



Verbal Abuse Against Women in the Workplace

A Qualitative Research of How Women Experience Verbal Abuse in their Workplace

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Section 1

1. Abstract

Workplace is vital in people's everyday lives and is undoubtedly important to be as protected and secure as possible. Employees, spend most of their time in a working environment, which should have been a healthy, beneficial, and a joyful place where people would be blissful to work. Contrastingly, there is an extending circumstance, employees are subjected to violent behaviors, discrimination, and terrorization at work, all of which are based on societal preconceptions and stereotypes.

Miscellaneous types of violence that occur in the place of work, for instance verbal abuse, tend to be more frequent in certain sectors than others. Expectedly, mirroring the general behavior of the society, by the large against women and aiming to escalate inferiority and inequality of gender. Even though women have started supporting themselves in a manner of reaching absolute respect by people around them, it is those people who regard females as marginalized groups. Their perspective is that women do not deserve appreciation and recognition within a company. Accordingly, they keep experiencing regular hostile behaviors from other people. A very common phenomenon is women as receivers of voice raising, sexist and humiliating comments, disrespectful, and aggressive behaviors by other people. Interestingly, it is frequently occurred from both males and females who consider themselves as superordinate species because of the attributes they have. This dissertation specifies how women encounter and react to verbal abuse in the workplace. Additionally, this paper discusses the individual and organizational effects of workplace aggression, and specifically verbal abuse. These outcomes could be in the form of both physical and psychological harm to the victims.

Keywords: women, employees, workplace, verbal abuse, aggressions, stereotypes, humiliation, inferiority, gender, hostile behaviors, mental health, psychology, physical health.

2. Introduction

In the current thesis, it is essential to understand how women experience verbal abuse in the workplace since it remains a tangible and expanding threat to the worldwide' workforce. Verbal abuse is defined in a variety of ways, including verbal aggression, verbal attack, verbal violence, verbal insult, psychic aggression, and psychic violence. This proves that various cultures, different groups, and individuals use different terms of what can be interpreted as abuse and what cannot. It is crucial to keep this in mind while looking into allegations of verbal abuse. The challenge of defining verbal abuse has made it even harder to intervene and prevent it. The outcomes of it can cause psychological/emotional and physical damage to an individual. Continuous verbal abuse is a painful and traumatic experience for the victims, with various short- and long-term negative consequences it can have an influence on not just the victims, but also their families and society. Verbal abuse appears as words or attitudes which aim to cause fear to the victim, manipulate or isolate them. Furthermore, it can include actions such as labelling, yelling, and humiliation against an individual. These actions might be correlated to gender, religion, race, sex, culture, or language of the victim. The perpetrators often attack the most sensitive spots of the victims knowing it can cause pain and making them feel threatened. The most common type of verbal abuse that women experience is gender-based and it appears in a form of jokes, which present women as sex objects. The reason for this is because women are largely defined by gender norms and stereotypes that have been established in the past (Dianova, 2017).

The research encompasses an endeavor to examine how women react and feel while experiencing workplace verbal abuse, find the most common emotions (i.e., stress, anxiety, humiliation, depression, fear of losing their jobs) and reactions (i.e., emotional, behavior, cognitive reactions) and its consequences, correlating them with their characteristics.

Over the recent years, many studies have shown that aggressions in the workplace and specifically verbal abuse within the workplace, is more prevalent type of aggression than sexual and physical harassment. Verbal abuse has become a common and destructive subject for both individuals and organizations. Various studies have proved the importance of the issue and its destroying consequences on people. Most of the employees at some points have experienced this phenomenon during their professional life, although the majority of them are women according to the literature available. Each woman has a different strategy of experiencing, responding, and approaching an aggressive episode. Some women try to defend themselves; others ignore and avoid such situations and others report it.

I chose to research verbal abuse because, in comparison to other forms of abuse, there is a lot less research on it. During my time at work, I observed a lot of concerns relating to verbal abuse. When I sought to study it, I realized that the literature did not cover me at a desirable stage. I'm particularly interested in learning more about women's experiences with verbal abuse, as well as their reactions and feelings. As a human resource management student and an HR associate, I have specific look when it comes to the psychology of employees within their working environment, as affected both by my education and work.

My inspiration for conducting the research for this dissertation was an incident of verbal abuse I witnessed, in which, the victim was a close person to me that I care very much for. It was a significant case of verbal abuse that resulted in a variety of ramifications for both of us. The consequences were devastating, causing emotional and psychological suffering. When it comes to your loved ones, everything becomes more personal and heart-breaking since you have the ability to witness the entire situation first hand and comprehend that what you've heard from others who have been in a similar circumstance is accurate and much worse. Only by being in the scenario can you truly understand what the victims are going through when they are subjected to verbal abuse. This worked as a shock to me and sent in in motion to

investigate and understand more about how women are affected by such situations, as well as how they react and respond to them. I want this research to become an initiative for all women to talk about their experiences and not be afraid to shout when a behavior makes them feel uncomfortable, afraid, or bad.

Considering there is often a gap between academic research and reality, this study on verbal abuse adds a valuable perspective to the subject of society. The current study investigates how women, who work in organizations in Cyprus, experience verbal abuse in their workplace and examines it alongside the literature on verbal abuse against women in the workplace. The literature indicates and the findings of the present study confirm that it is vital to develop awareness regarding the issue of verbal abuse, especially in the fields workplace. Given the prevalence of verbal abuse, in addition to having numerous negative consequences on people's mental and physical health, it also has a negative impact on their work performance, which has proven to be disastrous for organizations. Accordingly, it seems crucial for the workplace field to develop more research on this topic so that there can be more efficient and valuable action and prevention of verbal abuse.

My investigation was conducted by qualitative research through which I tried to answer my research question. During the interviews, I prepared a set of questions that the women were asked to answer. The aim is to learn how women with job experience in Cyprus deal with verbal abuse in the workplace, the consequences they encounter, how they respond, and why. According to data, verbal abuse towards women is a highly prevalent occurrence in organizations in Cyprus, and it can take several forms. Victims of verbal abuse suffered a variety of emotional and physical problems as a result of the abuse. Depending on their age and the number of years they had worked in the role, women saw each circumstance differently. Moreover, women responded differently depending on the types of verbal abuse they experienced and on the gender of the perpetrator. I observed women react in a variety of

ways, including avoiding aggressive attitude and behaving normally, reporting the occurrence, resigning the job, and some actively responding to it. Furthermore, I discovered that in some industries the incidents of verbal abuse happen more frequently in contrast to others. In the results and discussion section, the data is provided in further depth, with some actual quotes included for a better understanding of each circumstance.

This research paper is divided into 4 Sections, which include subcategories. Up to this part in Section 1, I have introduced the main topic, the research question of my study, and presented the general picture of the world regarding workplace abuse. In section 2, I will discuss gender inequality and gender stereotypes that led to the increased levels of verbal abuse, since I consider such mentions as essential to understanding why this is a frequent and expanding phenomenon. Particularly, before introducing the different definitions of verbal abuse, I thought that it would be helpful to describe the reason behind verbal abuse appearance and help you understand why I chose to focus on women. In addition, Section 2 includes the literature review part, which at the beginning demonstrates what workplace aggressions are and how they affect individuals and organizations. Following that, I will introduce the various definitions of verbal abuse and what are the most common ways of referring to it. This part will be more specified and will explain what verbal abuse is, its types, and how it is correlated to gender. Also, I will present the different ways that verbal abuse can affect both individuals and organizations, and subsequently, I am going to depict women's reactions to verbal abuse. Section 2 will be completed by giving the social framework in Cyprus about verbal abuse. In more detail, I will present a study that describes the general picture of verbal abuse in Cyprus.

The following part, Section 3, includes the methodology and data collection. In this part, I will take my research question one step further through qualitative research. In more detail, I will interview twelve Cypriot women with whom, I am going to discuss their personal

experiences of verbal abuse in the workplace, their emotions, and reactions. Afterward, I will present the findings and discussion of the collected data. At the end of the thesis, Section 4, will conclude the main parts of the project, the limitations, and the bibliography that has been used for the elaboration of the current thesis.

Section 2

3. Literature Review

The world of 2021 and its perceptions regarding gender equality and the destruction of all types of verbal abuse against a marginalized group of people is a known phenomenon that remains hard to be managed, especially when taking into consideration the rapid development of the world. Daily we become witnesses of various incidents of violence and inequality against people or groups of people which are regarded as aggressions on someone's dignity, personality, race, gender, and capability. Especially, in the work sector, employees are affected by "workplace discrimination or harassment", which has its roots in pre-existing stereotypes and gender discrimination. All these consequences, result to cause the feeling of insecurity, turnover, reduction of productivity and profit (Giaccone, Nunzio, Fromm, Vargas, 2015, p.32).

When talking about marginalized groups, we mean those people who are more prone to experience aggressiveness, discrimination and hostile behaviors across the culture, economy, and society. Particularly, women because of their gender and social stereotypes experiencing aggressive and discriminatory behaviors from the old times until today in their daily life. As the days pass, women's position in the current society is forcefully changing due to the feminist movement, which is strengthened more and more nowadays. Particularly, women have achieved the right to vote, be educated, and advance their careers by participating in the workforce. Nevertheless, in any case, we have not reached absolute gender equality just by increasing the job opportunities. Even though our days, expressions of

sexism are not very distinguished, within the working environment, gender discrimination is a typical occurrence that women experience in their working lives (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016, p. 47).

My present inquiry focusses on women because verbal abuse against women begins from gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is defined as happening “when personnel decisions are based on gender, an ascribed characteristic, rather than on an individual’s qualifications or job performance” (Basford, Offerman, Behrend, 2013, p. 1).

