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Perceptions regarding the grievance policy procedure:

The case of a small to medium (SME) construction business enterprise in Johannesburg

By

Edline Movha

Submitted in fulfilment of:

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SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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Edline Movha

July 2019

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents: Mr and Mrs S.J. Movha, their love, hard work, unity, perseverance, advice, hope and faith in their children is appreciated. Their teachings are forever embedded in my heart. You are always remembered and every memory is special and comforting.

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I thank God for giving me wisdom to pursue this investigation crucial to every employee or employer. With my Christian faith, I thank the Almighty Father, the owner of all under the sun, who has never failed me. He takes me from one glory to another; I thank him for the good health, wisdom, endurance and comfort he gave me throughout all my troubled and joyous times and especially through the difficult time of trying to balance up work, study and family.

I am indebted to you all and my gratitude is heartfelt!

ABSTRACT

Views of employees[1] regarding their grievance policy procedure (GPP) have been given lesser attention, evident from little empirical studies in that regard, particularly in private non-unionised environments. External reporting and the low finalisation rates of grievances, highlight that there is insufficient knowledge from both administrators and consumers of the policy at grassroots level. Most private companies lack formal and readily available representation or assistance in their GPP from unions or boards such as the Public Service Commission (PSC). Therefore, a private Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) Construction Company was investigated with the aim to explore perceptions of workers and managers regarding their GPP. Through purposive sampling in this qualitative study, data was gathered through semi-structured interviews from 30 employees; comprising of 20 workers and 10 managers. The Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) also regarded as the South African National defence Forces Model (SANDFM), the Person in Environment theory (PIE) and a holistically incorporated systems theory were integrated as relevant theoretical frameworks of the study. Analysis of the data was achieved through thematic data analysis, fulfilling the aim of exploring the extent of knowledge of the GPP in a private non-unionised environment. Findings revealed that culturalization of occupational environments are influenced by perceptions inherent in the workforce. The use of external grieving channels and avoidance of grieving amongst other factors were dominant employee practices that exposed unsound power dynamics at the workplace. Mal-administration of the policy by managers and an intriguing lack of knowledge of workers attributed to under-utilisation of the GPP. Procedural injustices of the GPP were found to exacerbate negative perceptions of workers, which included powerlessness and the promotion of unilateral decisions within the organisation. The only positive affordance of the GPP was that it helped to reflect the constraints of the policy thereof. Recommendations of social work interventions through inductions, policy reviews, training and the use of applicable occupational social work models are included.

KEY WORDS: Grievance, grievance policy procedure, non-unionised private company

[1] Employees in this study refer to the participants that comprised of management workers referred to as managers and non-management workers referred to as workers

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BCC	British Chamber of Commerce
BCCEI	Bargaining Council for the Civil Engineering Industry
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CCMA	Council for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration
CCRED	Centre for Competition Regulation and Economic Development
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
COIDA	Compensation of Injuries and Diseases Act
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoL	Department of Labour
EEA	Employment Equity Act
GPP	Grievances Policy Procedure
HRM	Human Resource Management
ILO	International Labour Relations
IT	Information Technology
LRA	Labour Relations Act
MilSPM	Military Social Work Practice Model

NCL	National Commission on Labour
OSWPM	Occupational Social Work Practice Model
PIE	Person in Environment Theory
PSA	Pubic Service Association
PSC	Public Service Commission
SANDFM	South African National defence Forces Model
SAQA	South African Qualifications Act
SDA	Skills development Act
SDL	Skills development levy
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
UUDHR	United Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION ON THE GRIEVANCE POLICY PROCEDURE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Grievance policy procedure (GPP) is a workplace policy that any individual in a workplace may be confronted with either directly or indirectly. Direct grievances affect specific individuals and are indirect if a larger workforce including those that did not wish to partake in lodging the grievance, are affected. According to Fox and Stallworth (2009), a grievance is direct when an individual has a personal complaint towards management whereas it can be indirect if a certain department lodges a complaint of what affects them. For example, if the department feels that they are bypassed on some incentives that other departments have. It is common that not everyone in the department may want to facilitate the grievance but once most of the people in the department are affected it becomes a collective grievance, hence indirect for others.

The grievance policy and its administration have a potential of determining peace in a workplace. Furthermore, consideration has to be made, on the other hand, that employees do not live in a vacuum. Employees are part of other social structures such as families, therefore the smooth functioning and administration of the grievance policy at work, does impact greatly not only on employees but also on their significant others. Significant others are explained by Grobler and Scheink (2009) as a proposition describing how an individual is connected to family, the community and the institutions they liaise with in their daily activities. In working towards, peaceful families, communities and society it is essential for employee grievances to be resolved and attended to with caution.

According to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), section 196(4)(f)(ii), a provision was made for the Public Service Commission (PSC) to investigate grievances of employees in the Public Services and to recommend appropriate remedies. Whereas social workers placed in occupational settings have an obligation to facilitate the smooth functioning of policies affecting employees and thus have a crucial role in workplaces. Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009) support that occupational social workers are of paramount importance in a workplace that help

employees to be aware of their policies, in this case the grievance policy. Regardless of efforts to have social work extend services in work settings, there is some form of friction in the implementation of the grievance procedure. This is evidenced by the high caseloads of unresolved grievances investigated by the PSC. The high caseloads of unresolved grievances are perhaps, a resultant of the shortage of occupational social workers, who may intervene in problem solving before issues are escalated as grievances. On the other hand employees' lack of knowledge can be an explanation to the high case loads of lodged grievances and another factor could also be the complexity of the grievance policy itself.

The PSC has a duty to administer justice and to implement the proper grievance procedure in workplaces. Perceptions of employees with regard to the grievance policy are necessary to improve implementation of the policy and help reduce increased statistics of grievances that get to be stagnant even in the office of the PSC. The increased figures of reported grievances contribute to the assumption of stressed employees who are in particular work settings and have stagnant grievance matters. These employees probably experience notable anxiety while awaiting the outcome of their grievances as substantiated by the PSC (2010), who mention that if a grievance is prolonged and escalated it leaves the grieving employee disgruntled. Employees, being part of other systems, may have their functionality in families and society compromised by the daunting process of lodging a grievance and waiting for the outcome.

The research site was a SME Construction Company situated in Midrand, Johannesburg. The structure of SME Construction Company comprised of 4 boards of directors, several managers in different sectors such as project management, finance, Human Resource, the administration and general contractors. There are 114 employees (manager and non-managers inclusive). The company is private and non-unionised and assumes to have a grievance policy that adheres to the requirements of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995.

In non-unionised environments such as the SME construction company, the grievance policy is like a stand-alone policy with no union to enforce or monitor its implementation. The lack of union representation point out that grievance procedures in private settings may need more caution as employees lack extra support in terms of their policies. Brown and Benson (2009) debated if a union is a strong support structure to workplace policies such as the

grievance policy while other authors have indicated a great decline of unions' intervention in their roles of protecting the employees.

In terms of section 186 (1) (e) of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, an employee can claim constructive dismissal should they be overwhelmed by the work relationship after grievance matters. The aim of the study is to explore perceptions of employee regarding their GPP, it is expected that the results of the study may assist occupational social workers to be more competent in assist employees with their grievances to curb negatives such as unfair job loss.

Occupational social workers (OSWs) must be aware of how employees view their GPP, coupled with Human Resource Management (HRM) knowledge an OSW will have a valid point of departure in assisting the employee. Specialised skills that an OSW must have include a tool kit of programmes, knowledge of the LRA and information on other workplace regulating bodies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The GPP is one policy that occupational social workers can facilitate in a workplace amongst other policies. In this study, perceptions of workers and managers about their grievance policy procedure at a construction company in Johannesburg were investigated to enhance intervention of social workers and other policy administrators in maintaining workplace justice in that regard.

A number of occupational social work approaches and theories have been designed to manage employee environments towards healthier labour forces. Theories such as the person in environment (PIE) that assesses an employee in relation to their work environment cannot be overlooked since implementation of such a theory contributes to informed decision making. Other legal advocating approaches that have been developed such as reasonable employer approach, the statutes approach, the economic rational approach and so forth, are seen as useful tools to adopt in occupational social work. The tools intend to understand the employee reasonably in the context of their work environment. In social work, specifically in the occupational social work environment, attempts to address workplace issues have compelled social work practitioners to consider approaches such as the binocular vision and the Occupational Social Work Practice model (OSWPM). The latter approaches were developed by Van Breda and du Plessis (2009); these will be discussed in the study. The binocular vision theory and the OSWPM inherent in social work aim to support the rights of employees by

critically analysing and considering circumstances of employees. Unfair labour practices are a clear indication of an infringement of human rights, as employee rights are also human rights therefore trained social workers, in occupational social work, will fulfil a crucial role for the preservation of human rights.

This study aims at helping social work practitioners stationed in occupational settings to be aware of how they can handle policies, particularly the grievance policy in this case. The scope of this study gives an overview of employee's views regarding the GPP, separating assumptions from facts regarding the policy. The study also explored the management and legitimacy of the GPP, which was achieved through a case study at a Johannesburg construction company. Challenges surrounding the policy at the company were explored while more knowledge was outsourced from other authors in understanding circumstances of employees with similar experiences.

1.2. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.2.1. Grievance

A grievance is a result of an interpretation of a perceived expectation from the organisation which is not met or fulfilled (Motlogelwa, 2015). Clarke, Godfrey and Theron (2002) add that a grievance is a raised workplace concern. The International Labour Office (2015) defines a grievance as a complaint of one or more workers, the complaint is usually concerning work, such as allocation of tasks, leave administration or termination of services.

1.2.2. Grievance policy procedure

A GPP is a document designed to help the aggrieved to allow for their grievance to be heard by following a series of steps. Saundry and Wibberly (2014), explain that a GPP is a written outline semi-legal document that involves a series of steps to follow in raising a grievance. Motlogelwa (2015) adds that a GPP is an effective tool in form of an outlined document, which has a main purpose of helping employees to raise their concerns, complaints and the challenges that workers have with their managers.

1.2.3. Non-unionized private company

Mzangwa and Madue (2015), discuss a non-unionised company as an environment that does not have an organised team (trade union) with the main purpose of representing workers. A private

company in this context is a company owned by an individual or a relatively small number of shareholders and the company's shares are not offered for sale to the public.

1.3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM/ RATIONALE

Exploration of grievance trends through employee perceptions is of paramount importance in South Africa as an attempt to lessen and manage a high failure rate of unresolved grievances as reported by the Public Service Commission (2007). However, Bacharach and Bambenger (2004); Motlogelwa (2015); Peterson and Lewin (1992) and Wilson and Blackmore (2013) agree that little empirical studies in employee perceptions of grievance procedures have been established particularly in the private organisations. Inclusion of managers in this study, is important since managers are policy enforcers, hence their perceptions regarding the policy influences how the policy is administrated and presented to non-managerial staff.

Unresolved grievances are detrimental to stability and cohesion in a workplace. Didaskalou, Roussi-Vergu and Andreou (2015), add that grievance procedures are essential in addressing work related inequalities. Bacharach and Bambenger (2004); Motlogelwa, (2015); Pavlak, et al (1992) and the Public Service Commission (2007), conclude that high rates of external grievance filing reflect ineffective management of workplace conflict particularly in non-unionised companies. Motlogelwa (2015) and the Public Service Commission (2007) point to the idea that findings of employee perceptions on grievance matters, which could help curb grievance challenges are not prioritised, simultaneously, the dispute resolution procedures are faulty. Pavlak et al. (1992) gives an example of a fault in the grievance procedure such as unavailability of a third party in intervention while the International Labour Office (2013) highlights that a system may be faulty if the aggrieved employees lack knowledge of the process. This discussion alludes to the fact that policy intervention with regard to grievance procedures is significant to address flaws and possible constraints of the policy.

Exploring employee perceptions regarding their GPP would also give an overview of the extent in which procedural justice afforded by the grievance policy is achieved. Procedural justice is according to Motlogelwa (2015); Saundry and Wibberly (2014) and Tepper and Taylor (2003), a degree of fairness on how processes and procedures are considered towards decision making, it denotes to neutral decisions which must be based on facts and appropriate action. In

this study procedural justice is fairness of the processes and procedures of following up a legitimate GPP in resolving workplace dissatisfaction. It is through accurate perceptions of employees that the GPP becomes successful, this follows the assumption that accurate perceptions contribute towards positive change. The analysed perceptions of employees helped to reveal the differences in perceptions of managers and non-management employees regarding their grievance procedure. Research results therefore influenced and rectified some procedural injustices from these different perceptions in an attempt to achieve a legitimate and fair workplace through recommendations.

Procedures by which grievance systems are administrated, are relatively more important than outcomes in shaping employee's perceptions about the grievance policy, however grievance procedures have been under investigated regardless of the fact that procedures are determining factors as to whether or not an employee lodges a grievance (Fryxell, 1992; Motlogelwa, 2015). The latter suggests little research on grievance procedural matters which can only be derived from employee perceptions to ensure workplace equity. Bennels and Foley (1996), Benson and Brown (2009), agree and argue that research in grievance matters has not shown significant improvements since the 1980s.

Insufficient research of grievance matters dates back in the past decade as findings from; Bennels and Foley (1996); Fryxell (1992); Harvey (2011); Jendereck et al. (2008); Motlogelwa (2015); Pavlak, et al. (1992); Peterson and Lewin (1990) highlight a global trend of researchers not prioritising perceptions of employees about the grievance policy. Motlogelwa, (2015) concludes that as much as there is little research of grievance matters, the constitution of South Africa as per section 196(4) f (ii) enforces investigations of grievance matters in the public sector through the Public Service Commission. The deduction made from Motlogelwa (2015), point out to a need of further and continued research of grievance matters particularly in the private sector as there is lack of opportunity for the enforced and organised investigation of grievance matters as compared to the public sector which has a privilege of the PSC.

Evidently, from the investigations done by the PSC (2007), the South African workplace is fought with multiple areas of labour conflict such as; challenges in recruitment

and selection, undermining of authority, disciplinary matters, salary problems, performance assessments disputes and unfair labour treatment, which all contribute to lodging of grievances. Statistics report that grievances lodged in 2007 as reported by the PSC (2008) in Gauteng public sector amounted to 446 individual cases which are alarming statistics that indicate a need of workplace intervention of grievances (Public Service Commission, 2007).

In the current 2018 report an increase in grievances is noted. The Gauteng province has at least 500 more cases than any other province. The PSC (2008) reports that in the financial year 2015/2016 a total cases of 1244 grievances were lodged, in 2016/2017 the figure rose to 1270 and currently in 2017/2018 a further 1286 cases were reported. The high number of grievances lodged at provincial level, as investigated by the PSC (2018) allude to the fact that grievances are not being resolved at organisational level rather escalated to provisional and national level. These findings are an indication of poor knowledge and administration of the GPP amongst employees and employers causing the grievances to be heard at higher constitutional offices. It is conclusive that workplace conflict is inevitable in both the public and private organizations, efforts in implementing effective GPPs are crucial. Unless investigated, the concerns of employees pertaining to their understanding of the grievance matters in the private organisations can only be assumed to be worse. Further on, investigations done by the PSC (2018) are only reflective on the public sector leaving more assumptions about the private sector grievance system. It could be conclusive that private sector has lesser options pertaining to addressing their grievance matters since the PSC works for the government.

This research study helped in extending knowledge of grievance matters particularly in private non-unionised companies such as the SME Construction Company that was investigated since little empirical studies have been conducted in such occupational settings (Motlogelwa, 2015; Petersen & Lewin, 1990). Furthermore, non-unionised institutions seem to have lesser options in resolving grievances as compared to unionised institutions, this is supported by Eaton and Keefe (1999); Fox and Stallwort (2009) and Harvey (2011), who mention that unions work hand in hand to ensure effectiveness of workplace harmony by being involved in settling arising grievances. It can be concluded that non-unionised and private institutions such as the SME construction company, a case of this study; seem to

achieve grievance settlements to a lesser extent due to absence of unions that could assist in that regard. The SME Construction Company was therefore not merely a case study but one with occupational traits compelling further investigations of the grievance policy and how the policy is perceived by employees in an attempt to address shortcomings of the grievance policy in private workplaces. Substantiating, the matter of private non-unionized companies, Pollert and Charlwood (2009) agree that unrepresented workers are less likely to use formal grievance procedures. Non-unionised workers, evidently, either do not grieve or use unbecoming ways to act upon their workplace dissatisfaction.

Accurate knowledge of the grievance procedure enables employees to understand and make use of various conflict-resolution strategies that are available to them, in an effective manner. Fryxell (1992) and Motlogelwa (2015) concur that an effective grievance policy can minimise or eliminate work stoppages, allow employee participation with regard to their work conditions, improve work productivity and also protect employees from unfair contexts in workplaces. Research findings intended to illustrate the importance of perceptions and knowledge of employees regarding the grievance policy in shaping policy reviews and recommendations. Wood, Saundry and Latreille (2014) agree that policies contribute to procedural justice in workplaces, it is expected that these procedures are most associated with employee perceptions of fairness and the quality of relationships amongst the managers and workers.

Findings with regard to the perceptions of employees added insight to an under investigated subject of grievance matters in South Africa, particularly at non-unionised private companies. The investigation promoted an understanding of legitimate grievance trends, gave direction towards curbing flawed grievance perceptions and contributed relevantly through recommendations. Practical guidance on policies to social workers employed in occupational social work positions is provided for in this study. Social workers in occupational settings require a fair understanding of how employees understand their workplace policies as well as the affordances and the constraints of the policies through an analysis of their perceptions. The development of appropriate policy related programmes and recommendations for a better working environment is also emphasised. Corey (2003) concurs that social workers employed in occupational positions must help in achieving optimal organisational functioning. It is through

such policy procedure investigations that fair organisational change can be implemented and/or sustained.

In an attempt to determine feasibility of the intended research, the researcher conducted a pilot study through informal interviews with workers from a private non-unionised company that employs similar workers to the ones employed by the investigated SME Construction Company. These informal conversations suggested that workers are less knowledgeable about the purpose of the GPP and how it must be administrated. A lack of understanding between assumptions and facts of the grieving policy was the precipitating reason and motivation to carry out this study.

1.3.1. Importance of knowledge of the grievance procedure

Knowledge of the grievance procedure will enable employees to understand and make use of the available grieving platforms, thereby providing the society with acceptable means of resolving disputes. In addition, a grievance policy can minimise or eliminate work stoppages during the life of the labour agreement. The grievance procedure also allows a measure of participation of employees concerning their work conditions; in addition, the grievance procedure is likely to contribute to higher workplace productivity, benefiting the employee, employer and society (Mathekga, 2016; Nurse & Devenish, 2006; Peterson Lewin 1990).

Knowledge of the grievance procedure as discussed by Motlogelwa (2015) and, Petersen and Lewin (1990) will promote a better working environment for the employer and the employee. Achievement of organisational optimal functioning is part of the roles that an occupational social worker needs to implement, as argued by Corey (2003). The occupational social worker seeks to understand various perceptions about the workplace policy, the affordances and the constraints of the policy from employees according to their knowledge of the grievance policy procedure, after associated needs have been explored, appropriate recommendations for a better working environment can be initiated.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the perceptions of workers and their managers regarding their grievance policy procedure?

1.5. PRIMARY AIMS AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

1.5.1. Primary aims

The study aimed at exploring the perceptions of workers and their managers regarding their grievance policy procedure.

1.5.2. Secondary objectives

- To explore the general understanding of the workers regarding their GPP
- To explore the general understanding of the managers regarding their GPP
- To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the workers
- To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the managers
- To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the workers
- To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the managers
- To compare and contrast the views that managers and workers at the SME construction company have about their GPP.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative study. Qualitative research can be defined as research that produces descriptive data based upon spoken or written words and observable behaviour, it is research based on contextual settings (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used an explorative case study research design. Purposive sampling method was utilised for twenty (20) workers and ten (10) managers at the SME Construction Company.

The researcher employed face-to-face semi-structured interviews (see Appendix H and Appendix I) using interview schedules as the main and primary research instruments for the purpose of data collection. Observations, participation, the use of primary and secondary data from the available published and non-published sources were also utilised in a secondary manner in the study. Research tools for this study were pre-tested using a similar company as the one which was investigated and a positive feasibility outcome of the study was determined.

1.7. POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The target population is the actual population from where findings were generalised. The accessible population becomes the population which the researcher has access to. In this study the actual population was one hundred and fourteen (114) employees. The sample consisted of thirty (30) purposively selected employees that are workers and managers. The sample

comprised of more males than females since the construction industry is male dominated and this applies to the company concerned. This section will be discussed in detail in Chapter three (3) which focuses primarily on research methodology.

1.8. DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of data analysis, the researcher utilised the eight steps of Tesch (as cited by Alpaslan, (2010). The researcher made verbatim transcriptions of the interviews that were audio tapped, themes were developed and sorted, eventually data was assembled and thereafter a preliminary analysis was done. When analysing data, certain aspects are considered in order to ensure trustworthiness, credibility of the information, dependability and confirmability of the data. Detailed aspects on data analysis are discussed in Chapter three (3) of this study.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics embedded in research such as confidentiality, anonymity and the right to know of a participant before involving themselves into participating in the study were also considered and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.10. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

This research study is organised in the following way:

The first chapter, chapter one (1); serves as the introductory chapter, with a detailed overview of what the whole research entails. The chapter defined major concepts in the research and outlined the reasons for undertaking the research in form of a rationale. Primary aims and secondary objectives are outlined to clearly show what the research aims to find out and how the findings are envisaged to unfold through the objectives. In the introductory chapter, the research methodology was briefly discussed since it will be detailed in chapter three (3). The population of the study is also highlighted in the first chapter. Ethics and the application of research ethics are also employed and finally an overview of the entire research is discussed, with a summary marking the end of the first section.

