them, they had ongoing problems and they always fought and from time to time the woman’s family were called in to help reconcile them after a quarrel (Xaba, 2011).”*

*“A man was fighting with his wife and the terrified woman ran from her shack to escape. The husband locked their five children inside the shack and set it on fire. Three older children jumped out of the window but the two little once died inside the shack (Nkhwashu, 2012).”*

Based on the above statements, it appears that some of the domestic violence cases are a result of relationship problems, arguments and fights in the family.

#### **4.4.4 Substance abuse**

In some of the incidents, it was found that substance abuse had some influence in the perpetration of domestic violence. The statements below illustrate how substance abuse has influenced perpetration of domestic violence in other people.

*“A couple had relationship problems and the man killed his wife and their children, a knife and spade were found next to their bodies, it is believed he was under the influence of substances as a zol of dagga and a bottle of alcohol were found in the house. The man tried to commit suicide by drinking battery acid (Obose, 2012).”*

*“A man allegedly sexually abused his daughter; he was once sacked from the soapie he was acting for, as he was suspected of using drugs (Mashaba, 2011).”*

*“A man stabbed one of his twin daughters and throttled the other until she was unconscious. He admitted that he did so in a fit of jealous rage soon after a cocaine binge. A report compiled by a social worker with 25 years’ experience revealed that he started experimenting with marijuana, alcohol and cocaine at the age of 16 (Molatlhwa, 2011).”*

*“A man attacked his mother by chopping her arm, lacerating her face and the back of her neck and she died on the scene. He then attacked his two sisters. It was well known in the community that he was using drugs (Marijuana) South African Press Association, 2011b.”*

*“A man came home drunk and aggressive and threatened his wife, the wife left the house with her daughter and the father went to fetch her. The next day she was found lying dead on the bed (Staat, 2012).”*

Based on the above statements, it seems that use of substances like drugs and alcohol does contribute to domestic violence. The drugs used include, dagga, marijuana and cocaine.

#### **4.4.5 Distress because of illnesses**

Some of the perpetrators of domestic violence appeared to have had health conditions that they were unable to cope with.

*“A woman went to hospital and she was told that she was suffering from an undisclosed illness. She set her house on fire and killed her two children and herself. She left a suicide note in which she said her problems were escalating and was left with no option but to take her life and that of*

*her children. She had serious health problems that had resulted in occasional fights with her partner (Matlala, 2012). ”*

*“A woman threw his son into a dam and hanged herself to a tree, she left a note in which she said “I have been ill for some time and it would not help and I am suffering”. She struggled to support her children as she was unemployed (Nilemo, 2011). ”*

Based on the above statements, it appears that some of the domestic violence incidents are as a result of physical illness.

#### **4.4.6 Jealousy**

Some of the perpetrators seemed to have been motivated by jealousy to commit the domestic violence acts. Below are some statements describing how jealousy influenced domestic violence perpetration.

*“A man allegedly got jealous after he found his wife in bed with another man and he locked himself and his two sons in their house, doused it with petrol and then set it alight. The couple were going through marriage counselling (Tshehle, 2012d). ”*

*“A man was jealous as he had suspicions that his wife was having an affair with his brother. He caused an inferno that killed his three sons and left him and his wife in a coma. The men changed drastically after spending years in jail for crimes, including car theft (Sithole, Dipa & Makhaya, 2012). ”*

*“A man stabbed one of his twin daughters and throttled the other until she was unconscious. He admitted that he did so in a fit of jealous rage as he had always suspected that their mother might have been having an affair (Molatlhwa, 2011). ”*

*“A man threatened to kill his wife if she tried to get a job and she was found dead after she got a job. The jealous husband wouldn't even let his wife get a job in case she met another man (Kekana, 2012). ”*

*“A man used to assault his wife because she was taking care of her sister's baby as she was at school. He reported that he was jealous of the child because his wife didn't have time for him anymore (Makoba, 2011). ”*

Based on the above statements, it seems that domestic violence is caused by jealousy. It appears that infidelity may also lead to violent behaviour in some of the male perpetrators of violence. A husband

may also kill the wife because she has got a job. Other females become victims when a male perpetrator feels that the wife's attention has shifted to someone else (For example, i.e a child).

