



WEED OUT – Causes mechanism of action

By Dekapulus Services Business Ltd

Course Module 1



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1. The Module contains 4 units:

- I. Definition, types and forms of violence and discrimination
- II. Basics of the diversity dimension as causes of discrimination
- III. Risk groups and vulnerable situations for occupational violence
- IV. Micro-, meso- and macro level in organizations as causes for occupational violence & Cultural imprints in the working context. Specifics of intercultural teams

2. Learning Outcomes

1. Be able to differentiate between the different types and forms of occupational violence and discrimination.
2. Be able to consider the diversity dimensions to promote intercultural competences among the staff and minimize the risk of discrimination.
3. Be able to reflect upon his/her own cultural imprints

3. Learning Units

Unit 1: Definition, types and forms of violence and discrimination

Definition of Occupational Violence

European Commission defines occupational violence as:

'Incidents where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being and health' (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010).

Types of Violence

- 1) Violence through third parties (client-on-worker violence)

Violence occurs when the perpetrator has a legitimate relationship with the business (for example a customer, client, or supplier) and becomes violent while interacting with the business and its employees.



2) Worker-on-worker

The perpetrator is the employee or past employee of the business who attacks or threatens other employees or past employees in the workplace. The violence can be lateral (same level of authority) or vertical (from superior to subordinate). It can include bullying, often verbal and emotional abuse, offensive/vindictive/humiliating behaviour, and homicide.

3) Criminal intent

The perpetrator has no legitimate relationship with the business or the employees. This type of violence usually happens in incidents (robbery, shoplifting, trespassing, acts of terrorism).

4) Personal relationship

The perpetrator does not have a relationship with the business but has a relationship with the victim. This category includes victims of domestic violence who are assaulted or threatened while at work. Even though it may seem personal, this type of violence can negatively influence co-workers and clients in form of physical or emotional damage.

Forms of Violence

1) Psychological violence

Often depicted by bullying or harassment. It includes any act that can cause psychological harm to an individual such as coercion, defamation, verbal insult etc, and any other intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity.

2) Physiological/physical violence

Occurs when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking or using another type of physical force. This can occur in many aspects of a person's life including work. Physical aggression is defined as any act involving the use of physical force onto others' objects, property, or the self.

3) Sexual violence

When a person forces or attempts another person to take part in a sexual act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event without consent. At work, sexual violence often appears as an unwelcome sexual advance, a request for sexual favours, or conduct of a sexual nature. (ex. Inappropriate sexual contact, staring, a suggestive joke, sexual pictures,



unwanted date invitations, requests for sex, intrusive questions, unnecessary familiarity, insults of sexual nature, sexual emails or texts).

4) Discrimination

The unequal treatment of a person or a group based on personal characteristics such as sex, race, colour, national or social origin, religion, language or opinion. At the workplace, it can also be deducted by third parties. It is the same act of unequal treatment based on the above-listed factors, carried out by a person other than a co-worker or superior such as a client, patient, pupil and other people associated with these parties.

Definition, types & forms of discrimination

Definition

- ❑ Discrimination is defined as the unequal treatment of a person or a group based on personal characteristics such as sex, race, colour, national or social origin, religion, language or opinion.

Types and forms of Discrimination

1) Direct discrimination

Occurs when a person/employee is being treated in a negative manner compared to others because of a certain disability or underlying reason. Such reasons vary, but the most common ones are age, race, creed or sexual orientation.

For instance, a tech company would not hire an older person as they assume the candidate isn't well familiar with the new technology due to their age.

Furthermore, direct discrimination has two additional facets; **discrimination by association** and **discrimination by perception**.

Discrimination by association occurs when one is being treated poorly because they are connected with someone that might have a certain disability, despite not having it themselves and discrimination by perception occurs when one assumes an individual has a certain disability when they don't.



2) Indirect discrimination

Occurs when an organisation treats everyone the same, but the requirements and practices they put in place disadvantage a certain group of people. For example, an individual is hired because he has a driving licence for a job that does not require driving.

