

**THE EFFECT OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN IN  
TAFELKOP, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## DECLARATION

I **NKADIMENG CASHLINE**, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation titled “**The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa**” is my own original work and have not submitted it before or to any other university or institution of higher learning. I certify that every source I used for this research is cited in the text and listed in the reference list.



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NKADIMENG C (MS)

12 December 2023

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late childhood friend, Ms L Nkosi who grew up witnessing domestic violence at home and passed on while we were still at the university without sharing her experiences with the rest of the world, as she would have wanted to.

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Domestic violence is a widespread problem that has serious consequences, especially for children who experience it. When children see or go through these upsetting situations, it leaves them with emotional scars that affect different parts of their lives. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

**Methodology:** This study used a qualitative approach and an exploratory research design. Purposive sampling was used to select 13 children between the age of 8-18 years from Matsepe Drop-in Centre to participate in this study. The sample size was depended on data saturation. One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants using semi-structured interview guide. Data was analyzed using Tesch's 8 steps of open coding method. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The study was approved by TREC (University of Limpopo Ethics Committee), and permission to conduct the study was granted. Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of participants were assured. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior their participation.

**Results:** This study found that children who see domestic violence get scared, and this causes problems like wanting to run away from home, avoiding arguments, and feeling emotions like being really mad or sad. Additionally, the study found that when children witness domestic violence, they might develop issues with anger. This can show up as bullying or being aggressive, feeling frustrated a lot, acting out in a mean way, and having big tantrums. The research also showed that children feeling shame or guilt during domestic violence might face long-term effects. They might isolate themselves, struggle to focus, lose interest in things they liked before, and even skip school to cope with these feelings of shame or guilt.

**Conclusion:** This study highlights the severe impact of domestic violence on children, causing fear and various negative outcomes such as anger issues, bullying, and emotional struggles. The findings indicate the importance of early interventions led by professionals such as social workers and school counsellors. Community-wide

awareness campaigns are also recommended to educate the public about the harmful effects of domestic violence on children and the crucial role of intervention and support.

**Keywords:** Anger; children, fear; isolation; witnessing domestic violence

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

GBVCC: Gender-Based Violence Command Centre

GBV: Gender Based Violence

IPV: Intimate Partner Violence

NCGBVF: National Council against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

OVC: Orphans and Vulnerable Children

WHO: World Health Organization

## **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **Children**

Any individual under the age of eighteen is considered a child (South Africa, 2005). Children in this study will be defined as individuals under the age of eighteen who reside in homes where they are exposed to parental domestic violence.

### **Domestic violence**

According to Fahmy, Williamson and Pantazis (2016), domestic violence is any abuse or violence committed by one person against another in a domestic environment, such as a marriage or cohabitation. For this study, domestic violence refers to violence or abuse witnessed or experienced by children between married or cohabiting partners irrespective of their gender.

### **Effect**

Hess (2016) defines effect as a change that happens as a result of an action or another cause. In this study, effect refers to children who witness domestic violence in their homes in terms of their attitude, knowledge, perceptions, and patterns of behavioural change.

### **Perpetrator**

Any individual who starts abuse or engages in domestic violence is considered a perpetrator (Munge, 2020). Any parent or caregiver who mistreats or abuses another parent in the presence of children at home will be considered a perpetrator for the purposes of this study.

### **Victim**

According to Munge (2020), a victim is any person who gets violated, harmed or injured when an act of domestic violence takes place. For this study, a victim is any parent or caregiver who suffers from an act of domestic violence at home.

## **Witnessing domestic violence**

Witnessing is an act of seeing, observing or hearing first hand evidence of some event (Barner & Carney, 2020). For this study, witnessing refers to seeing or observing domestic violence occurring within the household.



## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

This chapter serves as an introductory foundation for the study, providing essential background information, detailing the problem statement, outlining the study's aim and objectives, posing the central research question, and emphasizing the significance of the study. Additionally, it conducts a thorough analysis of the impact of witnessing domestic violence among children, offering a situational overview of this problem within a global, African, and South African context.

Domestic violence, encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, emerges as a recognized public health issue marked by uncertainty and exploitation. Particularly within intimate relationships and immediate social circles, many women endure the dual burden of psychological and physical violence, transforming this issue into a serious health concern. Notably, the reverberations of domestic violence extend beyond the direct victim to encompass the entire family, significantly affecting children as well (Bickerstaff, 2018).

Holmes (2016) underscores the global magnitude of the issue, estimating that around 275 million children worldwide witness domestic violence annually. The repercussions for these children are profound, placing them at an elevated risk of becoming victims of abuse themselves. Tinet's (2017) exploration of domestic violence in the United States reveals alarming statistics, with approximately 10 million children witnessing such violence within their households. The 2021 Census report from the United Kingdom reinforces this concern, indicating around 130,000 children residing in high-risk domestic violence households, with a staggering 62% directly experiencing abuse from the perpetrator (Office for National Statistics, 2019).

The African continent, as illuminated by Gelles (2016), grapples with domestic violence as a major social problem, rooted in cultural practices, patriarchy, socialization, and gender roles prescribed by society. A study by Chadwick-Charuma, Tsvere and Mutopo (2022) highlights the substantial prevalence of domestic violence in Sub-Saharan Africa,

where an estimated 34.9 to 38.2 million children have witnessed such incidents in their lifetime. In South Africa, the World Health Organization's (2020) findings suggest that 60,000 women and children fall victim to domestic violence, although accurate statistical data is challenging to obtain due to underreporting. However, a United Nations Children's Fund South Africa report (UNICEF SA, 2018) reveals a staggering reality, with 352 children violently losing their lives between October and December 2021, implying that nearly four children succumb to violence each day.

Turning the focus to Limpopo province, specifically in Sekhukhune District, Mukwevho (2017) notes a concerning rise in domestic violence cases against children, despite campaigns and marches by concerned residents. Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), in partnership with the Department of Social Development, conduct awareness campaigns to educate community members, children, leaders, and stakeholders about the negative impact of domestic violence (Van Niekerk, & Matthias, 2019). These campaigns aim to help identify victims and provide solutions to address domestic violence. Despite these efforts in Sekhukhune, reported cases of domestic violence, child abuse, and neglect at one-stop centers remain frequent, indicating that the awareness campaigns have not achieved their desired outcome.

According to statistics from the South African Police Service as reported by Ndhlovu (2022), there were approximately 10,818 reported cases of domestic violence in the Sekhukhune district during the first three months of 2022. Worryingly, 15% of these cases involve children bearing witness to violence committed by an intimate partner or spouse within the household. The Thuthuzela Care Centre in Groblersdal, designed to prevent and support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse, records an average of 120 new cases of domestic violence each month (Mukwevho, 2017). This comprehensive overview sets the stage for the study, underscoring the urgency and gravity of investigating the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo province. The multifaceted nature of this issue demands a nuanced examination to inform targeted interventions and support systems for the affected children.

Guidelines aimed at addressing domestic violence in South Africa include the National Council Against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill (NCGBVF), which originates from the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP (Interim Steering Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (South Africa), 2020). The NCGBVF, a statutory council, provides strategic leadership and coordination for gender violence initiatives to several government departments including Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities; Justice and Constitutional Development; Social Development; Health; Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs; and the South African Police Service. The primary objective is to empower women and girls to live free from domestic violence (Gelles, 2016). However, these guidelines primarily focus on women, youth, and people with disabilities, and do not specifically address the protection of children who witness domestic violence.

The Department of Social Development has also taken steps to combat domestic violence by setting up the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC), operating 24/7 to offer telephonic assistance to victims, providing professional psychosocial support and trauma counselling services. Additionally, the national Department of Social Development allocates funding to various non-governmental organizations to meet the needs of women and children affected by domestic violence (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018). The Children's Act 38 of 2005, introduced by the South African government, advocates for the protection of children from harm, abuse, and neglect. This legislation imposes an obligation on all state organs, officials, employees, and representatives to respect, protect, and promote the rights of children (South Africa, 2005).

Domestic violence extends beyond isolated incidents, becoming a systemic issue that affects families across socioeconomic and cultural boundaries (Lloyd, 2018). The problem encompasses not only the direct victims of abuse but also the silent witnesses – the children who bear witness to the tumultuous scenes within their households. Unfortunately, the incidences of domestic violence are not reported, implying that it has been accepted as a 'way of life', which has implications on the children witnessing the scene. The impact of domestic violence on children is a critical concern that demands

comprehensive exploration. Children exposed to domestic violence often face immediate and long-term consequences, influencing their emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Lloyd, 2018; Doroudchi *et al.*, 2023). Research indicates that the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children is both widespread and underreported. Despite this, children who witness domestic violence often lack effective support from public services, as they are required to produce evidence of being affected by domestic violence (Bickerstaff, 2018). This study seeks to explore the multifaceted effects of witnessing domestic violence on children, aiming to shed light on the challenges faced by these young individuals. This study is conducted with the aim of having baseline information for contributing to the development of targeted interventions, support systems, and community-based strategies to mitigate the long-term consequences and promote the well-being of the affected children. Through this exploration, we aspire to foster a safer and more nurturing environment for the young residents of Tafelkop, laying the foundation for positive change within the community.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The researcher is a social worker by profession, and in dealing with cases marital disputes, conflict resolution, and family interventions, the researcher noted existence of domestic violence cases. However, a significant gap was identified in recognizing the impact of such violence on children who witness distressing incidents. Thorough assessments revealed instances where children were inadvertently exposed to domestic violence, either through auditory experiences or direct witnessing from another room. Moreover, some cases were referred by school principals citing children's behavioural problems, high rates of school absenteeism, and a lack of concentration in the classroom. Upon closer examination, a discernible connection emerged, linking these issues to instances of domestic violence within the children's homes.

Therefore, the community of Tafelkop in Limpopo Province, South Africa, is grappling with a pervasive issue that extends beyond the confines of individual households - the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children. The prevalence of domestic violence in the area raises significant concerns about the well-being and future prospects of the young population exposed to such traumatic experiences. The problem

at hand is the profound and multifaceted effect that witnessing domestic violence has on children in Tafelkop. Domestic violence, encompassing physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, casts a long shadow on the lives of these children, influencing their psychological, emotional and social development. This suggests that the effects of domestic violence on these children are long lasting, can persist into adulthood, have an adverse effect on their psychological health, and may even result in their demise or developmental impairments. This issue demands immediate attention and comprehensive exploration to understand the specific challenges faced by children in Tafelkop who bear witness to domestic violence within their homes. The problem is compounded by a lack of sufficient community-based support systems and interventions in Tafelkop, leaving children without the necessary resources to cope with and overcome the challenges associated with witnessing domestic violence. The inadequacy of specialized services for children who are victims of domestic violence, coupled with the absence of professional services due to comrade deployment in South Africa, present a considerable challenge for children witnessing domestic violence in their homes (Bickerstaff, 2018).

### **1.3 Aim**

The aim of this study is to explore and describe the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

### **1.4 Research question**

What is the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province?

### **1.5 Objectives**

- To explore emotional and behavioural reactions exhibited by children who witness domestic violence, considering aspects such as child development and social challenges.
- To explore effects experienced by children who have witnessed domestic violence, considering aspects such as interpersonal relationships, and academic achievement.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The insights gained from this study hold significant potential benefits for various stakeholders in Tafelkop who are actively engaged with children in their daily lives. This includes individuals working and living with children, enabling them to recognize and interpret signs indicating whether a child is experiencing abuse or witnessing domestic violence based on their behavioural patterns. By providing a deeper understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children, the findings can serve as a valuable resource for those entrusted with the welfare of children.

Furthermore, the Department of Social Development will gain substantial insights from this study, as the findings can contribute to the development and refinement of programmes and policies specifically tailored to address the needs of children who are victims of abuse or witnesses to domestic violence within their households. The identification of these needs can inform the creation of targeted interventions aimed at fostering the well-being of affected children and improving their overall life outcomes.

Additionally, the study findings underscore the necessity for the Department of Social Development to consider the establishment of shelters and safe havens within Limpopo Province. This insight becomes crucial in prioritizing funding for Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) that actively address the unique needs of children affected by domestic violence. The study serves as a call to action, advocating for the creation of resources and support systems to provide immediate assistance and refuge for vulnerable children in the region.

Beyond local impact, the findings of this study can also contribute to academic knowledge. Scholars may leverage these insights to conduct future research, delving deeper into understanding how children are affected by and develop coping mechanisms in response to domestic violence within their homes. This opens avenues for robust evaluations of specialist programs designed to support children affected by domestic violence, ensuring that interventions are effective and responsive to the unique challenges these children face.

Moreover, the study suggests a need for further research that explores children's perspectives on their experiences of domestic violence. By amplifying the voices of children and considering their viewpoints, future studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the nuanced ways in which domestic violence impacts their lives. Overall, the findings of this study serve as a catalyst for both immediate action and on-going research initiatives aimed at addressing and ameliorating the effects of domestic violence on children in Tafelkop and beyond.

## **1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and background**

This chapter includes an overview of the study's goals and objectives, problem statement, background information, and significance of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter will examine the theoretical framework and the literature review that informed the study as well as the contributions that other researchers made regarding children witnessing domestic violence at home.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology**

This chapter consists of the discussion regarding research methodology and provides a brief description of qualitative research approach as well as exploratory research design which were followed in this study. This chapter also focused on purposive sampling to get responses for the research questions from the participants. Moreover, this chapter described the use of semi-structured interviews to gather information from participants as well as the ethical standards that were upheld.

### **Chapter 4: Presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings**

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the participants. The findings of this study were explained using themes and sub-themes from the information which was shared by the participants regarding their experiences of witnessing domestic violence episodes at home.

## **Chapter 5: Summary, recommendations and conclusions**

This chapter provided an overview of the study's findings and offered conclusions based on the developed themes and sub-themes. Along with offering suggestions for future research and professional training pertaining to child witnesses of domestic violence. This chapter also addressed the social ill of children witnessing domestic violence.

### **1.8 SUMMARY**

An overview of domestic violence and its connections to children's lives and aspirations worldwide, in Africa, and in different regions of South Africa were outlined in this chapter. The problem statement was expanded upon in this chapter, along with the purpose and objectives of the study. The next chapter includes a review of the literature on the causes of domestic violence, a global overview of domestic violence, the effects of domestic violence on children, the theories that explain domestic violence, and the laws that address domestic violence.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses literature review related domestic violence, which is sourced from various databases such as articles, journals, newspapers as well as books which are presented narratively. Domestic violence has not been traditionally seen as a social problem until the middle of the 1800s when it became socially acceptable to physically punish a spouse in the US and other countries. The effect that domestic violence has on both the victim and the children who witness it is still underestimated by the society even today. Domestic violence exists in all socioeconomic groups, irrespective of whether an individual is wealthy, poor or educated. This suggests that everyone is at risk of becoming a victim of domestic violence (Barner & Carney, 2020). The literature review focuses on the description of domestic violence, factors that contribute to domestic violence, overview of domestic violence in the world, in the African continent as well as the contextualization of the effect of domestic violence in South Africa. This chapter also discusses the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children, theories in understanding the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children as well as legislations guiding the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children.