Chapter two (2) focuses on the literature review and a literature control regarding the whole study, together with the theoretical frameworks of the study. Data collected in the study is also incorporated in the literature review as new literature; the new literature is supported by already existing literature. A global overview of grievances is discussed and eventually

narrowed to the South African context. An in-depth exploration regarding the challenges faced within South Africa, regarding the GPP is discussed, explored and debated. The role of social work in terms of occupational practitioners is outlined and discussed. Furthermore, the implementation of occupational intervention services is also outlined. Since this study investigates a construction industry, the context of a construction industry is inevitable hence, it is discussed and explored in the second section. A number of approaches with regards to employees exist; these were briefly discussed and explored together with the contours of the labour market, regulation, socio-economic stances and other factors influencing the trends in the GPP. The meaning of a grievance and a GPP will be analysed according to the different works of other authors and a current view of these terms is considered. All legislative arms and approaches such as the social work approaches, the Labour Relations Act, the International Labour Office and many others will be discussed in the second chapter, relating it to the grievance policy so as to match, contradict or expand on the perceptions that employees have already regarding their GPP.

In this second chapter, an overview of social consequences of lodging a grievance is discussed and tapping from findings in this particular research, more literature pertaining to the study will be explored to bring out how the perceptions of employees regarding the GPP can further contribute to better trends of the policy and its administration. Burning issues such as constructive dismissal will give insight about how the GPP not only affects individual workers, but the whole organisation and also the society. The latter discussion will leave a platform of feasible and constructive ideas of positive alignment of the perceptions of employees to the proper administration and implementation of the GPP and better working environments. A summary of the major concepts in the theory of the study; that is the perceptions of the grievance policy and the trends of the policy at SME Construction Company and other non-unionised organisations is discussed together with ideas of a functional grievance policy procedure and marks the end of the chapter.

In chapter three (3), the research methodology of the study is outlined. To start with, an introduction to the chapter is furnished. Thereafter, a discussion on the primary aims and objectives, research strategy and design, population sample and sampling procedures are discussed. It is in this section that research instrumentation will be discussed in detail. The

chapter focuses on the discussion of pre-testing of the research tools; methods of data collection and methods of data analysis. Factors contributing as limitations of the research are discussed nearing the end of the section. Eventually ethical considerations that were adhered to are outlined and a summary closes up the chapter.

The fourth chapter presents the results pertaining to the perceptions of employees about their GPP at the investigated construction company and includes a discussion of findings of the study. Firstly, an introduction to the chapter is furnished and a table of demographics of the participants unfolds thereafter. An overview of the perceptions of the employees is discussed. Themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis are presented, organised and discussed in relation to the objectives. This chapter draws discussions that are deduced from the actual verbatim responses of the participants thereby giving actual results of the study. A summary of the unique findings and results of the study is outlined and concludes the chapter.

Chapter five (5) summarises the main and major findings of the study and outlines conclusions and recommendations pertaining to the study. Findings presented are linked to the objectives, research question, conclusions and research recommendations of the study that was conducted in the investigated construction company. This section concludes on findings of the study and influences further research on perceptions of employees regarding the grievance procedure. Through recommendations, this last section evokes and employs better policy administration based on this study and influences the promotion of social work practitioners in different workplaces as a support structure in handling workplace grievances amicably. A narrowed down section of the rich findings, conclusions and recommendation of the study finalises the holistic reasons of embarking on the study and this concludes the entire study.

1.11. SUMMARY

The entire research overview has been outlined and crucial definitions of the study defined and explained. The rationale of the study has been furnished including the motivation behind the study. What and how the research will be investigated is outlined in terms of primary aims and secondary objectives. The research methodology was summarised and further explored in subsequent chapters. Population factors were taken into consideration. Aspects of analysing data were explained including the ethical precautions considered during the undertaking of the research and eventually an outline of the whole study was furnished. With this introductory

information, there is need to find out what has been done regarding the GPP and what the researcher could have found amongst the participants in form of literature review. This first section provoked enquiry from an in-depth analysis of literature from many other authors. Information gathered through literature is crucial and essential in understanding the study; literature review unfolds in the next section.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the study and important aspects of the study such as an overview of grievance matters globally and locally are discussed in this chapter. Challenges inherent in the GPP, the environment were the research took place and more specifically a holistic view of a construction environment was explored in the first section of this chapter. The second section focused on the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. The Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) or Military Social Work Practice Model (MilSPM), binocular vision theory, person in environment model (PIE) and systems theory are relevant theories to the study. Approaches to employees such as the person in environment (PIE) approach, systems approach and the main theoretical framework; OSWPM were integrated together to examine a holistic occupational setting where grievances are bound and how the main theoretical framework can be utilised in better administration of the GPP. Legal frameworks specific to the South African labour environment and the International Labour Office (ILO) are inevitable in workplace regulations, they are also incoporated as this indicates the statutory direction and trends of the GPP.

Herewith, in this second chapter of the study, an exploration of grievance hearings pertaining to the GPP are outlined so as to find out how employee perceptions are formed, in order to enable exploration of maladministration of the GPP. Burning factors contributing to the grievance procedure, constraints and affordances of the GPP are outlined. Internal grievance hearings that the company of study encountered and built up perceptions in that regard are intensively discussed. The detailed second section of the study incorporated findings from both the literature review and the study. Literature aids in facilitating the positive findings towards grievance administration or may reveal a pool of identified gaps possible for the breaking of new ground practically towards individual employees, workplaces and further future research.

The final section of the literature review focused on the social consequences of the grievance policy such as occupational stress and consequences of unfair labour practices within the grievance systems. The basic conditions for employment were explored to sum up the whole theoretical discussion in relation to the theoretical frameworks. Consideration was also made towards the legal frameworks as a toolkit that can be employed to fulfil accurate roles of the GPP

by social workers in occupational settings. Finally, crucial aspects that result from negative perceptions about the grievance policy and maladministration of the grievance procedure; such as unfair dismissal issues led to the conclusion of this chapter. It is within negative consequences of the GPP that a deterring effect may alert employers and employees to find reasons to tackle grievances with caution and create better perceptions surrounding the policy.

2.2. MEANING OF GRIEVANCE

Grievances are negative feelings experienced, in this context by an employee regarding unfulfilled work expectations or relating to gaps in the work environment. A grievance can also be explained as a verbalised dissatisfaction concerning work or the work environment. This dissatisfaction can be raised by an individual, more people or a department in a departmental workplace. Prasadini, Gamage & Hewagama (2008), defines a grievance as an articulation of unfairness that a worker harbours towards their employer at a workplace. Zulkiflee, Khulinda, Mohd & Wan (2011), defines a grievance as a job discontent that is filed by an employee informally first to their line manager, the grievance may be actual or a perceived awareness of displeasure which workers hold against their employers, the grievance also points to an infringement of workers' rights that they are not happy about. Motlogelwa (2015), agrees that grievances manifest as a result of an interpretation of a perceived expectation from the organisation which is not fulfilled. Mthombeni (2015), who defines a grievance as a complaint that has been addressed formally in writing, indicates an illustration of a formal process. Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2015) defines a grievance as a complaint of one or more workers with respect to wages and allowances, conditions of work and interpretation of service, job assignment and termination of service.

In defining a grievance, Charkrarbarti and Dasgupta (2007), discuss that the National Commission on Labour (NCL) explains that "complaints" affecting one or more employees regarding their salaries, overtime, leave, transfer, promotion, work assignment and discharge have the potential of constituting grievances. In defining grievances, it is essential to separate a grievance lodge of one individual from collective grievance in order to deal with the grievance appropriately, as these grievances are different. If the issues raised are concerned with individual workers, they should be dealt with through grievance channels. However, if the issues involved are about the general issues that deal with the implementation of the policy and include broad

interest, it can become the subject of collective bargaining (Motlogelwa 2015). Charkrarbarti and Dasgupta (2007) expand to say that the grievance procedure policy is a document of steps of addressing a matter and must be structured in a simple and user-friendly structure to be accessible to all levels of employees. Grievances cannot, however, be used as an alternatives, or appeals against disciplinary measures taken against the employee (Motlogelwa 2015).

2.3. GLOBAL ISSUES OF THE GRIEVANCE POLICY PROCEDURE

Updated and accurate, GPPs help to fulfil international labour and human rights expectations. Article 23 of the United Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UUDHR) of 1948 (2011), ascertain that every employee has the right to just and favourable conditions of work. Emphasis on just and favourable conditions highlights the need to have grievances heard and resolved amicably within the ambit of the law.

The ILO (2004), designed a guide to prevent and resolve workplace conflict. In resolving disputes, support and advice can be sourced from a third party who is mostly a union representative, a facilitator or a mediator (ILO, 2004). A union representative is therefore important in dispute interventions deducing that non-unionised companies compromise the grieving process. The ILO recommendations of 1982 number 166 towards termination of employment which has been induced by the employer, states that termination of employment should only take place following a sound reason for the termination, meaning it must point to aspects such as misconduct by the employee with practical evidence reported. The provision of evidence of misconduct was stipulated due to a perception that grievances are mostly lodged due to unfair dismissals facilitated by the employers to their employees.

In the United Kingdom, the British Chambers of Commerce's major concern is the ability to follow what they refer to as the Gibbon's review of 2007 which sought to place focus on reduction of regulation but rather encouragement of formal internal dispute approaches which are referred to as alternative dispute resolutions (ADR) such as mediation. According to the research by Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) a reduction of unionisation in Britain was perceived as an incident that eroded the capability of unions' effective dispute resolution (Latreille, 2013). In addition, Latreille (2013) argues that eradication of unions aided in promoting the organisations' internal managerial sectors so that they can be able to finalise decisions especially those concerning the grievance matters. Latreille (2013) adds that emphasis

in Britain has shown an interest to shift from grievance lodging and the litigation processes to mediation; however, the practical implementation of this has been trace and unrecognisable, particularly in the small and medium enterprises. ACAS issued a code of practice that guides organisations in curbing challenges of procedural justice and promote better accountability with regards to grievance matters.

Trade unions in the United Kingdom (UK) are up to date still very recognised (Charlwood & Angrave, 2014). Unions are perceived by both employees and employers as contributing to a fair workplace as they present as a platform of fair discussions and negotiations regarding workplace issues. Branney (2014), discusses that in the UK employment system, grievance procedures are underpinned by law and the same applies to the South African context. The Labour Relations Act (LRA), number 66 of 1995, as amended devised ways of addressing unresolved grievances through arbitration, mediation and collective bargaining. This was achieved through the aid of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The CCMA is an independent body responsible for formal conflict resolution between the employer and the employee for both unionised and non-unionised companies. However, Polster (2011), perceives escalation of grievances from informal to formal level, then to external formal levels as a hierarchy of increased injustices which can be avoided by quick, fair informal resolution of grievances.

In Malaysia, there is no existence of formal guidelines to resolving grievances in both unionised and no-unionised organisations, rather a variety of methods is used to tackle grievances from one organisation to the other. The grieving procedures are very questionable, little research has been conducted regarding the matter but this aspect point to recognisable unfairness and unjust workplace measures (Adir et al., 2013). The United States of America on the other hand has a grievance system that strictly utilises alternative dispute resolutions in either unionised or no-unionised environments.

Analysis of different grievance policies from; University of Cumbria (2012), the Imperial College in the United Kingdom (2010), the Heritage Early childhood centre from in Australia (2013) and from Elias Motsoaledi local municipality in South Africa (2013), show a lot of similarities. However, lesser differences in the structures of the GPPs. Differences may be due

to the different contexts such as constitutional affairs and the unique working environments. In low literacy level environments workers have to hire interpreters due to an English language barrier while in literacy competitive environments such as financial institutions workers can handle the grievance monotonously. It is then evident that efficacy of the grievance procedure entirely depends on the consideration of the company's context in compiling the grievance procedure. This study investigated employee perceptions of the grievance procedures against the respective work context since it is a case study.

Grievance trends in the Southern African region have not been specifically focused on, rather the attention was mainly on the labour law. Focus on labour laws in the Southern African countries according to Fenwick, Kalula and Landau (2007), was influenced by the common issues of the Southern African experiences such as colonialism, democratisation and economic liberalisation. Grievance issues are more pronounced only at national levels.

2.4. GRIEVANCE POLICY PROCEDURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The context of the study, for example employee level of literacy and the nature of work (construction) are essential in making deductions from employees' perceptions about their policy. Branney (2014) concludes that every dispute occurring in the workplace has an organisational element. Generalisations, such as the assumption that mediation breaks employee collectiveness and that micro level grievance lodging is an outlet of personality clashes, cannot be accepted unless the context of the whole grievance matter is taken into consideration (Cooling, 2004). Employee context therefore eliminates antagonistic perceptions that may cause friction during dispute resolution.

It is envisaged that findings of this study describe how understanding of the grievance procedure influences employee perceptions. Motlogelwa (2015) discusses that perceptions of employees in procedural justice, afforded by the GPP are crucial in shaping employee beliefs of a fair workplace and that it is in these procedural aspects that perceptions of just or unjust systems are formulated. Research findings additionally aimed at reducing misconceptions of the grievance policy that usually leads to conflict. In the South African environment, the GPP is widely used in public, private and non-governmental environments. As a labour policy the GPP is regulated by the labour law in terms of the LRA.

2.4.1. Challenges of grievances in South Africa

The Public Service Commission (PSC) (2007), reports a high failure rate in finalisation of grievances in South Africa. Thompson (2013) emphasises the importance of adhering to the time frames of the GPP to enable securing the legitimacy of the process. Challenges of the inability to meet time frames have been established by the PSC in 2007.

The major challenge experienced by workers in this study was the long finalization period of the grievance. Lengthy grievance finalizations; from a succession of authors was deduced in South African as one major aspect contributing to fear of lodging grievances. Another challenge is perceptions around a general fear of utilisation of the grievance policy due to anticipated negatives that the GPP can come with. Motlogelwa (2015) adds that there is need to dismiss perceptions that lodging a grievance limits career options as this aggravates a lot of fear amongst workers. Coskly (2013) concurs that harassment following lodging of a grievance is as another challenge that employees are faced with. There seems to be perceived threats in lodging grievances. Substantiating the matter, a court hearing of De Klerk v. Cape Union Mart International Private Limited (2012), published by the Labour Court of Cape Town in 2012 summarised a case of employee dismissal after lodging a grievance.

According to the Labour Court of Cape Town (2012), an applicant alleged that her dismissal was unfair following a grievance she had lodged. The grievance lodged by the applicant was with regard to the GPP itself. The dismissal therefore becomes unethical as it is against the requirements of the grievance procedure in the LRA number 66 of 1995, which points out that employees may lodge grievances without prejudice from their employer. In this case, the employee constituted misconduct by lodging a grievance according to the employer. Dismissal of the employee could have been an uninformed decision taken by management. However, management insisted that the employee was wrong according to the company's internal policy since the employee had not exhausted all the procedures. The employee lost the case due to lack of knowledge on internal grievance procedures.

Knowledge regarding the GPP would empower employees largely in making more informed decisions. In the public sector, the Public Service Act (PSA) (2011) adds that in some arbitration cases, relevant commissioners refused to continue with arbitration proceedings because the applicant would not have invoked the grievance proceedings. Discontinuation of a

case indicates that when the field of play is not level in terms of knowledge it is unfair to proceed with an all-knowing party and one that needs knowledge to proceed. Curbing of impartial practices discussed in the study would eliminate some negative conceived perceptions of the GPP by firstly allowing for knowledge about the GPP to be impacted on all participating parties. Internal grievance procedures seem not to be easily interpreted by workers, whereas policy inductions can be useful to alleviate such challenges.

Perceptions of employees regarding their GPP revealed incidences of fear of dismissal associated with lodging a grievance, these perceptions were apparent and common across non-managerial workers. Managers as implementers of policy did not indicate such fears as they assumed a stance of non-consumers of the policy but representatives of the organisation. It is bemusing to note that attempts of the labour law through policies to aid workers to achieve a harmonious work environment turn out to be possible trouble causers for workers who fear the utilisation of the policies such as lodging a grievance. It is noticeable that efforts of the labour law as perceived by employees have far more consequences than gains.

Power dynamics significantly influence the outcomes of grievances because in some cases workers have to report a grievance to their superior who is the person, they feel aggrieved at. The same sentiments prevailed in the study, giving an overall picture of subordinate and superior tension. Wood, Saundry and Latreille (2014), concur that in their study based in the UK, grievances were triggered mostly by unfair treatment or relations against an employee by their line manager or supervisor. Such power differentials can result in greater conflict and the inability for the resolution of the conflict in an informal unbiased manner (Motlogelwa, 2015). Another challenge highlighted by Colsky (2013), is that organisational grievance procedures can be easily exhausted leading to escalation towards the external legal system. Roche, Teague and Colvin (2007), highlights that the external legal system is accompanied by stress and cost that could be avoided. Employee perceptions of such scenarios when investigated can amount to appropriate policy reviewing.

2.5. THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) is a board that was developed through the CIDB act of 2000 as a board that implements and integrates strategy for the reconstruction, growth and development of the construction industry. Objectives accompanying the CIDB Act 2000 extend from focusing on construction projects to the grass root employers and employees through the promotion of appropriate research in the construction industry and the promotion of ethics to regulate the actions, practices and procedures of parties engaged in construction employment (Centre for Competition Regulation and Economic Development (CCRED), 2014).

The CIDB (2015), reports that the construction industry is perceived as a significant employer employing 8% of South Africans in the formal employment and 17% in the informal employment, in these statistics 46% of employees are semi-skilled while 29% are low and unskilled employees. It is paramount therefore to ensure optimal working conditions of such a large workforce.

An escalated number of strikes in the construction industry have been recorded by the Department of Labour (DoL) with an increase of 15, 1% between 2012 and 2013. Unresolved disputes remained the reason for work stoppages in 2013, accounting for more than three quarters working days lost with longest strikes lasting for more than 60 days (CIDB, 2015). Strikes leading to the Marikana massacre of 2012 in South Africa, serves as an eye opener on how dispute resolution in a workplace is crucial. Evidently from the investigations done by CIDB (2015), the construction industry suffers disputes amounting to grievances that are usually shown by labour unrest activities; these grievances reportedly are sparked largely by low wages, working conditions, disciplinary actions and retrenchments. CIDB (2015) further on concurs with contractors that work stoppages could be addressed through better industrial relations.

Construction work like any other employment is regulated by the LRA act of 1995. The Basic condition for Employment Act (BCEA) 75 of 1997 regulates the employment environment of construction workers. Despite efforts made to regulate construction work, there seems to be insufficient evidence of the practicality of regulation; in a survey carried out by the CIDB (2015), 54 % of respondents mentioned that they did not have recruitment policies for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. It became evident that labour unrests are due to a lack of formal union

negotiations. However, this study revealed unique perceptions regarding unionisation as not being the most accurate solution for workers' occupational wellbeing.

2.6 POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AT WORK

2.6.1 Victimisation

Workers do not voice most of their concerns because they fear being victimised and singled out as bad workers amongst others as confirmed by Motlogelwa (2015). Victimisation of workers probably may lead to segregation when it comes to work incentives that every employee would like to protect. On the other hand, being silent about dissatisfaction due to fear of possible victimisation means that workers are not well informed about their rights or they lack support in protecting their rights. The LRA 66 of 1995 advises that employees must voice their concerns and this act must not in any way victimise or disadvantage the employee. Managers must take caution at any stage of the grievance procedure that victimisation must be avoided on the grieving employee at all costs. The SME construction company workers are not immune to such situations and possible victimisation is one of the fears workers conceive prior to lodging a grievance. Conflict at the SME construction company is usually avoided, before a dissatisfaction progresses to being lodged as a grievance. Managers indicated that they opt for quick fixes to avoid the grievance. The quick fixes include switching employees so that the one that presents with dissatisfaction is monitored by a different manager in a different group. Switching employees to avoid a grievance constitute victimisation according to Mubezi (2013); the employee is already ill-treated by being moved to another work group without their willingness.

2.6.2 Forced resignation

The social pressure from management may depress a worker so much that the workplace becomes an intolerable environment forcing the employee to resign. Grievance procedures are some processes that can take a toll on the employee and some of the SME construction company workers who have once lodged a grievance are no longer with the company following possible frustrations that came with lodging a grievance. According to Section 186 (1) (e) of the LRA 66 of 1995, constructive dismissal is whereby an employee voluntarily terminates employment following reasons of facing unfavourable conditions offered by the employer. Forced resignation affects the employee as an individual, a loss of status and the family being provided for suffers

financial loss. Grievances are to be handled with caution as they can be detrimental to the employee who is also a bread winner for a certain number of dependants.

2.7 FORMS OF UNFAIRNESS

2.7.1 Power differences

The existence of power differences causes workers to succumb to higher authority on unilateral conditions and this can go by unresolved since the subordinate part does not have much control. A grievance becomes unfair due to power differences those of lower power experiencing unfairness along the procedure due to their lower status. Brief (2018), stresses that power relations create barriers between those of power and those who do not have it, the ones with power exerting control over the powerless and in some circumstances the one without power feels more power challenged and may retaliate.

2.7.2 Unavailability of occupational support

In situations where the employer does not support employees in lodging and finalising grievances but considers only their side, employees are bound to be treated unfairly. Occupational support must include orienting employees towards the proper stages of the GPP, advising them of having a representative, informing and supporting employees towards having legal intervention on their side as an employee's right. Should employees be deprived of the latter support, tension is created, coupled by a division of the employer from the employee. Employees feel neglected, suppressed and unwanted through lack of support in their workplaces. Motlogelwa (2015) views that, employees that are not supported in exercising their rights such as in filing a grievance may eventually see no use of having that policy (Mothlogelwa, 2015).