#### 4.4.7 Deviant behaviour

The results of the current study show that some of the perpetrators of domestic violence are abusive, and that the violence had been going on for a long time. Some of the perpetrators were ex-convicts who had committed other crimes, including acts of domestic violence. The following statements describe the types of abuse that are continuously experienced and the criminal behaviour of the perpetrators:

*"A man bashed his son's head against a stoep, the child died instantly he then stabbed his other son six times on the head. The man abused his wife physically for the past 13 years (Mahlangu, 2012)."*

*"An angry man, who always threatened to kill his wife and their daughter, shot the child to death. The man had abused his daughter sexually and he would also assault her. He also abused his wife emotionally, sexually and physically (South African Press Association, 2012d)."*

*"A man was jealous as he had suspicions that his wife was having an affair with his brother. He caused an inferno that killed his three sons and left him and his wife in a coma. The men changed drastically after spending years in jail for crimes, including car theft (Sithole, Dipa & Makhaya, 2012)."*

*"A man who had once committed murder shot his son (Ratsatsi, 2011)."*

*"A prophet who was sometimes violent towards the wife and the kids went to the bush with his wife during the night. The woman told her son that they were going there because a prophecy the husband made was about to come true. Later that night the husband called his wife's brother and told him to rehearse his sister's favourite hymn to sing to her funeral. The woman's body was found in the bush, she was killed with an axe (Langa, 2011)."*

Based on the above statements, it seems that domestic violence perpetrators are abusive in nature as the abuse is experienced more than once. The perpetrators of domestic violence appear to have a higher likelihood to commit other crimes like murder and theft.

#### 4.4.8 Other salient psychological themes

It does appear that domestic violence affects both the people who experience it and those who witness these acts. Below are statements that show how victims and indirect victims of domestic violence are affected by the violence:

*“A woman had a heated argument with her younger sister about her health, the next day she took all her pills and threw them away. She then took her kids (8 and 4 year olds) to a dam. She allegedly threw her eldest daughter in to the dam and then herself while holding her youngest daughter. The police were called and they managed to rescue the youngest daughter. The surviving child was shaken and she was admitted in hospital for anxiety. The class teacher of the girl who died said the whole class was on tears after hearing the news and she could not teach them as they were crying (Tshehle, 2012a).”*

*“A man shot his wife twice in the face during an argument. The victim was undergoing counselling (South African Press Association, 2012c).”*

*“A school teacher was shot by her husband in front of pupils and teachers. Some of the teachers were still afraid to go to the staffroom, saying it reminds them of the shooting. The school arranged counselling sessions for pupils and teachers who were adversely affected by the incident (Matlala, 2011).”*

*“Siblings who were starved and assaulted for 20 years by their father allegedly bashed him with an iron rod. They saw their father abuse their mother many times and she was assaulted to such an extent that she is mentally disabled (Machakela, 2012).”*

*“A woman said for 20 years her husband would pull her out of bed at night, rip her clothes off, beat her with a sjambok until she bled and he would rape her in front of their children. When he stopped abusing his wife, he started to abuse their 14-year old daughter, insisting that his 12-year old son watch. After the perpetrator was arrested, his 12-year old son was accused of raping a 9-year old girl. The entire family was receiving counselling (Langa, 2012).”*

Based on the above statements, it seems that domestic violence occurs as a result of anger. It affects the people who witness it and victims emotionally. It also affects the mental health of some of the victims. Some of the people who witness domestic violence end up being perpetrators.