### **2.2 Description of domestic violence**

Domestic violence is defined by Bates, Schule, Islam and Islam (2019) as any harm done to a person against their will that results in power imbalances that take advantage of differences between men and women as well as between males and females. These scholars further argued that domestic violence can take various forms including physical abuse, socio-cultural, sexual, economical or psychological. Furthermore, these researchers contended that domestic violence is a worldwide epidemic that affects many families, communities, societies and cultures. As a result, many women and girls, and to a lesser extent men and boys, may experience some type of domestic violence in their lifetime.

Domestic violence presents itself in a variety of ways and involves a diverse range of perpetrators, including intimate partners and family members, strangers, and

institutional actors such as police, teachers, and military (Bates et al., 2019). Domestic violence is seen as the most common type of domestic violence to which children are exposed. Notably, a review of generally accepted statistics indicates that roughly one in every three women in the globe has been subjected to psychological, physical or sexual relationship violence at some point in their life. A common example of domestic violence is a woman being beaten for failing to return home early or make dinner on time. By acting aggressively towards the woman, the man would be demonstrating his manhood. Furthermore, domestic violence can be aimed towards children, adults or the elderly. In traditional patriarchal societies, older women are expected to care for their children and grandchildren (Bates et al., 2019).

### **2.3 Factors that contribute to domestic violence**

Depending on the kind of violence, there are many different and contributing factors to domestic violence. Jewkes (2016) claims that there are many different reasons why domestic violence occurs, and that traditional views about women and children around the world, coupled with the environments in which people live, contribute to the violence's continuation. The following is a summary of the causes of domestic violence provided by the World Health Organization (2018):

#### **2.3.1 Poverty**

Njenga (2019) posits that financial insecurity is a contributing factor to domestic violence, and that when a man is unable to assert his authority through intellectual or economic means, he will often resort to physical force. Families that experience domestic violence are often also victims of poverty. The researcher is of the opinion that high levels of poverty cause economic stressors in the relationship, which in turn increase the risk of domestic violence crimes committed against women and children because of low income in the household. Furthermore, failure for the couple to communicate about family planning on the part of poverty-stricken couples caused the number of children being born in the relationship and as a result, men were unable to fulfil their children's needs and resorted to violence against their partners.

Spencer (2018) asserts that there is a greater chance of domestic violence exposure for children when they live in poverty. Poor women are more financially dependent on men.

One of the primary reasons why women and girls remain in violent marriages and jeopardize the wellbeing of their children who witness domestic abuse is that they lack the money to leave, find shelter or buy food.

In addition, Adams, Tolman, Sullivan and Kennedy (2018) averred that women who live in poverty are more reliant on men and are susceptible to being taken advantage of and manipulated by them. Not only that, but poverty also contributes to and results from violence against women. Women who are impoverished are vulnerable to violence and are kept in poverty by it. The inability of women who experience domestic abuse to support themselves and their children is a result of their loss of income and own financial capability.

### **2.3.2 History of Child abuse**

Bodkin, Pivnick, Bondy, Ziegler, Martin, Jernigan and Kouyoumdjian (2019) state that a person's history of childhood exposure to domestic violence is a significant factor in both the victimization and perpetration of domestic violence in women and men. According to Bodkin et al. (2019), women and children who experienced abuse as children make up between 12.8% and 5.4% of the population overall. Furthermore, the study's conclusions demonstrate that men who experienced frequent physical abuse as children are more likely to continue using domestic violence against their partners. According to Pickup (2019), about 75% of men report having experienced violence and gender inequality as children. Therefore, they run a very high risk of continuing to abuse their partners domestically. Heise (2017) provides evidence to bolster the aforementioned claim, stating that childhood exposure to violence is thought to be a major contributing factor to intimate partner violence on an individual basis. This determinant makes a distinction between three scenarios: witnessing marital violence as a child in one's home family, experiencing childhood abuse, and having a father who is absent or unsupportive. He goes on to say that, for violent adult males, witnessing violence as a child in their family of origin was the most reliable predictor of husband-to-wife violence.

The researcher is of the view that children who witness or experience domestic violence are more likely to pick up on the idea that using violence to settle disputes between

people are appropriate. Consequently, girls who were exposed to domestic violence as children are more likely to become victims of their husbands, while boys who witnessed domestic violence episodes at home as children are more likely to abuse women as adults. Childhood exposure to domestic violence has a profound emotional impact that puts people at a significantly increased risk of becoming abusers themselves (Bodkin et al., 2019).

### **2.3.3 Alcohol abuse**

Collings, Kroutil, Roland and Gurrera (2017) state that alcohol abuse is another factor that affects both genders and contributes to domestic violence. People are less able to reason critically and logically when they are under the influence. Consequently, they resort to fighting as a way to resolve their issues. According to Pickup (2019), regular episodes of domestic violence at home are associated with excessive alcohol consumption, ranging from moderate to heavy over time. Excessive alcohol consumption is also a common contributing factor to domestic violence because it can exacerbate volatile situations and increase the frequency and intensity of abusive episodes.

Alcohol decreases regular household functioning and adds to family stress (Pickup, 2019). This implies that the loss of inhibitions and rise in stress experienced during intoxication intensify violent feelings and tendencies. In addition, although alcohol consumption can exacerbate violence, it can also serve as a means of escape for the victim, exacerbating the cycle of domestic violence. Any children exposed to this violence may experience a variety of detrimental effects (Pickup, 2019). Bennet (2018) provides evidence to support the aforementioned claim, stating that both parental alcohol abuse and parental domestic violence raise the likelihood that a child will grow up to be an abuser or alcohol abuser. The researcher is of the view that not all children who grow up in homes where alcohol abuse is a contributing factor to domestic violence end up being abusers. Rather, some of them want to change their parents' behaviour so that their children can grow up in a stable home.

According to Zilberman (2015), there is no evidence available and never will be that alcohol abuse leads to domestic violence because the assertion is untrue. Furthermore,

domestic violence is something that people learn, which means that it is not something that comes naturally to them. An extended period of heavy drinking can lead to alcoholism. The two do not result from one another. However, it is safe to assume that abuse will escalate if a spouse is already abusive and later develops an alcohol addiction. Moreover, it is safe to assume that alcohol will serve as a trigger for domestic abuse if a spouse who is dependent on alcohol consumes it.

#### **2.3.4 Socio-cultural factors**

One of the causal factors contributing to marital violence is socialization during childhood. The claim is that women are socialized to feel that the men in their lives such as their husbands, fathers, brothers as well as their sons, are the source of their value and that they should be despised if they disappoint or defy these men. For instance, women are conditioned to believe that their own worth is contingent upon meeting the needs and wants of others. As a result, they are prone to criticize and condemn themselves when men beat them (Ondicho, 2015). The researcher is of the view that there are significant cultural elements that contribute to the problem of domestic violence. For example, the Tsonga tribe in Africa holds the belief that wives should be physically abused by their husbands for wrongdoing. These women are additionally compelled to engage in sexual activity with their spouse, who may be HIV positive. They occasionally face being evicted from their house by their in-laws for failing to comply.

The perception that men are strong, intelligent, creative and clever while women are assigned the opposite qualities is another factor contributing to domestic violence. This perception is shaped by the society. According to Carli (2015), men typically have a higher degree of legitimate authority and expertise than women. The way parents raise their children can make a difference between boys and girls which can later on in life lead to domestic violence. When a boy grows up knowing that he is not required to cook, clean or assist in the house, it can lead to tension that could escalate into violence when a boy marries a woman from a household where girls and boys were given equal responsibilities (Njenga, 2019).

Another reason of domestic violence is society's perception of a male as being powerful, educated, creative and intellectual whereas a woman is the exact opposite of all of

these attributes. Carli (2015) asserts that men generally have more expert and legitimate power than women. The way parents raise their children can produce differences between boys and girls, becoming a source of domestic violence later in life. If a male grows up knowing that he is not required to wash his own clothes, cook, or work around the house, when he grows up and marries a lady who comes from a home where tasks are equally shared between girls and boys, this might generate tension that may lead to violence (Njenga, 2019). The researcher is of the view that socio-cultural factors promote domestic violence against women in certain religions and cultures because cases of domestic violence are referred back from the courts/police to the clan and sometimes to the royal house for intervention of religious leaders for arbitration, often minimising the abused woman's claim.

### **2.3.5 Education level**

Education directly affects people's attitudes and behaviours regarding domestic abuse. According to the South African Statistic Report (2016), people without formal education think that domestic violence against women and children is acceptable. Since most South Africans live in rural areas without access to formal education and where the culture is more conservative when it comes to violence than in urban areas, the perception of children who witness domestic violence is therefore less well-known to the general public (Terry, 2017).

The researcher is of the view that a person who has never attended formal schooling is more likely to experience domestic violence at home because they are unlikely to know the laws that regulate domestic violence and are therefore less likely to try to address the issue by reporting it to the relevant professionals. All this can be attributed to ignorance, which is a product of lack of education. In support of the above statement, Lane (2016) provides evidence which points out that women with lower levels of education are more likely than those with higher levels of education to experience domestic abuse and to expose their children to it. Jeyaseelan (2017) argues that having more education does not preclude someone from experiencing domestic abuse. However, it only increases the likelihood that someone with less education than a high school diploma or a college degree may become a victim of domestic abuse.

## **2.4 Overview of domestic violence in the world**

Domestic violence is a serious problem which is faced by the world at large. Domestic violence poses a significant public health problem for the world because it leads to the burden of diseases such as stroke, hypertension and mental health disorders. Moreover, domestic violence also contributes largely on social issues that the world is facing including escalation of death rates, developmental disabilities and homelessness (Kimanthi & Thinguri, 2018).

According to McGee (2017), between 8% and 12% of women worldwide experience domestic violence each year. However, this figure may be higher due to the large number of cases that go unreported. Domestic violence refers to behaviours that one partner in a relationship uses to control the other. Acts of violence include physical assault, verbal abuse, sexual abuse and stalking. Many people remain in abusive relationships due to the cycle of violence as well as other factors. Victims find it challenging to leave abusive relationships for a variety of reasons including fear of being alone, children, finances, protection of family and having nowhere to go. This cycle of violence is on-going and may lead to death and suicide.

In a survey carried out in America, over 6,000 families were estimated to have undergone domestic violence and between 53% to 70% of the perpetrators who were male often abused their children as well (Munge, 2020). Previous research on domestic violence has concentrated primarily on women, children exposed to domestic violence have become the forgotten and hidden victims (Doroudchi et al., 2023; Galal Fathy et al., 2019). Society seems to ignore the fact that their exposure to domestic violence could adversely affect them during their adulthood (Wake & Kandula, 2022). The trauma of living in an abusive home can never be underestimated. These children may be at high risk and this risk is often overlooked. These children tend to be very involved and are not spectators but rather 'players' in the 'game' (Wake & Kandula, 2022).

According to a study on the actual prevalence of domestic violence in Korea, 31.4% of all households encounter it in a given year, which suggests that approximately 4 million families may be affected by domestic violence (Cho, 2018). In addition, domestic violence adversely affects all family members including the perpetrator and victim, and

has a significantly harmful effect on their children. Previous studies have revealed that children who witness domestic abuse display a variety of physical issues as well as psycho-social maladjustments. Despite the serious consequences of domestic abuse on children, there are not many empirical research conducted in Korea. In general, research in Korea has concentrated on gathering information, looking into causes, and studying the woman as the victim of violence rather than concentrating more on the children as victims of domestic abuse (Cho, 2018).

#### **2.4.1 Overview of domestic violence in sub-Saharan Africa**

According to a study conducted by Chadwick-Charuma, Tsvere and Mutopo (2022), domestic violence has significant and multifaceted impacts on individuals, families, communities, and societies across Sub-Saharan Africa whereby there are approximately 34.9 to 38.2 million children in the Sub-Saharan Africa who have witnessed domestic violence in their lifetime. Presently, there are few studies that describe the ways in which domestic violence affects children in Zimbabwe. However, based on UNICEF studies regarding key triggers of domestic violence in African Population (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018), estimates of the number of children exposed to domestic violence in Africa range from 500,000 to 1.3 million. Therefore, domestic violence can result in serious physical injuries for children who are exposed to it and in extreme cases, it can lead to death. Due to limited access to healthcare and stigma surrounding reporting, many children who experience domestic violence in Sub-Saharan Africa may not receive appropriate medical attention (Chadwick-Charuma, Tsvere & Mutopo, 2022).

According to a study conducted by Aihie (2019) on the prevalence of domestic violence in Nigeria, there is a high rate of violence against women which frequently result in the victimization of children. The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency in Nigeria indicates that there are approximately 2 334 cases of domestic violence which were recorded on the 01<sup>st</sup> June 2022 which shows that the number of domestic violence cases are on the rise (Harlem, 2023).

A study conducted in Ghana about children witnessing domestic violence revealed that children who grow up witnessing domestic violence in the households are more likely to



get harsh punishment (Muller, Tranchant & Oosterhoff, 2016). Similar to this, men are seven times more likely than other respondents to be violent towards their children when exposed to physical domestic abuse with their partners, while women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence in any form (Muller, Tranchant & Oosterhoff, 2016). Additionally, a survey carried out by the Ministry of Gender (2013), revealed a high prevalence of children witnessing domestic violence, with 31.9% reporting seeing a parent subjected to sexual abuse and 17.5% experiencing physical abuse when trying to intervene in parental fights.

#### **2.4.2 Overview of domestic violence in South Africa**

Domestic violence is one among many problems that South Africa is currently faced with and it has always been a problem which affects the lives of children. Many social ills that occur such as high crime rate, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, homelessness, child abuse and child negligence can all be attributed to domestic violence to some extent. This implies that domestic violence is a serious problem in South Africa (Kimanthi & Thinguri, 2018).

According to Sureka and Kesarwani (2022), witnessing domestic violence can have profound and long-lasting impacts on children, regardless of where it occurs. In South Africa, where domestic violence rates are often high, the impact can be severe due to socio-economic factors and cultural dynamics. Children's exposure to emotional violence and neglect is common, with 15% reported to be neglected by drunken parents (Sureka & Kesarwani, 2022).

Munge (2020) indicates that the study was carried out by the World Health Organization in 2018 which revealed that 65% of women living in South Africa had been victims of spousal violation. Moreover, the study indicates that between 75% and 90% of the time, children see the episodes either visually or by listening from their own rooms next door, despite the fact that women may frequently be the major victims of domestic violence in the household. Additionally, research has shown that anxiety, an inferiority complex, and instability frequently replace the security, comfort, love, and care that children require most as they grow older (Sureka & Kesarwani, 2022). Subsequent research has also shown that children who witness domestic violence may grow up to be permanently

afraid of the parent who is the violent spouse. According to Cho (2018), some children may also feel bad about loving the victim or the person who has been abused or blame themselves for not being able to stop the situation.

The most recent quarterly crime statistics from the South African Police Service (SAPS) from January to March 2023 revealed that there was a 20% decrease in child killings but a 29% increase in attempted murders (UNICEF, 2023). Tragically, 245 children have died as a result of domestic violence, and 2291 more children are affected physically and psychologically by it. These incidents serve as a tragic reminder of how serious the problem is. Every day, approximately 28 children are exposed to domestic violence attacks and 3 of them do not make it out alive. The findings came after South Africa observed its yearly "Child Protection Week" in March 2023, which strives to increase awareness of children's rights and safety. The human toll domestic violence is far reaching and not only has a devastating physical impact but also affects the emotional and social development of children (UNICEF, 2023).