2.7.3 Unionization

Employees always feel that some form of unionization can rescue them in terms of employee dissatisfaction and an absence of a union on its own is a form of unfairness regardless of its possible effectiveness or non-effectiveness. Some SME construction company workers felt that power differences could be curbed through a union since a union becomes a bigger voice. Charlwood and Angrave (2014), support that employees find the presence of a union as an important support structure in times of occupational disagreements.

2.7.4 Litigation

Grievances not resolved internally call for litigation as they escalate to the external labour environment (Motlogelwa 2015). It is a usual culture for any organisation to have their legal structures in place while the same is unlikely to the employee. Should a case be thrown out to litigation, the field of play becomes uneven for the employee who may not even have any form of legal representation.

2.7.5 Dismissal/constructive dismissal

Dismissal from work either voluntarily or involuntarily is unfair to an employee. Employee dismissal can be arranged by the employer following many permissible supporting points such as underperforming which may be a result of stress from the employee. Constructive dismissal is also unfair for the employee as the work environment will no longer be conducive for their psychosocial functioning yet burdening dependants of the employer through financial loss. Employees, who have indicated a dismissal calamity according to Doherty and Guyler (2008), have mentioned a lot of negative energy propelled from the employer to make the dismissal possible. It is inevitable that constructive dismissal also shows that the employer has resisted support towards the employee and have made the employee's working conditions so sour that the employee is left with no choice but to resign. Forced resignation is a very unfair stance especially to an employee who has attempted to address work dissatisfaction through a grievance and loses their job in the process.

2.8 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS IN OCCUPATIONAL SETTINGS

Social workers employed as occupational practitioners can develop and implement programmes to manage employee to employer misunderstanding and other work-related challenges (Corey, 2003). Social workers practicing as occupational social workers act as advocates in a work environment and are mostly aligned with those of less power and advantage in an effort to reduce workplace conflict (Carapinha, 2009).

The researcher, as part of this study illustrated the importance of social workers employed in the workplace in supporting the maintenance of stable work conditions through effective policy administration. Kurzman and Abakas (1993) discuss that, misconceptions and maladministration of the grievance policy cause malfunctioning of the organisation hence the need for social work practitioners in a workplace. Occupational social workers are neutral

professionals who act as mediators since they do not take either the side of the employer or employee but both sides are treated with impartiality. The attempts made by social workers practising as occupational social workers are to find solutions for work environments that create synergy amongst the employees improving workers' connectedness to their work environment.

2.9 THE GRIEVANCE CULTURE AND TRENDS AT THE SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

In 2012 when the SME construction company construction Company was just beginning its operations, IT personnel managers are reported to have been the ones who drafted the GPP for the organisation. The GPP was archived and during the study it was difficult to access the document as the IT personnel responsible for archiving the documents were not available to retrieve it. The difficulty in retrieving the GPP document points out that the GPP document at the organisation is not readily available for use. Watkins and Leigh (2009), express a concern that when policy systems are not utilised, measuring their effectiveness becomes difficult. The latter applies to the case study as grievances at the SME construction company are mostly heard through the grapevine before they are formally lodged and at times never lodged.

The SME Construction Company does have a legal representative for the company that usually stands for escalated cases of lodged unresolved and on-going grievances of employees. Motlogelwa (2015); Petersen and Lewin (1992); Prasadini (2008); Watkins and Leigh (2009), agree that if grievances are not handled properly internally, they are forced out externally were litigation becomes the final way in addressing the matter. Litigation exhausts more time and financially costs both the employer and employee. To curb consequences caused by grievances, social work practice has extended its scope to occupational interventions that aim to assist and address workplace issues at an earlier and most informal stage.

2.10 EMERGENCE AND THE HISTORY OF THE OCCUPATION SOCIAL WORK IMPROVING GRIEVANCE TRENDS

The social work discipline has expanded its scope to looking at workplace issues and matters affecting individual or collective employees through interventions in occupational environments, which is referred to as occupational social work practice. According to Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009), occupational social work was first developed in the 1930s, at this stage social work in the workplace aimed at addressing issues in a manner that was more or less like the Human

Resources Management (HRM) department. The trends of social work in work places took a turn around from an HRM function that largely supported production to a more person-centred approach. Van Breda and du Plessis (2009) further explained that social work for macro practice was fought for, in terms of registration with the South African Council for Social Service professions around 1997. Occupational social work allowed for workplace issues to be assessed at a close up range, referred to as the microscopic lens of assessing and it also encouraged a telescopic view of how the employee fitted in the environment. In terms of grievance lodging this means that a grievance matter may not only be assessed according to the employer but according to the views of the employee first and consideration of positive change be initiated to help the employee better fit into their work environment. The social work interventions are also considerate of the employer as well. According to the OSW views a grievance must instil a culture of being heard from the employees and a psychological mind-set that lodging a grievance is an impartial process that does not jeopardise an employees' job in any way, rather it creates collaboration from both the employee and the employer.

The context of the workplace under investigation compelled some theoretical frameworks to be considered in trying to address work challenges brought about by the GPP. Employees were assessed in accordance to how they fit in their working environment by utilising the systems theories that are the PIE theory. On the other hand, the employers' stance of helping employees was also integrated with the Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) also known as the South African National Defence Forces Model (SANDFM).

2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

2.11.1 The occupational social work practice model (OSWPM)/ South African National Defence Forces Model (SANDFM)

The researcher made use of the most relevant model; the Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) by Kruger and Van Breda (2001) as a theoretical framework in addressing perceptions of employees in their occupational setting. This model was developed for South African National Defence Force (SANDF) but can be applied to different occupational work settings, (Van Breda & du Plessis, 2009). The latter author defines social workers in a workplace as practitioners trained in a specialised field of social work practice that aims at addressing the human and social needs of the work community through a variety of interventions, in order to foster optimal adaptation between people and their work environment. This framework:

(OSWPM) aided the researcher on possible intervention strategies in understanding employee perceptions about their GPPs and recommended towards the addressing of associated constraints.

The OSWPM is a new model, which has moved away from evolutionary models that use terms such as phases and stages to describe a movement from micro to macro levels of practice. Instead, the model introduces the term positions, which suggests four practice positions (restorative interventions, promotive interventions, work-person interventions and workplace interventions) which are flexible and responsive to any situation in the work context. Another important theory incorporated and considered relevant in a workplace is how employees are viewed in a workplace, Kruger and Van Breda (2001), have two perspectives from which the employees in question were viewed and these are the telescopic and microscopic views emanating from a binocular vision model. A telescopic view means an analysis done at a wider and general view while a microscopic view means an in-depth analysis of smaller units such as ergonomics in a workplace. A systems theory based way of looking into employees' needs is very crucial in workplaces and the Person in Environment (PIE) theory is derived from the systems theory placing a need to relate workers to their environment.

2.11.2 Analysis of the positions of the social work practice model

2.11.2.1 Position 1: Restorative interventions

The restorative position in occupational social work views an employee at a personal level, away from their work settings, for example as a father or a mother. The employee is viewed as a person (Van Breda & du Plessis, 2009). The personal roles and responsibilities making up this particular person are considered such as the person's experiences, personal feelings in different situations and the person's support structures. The major focus in utilising the OSWP model in employment grievances is to explore and restore the perceptions of employees about their grievance system in order to develop a stable workplace and foster copying mechanisms of an employee as a person. This restorative interventions position as explained by William (2016) is a non-work position but forms assessments of the employee that are crucial to understand because employees also exist outside the work environment. Should employee perceptions be biased, it means the psychological meaning they make of the policy may also be biased affecting them as employees and as individuals hence the stance to have a position where individuals are considered personally for some restoration.

2.11.2.2 Position 2: Promotive Interventions

The second position of the model aims at promoting social functioning and well-being of employees through prevention, education and development (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009). After the understanding of employee perceptions with regard to the GPP, prevention of formalising grievances may be achieved through the ability to negotiate grievances at an earlier stage. Workers may be educated and empowered through skills development as encouraged by the DoL through the Skills Development Act (SDA) (2003), which stipulates its aim to develop the skills of the South African workforce and to improve the quality of life of workers and their work prospects. The SDA of (2003) further explains its aim of improving productivity in the workplace and promote competency of employers while also encouraging self-employment of workers should they be out of employment. This promotive position aims to improve the employee in general. If grievances are handled with much understanding there is more time created for productivity, workers are empowered and there is better cohesion in the organisation. If the GPP is understood by both parties; the aggrieved and the administrator of the policy, little or no antagonism occurs.

2.11.2.3 Position 3: Work-person Interventions

This stance of the model no longer views an employee at a personal level, which is the employee as a person but now specifically views the person as an employee (Van Breda & du Plessis, 2009). The GPP will not be analysed according to the personal level of the employee and what could suit the employee but also according to the expectations of the employer. This stance seemingly embraces an eco-systems theory within it, the employee in relation to the employer and the employment environment. This enables synergy in the workplace among employees and managers. The GPP having been explored from the employee and the manager will mean that combined perceptions will be analysed and an overall view of the organisational culture analysed for future facilitation of the positives and amendment of the negatives making a better working environment for all individuals involved; employees, the employer and managers. This important position helped the study to direct the occupational social worker in striking a balance between the employer (SME Construction Company and management) and the workers in this context.

2.11.2.4 Position 4: Workplace Interventions

This position is a telescopic view of the binocular vision paying more attention on the workplace itself (Van Breda, 2012). The main focus considers how the policies, work structures and

processes shape perceptions of employees about the GPP so that gaps can be identified towards resolving grievance matters. Construction workers have a CIDB board that oversees on the development of construction projects, with some of its objectives extending to focusing on the employers and employees but to a smaller extent. According to the CIDB (2015), the Bargaining Council for the Civil Engineering Industry (BCCEI) further aims to regulate civil engineering construction industry. Regulatory measures in employment have been implemented, however, to a smaller extent by the governing bodies as well. The CIDB (2015) reports on work stoppages caused by disputes which indicate a gap between policy and practice in the construction industry. The workplace intervention position, which is the fourth position of the OSWPM, seeks to find out how a workplace can help employees in creating an understanding of policies, work structures and processes and in this study the focus is on the grievance policy. Workplace interventions seek to find out what strategies are in place to enhance aspects such as grievance management.

2.11.3 The binocular vision

The binocular vision is a figurative expression that aims to view a person in environment (PIE), that is; how people interact with their environment (Van Breda, 2012). The binocular vision is the ability to have a telescopic and a microscopic view of a situation at the same time. The microscopic lens pays attention on the issues close-up such as everyday struggles of employee individuals and families the telescopic lens focuses on the large picture such as policies (Van Breda & du Plessis, 2009). These views are both important to understand the whole phenomenon of a workplace situation. In this context the binocular vision helped analyse the immediate worker-manager relations and other work linked structures such as a need for unionisation.

The whole phenomenon under investigation was viewed by a binocular view in greater depth enabling a better quality and scope of assessing the situation and intervening appropriately with employees and then at a larger scale assessing the whole work setting. The binocular view is holistic in nature as it is able to view detail at a more personal level and also at an outward environmental level (Van Breda& du Plessis, 2009). Employees' perceptions were considered from a personal level and how they have been shaped by the environment in which employees work. The aspects of the environment considered were the management style, nature of the work

at the organisation and the culture of the organisation which may include how grievances are handled in the company.

Kruger and van Breda's model comprises four positions which are restorative, promotive, work-person and work place interventions all that helped the study to achieve an in-depth and an accurate view of the perceptions of employees regarding their grievance policy.

2.11.4 The person in environment theory (PIE)

This theory is found in the OSWPM; however, the researcher considered the theory to a greater extent on its own as one of the theories underpinning the study. Interrelationships between personal competence and the environment are a key element of the PIE theory. According to this model, when stressors interact negatively with personal characteristics, the result is physiological and psychological strain (Prescott & Bogg, 2013). The PIE model can be applied to occupational stress.

The researcher used the PIE model deeply realising that occupational issues circling particularly on grievance matters are very sensitive to workers, evoking emotions and psychological tension. It is therefore crucial for workers to be considered individually with their own knowledge and understanding of their work environment. The researcher viewed the PIE model as of paramount importance because the PIE model aims to resolve maters through a holistic approach that may eliminate bias in organisational decision making.

According to Sackey and Sanda (2009), the specific components of the PIE model are the work environment, the person and strain. For example, women in male dominated professions tend to be disadvantaged in the workplace due to prejudices associated with femininity and need to adopt a more masculine identity in order to fit into the male dominated environment (Pee, 2012). The latter example is the very situation at the SME Construction Company for female workers, perhaps research on how females perceive lodging grievances in a male dominated environment must also be explored. However, the latter example serves to point out how an individual is strongly influenced by the environment and vice -versa. An already built in culture and trend of grievance issues influences a certain way of dealing with grievances in a workplace.

2.12 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

2.12.1 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and rights of employees

The BCEA 75 of 1997 is a useful tool for occupational practitioners in addressing work issues. Grievances lodged are all supported by the BCEA in a sense that all employees must be protected against any form of discrimination, hence the grievance must be considered with caution. Motlogelwa (2015) ascertains that employment rights stem from the BCEA and are transferred to the employee. There are however, many regulations and policies put in place for the wellbeing of employees that aim to preserve employee rights which are also their human rights. It is evident from the findings of the PSC (2007) that grievances are escalating to the national level in large numbers meaning that regulatory measures need to be emphasised, facilitated and effectively implemented as this indicates challenges in the ability to finalise internal grievances. Workplace injustices are still rampant regardless of the many measures put in place to curb such. A good example is the underutilisation of the GPP from findings of the PSC (2007) and an indication that grievance matters are not resolved at organisational level but externally escalated. More ways of reinforcing employee rights and promoting the basic conditions of employment have to be explored.

2.12.2 Employment Equity Act (EEA)

The Employment Equity Act, section 55 of 1998 serves the right of making every employee equal to ensure that no one discriminates against the other. Section 9 (1) of the EEA renders everyone equal before the law and the right of protection is thus guaranteed. The act also has an affirmative action clause which is section 9 (2) , affirmative action being the measure introduced by law to create equal opportunities in the workplace for all people in South Africa who were previously disadvantaged. The EEA also comes with an anti-discrimination clause which is section 9 (3) and (4) in practicing employee rights (Du Plessis and Fouche 2015). Efforts have been made available to ensure fair working conditions.

2.12.3 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993

Construction work involves high risk of physical injury and the workers need to be knowledgeable about the COID act that can help employees address their injuries and diseases incurred because of the work environment. Du Plessis and Fouche (2015) explain that the COID Act 130 of 1993 came into operation on 1 March 1994 and outlines a procedure of the right of

employees to be compensated for injury or disease sustained in the workplace. For one to qualify for the benefits of COID they need to notify the employer verbally or in writing of an accident as soon as is reasonably possible (stipulated that within 12 months of the death or injury) and of the complainant's intention to claim compensation. Eligibility of employees to get compensation include that there must be an existing contract of employment at the time of accident, the accident must have taken place suddenly and unexpectedly, the accident must have resulted in an injury (internal or external) or death of the employee and lastly the accident must have taken place in the scope of the employment. This legislation enforces employers to ensure that workers are protected from physical harm or death hence health and safety precautions are enforced.

2.12.4 Occupational Health and safety Act (OHSA)

In an attempt to reinforce health and safety measures, the OHASA is stipulated in the labour relations Act. Du Plessis and Fouche (2015), explain that the occupational health and safety act aims to provide for the health and safety of persons at work and for the health and safety of persons in connection with the use of plant and machinery. The act aims to protect persons other than persons at work, against hazards to health and safety arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work. The OHSA also aims to establish an advisory council for occupational health and safety and to provide for matters connected therewith. Construction workers usually with the help of safety managers are guided towards safety regulations and any person around construction sites is usually safe as measures would have been put in place.

2.12.5 Skills Development Act (SDA) 97 of 1998

This act aims to provide an institutional framework that devises and implements national, sector and workplace strategies. Workplace strategies further develop and improve the skills of the South African Qualifications Act (SAQA) in order to provide learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications (South African Qualifications Act 2010). The aim of this legislation is to improve employees through education and training. Swanepoel (2008) discusses that the SDA together with SAQA and the payable levies in form of tax which are the Skills Development Levy (SDL) work together to achieve empowering workers. The SDA challenges the employer to manage the training and development of employees by adhering to objectives such as appointing a skills development facilitator and to align the company's strategy, particularly the education and training strategy with the overall business strategy (Swanepoel

2008). Every employee therefore has a right to be improved in their work setting so that training gained will enable them to be better employees in their current environment or in any other work environment.

2.13 SUMMARY

Grievances are inevitable in any working conditions and they require an acceptable way to deal with them. Literature has shown that the trends in grievances call for urgent change since most challenges pertaining employee concerns are still apparent. Insufficient research in this regard could be a possible aspect to failure in addressing workplace issues more relevantly. The help from international organisations such as ILO and the United Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UUDHR) further promotes employee wellbeing and employee rights; however, a closer contextual analysis is called for. Different countries and states have made extra mechanisms despite the GPP to assist in achieving peaceful workplaces, however little results have been documented. In South Africa effort has been made from the PSC to investigate the escalated grievances from the public sector. On the other hand the LRA gives guidelines to all the employees and particularly the Basic Conditions for Employments Act, helping in safeguarding employees. The COID act helps compensate employees who get injured, die or acquire diseases because of the work environment. The EEA provides a basis of fairness and anti-discrimination regulation while the SDA improves employees through education and training. The negative consequences of improper administration of grievances affect the organisation economically yet affecting the employee psychosocially. With the gathered theory it is evident that more research is needed to curb some challenges that come with incompetence of grievance administration. The literature review section gave a holistic understanding of grievances in a workplace. To achieve an exploration of employee perceptions of their GPP a qualitative method of research was employed and executed to find the relevant data. The next section outlines the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this research was to explore the perceptions of workers and managers about the implementation of the GPP at a SME construction company in Johannesburg. As a point of departure, the company's GPP was analysed prior to the interviews, analysis of the company's GPP enabled an accurate assessment of the workers and managers' knowledge regarding their own policy.

Grievance policy procedures are sensitive issues to deal with considering that they influence the growth or downfall not only of the employee but the organisation or employer as well. The aim of the grievance procedure is to create a healthy working environment through meaningful consultation, discussion and joint problem solving. Having workplace regulations is an inevitable organisational practice however, the implementation thereof is crucial. Brand, Lotter, Steadman and Ngcukaitobi (2016) imply that the GPP has been adopted in many occupational settings, due to the unique nature of these settings; administration of the policy must be treated cautiously considering the context or characteristics within that particular organisation. A case study approach becomes very relevant in exploring grievance trends so as to make specific future recommendations to particular organisations and in this case, it is an organisation that is privately owned and is non-unionised.

This research drew data from employees that have spent a reasonable time in the employment setting (2 years) through a qualitative approach research methodology that is discussed in depth in this section. Purposive sampling was implemented as it was an ideal way of selecting participants to responding to their views and perceptions regarding their GPP. The adoption of the qualitative approach as a methodology followed that the researcher needed to produce descriptive data based upon spoken or written words and observable behaviour, based on a particular contextual setting which is supported by Creswell (2012). Primary aims and objectives of the research are also discussed in this section as they formed the basis of the study and the direction of the practical unfolding of events in the study.

A research strategy and design were explored in detail in this section, describing the tools of research and their relevancy that met the aims and objectives of the study in finding out how employees perceive the grieving policy. A relevant population of the research that was considered is described, and the actual sample that the researcher worked with is included. Appropriate characteristics of the sample ensured that research objectives and aims were met. Sampling procedures that were implemented in the study are included together with crucial aspects of the research such as pre-testing of the research tool. Limitations of the research strategy are laid out and ethical considerations pertaining to the study that were employed are discussed before the last section of this chapter.

3.2. PRIMARY AIMS AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

3.2.1 Primary aim

The study aimed at exploring the perceptions of workers and their managers regarding their grievance policy procedure.

3.2.2 Secondary objectives

- To explore the general understanding of the workers regarding their GPP
- To explore the general understanding of the managers regarding their GPP
- To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the workers
- To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the managers
- To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the workers
- To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the managers
- To compare and contrast the views that managers and workers at the SME construction company have about their GPP.

3.3. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DESIGN

This study was a qualitative one in nature. A qualitative research strives to create a coherent story as it is seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story, to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The qualitative research suited the expected outcomes of the role of occupational practitioners, who need to go to the natural settings of the people and directly interact with them as supported by Marshall and Rossman (2011). In this case the natural

setting of the organisation was considered greatly as it impacts on how people make perceptions of their surroundings such as the policies governing them.

The researcher used an explorative case study research design. Creswell (2003) defines an explorative research design as a design which is used when the concept under study is immature due to lack of theory as in the case of grievance procedures. Characteristic features of the case study methodology also included triangulation, which is described by Baxter (2008), as a process whereby data collection methods are combined and participants are purposefully selected. The study was a single case study since only one phenomenon was being investigated, which are the employee perceptions.

The advantage of a case study is that it serves as an exemplar of the possible. A single study done almost accurately can be enough to refute a general theory. However, the disadvantage of a case study is that it is difficult to use findings of a single case study and generalise to other cases or to the broader population (Mcleod, 2003). Terreblanche, et al. (2006), suggests that case studies are intensive investigations of particular individuals; in addition, they may also be studies of single families or units such as an NGO or a corporate company.