3) Harassment

Occurs when an employee experiences uninvited behaviour from others in the organisation. This type of behaviour usually violates the dignity of the individual when they experience intimidation, degradation, humiliation or any kind of offensive behaviour towards them. The most common harassment examples would be bullying, having an employee experience unpleasant and derogatory nicknames or having someone ask inappropriate questions.

4) Victimization

Occurs when an individual becomes the target of harmful behaviour because they made a claim about workplace discrimination, gave evidence about discrimination happening in the workplace or raised a concern about discriminatory practices at work. In some cases, individuals can be marked as “troublemakers” by the organisation and can even have a negative effect on their current role such as denial of promotion and isolation from other colleagues because of their claim.



Unit 2: Basics of the diversity dimension as causes of discrimination

The dimensions of diversity include:	
❖ Gender	❖ Age
❖ Religious beliefs	❖ Physical and mental ability
❖ Race	❖ Income
❖ Marital status	❖ Sexual orientation
❖ Ethnicity	❖ Occupation
❖ Parental status	❖ Language
❖ Geographic location	❖ and many more components.

- ☐ Understanding the dimensions of diversity and world cultures in Extension audiences will help ensure the development of instructional competencies that will connect with groups and individuals interacted with. Not understanding such dimensions allow discrimination to originate.

❖ Protected characteristics by law:

According to the law of Equality Act (2010), it is important to mention that there are nine protected characteristics that individuals should not be discriminated against. These include:

- ☐ Age
- ☐ Race
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Gender reassignment



- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Pregnancy and maternity
- ☐ Marriage and civil partnership
- ☐ Religion or belief
- ☐ Sexual Orientation

Unit 3: Risk groups and vulnerable situations for occupational violence

Vulnerable groups of workers:

- ☐ Women
- ☐ Part-time workers
- ☐ Young workers and transient labour market:

A feature relating to this is that some jobs in the industry have low status, therefore the educational profile required is average. Such conditions combined with low status, educational level and age workers are highly related to their vulnerability and susceptibility to many stressors, including sexual harassment, demanding customers, or unclear responsibilities which can lead to the worker being unable to cope with stress and forms of violence on his/her own (Argusa et al, 2002).

- ☐ Immigrants and ethnic minorities:

In many instances, a worker's ethnic origin is a pretext for discriminatory attitudes at the workplace. The workers concerned are therefore exposed to similar risks as the vulnerable groups of workers mentioned above, and cannot similarly face situations of stress, violence and harassment due to the fact that they're not familiar with the language and/or other local conditions (Hoel, 1993).

Vulnerable situations and/as causes for occupational violence

According to ILO (2001), the hotel, catering and tourism industry embraces a large number of different organizations and workplaces including hotels, motels, restaurants, camp sites, clubs, bars and cafeterias, catering and canteen establishments, travel agencies and tourism information offices, but also exhibition centres and conferences. A number of factors are mentioned below which, either alone or in combination, directly or indirectly, may contribute to stress and violence, and which are more or less characteristic of the sector.

- ☐ **Long shifts, irregular and unusual working hours**



A characteristic potential stress factor for many workers in the hospitality industry originates from changing timetables and working during unsocial hours including evenings and nights. Shift-work is widespread and especially in restaurants, split shifts are very common and so is working on Sundays, which in most countries is considered rest day. While a large proportion of employees work shorter hours due to their part-time status, working overtime is also very common, with a higher than average number of people working more than 65 hours per week and also working during very late or very early hours.

Income insecurity

Wages paid to employees especially in the hospitality industry on a regular basis, are lower on average compared to those in similar occupations in other sectors. For example, in the UK, male workers earn approximately 45% of the national industry average for males. For women, the percentage is somewhat higher, although overall, it is lower than that of their male counterparts. As a result, many of the lowest-paid workers such as chambermaids, porters and dishwashers, may hold other jobs in addition to their substantive employment (Hoel, 1993) and face higher-than-usual work pressure.