Domestic violence witnessed by children has damaging economic impacts. A 2022 global brief by UNICEF highlighted that the cost of domestic violence witnessed by children might account up to 8% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Office of the Special Representative on Violence against Children *et al*, 2022 ). In South Africa, the estimated cost of children witnessing domestic violence in 2015 was 5% of GDP. As a result, any act of violence witnessed by children is tragic and requires serious intervention in order for children to achieve their full developmental potential as well as save costs to the society at the same time (UNICEF, 2023).

Previous research shows that there is lack of evidence on how to identify children who witness and are affected by domestic violence in the police service sector as well as joined approaches to identify people in different health and educational settings who are affected by domestic violence (Molina & Levell, 2020). Moreover, there is a dearth of data regarding collaborative methods for identifying coexisting problems, such as the connections between substance abuse and domestic violence or mental health problems in children. This suggests that there is a gap in prevention interventions, lack of behavioural measures, coordination and stakeholder engagement as well as reliance

on self-reporting among children who witness domestic violence (Molina & Levell, 2020).

According to Carlson (2018), there is lack of specialised services and training on domestic violence in South Africa. This implies that regular training on the dynamics and the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children is not adequately provided to the multi-disciplinary team professionals who are working closely with children as well as families that are affected by domestic violence. Furthermore, research shows that there is lack of collaboration across organisations and different sectors which can assist to better respond to domestic violence. As a result, there is no efficient and effective data collection tools around domestic violence. Mukwevho (2017) states that previous research shows that there is no consistent response from private, government and non-government enterprises when disclosures about domestic violence are being reported. This implies that in some cases, children are not fully supported when disclosing their experiences of domestic violence and that their opinions are barely considered when parenting decisions are made.

## **2.5 The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children**

Much academic research supports the premise that childhood experiences of domestic violence are not compassionate and have negative implications for children. There is compelling evidence that witnessing domestic violence has a negative impact on children's emotional, health, educational, and other outcomes (Chan & Yeung, 2019). Witnessing domestic violence has a negative impact on children's livelihoods and stages of development. Children who encounter domestic violence at home are more likely to be victims of child abuse (Carlson, 2018).

### **2.5.1 The behavioural effect of witnessing domestic violence among children**

Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to experience poor performance at school and they end up dropping out of school. Lack of educational background due to school dropout; makes children who witnessed domestic violence unemployable which contributes to the escalation of poverty. As a result of poverty, child witnesses to domestic violence resort to troublesome lifestyle such as crime, interest in using drugs

and alcohol, lying to avoid confrontations, engaging in risky sexual behaviours which lead to teenage pregnancy as well as aggression (Barner & Carney, 2020).

In a study conducted by Carlson (2018), the findings of the study indicate that boys who witness domestic violence at home have more ideas of committing or have attempted suicide, physical aggression towards their mothers and have more episodes of running away from home. The findings of the study further found that girls who witness domestic violence seem to have attention seeking problems as well as being interested in relationships earlier in their stage of development as compared to boys.

According to Tsavoussis, Stawicki, Stoicea and Papadimos (2015), children who witness domestic violence often display behavioural problems of overreacting, acting out, being hostile, impulsive, withdrawal, running away from home and defiant. The effect of witnessing domestic violence is severe and traumatic to children. This implies that children may struggle to concentrate in class due to the fact that they are always in the lookout for danger. As a result, their behaviour may start to be inappropriate to an extent whereby they may start bunking classes on purpose, be sent to detentions and they may change schools frequently due to expulsion and suspension.

### **2.5.2 The social effect of witnessing domestic violence among children**

Children who witness domestic violence may have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with their peers and friends. Some will deliberately avoid their friends out of fear that their friends will find out about their family issues if they visit them too often. As a result, the child may start being lonely and develop self-esteem problems. Furthermore, children who witness domestic violence at home may start hiding when the abusive parent or guardian comes back home from work and stop taking part in social activities such as sports, playing with age mates and developing mood swings (Nguyen & Larsen, 2018).

Plumptre (2021) mentions that the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children involves children avoiding close relationships and pushing people away. Child witnesses may also develop attachment to adults who seem safe for them in order to develop a secure base when home feels insecure.

### **2.5.3 The physical effect of witnessing domestic violence among children**

Children who are exposed to on-going abusive relationships are more likely to have multiple injuries as a result of trying to intervene when their parents are fighting, repeated bruises and broken bones. As a result, they may be absent from school more often and eventually dropout. Children who experience domestic violence are more prone to visit the doctor frequently, to suffer from headaches, persistent generalised pains, pelvic pains, gastrointestinal difficulties and eating disorders. They also have increased somatic symptoms of stress, anxiety or sadness (Packota, 2018).

According to WHO (2015), the effect of witnessing domestic violence on children's lives can be far-reaching. Particularly if the parent or care-giver that the children look up to for protection and safety, becomes a danger to them. Some children experience traumatic stress reactions such as difficulty forming and sustaining friendships with other children. Furthermore, many children become violent or have other issues such as shouting or striking their siblings.

### **2.5.4 The effect of witnessing domestic violence on child development**

According to Nguyen and Larsen (2018), exposure to domestic violence in the early years of a child's life can disrupt their development of autonomy because it impedes their ability to build trust and engage in exploratory behaviour. In addition, children in this age range who witness domestic abuse may exhibit low self-esteem, withdraw from or avoid social interactions with peers, act in an oppositional or defiant manner in the classroom, throw temper tantrums, become agitated and lash out at objects. In support of the above statement, Chan and Yeung (2019) point out that when children observe violent behaviours at home, children tend to feel isolated, lonely, develop stress, and experience health related problems and may have difficulties in school. Unfortunately, studies have indicated that children exposed to domestic violence at home are more likely to suffer from substance abuse, engage in risky sexual behaviour, become aggressive or exhibit antisocial behaviour. It is important to note that even though children handle their anger in different ways depending on their age; these behaviours still have a negative effect on them. The effect of witnessing domestic violence can disrupt and impair the usual development of a child. Moreover, children who witness

domestic violence may subconsciously try to act their younger age in order to get to a state where they feel safe and secure. As a result, their brain development may be harmed due to the traumatic exposure of witnessing domestic violence (Plumptre, 2021).

### **2.5.5 The psychological effects of witnessing domestic violence among children**

Holmes (2016) explains that children who are exposed to domestic violence are more prone to acquire various types of psychological problems, anxiety disorders and interpersonal issues. Domestic violence can cause children to have a low sense of self-worth, serious psychiatric illnesses, oppositional defiant disorder and depression.

According to Sawyer and Burton (2016), witnessing domestic violence among children reduces the children's self-worth and keeps them in a constant state of anxiety and fear. Moreover, children may feel unsafe in their own homes and make them hostile. Babur (2017) explains that domestic violence has adverse psychological effects on children who witness it. The effects that children may struggle with for many years to come include loss of sense in future, suicidal behaviour, flashbacks, sleep disturbances, inability to concentrate and fear of intimacy. In support of the above statement, WHO (2016) indicates that domestic violence causes an adverse effect on the psychological state of children. Psychiatric disorders, difficulties in executing domesticated duties, aggressive behaviour and low self-esteem are some of the effects that children who witness domestic violence may experience. Exposure to domestic violence among children may trigger mental health problems. This suggests that children who witness domestic violence may live with severe mental illness which may increase the vulnerability of being abused.

Pre-school children who witness domestic violence are negatively affected by domestic violence which may cause them to engage to infancy habits such as sucking thumbs, whining, bedwetting and increased crying. Furthermore, domestic violence causes traumatizing effects on children such as post-traumatic stress disorder, dangerous changes in the brain, nightmares, sleep patterns changes and difficulty concentrating (Tsavoussis et al., 2015).

## **2.6 Theories in understanding the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children**

### **2.6.1 Social Learning Approach**

Social learning theory states that children copy actions they see their parents and other role models taking. Furthermore, the social learning approach indicates that aggression in children is a learned behaviour that frequently occurs in a social setting. According to the social learning model, people learn how to commit certain sophisticated acts of aggression through observation of other people's behaviour or through first-hand experience (Pingley, 2017).

According to Pingley (2017), many individuals exhibit various behavioural patterns as a result of growing up around influential role models. Through the use of these models, individuals can develop efficacy expectancies and learn behavioural outcomes without necessarily having first-hand experience with them. Families and peers provide strong modelling influences on young children. Social media also provides an enormous number of models of behaviour to children and not all of them are positive.

### **2.6.2 Attachment theory**

Secure attachment between a mother and her infant child forms during infancy and has an impact on an adult's capacity to form healthy relationships later in life. Pingley (2017) states that an attachment happens when there is a continuous relationship where both parties find satisfaction and enjoyment in an environment that fosters warmth and intimacy. Therefore, attachment gives infants feelings of security. The mother's capacity to alleviate the infant's worry or dread is critical to the infant's attachment development. When the mother is nearby and the child is not afraid, the child feels secure.

It is widely acknowledged that for children to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally, they require a consistent and on-going relationship with a nurturing adult. An attachment between the parent and the child would be fostered and maintained by this steady relationship. According to Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda (2012), parent child attachment is the outcome of a continuous process that takes place between a child and their primary caregiver.

Studies included in the literature review make it clear that domestic violence has a detrimental impact on the stability of families and the bond between caregivers and children. It is obvious that the child's development as well as the process of parent-child attachment will be negatively impacted by this violence and the instability that follows. Furthermore, if the violence causes the child to be taken away from the caregiver, that makes the impact even worse. For both caregiver and child, the grieving process that follows the child's separation from them is a difficult experience. Robbins et al. (2012) explain that a child may feel completely abandoned after being separated from their caregiver.

### **2.6.3 Family Systems theory**

According to Johnson and Ray (2016), the family system theory upholds a bidirectional perspective, taking into account two opposing viewpoints. According to this theory, every family member has a role in the overall conflict that exists within the family. Giardino and Giardino (2014) assert that proponents of this viewpoint stress that each person, especially the perpetrator, is responsible for their own actions.

Johnson and Ray (2016) indicate that abuse arises from family stress or when conflict is accepted as a means of resolving disagreements. A dominant position within the family is what abusers aim for. According to this perspective, any member of the family could intensify the dispute. Davis (2018) states that in order to hold the perpetrator accountable, the focus should be on offering services that consider everyone's needs and desires.

Every member of the family is viewed as a contributor to the violent system and has a duty to uphold it. Treatment approaches are typically predicated on the belief that early intervention can prevent severe violence before criminal justice sanctions are required. It is believed that treating all members is necessary to find solutions. According to Alho (2015), the family systems theory identifies the origin of abuse in the family dynamics. The most prevalent efforts are prevention ones, which place a strong emphasis on victim support, the identification of domestic violence, the treatment or punishment of those who commit it, control over the behaviour and its negative consequences (Nguyen & Larsen, 2018).



Alho (2015) states that the family system theory is based on the premise that a person's desire to gain and hold onto power and control in a relationship is the cause of a lot of violence within the family. The abuser's ability to dominate and control other family members is what drives his actions. Family members who possess greater power frequently employ coercion or threats of violence to compel subordinate family members to comply. Various studies from the researchers indicate that majority of women are abused because their husbands want to be in complete control of them and emphasize that they are men and that women should submit to their rules and desires.

## **2.7 Legislations guiding the effect of domestic violence among children**

### **2.7.1 Children's Act 38 of 2005**

The ACT indicates that children require care and protection if they live away from home, are in unsafe or dangerous circumstances, or are being physically or emotionally neglected. The child's best interests come first in all circumstances pertaining to a child. Section 9 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 states that the child's best interests are the most important consideration in all decisions pertaining to the care, protection and well-being of the child (South Africa, 2005). In support of the above statement, Mukwevho (2017) explains that the Children's Act 38 of 2005 lays out the principles pertaining to their care and protection as well as extending the rights of children who witness or are victims of domestic abuse. The Act is unequivocal about parents' legal duty to give a loving and nurturing home for their children. In summation, the child's best interests must always come first.

### **2.7.2 Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998**

The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 gives victims of domestic abuse irrespective of age, the ability to ask a magistrate's court for a protection order against the abuser. In addition, the protection order prohibits the perpetrator from abusing the victim in the home again. This suggests that the perpetrator may be arrested and brought to court for violating the protection order if they carry out any acts of domestic abuse against the victim that are forbidden by it. The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 explains that a protection order can be obtained in the best interest of any individual who is a victim of domestic violence by family members, friends and essential professionals such as

social workers, teachers, health care providers and police officers. However, if a victim is under the age of eighteen, mentally incapacitated, unconscious or the court determines that the victim is incapable of providing consent due to some other circumstance, it is imperative that the person applying for a protection order on behalf of a victim of domestic abuse obtain written consent from the victim (South Africa, 1998).

### **2.7.3 Theoretical framework of this study**

Family system theory postulates that a family is the most crucial institution which describes the attitude and behaviour of a person (Munge, 2020). An individual gets an identity by being part of a family and establishes social connections with both the family and the outside world. Consequently, family system theorists believe that a child's family shapes their attitudes and views about the world they live in. Family systems theory indicates that a person's social circumstances and family are major influences on any violent behaviour.

For the purpose of this study, a family system theory is employed as a guiding theory of the study. Moreover, the family system theory emphasizes that a child's behavioural threats originate from the family and thus the home. As a result, the majority of the negative effects of domestic violence on children can be attributed to what they observe in their homes. Therefore, this study reviews the extent and depths of these effects on children who witness domestic violence.

### **2.8 Summary**

This chapter indicates that the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children involves an inability of children forming bonds, securing attachments as well as a sense of exploring and playing. Moreover, younger children who witness domestic violence struggle to express their feelings and emotions. As a result, they start developing behavioural problems such as clinging, whining, sleep difficulty and concentration problems (Henry, 2017). According to Tedesco and Schnell (2015), statistics indicate that children who witness domestic violence at home tend to carry on with violent behaviours in their own adult lives. Children who witness domestic violence may not suffer from physical injury. However, the emotional effects of witnessing or hearing acts of violence are intense and long lasting. This implies that child witnesses often

experience many of the same symptoms and lasting effects as children who are victims of domestic violence themselves.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focused on outlining the methodology employed for the study. According to Jansen and Warren (2020), research methodology serves as a systematic plan detailing how a researcher intends to conduct their research, logically addressing the investigation into the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo province. The study used a qualitative research approach, applying an exploratory research design to delve into, contextualize, and describe the impact of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop. The chapter also elucidates the data collection methods utilized and the ethical considerations adhered to by the researcher.

### **3.2 Research approach**

According to O'Leary (2017), research approach involved qualitative research, an unquantified approach reliant on images, experiences, observations, words, and narrations. In this study, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach to explore and articulate the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province. This approach detailed explanations from participants concerning the effect of witnessing domestic violence.

### **3.3 Research design**

The research design refers to the structured framework for conducting the research process to address the research problem (Punch, 2018). An exploratory design was adopted to gain an understanding of children witnessing domestic violence in the Tafelkop community. Punch (2018) states that exploratory research is undertaken for a subject that has not been extensively examined in order to create priorities generate operational definitions and improve the final research design. The exploratory research design supported the researcher in determining the optimum data collection methods and participant selection for the study, utilizing purposive sampling to identify people meeting the criteria and qualifications associated to the effects of witnessing domestic

violence. The one-on-one interview was used as a method of gathering data to allow participants to share their experiences of witnessing domestic violence in depth.