The sampling technique that was utilised was purposive sampling. Participants for the study included twenty (20) general construction workers and ten (10) managers at a construction company in Johannesburg. The researcher employed face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the participants (see Appendix H and Appendix I). Interview schedules were research instruments used for the purpose of data collection. Prior to the actual research the research tools were pretested at a similar company as the one which was investigated and a positive feasibility outcome of the study was determined.

For the purpose of data analysis, the researcher utilised the eight steps of Tesch (as cited by Alpaslan 2010). The researcher made verbatim transcriptions of the interviews that were audio tapped, themes were collected and sorted, eventually data was assembled and thereafter a preliminary analysis made.

3.4. POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Du Ploy (2009) argues that a population is all possible units of analysis. It has characteristics such as population parameters, which is the nature, size and unique characteristic of the target population. Terreblanche et al. (2016) states that a population is the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn, while Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) add that questions of sampling arise directly out of the issue of defining the population on which the research will focus. Brynard et al. (2014) defines sampling as a method used to select an aggregate group of elements representing the larger population as it is not possible to study the whole population group due to time constraints and cost, hence sampling from a specific population group is used to simplify the research.

The target population is the actual population from where results were generalised. The accessible population becomes the population which the researcher had access to and the actual population was 114 employees. At that point of collecting data, the organisation comprised of 114 employees (workers and managers), however, the figure is fluid due to the stoppages of the projects or completion of projects propelling the retention or retrenchment of employees, retirements and resignation of employees.

The researcher used a smaller sample as supported by Halloway and Wheeler (1996) who state that qualitative research consists of small sampling units studied in depth, usually consisting of 4-40 participants. Cohen, et al. (2007), alludes that; researchers often need to be able to obtain data from a smaller group or subset of the total population in such a way that knowledge is gained and representative of the total population under study. The latter is also supported by Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, Nicholls and Ormston (2014) who suggest that in non-probability sampling, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of, or groups within the sampled population. A non-probability sampling techniques is a process that selects participants without allowing units of the population an equal chance of being selected. The population lacked an equal chance of selection, for example; employees with one-year working experience at the company did not have a chance to be selected. The researcher had a smaller sample from the total population that consisted of 30 purposively selected workers and managers. The sample comprised of more males than females since the construction industry is male dominated and this applies to the company concerned. The purposive sampling used by the researcher aimed at

bringing conclusive data and findings that can be trustfully applied to the larger population regarding employee views of their GPP.

Participants were included according to age, level of education and years of employment at the company. Workers included were those that had attained grade 8 of education, have been at the company for two years or more and were aged between 21-50 years. Managers on the other hand were required to have a tertiary qualification, two years of experience at managerial level and also between 21-50 years of age range. Employees that had been at the company for at least two years are assumed to have a better understanding of their working environment and probably may have some experiences of the subject under investigation improving the credibility of results to be arrived at. The discussed characteristics permitted participants to the study. Creswell (2012), states that an inclusion criterion is characteristics permitting a unit of analysis to be included in a research study.

3.5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION

The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews with the SME construction company employees; general employees (workers) and management employees (managers) (see Appendix H and Appendix I) as research instruments. Semi-structured interview schedules were used as guidelines. Castilo-Montonya (2016), explains that an interview schedule is a data-collecting instrument that is user friendly for conducting interviews. The interview guides were divided into two sections, section A for participants 'demographics and section B for open and closed questions. The open-ended questions allowed workers and managers to explore and narrate their perceptions about the GPP. A semi-structured interview schedule is an interview tool that consists of closed and open- ended questions; close-ended questions are questions that require a yes or no answer whereas open-ended questions are questions that seek an explanatory answer, Nieuwenhuiis, (as cited in Alpaslan, 2010). Closed questions in the interview guide aimed to find out for example; if an employee or manager has raised a grievance or not, making data analysis easier to deduce using yes/no answers. As noted by Creswell (2003), semi-structured interviews allow for questions to be refined as the researcher learns what to ask and to whom it should be asked; the further the research process unfolds the more refined and accurate the interview is conducted.

3.5.1. Pre-testing of the research tool

Pre-testing involved asking the same interview questions of the study to employees from another workplace The same research tool was used and participants involved in pretesting were not part of the study. Pretesting participants were contractors of the same company (SME construction company), based in another location. Kumar (2010), states that pre-testing a research tool is an integral part of instrument construction which as a rule, pre-testing should not be carried out on the sample of the population being studied, but on similar population. In so doing the main aim is to determine the suitability of the questions to be used. Evidently, the main reason for pretesting was to ensure that questions were understood as intended by the researcher, this was achieved since pretesting enabled amendment of questions that seemed confusing. Pretesting was done on both interview schedules; one for the workers (see Appendix H) and the other one for managers (see Appendix I). Pretesting helped in re-structuring of the interview questions so that the participants would easily understand them.

3.5.2. Methods of data collection

The data collection techniques were in the form of observations and participation, interviews, and the use of primary and secondary data from the available documentation of the PSC as well as other published and unpublished sources. From the various methods of data collection, answers regarding the views of the employees about their GPP were observable through non-verbal gestures of the employees. George (2011), supports the approach of using various instruments, because no particular method of data collection is flawless, and advises the diverse use of methods in data collection.

The face to face interviews as the major instruments of data collection were beneficial as employees gave in answers that the researcher needed to analyse thematically towards the findings of the research. Questions were asked as guided by the interview guide, rephrasing was done should the question sound unclear and the use of examples was incorporated to ensure that the participants answered the question most relevantly. In gathering literature, a reasonable amount of sound and applicable data was collected regarding the GPP as supported by Kumar (2010), who states that it is critical to review literature in all research projects as another method of collecting data. Literature review helps the researcher to review what is already known so that it can add value to the research as it would point out the current trends of the topic under

investigations. The most important sources of information were the efforts made by the PSC in terms of documents and journals regarding the grievances in a workplace. However, PSC focused on the public sector, exposing a gap of need in the private sector regarding grievances. Kumar (2010) provides that there is a range of information that already exists in an organisation to answer a research question which other researchers may not have had access to; in this research, it is the perceptions of employees regarding their GPP. The PSC has generated enormous knowledge in forms of research reports, rules and procedures following the realisation of the unknown experiences in workplaces. The PSC reports were used as primary data to predict the possible unknown experiences in the private sector; hence, literature review which is also a method of data collection gave a solid guide to this study.

The researcher had ethical guidelines to adhere to in conducting the study, taking in consideration that participants need to have their rights observed and preserved during data collection. Below are ethics that the researcher adhered to.

3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are the norms that protect the value of humanity, in all the aspects of life. Holt (2009) explains that ethics is the principle of what is and what is not acceptable behavior. De Vos et al. (2011) adds that ethics are a set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or a group, and are subsequently widely accepted, offering rules and behavioral expectations about the most appropriate conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. It is important that the researcher considers research ethics when conducting research. The ultimate achievement of following the principles of ethics is to avoid research from making unreasonable demands on participants. Ethics also ensure that participation is based on informed consent; it is voluntary and free from coercion. Furthermore, following ethics guidelines ensures that adverse consequences are avoided and that confidentiality, and anonymity are preserved and recognised (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). Herewith are ethical considerations that employed in this study:

Informed consent

The researcher informed participants about the intentions of carrying out the research and made the participants aware of their involvement prior to their participation. Alpaslan (2010) mentions

that before one proceeds with data collection, participants need voluntary consent to participate as part of the general ethics that he listed which entail an informed consent (see Appendix C). The researcher also ensured that a participant information sheet (see Appendix B) was issued to every participant before the research commenced. Wagner, et al. (2012) argues that, the guiding principle of informed consent is an individual's personal right to agree (or not) to participate in a research study and fully understand the research process and consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Grobler and Schenk (2009) state that confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few other relevant people such as the researcher's supervisor, are aware of the identity of participants and that these other relevant people should also make an effort to keep the identifying details and matters of participants confidential. Ritchie, et al. (2013) explains that confidentiality means not disclosing who has taken part and not reporting what they say in ways that could identify them or attributed to them. All recordings and transcripts were stored in a password-protected computer and the computer was locked in a safe place. Confidentiality was also achieved by keeping records in a locked cabinet and making sure that all computer files were password protected. Furthermore, the researcher used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of participants. Langford (2012); Paulus et al. (2013), support that replacing real names with pseudonyms is a standard practice in qualitative research in order to preserve the participant's anonymity.

Voluntary participation

A number of advertisements printed on paper were distributed to the employees of the SME construction company, inviting employees for participation. However, invitation was based on meeting the inclusion criteria. Invitation letters stipulated that for workers were required to have obtained at least grade 8 and have worked at the company for two years. On the other hand managers were required to have at least grade 12 and a tertiary qualification. Participants who met the criteria and volunteered to participate were given the participant information sheet. The participant information sheet (see Appendix B) enabled participants to know what they were getting themselves into by accepting to participate. The researcher advised as stated in the

information sheet that research was voluntary and a participant was allowed to freely withdraw from the research should such a need arise.

Non-maleficence

Non-maleficence is a principle that requires the researcher to ensure that no harm befalls participants as a direct or indirect consequence of the research (Terreblanche et al., 2006). In order to try and protect the participants, the researcher adopted skills explained by Grobler and Schenk (2009); that emphasises on creating a safe environment for participants by using social work skills such as maintaining a positive regard, recognising individuality of people. Communicating to participants that confidentiality will be observed, acknowledging that participants are self-determining and using appropriate basic and advanced communication skills were considered in contributing of a safe place for participants. In addition, the researcher ensured that information about psychosocial support was readily available according to the unique needs of the participants.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Creswell (2003) states that qualitative data analysis is always an on-going process that can start prior to the first interview and is as an activity that will run concurrently with data collection, data interpretation and report writing. According to Kumar (2010); Wolcott (2009), data analysis involves reading your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down. Creswell (2015), states that qualitative data analysis focuses on qualities more than quantities. It is about discovering patterns, coherent themes, meaningful categories, new ideas and in general uncovers better understanding of a phenomenon or process.

There are steps in which data was analysed. These summarised steps are according to the eight steps of Tesch (as cited by Alpaslan 2010). The researcher made verbatim transcriptions of the interviews that were audio tapped so that once this had been completed the researcher read them through to get the whole sense and made notes. The shortest interview was selected to make sense of the underlying message. After completing the task from several participants, the researcher collected themes and labelled the themes as: “major”, “unique” or “leftovers”. Unique abbreviations to categorise the themes were employed. Finally, the researcher used a cut and

paste method to assemble the data or material belonging to each theme or category in one place and did a preliminary analysis.

First, as mentioned above, this research study was qualitative. Babbie (2011), states that qualitative data analysis is a non-numerical examination, which is an interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering the underlying meanings and patterns. In emphasis, Cohen, et al. (2007), states that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of these steps as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 1994:70) to analyze data. These steps are as follows:

1. Audio taped interviews were listened to and the researcher transcribed the interviews word for word. The researcher then read all the audios to get a sense of the whole findings. The researcher then read through the entire transcripts carefully and made notes of main ideas as they came to mind.

2. The researcher selected one document (one interview) - which was the most interesting interview document and the shortest. The researcher went through the interview document, to check on the content and meaning. The researcher did not think about the content, rather the information, and mostly the underlying meaning. The researcher wrote down emerging thoughts in the margin.

3. When the researcher had completed the above task for several informants, the researcher made a list of all the topics. The researcher put similar topics and listed the topics in columns that were headed "major topics", "unique topics", and "leftovers".

4. The researcher found a fitting abbreviation for each of the topics that were identified.

5. The researcher found the most descriptive wording for these topics and turned them into themes or categories.

6. The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category and alphabetized these codes.

7. The researcher used the cut-and paste method, assembled the data or material belonging to each theme or category in one place and did a preliminary analysis.

8. The researcher recorded the existing data and started to report on research findings.

Data is analyzed to ensure it can be relied upon. Trustworthiness of findings was analysed and the researcher checked how the results deduced from the research corresponded to what was on the ground. Data needs to be trustworthy and to achieve this, aspects below were considered:

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Guba and Lincolin (as cited in Morrow 2005) discuss the authenticity criteria in research, which include; fairness regarding how the different constructions are solicited and honoured. To achieve trustworthiness, the following aspects were considered; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

According to Creswell (2009), credibility is attained through triangulation which the researcher achieved by using interviews and observing the participants. Information was obtained from both general workers and managers. Accurate transcription of interviews also added to credibility of the research. The researcher recorded participants enabling the word for word interviews to be recorded exactly as they were spoken.

Transferability

The ability to generalise findings was guaranteed through purposive selection of participants; participants were selected relevantly to the study. Transferability denotes to the fact that similar results will be attained if the same research is done to a similar population (Castillo-Montonya 2006). The use of accurate information of the context of research, participants and processes will help guarantee transferability should a similar research be undertaken.

Dependability

Dependability is the ability to follow a systematic process (Morrow, 2005). A chronological and well-outlined method and process of research aids other researchers to be able to depend upon the data collected, findings and recommendations. For an easier assessment of dependability, the researcher in this study clearly outlined the process that the study followed, should there be need to trace outcomes of the study the same process can be depended upon.

Confirmability

Confirmability means that results can be confirmed, meaning that; findings should represent as far as is (humanly) possible the situation being researched rather than beliefs, biases and theories of the researcher Gasson (as cited in Morrow, 2005). Findings should represent the situation being researched not the beliefs, pet theories or biases of the researcher (Creswell, 2009). The researcher had to ensure confirmability by writing reflective reports and personal notes soon after each interview and transcribed using the audio tapes ensuring accurate recording of answers.

3.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STRATEGY, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Limitations of the research method that was mainly interviews was that of time constraints. Workers had to leave for their different working sites in different locations. The participants' nature of work had no formal schedule, hence the study kept the researcher on the road to meet the participants who may be reported to be away from the head office. The face to face interviews took more effort from the researcher to ensure that an appointment is not missed as workers used mostly their lunch time and tea breaks. During the researcher's contracting period with the company before undertaking the study it was established that workers are not readily available at the Johannesburg cite due to the different locations of projects. The researcher had to commit to financial costs of keeping lines of communication open and following up on the sites were the workers were operating from, which was expensive.

Another challenge was the delay in accessing the company's GPP document. It was alleged that IT professionals who had been responsible for archiving the document were not working on the site that the study was to be based. It took at least 30 days to get access to the GPP document.

The researcher forecasted on the benefits of mixed methods and realised a missed opportunity in utilising a quantitative analysis as well. As the research unfolded, it became interesting to note not only the feelings and experiences of employees but a record of statistics whereupon ratios and inferential statistics could be presented regarding percentages of people lodging grievances in a particular organisation. Mixed methods are considered advantageous, as it is a more holistic approach that compensates for the shortcomings of either a quantitative or a qualitative approach on its own (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The interview guide, being only a guide allowed the researcher some flexibility of probing more and expanding further questions, however, not equally amongst all the participants.

3.10. SUMMARY

A total of thirty (30) SME construction company employees, were successfully interviewed and interviews were transcribed. The process of data collection took a maximum of nine (9) weeks to achieve all the interviews. The next section shows how the collected data was re-arranged into meaningful themes that fulfilled the objectives of the study. Findings were explored and discussed, bringing out a coherent, comprehensive and holistic picture of the culture and trends of the organisation regarding employees' grievances through their perceptions and experiences.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AT SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present the raw data as it was collected for the purpose of the study. In this section, data is presented as it was analysed and interpreted. Themes drawn from the research findings are presented in relation to the objectives of the study. Creswell, (2013) explains that the interpretation of data involves making sense of the data to articulate lessons learnt. The aim of the study was to explore perceptions of employees (workers and their managers) regarding their GPP at a SME construction company which was used as the case study. The qualitative research had a number of secondary objectives that were to assess the workers' understanding and level of knowledge about their workplace policy and further understand the constraints and affordances of their GPP.

The demographics of the participants in the study were presented first, and a general overview of the GPP at the company being investigated was assessed as leading information to the findings. Contributing factors to the current trends of grievances and the grievances at the organisation are discussed to exposing the culture of grievance administration at the organisation. Thereafter, the practicality of the analysed data was explored and explained followed by the major findings of this study. Findings of this study helped influence a general understanding of the GPP at similar organisations by explaining concerns of companies similar to the one that was investigated which has two major characteristics of being a private company and, one whereby workers do not have a union (non-unionised).

4.2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF WORKERS AND MANAGERS

Table 1: Profile of workers and managers (N=30)

Demographic factor	Sub category 1	Sub category 2	No.
Age	Workers	21-30	4
		31-40	10
		41-50	6
	Managers	31-40	6
		41-50	4
Gender	Workers	Male	16
		Female	4
	Managers	Male	6
		Female	4
Period of service	Workers	13-24 Months	3
		25-36 Months	14
		36 Months+	3
	Managers	13-24 Months	6
		25-36 Months	4
Level of education	Workers	Gr 8-9	6
		Gr 10-11	10
		Gr 12	3
		Dip/Cert	1
	Managers	Dip/Cert	7
		Bachelors	2
		postgrad	1
Position	Workers		20
	Managers		10
Race	Workers	Black	20
	Managers	Black	9
		white	1

Key:

Gr- Grade Cert- Certificate

Dip- Diploma

4.2.1. Analysis of workers demographics

The analysis indicated that 50% of workers were aged between 31 and 40 making this age category the biggest group in the sample of workers. Fewer workers were in the age group of 21-30, making 20% of the workers. The age group of 41-50 was made up of 30% of workers. Workers across ages of early twenties to mid-forties exist in the SME construction company of which the average age was 35.5. The youngest workers were aged 23 and the eldest was 44 years old. The gender analysis indicated that 16 (80%) of the workers were male and the remaining 4 (20%) workers were females. The workers profile was male dominated. The largest numbers of workers 14 (70%) had been employed at the SME construction company at least for 2 years and at most 3 years as their employment service period ranged from 25 months to 36 months.

A smaller number of workers had been at the organisation for exactly 2 years and that was 2 workers. One of the workers had been at the organisation for 1 year and 8 months, which was close to the inclusion criterion which considered workers to have served for at least 2 years at the organisation. Findings denoted that 3 (15%) of workers, had been at the organisation for more than 3 years. The average period of service of workers was established to be 30.4 months, which is 2 years and 5 months. Statistics showed a high worker retaining capacity at the organisation. Half of the workers; 50% had attained grade 10 and 11. The inclusion criterion expectation was grade 8, meaning more workers were beyond the expected level of education that could promote better understanding and interpretation of the interview questions to produce more reliable findings. The lowest recorded level of education attained was grade 8 to grade 9, it constituted 6 (30%) of the workers. Some workers were sufficiently educated beyond the minimal requirements of the study and constituted 4 (20%), these workers matriculated and one of them had an extra certification in business management, this was the highest category level of education. All 20 workers were general construction workers and were Black[2] according to race classification.

4.2.2. Analysis of managers demographics

Managers comprised mostly of the age group range 31-40 which constituted 6 (60%) of the management team. The remaining 4 (40%) were in the age group 41-50. The average age of the

[2] According to South Africa black broad –based black economic empowerment (BBBEE), the black race refers to descendants of the Khoisan, Bantu and Nguni people, Coloureds and Indians

managers was established to be 39 years. None of the managers were below 30, these demographic findings points to an expectation of higher level of maturity from the management team. Based on gender 6 (60%) of the managers were male and 4 (40%) were female. Most managers, who were 6 (60%) had served at the organisation at most 2 years while the rest 4 (40%) had served longer, at most 3 years. A high employee retention capacity was also observed within the managers. All ten managers had a tertiary qualification with 7 (70%) having diplomas and certificates, 2 (20%) having at most a bachelor's degree and 1 (10%) with a postgraduate qualification, all managers were well educated. Amongst the managers 9 (90%) were black by race and one manager 1 (10%) was white.

4.3. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE GPP AT THE COMPANY

Out of the 30 participants, 19 (68.3%) noted that grievances were found to be emanating from relationship challenges between the manager and the subordinate. However, to a higher extent these relationship challenges were not constructively addressed. It was noted that when workers raised a grievance or displayed dissatisfaction, they were often transferred to a different construction site without consultation. This was referred to by the managers, as "switching". A safe way of avoiding conflict or a dispute turning into a conflict was achieved by swooping workers from one team to the other since workers are organised in teams for the construction tasks. A manager mentioned that

> *Employees [workers] are at times switched [*transferred to another construction site without consultation*] to avoid conflict, when the HR approaches me for a switch, I know there is a reason (*Manager, male*).*

A worker can be moved from one manager to another team with different colleagues and a different manager. This is a strategy of avoiding conflict and not addressing the issues on the ground, which has become a practice at the organisation.

Asewe (2016) argues that perceived crucial employee needs, when neglected become the major causes of grievances. Employee needs at this organisation, that would refute energy for expression of a grievance, were expressed amongst others as issues such as; leave administration, overtime issues and unpaid overtime. Managers on the other hand raised concerns of overtime

payments versus the production during the overtime period, expressing that little production is achieved during overtime sessions.

An audit took place at the SME Construction Company on the 7th of September 2018. Audits at the organisation are facilitated by the DoL following workers' concerns recorded in workers files. However, this audit had not produced a report in that regard. One manager said, "*The departmental people come to us if there are many similar reports from our employees [workers]"* (Manager, female*)*, The latter indicates that the department of labour tries to address challenges of workers as they occur but seem to have not considered underlying causes of matters escalating from the private company to their DoL offices. Grievance matters only refute action at a higher level yet this can be curbed by considering workers' needs at grassroots level.