Comprehending how nowadays working women are suffering by sexism, in contrast to the past, this is usually performed in some kind of a more “hidden or softer” way. Therefore, it is critical for gender discrimination to be identified.

During the last years, due to the establishment of new organizational policies and practices which are opposing unfairness and sexism, discrimination has been minimized. Nevertheless, they have not reached gender equality yet since stereotypes are still on the surface of society. Hence, nowadays, we do not have clear sexism in the workplace, although it can be manifested through verbal abuse, which is difficult to identify and be accused. Verbal abuse is not a clear type of abuse as opposed to physical and sexual abuse (Hogh, Balducci, Ebbesen, 2018). Although it can be difficult to recognize, it does not mean that it causes less harm. Some people use verbal abuse to control and show power over the other person who feels incapable, and worthless because of the verbal abusive behaviors (Blackwood & Jenkins, 2018, p. 9).

Over time, women's position in the current society is forcefully changing due to the feminist movement, which is strengthened more and more nowadays. Particularly, women have achieved the right to vote, be educated, and advance their careers by participating in the workforce. Nevertheless, in any case, we have not reached absolute gender equality just by

increasing the job opportunities. Even though our days, expressions of sexism are not very distinguished, within the working environment, gender discrimination is a very common fact that women experience in their working lives (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016, p. 50).

Discrimination has been reduced in recent years as a result of the implementation of new organizational rules and practices aimed at combating unfairness and sexism. Nonetheless, preconceptions still exist on the surface of society, and they have not yet achieved gender equality. Hence, we no longer have open sexism in the workplace, however it can present itself in the form of verbal abuse, which is difficult to detect and accuse. Verbal abuse is not a clear type of abuse as opposed to physical and sexual abuse (Hogh, Balducci, Ebbesen, 2018, p. 2-18). Although it may be difficult to spot, this does not imply that it is harmless. Some people use verbal abuse to control and show power over the other person who feels incapable, and worthless as a result of the verbal abusive behaviors (Blackwood & Jenkins, 2018, p. 5).

Up to this time, a wealth number of studies have shown that the great majority of the employees at some point in the past had either experienced or witnessed workplace aggressiveness directly or indirectly at some point in the past. Many people are verbally abused on a regular basis, and they do not even realize it since they consider that verbal violence is obvious to identify. Verbal abuse is difficult to be identified and usually passes unnoticed both by the receiver and deliverer. Going through literature, I understand that it is hard for people to detect it, and usually includes yelling, name-calling, and humiliating behaviors.

3.1 What are workplace aggressions and how do they affect individuals and organizations?

In general, people can encounter several sorts of workplace aggressiveness in the workplace, including verbal abuse, which I will discuss in the current thesis. Beginning with workplace aggressiveness, which is a broad category that encompasses bullying, verbal, psychological, and emotional abuse, mobbing, and sexual harassment, among other forms of violence. The potential types of workplace aggression that people might encounter is work-related bullying and can be seen as personal verbal abuse, socially isolating, marginalizing, yelling at or called by "names" and/ or disseminating "tales" (Ibiloglu, 2020 , p. 333). Schat & Kelloway defined workplace aggression as “behavior by an individual or individuals within or outside an organization that is intended to physically or psychologically harm a worker or workers and occurs in a work-related context” (Schat & Kelloway, 2005, p. 191).

Workplace aggressions are "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour" (Sue, 2007, p. 271). Summarizing the definitions of gender discrimination in the workplace, I believe that the ideal is the following definition of gender discrimination in the workplace are deliberate or not attitudes or actions which reject, marginalize, degrade, slight by expressing hostility or detachment against women (Herrick, Thomas, Bartholomy, 2007, p. 2).

Also, workplace aggression has a damaging impact on employee's attitudes, behavior, and well-being (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Workplace aggressive behaviors can arise from different sources. These can range from supervisors, co-workers to outsiders (Li, Zhang, Xiao, Chen, Lu, 2019). It is related to several outcomes such as excessive turnover,

psychological exhaustion, depression, reduced job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and both emotional and physical well-being (Caputo, 2018, p. 1).

Although there are various types of workplace aggression, the majority of the literature deals with bullying, “Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone, or negatively affecting someone’s work. For the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction, or process, it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g., weekly) and over some time (e.g., about six months) (Matthiesen, Einarsen, 2010, p. 203-213). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts (Conway, Hogh, Balducci, & Ebbesen, 2018). A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal ‘strength’ are in conflict” (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003a, p. 15)

Workplace aggressions refer to continuous behaviors and actions which are conducted opposing to one or more employees, are unwelcome by the victims, and are enacted purposely or unknowingly and undoubtedly cause mortification, malpractice, and distress. All the above can lead to a distressing working environment that negatively affects the productivity and the job performance of the victims. Accordingly, workplace aggression empathizes to perpetual subjection of hostile and aggressive behaviors of mainly psychological forms (Einarsen, Helge Hoel, & Cooper, 2003, pp. 3, 103, 127, 203, 259, 412).

All the outcomes that workplace aggression develops, are harmful to both employees and the organization. Specifically, workplace aggressions have been determined as a terrible cause that assigns to stress-related disease. It devastates people's psychology, physical situation, and behavior (Wondrack, 1999, p. 12). Over the years, the business needs are becoming overabundant, and people have become more competitive and aggressive with each

other. This situation composes a workplace where interpersonal conflicts and workplace aggressions prevail. Workplace aggression has a huge exert influence on cost because the elevated sickness leads to increased levels of absenteeism, weakened productivity and performance (Penttinen, Jyrkinen, & Wide, 2019, pp. 6, 14, 44). Also, it causes turnover, reduction of commitment, creativity, and morale. There are many and different types of referring to workplace aggression such as verbal abuse, psychological terror, harassment, and mobbing. Nevertheless, all of them resemble to exemplify the same fact namely the continuous hostile behaviors against an inferior, a colleague, or a superior which causes them hard social, psychological, and physical problems (Wondrak, 1999, p. 15).

According to Buss (1961), aggression is a retort which brings harm to others. This often states physical abuse but can also describe verbal abuse. Aggression is divided into three dimensions., physical/ verbal, active/passive, and direct/indirect (Buss, 1961, p. 155). According to Caminski (1984), aggression is a vital instead of a secure entity. They support that regardless an action is aggressive or not it depends on the conditions and regards the justification of the action. The separation of the definitions of physical and verbal aggression has been made in the past 10 years. To clarify the definition, verbal abuse is defined as a hostile and aggressive verbal attack on a person (Wondrak, 1999, p. 25).

3.2 Definitions of Verbal Abuse

In my dissertation, I will concentrate on the aforementioned problem, which I will refer to as verbal abuse. Several papers have looked into the effects of workplace aggressions, however there is very little evidence concerning verbal abuse. Looking at the literature available, the cases of workplace violence are mostly focused on psychological and verbal abuse. Verbal abuse is a specific type of psychological abuse, and it is the most widespread type of workplace violence and has many consequences both on organizations and the

victims as well (Guay, Goncalves, Jarvis, 2013). Workplace verbal abuse is a type of workplace violence that has no observable marks. Nevertheless, the psychological harm to the internal centre of the victims can be damaging. It is expressed through words, tone, or manner that denigrates, threatens, humiliates someone. The result of verbal abuse consequence in rigorous emotional harm (Wondrak, 1999, p. 79).

3.3 Verbal abuse and gender and social status

Verbal abuse is affected by multiple factors such as individual factors (gender, age) and environmental factors (lack of security, insufficient lighting, night shifts). All the above can intensify the risk of being a victim (Guay, Goncalves, Jarvis, 2013, pp. 572, 573). There are different forms of verbal abuse for example name-calling, threats, and more crafty ways like interrupting, constantly correcting, and disparaging. Similarly, the silent treatment is also a type of verbal abuse by which the perpetrator tries to punish the victim and communicate with other people who are around.

The majority of the research which concerns verbal abuse investigates verbal abuse as an issue that all people encounter, but mostly those who work in the health care sector. Verbal abuse is more intense to inexperienced employees of numerous professions who work in the front line, health, and safety (Aytaç, Bozkurt, Bayram, & Yıldız, 2011, pp. 386-388). To be more specific, workplace cases have shown that health care sector employees have been presented to the highest level as victims of verbal abuse. Regarding a Health and Safety Commission (1987) survey, the highest type of aggression in the health care sector is verbal abuse. Most of the nursing staff are women and are at a high risk of accepting verbal abuse (Chang, Park, Jangn, Ahn, & Yoon, 2018, pp. 1-4). Nurses are the ones who have the most interaction with patients and their families (Dafny & Beccaria, 2020). Therefore, most of the times nurses are the ones who are being blamed for their services since people tend to avoid

behaving negatively against doctors because of their position. As a result, nurses become the "scapegoat" (Çelik, Ağırba, & Ugurluoğlu, 2007, pp. 359-362). Most of the research indicated that the sources of verbal abuse against nurses were patients, their families, visitors, doctors, and other healthcare employees even other nurses.

Taking gender into consideration, much research has demonstrated that women are in a riskier position than males when it comes to sexual assault. In the workplace, both men and women encounter verbal abuse; nevertheless, women perceive greater discrimination than men (Ibiloglu, 2020, p. 333). Even though females have made important advancements concerning gender equality in the workplace they are still seen as inferior and as easy victims of sexual and verbal harassment. Females keep facing lots of challenges in their working environment, which marginalize and keep them in a disadvantaged position due to many factors, namely, negative gender stereotypes and perceptions, decreased mentoring and career opportunities, family-related issues, and gender discrimination (Zhou, 2012, p. 8). Women continue being marginalized in doubtful roles, with lower incomes and status jobs which worsens the problem (Kaphle, Neupane, Adhikari, & Yadav, 2015, pp. 1-6). Moreover, the current global pandemic makes it even more difficult for women to find an appropriate job since the responsibilities related to children and households have increased.