### **3.4 Research Setting**

The research setting encompassed the Matsepe Drop-in Centre and the Matsepe Welfare Office, both situated in the Sekhukhune district of Limpopo province, South Africa. Located in the rural area of Sekhukhune district, specifically in Tafelkop village within the Elias Motsoaledi local municipality, the Matsepe Drop-in Centre functions as a small aftercare facility for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs). The center, positioned approximately 25 km away from Groblersdal town in Limpopo province, caters around 109 beneficiary children, providing a conducive environment for completing schoolwork and having lunch. The predominant languages spoken in the Tafelkop area are Sepedi, IsiNdebele, and IsiZulu, while professionals within the centre primarily use English. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the study site, depicting the location of the Matsepe Drop-in Centre.



**Figure 1: Map of Tafelkop indicating Matsepe Drop-in Centre which will be used in the study.**

**Source:** <https://www.map.tafelkop.gov.za> (11/09/2015)

### **3.5 Study population**

Population refers to the collection of items, individuals, or entities that meet specific criteria (Punch, 2018). In this study, the target population was children who have witnessed domestic violence in their lifetime between the ages of 8-18 years old. The children are permanent residents in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province. There were

approximately 45 children who witness domestic violence and are currently beneficiaries at Matsepe Drop-in Centre. There are more cases of child abuse and child neglect being reported on a weekly basis in Tafelkop.

### **3.6 Sampling procedure and size**

Sampling is the process of selecting research participants from the total community or a group of people who will be the subject of a sample (Punch, 2018). The researcher employed purposive sampling to select individuals who fulfilled the eligibility criteria and granted consent to participate in the study.

The sample size was dependent on obtaining data saturation, which was attained with the addition of 13 people, rather than a predefined number. Subsequent sampling was stopped when data saturation was achieved, a sign that participants were not providing any fresh ideas. According to Majid (2018), data saturation is the stage of the research process at which no new information is found through data analysis and no additional data collecting would result in insights that are valuable.

### **3.7 Inclusion criteria**

According to Punch (2018), inclusion criteria are a set of predetermined traits that are used to determine which people will be included in a research study. The following individuals were included in the study for the purposes of this research:

- Children between the ages of 8-18 years old
- Children who were either English, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele and Sepedi speaking
- Children who were either attending or not attending school
- Children who were permanent residents at Tafelkop community. In this study, permanent residents of Tafelkop refer to children who are born and bred in Tafelkop and they are currently staying in Tafelkop on a full time basis.

### **3.8 Exclusion criteria**

Exclusion criteria can be described as features that prevent potential participants from being included in the study (Punch, 2018). The following participants were not included in this study:

- Parents, caregivers and guardians of the children from all age groups
- Children living with mental disabilities due to the fact that children living with mental disabilities do not have the capacity to act while parents, caregivers and guardians of the children were not the target population of the study.

### **3.9 Pilot study**

According to Wild and Diggins (2013), a pilot study is a small trial carried out prior to a major investigation is conducted, intended to test the level and efficiency of a research method and data collection tool. Before the actual data collection, a pilot study was done with four participants at Matsepe Drop-in Centre since it is the only operational Drop-in Centre in Elias Motsoaledi municipality.

Although the results of the pilot study were not incorporated into the main study analysis, they played a crucial role in refining the research approach. The findings from the pilot study were used to assess the effectiveness of the interview guide used and to identify areas for improvement.

By analyzing the pilot study results, researchers were able to identify any ambiguities or deficiencies in the interview questions and adapt them accordingly. This iterative process ensured that the interview guide used in the main study was clear, relevant, and tailored to elicit meaningful responses from participants. The revisions made based on the pilot study findings aimed to enhance the quality and depth of the data collected, ultimately contributing to a more robust and insightful investigation into the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children in the study area.

### **3.10 Data collection**

Data collection is the method used to obtain information in a course of a study (Punch, 2018).



### **3.10.1 Data collection tool/instrument**

In order to obtain data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. Moreover, an interview guide was used by the researcher which is attached as appendix B and observational notes to collect information/ data from the participants. These interviews were guided by an interview guide open-ended questions. The interview guide had 07 questions which consist of only section A, the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children. A biographical data sheet is attached as appendix A and it was used to collect data about the basic characteristics of the participants.

### **3.10.2 Type of interviews**

The researcher used one-on-one interviews to collect data from the participants. Furthermore, the interview guide for one-on-one session is attached as appendix B for English version, sehloathišo B for Sepedi translation, isithathiseló B for IsiZulu translation and isithasiselo B for IsiNdebele translation.

### **3.10.3 Recording of data**

According to Ingwenagu (2016), recording interviews during data collection is very crucial. As a result, the researcher used a mobile phone to record data during one-on-one interviews. Moreover, before the one-on one session began, the researcher ensured that a fully charged device was available, checked and tested to ensure that it is completely functional. The researcher also asked the participants for consent to record the one-on-one interviews and they agreed. During the data gathering phase, the recording device was placed in the centre to record the interview.

### **3.10.4 Recruitment and data collection procedure**

In this study, participants were recruited through the database of children who are beneficiaries at Matsepe Drop-in Centre. Moreover, the children were between 8-18 years old and are permanent residents at Tafelkop. Parents of the participants are beneficiaries at Matsepe Welfare Office which is in the same yard as Matsepe Drop-in Centre. The researcher asked the parents of the participants to report to Matsepe Welfare Office on a day whereby they did not have any therapeutic intervention with social service practitioners so that they can sign consent forms which is attached as appendix D on behalf of their children so that they can take part in the study. The

participants also signed the assent form which is attached as appendix D for the parents of the participants to be aware that their children can withdraw from the study at any time. Semi-structured interviews were employed by the researcher to collect data from the participants. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were guided by a questionnaire so that the aim of the study can be achieved (Johnson & Ray, 2016).

### **3.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis refers to the way in which the researcher arranges interview transcripts and field notes and other material received from the participants systematically in order for the researcher to present the findings clearly and logically (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015). The data was analysed by the researcher by describing and summarising data, establishing links between variables, comparing variables, forecasting results and using the triangulation approach. After the data was collected, it was organized and transcribed from recorded audio into verbatim form by the researcher. Translations to English for analysis were made. Data was cleaned and the transcripts were arranged in order. Moreover, a comparison between the transcriptions and notes were made in order to verify accuracy. Both the researcher and supervisor analyzed the data independently. Subsequently, they met to finalize agreed-upon themes and sub-themes. Field notes taken during interviews were thematically analyzed. Transcription findings were compared with field notes to ensure accuracy and capture contextual nuances. This rigorous process ensured the data's comprehensiveness, reliability, and readiness for further interpretation and synthesis to derive meaningful conclusions. The following Tesch's 8 steps of open coding method were used for data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018):

#### **Step 1: Reading through the data**

The researcher closely examined each verbatim transcript in order to make sense of the information obtained. Ideas about the data segments and their meanings were generated by this process. Both the ideas that occurred to mind and the meanings that surfaced during the reading process were recorded. All participant transcripts were carefully read by the researcher until they were fully understood. A time period for

processing and considering the data in its entirety was established. The researcher took notes and recorded impressions as they occurred to her while conducting data analysis.

#### Step 2: Reduction of the collected data

The data was reduced by the researcher to codes depending on whether or not the concepts were present in the verbatim transcriptions. The researcher was also able to enumerate every subject that came up during the scaling down. Moreover, the researcher labelled margins with notes and grouped related topics. As the verbatim transcripts appeared in the paper's margins, the researcher began to note comments regarding the data.

#### Step 3: Asking questions about the meaning of the collected data

The researcher reviewed and analysed the transcriptions once more, but this time she asked herself questions about the interview transcriptions depending on the frequency of the concepts' codes (mental picture codes when reading through data): "Which words describe it?" "What is this about?" in addition to "What is the underlying meaning?"

#### Step 4: Abbreviation of topics to codes

The researcher used codes to represent the topics that arose. These codes were written down in relation to the pertinent transcription passages. Only the significant occurrences of the data associated with each code were included in order to distinguish the codes. Using a pen that is not the same colour as the one used in Step 3, these codes were scribbled on the margins of 35 and the page in relation to the data they reflect.

#### Step 5: Development of themes and sub-themes

The researcher used the coded data and relevant texts to develop themes and sub-themes. In order to give the themes and sub-themes meaning, the overall list of themes and sub-themes was whittled down by organizing the subjects that are related to one another.

Step 6: Compare the codes, topics and themes for duplication

The researcher conducted a chronological analysis of the data to check for duplication in the work and to make necessary corrections to codes, topics and themes. In order to make sure there were no duplicate codes, the researcher also used the list that contained the codes. Moreover, the researcher recoded some codes that were required in order for them to fit within the description and grouped codes that were similar.

Step 7: Initial grouping of all themes and sub-themes

The data associated with each theme were gathered into a single column and after a preliminary analysis, the researcher and co-coder had a discussion to determine the themes and sub-themes that each of them had independently developed.

Step 8: Recodes existing material

The researcher provided findings for each theme and came to conclusions that the reader can easily understand and apply to their own interpretation.

### **3.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

For purpose of this study, the researcher ensured that trustworthy was well maintained and engaged in the research process through the following criterion:

#### **3.12.1 Credibility**

According to Daher, Carrer, Jaramilo, Olivares and Tomicic (2017), credibility plays a crucial role in establishing trustworthiness by assessing how closely the findings match reality. The researcher was able to assure the study's credibility by using multiple methods of triangulation, peer debriefing, member checks and extended fieldwork.

#### **3.12.2 Transferability**

According to Leavy (2017), transferability necessitates that the researcher gives the participants enough information to assess whether the results are applicable in different situations. To make sure that the results could be applied elsewhere, the researcher used a technique called triangulation which involves using data from multiple sources.

### **3.12.3 Dependability**

According to Wild and Diggins (2018), dependability refers to having adequate information and documentation of the procedures used which enables the study to be repeated. The researcher ensured dependability of the study through note-taking and audio recording. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone and stored as an mp3 file. Transcripts and other papers were scanned, stored on a computer, and used to gather the data. Due to ethical requirements pertaining to this study, the records were kept private and secure and were only used for academic purposes.

### **3.12.4 Confirmability**

According to Daher et al. (2017), confirmability refers to the extent to which the study's conclusions are based on participant experiences rather than the researcher's preferences. The researcher ensured that the results could be confirmed by keeping a record of the raw data, memoranda, notes, data reduction and analysis.

## **3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research ethics are principles of morally good conduct for research that are based on moral and political ideas that are external to research (Bryman, 2015). The study was conducted from a human standpoint, which entails human participation. To preserve the participants' integrity, rights and the institution's rights, research ethics were considered. This study took into account the following factors:

### **3.13.1 Ethical clearance**

The proposal was sent to University of Limpopo Senior Degree Committee for approval. Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) issued ethics clearance certificate to the researcher with TREC project number: TREC/647/2022: PG. The TREC certificate is attached as appendix G. The proposal was further sent to Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) for approval. Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) issued ethics clearance certificate to the researcher with LPREC project number: LPREC/89/2022: PG. The LPREC certificate is attached as appendix H. Approval letter from Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is attached as appendix I. Moreover, approval letter from the Department of Social Development in Limpopo Province is attached as appendix J.

### **3.13.2 Permission to conduct the study**

Parents of the participants signed consent forms which allowed their children to take part in the study. Furthermore, the participants also signed assent forms in order for them to indicate their willingness to participate and understand what is expected from them in the study. The letter to request permission to conduct the study was written and it is attached as appendix E. An approval letter to conduct the study from the Department of Social Development is attached as appendix J.

### **3.13.3 Confidentiality**

According to Jansen and Warren (2020), confidentiality is the researcher's commitment to manage, preserve and distribute research data in a way that prevents information about and the one collected from research participants from being unintentionally disclosed. The researcher ensured confidentiality in the study by making sure that all the data collected during the study remain in possession of the researcher and is kept in a file which is created for research purposes only which ensured confidentiality of the study. Moreover, data was made available to all relevant stakeholders where necessary. The researcher ensured confidentiality during data collection by giving the participants a copy of the study information leaflet, interviewing the participants one at a time in a private office instead of the dining hall, storing research data of the participant in a phone that is password protected and by also ensuring that the sociodemographic information of the participants is filed and separated from the other sections of interview guide before one-on one interviews of every participant begin.

### **3.13.4 Anonymity**

Anonymity refers to collecting data without obtaining any personal and identifying information (Pardebe, 2018). The researcher maintained the anonymity of the participants by separating the socio-demographic data sheet in order for it to be filled separately. This suggests that the records were not linked with the participants.

### **3.13.5 Privacy**

According Pardebe (2018), privacy can be described as the willingness of study participants to give access to themselves and their information. The researcher ensured privacy by making sure that information which was collected from all participants was

viewed only by the researcher as well as the supervisor. Moreover, the researcher ensured privacy by making sure that only two people such as the researcher and research assistant are allowed to enter in the research interview room. This suggests that during recording, no mentioning of names was allowed and the audio tapes were locked after data collection and the audio tapes can only be accessed by the supervisor and the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher ensured privacy by making sure that during data collection, consent forms and assent forms were signed.

### **3.13.6 Avoidance of harm**

According to Kumar (2014), avoidance of harm entails that neither the researcher nor the research project may intentionally or unintentionally cause participants' physical, psychological, or emotional suffering. In this study, interviews about domestic violence may provoke intense emotions and painful feelings among the participants, the researcher minimized harm to the participants in case of emotional harm by organizing a Social Worker to be on standby in order to come down the participants. The researcher minimized harm by having a debriefing in between sessions in order for the researcher to remain objective. Moreover, the researcher ensured that participants express their feelings without the researcher overriding their responses to pursue a line of questioning.

### **3.13.7 Informed consent**

Informed consent can be described as the process in which the researcher informs the participants about the way the study will be conducted, the study's benefits as well as the study's limitations that participants may be exposed to during data collection (Ferreira & Serpa, 2018). The researcher gave enough information to the participants in this study regarding the study's aim, how the data collected would be used, and the type of participation asked from them in this study. Parents of the participants are beneficiaries at Matsepe Welfare Office which is in the same yard as Matsepe Drop-in Centre. The researcher asked the parents of the participants to report to Matsepe Welfare Office on a day whereby they did not have any therapeutic intervention with social service practitioners so that they can sign consent forms which is attached as appendix D on behalf of their children so that they can take part in the study. The

participants also signed the assent form which is attached as appendix D for the parents of the participants to be aware that their children can withdraw from the study at any time.

### **3.13.8 Bias**

According to Kumar (2014), bias is defined as a research error influenced by prior knowledge or other confounding variables that may emerge during the study. Few possible biases, such as confirmation bias, participant bias, and selection bias, were likely to exist in this study. Confirmation bias, participant bias and selection bias were explained in more details below and how to avoid them in the study.

#### **Confirmation bias**

Leavy (2017) describes confirmation bias as a way in which researchers seek or interpret data in accordance with their belief system, values, expectations as well as hypotheses. In this study, the researcher mitigated the risk of confirmation bias by considering all of the data collected from participants and evaluated it objectively. In addition, the researcher re-evaluated the perceptions and responses to ensure that pre-existing assumptions were not violated.

#### **Participant bias**

According to Kumar (2014), participant bias refers to the tendency of participants to present and express themselves in ways that they believe align with the researcher's expectations or societal norms. The researcher in this study avoided participant bias by building rapport with the participants and by creating a safe space for the participants to feel comfortable so that they can be able to share their experiences with the researcher without any hesitation. The researcher also conducted the interviews using the participant's home language and by re-assuring the participants that their life experiences will be kept confidential.