## **4.5 Summary of results**

### **4.5.1 Demographic details**

The majority of cases of domestic violence involved only one perpetrator and most of them were adults. With regard to gender, most perpetrators were males. The majority of the perpetrators were African/Black, whilst a small number was made up of individuals classified as white. 16.3% of perpetrators had passed matric and 26.5% were skilled while only (17.3%) of the perpetrators were unskilled.

Most of domestic violence cases involved only one victim (72.4%) with those involving more than two victims accounting for less than 25%. The majority of victims were African/Black. A high percentage (55.1 %) of victims were adults. Thirty three percent (33.7%) of the victims were children. With regard to gender, most of victims were females. Regarding the educational level of the victims, a high percentage of victims were below matric (42.9%), while only 7.1% were reflected to have passed matric. Most of victims were unskilled (45.9%), whilst for a considerable number of cases there was no reflection of the level of skill.

### **4.5.2 Emerging psychological themes**

The results of the current study indicate that a number of couples were unable to solve conflicts in their relationships. They had relationship/marital problems and they often had arguments which sometimes got violent and one partner would get angry and victimize the other partner during the argument or later. In other incidents children were killed because of the fights or arguments between their parents. Some of the mental health problems associated with perpetration of domestic violence in this study include acute psychosis, major depression and borderline personality disorder. Other individuals were found to have perpetrated domestic violence because of jealousy.

In these particular cases, partners were victimized because of suspicions of partner infidelity. Substance abuse was associated with perpetration of domestic violence. Some of the perpetrators were reported to have been under the influence of substances at the time when they committed the criminal acts of domestic violence.

The results suggest that a number of the victims were not experiencing the violence for the first time. It has been going on for some years. Some people perpetrated domestic violence because of they were unable to cope with some illnesses, while others perpetrated domestic violence after finding out that they have some illnesses. The results further showed that domestic violence can have adverse psychological consequences for, not only for those who experience it, but also those who are exposed to it.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the resultss of the study. It appears that there are certain characteristics that are associated with perpetratoion of domestic violence wich include being male, having post matric education and being skilled. Most of the victims are women, below matric and they are unskilled. The mental health problems that are associated with domestic violence include, acute psychosis, major depression and borderline personality disorder.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the results of the study by relating them to the disinhibition theory and existing literature. The demographic characteristics of the perpetrators and victims are discussed. The psychological themes that emerged from the newspaper representations of domestic violence.

#### **5.2 Demographic factors and domestic violence**

The results of the current study revealed that the majority (70.4%) of perpetrators of domestic violence were men. These findings are consistent with results of previous studies that have focused on issues related to domestic violence (Abeya, Afework & Yalew, 2011; Babu & Kar, 2009; Semahegn, Belachew & Abdulahi, 2013). Perpetration of domestic violence against women has repeatedly been found to be common in most countries. Some studies have shown that perpetration of domestic violence by men against women is highly prevalent (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Singh, Tolman, Walton, Chermack & Cunningham, 2014).

The results support earlier studies conducted in South Africa which showed that 30.6% of perpetrators of domestic violence are males with problem drinking and they use drugs (Peltzer & Pengpid, 2013). Other researchers found that the rates of perpetrating domestic violence are similar for women and men in South Africa (Gass, Stein, Williams & Seedat, 2011). Another research done in South Africa found that perpetrators of domestic violence are more likely to be females (Stein et al., 2009). In addition, Lee, Stefani and Park (2014) found that men report perpetration of physical violence against their wives, while

women report perpetration of verbal intimate partner violence against their partners.

Consistent with some previous studies (Abeya et al., 2011; Semahegn et al., 2013) the present study has also indicated that educational and occupational status are associated with perpetration of domestic violence. Results of the current study indicate that most perpetrators of domestic violence have higher education and skills (16.3% of the perpetrators their level of education was post matric while 26.5% of the perpetrators were skilled).