An additional factor to consider when it comes to verbal abuse and gender is the relationship between abuse and sexism. Specifically, the patriarchal system silences the verbal abuse, they as it focuses on nursing in a sexist way (Reakes, 1981, p. 81) compares a picture of an abused child who is vulnerable, pure, and impeccable and that all these characteristics can "increase" the emotions of anger in the abuser. The image of the child is inextricably associated with the image of a nurse victim and their incapability to manage their role which turns out from gender roles and stereotypes which underestimate female sex roles. Women's professional roles are seen as inferior to men's professional roles. Generally,

women's role is underestimated and never expected to succeed. In case a woman tries to influence a group of men, she is usually ignored (Herrick¹, Thomas, & Bartholomy, 2021, pp. 2-8). In patriarchal systems, what is expected from women can lead to challenges when a woman does not follow her "role". According to Chitty and Maynard (1986), patients usually stay away from proximity and behave in an aggressive and antagonistic way which includes sarcasm, sexist comments, touching, aggressive personal questions (Chitty, 1986, p. 82). Abusers often have a poor self-image and low self-confidence, which is why they try to make others feel the way they feel for themselves (Zhou, 2012, p. 12).

Another disappointing point that needs to be highlighted is that women do not report such behaviors especially when they are "lighter" ones. According to women, there are many reasons for not reporting such behaviors. For example, women tend to blame themselves for verbal abuse and this makes them acceptable for all sources of abusive behavior. Some women believe that they cannot prevent such behaviors since society has nurtured them from a very young age to behave as inferior human beings who must not respond or oppose to this kind of abusive behavior (Çelik, Ağırba, & Ugurluoglu, 2007, pp. 3337-3339).

3.4 Types of verbal abuse and hate speech

Each culture has its own terms and phrases for verbally harming someone, but traditionally they teach us to avoid verbal attacks. When these attacks are often and regular and deliberately attack to an individual's sensitive topics, then individuals are considered victims. Embarrassing, making someone feel uncomfortable, and threatening someone are all examples of verbal abuse. Abusers identify the most vulnerable emotional areas of an individual and target these spots in order to cause inflict pain and humiliate them. Sexist comments, which are tied to gender stereotypes and include comments and jokes that treat women as sex objects, are the most prevalent kind of verbal abuse that women face. Verbal

abuse can take various harmful types. These can vary from blaming and making someone feel that he/she is responsible for the consequent abusive behavior, which has been caused (as they want their victims to believe) by their words and actions. Furthermore, criticizing someone with deceitful and harsh words makes them feel incompetent, worthless, and weak. Judging is a type of verbal abuse in which someone is made to believe that he or she is not acceptable to them. Name-calling is a form of abuse that degrades a person's self-esteem, confidence, and sense of worth. Threatening someone causes fear and manipulation of the victim, as well. Some people even argue that verbal abuse might show a level of familiarity which is developed between people. Sometimes, people tend to express their real feelings and anger to people they trust, while in other situations verbal abuse might be impulsive and targeted.

Verbal abuse can also be categorized as hate speech. Hate speech can appear in different forms such as words, videos, memes, or pictures posted on social media. Additionally, it may include messages that threaten individuals or groups because of their characteristics. Additionally, can cause other diseases, for instance, chest pains. stomach disorders increased blood pressure, and suicide in extreme cases. These cases end up being extremely dangerous especially when they do not deal with appropriately. Gender-based speech appears mostly against women and it's often called sexist hate speech. It addresses sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Individuals who experience hate speech feel scared, vulnerable, and powerless. Hate speech can also lead to suicide since people who experience it do not know how to respond and overcome it (Council of Europe, 2016).

3.5 Impacts on the victims' health

Episodes of any type of abuse can have a huge and devastating impact on victims' health. It can bring catastrophic effects on women's protection, health, wellbeing, rights, and

productivity at work. People who experience verbal abuse at work tend to face psychological and/ physical health problems. The scars resulting from verbal abuse can prove to be irreparably and affect mental and physical health. These symptoms including anxiety, lack of confidence, stress, depression, panic attacks, insecurity, vulnerability, and difficulties in interacting with other people, require therapy by specialists to be tackled.

All the above health problems affect victims' productivity, motivation, and desire for work and interaction with their colleagues. All the above, traumatize the victims and place them in a very disadvantaged position. Victims often feel that they will never go through it, will always be losers, and led to a turnover (Κοϊνης, Σαρίδη, 2017, pp. 3-13).

3.6 Women's Reactions to Verbal Abuse

Women ponder verbal abuse by reacting in different ways; behaviourally, emotionally, and cognitively. Subsequently, the categorization method developed the following reactions: emotional reactions that reflect the different emotions that females feel while experiencing verbal abuse, behavioral reactions that encompass examples of physical reactions, and cognitive reactions that include a conscious and logical process that women use while experiencing verbal abuse. Other reactions that women follow are communicating the situation with the perpetrator or reporting to others the situation. Some women decide to leave their work and others prefer to stay and try to get over it (Salmivallu, Karhunen, Lagerpetz, 1996, pp. 99-104).

Beginning with the emotional reactions, in this case, women experience verbal abuse by mainly feeling humiliated and disrespected by the perpetrators. Through emotional reactions, victims express their way of feeling, their emotions that encompass humiliation, discomfort, anger, fear, and guiltiness, and unsafety. Similar studies have shown that some women experience distress which is a softer way of reaction. Distress makes women feel

nervous, uncomfortable, and traumatic. The most common reaction is anger as a response to hostile behaviors against them. Also, it is often reported that anger is an automatic response to the experience of disrespect. The second most common reaction is fear. Fear reactions predict both psychological (depression and stress) and physical (sleep disorder, gastrointestinal) outcomes. Another emotion that women tend to experience is betrayal. Women feel betrayed by their colleagues when they verbally underestimate, marginalized, and undervalue their capabilities. Hopelessness and exhaustion are emotions that women feel while experiencing verbal abuse. They feel like fighting hopelessly against verbal abuse and they believe that these behaviors will never stop. All the above, are painful emotions that destroy both psychological and physical health (Salmivallu, Karhunen, Lagerpetz, 1996, pp. 99-104).

Moving to the behavioral reactions, that concerns the physical reaction while or after experiencing verbal abuse. Some women choose to react passively, some prefer to protect themselves by walking with the group and others choose to avoid and feign that nothing happens. Also, some women decide to clash the situation and report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. Other women prefer to avoid such behaviors, for example by walking away, stop talking to them, ignore them. Women prefer the above way of reaction because they feel that cannot deal with such behaviors. Literature showed that some women try to open a dialogue with the perpetrator to explain, discuss and understand the cause of their behavior.

Through cognitive reactions, women try to be resilient to prove the others that they can prevail or be as good as them. They try to prove that even when they are experiencing such behaviors, they will not stop their efforts for work, this is not going to affect them in any way. Victims usually accept the situation, resist and/or act consciously. By reacting cognitively, they try even harder to succeed. Additionally, some women choose to speak out

about the situation and report it either to the head of the department or to HR. They prefer to let others know about what they are going through since they believe that they might help to improve the situation.

Based on some women's experiences of verbal abuse, not all women react in one conventional way. In addition, reaction to verbal abuse developed from an amalgamation of behavior and context. Behaviourally, a lot of women choose to tackle their anger and remain passive and calm by avoiding conflict. Emotionally, other women react by experiencing feelings of guilt and humiliation and others by acting against them. For instance, some women experience a feeling of fear which makes them feel strategic instead of the act and others act directly and defend themselves.

Some women confessed that by experiencing such behaviors they proved themselves that they are capable to defend themselves without help. Others confessed that their response to verbal abuse made them feel emotionally stronger and work harder to achieve success. Furthermore, some women find a way to protect themselves by taking measures from future aggressions that may face (Paludi, 2013, pp. 15-53).

3.7 How verbal abuse affects individuals and organizations?

Verbal abuse at work can provoke numerous physical and psychological outcomes in victims. The negative outcomes of abusive behaviors can be divided into three categories: job performance, psychological and physical well-being. Verbal abuse against women can make it difficult for women to perform their responsibilities to the fullest at work.

Undeniably, the negative relationship with colleagues and the personal verbal attacks affect significantly women's abilities to interact and practice their roles effectively. The most common psychological and well-being outcomes of verbal abuse are psychological distress, depression, and emotional exhaustion. In addition, verbal abuse can cause hostility, anxiety,

stress, and sleep turmoil to women victims. Moreover, it often causes mood changes, chronic stress, feelings of shame, and PTSD. Furthermore, due to the gender stereotypes and the difficulty that women face reaching a good position, when they are victims of verbal abuse their role becomes even harder. The fear and the anxiety of losing their job or affecting their position in the organization is another source of psychological disruption for women (Kapombe & Union, 2015, pp. 1-6).

Many female victims of verbal abuse often decide to leave their job because of the decreased levels of job satisfaction and deprivation of their enthusiasm for work. Additionally, verbal abuse results in poor job performance, decreased levels of productivity, lateness, and devalued career development. Also, due to the above, women victims lose their motivation and commitment at work because of the decreased psychological and cognitive energy concentrated at work. Their energies are concentrated in the process of avoiding, preventing, and reducing the verbally abusive behaviors against them. Some women respond to the aggressiveness and focus their energy on anger, feelings of injustice, and will for revenge. Moreover, it can cause psychological effects, such as fearfulness, shock, apathy, guilt, loss of self-esteem, humiliation, and helplessness (Hershcovis & Julian Barling, 2009, pp. 25-28).