#### **Selection bias**

According to Smith and Noble (2019), selection bias describes the process of participant recruitment and study inclusion. In this study, selection bias was mitigated by



employing a purposive sampling in order to interview only children who witness domestic violence in Tafelkop using the beneficiary list of children who are in need of care and protection. The researcher further mitigated the risk of selection bias by excluding children who are living with mental disabilities as well as those who are not permanent residents in Tafelkop.

### **3.14 Summary**

This chapter covered the qualitative research approach and used an exploratory research design to explore the study's aims and objectives. This chapter also focused on purposive sampling to select participants of the study and data was gathered from participants through one-on-one interviews. This chapter also consisted of ethical considerations which were applied in the study. The next chapter will be about the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the findings.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter detailed the methodology employed in this research, focusing on "The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo province, South Africa". This study was qualitative. Data was collected using one-on-one interviews and analysed thematically. Therefore, this chapter summarises the study's findings, which includes the interpretation and discussion. The results encompass the socio-demographic profiles of the participants, as well as the central themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. To support the study's findings, pertinent quotes from the participants are incorporated for each sub-theme. Furthermore, relevant scientific literature is employed to validate and strengthen the findings derived from the interviews and discussions with the participants.

### 4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

**Table 4.1 Biographical details of the participants**

Participants	Age	Gender	Education	Race
Participant 1	16 Years	Female	Grade 12	Black
Participant 2	14 Years	Male	Grade 09	Black
Participant 3	11 Years	Female	Grade 06	Black
Participant 4	09 Years	Female	Grade 04	Black
Participant 5	09 Years	Male	Grade 04	Black
Participant 6	17 Years	Female	Grade 11	Black
Participant 7	15 Years	Female	Grade 10	Black
Participant 8	17 Years	Male	Grade 10	Black
Participant 9	17 Years	Female	Grade 11	Black
Participant 10	14 Years	Male	Grade 09	Black
Participant 11	17 Years	Female	Grade 12	Black
Participant 12	18 Years	Female	Grade 11	Black
Participant 13	18 Years	Female	Grade 12	Black

The above table illustrates that 13 people took part in the study. Matsepe Drop-in Centre was used to recruit all participants. There were 9 females and 4 males aged 9 to 18 years. The above table also illustrates that majority of the participants (n=11) were in secondary school while two participants were in primary school. All participants who took part in the study were black South Africans.

**Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes of the study**

Themes	Sub-theme
Theme 01 : Presence of Fear	Sub-theme 1.1: Tendency of individuals to escape or flee from situations that evoke fear.
	Sub-theme 1.2: Act of concealing oneself or steering clear of confrontations in the face of fearful situations.
	Sub-theme 1.3: Emotional reaction of experiencing anger or depression stemming from fear.
Theme 02: Manifestations of anger	Sub-theme 2.1: Propensity for individuals to partake in bullying or aggressive actions towards others as an expression of anger.
	Sub-theme 2.2: Regular feeling of frustration as a frequent emotional reaction associated with anger.
	Sub-theme 2.3: Exhibition of aggressive behaviour resulting from feelings of anger.
	Sub-theme 2.4: Incidence of tantrums, typically characterized by unrestrained outbursts of anger.
Theme 03: Sensations of shame/guilt	Sub-theme 3.1: Propensity for individuals to retreat and isolate themselves due to feelings of shame or guilt.
	Sub-theme 3.2: Challenges in sustaining focus and

	concentration attributed to the emotional weight of shame or guilt.
	Sub-theme 3.3: Decline in interest and enthusiasm for activities as a result of experiencing shame or guilt.
	Sub-theme 3.4: Heightened probability of absenteeism from school as a strategy to cope with feelings of shame or guilt.

Table 4.2 showed that three themes emerged from the study. Presence of fear, manifestations of anger, and sensations of shame or guilt. The presence of fear theme highlights individuals' tendencies to escape, avoid confrontations, and experience emotional reactions such as anger or depression due to fear. The manifestations of anger theme encompasses sub-themes of individuals' tendencies to engage in bullying or aggressive actions, feelings of frustration, exhibition of aggressive behaviour, and tantrums characterized by unrestrained outbursts of anger. Lastly, the sensations of shame or guilt theme includes sub-themes of individuals' tendencies to isolate themselves, challenges in maintaining focus and concentration, a decline in interest and enthusiasm for activities, and an increased likelihood of school absenteeism as coping strategies for feelings of shame or guilt.

**Theme 01: Presence of fear**

The findings show that witnessing domestic violence in children results in the presence of fear. The observed effects include a tendency to escape or flee from fear-inducing situations, actions such as concealing oneself or avoiding confrontations in the face of fear, and emotional reactions such as anger or depression stemming from fear.

**Sub-theme 1.1: Tendency of individuals to escape or flee from situations that evoke fear.**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals often exhibit a strong inclination to withdraw or run away from situations that provoke fear, which is a significant consequence of

children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the subsequent statements from participants:

“When my parents start fighting, I always run away from home and stay in my grandmothers’ house until my mother comes to fetch me after the fighting settles down”. (P1)

“My father once kicked me out of a moving car while we were on our way to my paternal grandparents’ house because I was siding with my mother while my parents were arguing in the car, this upset my father and he kicked him out of moving car and I had to sleep under a bridge until I was taken to the police station the next day by passengers who saw me looking lost while walking beside the road, the police took me home and after some time when my parents started with their fighting, I run away from home and I never went back until today”. (P2)

“When my parents start fighting, I go to the Somalian spaza shop around the corner and spend time with other kids in the area and smoke”. (P8)

“The constant fighting between my mother and step-father pushed me to run away from home and find comfort in relationships and I had a child at a young age of 17”. (P12)

The findings of this study highlight that participants experience fear during episodes of domestic violence or conflicts between their parents, prompting them to seek an escape from the hostile home environment. When children are fearful, their productivity suffers as they feel powerless (Fromm, 2019). As a result, they may choose to leave or run away from home to start anew in a place free from violence, reduce stress, and free themselves from distressing circumstances and realities. In a study conducted by Gillespie (2020), the results revealed that children exposed to domestic violence at home often resort to escaping and fleeing from fear-inducing situations by going to their neighbours’ or grandparents’ houses as a means of survival. However, children without a place to flee to may end up homeless, and resort to engaging in risky behaviours such as substance abuse, bullying, eating disorders, risky sexual behaviours which can have long-term health consequences, including respiratory illnesses, stunted lung growth, and impaired brain development (Gillespie, 2020). Additionally, some children seek

refuge with family members or relatives who then subject them to abuse, leading to sexual exploitation and unintended pregnancies during their minor years.

Participants in this study shared that they chose to leave home because they could not bear the pain of witnessing a helpless parent being assaulted, as well as experiencing abuse from the perpetrator themselves on certain occasions. In a study conducted by Lloyd (2018), the results reveal that domestic violence pains children because children who are exposed to domestic violence do not have a stable home, they move from one place to another in between family members, friends or even social welfare homes in search for love and affection. As a result, children choose to live in the streets and they end up having long-term problems because they eat from dustbins which decrease their level of productivity in various aspects of their lives (Munge, 2020). Some participants noted that they left home to improve their living conditions and free themselves from suffering by going to places and people who can provide for their basic needs, people who provide them with safety and security as well as places whereby they can make a living for themselves. Pingley (2017) highlights that children who left their homes were able to improve their lives by being in homes which foster concentration in school work, nurturing their talents and sports as well as experiencing their stage of development like any other child.

### **Sub-theme 1.2: Act of concealing oneself or steering clear of confrontations in the face of fearful situations**

This sub-theme emphasizes that individuals often mask their feelings, emotions and frustrations when confronted with fearful situations, which is a crucial effect of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is confirmed by the following statements from participants:

“I am scared of my father to a point whereby when I hear his car parking outside, I leave everything that I am doing and run to my bedroom and hide. I always avoid being in the same room as my father because he is a problematic person and always shouting over small things”. (P1)

“I joined study groups so that I can come back home tired and go to my room after eating so that I can avoid my parents”. (P4)

“I am always scared in the house and when I hear a drunken person shouting, screaming or singing outside, I automatically assume that it is my father and I will take my siblings and hide in our bedroom and lock the doors so that we can avoid being involved in fights between our parents”. (P8)

“I have to hide or leave the room and go to my bedroom with my child when my step-father arrives at home because he does not like me and we do not even speak to each other. When my stepfather buys ice creams or something for his children, he does not buy anything for me and my child. This behaviour causes a lot of tension in the house because I am always chased away from the house by my step-father and when they need someone to take care of their children, my mother fetch me from my grandmother’s house to their house. I am scared of asking my mother for basic necessities for myself and my child because my step-father always reminds me that I must ask my father or the father of my child since I am an adult who goes around having children”. (P12)

The findings revealed that participants who are exposed to domestic violence often avoid their parents, caregivers or guardians out of fear when domestic violence episodes occur at home. Moreover, when children are exposed to domestic violence, they become hopeless, confused and vulnerable (Fromm, 2019). As a result, they prefer to be strong on behalf of their parents and not show any emotions by not interfering in adult issues. Participants in this study shared that they hide in their rooms from their parents, care-givers or guardians due to the fact that they do not want to see or hear the domestic violence taking place. Gillespie (2020) corroborates the above statement and indicates that children who witness domestic violence at home hide from the perpetrator as a defence mechanism and avoid being beaten and forced to take a sides between their parents.

Some participants explained that the violence often takes place in their parents’ room and they are able to hear the sounds of throwing objects, screams and groaning of the primary victim from the bedroom. Studies show that women are often primary victims of domestic violence. However, 75% to 90% of the time, children often witness the incidents either visually or listen from their own adjacent rooms (Women’s Aid, 2016).

The sound of crying could go on for hours and this makes the children to be uncomfortable and unable to sleep. As a result, the children must hide under their beds or wardrobes if they hear any door opening in the house to escape being attacked and beaten by the perpetrator. Women's Aid (2016) indicates that children hide as a surviving method in order to be out of sight from the perpetrator because when the perpetrator is not in a good mood, the fights also extend to everyone who is insight.

### **Sub-theme 1.3: Emotional reaction of experiencing anger or depression stemming from fear**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals often show emotional reactions such as anger or depression that induce fear which is a crucial consequence of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the following statements:

"I felt angry that my father will just beat my mother in front of me and my siblings and made us a laughing stock in the community, that is why I run away from home and never returned". (P2)

"I feel angry and violent towards my father because he spends his money with other women and is not taking care of us in the house. When my mother confronts him, he become defensive and beat her up". (P7)

"I have seen my parents fighting with each other and I got used to it to a point whereby I do not care anymore. When my parents start fighting, I go to my friends' house and give them space to resolve their issues. My parent's fighting pushed me to start smoking and when I am high, I start being inconsiderate and also beat people over silly things". (P10)

"I feel angry and frustrated that my step-father beat my mother hence I always see the need to intervene and protect my mother from him". (P12)

The findings highlight that participants experience fear during domestic violence episodes between their parents, care-givers or guardians which make them develop anger or depression. When children struggle to control their fear, it leads to emotional reactions such as short temper which turns into angry outburst towards parents, siblings or peers (Hsiao, Ward, Ganz, Casey, Zheng & Fang, 2018). In a study conducted by



Hsiao et al. (2018), the findings of the study indicate that children who witness conflict at home are hyper vigilant and aggressive because of fear which often extends to their social lives as well as their interaction with others. As a result, children who are exposed to episodes of violence may experience feelings of being worthless, hopeless and being depressed which make them abusing substances or engaging in self-damaging behaviour such as an increased risk of committing offences, being suicidal and a potential danger to themselves or others. In a study conducted by Jenny (2023), it was found that children who witness domestic violence experience high levels of emotional reactions such as anger, tension and stress which often lead to depression. Though some of the children do not see certain aspects of the physical abuse, they are aware of and may feel the tension and distress caused by those acts. It further reveals that the perpetrator of the abuse may abuse the children verbally or physically by blaming, shaming them or trying to control their behaviour. Therefore, the children become alert and become angry for always watching out and preparing to fight and protect the primary victim and their siblings (Jenny, 2023).

Participants in this study shared that they experience anger and act irrationally towards the perpetrator of the abuse because they want to protect their parent from the physical abuse which they go through. Some participants expressed that they get agitated and angry towards their abusive parent for neglecting and not assuming the financial responsibility on their behalf. This agrees with Munge (2020) who states that when children have conflicting emotions of anger or depression because of fear, they tend to develop deep hatred for the perpetrator, have extreme withdrawal and acute aggressiveness which often influences their attitude towards others. Other participants indicated that they have detached from the domestic violence episodes to a point whereby they do not care what happens when their parents fight and go visit their friends and give them space. According to a study conducted by Pingley (2017), children who are exposed to fights, develop an insecure attachment which is avoidant to their parents and may be ambivalent by being withdrawn or avoidant. Children who witness domestic violence are angry and hostile towards the perpetrator and resent them for their actions (Jenny, 2023). Moreover, children who witness domestic violence

may also be angry with the primary victim for not protecting them or not leaving the abusive parent who expose them to fear, anger and depression (Bundy, 2015).

## **Theme 02: Manifestations of anger**

In this theme, participants identified anger as a significant outcome of witnessing domestic violence. They revealed that the experience led to embedded anger issues, manifesting in varied behaviours depending on life circumstances. The expressions of anger included engaging in bullying or aggression, experiencing persistent frustration, displaying aggressive behaviour as a response to anger, and exhibiting unrestrained tantrums.

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Propensity for individuals to partake in bullying or aggressive actions towards others as an expression of anger**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals have a tendency to engage in bullying or aggressive actions towards others as a way of expressing anger, which is a significant consequence of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the subsequent statements from participants:

“I sometimes take out my frustrations from home to my friends and convince them to do my home works because I hardly get time to do my school work at home. So I use manipulation to my friends and cut them off if they refuse to do what I want”. (P1)

“I am used to being harsh, so I also use force when I am playing with my friends. I use force with intentions but I just want my peers to respect me. If I am passing in the playground during school break and find my school mates playing soccer or tins, they must show me respect and allow me to pass or I will take their playing tools and wait for the one who will follow me and beat them up”.(P2)

“I am always mean and quick to get involved in fights at school which has nothing to do with me because my father told me that I am a man and must be respected”. (P5)

“I am always protective and defensive of my child, siblings and myself. I lost a lot of friends at school because I am always fighting with them for no reason even before I fell pregnant.” (P12)

The findings of the study highlight that participants develop anger during episodes of domestic violence between their parents or caregivers, which makes them to use force, threats, tease others or try to dominate others in order to feel in control and good about themselves. When participants witness domestic violence at home, they learn how to bully and torment others by modelling the behaviours of their caregivers or parents. As a result, the participants may abuse or physically injure other people on purpose such as siblings, peers or abusive parents because of their aggression and uncontrollable anger. In support of this statement, Plumptre (2023) states that there is a high prevalence of school bullying which is a result of children who witness domestic violence because there is parental disharmony and conflict at home. Moreover, the children who witness domestic violence are socially isolated from others by the perpetrator and they lack outside support. The perpetrator may also discipline the children inconsistently based on their mood rather than on the child's behaviour. This agrees with Carlson (2018) who states that children are disciplined harshly by the perpetrator when they take sides during fights or standing next to the victim. The findings further indicate that participants who are exposed to domestic violence may feel sad and lonely because of the constant fights, which makes it difficult for them to express themselves to others. Therefore, participants expressed that they bully and torment others because it is normal to them and that is how they live at home. Carlson (2018) indicates that children who are exposed to fights at home grow up knowing that aggression is an acceptable way of solving problems.