Grievances were found to have financially costed the organisation as one manager expressed that:

> *…. there was once an overtime query…. some employees [workers] came straight to the CEO to complain…. Some went straight to the CCMA… it was unfortunate that the company lost the case and the labour office demanded that we pay the workers even more than what they were supposed to get* (Manager, female).

Workers seemed to trust the external organisations from the above script, it is also substantiated by one worker who mentioned that "reporting *to CCMA is better than have your case being postponed at the organisation, CCMA will act faster…" (*worker, male). The employer in this regard was found guilty of policy maladministration hence the compensation to workers was effected in terms of monetary value. Cost is an inevitable expectation to be incurred in litigation when amicable resolution within the organisation fails. It can be argued that workers have a reason of not using the internal grievance policy, which could be a lack of knowledge about it or a lack of trust towards management of which this study reveals both factors relevant.

The GPP is a document that has been drafted and stored as a resource at the organisation with no evidence of its full utilisation. The underutilisation of the policy was evident by the struggle that the researcher went through after requesting for the policy, it could not be retrieved and took a full month to be presented. One manager explained that, "It *was not easy to retrieve*

the document as the IT technician who was responsible for archiving the document was working in another firm and had to be sought first" (Manager, female*).* This showed that the grievance policy document had not been given much attention since it was not readily available, yet on the other hand the company paid more attention on details of financial loss after the DoL's verdict favoured the workers over the employer and hence recommended that workers be compensated. The company would rather be focusing on attempting to resolve grievances internally.

Einarsen,Skogstad, Rorvik, Lande and Nielsen (2016) states that easier ways of addressing grievances are at times adopted for the sake of production but are not always effective. A traditional way of resolving grievances is at times utilised at the organisation which was found in this study to be an informal procedure. The study revealed that the semi-formal or informal procedures such as switching workers were quick fixes for both the manager and the employee to get back on duty at the organisation.

The study also established that grievance issues at the organisation mattered as they occurred. The GPP document is only retrieved or referred to when a grievance case emerges, hence it is to a lesser extent referred to. Marchington et al. (2016), states that if a policy is not used in the organisation, it deprives consumers from exercising their rights.

4.4 KEY FINDINGS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF WORKERS AND MANAGERS REGARDING THEIR GRIEVANCE POLICY PROCEDURE

Table 2: Objectives, themes and subthemes

Objectives	Themes	Sub-themes
To explore the general understanding of the workers regarding their GPP	Theme 1:Workers and managers definition of the concept "grievance"	• *perceived negative and positive connotations of the concept grievance*
To explore the general understanding of the managers regarding their GPP	Theme 2: Understanding of the entire GPP by the managers and workers at the organisation	
	Theme 3: Factors contributing to the lodging of the GPP	
To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the workers **To understand affordances of the GPP as viewed by the managers**	Theme 4: Affordances of the GPP	• *Understanding and analyzing the process of the GPP, perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)of the GPP*

Objectives	Themes	Sub-themes
To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the workers **To explore the constraints of the GPP as viewed by the managers**	Theme5: Experiences and perceptions of workers regarding lodging a grievance	• *Expectations of workers in lodging a grievance*
	Theme 6: Constraints of the GPP	• *Workers lack of knowledge, language and terminology barriers, reporting to supervisors, power dynamics, lack of representation, delay in finalization, confidentiality, Litigation and maltreatment after lodging a grievance*
	Theme 7: Workers' copying mechanisms regarding the grievance constraints	
	Theme 8 :Fairness and effectiveness of the GPP	

Objectives	Themes	Sub-themes
	Theme 9: Feelings and emotions associated with the pre and post procedures of lodging a grievance	
	Theme 10: Lack of management skills and possible remedial action	• *Nature and frequency of policy inductions, policy reviews*
	Theme11: Unionization	
To compare and contrast the views that managers and workers at the SME construction company have about their GPP.	(A Comparison of views of managers and workers is discussed in the last section of the study in section 5.2.7)	

The section below comprehensively explains the findings of the study in a thematic way, incorporating the objectives, themes and the subthemes of the findings:

4.5. PERCEPTIONS OF WORKERS AND MANAGERS DISCUSSED UNDER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.5.1. Theme 1: Workers and managers definition of the concept "grievance"

Workers perceived and understood that a grievance is a complaint or a query they have at a workplace towards the management or regarding the working environment such as working conditions, salary, incentives, leave days and so forth. It is intriguing to note that workers perceived a grievance as relating firstly towards management and then secondly towards the

work environment. A grievance towards management hereby depicted that most of the grievances that workers have at this organization were specifically towards management although they may also have a working environment component as most workers answered similarly to say: "*It is when a worker has a problem with the manager."* (Worker, male)

Braad, Lotter, Steadman and Ngcukaitobi (2016), define a grievance as a partly formalized expression of individual or collective conflict, usually the dissatisfaction is in respect of work-related issues. The workers also recognized the formality of a grievance by mentioning the involvement of managers to address workplace concerns. Some workers defined a grievance as a problem relating directly to the work environment as one said "*These are problems that are voiced by the employee such as advocating for good working conditions*…" (Worker, Male).

A problem is usually a situation or experience associated with difficulty, an emotional drain and anxiety which is a negative aspect. The grievance was viewed both negatively and positively.

4.5.1.1. Perceived negative connotations associated with the concept grievance

It was observable that workers on defining a grievance linked it with the term "problem" and they had negative emotional cues, deducing that a problem can lead to unhappiness and stress in the working environment and this is how it is perceived at the company. One of the workers said, *"Grievance means telling management the* ***problems*** *that you are facing at work*" (Worker, male). On defining the term grievance in association with the word "problems" workers showed emotive gestures of unhappiness. On the other hand, a couple of workers directed a grievance as a problem associated between a worker or workers and their management. One employee had this to say: *"Eeeh… I think it is those issues that management turn a blind eye on and do not want to address them but the worker wants to address them strongly"* (Worker, male). Workers that related a grievance to issues arising from management flaws and ignorance brought out a highlight towards worker-manager relations that are perforated.

Experiences of some workers showed that their relations with management were the actual grievance as one expressed that; *"A grievance is when a worker has a problem with the manager*" (Worker, male). The worker deduces that when manager to worker relations are constrained, the matter can amount to a grievance. The latter suggests and substantiates findings

by Wood, Saundry and Latreille (2014), who mention that most grievances occur between the superior and the subordinate. Negative connotations of the concept grievance were evident through the workers' association of the concept grievance in relation to a problem and poor worker-manager relations that showed negativity of power relations in the organizational hierarchy.

4.5.1.2. Perceived positive connotations associated with the concept grievance

A remarkable finding from 13 (65%) of workers was recorded, these workers understood a grievance as a process, a form of negotiation, a discussion to correct something and as a processing of voicing out concerns about the working conditions. One worker echoed:

> *…reporting first to your manager and then me and the manager we try to sort the problem and if it is solved thank God if it is not solved then that manger takes it to their next superior and If it doesn't get solved there it is taken to HR were a lot more processes happen and it takes a lot of time but if it fails then lawyers and people from labour can be involved* (Worker, male).

The latter quote by a worker suggested that a GPP is perceived as a complaint, query or problem that can be resolved through a process; this deduced that workers theoretically understood what a grievance entails on a positive note as well.

4.5.2. Theme 2: Understanding of the entire grievance policy procedure by the managers and workers at the organisation

4.5.2.1. Understanding the steps and the process of the GPP

Only 2(20%) of the managers perceived workers knowing the steps towards a grievance policy and 8 (80%) perceived that workers do not know the steps to follow in lodging a grievance. The graph below depicts the results as to whether workers are knowledgeable regarding the unfolding of their GPP.

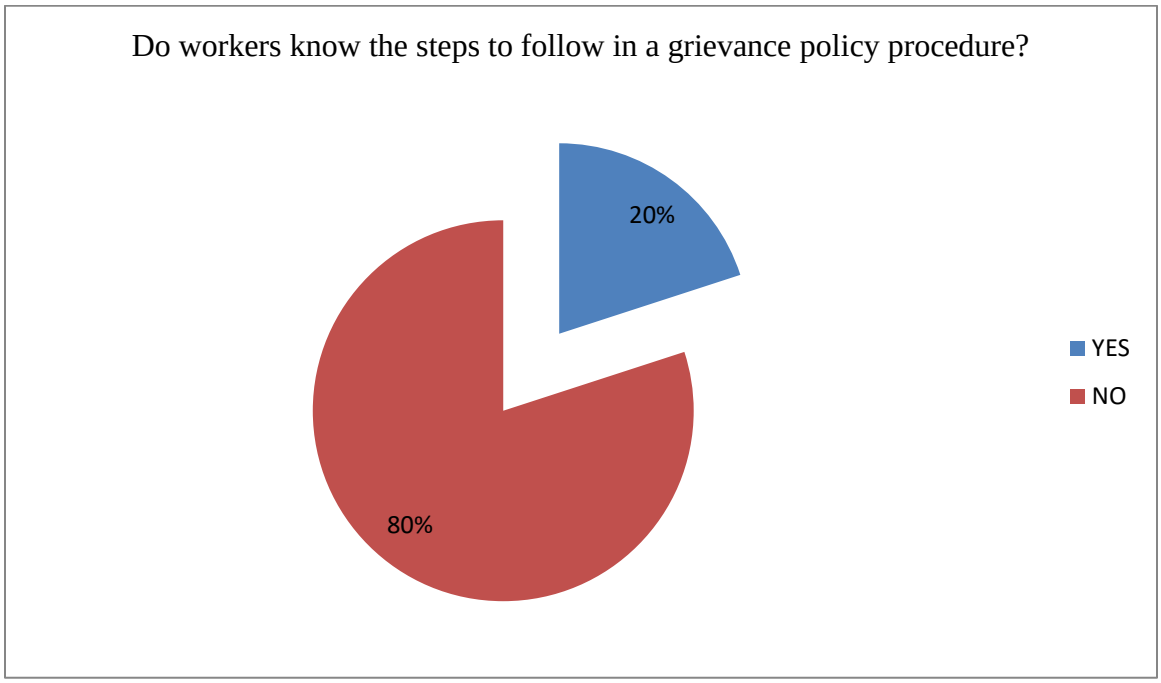

Figure 1: Management perceptions of workers' knowledge of the GPP

Managers perceived that workers do not have the know-how on lodging a grievance. Workers on the other hand were asked to answer to a closed-ended question to determine their general feeling towards their knowledge and ability to use the GPP, the question intended to find out if according to the workers the GPP was easy to follow or not. Results are presented on Figure 2 as follows:

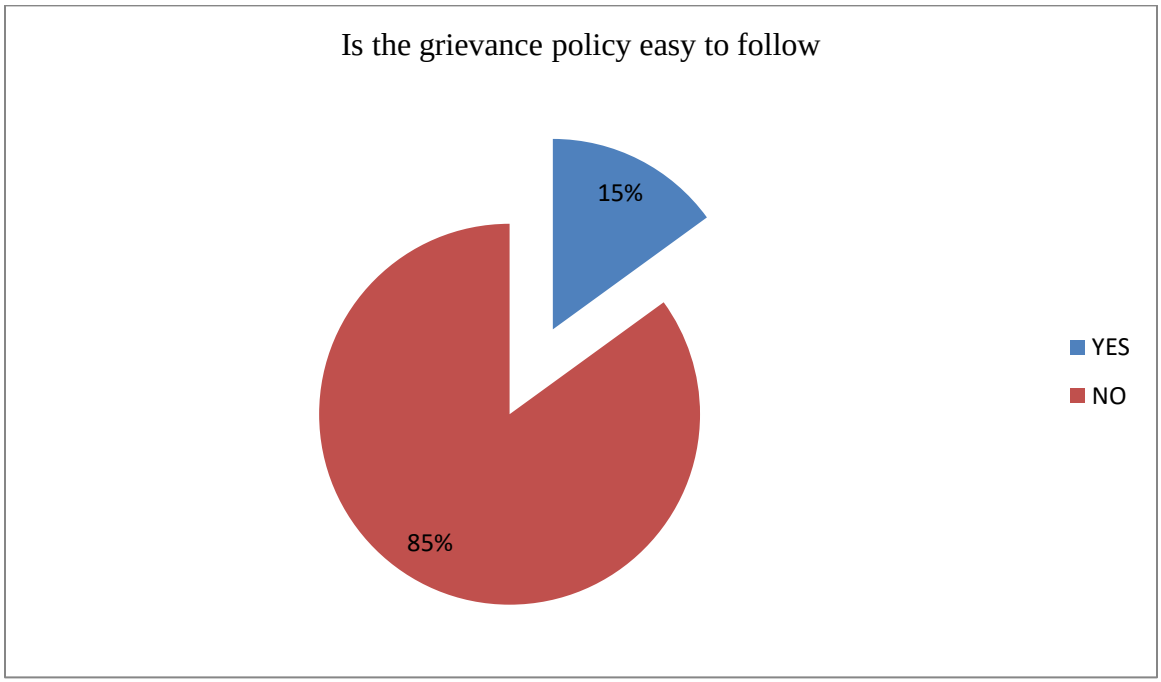

Figure 2: Is the grievance policy easy to follow

The above question, not in the interview schedule was a follow up question to determine whether workers find it easy to follow the GPP. The question was asked as a closed ended question. It was evident that workers at the SME Construction Company find the grievance system difficult to use; contemplation in attempting to use it was the common sentiment amongst workers. One worker said:

> " *I think if it was easy people will follow it and use it, you see working in construction is not easy….it is a hard job and most of us do not have qualification for another job so people in the office like to explain the process but it is not clear so you are not sure whether to try or not..*" (Worker, male).

17 (85%) of workers confirmed that the grievance is not easy to follow through the closed ended question posed. Workers found no motivation to use the policy since the general anticipation is failure due to its perceived complexity. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2017), believes that policies may be overwhelming for workers so much that there is no intent to learn due to the

perceived complexity and leading to workers withdrawing from the policy. One worker said, " *I think it will stress me because it is complicated as long as am feeding my family I think I am ok"*(worker, male). Similarly, another one said: "*The process takes a lot of time I do not want to be stressed and at the end of the day maybe you don't get a solution"*

Since workers' needs and dissatisfaction may remain unattended to, there could be other means used by workers in attempting to address their grievances.

Following that workers perceived the policy complex hence difficult to understand, an enquiry in that regard was achieved through open ended questions that aimed at finding out if workers knew the steps to follow in the procedure or perhaps the perceived complexity of the policy denied workers the enthusiasm attempt it. Workers elaborated their views on what made the grievance procedure difficult and results were recorded below:

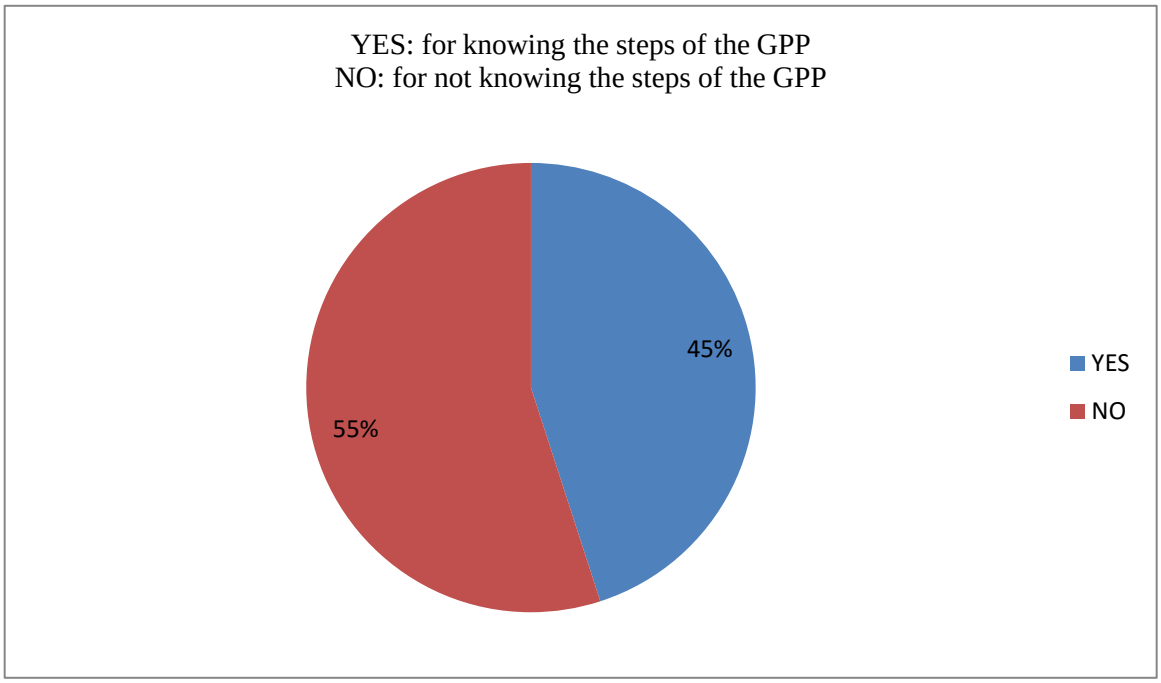

Figure 3: Workers knowledge of steps of the grievance procedure

It was established that 9(45%) workers stated that they knew the steps to follow in the grievance procedure however, upon being asked to describe the steps it was clear that the first

step to report a grievance to their immediate supervisor was the main step known to workers as one worker stated:

> "*…I know the steps generally like reporting first to your manager and then me and the manager we try to sort the problem…. If it doesn't get solved there it is taken to HR were a lot more processes happen"* (worker, male).

Tapping from Figure 2, only 3 (15%) workers highlighted that the grievance was not easy to follow. A discrepancy is realized upon asking workers about the steps of the procedure were a larger statistic of 45% claimed to know the steps. Most workers from the 45%, who stated that they knew the GPP were referring to the first step of the procedure and not the entire grievance. It made sense that the rise from 15% to 45% stating that they knew the steps showed a discrepancy, some facts had to be considered more accurately. It could have been reasonable if at most the 15% who initially commented that the grievance procedure is easy to follow were the only ones who went on to emphasis that they are aware of the steps. Tapping from the 15% of workers who said that the grievance is easy to follow, the assumption that perhaps the grievance is complex for workers is answered because 75% do not find the GPP easy. Regardless of the misrepresentation of the information from the workers, it can be noted that workers feel that they do have some knowledge of the GPP by knowing only the first step. However, the researcher sought participants who knew the unfolding of almost all the steps of the GPP and not only the first step.

It was evident from the data that workers do not know the unfolding of all the steps that lead to a proper completion of a grievance procedure. One participant said … *but I know that I tell my manager, that is what I was told after that I think my manager can take it up"* (worker, male). Another participant also said; *"What I only know is that when I have things to talk about, I tell my supervisor* (Worker, male). The data collected showed an emphasis of knowing the first step of the GPP. The latter sentiments from the workers supported the managers' views that workers lacked knowledge of the GPP. Steps of the GPP were sketchy from the workers, some of the workers where explicit about not knowing the step as one of the workers when asked to describe the steps echoed that; *"I am not very sure, but one step I know is that you talk to the supervisor if you have a problem…*" (Worker, male). Another worker also said:

You first address the issue with your manager if it fails, I think that is when you take it further by going to HR and they take it from there. I am not sure exactly how the steps flow… (Worker, female).

All (20 workers) were aware of the first reporting step; the first step was articulated very well by all participants who mentioned that they knew the steps of a GPP. In actual fact, it was clear that workers were better acquainted to only the first step of the GPP and had no understanding of the unfolding of all the other procedural steps of the policy. Marchington et al. (2016), ascertains that; policy information if not explicitly shared in a professional environment and reinforced, it can never be known by the users. One of the workers said, "*I do not know the steps I have not had a problem here but if I have a problem, I want to know how to address it for now I do not know*" (Worker, male). Evidently, should the worker experience some work dissatisfaction, they may not make use of the GPP as they do not have the knowledge and understanding of how to proceed with it.

To substantiate the above findings, responses from open-ended questions which were posed to the management were gathered. Managers were asked to describe steps actually taken by workers in lodging a grievance since they are the recipients of the grievance. Managers' responses towards steps taken by workers in lodging a grievance pointed out that there is a haphazard way of reporting grievances which could be associated with lack of knowledge and understanding of the procedure. One manager said, *"Employees [workers] are different as different individuals some talk to their managers some find people they are comfortable with and some go to labour offices*" (Manager, male). The sentiments from the manager denotes that both workers and managers concur to workers lacking procedural knowledge about their GPP. Due to a lack of procedural knowledge and understanding of the GPP, there is no uniformity in lodging a grievance. Nevertheless, it can also be the misconceptions that a workforce has towards the policy that limits the workers enthusiasm to learn and exercise their policy. In this study, both factors (lack of knowledge and misconceptions of the GPP) were evident as contributing factors to the haphazard way of lodging grievances.

Despite workers knowing the first step of the policy technically, they are not utilising the procedure effectively as discussed. The image of the organisation is tarnished, particularly by the

workers' act of dismissing the role of internal managers shown by external reporting of a grievance. Didaskalou, Roussi-Vergu and Andreou (2015), discuss that grievance procedures are essential in addressing work related inequalities to secure stability. Results show that workers neither know nor understand the GPP procedure since they report grievances externally. On the other hand, internal factors explored in this study force employees to report externally.

The International Labour Office (2013) highlights that a system may be institutionally faulty and presenting with gaps if the aggrieved workers do not know how to proceed. Another perception was expressed as follows: *"Some of them [workers] take their cases through the big offices without coming to the office …they do not know how to use the procedure"* (Manager, male). Managers and workers both concur to the lack of knowledge of the grievance procedure indicating the most crucial gap (lack of knowledge and understanding) that exists in the organisation. Information that is not interpreted in the correct way results in misconceptions and myths and these are the experiences at the organisation, if workers were well informed about their GPP, there could be lesser unilateral decisions in grievance utilisation.