Along with the psychological suffering as a result of the verbal abuse, women victims can cause loss of money for the organization because of their increased absenteeism from their workplace. The organization's culture is negatively affected as well, because of the higher turnover rates, increased lawsuits, and job-related errors (Hogh, 2019, pp. 4, 7, 8). As a result of the verbal abuse, there is an increase in medical expenses, as well. Regarding the physical effects of verbal abuse, these include gastrointestinal perturbation, overeating, regular headaches, sleeplessness, exhaustion, and weight loss (Matthiesen, Einarsen, 2015, p. 233).

3.8 Verbal abuse against women in the context of Cyprus

For the current study, all the data was collected from people who work in organizations in Cyprus. In this part, I am going to present the literature available regarding verbal abuse against women in Cyprus. Despite the fact that Cyprus is a small society not as progressive as other countries since there are still patriarchal stereotypes, there is an advancement of women especially in the work industry in the sense that people do not only consider women responsible for the householding and family and that women can have higher and leadership positions. People gradually started accepting that but have not reached the desirable level. Nevertheless, in Cyprus still prevail stereotypes that indicate the role of women which intensifies the exacerbation of verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, violence, and discrimination. Below I am going to present a study that has been done by Insights Market Research (IMR) / University of Nicosia. According to this recent survey 90% of employees and all employers acknowledge that gender inequality exists in the labor market in Cyprus, 40% presume that pay gaps arise between the genders, and 86 percent of citizens assume that discrimination is more common among women. Gender-related issues were experienced by four out of ten workers, the majority of whom worked in the private sector. Furthermore, according to the findings of a study done in 2020 on the research of workplace harassment in Cypriot data, women harass other women at a rate three times greater than males or both sexes. This suggests that in a workplace where other women work, a woman is three times more likely than a male to be assaulted by a woman (Χαραλάμπος 2021).

Section 3

4. Methodology and Data Collection

For the purpose of this study, a thorough qualitative survey was conducted. Qualitative research is a principal way to best attract participants and describe their experiences. I selected qualitative research to capture a more fruitful and comprehensive discussion and description of the participant's experience. I wanted to have a complete understanding of the context in which a person experiences verbal abuse and how they react or respond to it. The aim of using interviews was to create a more comfortable and friendly setting for the interviewees, allowing them to feel safe and open up throughout the discussion. Interviews interceded to investigate the issue in great depth and clarify any ambiguities. Additionally, interviews are more interactive in contrast to other data collection methods for example questionnaires (Tech, 2018). For the above reasons, semi-structured interviews were chosen to gather data regarding how women experience verbal abuse in the workplace. Before launching the data collecting phase, the necessary descriptive paragraph was prepared to inform all the participants of the purpose of the study and the terms and conditions of the interviews to obtain their approval. Additionally, all the participants were provided with the definition of what constitutes workplace verbal abuse.

4.1 Recruitment Method

For the recruitment part for the research, I used convenient sampling, women I know by my direct and indirect environment including family, friends, and colleagues, which helped me to find participants easily and feel familiar with them, which benefited both the interviewees and the interviewer. The selection of the participants conducted based on the following criteria. To start with, all participants must identify as women because the aim of this study is to focus on women and how they experience verbal abuse in the workplace. The second criterion was the age, all the participants must be between the ages 18-65. I have set

18 as the youngest age, since from 18 people become adults and start working so they probably have experienced the verbal abuse within their workplace. I have set 65 as the oldest age since this is the age of retirement in Cyprus. Moving to the last criterion for the participants, was that all the participants must have work experience in a job, in any industry, located in Cyprus. The fact that I chose to interview people from different industries is because I want to make some comparisons between industries regarding verbal abuse.

4.2 Sample Information

Twelve Cypriot women between the ages of 21 and 45 were chosen as volunteers, with an average age of 31. All the women participants have working experience in Cyprus in different industries in the private sector. Most of the participants reported that the majority of their co-workers were men, meaning that they work in a men-dominated environment. Particularly, 8 women stated that the majority of their co-workers are men, whereas four women stated that they had more female co-workers than male co-workers. In terms of their position holding and industries, I interviewed 5 entry-level auditors who work at audit firms, two cashiers between them one works at a bank and the other at a supermarket, a saleswoman works at a toy shop, a medical student, two teachers work at a private institute and a secretary who works at a car showroom. In regards to their working experience in their current working place varies between 6 months to 24 years.

4.3 Interview Process

The interviews took place in the summer of 2021, during the months of July and August, and lasted roughly 45 minutes to an hour apiece. In terms of interview locations, some were held in quiet cafes and others in parks to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable during the process. The place of the interview process is one of the most critical aspects to consider since it is vital for interviewees to feel at ease and free to open up and

express themselves in an environment where they will not be distracted by external stimuli. All of the interviews were captured using the recording app on a phone.

For the current research, I decided to follow semi-structured interviews. The reason this type of interview is because they are realistic enough to collect someone's thoughts, views, and emotions about a topic. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to clarify some issues and provide additional information and explanations to the respondents, minimizing misconceptions. Also, this kind of interview, follow a series of prepared questions that help you to maintain a logical order of questions based on the topic of discussion and at the same time gives the opportunity to interviewees and the interviewer to be more flexible, add or remove questions and answers and make the interview more interesting (Longhurst, 2003, p. 25). Before the start of each interview, I was reminding all the interviewees that the discussion will be recorded and that they have the right to stop it whenever they want. Also, I was reminding them that they have the right to not answer a question if they do not want to. Before the interview, the interviewees were aware of all this information, since an information paragraph was sent them previously.

The interview guide is divided into three sections. The first one, includes three warm-up questions for example: "how old are you?", "How many years of working experience do you have in this position?" and "How many jobs have you had so far?". I chose to ask these three specific questions in the beginning since can be easily answered, break the ice, and are also useful for the research since age, and years of work experience play an important role in the study. As it comes to the second section, consists of questions that focus on the experience of the participants in their working environment, for example, "How are you treated in your work environment", "Have you ever been yelled at or been called by names in the workplace?", "How did it make you feel?". The aim of asking these questions was to learn about their working environment, emotions, and experiences. I tried also to ask the

more positive questions at the beginning and then move deeper to the more difficult and negative ones, in order to give them the chance to feel confident and easy to talk to. I was very interested to focus on their emotions while experiencing the situations of verbal abuse. Moreover, because of the semi-structured interview, it helped us to build on questions based on the answers given, for example, “please explain further”, “give me an example”. In this way, I could get more detail on the descriptions for each situation. All the questions encouraged narrative responses from the women participated who were backed to express their feeling and perceptions freely and uncertain them that whatever will be assumed is acceptable and completely confidential. At the end of each interview, I used to thank the interviewees for their time and for being so open to me. Also, I was asking them if they had further questions or something to add in order to allow them to tell me something they might remember later or forgotten to say.

4.4 Data Analysis

I was stepping into the transcribing and analysis of each of the 12 interviews by the time they were all completed. Then, I was taking the respective notes based on the transcription. My notes covered the major points mentioned during the interview as well as key details that I may use to categorize them afterwards. To get at my conclusion, I attempted to categorize all of the data in order to identify parallels and differences in themes, and then split them appropriately. This technique assisted me in forming five distinct categories, which will be examined and discussed in the findings and discussion section. Furthermore, all names used were pseudonyms, ensuring that anonymity was maintained at all times.

4.5 Ethical Challenges and Difficulties during the interview process

Beginning with the ethical challenges, I attempted to completely inform the participants on the topic and the interview procedure by providing them with an instructive

paragraph in order to avoid any misunderstandings. In the informative paragraph, in addition to the needed information about the topic, contact information was given to demonstrate legitimacy. The primary challenge I encountered throughout the interviews was women's inability to express their sentiments and emotions when they were subjected to verbal abuse. They were willing to tell me about the scenario and how the verbal assault occurred, but the toughest part for them was opening up about their feelings and talking to me about it. I attempted to reassure them that sharing their emotions was a safe subject, but I recognized it was tough and delicate, so I just gave them as much time as they needed. conversation was unfolded. In terms of sensitivity, I was being very careful to the issues raised and that if someone was feeling distressed you could refer them to the University counsellor or to me for help.

5. Findings and Discussion

The purpose of following part aims to critically present, analyze and discuss the data gathered during the interviews while also connecting them to the relevant literature review. This section is divided into four subsections, the first one examines the multiple types of verbal abuse that participants have encountered, the second discusses the differences between verbal abuse perpetrated by men and women, the third explores how women felt when and while experiencing verbal abuse and the last subsection investigates women's reactions to verbal abuse, which are divided into Emotional, Behavioral and Cognitive reactions.

Additionally, in this part, certain original quotes were included to this section in order to attribute and portray the actual terminology used by the participants, as well as convey women's words directly. All of the quotes were translated from Greek to English and tried to stay as close as possible to the interviewees' words. As this study is about verbal abuse, it's vital to illustrate the actual terms used by the victims and perpetrators.

5.1 Types of verbal abuse

Gender-based abuse was reported by 50% of the participants, according to the data gathered. Those participants believe that the fact they are women, made people consider them as the inferior gender and easy victims of verbal abuse. Gender-based abuse, according to the literature, is the most common type of work abuse and it is related to perceptions and assumptions which concern gender roles and stereotypes. Gender-based abuse can take place as verbal abuse, threats, name-calling, and different gender attacks which purpose of showing superiority (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021). One example of a behavior that exudes from gender stereotypes is Niki's experience:

Every Friday, we are allowed to leave work earlier, at 2 p.m. For this reason, I scheduled my program so that every Friday I could pick my child from school earlier. I informed my boss about that so that he avoids scheduling any of our meetings on Friday at 2p.m. Nevertheless, one Friday, he scheduled a meeting after 2 p.m., I did explain the situation to my boss and left work. During the meeting my boss called me, while everyone there was listening. He started shouting at me "All women are incapable of keeping such a job and it'd be better (for me) to stay at home and take care of (my) child", "You do not deserve this job" At the end of that day, I received a message from my boss that said, "never come back to work again.