The results of the current study are in contrast with other studies done in South Africa. For example, Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher and Hoffman (2006) showed that having no post school training is associated with violence against an intimate partner. In addition, Stein et al. (2009) showed that perpetration of domestic violence is associated with less education and lower income. Another study conducted in Ethiopia found that women whose partner's educational level is above grade 12 are less likely to experience domestic violence as compared to women whose partner are illiterate (Feseha, G/Mariam & Gerbaba, 2012). However, some research done in South Africa found no association between male domestic violence and occupation (Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 2002). Similar results were found in Nicaragua. Ellsberg, Pena, Herrera, Liljestrand and Winkvist (1999) did not find an association between spousal abuse and education or occupation.

### **5.3 Psychological themes**

The current study found that some of the cases of domestic violence were associated with mental health problems like major depression and acute psychosis on the part of the perpetrators. This seems to be consistent with findings of previous studies that have suggested that there is a link between domestic violence and mental illness. For

example, a study by Friedman, Loue, Goldman and Mendez (2011) found that severe mental illness is associated with intimate partner violence. Similar results were reported by Marshall, Panuzio and Taft (2005) in an earlier study that suggested that depression on the part of the perpetrator is related to perpetration of intimate partner violence. The present study also suggested that there could be some link between borderline personality and acts of domestic violence. This finding lends support to previous studies by Whisman and Schonbrun (2009) who found that borderline personality disorder symptoms are positively associated with marital violence. Similar results were reported by Stuart, Moore, Gordon, Ramsey and Kahler (2006) in an earlier study.

Based on the results of the present study, it can be suggested that there are some triggers that tend to ignite domestic violence. These include marital problems and arguments that at times result in physical and emotional partner violence. Similar findings were reported by Jewekes et al. (2002) who found that verbal marital conflicts can lead to physical violence against an intimate partner. The same results were also reported in another study conducted by Eng et al. (2010) who found that more frequent spousal disputes could lead to physical and emotional violence. Stuart et al. (2006) have also found that poor emotional regulation is a predictor of intimate partner violence.

The newspaper articles did also suggest that, in some cases, the perpetrators of domestic violence attempt to commit suicide after the domestic violence act. This is in line with the study done by Chan, Staus, Brownridge, Tiwari and Leung (2008) who found that perpetrators of domestic violence are at an increased risk of suicidal ideations. This is also supported by Harris et al. (2011) who found that men who use violence against an intimate partner are more likely to be suicidal. Logan, Hill, Black, Crosby, Karch, Barnes and Lubell (2008) reported that having a history of intimate partner conflict is common among most of the perpetrators of homicide-suicide and that homicide-

suicide perpetrated by males is mostly preceded by intimate partner conflict/violence.

Marshall et al. (2005) found that antisocial characteristics are correlates of intimate partner violence. Similarly in the current study the findings do suggest that some of the perpetrators may have displayed some antisocial tendencies. Stuart et al. (2006) also found that antisocial personality is related to domestic violence among women arrested for intimate partner violence

The current study suggests that substance abuse is a predictor of domestic violence. The use of drugs and alcohol use/dependence is related to perpetration of domestic violence. This finding lends support to a South African study by Pretorius and Botha (2009) which found that women reported that alcohol or drug abuse had contributed to fights in their families which turned violent. In Kenya it was also reported that in some cases, a husband's use of alcohol may lead to physical and sexual violence (Kimuna and Djamba, 2008). Previous research has found a link between substance use and jealousy with perpetration of domestic violence. For example, Foran and O'Leary (2008) found that jealous men were likely to show the strongest association between problem drinking and intimate partner violence. In the current study a link was also found between substance use and jealousy and the perpetration of domestic violence.

#### **5.4 Disinhibition theory**

According to the disinhibition theory (as cited in Van Rooy & Mufune, n.d) alcohol consumption is linked to violent behaviour as it releases an individual's violent impulses and tendencies, and suppresses inhibitions. Alcohol affects the central nervous system by releasing inhibitions that depress brain function or suppress super-ego function, thereby allowing the expression of rage Kantor and Straus, 1987 (as cited in Van Rooy & Mufune, n.d).