If the GPP at the SME company is not being utilised due to lack of knowledge, then it can be deduced that 35% of workers having had lodged a grievance have some knowledge about the procedure while the bigger 65% of workers do not have the know-how of the GPP. These results are an indication of urgent remedial action to impact GPP knowledge to the workers.

Workers had earlier on stated that they were aware of the steps in the grieving process but it was not factual, since they knew only the first step of the process. With all these findings an analysis into the utilisation of the process was outlined. Workers were asked if they had once lodged a grievance and results were found as follows:

4.5.2.2. Analysis of the grievance lodging at the SME construction company

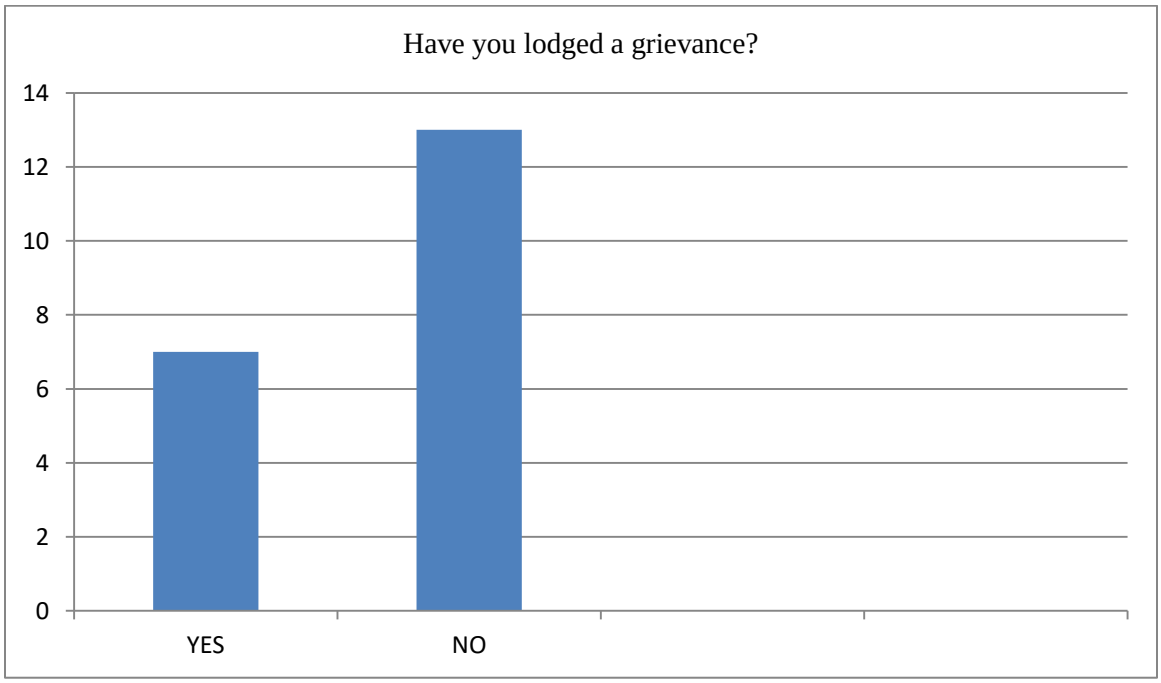

Figure 4: Grievance lodging analysis

Results in Figure 4 revealed the lodging and utilisation of the GPP at the organisation**.** Figure 4 shows that 7 (35%) workers stated that they had once lodged a grievance and only 3(15%) have had it filed and highly formalised. Results conclude that workers at the organisation use the grievance procedure to a lesser extent. The study also revealed that workers at the organisation do not have the knowledge to make use of the GPP coupled with perceived injustices that can befall them should they use the procedure, hence less utilisation of the policy by the workers. As indicated by Webster (2010), the traumatising aspect of lodging a grievance should be what workers at the organisation are afraid of such as facing what they are not much knowledgeable about.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Factors contributing to the lodging of the GPP

Different factors compelling lodging of a grievance were discussed. Workers perceived major issues leading to lodging a grievance as emanating from overtime related concerns, leave administration, general unsatisfying work conditions, favoritism, unfairness of managers, sour

worker-manager relations and burn out. Worker to worker strained relationships, poor management skills from superiors; unfulfilled work promises by the organization or managers, injury at work concerns and mostly salary issues were main leading factors to grievance lodging. The latter responses from the worker's perceptions can be identified from some verbatim transcripts:

> *Issues such as low income, ill-treatment at work, bad supervisors and not being safe at work can cause people to approach management. Yes, if it is affecting an individual then that particular person can approach the management* (Worker, male).

Another participant said:

> *In most cases when people do not agree on the remuneration or maybe they agree and there is no increase after you have shown that you are good at the job or at times when you ask for an increase and promises are just made but there is no practically. Leave days are also a problem you have the days and you can't take them the way you want to* (Worker, male).

These workers substantiate to the major issues that evoke reporting of dissatisfaction. The frustration of being denied rights refutes enough energy for a worker to express a grievance. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2017), emphasises that lodging a grievance is an action that emanates from the need to address a very relevant issue and can be barely abused. It can be deduced that lodging a grievance must be taken seriously and exercised with caution. Another participant also said;

> *Yaa there is a lot that can happen at work if you have an injury here, we are working with heavy and dangerous machines and the company does not assist you to get the monies for the injuries you complain about that* (Worker, male).

This participant perceives that their construction-working environment is very risky, however, they do take risks since they need the remuneration and should the money, they so much risk for is not compensated to them or is mal-administrated then it can amount to grievance lodging.

It can be noted that not all concerns that the workers mentioned can constitute a grievance. For example, workers had burn out as one aspect that they can raise, however, burn out may not necessarily constitute a grievance since it can be an outcome of one aspect or a combination of work-related demands together with other social issues, which is not always the fault of the employer. Upon being asked" **Can you explain to me the reasons why an employee will lodge a work complaint?" one worker answered:**

> *For instance if he feels that he is burnt out because of bad working conditions, if the situation at work is compromised affecting the worker's social or mental health….. it can be purely financial a low remuneration, below minimum wage, it can happen and a complain can be lodged.*

Only two (2) workers had to include burn out in their discussion. Burn out is a situation that requires a worker and a manager to support each other without it evoking a grievance or some sort of conflict**.** The use of PIE model can be beneficial in combating burnout. The person in environment model assesses how a worker fits in their environment. The mentioning of burn out from workers calls for a worker assessment that helps to remove obstacles in the work environment while offering psychosocial support to the worker. The ecosystems theory embedded in the PIE model will view the worker in relation to the employer and also to the work environment. This enables synergy in the workplace among workers and managers and may curb a situation whereby there is no cohesion between managers and workers.

Herewith, an analysis of the data given by workers regarding burning issues that can propel lodging of a grievance was analyzed in terms of a bar graph and disclosed these results:



Figure 5: Factors causing grievances

Perceptions of workers according to the data analysis depicted from Figure 5 shows that major concerns in a workplace that can cause grievances to be lodged are largely related to salary issues shown by the longest graph. The graph depicts that 15 (75%) of workers spoke about salary. The main purpose of going to work is to be reciprocated by a salary that has to sustain the worker's life and their families hence it is a major contributor to grievance lodging should it not be negotiated well. Asewe (2016); Motlogelwa (2015); Prasadini (2008), do agree that HR is the driving force of any organization and their immediate needs must be met with great priority. Workers hence strongly perceive salary as a crucial aspect of their work and an immediate need, as one worker stated:

> *The biggest problem to cause someone to report is when it involves money you see money issues you can't wake up all the days and you don't get a better salary or if they pay you money that is not enough it is not fair* (Worker, male).

A second major concern coercing workers to grievance lodging is strained manager to worker relations. This issue seems to be emotionally draining as most workers showed a range of unpleasing and disturbing non-verbal cues in that regard. One worker mentioned that, *"A grievance is lodged if workers are looked down upon by management"* (Worker, male), meaning that inequality or perceived abuse of power, stresses relations of subordinate workers to their superior colleagues and encourages lodging of a grievance. Asewe (2016) believes greatly that if workers feel unheard or looked down upon; it depicts that managers have failed to show and negotiate the importance of their role. Another worker stated that, *"Especially the problem of having managers that make you feel uncomfortable at work that one can destroy you*" (Worker, male). The latter is a very emotive expression, it portrays how gross strained manager to employee relations can be damaging psychologically, hence being the second major cause leading to workplace complaints. Marchington (2016) emphasised that it is usually the strained relations in a workplace that promote conflict. Evident in the graph, manager to worker relations have the second highest statistic of 68.75% workers verbalising it as a major cause of lodging a grievance. It is crucial to note that manager- subordinate relations are also an occupational need to address in workplaces should cohesion be sought.

General unfairness was the third largest cause of lodging grievances, one worker said, *"If managers have favoritism or does not handle our concerns well it can provoke reporting*" (Worker, male). If workers feel that they are not treated fairly be it in job allocation or treatment from superiors they are bound to lodge a grievance.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Affordances / benefits of the GPP

4.5.4.1 Perceived strengths of the grievance procedure at the company

According to Watkins and Leigh (2009), strengths from the SWOT analysis pertains to an internal enhancer of competence, valuable resource or attribute. This can also be viewed as a positive factor in a process or procedure that propels the sustainability of an endeavour in business. Perceptions on the strengths of the SME construction company's grievance system varied and the management perceived their policy as having much strength such as providing a reflection to the management regarding what is happening in the work environment. One of the participants had this to say, *"The GPP helps us to know areas that need to be addressed and the general feeling of the employees [workers]; it also helps us to identify strained relations"*

(Manager, female). The grievance system is being seen as a tool that enables flaws to be addressed. This factor is positive only if the GPP is being utilised to surface the concerns of the workers and initiate positive change towards a harmonious workplace. Marchington et al. (2016), states that exercising of the workplace policies helps in the amendment of the policies thereof, making policies better for the users. Managers perceived the strength of the grievance as being a platform not only to expose workplace needs but also as an opportunity to internal grievance resolution. Without the internal system, workers will inevitably turn to external lengthy, hierarchical, legal processes. It is evident that grievances are directed either against work colleagues or against managers, this in general helps to identify how workers and their employers relate. The strength of the GPP becomes the ability of the policy in reflecting on work relations, and offering an opportunity for amendments to the prevailing relationship based circumstances.

Perceptions about the GPP as a tool to reflect what is happening in the work environment were observed as a strength and it was reinforced as follows:

> *The policy shows us how we present ourselves to the employees [workers] like now it seems that we have bad blood with the employees [workers] because if HR can keep having meetings that there are cases that go straight to Labour department it means that we are not recognised as a team of managers…* (Manager, male).

Management have had the ability to reflect using the GPP and have realised that they have bad relations with their subordinates. One manager viewed that the GPP has a strength of being easy to follow since it does not have so many steps by answering the question on the strengths of the GPP as follows: "*The grievance as I have taken a glance at it was not very long making it easy to finalise a case*" (Manager, male). However, it must be noted that as much as the grievance policy may have a few steps (seems as an advantage) it can be easily and quickly exhausted calling for external finalisation or litigation which could stand as a negative aspect. On the other hand, it is socially desirable for a manager to state how easy a policy is, since in most cases managers are the policy designers and administrators. Already it was noted that workers do not know how to use the policy and the fact was confirmed by 80% of managers rendering the advantage of the short steps of the GPP inefficient. The perceived strength of having few steps in the GPP could be recognised if the policy was being used as needed but results show that the

policy being easy and having few steps have not contributed to addressing workers' dissatisfaction.

All perceived strengths of the grievance procedure are indeed factual; however, effectiveness and efficiency of the utilisation of the GPP was not established.

4.5.5 Theme 5: Experiences and perceptions of workers regarding lodging a grievance

All 20 (100%) workers responded to the question pertaining experiences of lodging a grievance, including those that had not lodged a grievance. Amongst the workers 4(20%) did not have a reason to lodge a grievance however, the rest had varying narrations to give and an analysis was arrived at by use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats model (SWOT) in this section. One participant after being asked of their experience in lodging a grievance echoed that, "*No, these things are stressful; they will waste your time"* (Worker, male), the worker perceives that lodging a grievance is stressful and a waste of time. Webster (2010), states that in order to address the problems of a grievance procedure or a grievance system issues of justice are fundamental because particular expectations of individuals revolve around workers' perceptions of justice.

Despite the inevitability of challenges and conflict in work environments, all employers and workers would prefer to work in a harmonious environment. A worker indicated that lodging a grievance is invitation of a stressful process, according to the worker it is threatening to lodge a grievance. Guest and Peccei (2001), state that a stressful environment is a threatening aspect for any worker and must be avoided. The latter worker perceives not using the grievance at all as avoiding stress for their wellbeing at the organisation. On the other hand, avoiding a grievance means that the particular concern or need is not nearer to being resolved and the worker will still have to cope under some occupational distress. Kelly (2006) also asserts that formal grievance handling practices may be costly in terms of time consumption, fees for external investigations and may cause the breakdown in workplace relationships during and after the grievance, hence the worker indicated that lodging a grievance is stressful. Usually the aspect of time wasting is an experience from the party that feels that the procedure was not in their favour. One worker stated that "*...the manager did not listen to me… the case took long… I was exposed to unfriendly other managers that I did not know and feared that everyone knew my story….the matter took a year to be solved..*" (Worker, female). It is clear that when a grievance is not solved with the

immediate manager it goes a further step up in the hierarchy of authority which is a negative aspect expressed by many successive authors. The PSC (2007) agrees that the higher the hierarchy of a grievance the more formal it becomes and the more injustices are experienced.

Another factor expressed by the worker was an experience of lengthy time consumption since the responsible immediate manager did not find interest in listening and attempting to resolve a concern of an employee immediately. Prasadini et al. (2008), asserts that grievances must be addressed at the earliest opportunity possible or else they can be a cause of profound consequences in an institution.

The worker summarised that she was referred from one manager to the other, which could have been frustrating. The three managers and the construction worker, a total of 4 employees had to cease duties, contributing to declining productivity to sit for a grievance. This matter lasted for the whole year while at the same time depressing the grieving worker.

The worst fear of workers which is job loss emanating from the utilisation of a grievance was one of the experiences of one participant who lodged a grievance and had this to say, *"... instead of him (manager) explaining how things work he informed me not to talk a lot or else I would lose my job…"* (Worker, male).

The experience of the worker was that exercising their rights could lead to job loss. The worker expressed that they initiated a concern regarding leave application however abandoned the process after being warned that some negativity may erupt should they voice their concerns. The concerned worker feared to proceed with the process as they perceived it would jeopardise their job. Mubezi (2013), concur with Motlogelwa (2015), that management behaviour is crucial for worker's freedom to exercise their rights. The PSC (2007) expresses that workers are deprived of rights in unfair labour practices. The worker did not pursue their grievance due to perceived unforeseen negative outcomes.

The CCMA was mentioned by two participants in their experiences; regarding to grievance lodging. One worker echoed that: "*I have not lodged but I know that people that have gone to labour department and CCMA have made management angry"* (Worker, male) and the

other one voiced that, *"I have heard that people who have voiced their complaints are no longer working here, maybe there was a lot of hatred created"* (Worker, male).

Workers indicated that management was angry that one worker consulted the higher offices. It is clear that when workers lack support from internal systems they do consult external help. There are many reasons as to why the concerned worker did not consult managers, it is either the fact that they do not have a working relationship with their management or they perceived negative characteristics of following the GPP accordingly. Other reasons could be those of discouragement from the management or previously observed negative consequences of grievance lodging at the organisation. Issues such as the delay in grievance resolution, lack of confidentiality or worsening of relations may discourage the lodging of a grievance. Workers who mentioned that people who lodged grievances were no longer at the organisation indicated that experiences and their perceptions about the GPP had been negatively created and influenced by the realities at the organization. Workers do not have a friendly platform with their managers, they perceive the grievance as a tool that does not serve a purpose at their organisation. Results show that a lack of usefulness of the GPP and possible post consequences of lodging a grievance with many other factors were discouraging workers to the use of the GPP.

Managers also related to the experiences and perceptions of workers as one echoed that:

> *Employees [workers] think that the policy was never meant to help them but it was meant to defend the company. Another observation is that they feel if they follow it, they will be dealing with biased managers rather they consult directly from CCMA or the department of labour … (Manager, female).*

The above answer from the manager attempted to answer the question**: "***What are misconceptions of the grievance policy from the employees?***"** It was made clear that some negative perceptions of workers have been built according to their experiences and how they interpreted the policy. The first misconception identified by managers is that workers perceive the GPP as a policy that was not intended for them, instead meant to defend the company as indicated in the above script. However, at a microscopic glance if the OSWPM was to be implemented, specifically the fourth phase which is the workplace interventions phase, worker assessments would clearly show that workers are not benefiting from an available policy and

remedy could be considered. There is need to utilise a work model such as the OSWPM to help assess and understand employees. The most relevant phase in working with policies is the fourth phase of Van Breda and du Plessis (2009) "Workplace Interventions". This phase of working with employees emphasises on fostering knowledge about work policies and structures to employees and can apply to situations such as that of the SME construction company. This study also realised that the workplace interventions position would stabilise the work environment by establishing knowledge for both the worker and the manager regarding the grievance systems at the same time in so doing reducing enormity.

Misconceptions of workers regarding their GPP show the workers' lack of factual information; however, these misconceptions are perceptions of workers that have been formed due to their observations, experiences and reality. Despite it being clear that workers lack knowledge of their GPP it cannot be excluded that there are other reasons why workers are not using the right procedure.

When workers confirmed their ***experiences*** and perceptions regarding lodging a grievance it was discovered that 55% of workers agreed that the GPP was not easy to follow which was the first identified experience and perception. Not all workers who confirmed that the grievance was complex had lodged a grievance. For most workers the difficulty of the procedure was a perception from their observations and not necessarily their personal grievance lodging experiences. Only 3 participants (of the 45% claiming to know the procedure) comprehensively narrated the procedure while the rest only knew the first step of the procedure. The researcher developed a SWOT analysis concerning the lodging of grievances at the organisation according to the information collected which was confirmed by the employees:

4.5.5.1 SWOT analysis of grievance lodging at the SME construction company

Table 3: SWOT analysis regarding grievance lodging

Strengths	Weaknesses
At organisational level, 6 lodged grievances were successful. If workers can use the internal grievance system accordingly their concerns may be successfully addressed	One grievance was dropped before completion as the aggrieved workers feared negative consequences that his manager perceived could come with lodging a grievance Managers need to support workers with their concerns and grievance lodging and not discourage them
Opportunities	**Threats**
One grievance attempted at the lowest informal level was successful between a supervisor and a supervisee As discussed by Asewe (2016), continued good employee-employer relations may avoid the lodging of grievances that may be time consuming and may come with litigation costs. There is an opportunity to resolve Grievances at the lowest and most Informal level	Many workers feared their perceived consequences of lodging a grievance and others concluded that grievances when reported may result in perceived injustices such as job loss, litigation and can promote unsound work relations. Therefore 13 (65%) at the organisation have not lodged a grievance with only 2 of them had no reason to do so. Keeping quiet about grievances may not guarantee a peaceful working environment. It is likely that workers may revolt through strikes, which threatens organisational peace.

4.5.5.2 Employee expectations in lodging a grievance

Managers perceived that expectations of workers are not practical since they only expect to have their grievance resolved. Mthombeni (2005) argues that grievances can indeed cause labour disputes, especially when they are neglected or left unresolved hence employees expect action after lodging a grievance. It is both a human right and an employee right to be heard. Motlogelwa (2015), substantiates the right to be heard as one that is of paramount importance hence the LRA's effort in creating platforms for employee grievances to be heard through the GPP. One of the managers said, *"Workers think they are always right even though it may not always be the case"* (Manager, female).

Expectations of workers were unpacked and managers expressed that workers want the procedure to unreasonably favour them, which is a sign denoting to a lack of procedural knowledge about the GPP. One manager said, "*You know they [workers] would expect that only their side is considered yet there is need to reach a fair conclusion for both the company and the employee [Worker] in a reasonable time"* (Manager, male). Another manager added that, *"Employees [workers] think that they are always right even though it may not always be the case and they expect their perceived thinking and requests to be taken straight away and a quick but positive result given to them"* (Manager, male). Managers perceived workers as lacking procedural knowledge which includes the reasonable time needed in finalising a grievance.

It must be noted that the time frame in resolving a grievance must be considerate of both the worker and the employer to allow a reasonable unfolding process of the GPP . One of the participants echoed that, "*When I lodge a grievance, I just want my matter resolved that's all"* (Worker, male). Workers expect that when they lodge a grievance, they may not expect any excuses, be it the procedure, protocol or steps of the grievance, the demand is to have the complaint heard and attended to. The worker bypasses the aspect of procedures, consultations and some reasonable time in resolving a grievance.

All (10) managers perceived that there is an unreasonable expectation of workers wanting instant answers. According to managers, appointing a date for a hearing is perceived by workers as an act to buy time to plan a plot against the worker. The perception was confirmed by a

worker who said, *"...this thing of following procedure takes time like if they start to postpone the case you will get stressed and you never know what to expect of their plans"* (Worker, male).