(Niki, 40, banker)

People's perceptions about women's roles as submissive to males, less capable at work, and more adept in caring for the home and family are still prevalent in Cyprus today, according to the findings. Gender stereotypes still remain in 2021, according to Louisa Zannetou, the chairperson of the Ministry of Labour's commission on gender equality in employment and vocational education. People believe women are helpless, and that women's

responsibility is to care for the house and children at home, according to her. Men, in contrast to women, are believed to be the "column" of the home (Ψύλλου, 2021). I discovered through statistics that such aggressive acts against women are connected to historical gender disparities. All of these actions are based on societal norms and assumptions, and they lead to discrimination against women in numerous ways.

From the literature available, I have noticed that both nurses and healthcare professionals are common victims of verbal abuse. Verbal abuse is unfortunately widespread in hospitals, and this tends to be true in Cyprus' hospitals and healthcare places as well. Many nurses around the world have reported or witnessed verbal abuse from patients and co-workers in the form of yelling, showing disrespect, receivers of humiliating language, and sexist comments both by patients and colleagues (Dafny & Beccaria, 2020, pp. 3337-3338). Below you may find an example of a medical student tolerated gender-based verbal harassment and hate speech in the healthcare business while performing her practical experience in a hospital in Cyprus.

At the hospital, I experienced verbal abuse from patients, their families, doctors, and nurses. I was in shock because of the terrible language they used to each other. Their aggressive behaviors made me make lots of mistakes. {...} The doctor during the surgery was very aggressive and used hostile behavior against nurses. While I was sewing the patient, he was looking at me with contempt, underestimated me and suddenly he started shouting and saying that I was sewing a tablecloth and not a patient. He commanded me to stop, He said that "you are too young, and you are not capable of doing that" and handed my job to my (man)colleague. In the end, he only congratulated my colleague while he was very aggressive to me without any reason. I deeply felt that he acted that way, just because I am a woman.

(Antonia, 24, medical student)

In the situation at hand, the doctor verbally abused Antonia by using disparaging words to describe her job with the purpose to disturb and stressing her to choose her colleague and sideways to demonstrate that men can perform the job better than women. As Antonia noted, his issue was with all women around him, regardless of their position, specialization, or age. He used to shout and negatively behave at every woman and humiliate them with sexist comments. In this situation, he even raised his voice to humiliate Antonia during the procedure the surgery, aside from the improper remarks and phrases he used against her. The doctor was most likely attempting to demonstrate his masculine superiority over the feminine gender's inadequacy by raising his voice and acting aggressively. People adjust their tone of voice based on who they are speaking to and how they want others to perceive them, according to research (University of Stirling, 2017). The fact that he picked a male to continue Antonia's task at the conclusion of the surgery clearly demonstrated that it was a gender-based abuse, especially because these two persons did precisely the same work and had the same experience. The rest of the employees, who had known him for a longer amount of time, reinforced this notion.

From the data collected through interviews, I found out that women are not only judged and verbally attacked for their gender but by their appearance characteristics, as well. One of the many women who participated in the survey recalled a circumstance in which she was discriminated against during an interview because of her physical appearance. Specifically, the woman in the following case is a teacher who went for an interview to a private education institute where she experienced verbal abuse as a form of "joking". The interviewer, in particular, misjudged and criticized her since her look did not correspond to her age; he mistook her for someone younger than she is.

The interviewer asked me to show him my ID card to confirm my age. As he said, “students will consider you one of them and wont probably listen you because of your height”. During the interview, he even laughed at me and expressed some kind of “jokes” for my height”. When he finally hired me, the comments and jokes worsened. The rest of the teachers there, never counted on me and they were made fun of me behind my back. When students realized that they started yelling at me which made the lesson harder to succeed.

(Valentina, 23, teacher)

The preceding case involved verbal abuse based on the woman's physical appearance. The sort of verbal abuse she endured began in the guise of jokes, which she tolerated at first, but as time passed, “the jokes started making me feel unhappy, unattractive, inferior, and incapable of doing my work,” she said. My stomach ached every day before I went to work.” Women are being judged not only about the gender and their but also on the basis of how they depart from the stereotyped picture of a woman. Many women all around the world have a more masculine physical form or are shorter than the usual female height. Women are frequently degraded because of their appearance (Martinez-Gonzalez, Perez-Pedraza, Alfaro-Alvarez, Reyes-Cervantes, Gonzalez-Malabet, Clemente-Suarez, 2021, p. 2).

As aforementioned, according to literature, verbal abuse can be manifested in various ways, for example, threat, discrimination, manipulation, control over someone, raise voice, and name-calling. Also, it can take the form of coercion, insult, including labelling, yelling, and humiliation. In addition, it may include jokes about women or might depict women as sexual objects (Wondrak, Verbal Abuse, 1999, p. 79).

From the data collected, almost half of the participants mentioned that the most intense way they experienced verbal abuse was when another individual got aggressive

against them, raised their voice, and verbally attacked them by shouting. Some of them said that when they shout at them, name-calling follows. Another part of women reported that verbal abuse was as a form of a threat and assertion of responsibilities and others said that they experienced it as an intense criticism. Shouting, name-calling, criticism - judgment, irony, "jokes," categorization, humiliation, sexist statements, and assertion of responsibility were the sorts of verbal abuse observed by the participants in order of frequency.

Surprisingly, more over half (58%) said the incident of verbal aggression occurred in the presence of other co-workers.

The 33% of women interviewed, said that they experienced verbal abuse when their colleagues or clients expressed sexist and humiliating behavior against them. According to the law, sexist comments are considered sexual harassment. Sometimes they are not obvious, and people can meet them as devious comments and sexist jokes. If someone is a victim of gender-based jokes he or she is entitled by law to pursue a sexual harassment claim against the abuser (Employment law help, 2021). Women experience criticism and tough words, which make them feel weak, incapable, and useless. Below are some examples of participants who experienced sexist comments as a form of verbal abuse.

I was the secretary in a sports cars showroom, most of the clients were men and all of my colleagues were men. Almost everyone surrounded me at work had inappropriate and humiliate behavior against me. They were observing my body very intensely, making comments like "what a beautiful skirt" and then wink, laugh, and discuss with each other. I experienced sexist, disrespectful comments by colleagues and clients, "you should go and make me a coffee! Women do not know very much about cars; I want a man to explain to me about a car. Women do not even know how to drive, and you're expecting me to ask you about cars?."

(Ioanna 36, secretary)

Since the attackers concentrated on a stereotype that "women don't know how to drive well," it's clear that Ioanna was subjected to gender-based verbal abuse in the event described above. Also, she experienced verbal abuse against her capabilities as a woman since they presented her as powerless and incapable of doing her job effectively. Aside from that, she was subjected to sexist jokes, which made her feel ashamed, embarrassed, and humiliated about her appearance. People at workplaces where there is only one woman and the rest are males, especially in a small society like Cyprus, find the chance to verbally attack the woman in different ways, mostly on her feminine appearance based on misconceptions about women.

{...} one man colleague followed me on social media. From that moment on, all the men of the office changed the way they used to talk to me. From what I realised; he probably shared my photos with the rest. They started making comments about my body and laughing with each other.

(Marilena, 34, accountant)

Marilena's case was clearly a gender-based attack which included offensive comments regarding her body. Many people around the world use social media as source to observe someone's photos and by spreading them with their friends, humiliate victims.

The 58% of women interviewed, reported that they experienced verbal abuse as a form of accepting shouting when their superior or colleague raised their voice at them and called them by names. Raising the voice is considered a serious form of verbal abuse. Most of the time it aims to threaten someone emotionally and psychologically. Yelling and raising your voice can cause long-lasting damage to people.

I suffered from a physical injury; I broke my leg. The doctor suggested staying at home for a month. When I informed my boss about it, he got angry, his response was

“what are we going to do with the job now? You need to come to the office no matter how. You don’t need your legs to work. You and the doctor are idiots. If you do not come to the office tomorrow, I will recruit another employee”. {...} I went to the office with a broken leg. {...} He ironically told me that I should stay for overtime since my husband was coming to drive me at home at 17:00, which was my working hour of leaving.

(Melina, 46, audit firm)

In the case at hand, Melina stated that it was the worst incident of verbal abuse she had ever experienced. She claimed to be a dedicated employee who was only absent in extreme circumstances, and she wanted respect and understanding when she broke her leg and needed to take sick leave. On the contrary, her supervisor not only disrespect her but raised his voice too, used name-calling, underestimated, and humiliated her in many ways. As she voiced, her boss’s behavior make her feel stressed, anxious, panic attacks affected her sleep and caused many physical health issues such as body pains, headaches, and stomachaches.

Another example of a boss using name-calling and raising voicing to characterize a woman at the job. In the case below, the boss daily used to underestimate Nadia, the interviewee. As Nadia mentioned, he had very provocative and annoying behavior, she experienced irony, criticism, name-calling, and sexist comments.

{...} When I dared to voice my ideas during the meetings, my boss used to talk to me using horrible language; “Are you crazy, do you want us to lose such a rich client? The only thing that made me sad is the money that your parents gave you to study. Women are not capable of taking such decisions” He made me feel inferior to others and that made me sad, disrespected, and uncomfortable. Every time I wanted to leave

the office, but I was afraid of doing it, I needed the money to pay for my Master's degree.