The current study seems to be consistent with previous findings that have suggested that perpetration of domestic violence is associated with alcohol consumption. For most of the cases reflected in the newspaper articles studied, it does appear that a number of the incidents of domestic violence were as a result of being under the influence of alcohol. This suggests that some of the perpetrators of domestic violence portrayed in the newspaper articles may have been violent due to the influence of alcohol.

Consisted with this is a study done by Abramsky et al., (2011) which found that problematic alcohol use is associated with intimate partner violence. Similarly, Lipsky and Caetano (2011) found that alcohol abuse is associated with intimate partner violence perpetration. Furthermore, having a partner with alcohol drinking problems is associated with psychological partner abuse (Peltzer & Pengpid, 2013).

## **5.5 Some emerging hypotheses**

- (a) Perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to be under the influence of alcohol when they commit the violent act.
- (b) Perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to suffer from mental health problems including, acute psychosis, borderline personality disorder and major depression.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. It does appear that domestic violence is associated with mental health problems and substance abuse.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 Summary of findings**

The results of the study showed that the majority of the perpetrators of domestic violence were men with higher education and skills, while the majority of the victims of domestic violence were women with little education and skills. Assault, attempted murder and murder were found to be the forms of violence perpetrated against the victims. The majority of the perpetrators were represented in the newspaper articles as emotionally troubled, passively aggressive, mentally disturbed and socially deviant. The majority of the mental health problems that were associated with the perpetrators of domestic violence included depression, borderline personality and acute psychosis. A number of triggers were found to lead to domestic violence. These included family arguments, jealousy, substance abuse, and criminal behaviour.

#### **6.2 Limitations of the study**

According to Bowen (2009) archival research has its own limitations. For example, data from archived documents may provide insufficient detail as documents are produced for some purpose other than research, and are created independent of a research agenda (Bowen, 2009). Similarly, the present study was confronted with the same limitations. For example, in a number of cases, the information gleaned from the newspaper articles was incomplete. This means that the results of the present study should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Another limitation of the present study relates to the fact that only two daily newspapers that have a predominantly African/Black readership were selected as sources of data for the present study. This suggests

that the results obtained may probably be skewed to reflect their readership patterns.

### **6.3 Contributions and recommendations**

Cavaglioni (2009) has pointed out that the media has the potential to portray social and political issues to the extent that policy makers may be prompted to develop appropriate policies. According to Pollak and Kubrin (2007) critical attention to how crime is reported in the news is necessary given the way in which the media represents these events heavily influences the understanding of crime in society. It is hoped that the present study has managed to provide some useful insights regarding the psychological profiles of perpetrators of domestic violence. The study further, confirmed the hypotheses that perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to be under the influence of alcohol when committing the violent act. Another hypothesis that was confirmed is that perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to suffer from mental health problems. The researcher is also hopeful that the results could provide some useful information to the criminal justice system about some of the characteristics of offenders as reported in the newspapers. This could in turn help the government to consider these characteristics when developing policies and intervention programmes related to domestic violence.

Based on the results of the present study, it is recommended that anger and stress management be modules that are included in government programmes that are aimed at prevention of domestic violence. Furthermore, it is recommended that more larger studies focusing on the perpetrators on the one hand and victims on the other, be conducted to understand this phenomenon that has negative impact on individuals, families and communities. For the media houses, it is recommended that they should also focus on representing domestic violence, not only as a public health problem, but also as a societal problem that needs collective intervention.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the summary of findings of the study. The forms of violence perpetrated against the victims include, assault, attempted murder and murder. Domestic violence is associated with mental health problems and substance abuse. An acknowledgement of the limitations of the study and paths for policy makers when addressing domestic violence. Furthermore recommendations of the study are also highlighted.