Workers perceive that they are being fought against by the managers and the employer, hence they become anxious about what management is planning against them throughout a GPP. Section 23 (1)[3] of the constitution of the republic of South Africa stresses the rights of a worker as it provides that everyone has the right to fair labour practices; implying that employers need to recognise an obligation not only to attend to grievances but also to attempt by all means possible to resolve them. A succession of authors such as Brad et al. (2016); Marchington (2016); Motlogelwa (2015) conclude that managers are responsible for identifying grievances and resolving them quickly because a delay in this regard will cause matters that were supposed to be resolved locally to be thrown to external intervention and resulting to litigation. Workers expect to change all the former negatively perceived characteristics of the grievance policy.

4.5.6. Theme 6: Constraints of the GPP

4.5.6.1 Complexity of the procedure versus employee's lack of knowledge

Precisely, 85% of worker participants agreed that the GPP was not easy to follow which was the first identified constrain; that the grieving system is difficult to utilise. Brad et al. (2016), discusses that the way in which the participants of a grievance resolution system go about their work determines the trust that parties have towards the system itself and this influences the perceptions that disputing parties have about the system leading to a contemplation whether or not to use the grieving system. Only 15% of workers mentioned that the grievance procedure was an easy process, while the larger 85% participants disagreed. Workers at the SME construction company find the GPP a complex and difficult procedure to follow, expressed by one participant as follows, "*If it was easy, we were going to use it,"* (Worker, male). The complexity of the policy is the first identified constrain. Brad et al. (2016); Wood, Saundry and Lattraile (2015); Motlogelwa (2015); PSC (2007), agree that it is in factors such as fairness, neutrality, trustworthy and efficiency of the procedure that dispute resolvers can create positive or negative perceptions associated with the whole system. Participants that perceived the grievance system to be difficult have observed elements of bias, unfairness; untrustworthiness of managers as discussed previously in worker's experiences hence the ineffectiveness of the whole system

[3] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa number 108 of 1996

leading more workers to view the system as a difficult process. Workers' lack of knowledge in this regard further aggravates the challenge of using the grievance procedure.

Managers also agreed to the technical structure of the procedure that is not easily understood by workers as one manger stated, *"They do not know how to follow the steps of the procedure"* (Manager, male). The lack of understanding that contributes to complexity of the GPP was also perceived by workers as a result of not being involved in the decision making of the policy as one participant echoed these sentiments, "*Us as workers to understand the procedure we must be included in making the procedure"* (Worker, male). Asewe (2016) believes that workers' views must be considered during decision making and Parasidini (2008) discusses that including workers' decisions is easier in unionised organisations. In non-unionised organisations, it may not be easy to pursue worker's inclusion in decision making since they do not have a union. On the other hand, regardless of unionisation, it may be difficult to incorporate all worker views in drafting a GPP taking into consideration that many stems of knowledge need to be consulted that include HRM, labour issues, the constitution and recognised international guidelines governing the policy. Workers may not pace up with the gathering and integration of all the prerequisite information to policy formulation.

Perceptions of the complexity of the grievance have not been drawn from experiences by most workers, but from observing some cases that have once transpired within the organisation which included negative hearsay of internally failed cases within the organisation. One participant said, *"People go to CCMA because the policy here does not work it is difficult for the employee and it is unfair"* (Worker, female). If workers had sufficient knowledge about the policy a culture to use the policy could have been common and views of complexity unheard of. However, a culture of reporting grievances straight to CCMA or DoL is the reality of the workers. Reporting to CCMA and DoL implies that the lack of knowledge of workers at the organisation presents the grieving system as a very complex internally procedure such that workers opt to report their cases externally. It is inevitable that many other factors do contribute to external reporting of the grievances at the SME construction company for example the unsound worker-manager relations and failure to interpret the policy document.

Workers expressed that the GPP is also complex because workers have to report to the main causers of their grievances (managers) who are more knowledgeable than they are. The latter is explored in subsequent sections.

4.5.6.2 Language and terms used in the grievance policy

The grievance policy must be easy to understand in simple language and must preferably be translated in other languages to enhance easier understanding for workers thereof. Motlogelwa (2015) agrees and discusses that the grievance must be written in at least two common languages. The issue of language and terms used was a follow up question under the question "*What would you change about the GPP?"* Common responses towards the question regarding language and terms used in the procedure pointed to the fact that workers had not seen the grievance and hence they could not comment about how it is written. Workers were further probed to answer on what they can recommend or suggest on issues of the terms and language used in the GPP regardless that they had not seen the document. Verbatim scripts were recorded as follows:

> *I think it must be translated to the whole 11 languages because one must fully understand how it works because at the time of complaining usually you are stressing …. because these people that think they know English can maybe twist the process and make other explanations to fit them against the worker* (Worker, Male).

These sentiments show that workers perceive that the language used in the grievance policy if not clear aims to disadvantage the grieving worker, depicting mistrust amongst workers and the policy administrators who are managers. The perception that management aims to benefit from the policy is evident in the latter sentiments as workers feel that managers can alter the language of the policy to suit them against the worker. Another participant commented about the legal jargon and said, *"I think the English must be simple, a grievance policy obviously has some legal jargon that must be simplified or explained"* (Worker, male). The latter participant was concerned about legal terminology which needs to be explained further, such need to understand the language and terms used was perceived as a prerequisite to the workers that wished to lodge a grievance as it would build confidence in them. The possibility of difficulty in understanding the language of the GPP destroys the eagerness of workers to use the system, contributing to

another constraint experienced by workers. Motlogelwa (2015); Asewe (2016), do mention that if a procedure is not simplified for the users, they many not use it.

Despite the language and terminology barriers, it is more realistic to note that cases of grievances are unique and that not all cases may fail. Workers are not practicing the procedure; hence they are not aware about what the employer would do should some terms used in the process be confusing. Perhaps the employer will put measures in place to accommodate the worker but these positive views cannot be established since the GPP is barely attempted. It is not disputable that it is difficult and uncertain to start a process that one is not familiar with and if there is no culture of exercising workers' rights in an organisation the effectiveness of measuring the tool's efficiency is also uncertain and difficult to arrive at.

4.5.6.3 Reporting to the immediate supervisor/manager

Managers perceived that making changes to the first step of the GPP may assist workers in utilising the procedure as the first step of the procedure was seen to be the one that complicated the whole GPP. Managers agreed that the first clause of the procedure is limiting since workers view that managers are the cause of their grievances hence reporting to their direct managers is almost impossible. Another participant mentioned that, *"It is difficult to report to the manager when the manager is the snake that you see"* (Worker, male). The grievance is perceived complex because workers have to face people that they are aggrieved against.

Workers find it hard to report a grievance to a person they assume or know has actually contributed in some way to that grievance. Burr (2016); Motlogelwa (2015); Mubezi (2013) and Saundry and Wibberley (2014) agree on the fact that workers find it difficult to report to their line managers due to already strained relationships. Singhal, Ojha and Madhav (2017), also add that the way in which grievances are handled can have a very huge and significant impact on the psychological employment bond and culture within an organisation. The latter points to the similar views of Motlogelwa (2015); Asewe (2016), who note that the trend on resolving grievances have not changed despite the perceived and established stumbling blocks. Constraints of grievance lodging are still being perceived the same as they have been investigated by the very few earliest researchers in occupational settings. Petersen and Lewin (1992)'s findings regarding the constrain to report a grievance to the direct manager, dates back before 1992 and

the same findings are apparent in consecutive years dating until 2018. Innovative recommendations for change are therefore crucial in this regard.

Substantiating the complexity of workers' difficulty regarding reporting to managers; a question was posed: "What makes the GPP difficult" and one of the participants had this to say, "*Telling the manager does not always work … managers many times clash with the people they manage so whom do you report to?"* (Worker, male). Another participant said, "*Reporting to your direct manager is wrong because they are the ones that we want to report …there are the ones that are making the workplace sour"* (Worker, male).

Mentioning that problems are caused by managers in the organization yet the workers need to report to that same manager is suggestive that workers may never consider procedural use of the GPP since the first step is difficult to execute. The GPP is therefore crippled from its initial stage. Motlogelwa (2015) emphasises that the purpose of a grievance procedure is aimed at promoting sound labour relations in the workplace, empowering workers, together with labour principles it also embraces consistency, transparency and the resolution of worker dissatisfaction, as close to the point of origin as possible. Workers at the organisation can hardly achieve all the advantages of having a grievance system since their environment does not promote the utilisation of the policy; rather more of limitations are experienced.

The first step of the GPP is perceived a worst constraint, one of the participants said:

> *I think reporting to the manager is difficult because most problems are caused by managers…rather a neutral person who works at labour can help and I feel people must have an option to report to someone else if the manager is the one making life uneasy at work* (Worker, male).

The participant perceived like most workers did, that most grievances are caused by managers. This finding was widespread across all participants some being explicit and some putting it across as an implied message but it was the major perceived unwanted constraint that workers wished to change. Managers at the organisation are also less trusted hence workers seek neutrality from external officers. Marchington and Wilkinson (2016), view a weakness as a negative challenging factor towards a plan or project. A weakness is a loophole in a plan or

procedure that is bound to cause failure or render a lesser anticipated outcome. The weaknesses of the GPP was viewed very similarly amongst managers of which the major one being an ignorance towards the fact that problems could be emanating from the managers that workers have to report to.

Managers also perceived the first step of the grievance policy as a challenge to the workers. One manager said:

> *The grievance procedure is blind to the fact that some problems may be emanating from the direct manager of that employee [worker] that wants to lodge a grievance* (Manager, female).

Regarding the first step of the procedure 3(30%) managers shared the same perceptions as the workers. While some SME construction managers do share the same sentiments as their subordinates, some researchers have figured out that using other options to relay worker dissatisfaction renders the management role insignificant. Rindt and Mouzas (2015), mention that line managers' view other means of reporting grievances other than through the immediate supervisor as a threat to the superior's authority. Perhaps the SME construction managers may view external reporting of grievances differently since they have also acknowledged the procedural injustice of the first step.

An explicit view of frustration came from a participant that said, "*The whole thing must fall it is very unfair to be told to report to the manager when the manager is the snake you see*" (Worker, male). This participant showed a lot of emotional drain from the policy and perceived the policy as unfair, uncalled for and useless because of the first step of the GPP. The experiences of having cases reported right away to external organisations such as the CCMA are evident observations that workers cannot report to their managers.

Another manager said:

> *Reporting to their direct supervisors seems to create a fear of expulsion from work… they think supervisors are like spies… they think complaining puts them on the spotlight (*Manager, male).

Workers fear being targeted as initiators of trouble and strikes in a workplace as they perceive that managers can spy on them. Mthombeni (2005) agrees that the major causes of grievances are the ill-treatment of workers from their supervisors. Many successive authors from 1996-2018 also point out the same concern. The trend on grievances constraints does not seem to be improved since the SME construction workers and managers share the same challenges as discussed by previous authors.

4.5.6.4 Power dynamics

Workers feel powerless over the GPP because the GPP is spearheaded by managers. One participant said, *"The GPP was made by managers to benefit the company and not the employee [worker]"* (Worker, male)*".* Issues of ownership of the procedure as designed and belonging to the organisation makes workers feel they do not have power over it, which complicates any attempt of the worker to use. Workers feel powerless to present their dissatisfaction using a tool designed by management whom they are usually aggrieved against. The notion of power dynamics does not encourage the worker to see a good outcome of the grievance lodging since the ones with power have designed the GPP and can exert as much control as they can over the policy.

Power and stereotyping allows those in power to control others (Brief, 2018). Workers at the SME construction company have constrained relations with their supervisors due to power differences. Workers cannot lay grievances through management and in many instances the grievance an employee seeks to resolve has been caused by their manager. The latter dilemma faced by workers was expressed by one participant who said: "*It is not easy because most cases we have complaints regarding the managers that directly supervise us, it is very difficult to confront your supervisor*" (Worker, male). Managers having power over the subordinate workers, makes subordinates feel less privileged to confront managers should the managers be the cause to the grievances. If a manager has actually caused a grievance, it denotes an abuse of power especially if that worker with less control may not be supported in addressing the dissatisfaction. Rindt and Mouzas (2015), discuss that in asymmetric business relations the stronger party is likely to dominate and exercise power in determining processes and outcomes. In other words, there is a higher likelihood that those in power will have outcomes of any case in favour of them regardless of the consideration of neutrality.

The experience that workers approach the CCMA directly shows that perceptions around the grievance system at the organization are negative towards their own internal grieving structures. Perceptions of fairness being compromised and leading workers to report to other offices that support workers' rights at a higher level such as the CCMA or the DoL, show an inequitable balance of power.

Motlogelwa (2015) does highlight that power differences alone creates perceptions about an organisation to its workers. Workers do not have a mind-set to organise positive thoughts about other aspects of the organisation other than concluding that all procedures are unfair since representatives of the organisation (managers) have been perceived unfair in their positions of power. Concisely from the data collected, workers view the grievance system as one that is biased, involving a lot of prejudice, a policy that is automatically made to disadvantage workers who have less power from their superiors.

Managers perceived that grievances between managers and workers are the ones that caused a lot of tension, causing workers to take major decisions such as approaching CCMA or the DoL. One of the managers perceived the situation by echoing these sentiments, *"…when it is a complaint regarding the supervisor one just reports to CCMA and does not come to us"* (Manager, female). Powerlessness of the worker coerces the worker to seek neutrality elsewhere to avoid possible conflict. Motlogelwa (2015) agrees that power differences can lead to conflict which is amongst the fears of workers at the company.

4.5.6.5 Lack of representation/accompaniment

One of the greatest legitimacy traits of a GPP is having a representative in terms of an individual or a union as discussed by Asewe (2016). *"A neutral person who works at labour can help in representation"* (Worker, male). The latter worker expects a person from the labour department to be consulted to represent a worker, this shows that workers perceive their direct mangers as people that do not only cause grievances but who are also biased in finalising grievances hence the recognition of a representative from the labour department. Another participant said*:*

> *I understand that there is an option to have a representative but are they always people who are well informed to stand for someone or some legal board or company person who*

is well informed can help because you can get someone to help but they do not have information (Worker, male).

The verbatim quotes indicate that there is no use of significant representative people showing further characteristics of malpractice of the policy. Saundry, Antcliff and Jones (2008), argue that effective worker representation underpinned by high trust relations gives an outcome of critical minimisation of grievance sanctions and dismissals. Constrained relations at the SME construction organisation promote sanctions and possible dismissals hence the non-existence of representation of a worker by another due to lack of knowledge and sour workplace relations. Probably labour personnel are preferred since they are more knowledgeable about the GPP.

Managers do agree that the organisational grieving policy does cater for worker representation, however there was a concern regarding the stipulation on paper to support worker representation and the lack of representation support practically. A manager expressed that, *"I have realised that many a times employees [worker] are given a chance to get representation and that they never achieve it*" (Manager, male). If a procedure is drafted and workers do not get facilitation and guidance towards the process, it cannot be expected that workers act towards the policy stipulations; otherwise workers would have been well informed on representation or accompaniment. A workforce struggling with strained work relations may not make use of the representation, firstly the environment is non-unionised with no union support and secondly the culture that has been created will not allow another worker who may be suppressing their own grievance to yet stand for another. Another major concern is that workers are ill-informed about the grievance and therefore there is no confidence in representing each other as colleagues.

Representation of one worker by another, calls for knowledge to the grieving parties to enable them to factually challenge managers in a particular case. Saundry, Antcliff and Jones (2008) agree that in non-union companies' worker companions (representatives) were perceived by managers to lack both knowledge and confidence in grievance hearings. Similarly, it is difficult for the workers to stand for each other unless they are fully knowledgeable then they can have the confidence to utilise their right of accompaniment and representation. Experience, training and legal knowledge are seen to be a prerequisite for effective representation, not only

for best results in the grievance outcomes but also for achieving constructive approaches to grievance issues (Saundry, Antcliff & Jones, 2008).

Workers at the SME construction company have never had an opportunity to have representation and they believe fair representation can be sourced from the CCMA or the DoL. One participant echoed these sentiments, *"I think I can say… employee [worker] representation must be encouraged from the word go so that the employee can know that there has this right"* (Worker, male). Workers feel that representation must be encouraged by the organisation. Saundry, Antcliff and Jones (2008), mention that for smaller organisations grievance issues can be daunting, particular attention is needed to establish ways in which accompaniment and representation can be made more effective within smaller non- unionised organisations.

4.5.6.6.Delay in grievance finalisation

Workers and managers expressed a delay in finalisation of grievances, one worker said, "*The process takes a lot of time I do not want to be stressed and at the end of the day maybe you don't get a solution"* (Worker, male). Managers agreed to the latter and expressed that: *"The grievance takes some time and employees get to be angry the more the grievance is postponed"* (Manager, male). It was established by Makhuzeni (2014), that the longer the postponement of cases the greater the service delivery deficiencies within an organisation. Workers relate to the stress experienced versus the lag time to completion of the GPP meaning the longer the grievance takes to be finalised the longer the stress to the aggrieved and probably to the personnel responsible for resolving the grievance. Much anxiety is built as a grievance procedure prolongs, which is psychologically exhausting to all parties involved.

One of the participants echoed that, *"The HR management team, eeh we are many because as managers we do join the hearings and we are of different views it also takes time amongst ourselves to see as to how we can tackle a case"* (Manager, male). Delays in grievance procedures are attributed to the number of people involved in the process and evidently, from the latter transcripts, decision-making takes long as all personnel inputs need to be considered. Polster (2011), pointed to an example of procedural injustice; whereby a grievance is lodged and prolonged. This is an experience and perception felt by workers at the organisation and another participant said, *"...MrX did complain but I think his complaint involved a manager …but it never was resolved …they keep on postponing and postponing it is a stress..."* (Worker, male).

Polster (2011) further explains the negative aspects of this postponement as not only affecting the worker but also decreasing work productivity, promoting litigation and creating a psychological mind-set for the worker to commit to the course of action and invest additional resources to the grieving procedure. The time frame of awaiting outcomes of the procedure can be damaging to the psychosocial functioning of the concerned worker. Motlogelwa (2015) agrees that legitimacy of the GPP considers the time frame taken to resolve a case; should it become too long then then legitimacy is compromised. Another worker also said, "*I think there must be a time frame to say this matter has to be ended so that the outcome is clear much sooner whether the request is doable or not doable"* (Manager, male).

The length of the grievance process denotes to the legitimacy of the grievance, should the grievance take longer than necessary regardless of the accurate statutory processes perceptions of workers are bound to be negative. Management perceives that lengthy grievances are a weakness probably because much more unnecessary time is invested in the procedure while stressing the involved parties. There is no specific stipulation of how much time a grievance must take as this is unique to the different internal grieving systems. It is only required that grievances must be resolved without unreasonable delay.

Delays towards resolving a grievance have shown to be an irritating aspect to a worker who seeks to resolve a burning issue, safely concluding the unfairness of the grievance according to that occurrence and worsening worker management relations since the worker feels that the management is not being hands on to resolve their concern promptly.

4.5.6.7 Lack of Confidentiality

The hesitation to the utilisation of the internal grieving procedure was also attributed to lack of confidentiality. According to Schenk and Grobler (2009), confidential information can be only kept if all parties are confidants. The higher the number of parties involved in the grieving processes the lesser the probability of all participants being confidants hence a higher chance of information leakage. A frustration indicated by one of the participants is that there was a concern of confidentiality in the process; the aggrieved perceived her report to be unsafe and one that could end up known to her colleagues. One participants said*, "I think it (the GPP) involves many people in the company some employees [workers] become uncomfortable with it, privacy and confidentiality becomes limited"* (Manager, female). Workers also had the same feelings around

the lag time of a grievance and shared these sentiments, *"Many people are involved in it (the GPP) making it difficult…"* (Worker, female). The more the people involved, the longer the time of resolution and the lesser the confidentiality. Once workers do not feel that their concerns are tackled with confidentiality it is a risk to start the whole procedure and workers may terminate the process prematurely to protect their images.

Despite that managers may keep the confidentiality of a grievance it becomes somehow visible to other workers by the many visits made by the grieving worker to the offices of authority. Absence from duty, the anxiety and stress that the aggrieved worker experiences from the whole process can promote inquisitions from surrounding colleagues hence concealing a grievance is difficult.

4.5.6.8 Possible litigation

Most managers perceived that they have an open system in terms of advising the worker to consider other grievance resolution systems such as consulting a legal board or the DoL or even the CCMA. Managers seemed not to expand much on options advised to the worker about furthering a grievance should it fail internally, denoting that such scenarios are rare because grievances are not lodged at all or because workers escalate grievances externally from the beginning. One participant said, *"We do not conceal information we sit and tell the employee [worker] that if they need to take the case further, they can consult labour relations for advice regarding their case, have legal representation or go to CCMA..."* (Manager, male).

Managers may have shown a positive factor of not neglecting workers that have reached a dead end in an internal procedure by further advising on how a worker can exercise their rights further. However, stress is harboured by the worker because litigation is costly to them. Harlos (2001), summarises that despite efforts made for workers to have other various ways of grievance resolution it has instead shown that these systems actually cause what they are intended to prevent; exacerbating workers' perceptions of unfairness and discontent.

Another participant said:

The Company must take responsibility of legal costs for their employees [workers] because some are financially vulnerable so it pulls the employees [worker] down (Worker, male).

The cost of litigation burdens both the organisation and the grieving worker; the employer may have legal plans in place while the worker may not be in any financial capacity to initiate any legal action. Harlos (2001); Motlogelwa and (2015); Saundry and Wibberly (2014) state that there is increased injustice as a grievance is escalated further externally, it confirms a failure of the organization to respond to workers' complaints while aggravating litigation. Steps taken by management to aid workers should a grievance become exhausted at the SME construction company were investigated. One participant said, *"We advise workers to seek external legal help … we do not close doors to worker options should they feel that the grievance did not favour them but we also prepare our statutory processes"* (Manager, female).