(Nadia, 37, audit firm)

Women participants responses confirmed the numerous barriers described in the literature for example problems with defining verbal abuse, rejecting misconceptions such as verbal abuse is a lighter and less harmful form of abuse. Data showed that verbal abuse is a highly typical occurrence for women during their working life. As literature supports, women are more likely to face verbal abuse than men and women are more likely to face more serious types of verbal abuse such as name-calling, voice raising, and sexist comments. Most types of verbal abuse that the women I interviewed experienced even if at first appeared with forms such as criticism, judgement, irony and jokes, they were gender-based, and perpetrators attacked women based on gender roles, patriarchy, and stereotypes. Data also features that verbal abuse does appear in different industries, however, the industry in which most incidents of verbal abuse were accounting and audit firms The greatest levels of verbal abuse were seen in audit and accounting businesses, where women were subjected to a variety of forms of abuse, including name-calling, voice raising, yelling, irony, criticism, and judgment. In the health care sector, I found that women face many and different types of verbal abuse, and are attacked by many people including doctors, patients, and the relatives of the patients. Among the most frequent types of verbal abuse that I found in the healthcare sector were gender-based verbal abuse, voice raising, irony, name-calling, underestimation, disrespect, sexism, and inappropriate comments. Then follows the market industry where women faced sexism, underestimation and humiliation especially when they were surrounded by men. In the education industry, I found that women face the lightest types of verbal abuse such as "jokes" which attack those who differ from the stereotypical image of women and focus on women's appearance. Jokes turned to injure the mental and physical health of women even if

people consider them as nothing. Apart from the industry differences, I have observed that according to each woman's age the type of verbal abuse experienced differs. The younger women as data proved experience the lighter types of verbal abuse such as jokes that focus more on gender stereotypes, women appearance and the stereotypical image and role of women. Also, younger women experience verbal abuse as a form of sexist comments in contrast to older women who accept more aggressive behaviors such as voice raising and focus more to affect and damage their psychological state.

5.2 Verbal abuse with men and women perpetrators

Despite the fact that both genders can experience verbal abuse and discrimination in the place of work and be harmfully affected, according to the findings women experience it more frequently and in more serious ways. According to research about verbal abuse in Cyprus conducted by the University of Nicosia, data proved that people are more likely to experience verbal abuse from women than men (Χαραλάμπους 2021). In contrast to the University of Nicosia's study, the current study seems to disagree with the results found.

Even nowadays whereupon many movements support feminism and women's unity and solidarity, people tend to consider as a taboo the fact that women can abuse other women and believe that kindness, support, and love characterize relationships between women. Even though, in most circumstances, we meet men in the role of the abuser, the same happens with women. This phenomenon has undoubtedly increased in our days since women aim for higher job positions and advance their careers.

It is a fact that women who refer to women, experience abuse more regularly in comparison to the abuse they experience from the opposite sex. This happens because women tend to go after other women because of enviousness, uncertainty, hate, and fear that the other woman is better than herself. Therefore, instead of supporting and loving other women,

women themselves tend to compete with each other. Additionally, a theory that prevails, supports that a woman verbally abuses other women in order to show superiority and gain power, respect, and obedience. As a result, we meet women who have more aggressive styles of leadership. Because they try to have the same power of influence with men. This is their way of surviving in superior positions and it is known as toxic masculinity. Specifically, toxic masculinity is when women try to imitate men's behavior in order to lead capably. In these circumstances, women disappear their emotions and they try to fit in, especially when a woman is new in a leadership position (Kurter, 2020).

From the data collected only 25% of the interviewees have been verbally abused by women. In most of the cases, women abusers had managerial and high hierarchical positions while there was a case where the woman abuser was in the same position as the abused woman. Interestingly, all women abusers used an almost similar way of abusing other women. Those at the managerial position used irony, mockery, and harsh words when abusing a woman and at the same time, they had a contemptuous grimace on their faces. They did not raise their voice; however, they tried to hurt, yell, and humiliate women by their tone of voice, language, and their facial expressions. In one of the cases, the woman abuser used name-calling aiming to humiliate, insult and degrade the other woman while making herself to be deemed as superior.

I asked her to help me because I was new at the job, and I needed to clarify a few questions I had. At first, she laughed and yelled at me because she thought that I should not have any questions. When she realised that I really needed help, yet bored to help me, she underestimated me with her words “even my baby daughter would have done it without questions” “Are you stupid? It is very easy”. Why did they hire you?” Her behavior made me feel stupid at that moment and I could not stop thinking

of what she had said to me. I felt really angry and sad at the same moment because she disrespected me.

(Anna Maria, 23, saleswoman)

An estimation from the data collected is that women when verbally attacked by other women, they have a higher likelihood of ending the undesired hostile behavior than when they are verbally abused by males. The aforementioned woman stated that when the other woman verbally abused her, she became so angry that she responded to her behavior, however, as she mentioned, she would not have responded at all if the abuser were a man. She explained that men can be more dangerous when getting angry and they may act physical abuse against them, so it is about fear of men aggressiveness.

{....} Her behavior made me feel so angry that I went back to her and said that her behavior was inappropriate and that she does not have any right to talk to me in this way. I also told her that she needs to respect me, that I am not stupid, that I had just been hired for the job, so it is logical to have questions. Additionally, I mentioned that if she ever talks to me again in this way, I will report her to the HR.

(Anna Maria, 23, saleswoman)

Although women's roles have progressed significantly, gender stereotypes and beliefs regarding women's roles in today's society have not totally vanished. In the past, men's aggressive behaviour towards the female sex was justified due to their superiority and power of gender. Although it may seem that such behaviors and beliefs have been eliminated and left in the past, they have not. In the 21st century, we have cases of men using various forms of abuse on women since women are considered as vulnerable, inferior, powerless, and less capable of working or taking over a higher position in the workplace.

Women who follow male-dominated careers usually become victims of verbal violence, discrimination, financial discrimination, harassment, and are made to feel less capable as well as inferior. Also, women in these positions often face sexist comments and behaviors that make them feel uncomfortable and lose their motivation and energy at work. Apart from the feeling of debasement, women often experience emotions of fear and threat. These behaviors come from patriarchal societies in which men are seen as superior to women. As a result of the patriarchal system, we can see more men instead of women holding superior positions in the workplaces and women have more entry-level positions. Women are ignored during the meetings and when they dare to tell their opinion, they become subjects of ridicule and mockery (Torres, Proyer, Benitez, Brauer, Carretero, 2019, p. 473).

As aforementioned, 8 of the women participants, reported that they worked in a male-dominated environment while 4 women in a female-dominated one. As regards the latter, only half of them were verbally abused by a woman, thus indicating that the cases with men as verbal abusers are the majority.

Even if the majority of employees are women, only men hold the superior positions, those of managers and partners. Men are the most aggressive within the organization in contrast to women.

(Melina, 46, auditor)

These behaviors may be repeated because of a non-equal organizational structure, which is known as societal norms and stereotypes. As a result, it is significant to identify structural abuse because it can cause the subordination of women in many aspects of life such as economic, social, and political (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021).

5.3 Dealing with verbal abuse

The overall effect of the workplace verbal abuse is hard to calculate due to the multiple issues involved. Verbal abuse at work, as data proved, can trigger various physical and psychological results in victims, which are themselves hard to measure. As I mentioned in the methodology part of this paper, the most difficult part for women during the interviews, was when they tried to explain to me what they exactly felt or went through during and after experiencing verbal abuse.

5.4 Effects on mental and physical health

From the data collected, it seems that what women firstly experienced was shame, especially when the verbal abuse took place in the those who experienced the incident in presence of other colleagues. What they also felt was a feeling of anger their self-esteem was hurt while being humiliated. It was also noted that women felt stressed because they did not know how to react. Most women told me that they did not know what to say or how to react, especially when experiencing verbal abuse for the first time. In the cases when verbal abuse continued, the levels of anxiety seemed to increase. Considering the seriousness of each case some women confessed that they faced depression, stopped eating as normal, had difficulty sleeping at night, and did not want to talk or discuss it with anyone not even with the people they love. Due to this, they felt a lack of confidence and self-esteem, a sense of insecurity vulnerability, and powerlessness. Among the mental consequences, the majority of the participants confessed that they went through physical consequences as well. Anxiety and depression caused them headaches and lack of concentration. In addition, some interviewees told me that they suffered from vomiting and stomach disorders. Furthermore, two women stated that although many years have passed since the incident of verbal abuse, their mental health still suffers and attend sessions with rehabilitation specialists.

Below, I will try to associate the most frequent verbal abuse types that participants experienced with the consequences those had on them. First of all, I observed that when women were experiencing verbal abuse as voice raising the first consequent symptom was stress and anxiety. Stress is a reaction of the body when experiencing harmful situations. When an individual feels threatened then the body develops a chemical reaction that helps the body avoid injury. When people become victims of yelling, their brains and body change in various ways. There is an increased activity of the amygdala which is in the emotional brain and increases stress hormones as well as muscular tension (Hendel, 2018). Continuing with name-calling, a regular type of verbal abuse, women said that when an individual used “bad words” to describe them, their work, their appearance, and their way of life, they deeply felt humiliated. Many of them even felt shame and wondered whether what they did something wrong. Name-calling caused harmful consequences on participants since negative characterizations hurt their feelings. When the name-calling was about their personality, appearance characteristics, and way of life, they felt wronged, disrespected, humiliated, and discriminated against the rest. That made them feel sad and depressed since they felt rejected by their colleagues. Some of the participants said that many times they left their workplace crying and did not want to eat or drink something. Moving to the gender-based abuse, sexist comments are, according to the Council of Europe, defined as;

“... derogatory comments, objectification, sexist humour or jokes, overfamiliar remarks, silencing or ignoring people, gratuitous comments about dress and physical appearance, sexist body language, lack of respect and masculine practices which intimidate or exclude women and favor fellow men (Council of Europe,2019)”

Facing gender-based verbal abuse with sexist comments from their colleagues, negatively affected women’s performance at work including motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. Also, women lost the sense of belonging since they felt that they needed to fight

and defend their gender and their capabilities. Women felt that people neither respected them nor recognized their efforts this mostly being the consequence of existing gender stereotypes in Cyprus. Women's well-being is affected by sexist comments as well (Council of Europe, 2019). Therefore, some women felt shame and felt that verbal abuse was the result of their fault. As a direct consequence, some confessed that the whole situation made them feel stressed, anxious, ashamed, could not sleep, or do their job effectively. The above outcomes were linked with the prior research in literature where women suggested emotions of anger, depression, sadness when imposed to verbal abuse.