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**APPENDIX: A**

**Data record sheet**

**1. Name of newspaper**

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**2. Date of publication of the newspaper article**

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**3. Title of the newspaper article**

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**4. Description of the violence incident and the method used**

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**5. Category of crime (e.g. murder, sexual offense, etc)**

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**6. Perpetrator profile**

**6.1. Number of perpetrators involved**

One perpetrator  Two perpetrators

More than 2 perpetrators  Unspecified

**6.2. Age of perpetrator**

Child  Adult  Unspecified

**6.3. Gender of perpetrator**

Male  Female  Unspecified

**6.4. Level of education of perpetrator**

Below matric  Post matric

Unspecified

**6.5. Occupation of perpetrator**

Skilled  Unskilled  Unspecified

**6.6. Geographical location of the incident**

District  Province

**6.7. Racial classification of perpetrator**

African/Black  Indian/Black  Coloured/Black

White  Other  Unspecified

**7. Victim profile**

**7.1. Number of victims**

One victim  Two victims

More than 2 victims  Unspecified

**7.2. Age of victim**

Child  Adult  Unspecified

**7.3. Gender of victim:**

Male  Female  Unspecified

**7.4. Level of education of victim**

Below matric  Post matric   
Unspecified

**7.5. Occupation of victim**

Skilled  Unskilled  Unspecified

**7.6. Racial classification of victim**

African/Black  Indian/Black  Coloured/Black   
White  Other  Unspecified

**8. Relationship between victim and perpetrator**

Spouse  Parent  Sibling   
Other  Unspecified

**9. Media representation of the perpetrator as:**

Suffering from mental illness   
Unable to manage emotions   
Passive transgressor   
Social deviant   
Other

**Notes**

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**10. Media representation of the crime committed as:**

Premeditated act

Impulsive act

A result of extenuating factors

Other

**Notes**

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**11. Description of other salient psychological themes**

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**APPENDIX: B**

**LETTER TO REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO ARCHIVED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.**

Department of Psychology

University of Limpopo

Private Bag X 1106

Sovenga

0727

Date:

Head of Publications

*Sowetan*

PO Box 2518

Polokwane

0700

**RE: REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO PREVIOUS NEWSPAPER ARTICLES THAT CONTAINS VOICE FROM JANUARY 2011 TO DECEMBER 2012.**

My name is Raisibe Promise Mashabela and I am a Masters student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Limpopo (Turf loop Campus). I am conducting research on the trends of violence as portrayed in the *Sowetan* from January 2011 to December 2012.

I do hereby request to have access to all your previous newspaper articles that contains domestic violence from January 2011 to December 2012.

Yours Faithfully

Ms R.P Mashabela

\_\_\_\_\_

Masters Student

Date

Dr G.N Lesolang

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor

Date

Prof T Sodi

\_\_\_\_\_

Co- Supervisor

Date

**APPENDIX: C**

**LETTER TO REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO ARCHIVED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.**

Department of Psychology

University of Limpopo

Private Bag X 1106

Sovenga

0727

Date:

Head of Publications

*Daily Sun*

PO Box 121

Auckland Park

2006

**RE: REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO PREVIOUS NEWSPAPER ARTICLES THAT CONTAINS VOICE FROM JANUARY 2011 TO DECEMBER 2012.**

My name is Raisibe Promise Mashabela and I am a Masters student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Limpopo (Turf loop Campus). I am conducting research on the trends of violence as portrayed in the *Daily Sun* from January 2011 to December 2012.

I do hereby request to have access to all your previous newspaper articles that contains domestic violence from January 2011 to December 2012.

Yours Faithfully

Ms R.P Mashabela

\_\_\_\_\_

Masters Student

Date

Dr G.N Lesolang

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor

Date

Prof T Sodi

\_\_\_\_\_

Co- Supervisor

Date