Participants shared that they are aggressive and violent towards others because they cannot confront or express their anger to their parent due to the fact that they are aggressive in nature and always ready to physically discipline others. Other participants stated that their parents do not care about them so they resort to bullying in order to get their parents' attention and have a sense of power and control which is lacking in their own life. These findings are supported by Lodge (2015) who found that children who witness domestic violence have a tendency to be violent towards other people due to the fact that they are often rejected, perceived differently by one of their parent and to some extent, these children are being harshly and physically punished by their parent in order to control the child.

## **Sub-theme 2.2: Regular feeling of frustration as a frequent emotional reaction associated with anger**

This sub-theme indicates that individuals often display persistent feelings of frustrations from situations that evoke anger, which is a significant effect of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the following statements from participants:

“The constant fighting was frustrating and did not have limits to a point whereby my parents will fight in front of guests, other family members and even in public. So sometimes I will talk back at my dad because he has a bad attitude and my mother will stop talking to me for days”. (P2)

“The constant fighting at home is frustrating and I am even ashamed to ask my parents to attend school meetings because I stay in the same area as most children in my class and I do not want them to embarrass me in front of them”.(P5)

“I do not have a life; I am expected to take care of my siblings because my mother refuses to leave her abusive boyfriend”. (P8)

“I get annoyed when my mom ask me to do household chores and wash my siblings uniform while she is always at home doing nothing”. (P13)

The findings of this study revealed that participants experience extreme anger during their parents' fights which prompts them to be impatient with others and get irritated fast. Carlson (2015) indicates that children get frustrated by the hurtful remarks made by the perpetrator during fights which suggests that children are the cause of the fights and should be blamed. When participants are frustrated, they become hostile towards their peers, siblings or parents and they become impulsive (Bundy, 2015). Furthermore, the participants expressed feelings of being emotionally overwhelmed and stressed, leading to a tendency to give up on tasks both in the academic and home environments. As a result, their frustration interferes with their ability to develop appropriate social skills such the ability to express their feelings, responding to the initiation of interactions with others, appropriate facial expression as well as taking another person's perspective (Bundy, 2015).

Participants in this study expressed that they get frustrated when they have to leave home for school as they become anxious throughout the day about what could happen to their parent if the abuser find their parent alone. In a study conducted by Munge (2020), the findings reflect that in a domestic violent home, there is a role switch whereby children have to guard the abused parent instead of the parent guarding the children because the parent is either injured or not deprived sleep. Moreover, participants indicated that they resent their mother for choosing and defending their abusive partner instead of protecting herself and her children. Participants shared that they feel frustrated about having to forfeit their childhood and take on parental responsibilities for their siblings due to the constant poor decisions made by their own mother, who is a victim. Munge (2020) states that older siblings often sacrifice their childhood by dropping out of school or having to sell sweets or snacks in order to put food on the table because the perpetrator no longer take care of them and does not want the victim to work.

### **Sub-theme 2.3: Exhibition of aggressive behaviour resulting from feelings of anger**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals often exhibit high levels of aggressive behaviour from situations that provoke anger, which is a significant consequence of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the subsequent statements from participants:

“I always use force when playing with others and I am too quick to attack my peers and this started happening after being exposed to domestic violence at home”. (P2)

“When my dad comes back home drunk and beat my mom, my siblings and I usually team up with my mom and beat him until he runs away and go to his sister’s house”. (P5)

“I developed a short temper as a result of the abuse and I am always ready to be violent and defensive towards my peers and siblings”. (P8)

“I swear at my mother’s boyfriend and fight with him when he is talking to her as he pleases”. (P9)

The findings of the study highlight that participants who are exposed to episodes of domestic violence have aggressive behaviours such as saying something hurtful to others, hitting and swearing at parents, peers and siblings. As a result, participants may have injuries as well as developmental disabilities which interfere with their normal functioning because of their aggressive actions and behaviours. Children exposed to domestic violence often undergo heightened levels of aggression, leading to the development of problems related to aggressive behaviour in children (Pingley, 2017). Moreover, O'Brayan (2018) found that there is sufficient evidence which suggests that social environment and engagements with different people is another factor which contributes to the promotion and socialization of childhood aggressive issues. Furthermore, this study did not examine interventions for enhancing aggressive behaviour in children witnessing violence; it suggests the exploration of strategies to mitigate such behaviours, involving diverse stakeholders in identifying suitable interventions.

Participants in this study shared that they use force in order to have control and power over their vulnerable peers so that they can be respected and praised by them. Some of the participants postulated that they team up with their siblings and the abused parent and beat up the perpetrator of the abuse due to the fact that they are tired of their behaviour. Goldsmith (2016) states that children often become the victim's protector and intervene during fights in order to rescue the victim because it angers them to take care of the victim after every fight. Other participants averred that they talk back at an abusive adult so that they can see that they are not scared of them. Despite earlier research indicating a link between witnessing domestic violence at home and increased child aggression, the impact of such exposure on the duration and timing of developmental effects is frequently overlooked (Pingley, 2017).

#### **Sub-theme 2.4: Incidence of tantrums, typically characterized by unrestrained outbursts of anger**

This sub-theme shows that individuals often exhibit incidence of tantrums typically characterized by unrestrained outbursts of anger, which is a crucial effect of children being exposed to domestic violence. The following statements support this behaviour:

“Whenever I am playing with my friends and they do not give me many chances to play, I take my toys away and go back home”. (P4)

“I break plates and burn food on purpose when my mother asks me to cook for her husband while he does not contribute anything in the house”. (P12)

“I always slam the door on my way out when my teacher shout at me for not doing my homework”. (P5)

“When my stepfather starts demanding money from my mom and ask about my grant money, I just walk out and pretend like I don’t hear him”. (P13)

The findings of the study highlight that exposure to consistent anger contributes to participants throwing tantrums because they are caught in the middle of their parents’ fights. When participants are raised in households where they are not free to express their feelings safely, they get overwhelmed and model the behaviour of their parents. Participants throw tantrums depending on what they have witnessed from their parents when they are burdened with emotions (Plate, 2019). Thurrott (2020) found that children throw tantrums such as using offensive language, overreacting or lash out in a physical way based on how their parents behave during conflict.

Participants in this study shared that when they are overwhelmed by emotions of anger, they tend to throw away their toys or destroy them. Some participants expressed that they walk out of conversations when they are angry. While other participants indicated that they sulk and stop talking to their parents or siblings. Other participants reported that they scream and cry uncontrollably until their parents give them what they want even if it is unreasonable.

### **Theme 03: Sensations of shame/guilt**

In this theme, participants indicated that witnessing domestic violence results in feelings of shame or guilt. This emotional burden leads to negative self-perception, altered behaviour, heightened worry, and, at times, a sense of responsibility for the harm suffered by the primary victim. Participants emphasized that children in such situations

may isolate themselves, struggle with focus and concentration, lose interest in activities, and resort to school absenteeism as a coping strategy for managing shame or guilt.

### **Sub-theme 3.1: Propensity for individuals to retreat and isolate themselves due to feelings of shame or guilt**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals have a tendency to retreat and isolate themselves from situations that provoke feelings of shame or guilt, which is a significant consequence of children being exposed to domestic violence. The following statements from participants confirm this behaviour:

“I feel disappointed and ashamed when my parents are fighting and this makes me uncomfortable because I do not know how to ask them to stop fighting. So I prefer staying in my room alone, and go through social media on my phone and then sleep a lot”. (P1)

“My dad does not want me to play with other children, he makes me do all the house chores and sometimes I must go with him to collect tins for his recycling job”. (P9)

“My mom does not want me to go anywhere after school because she is scared that I might tell people about what is going on at home”. (P10)

“I have trust issues, push people away and I fail to maintain friendships and relationships with others because I fear that they will discriminate and judge me for being a teenage mother without understanding what pushed me to do it. So I prefer staying at home alone to avoid a lot of things”. (P12)

The findings highlight that participants experience shame or guilt during and after episodes of domestic violence, making them to avoid interacting with peers, siblings or even parents because they believe that the fights at home are socially unacceptable and embarrassing for them. When children feel ashamed or guilty, they often isolate themselves in order not to be subjected to rejection, hurt and negative remarks about their home situation (Lodge, 2015). As a result, participants struggle to play with other children as well as to initiate or maintain friendships. Chemtob et al. (2017) concur with the above findings of this study and explain that isolated children who witness domestic violence often struggle to develop and show case their social skills. This suggests that



children who witness domestic violence may not have an opportunity to learn appropriate problem-solving methods or acceptable conflict resolution strategies.

Participants in this study averred that they try to hide the chaos that is happening at home from their friends and peers by isolating themselves. Some participants indicated that they do not feel comfortable when their friends want to visit them because the perpetrator does not allow them to have friends visiting them. Alho (2015) states that the perpetrators separate their children from friends and others so that they can control the narrative of the domestic violence, keep it a secret and ensure that their privacy is not compromised. As a result, participants expressed that they start to be lonely, suicidal, angry and frustrated due to being isolated. When children are isolated, they do not have a source of support and are reluctant to confide others, which leads to them being frustrated and having suicidal thoughts to deal with their emotions (Goldsmith, 2016).

### **Sub-theme 3.2: Challenges in sustaining focus and concentration attributed to the emotional weight of shame or guilt**

This sub-theme highlights that there are various factors, which contribute to individuals not sustaining focus and concentration from the situation that proves shame or guilt, which have a huge effect on children being exposed to domestic violence. The subsequent statements from participants support this behaviour:

“I am always distracted and lose concentration at school due to the fact that I am always worried about my mom, how she is feeling and what happens to her while I am away because I do not know how best to support her as I am also scared of my father”. (P1)

“My mom shouts at me because I always forget my books, lunch box or school jerseys at home and only remember them when she is dropping me off at school”. (P3)

“I don’t pay attention in class because my teacher says I’m dumb so I end up scoring low marks”. (P9)

“I get tired very easily so I am always sleepy in class and I miss lessons”. (P10)

The findings suggest that children who witness domestic violence face challenges in maintaining focus and concentration, which are attributed to the emotional burden of shame or guilt. This indicates that the psychological impact of witnessing domestic violence extends beyond immediate emotional reactions and influences cognitive processes. The emotional weight of shame or guilt can create a significant distraction for these children, making it difficult for them to concentrate on tasks, whether at school or in other aspects of their lives. This is consistent with existing literature that underscores the intricate connection between emotional well-being and cognitive functions.

Participants in this study shared that they have a problem of paying attention in class and social activities due to disturbing experiences of domestic violence, which occur at home. Some of the participants stated that they are always worried about what happens to the primary victim while they are at school. The experiences of some participants relate to the findings of Hsiao et al. (2018) which indicate that the effects of domestic violence do not end at home, but stretch to the social lives, interactions and school performance of children who witness it. As a result, they lose concentration in class and do not perform well in their grades. In a study conducted by Boston Medical Centre (2017), the implications of this finding are noteworthy, as sustained difficulties in concentration can affect academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. Addressing these challenges may require a holistic approach that combines psychological support, counselling, and educational interventions to help children cope with and overcome the emotional hurdles associated with witnessing domestic violence. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing the multifaceted nature of the impact of domestic violence on children and tailoring interventions to address both the emotional and cognitive aspects of their experiences.

### **Sub-theme 3.3: Decline in interest and enthusiasm for activities as a result of experiencing shame or guilt**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals often display a decline in interest and enthusiasm for activities when they are confronted with situations that evoke shame or

guilt, which is a serious effect of children being exposed to domestic violence. This behaviour is supported by the following statements:

“I don’t like playing with friends anymore, I enjoying going through social media on my phone and then sleep a lot”. (P4)

“I don’t like going to school, my teacher is boring and I don’t understand her”. (P5)

“I don’t enjoying riding bicycles with friends anymore because my dad beat me when I come back home”. (P6)

“I no longer enjoy watching tv with my family because my stepfather leave the room when he sees me and this makes my mom be angry at me”. (P12)

The findings of this study underscore a profound impact on participants who experience shame or guilt resulting from episodes of domestic violence, leading to a decline in interest and enthusiasm for various activities. This emotional burden appears to extend across different facets of their lives, influencing engagement in areas such as hobbies, social interactions, and academic pursuits (Carlson, 2018). Children grappling with shame or guilt may struggle to rediscover the enjoyment they once found in activities (Alho, 2015). Some participants reported a loss of interest in hobbies they previously enjoyed, while others expressed a reluctance to engage with peers or participate in playful activities. Furthermore, a notable decrease in motivation and interest in learning or school-related activities was evident among certain participants. Goldsmith's (2016) insights suggest that the lack of parental guidance and involvement in the lives of children exposed to domestic violence may contribute to a diminished sense of purpose, goal-setting, and productivity. The participants' preferences for solitude and disinterest in various aspects of life may be indicative of coping mechanisms or responses to the emotional weight borne from witnessing domestic violence.

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a nuanced approach that prioritizes the emotional and psychological well-being of these children. Interventions should encompass therapeutic support, counselling services, and the creation of a supportive environment conducive to gradually reigniting their interest and enthusiasm. Recognizing the intricate interplay between emotional experiences and the broader

spectrum of a child's life is essential for developing effective strategies to help them navigate and overcome the complex challenges associated with witnessing domestic violence.

#### **Sub-theme 3.4: Heightened probability of absenteeism from school as a strategy to cope with feelings of shame or guilt**

This sub-theme highlights that individuals often display high levels of absenteeism from school, which as a result of feeling ashamed or guilty, after being exposed to episodes of domestic violence. High levels of absenteeism from school have a negative impact in the lives and desires of children. The subsequent statements from participants support this behaviour:

“I sometimes bunk school which affect my performance in maths and physical sciences in order to make sure that my mother is well taken care of, she has cooked food in the house because sometimes she cannot walk due to injuries and also make sure that she takes medication on time”. (P1)

“I skip school because my dad locks me up in the house and does not want me to go to school”. (P2)

“I do not normally go to school on Mondays because my mother was too sick or badly injured by the fights which take place at home over the weekend and did not wash my school uniform. This means, I have to bunk school and this affects my assessment marks and submissions because I am too scared to be judged by my teacher in front of the class if I tell her the truth about the situation at home”. (P9)

“My mother forces me not to go to school if I got involved and tried to intervene in the fights which led me to have injuries or bruises. So I must always lie to my teachers about why I am always absent and my marks are dropping due to the fact that my mother does not want to be reported to the social workers again.” (P10)

The findings shed light on a significant consequence of witnessing domestic violence in children—the increased likelihood of school absenteeism as a coping mechanism for dealing with feelings of shame or guilt. The participants in this study expressed that episodes of domestic violence between their parents led them to experience shame or

guilt, prompting them to stay away from school as a way of coping. This reveals the profound impact of domestic violence on children, pushing them to avoid the school environment due to the emotional challenges they face (Alho, 2015). Children dealing with shame or guilt resulting from domestic violence may struggle with the social interactions and academic demands present in the school setting (Gillespie, 2020). The fear of judgment, feelings of unworthiness, or the belief that they are responsible for the harm inflicted on the primary victim could contribute to the decision to skip school. This coping mechanism reflects a deep-seated struggle with the emotional aftermath of witnessing domestic violence, affecting various aspects of a child's life (Gillespie, 2020).