5.5 Verbal abusers in superior positions

Participants reported that the position of the abuser does affect the way they responded to each case. 50% of the interviewees said that the verbal abuser in their case had a superior position within the organization, some of them were managers and other bosses. Two of the participants that experienced verbal abuse from a colleague holding a higher position than them, did not actually respond to their superior's bad behavior. They continued their work pretending that nothing happened. They tried to avoid responding to them, stayed passive believing that in this way their manager/boss might not behave in that way again. Another explanation for having a passive response when verbally abused was fear of losing their job. Since both women were mothers, they could not risk losing their job. Surprisingly, these two women had the most working experience in their job environment than all their other colleagues, in contrast to the other participants that had fewer years of working experience and responded differently. This helps to understand their willingness to keep jobs, regardless of what they had experienced. Moreover, these two women are oldest older than the other the participants, the first being 40 years old and the other in her mid-forties. They both keep their job positions in the same organisation today. Therefore, it is obvious that the factors which contributed to making them stay at the company and ~~do~~ not respond to verbal

abuse were their years of working experience, their families, their age, and their fear of losing their job.

As regards the other two women-participants who have been verbally abused by supervisors/ bosses they expressed their feelings to their fellow-colleagues but did not respond in any way to their manager/boss who verbally abused them. From these two participants, only one woman reported her manager's behavior to the HR. As she mentioned, the HR assured her that her manager who was also a woman would not treat her in that way again. Fortunately, after reporting her to the HR, some other colleagues found the power to report the specific manager's abusive behaviour to them, as well. As a result, the HR fired the manager. Moreover, the women who faced verbal abuse from their manager/ boss, but did not react, just left their jobs.

5.6 Verbal abusers in Entry level abusers

When it came to the women who had been verbally abused by a co-worker who was in the same entry-level job as them, I saw that they felt more capable and stronger to respond to their actions. From what I understand that was because of the verbal abusers' positions. The majority of women tried to discuss directly with the perpetrators and tell them what they felt about their behavior. Between them, for some their move succeeded since the perpetrator apologize for their behavior but other failed because the perpetrators never confessed their behavior.

In total, some women, choose adaptive and convinced managing skills by seeking to make the situation clear from any misunderstandings and handling directly with the perpetrator's behavior, especially women who worked in the same level position with the perpetrator. Nevertheless, some women did report reaction patterns of avoidance, passivity, quietness, and hurting themselves by getting sick after they became verbally abused. Raise

voicing and name-calling were found to be more stressful than judgment and criticism. It is significant to note that although the majority of interviewees felt angry, sad, stressed, disrespected, disappointed, and hurt when bearded with a verbally abuse incident by a colleague or a superior, and most felt that they did warrant the perpetrator and did not do much to worth to be treated in that way. Most of them felt that they could handle the situation at the beginning, however, as the negative behavior was getting worsen, most of the interviewees confessed that they felt desperate but did not actually do something to stop it due to their fear of losing their job.

Of the women interviewed, 90% confessed that after experiencing verbal abuse in the workplace it was difficult for them to deliver their work responsibilities effectively. That happened since they lose their motivation and energy for work. The words they used against them hurt them deeply so they could not forget about it. 30% of women interviewed even felt shame for what they heard and experienced and they could not concentrate on their work roles.

Moreover, undeniably, when women became victims of verbal abuse, developed bad relationships with colleagues and personal verbal aggressions importantly affected women's ability to interact with each other and practice their roles well. Women felt that they could not trust anyone within their work environment.

I was new at the job, and I know I did many mistakes at the beginning, but I guess it was normal since I did not know the job very well. I was trying to ask for help but to be honest people there were not very helpful. Once I did ask for help and I did not understand exactly what to do, I asked for further explanation and the answer was "you are an idiot you do not understand anything. Why did they hire you?" I did feel stupid that time, I could not stop thinking of what she said to me. I felt horrible and

my stomach started hurting me” Of course I could not work and be concentrated anymore, I did even more mistakes. From what I remember I gave wrong products to the clients and also, I did give wrong changes to the customers when they paid.

(Anna Maria,23, saleswoman)

As women expressed, the quality of their work was decreased as well as their patience for innovation. Some women preferred to leave work. Thus, organizations faced with job turnover of their staff not only the abused one but also some for who witnessed such hostile behaviors as well. As a result, organizations needed to repeat recruitment, training which were too costly. One example from the participants, was a medicine student, Antonia who was working as an apprentice doctor and when she started experiencing verbal abuse while working, because of the emotional disorder faced she treated her patients poorly and she might have occurred huge, dangerous, and unsolved mistakes.

5.7 Emotional, Behavioral, Cognitive Reactions

Women participated, expressed how verbal abuse made them feel; they voiced numerous emotions including, fear, sadness, humiliation, uncomfortable, anger, and shame. As the data proved women after experiencing verbal abuse it was difficult for them to deliver their work responsibilities effectively. Therefore, the negative effects of verbal abuse were both individual and organizational. Below I am going to present and discuss the different reactions that women had when they experienced verbal abuse, associating them with the available literature.

According to the literature, women react in three different ways, Emotional, Behavioral and Cognitive. Participants seemed to have a specific reaction depending on their age and the gender of the abuser. Women who were 35 years old or more and experienced verbal abuse by a man perpetrator, appeared to have emotional reactions, such as feeling humiliated,

ashamed, and fearful. They unexpressed their feelings to others or the perpetrators. Women who belong to this reaction group reported that they felt fearful of losing their job. Even if they were experiencing verbal abuse, they considered that they could not find other jobs because they are not in their 20s anymore. Participants sometimes felt anger for the behavior against them, although they reacted only by crying. Especially when women voiced feeling scared, fearful they preferred to protect themselves by ignoring to avoid any consequence (Paludi, 2013, p. 87).

He humiliated me with his behavior, I was one of his most committed employees. I felt so sad and disrespected but I did not report anything to anyone because I was afraid of losing my job

(Melina 45, auditor)

It made me feel really angry with his behavior, he humiliated me in front of other people, he yelled at me

(Nicoletta, 40, banker)

Moving on to the Behavioral and cognitive reactions, which appear to be more prevalent among the younger individuals (18-23 and 24-34 years old). Participants in the first age group reported having more active behavioral reactions, such as leaving a job after seeing such conduct or reporting it to a superior, such as HR, boss, or manager.

I did report her behavior to HR. She had very provocative behavior against me and I could not accept it because I respect myself.

(Savvina, 21, auditor)

Also, there were situations in which the victim responded to the behavior as below.

She did not have any right to talk to me in this way. I felt so angry with her that I talk to her back and told her that she needs to respect me.

(Anna Maria, 23, saleswoman)

When I first experienced verbal abuse by a man doctor, I was not sure how to respond and my first reaction was internal anger and sadness. I left the surgery room crying but then I realized that nobody could underestimate me in this way. I discussed it with many people around me in the hospital and I reported him to the hospital management.

(Antonia, 24, medicine student)

The two examples mentioned above included female criminals who verbally assaulted very young women. According to the statistics gathered, younger women currently respond when verbally attacked, and they do not have the same passive reactions as older women. They do not tolerate rude or aggressive behavior from anyone, whether older or younger, woman or male.

The majority of women in the second age group, 24-34, displayed certain behavioral as well as cognitive reactions similar to those in the preceding age group. The minority of women who demonstrated cognitive responses were strong and powerful after undergoing verbal abuse and worked even harder to show that they were irreplaceable, nevertheless they eventually left the job because they continued to endure verbal abuse.

Section 4

6. Conclusions

6.1 Conclusion

Over time, verbal abuse types become more severe and intense, multiple, and repeated. Ultimately, women victims end up blaming themselves and considering that it is their fault. The forms used by abusers varied and aim to cause blows to victims' self-esteem. Verbal abusers aim to maintain power and they succeed by humiliating, resilience, ridiculing, criticizing, joking, ignoring, and interrupting someone.

This study has imputations for the field of psychology for countless reasons. Firstly, the current study is the first investigation that examines verbal abuse against women within industries in Cyprus. The findings support that verbal abuse can negatively influence the mental and physical health, as well as everyday experiences of women. The purpose of the research was to explore how women who work in organizations in Cyprus deal with verbal abuse. Given that we are all unique individuals with distinct personalities, attitudes, and behaviors, it is only natural that we each have a unique way of perceiving and addressing each circumstance.

Findings indicate that verbal abuse does, in fact, injure. A review of verbal violence in the workplace findings by women working in organizations located in Cyprus reveals that sometimes verbal abuse is not random, however, most of the time occurs anticipatedly in certain types of organizations or occupations. All of them, have experienced verbal abuse at least one time in their working experience. It should although, be acknowledged that incidents of verbal abuse can occur anywhere. According to the data gathered, the majority of the occurrences occurred at work; however, some of them began at work and continued with phone messages outside of traditional working hours. It's also worth noting that the victims

are tortured every minute of their lives as a result of such actions. The reality of verbal abuse was extremely distressing for the women who had been subjected to it, with the most significant accusations being name-calling, raising voice, and making sexist remarks. The findings revealed that it might affect people's health on both a personal and organizational level; however, the personal consequences may be more severe. These catastrophic outcomes may be economic or not, financial and or individual. The price of verbal abuse in the workplace may be a direct or indirect result of it. Unfortunately, any estimation of verbal abuse cost could not be estimated due to a lack of available data. Cases of verbal abuse affected the morale of the employees and created negative conditions for performance at work, bad interpersonal relationships with colleagues, and problematic communication among team members. Moreover, many participants of the interviews believe that cases of verbal abuse led them to mistakes and increased workload.