Informal economy

A substantial number of organizations in this sector and individuals within organizations are operating in the informal economy and therefore do not pay tax or contribute to social security/insurance schemes. The informal economy in the hotel, catering and tourism sector tends to attract workers from the most vulnerable groups of the population (illegal immigrants). Employees working in such situations are especially prone to abuse of all kinds.

Catering for nightlife customers

Parts of the hotel and catering industry are operating in the late hours of the day characterised as the “night economy” and they are therefore centred on alcohol consumption. These features potentially expose them to violence and related types of misbehaviour (Hobbs et al., 2002). In hotels especially, the prevailing environment is intended to make customers feel in a more private mood in spite of the commercial and public character of the place. The ambiguity between private and public norms and behaviours may also contribute to a higher risk of unacceptable behaviour not only in hotels but also in bars and certain restaurants.



☒ **Stress and pressure**

Working under pressure and fast-paced environment can cause significant tension. A study among chefs working in high-quality British restaurants concludes that the kitchen is a highly stressful place with occurrence of abusive and violent interaction usually instigated by the chef. The kitchen is crowded, noisy and hot, thus this combination is regarded as a typical potential cause of aggression. In addition, other related factors are the pressure to speedily deliver quantity and high quality. The strict hierarchy and the notion of the chef as 'an artist' whose bullying and abusive behaviour must be understood as "idiosyncratic", born out of artistry and creativity performed under great pressure, produces social norms in which a high level of violence and bullying on the part of the chef is somehow allowed. The culture of those kitchens is claimed to be further characterized by a tacit agreement that bullying is a necessary part of motivating staff and that physical and verbal abuse are necessary to induce discipline and hard work (Hotel and Caterer, 1995).

☒ **Lack of control at work**

A work situation characterized by high ambiguity and low decision latitude, implying a lack of control over demands and a lack of authority to make decisions, was a strong predictor of work stress. Karasek's (1979) demand-control model suggests that stress results from a combination of high workload and low decision latitude. In other words, stress arises from being in charge without being completely in control. According to Zohar (1994), role ambiguity was found to be a major stressor at work.

☒ **Burnout**

Burnout is a feeling of 'being drained or used up. It has been defined by Maslach (1993) as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people". Burnout is thus associated with a loss of trust and interest in others, often combined with a cynical attitude towards one's environment. It is a phenomenon commonly found in jobs with a great amount of pressure and low motives.

☒ **Work location being in a high-crime area**

A high crime area increases the risk of danger and unwanted behaviour.



Unit 4: Micro-, meso- and macro level in organizations as causes for occupational violence & Cultural imprints in the working context.

Environmental factors are often limited to organizational environmental factors, such as cultures. The majority of research is focused on these micro (individual) and meso (organizational) levels to the exclusion of macro level (community). While these macro level variables are often beyond the control of the organization, location of the office is within the company's control. From a human resource perspective, the common logic is that the best method for keeping violence out of the organization is to not hire at-risk employees. Many employers include assessments in hiring, perform background checks and engage in various other procedures to limit at-risk employees from entering the workforce. Zagenczyk, Murrell & Gibney (2008), suggest that just as office design can influence employee behaviour, the location of the office can be associated with employee behavior as well.

Short (1997), discusses that socioeconomic status (ex. poverty, unemployed, etc.) have frequently been associated with violent crime and this may be a function of lack of opportunity within communities (Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000). From this perspective, communities become disadvantaged because organizations are not established. When an employer opens in a disadvantaged community, increased social pressures may be applied to employees to abide by corporate policies and not engage in deviant behaviour. It is also likely that the patterns which exist in society writ large will also be exhibited within organizations.

Baron and Neuman (1996), emphasize that while there are multiple stressors that can be brought to work, one stressor that has been shown to be correlated with workplace aggression is social change. Social change is often evidenced by voting patterns and political affiliations which can evoke strong emotions from either side of the political ideology divide and can result into violence that is used to achieve political goals.

Intercultural teams

“Intercultural describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together” (Spring Institute). Teams consisting of members from different cultural backgrounds and



disciplines can possibly present the potential for creativity and innovation due to possibility of integrating diverse knowledge, perspectives, skills and abilities (Jackson, 1992).



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