When participants experience shame, they tend to be absent from school to conceal injuries acquired from intervening in the fights and maintain a neat appearance. The study further indicates that participants often miss school because the abusive parent confines them at home to care for the injured parent, resulting in academic setbacks and, in some cases, dropping out. This heightened probability of absenteeism not only impacts academic performance but also raises concerns about the child's overall well-being and social development (Hsiao et al., 2018). In line with a study by Boston Medical Centre (2017), children exposed to domestic violence may face difficulties concentrating at school, reflected in changes in attendance and performance. Participants in this study revealed that they sometimes miss school because their parents hide them at home to conceal injuries, leading to questions from classmates and teachers. The findings also highlighted instances where participants were absent due to unwashed uniforms resulting from their caregiver's injuries sustained during a domestic violence incident.

A comprehensive effort involving school officials, teachers, and mental health specialists is required to address this issue. Strategies such as creating a supportive and understanding school environment, providing counselling services, and collaborating with parents or guardians are crucial in mitigating the impact of shame or guilt on school attendance. Recognizing the interconnectedness of emotional experiences and educational outcomes is essential for developing interventions that holistically address the challenges faced by children witnessing domestic violence.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

It can be deduced from the findings of this study that the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children are many and varied. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that the effects of domestic violence can damage and disrupt the normal functioning of children. The next chapter will focus on the summary of major findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the overall study summary and draws a conclusion based on the data obtained. This study also indicates the limitations of the study, makes recommendations which are in line with intervention strategies and policies as well as the strength of the study. This study explored and described the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children using a qualitative research approach as well as exploratory research design to gain an in-depth understanding of children witnessing domestic violence in Tafelkop community. This study also employed a purposive sampling and used semi-structured interviews to get relevant answers of the research questions from participants.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative exploratory study was undertaken, involving 13 children aged 8-18 who have experienced domestic violence in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Recruitment involved selecting participants from the Matsepe Drop-in Centre database, utilizing purposive sampling. The research employed individual interviews guided by a semi-structured interview guide. Data analysis followed Tesch's 8 steps of open coding method, leading to the identification of themes and sub-themes. Trustworthiness was maintained including adherence to ethics, and efforts were made to minimize biases during the study.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study delved into the repercussions of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, specifically within the age range of 8 to 18, at Matsepe Drop-in Centre. The research found three overarching themes that encapsulate the profound impact on these children:

Firstly, there is a pronounced tendency among children to escape or flee from home when confronted with domestic violence. Seeking refuge at relatives' houses, escaping during parental disputes, and resorting to coping mechanisms like smoking were

common responses. Individuals actively concealed their emotions and frustrations, avoiding interactions with the abusive parent and taking precautions to evade potential conflicts.

Secondly, emotional reactions, primarily anger and depression, were triggered by exposure to domestic violence. Children expressed frustration and resentment towards the abusive parent, who often made their family a laughing stock or neglected responsibilities. Additionally, some individuals adopted violent behaviours themselves, resorting to physical aggression as a coping mechanism induced by the emotional turmoil resulting from their parents' conflicts.

Thirdly, manifestations of anger, including bullying, aggression, and tantrums, were prevalent among participants. There was a propensity for bullying or aggressive actions towards others, with some manipulating friends or engaging in unnecessary fights at school. The constant exposure to domestic violence resulted in persistent frustration, impacting social interactions and relationships. Individuals exhibited high levels of aggressive behaviour, directing aggression towards peers and family members. Incidences of tantrums, characterized by unrestrained outbursts of anger, were frequent and triggered by various situations, reflecting the difficulty individuals faced in managing and expressing their anger appropriately.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

- Children who are exposed to domestic violence experience a pervasive presence of fear, leading to behavioural patterns of escape, concealment and emotional distress.
- Witnessing domestic violence contributes to the manifestation of anger-related issues, including bullying, aggression, frustration, and unrestrained tantrums.
- Emotional repercussions, such as shame and guilt, emerge; impacting self-perception, behaviour, and leading to isolation, focus challenges, decreased interest in activities, and school absenteeism.
- The study underscores the profound and multifaceted psychological impact on children, necessitating comprehensive interventions and support systems.



- Beyond immediate effects, the findings highlight enduring consequences on emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Early intervention strategies:** To address the immediate needs of children escaping from homes marred by domestic violence, proactive early intervention strategies are crucial. Drop-in centres, NGOs, and Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) play a pivotal role in providing a safe haven for these children. Furthermore, community outreach initiatives are recommended to extend awareness into schools, malls, and rural areas of Tafelkop. This proactive engagement seeks to not only educate children about domestic violence but also enlighten parents about available services. The ultimate goal is to prevent homelessness and deter vulnerable children from resorting to substance abuse.

**Prevention strategies in schools:** Prevention is paramount in mitigating the effects of domestic violence on children. School support staff should incorporate awareness campaigns into the curriculum, enlightening students about the diverse consequences of domestic violence, including bullying, frustrations, aggression, and unrestrained tantrums. Collaborative efforts between school management teams, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), drop-in centres, NGOs, and Child and Youth Care Centres are essential. This collaboration aims to implement behaviour modification programmes within schools, fostering a supportive environment that significantly reduces and prevents occurrences of bullying, aggression, and unrestrained tantrums among children.

**Integration of full-time support personnel:** The Department of Education is urged to take a proactive role by employing full-time social workers and school counsellors. These professionals can provide vital support by offering individual or group counselling to learners grappling with the emotional repercussions of domestic violence. Their roles extend to assisting with the placement of children in places of safety, facilitating family reunification, implementing life skills and mental health programmes within schools, and providing after-care programmes to learners in need.

**Collaborative initiatives with social workers:** Social workers should actively collaborate with school principals, community leaders, and NGOs to identify children and families experiencing psychological challenges stemming from domestic violence. Conducting home visits and providing psychosocial support and crisis intervention can be instrumental in addressing the underlying issues associated with domestic violence. This collaborative effort ensures a holistic approach to identifying and assisting those in need.

**Ongoing support groups and structures:** Recognizing the enduring impact of domestic violence on children, the establishment of ongoing support groups and social structures or movements is recommended. These initiatives aim to provide sustained assistance, potentially extending into adulthood. By addressing the long-term effects of domestic violence, these support groups contribute to a comprehensive and enduring solution for individuals affected by such traumatic experiences.

## **5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study would have produced greater results. However, the study was limited due to the following factors:

- The study was limited to a single population, making it difficult to generalise to other populations.
- Gender balance was not achieved in the sample because there were not enough male children who witnessed domestic violence who were willing to participate in the study. Only four male child witnesses to domestic violence participated in the study.
- The relevant stakeholders who work with children such as social workers, psychologists, teachers, South African Police Services, community based organization and homeless shelters management team were also not part of the study which could have resulted in a better understanding and outcomes of the effects of witnessing domestic violence among children.

## **5.7 STRENGTH OF THE STUDY**

This qualitative study demonstrated notable strengths that enhance the depth and applicability of its findings. The study employed qualitative research design and conducted one-on-one interviews, which enabled an in-depth exploration of children's experiences witnessing domestic violence. This approach captured the nuanced and complex nature of their situations. The deliberate focus on a specific population, children aged 8 to 18 at the Matsepe Drop-in Centre in Tafelkop, allowed for a detailed examination of experiences within a particular context. The identification of three overarching themes—tendency to escape or flee, emotional reactions (anger and depression), and manifestations of anger (bullying, aggression, tantrums)—provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of domestic violence. This nuanced approach adds depth to the study's insights. Furthermore, the study's exploration of coping mechanisms and behaviours offered valuable insights for potential interventions, contributing to the development of targeted support systems and strategies to address the specific needs of affected children.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter encompasses a detailed examination of the study's findings and conclusions. Additionally, it puts forth recommendations derived from the outcomes of the study. A thorough exploration of the study's limitations and strengths provided constraints and notable attributes of the research.

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## APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHICAL SHEET

Topic: The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

### Introduction

I am Nkadimeng C, student number 201512406, Master of Public Health student at the University of Limpopo. I am conducting a study on the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children, kindly note that the information you share with me will be kept confidential and not divulged to any other person. Thank you for participating in the interview and sharing your thoughts and experiences.

### Biographical details of the participants

#### 1. Age category of the participants

8-11	
11-15	
15-18	

#### 2. Race

Black	
White	
Coloured	
Indian	
Other (specify)	

#### 3. Religion

Christian	
Traditional African religions	
Islam	
Hinduism	

Judaism	
---------	--

4. Educational level

Primary level	
Secondary level	
Other (specify)	

## SEHLOMATHIŠO A: TATAIŠO YA DIPOLEDIŠANO.

Hlogotaba: ditšweletšwa tšago hlatsela thlorisho kgahlanong le bana.

Matseno

Ke nna Nkadimeng C, nomoro ya moithuti 201512406 Master ya maphelo a setshaba moithuti yunibesithing ya Limpopo. Ke tsamaisa/ke etsa boithuto ka phello ya go bona dikgaruru tsa ka gae gare ga bana, ka botho hlokomela gore tshemoso yeo o e abelanago lenna etla bohlokwa e le sephiri gomme e ka se utollwe go motho yo mongwe. Re leboga go tšea karolo poledišanong le go abelana dikgopolo le maitemogelo a gago.

Tša methopo ya batho bao ba fanego ka tshedimošo.

1. Pharologanyo ya mengwaga ya bao ba fanego ka tshedimišo.

8-11	
11-15	
15-18	

2. Mohlobo

Batho baso	
Batho ba šweu	
Mmala' ohle	
Makula	
Tše dingwe (hlalosa)	

3. Bodumedi

Sekreste	
Ditumelo tša setšo sa seAfrika	
Isilamo	
SeHindu	

SeJudah	
---------	--

#### 4. Tša thuto

Sekolo sa fase	
Sekolo sa magareng	
Le tše dingwe	

## ISITHATHISELO A: UMHLAHLANDLELA WEKULUMOKUHLOLA

Isihloko: Ukuthinteka nokubandanyeka kokubona inturhu yokuhlukunyenziwa kwabantwana endaweni yeTafelkop esiFundeni seLimpopo.

Isingeniso

Nngimu u Nkadimeng C, inombolo yama kwezemfundo 201512406. Ngenza iziqu zezempilo eNguvesi yaseLimpopo. Ngenza ucwaningo ngemiphumela yezingane ezihlukumezwayo emakhaya, zihlukunyezwa gesihluku nangendluzula.

Yazi bonyana ulwazi ongipha lona lizokuba yifihlo angekhe la dluliselwa komunye umuntu. Nngiya thokoza ngoku dlhala indima nge kulumo begoda noku wabelana ngemi khumbulo no lwazi.

Isigaba A: Imininingwana yomlando wokuphila yabahlanganyeli.

1. Isigaba seminyaka yabahlanganyeli

8-11	
11-15	
15-18	

2. Umhlobo/Umbala

Abamnyama	
Abamhlophe	
Abanombala	
Ama-Indian	
Okunye (hlathulula)	

3. Ikolo

AmaKrestu	
Ikolelo Yesintu	

Ama-Islam	
Ama-Hinduism	
AmaJuda	

#### 4. Izinga Lezefundo

Izinga Lefundo Ephasi	
Izinga Lefundo Yesibili	
Okhunye (hlathulula)	



**ISITHASISELO A: UMHLAHLANDLELA WOKWENZA I-NTHAVIYU (INKULUMOLUHLLO).**

Isihloko: imiphumela yokuzibonela ngqo kuhlukunyezwa izingane ngendluzula emakhaya azo eTafelkop, esifundazweni saseLimpopo.

Isingeniso

Igama lami uNkadimeng C, inombolo yama kwezemfundo 201512406. Ngenza iziqu zezempilo eNguvesi yaseLimpopo. Ngenza ucwaningo ngemiphumela yezingane ezihlukumezwayo emakhaya, zihlukunyezwa gesihluku nangendluzula.

Yazi ukuthi leminingwane owabelana ngayo izoba yimfihlo kanti angeke ivezwe nanoma kubani. Ngibonga ukuzinikela kwakho kulenkulumoluhlolo ubuye usabele ngovo nemibono yakho ngalesisihloko.

Isigaba sokuqala: imininingwane ngomlando yomuntu obambe iqhaza kulenkulumo.

1. Iminyaka yababambe iqhaza

8-11	
11-15	
15-18	

2. Lihlanga

Abansundu	
Abamhlophe	
Abebala	
Amandiya	
Nabanye	

3. Inkolo

Limkristu	
-----------	--

Inkolo Yendabuko Yase-Afrika	
UbuIslam	
UbuHindu	
UbuJuda	

#### 4. Ezemfundo

Amazinga aphansi	
Amazinga aphezulu	
Okunye	

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### Section A: effects of witnessing domestic violence among children

1. How often did your father and mother fight at home? What did you do when they used to fight?

2. Did you think that it was normal/OK for your parents to fight or any family member?

- How does the constant fighting make you feel?

3. How do you think you were affected by your parents' fighting?

4. Tell me about school and how you relate to other people at school?

-How does the domestic violence at home affect you and your interaction with friends and teachers at school?

- How does the domestic violence affect your performance at school?

- Are there episodes of bullying/fighting where you are attending school?

- How do you respond to bullying/fighting at school?

5. Tell me about the relationship you have with your parents?

- When the domestic violence occur in the household, do you feel like you want to take sides?

- Who do you feel is wrong between the two parents?

- How do you show that you are taking sides?

- How does taking sides make you feel?

6. Can you share with me the kind of abuse you witnessed or are you witnessing now?

-How did you respond to that abuse or violence?

-How did the abuse affect you? (Socially, psychologically, physically and emotionally)

-Are /were your social activities and personal life get affected by your parents' abuse/extended family members?

7. What impact did the violence have on you and your outlook in life?

- What changes did the violence bring to your life (do you sometimes hide, are you scared of asking your guardians for food and other necessities?)

## SEHLOMATHIŠO B: TATAIŠO YA DIPOLEDIŠANO.

Hlogotaba: ditšweletšwa tšago hlatsela thlorisho kgahlanong le bana.

Karolo ya A: ditšweletšwa tšago hlatsela thlorisho kgahlanong le bana.

1. Ke makgahlo a ma kae botate le bomma ba kgagana ka fao gae? O ile wa dira eng ge ba tlwaetše go kgagana?

2. O ile wa nagana gore ke setlwaelo/ go lokile ge ba kgagana?

-Ge ba kgagana/ Ba be ba kgagana, o ile wa ekwa o le bjang?

3. O nagana go re kgagano ya batswadi ba gago e go amile bjang?

4. Mpotše ka ga sekolo le ka tsela yeo o phedishanang le baithuti ga mmogo le barutiriši kua sekolong

- E kaba go nale nako yeo baithuti ba kgaganago ka yona kua sekolo?

5. Mpotše ka ga kamano yeo o nago le yona le batswadi

6. Ke thlorisho e fe ilego ya go diragalela/ yeo e go diragalelang?

- Phetolo ya gago e bile ya mohuta o fe go thlorisho yeo/ go bomenemene bjowe?

- Thlorisho yeo e go amile bjang? (go bao o phelago le bona, monaganong, mmeleng le maikutlong?)