Participants seemed to have some trouble communicating their own experiences. The women who participated stated a sense of uncertainty of how to define verbal abuse, each woman defined verbal abuse differently. Some of them, even wondered that it could not be defined. Some attitudes that women reported as verbally abusive included controlling behavior, emotional abuse, non-supportive behavior, humiliation, manipulation, and punishment for personal gain. Nevertheless, women identified a key element of verbal abuse that is the consistency of negative emotions that affect their psychology. All the women who participated, agreed that verbal abuse is very damaging and that its outcomes can manifest in numerous ways. The participants mentioned difficulty in interpersonal skills, concentration, communication with other people, anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem. Overall, the women reported having a lot of similar emotions while experiencing verbal abuse for instance feeling a sense of sadness, overwhelm, exhaustion, and drained.

Keeping in mind the challenges of locating a comprehensive definition of verbal abuse, particularly workplace verbal abuse. I tried to conduct a definition of workplace verbal abuse, which is limited in the literature. Despite the fact that I read many definitions that referred to verbal abuse but with a different name, they did not meet the requirements of my research. Thus, after communicating with the interviewees, collecting the data, and reading the relevant literature, I have a thorough understanding of what constitutes workplace verbal abuse. The definition of workplace verbal abuse that I have conducted by the current research is *workplace verbal abuse is an aggressive or assaulted behavior against a person or a group happening in circumstances related to work, either at the workplace or not that result in emotional harm, well-being, health injury, psychological harm, and career consequences. Workplace verbal abuse includes attacks on an individual's self-concept, or their position, and a verbal abuser is an individual or group who tries to control or exert power over the victim.*

Through the research, I found that verbal abuse includes various observed short-term and long-term effects. Verbal abuse can affect mental and physical health, behavior, and development in many areas of life. It can have various outcomes as findings indicated such as headaches, stomach problems, depression, lack of sleep, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Even though the sample of the research was short, it still illustrates the severe and powerful impact that verbal abuse has on healthy career development which affects an individual's life. It was found that female workers in audit and accounting industries suffered more verbally than any other form of violence. Male managers, bosses, and co-workers were reported to be the main perpetrators. Women who were less than 36 years old were more vulnerable to sexist comments and verbal abuse against a non-stereotypical woman. In contrast to the younger women, older ones faced more aggressive behaviors which were more work-related. The majority of the older respondents chose to ignore the incident of verbal

abuse and act as if it had never happened in order to avoid further aggression and avoid losing their job. The younger women who participated, contrary to beliefs evident in the literature, which most of the time presents women as powerless, helpless, and passive, younger women in the current study actively responded to verbal abuse in various ways. The younger women preferred to respond to the verbal abuse incidents and did not ignore them. Specifically, some women preferred to leave the job or discuss with the perpetrator and show their power. The majority of the participants shared the incidents of verbal abuse experienced, with their near ones.

6.2 Limitations

Even though the current study discusses several conspicuous and emerging domains that encompass women's experiences of verbal abuse it is important to detect its limitations. Women in my sample depicted a variety of ages and industries however the sample size was limited and the fact that they were women I know from the direct and indirect environment may have influenced my research. As a result, the outcomes of the research due to the above reason, cannot be generalized to the larger population. Another probable limitation is the fact that some of the women who participated needed clarification regarding the meaning of some of the interview questions.

Moreover, while other studies regarding verbal abuse have focused on women of a specific workforce industry, women in my investigation needed only to identify as female and to work in organizations located in Cyprus. Women who participated in the present study came from different and multitude backgrounds and ages, they may have had other standards, biases, and prejudices that might influence their responses. Specifically, many of the women who participated were in their early twenties and may have not experienced various incidents

or cases of verbal abuse. Given in mind the limited work experiences they might have not developed their feminist identities yet.

Future research may wish to investigate verbal abuse against women from the same industry to see if they voice similar areas to ones found in the present study. In addition, future studies may apply quantitative research methods to estimate verbal abuse on mental health problems. There are various recommendations for future research based on many questions that came to the surface while doing my research and gaps that I found in the literature. Given this paper's noteworthy findings, I suggest that larger research can be accomplished where professionals such as psychologists, sociologists, and HR professionals can observe more samples from each industry and utilize the same or updated questions to this study. Ideally, this study would have had more interesting results if we used a combination of research methods, for instance, focus groups in combination with interviews and questionnaires. It would be more beneficial to gather more information on the verbal abuse itself.

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7. Descriptive paragraph and Interview Questions

Research Question: “How do women experience verbal abuse in the workplace?”

Γεια σας, ονομάζομαι Αθηνά Νικολάου και είμαι φοιτήτρια στο μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα του Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού στο Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου. Θα εκτιμούσα ιδιαίτερα αν προσφέρατε τη βοήθειά σας στη διεξαγωγή του ερευνητικού μέρους της διατριβής μου, με θέμα «Λεκτική κακοποίηση κατά των γυναικών στο εργασιακό περιβάλλον», αφιερώνοντας λίγο από το χρόνο σας για να απαντήσετε σε μερικές από τις ερωτήσεις μου.

Η απάντηση των ερωτήσεων, θα πραγματοποιηθεί μέσω σύντομης και ημιδομημένης συνέντευξης στην Ελληνική γλώσσα. Η συνέντευξη θα ηχογραφηθεί και με το τέλος της εργασίας όλα τα δεδομένα θα καταστραφούν. Έχετε το δικαίωμα να διακόψετε την ηχογράφηση οποιαδήποτε στιγμή θελήσετε εσείς. Ακόμη, έχετε το δικαίωμα να μην απαντήσετε σε κάποια ερώτηση. Για όλα τα δεδομένα, θα τηρηθεί απόλυτη εχεμύθεια, εμπιστευτικότητα και ανωνυμία. Όλα τα δεδομένα, τα οποία θα συλλεχθούν, πρόκειται να χρησιμοποιηθούν αποκλειστικά για σκοπούς έρευνας της παρούσας διατριβής.

Η εργασία μου εναπόκειται στην επίβλεψη της αναπληρώτριας καθηγήτριας στο Τμήμα Διοίκησης Επιχειρήσεων και Δημόσιας Διοίκησης του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου, Αλεξίας Παναγιώτου στην οποία μπορείτε να αποταθείτε για οποιαδήποτε πιστοποίηση ή διευκρίνιση (alexia@ucy.ac.cy / +357-22893618).

Ορισμός: Η λεκτική κακοποίηση στο χώρο εργασίας, εκφράζεται μέσω λέξεων, τόνου ή υποτιμητικής έκφρασης, που έχει ως στόχο να απειλήσει, να ταπεινώσει και να εξευτελίσει κάποιον. Το αποτέλεσμα της λεκτικής βίας είναι η συναισθηματική βλάβη η οποία μπορεί να προκαλέσει ακόμη και σωματική βλάβη. Συμβαίνει στο χώρο εργασίας, συγκαλυμμένα ή φανερά και συνήθως δεν έχει ορατά σημάδια το οποίο την καθιστά δύσκολη να αποδειχθεί. Παρ'όλα αυτά, η ψυχολογική βλάβη στο εσωτερικό κέντρο των θυμάτων μπορεί να είναι επιζήμια (Wondrak, Verbal Abuse, 1999).

Η συμμετοχή σας είναι πολύ σημαντική για την επιτυχία της παρούσας έρευνας.

Ευχαριστώ εκ των προτέρων για τη προθυμία και το χρόνο σας.

Questions:

1. What is your age? / Τι ηλικία έχετε;
2. How many years of working experience do you have in this position? / Πόσα χρόνια εργασιακής εμπειρίας έχετε σε αυτή τη δουλειά;
3. How many jobs have you had so far? / Σε πόσες δουλειές έχετε εργαστεί μέχρι στιγμής;
4. What about the job you enjoyed the least? / Ποια από αυτές σας άρεσε λιγότερο; Γιατί;
5. What type of job was it? / Τι είδους δουλειά ήταν;
6. How would you describe your working environment? / Πως θα περιγράφατε το εργασιακό σας περιβάλλον;
7. How are you treated in your work environment? / Πως σας αντιμετωπίζουν στο εργασιακό σας περιβάλλον;
8. Are women treated differently in the same way as men in your working environment? / Πιστεύετε ότι οι γυναίκες αντιμετωπίζονται με τον ίδιο τρόπο όπως ο άντρες στο εργασιακό σας περιβάλλον;
9. Have you ever been yelled at or been called by "names" in the workplace? / Σας έχουν ποτέ κοροϊδέψει ή αποκαλέσει με αρνητικά "ονόματα";
10. How often does this happen? / Πόσο συχνά συμβαίνει αυτό;
11. How did it happen? / Πως συνέβη αυτό;
12. How did it make you feel? / Πως σας έκανε να νιώσατε;

13. What did you do or say in response to the negative behavior? / Πως αντιδράσατε και τι απαντήσατε στην αρνητική συμπεριφορά;
14. Did you report this to anyone in management? When? To whom and what did they say and/or do? If not, why didn't you report it? / Το έχετε αναφέρει στη διοίκηση της εταιρίας; Πότε; Σε ποιον και τι είπαν και/ή πως έπραξαν; Εάν όχι γιατί δεν το αναφέρατε;
15. Do you know why the behavior occurred? / Γνωρίζετε το λόγο που προκάλεσε αυτή τη συμπεριφορά;
16. Do you consider it as a gender-based attack in your workplace? / Θεωρείτε ότι επρόκειτο για επίθεση με βάση του φύλο σας;