7. A, bomenemene bjo bo go swere ka tsela efe le ka mokgwa woo o bonang tša bophelo?

- Ke diphetogo dife tseo di tlishitsego ke di kgagano ka gae? (e kaba o tshaba go kgopela batswadi bag ago dijo, goba ga o sa kgona go segishana le bona go pele ge di tiragalo tsa di kgagano di tsea karolo?)

## **SITHATHISELO B: UMHLAHLANDLELA WEKULUMOKUHLOLA**

Isihloko: Ukuthinteka nokubandanyeka kokubona inturhu yokuhlukunyenzenza kwabentwana endaweni yeTafelkop esiFundeni seLimpopo.

ISIGABA A: umthelela oledwa kubona izipi zangendlini emkhumbulweni wabentwana.

1.Kumahlandla amangaki ababelethi bakho basilwa ekhenu?

-Yini okwenzako lokha nabalwako?

2.Ucabanga bona kuyinto elungileko bona balwe?

Ukulwa kwabo kukwenza uzizwe njani?

-Yini ebe ufuna ukuyenza lokha nabalwako?

3.Ucabanga bona kukuthinta njani ukulwa kwababelethi bakho?

4.Ngitjela ngesikolo

- Mhlobo bani wokuthoriswa owakhe waqalana nawo nofana oqalene nawo?

-Kwaba yini oyenzako ekuthorisweni lokho?

5.Ngitjela ngobudlelwano bakho nababelethi bakho

6. Kwakuthinta njani ukuthoriswa lokho? (Ngokomkhumbulo,ngokomzimba nangokwemizwa).

7.Ngimuphi umthelela oledwa zizipi zokuthoriswa kuwe?

**ISITHASISELO B: UMHLAHLANDLELA WOKWENZA I-NTHAVIYU (INKULUMOLUHLLO).**

Isihloko: imiphumela yokuzibonela ngqo kuhlukunyezwa izingane ngendluzula emakhaya azo eTafelkop, esifundazweni saseLimpopo.

Isigaba A: imiphumela yokuzibonela ngqo likuhlukunyezwa ngesihluku nange-ndluzula kwezingane emakhaya.

1. Shono amahlandla lapho umama nobaba abalwa ngawo njalo ekhaya? Wenzani uma belwa?

2. Ucabanga ukuthi kulungile yini uma belwa?

- Uphatheka kanjani uma belwa?

- Ufuna ukwenzani uma belwa?

3. Ucabanga ukuthi yini/yimuphi umthelela oba nawo uma abazali bakho belwa?

4. Kunjani esikoleni? Uphatheke kanjani esikoleni?

-Ingabe uke wabona umuntu ehlukunyezwa?

-Waphatheka kanjani?

5. Bunjani ubudlwelwano bakho nabazali bakho?

6. Ingabe ukuhlukumezeka kukuphatha kanjani?( Ngokwenhlalo, ngokwengqondo)

7. Ingabe izinto zakho zokuzijabulisa kanye nempilo yakho kulawulwa umhlukumezi wabazali bakho?

-Ubudlova baba namuphi umthelela kuwe nasendleni obheka ngayo ukuphila?

## **APPENDIX C: STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET**

Dear participant

RE: PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**RESEARCH TITLE:** The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

My name is Cashline Nkadimeng, student number 201512406, a Master's student in Public Health at the University of Limpopo. You are kindly requested to participate in the study. This study has been approved by Research and Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo and Department of Social Development in Limpopo Province.

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

You will be asked to answer a series of questions from the interview guide which consists of only two sections, part A and B.

Your information will be kept confidential by requesting the participants to participate in the study anonymously. When I write my report or article about this research, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. The best benefits will be to know about the effect of domestic violence among children. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

If you have any questions about the research please contact:

Ms C Nkadimeng

Tafelkop Stadium View

Cell no: 072 3341 696

Email address: [cashlinenkadimengreshoketswe@gmail.com](mailto:cashlinenkadimengreshoketswe@gmail.com)



## **SEHLOMATHIŠO C: LETLAPA LA DITABA TŠA NYAKIŠIŠO**

Motšeakarolo yo a rategago

RE: Go tšea karolo go nyakišišo.

Hlogo ya nyakišišo: ditšweletšwa tšago hlatsela thlorisho kgahlanong le bana.

Yunibesithi ya Limpopo. Le kgopelwa ka botho go tšea karolo thutong yeo. Thuto ye e dumeletswe ke komiti ya dinyakišišo le maitshwaro ya Yunibesithi ya Limpopo le Kgoro ya Tlhabollo ya Leago Profenseng ya Limpopo.

Maikemišetso a nyakišišo ye ke go hlahloba le go hlaloša mafelelo a go bona dikgaruru tša ka malapeng gare ga bana ka Tafelkop, Profeseng ya Limpopo.

O tla kgopelwa go araba lekololo la dipotšišo go tšwa go tlhahlo ya dipoledišano tšeo di nago le dikarolo tše pedi fela, karolo ya A le B.

Tshedimošo ya gago e tla bolokwa e le sephiri ka go kgopela batswasehlabele go tšea karolo thutong ba sa tsebje. Ge ke ngwala pego ya ka goba sengwalwa ka ga nyakišišo ye, boitshupo bja gago bo tla šireletswa go fihla bokgoleng bjo bo kgonegago. Ga go na dikotsi tse di tsebjago tseo di sepedisanago le go tšea karolo nyakišišong ye. Mehola e kaone e tla ba go tseba ka mafelelo a dikgaruru tša ka gae gare ga bana.

Go tšea karolo gago go nyakisisong ye kega boithaopo. O ka kgetha go se tšee karolo le gatee. Ge o tšea karolo nyakišišong ye, o ka emiša go tšea karolo nako efe goba efe, o ka se otlwe goba wa lahlegelwa ke mehola efe goba efe yeo o swanelegago go yona ka tsela ye nngwe.

Ge o na le dipotšišo mabapi le nyakišišo ye, hle ikopanye le:

Ms C Nkadimeng

Tafelkop Stadium View

Nomoro ya mogala: 072 3341 696

Aterese ya imeile: [cashlinenkadimengreshoketswe@gmail.com](mailto:cashlinenkadimengreshoketswe@gmail.com)

**APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

PARENT’S CONSENT FORM TO ALLOW CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH OF MS C NKADIMENG

**Research title:** The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province.

The aim of the study has been described to me and I understand it. I freely and voluntarily agree that my child should participate in the study. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my child participates in the study anonymously and that the child may withdraw from the study without giving any reason at any time and this will not affect them in any way.

Parent’s name .....

Parent’s signature.....

Date.....

CHILDREN’S ASSENT FORM

I ..... (Name and Surname) agree to participate in the study. The purpose of the study as well as my rights to participate in the study has been explained to me.

When I sign my name, this means that I agree to participate in the study and that all of my questions have been answered. I have also been given a copy of this form.

Name.....

Signature.....

Date.....

## SEHLOMATHIŠO D: FOROMO YA TUMELELO

FOROMO YA BATSWADI YA GO DUMELELO GO TŠEA KAROLO NYAKIŠIŠONG YA MOHUMAGADI C NKADIMENG.

Hlogo ya dinyakišišo: ditšweletšwa tšago hlatsela thlorisho kgahlanong le bana.

Nepo kgolo ya nyakišišo e hlalošitšwe ka kwišišo go nna e bile ke e kwišišitše. Dipotšišo tšaka ka ga nyakišišo ye di arabilwe. Ke kwišiša gore ngwana waka o tšea karolo nyakišišong e le thlokaina, ngwana waka a ka kgetha go lesa go ba motšeakarolo ntle le go fa mabaka ka nako efe goba efe go sena seo se kamo thlagela morago ga go kgaotša botseakarolo bja gagwe.

Leina la mokgatlatema .....

Mosaeno wa mokgatlatema.....

Letšatši.....

## FOROMO YA TUMELO YA BANA.

Nna.....(Leina le Sefane) ke dumela go tšea karolo go nyakišišo yee. Nepo kgolo ga mmogo le ditokelo tšaka go nyakišišo yee dihlalošitšwe.

Ge ke saena leina laka, seo se laetša gore ke dumela go tšea karolo go nyakišišo yee ebile dipotšišo ka moka tšeo ke be ke nale tšona di arabilwe. Ke filwe khophi ya letlakala lekhi.

Leina.....

Mosaeno.....

Letšaši.....

## **APPENDIX E: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA**

Head of Department

The Department of Social Development

Olympic Towers

21 Birccard St

Polokwane

0700

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am Cashline Nkadimeng, student number: 201512406. I am currently studying Masters of Public Health with the University of Limpopo. I am requesting a permission to conduct my research in your institution. The title of my research is “The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo province.”

The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr MH Mphasha from the University of Limpopo.

Before the commencement of the study, I will obtain approval from Research and Ethics Committee at University of Limpopo and ethical clearance from Limpopo provincial research ethics committee, so as to make sure that the rights of the participants will be protected and that the research is conducted in an ethical and professional manner.

Participant’s consent will be obtained in writing before participating in the study. Participant’s confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. The results of the study will be made available to the institution if needed.

Attached please find the copy of my proposal and the ethical clearance from the University of Limpopo and ethical clearance from Limpopo provincial research ethics committee.

Yours faithfully

Signature.....

Date.....

C Nkadameng

201512406

## APPENDIX F. TIME SCHEDULE AND BUDGET

Table 1: Time schedule

		2							2												
		0							0												
		2							2												
		2							3												
	ACTIVIT	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
	Y	A	U	U	U	E	C	O	E	A	E	A	P	A	U	U	U	E	C	O	E
		Y	N	L	G	P	T	V	C	N	B	R	R	Y	N	L	G	P	T	V	C
A	Develop protocol	X	X	X	X	X															
B	Submit protocol						X														
C	Ethics approval and permission								X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
D	Pilot study															X					
E	Data Collection																X				
F	Data Analysis																	X			
G	Write Up																		X		
H	Submission for examination																			X	
I	Presentat																				X

	ion of the research																		
J	Publication of the results																		X

The study will be self-funded by the researcher

Table 2: Budget required for the study

	ITEMS	COST /UNIT (R)	TOTAL COST (R)
A	Copies	R 1.50 x 1 500	R 2 250.00
B	Transportation	R 180/25 km	R 540.00
C	Language editing and proof reading	R 23.00 pg	R 2 160.00
D	Printing and binding of dissertation	R 300 X 6	R 1800. 00
		TOTAL	R 6 750.00

## APPENDIX G: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO (TREC)



University of Limpopo  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 29 November 2022

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/647/2022: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** The effect of witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa  
**Researcher:** C Nkadimeng  
**Supervisor:** Dr MH Mphasha  
**Co-supervisor:** Prof L. Skaal  
**School:** Health Care Sciences  
**Degree:** Master of Public Health



**PROF D MAPOSA**  
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

**Note:**

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

*Finding solutions for Africa*



## APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)

CONFIDENTIAL



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

Office of the Premier

Research and Development Directorate

Private Bag X9483, Polokwane, 0700, South Africa

Tel: (015) 230 9910, Email: mokobij@premier.limpopo.gov.za

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### LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Review Date: 04 May 2023

Project Number: LPREC/89/2022: PG

Subject: The Effect of Witnessing Domestic Violence among Children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Researcher: Nkadimeng C

Chairperson: Prof I Swarts

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'I Swarts'.

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number **REC-111513-038**.

**Note:**

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- iii. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.
- iv. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

**APPENDIX I: APPROVAL LETTER FROM LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH  
ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)**

CONFIDENTIAL



OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**TO: MR MJ MOLOISI**

**FROM: PROF I SWARTS**

**CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)**

**REVIEW DATE: 04 MAY 2023**

**SUBJECT: THE EFFECT OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN IN  
TAFELKOP, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

**RESEARCHER: NKADIMENG C**

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). The committee is satisfied with the methodological and ethical soundness of the proposed study.

**Decision: The research proposal is granted approval**

Regards

Chairperson: Prof I Swarts

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I Swarts".

Secretariat: Ms MJ Mokgokong

A handwritten signature in black ink consisting of the initials "H B".

Date: 31/05/2023

# APPENDIX J: APPROVAL LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Confidential  
**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ref : S4/3/2  
Enq : MJ Moloi  
Tel : 015 230 4381 / 082 457 7120  
Email : MoloiMJ@dod.limpopo.gov.za

House No 1132  
Tafelkop  
Stadium View

Dear Ms C Nkadmeng

**RE: THE EFFECT OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN IN  
TAFELKOP, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

The above matter has reference.

Thank you for applying for permission to conduct research at the Limpopo Department of Social Development. The department further acknowledges receipt of the research review outcome from the Limpopo Provincial Research and Ethics committees certifying that you have been granted full approval and ethical clearance to conduct a study titled: *"The effect of Witnessing domestic violence among children in Tafelkop, Limpopo province, South Africa"*.

The following statements are articulated in the research proposal; namely that:

- The study will be conducted at Matsepe drop-in centre and Matsepe welfare office in Sekhukhune district Limpopo province, South Africa.
- The study may assist the Department of Social Development to develop and refine programs and policies which deals with children who are being abused or those who witness domestic violence in their households.
- The findings of the study may inform the Department of Social Development about the need to build shelters and a place of safety within Limpopo Province and priorities the funding of NPC's which address the needs of children.

To this effect, this letter serves to grant you (i.e., Ms C Nkadmeng) permission to conduct research at the Department of Social Development in Limpopo Province.

We trust you will find this to be in order.

  
Head of Department  
Limpopo Department of Social Development

02/06/2023  
Date

21 Bocard Street, Polokwane, 0700, Private Bag 10710, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: (015) 230 4300, Fax: (015) 261 2298 Website: <http://www.dod.limpopo.gov.za>

The heartland of Southern Africa - *development is about people*

APPENDIX K: LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



ZEE EDITING AND PROOFREADING SERVICES  
PO BOX 663 THOLONGWE 0734  
LANGUAGE MATTERS

14 December 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "The Effect of Witnessing Domestic Violence among Children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa" by Nkadimeng Cashline (201512406) has been edited and proofread for grammar, spelling, punctuation, overall style and logical flow. The edits were carried out using the "Track changes" feature in MS Word, giving the author final control over whether to accept or reject effected changes prior to submission, provided the changes I recommended are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any enquiry.

Kind regards

Dr. Hlavisomhlanga (BEDSPF-UL, BA Hons-UL, MA-IUP: USA, PhD-WITS, PGDiP-SUN)

Cell number: 079-721-0620/078-196-4459

Email address: hlavisomhlanga@yahoo.com

## APPENDIX L: RE-EDITED LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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ZEE EDITING AND PROOFREADING SERVICES  
PO BOX 663 THOLONGWE 0734  
LANGUAGE MATTERS

21 April 2024

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the mini-dissertation titled "The Effect of Witnessing Domestic Violence among Children in Tafelkop, Limpopo Province, South Africa" by Nkadimeng Cashline, student number 201512406 has been edited and proofread for grammar, spelling, punctuation, overall style and logical flow. The edits were carried out using the "Track changes" feature in MS Word, giving the author final control over whether to accept or reject effected changes prior to submission, provided the changes I recommended are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any enquiry.

Kind regards

Dr. Hlavis Motlhaka (BEDSPF-UL, BA Hons-UL, MA-IUP: USA, PhD-WITS, PGDiP-SUN)

Cell number: 079-721-0620/078-196-4459

Email address: hlavisomhlanga@yahoo.com