There were no specific practical steps taken by management to aid workers when a grievance calls for litigation. Deducing from the latter transcript, however, workers are advised that they can take their matter further. Eventually it seems like a war in a grievance hearing when a dead end is reached, when the grieving process knocks on litigation the company is fighting for its image while advising the worker to prepare their own statutory processes. Doherty and Guyler (2008), believe that a win-win collaborative situation is better when a conflict or grievance goes out of hand than the usual unilateral situations in workplaces whereby a win-lose situation shows to be an agenda in failed grievances. The aggrieved is asked to figure out an alternative way to further the grievance while the employer usually with litigations measures in place such as a company lawyer implements their statutory processes against the worker. Grobler and Scheink (2009) express that experiences are responsible for building perceptions; it is in the person's experiences that perceptions are created. It is undoubted that what workers have observed in the organisation hinders them from attempting to use the GPP as they fear litigation consequences.

Workers feel overwhelmed to proceed externally with a grievance considering that such action may compromise working relations. When a grievance is failing internally, the worker's focus is turned away from work and production to anxiety of probably job loss, losing the case, the cost of litigation and perhaps regret of exercising their right. Managers insisted that they do prepare workers for the external procedures while the employer also prepares for litigation on

their side. A lack of collaboration is evident leaving the worker with little or no support towards their matter.

It was evident that no precise and practical duties are taken by the organisation to sincerely and practically support the workers regardless of the fact that management perceives that they do offer advice to the grieving worker towards finalisation of a grievance. While all (10) managers perceived that they help workers with how to proceed with a failed grievance, none of them had an idea of the practical tangible steps taken to assist workers. It is the worker's responsibility to ensure finalisation of their grievances, either by surrendering the case or paying for litigation. It is evident that if the worker wants to attain justice externally a sacrifice to pay must be incurred. Brand et al. (2016), concurs that it is almost axiomatic that the ideal grieving system should be free.

4.5.7 Theme 7: Employee copying mechanisms regarding grievance constraints

A high possibility points to the fact that workers will remain silent about their grievances, workers would rather start looking for alternative better working environments or at least trying to resolve the grievance at the lowest and most informal ground as possible. Workers feel that lodging a formal complaint eventually becomes complex.

Workers have shown that it is difficult to use the internal GPP. The workers wish to change the reporting channels in their organisation. Regardless of the stipulation to report to their direct manager or supervisor, workers rather wish to report their grievances to personnel they feel comfortable with. Indeed, as a copying mechanism, workers succumb to silence, to spare themselves a lot of anxiety and consequences that come with lodging the grievance. Workers are coerced to suppressing their grievance to avoid the negative consequences of lodging a grievance. One worker said, "*It is better to work grumbling than lodging a grievance since it is very stressful as long as the children have bread to eat"* (Worker, male). Silence as a copying mechanism does not resolve employee grievances instead suppresses the reality of workers' experiences and deprives initiation of positive change. Workers having incorporated and settled in perceptions of unfairness of the grievance procedure of the organisation find no purpose of having the policy and hence believe in reporting externally to the DoL or CCMA as a copying strategy to have their views heard. One worker said, "*If the GPP was easy to use people here will be using it, but people go straight to CCMA"* (Worker, male). Some workers have no

choice but feel that they can only be heard either through CCMA or the DoL as a copying mechanism to avoid organisational anxieties. Approaching the CCMA and the DoL directly shows not only a gap in utilisation of the policy but also a suggestion of compromised worker-manager relations.

Uncertainties associated with lodging a grievance encourage other workers to pursue employment elsewhere. One of them said, "I *have to look for another job if my grievances are not taken*" (Worker, male). The negative perceptions, whether true or false regarding the grievance procedure have given workers conclusions of their own, that is; the internal grieving system is not helpful. One manager said, *"Workers think that the policy does not work for them rather action like absconding work would bring results, they think the policy is weak"* (Manager, male). Workers copying mechanism could be to team up and absent themselves from work as communication of dissatisfaction to the employer. Workers perceive that the latter yields better results than lodging a grievance. Workers showed repulsion to the GPP and perceive more power from group action than an individual attempt.

Copying mechanisms to the perceived legal jargon used in the GPP was responded to by a worker who said, *"The jargon is good as it is, if they (management) allows for an interpreter if one does not understand it"* (Worker, male). The participant perceives the use of an interpreter as an important aspect of the policy system. Lack of an interpreter would mean that there is no fairness on the party requiring clarification of terms in their own native language. Workers will cope better if terms in the GPP can be explained to them.

4.5.8 Theme 8: Fairness and effectiveness of the grievance policy procedure

Perceptions of workers regarding the GPP in terms of its fairness and effectiveness seemed crucial and the researcher facilitated the discussion in the study. The legitimacy of the GPP is determined by aspects such as the correct time taken to address the matter, representation of the employee and so forth. However, workers showed that if the policy does not help the worker it is deemed unfair. It must be noted, however, that this is despite checking if the grievance lodged was also reasonable to the employer and if the legitimacy of the process was taken into consideration

Clarke, Godfrey and Theron (2002); Darcy and Potgieter (2014); Hamberger (2009); Motlogelwa (2015), all agree that if a grievance does not provide fairness to workers, then workers' rights are violated, the system becomes futile and a resistance to make use of it is prone from the workers. Motlogelwa (2015) emphasises that if the workers are treated impartially, they will have an opportunity to present their side of the story without feeling prejudiced. A lack of neutrality from management has been expressed by workers hence the contribution in the underutilisation of the policy by the workers.

Perceptions with regards to fairness of the GPP at the company refuted these responses, *"The process must be helpful and I think it is not fair because the way it is done it does not help the worker"* (Worker, male). Another participant referred to the unfairness of the procedure emanating from the complexity of the process by saying, *"The process is not helpful because it is not easy"* (Worker, male). Procedural unfairness that cannot be ignored is the fact that workers feel uncomfortable addressing grievances with their immediate managers. Workers feel that they are aggrieved against the managers and due to strained power relations, workers feel that their concerns are not taken significantly by their superiors. As discussed by a succession of authors regarding perceptions of workers, such as: Petersen and Lewin (1992); Bacharach and Bambenger (2004); PSC (2007); Wilson and Blackmore (2013); Didaskalou, Roussi-Vergu and Andreou (2015), that it is usually in the perceptions of policy consumers that notions of fairness and justice are psychologically created. One participant said, "*The grievance is not fair because we have to report to the manager who is causing the grievance" (Worker, male).* One of the participants referred to the practical experiences shaping workers perceptions by saying, *"The procedure is not fair because I think if it was fair people could not be approaching the CCMA because they know that the policy is not fair"* (Worker, male). It is clear that workers perceive external help better than the internal organisational help. Evidently, workers agree that the internal grieving system is not fair to them.

Findings of the PSC have also pointed out that the high number of grievances lodged at national level as investigated by the PSC (2007), allude to the fact that grievances are not being resolved at organisational level but escalated to provisional and national level. The latter denotes to the same experiences at the organisation since workers prefer to report their grievances externally. On the other hand, fewer 3(30%) participants mentioned that the grievance

is technically fair. However, these participants pointed to the fact that managers and people involved in the process or personal clashes between the employer and the worker may cause unfairness of the handling of the procedure. One of the participants said, *"The grievance is fair in the way it is written, unfair if the people participating are unfair. If it is treated without fairness it cannot help in anyway*" (Worker, male). Another similar response was, *"…at the end of the day if the procedure is adhered to and all parties are involved in the resolutions it is fair but if the management does not give the grieving employee [worker] a fair platform then it is not fair"* (Worker, male). 70% of participants perceived the grievance policy as procedurally unfair. It was through a closed ended question to determine the fairness or the unfairness of the procedure that these results were obtained:

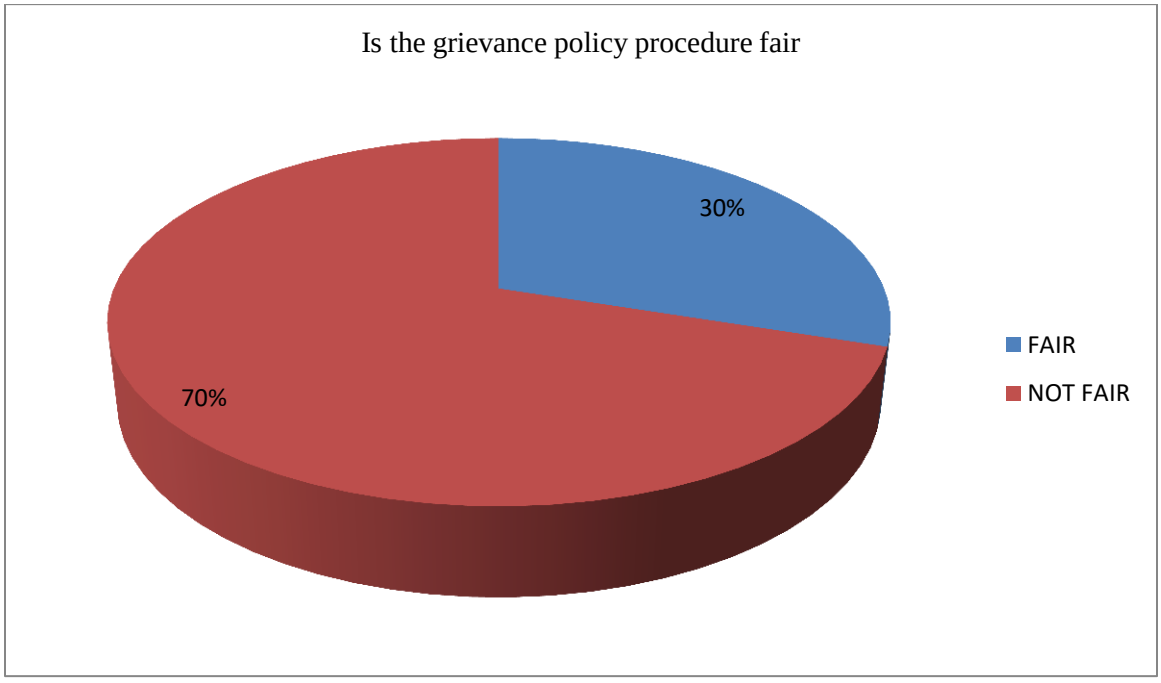

Figure 6: Fairness of GPP

4.5.8.1 Maltreatment

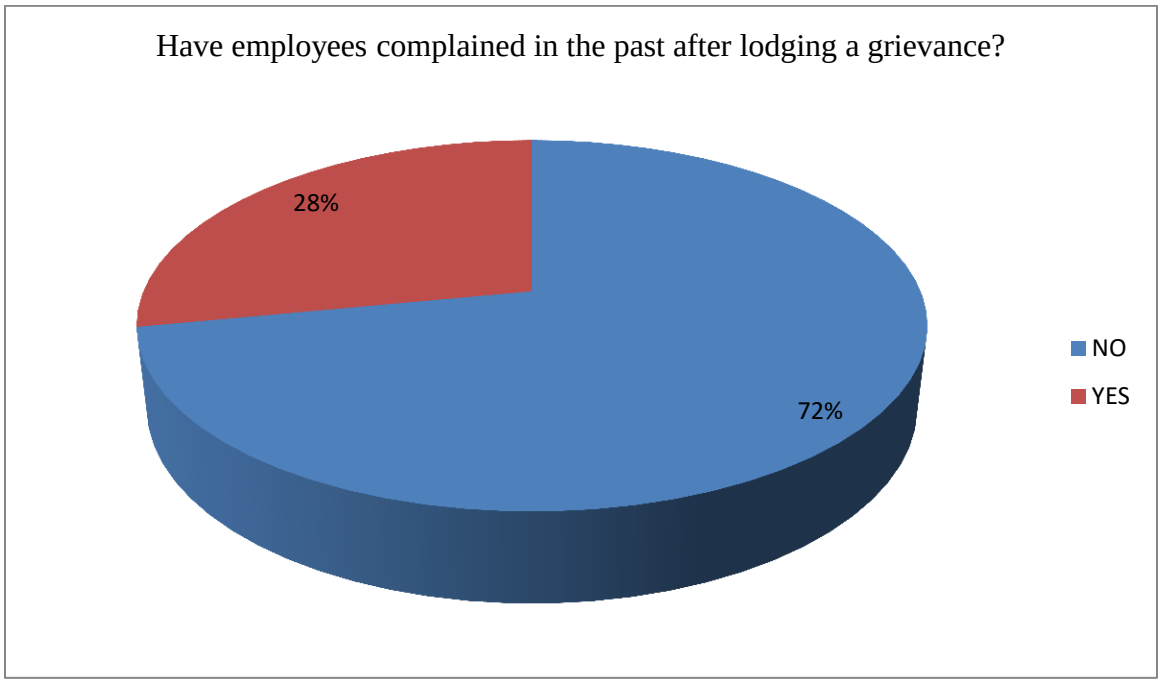

Figure 7: Maltreatment after lodging a grievance

The above closed ended question was posed to managers in an attempt to determine the treatment of workers after lodging a grievance. A follow up open-ended question in that regard aided the researcher to incorporate the experiences of managers regarding maltreated of workers after formalising dissatisfaction. A positive response resulted from the above question with 7 (70%) participants responding that workers have not reported any maltreatment after lodging a grievance. Managers perceived that there are few complaints of maltreatment that come to their attention in different ways after a worker has lodged a grievance. The result may be positive due to lesser usage of the grievance policy; however, narrative responses substantiated the findings as managers elaborated further.

The study established that most managers that reported not experiencing a complaint after a worker lodged a grievance never had an opportunity to hear or file a grievance solely because the task is not in the manager's direct line of duty. Responses from managers that have not been directly involved with workers grievances cannot be concluded upon. One of the managers that responded positively to having had a post grievance complain had this to say:

For those that have lodged a proper grievance through the right channel have not complained of maltreatment, but those that are grumbling without clearly saying their grievances have problems with their manager… (Manager, male).

It is the manager's perceptions that when the procedure is followed well there is lesser likelihood for a post grievance complain. Another manager said:

One employee [worker] did come to me complaining of being unfairly treated and said that the management was defensive ...when he was on his off-laying time, he phoned me to say he was not coming back (Manager,male).

The worker could have failed to cope with the possibility of sour relations with management. The ILO (2013); Motlogelwa (2015); PSC (2007); Wood, Saundry and Latreille (2014) and many other successive authors believe that in many organisations with no unionisation, lodging a grievance counts back to the aggrieved and creates sour working relations. Other managers that also had the same experience of having workers complain after lodging a grievance indicated that relations with managers are strained and workers feel that the system is harsh on them. One of the managers stated, "*I have had two employees [workers] that complained after lodging grievances that they felt their managers became even harsher, I had to arrange a meeting with HR directly…"* (Manager, male). It is evident from the latter transcript that tensions across power relations worsen after a worker has lodged a grievance.

4.5.9 Theme 9: Feelings and emotions associated with the pre and post outcomes of lodging a grievance

Lodging a grievance at the organisation was associated with fear, blame, confusion, anxiety, possible embarrassment, possible strained work relations, inability to be resilient throughout the process and lack of confidentiality amongst other aspects. One worker stated that, "*I fear losing my job that will take care of my family; I think it is better to work grumbling…"* (Worker, male). Workers are afraid to lose their jobs as this jeopardises not only them but their significant others particularly dependants of the worker. Hamberger (2009) substantiates facts that workers do not live in isolation and occupational stress can affect their families as well. Mubezi (2013) and Polster (2011) agree that workers may keep quiet about work dissatisfaction not because it does not affect them grossly but due to fear of an unpredictable outcome of addressing work challenges. Another challenge associated with job loss is also a loss of status as an employed

individual which creates trauma associated with the possible negative change of being unemployed.

Another response was transcribed, *"I think the manager may not like me (after lodging a grievance) …"* (Worker, male). Motlogelwa (2015) discusses the fear of lodging grievances by mentioning that there are perceptions that lodging a grievance limits career options while Coskly (2013), agrees that harassment following lodging of a grievance is another challenge that workers are faced with. There seems to be perceived threats in lodging grievances, however, should aggrieved workers keep grievances within themselves then the outcomes of lodging a grievance remain inconclusive.

The fear of possible unfair grievance outcomes was apparent amongst workers. One worker said: "*You tend to think a lot because you do not know if managers influence each other but if you know the law then it becomes not so much threatening*" (Worker, male). The workers experience psychological tension which is stress as the GPP will lead to many thoughts. One participant expressed the feelings and anxiety that would be associated with lodging a grievance and said, "*I will be **scared** and **confused** to think about what will happen if I complain. What comes to the mind is that what if people do not understand you, or believe you or if you are not going to be helped"* (Worker, female). Workers have built in scenarios about lodging a grievance that negative and do not support attempts to use the internal grieving system. Many times, there are perceived injustices and conflicts in an organization hence the presence of a well-coordinated grievance handling structure may assist in improving such circumstances (Hamberger, 2009).

Managers also develop a negative attitude towards those who file grievances and regard them as bad workers. The perceived fear of job loss expressed by the workers could have been perpetuated by the experiences of the workers at the organisation, concerning some of their colleagues that never returned to work after lodging a grievance with the DoL and the CCMA. Justice plays a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and feelings of workers and influences the attitudes of workers about the GPP.

4.5.10 Theme 10: Lack of management skills and possible remedial action

Strained manager-worker relations show that managers have not taken appropriate action to improve work relations. Managers expressed that the GPP enables a reflective image about managers-worker administration and relations. One participant said:

> *The policy shows us how we present ourselves to the employees like now it seems that we have bad blood with the employees [workers]because if HR can keep having meetings that there are cases that were straight away taken to Labour department it means that we are not recognised as a team of managers* (Manager, male).

The above quotes depict that managers perceive more strained relations at the organisation following the fact that workers do not report grievances internally. Another worker shared that, "*Managers makes us feel uncomfortable at work…"* (Worker, male). Managers that fail their subordinates, leave workers in a desperate state of isolation as far as recognition of human resources is concerned.

The mirror image that the grievance procedure affords reflected poor management skills in this study. Superiors are not easily approached by their subordinates, hence the reporting channel goes to the external environment. A barrier influenced by power relations and unsound differences between the managers and workers point to poor management and administration skills.

Another worker who lodged a grievance narrated their experience that included these sentiments:

> *...I sat for the different meetings, they were asking me to motivate why I can do the construction work and with my age if I was going to do some of the tough jobs …I agreed to all the terms and conditions then I waited more than six months and I feared that everyone knew the story … I was frustrated …* (Worker, female).

The worker approached a manager regarding their dissatisfaction and that particular manager did not want to get involved, stating that he was not involved in the recruitment process since the dissatisfaction involved a work position. The worker experienced a lot of strain According to Sackey and Sanda (2009), the specific components of the PIE model are the work

environment, the person and strain. The latter factors are connected; one affecting the other hence there is a need to break the cycle that may strain workers. Implementation of the binocular vision theory would curb some feelings of "not being cared for" as experienced by the workers. The binocular theory utilises a microscopic lens metaphor that pays attention on the issues close-up such as everyday struggles during the workers day in and day out duties and this will enable addressing the grievances much quicker and thus caring for workers. On the other hand, the theory also has a metaphoric telescopic lens focusing on the large picture such as policies and if these are viewed in the larger picture, the employer would show concern to workers and workers will in turn have a collaborative response to the managers. The views offered by the binocular way of viewing workers will bring a holistic picture of interconnectivity**.** Managers that lack skills in managing people can easily learn from models and theories of occupational improvement.

Asewe (2016) supports that managers must get training in their roles and generally on how to help workers, than to assume a non-helping stance to a subordinate as this will make workers feel uncared for. Time was wasted in the case of the last verbatim response showing a lack of skill from management to maintain legitimacy of the procedure. Time consumption in a grievance process starts when the immediate manager does not find interest in listening and attempting to resolve a concern of a worker, Prasadini et al, (2008) asserts that grievances must be addressed at the earliest opportunity possible or else they can be a cause of profound consequences in an institution.

A participant mentioned that: *"My tasks were unfairly allocated and this caused sour relations between me and my manager. I had to approach HR to have my query resolved"* (Worker, male). The unfair allocation of tasks was solely the manager's responsibility to attend to and the issue could have been resolved between the manager and the grieving worker informally. Asewe (2016) alludes that workers' grievances may mean that a manager's behavior was inappropriate or the manager failed to abide by the worker's right. Mubezi (2013) additionally state that in a specific group of workers many grievances are in response to specific behaviors shown by their seniors which can be avoided through better management skills.

A lack of management skills exacerbates workplace vulnerabilities that are prone to challenge the worker and manager. Experiences at the organization have concluded a need for better management administration, one worker stated that, *"Supervisors and managers also have no managerial skills and do not know how to treat people"* (Worker, male). Regardless of the fact that it is the duty of all; managers or workers to work towards professional, non-personal and productive work relations in a workplace. Managers are expected to have advanced skills to bring a facilitation of workplace relations to achieve cohesion in an organisation. One participant said:

> *"Supervisors and manager are unfair and do not have managerial skills and do not know how to treat people and if you feel ill-treated you can report… people are given more incentives even the way they are off it is not clear if they put in leave or what. I can see this business looks like it has family members so if they go off all the time and you ask for off and you are not given it is a problem … such issues will make you to stand up for your rights* (Worker, male).

The response of the participant denotes that trust issues between managers and workers are prevalent and this has negatively affected the occupational environment. This worker perceives managers as having no managerial skills through their unfairness. The worker also perceived existence of nepotism and favouritism, which all together creates a mind-set of a selfish management team.

The SDA 97 of 1998 [4]aims at developing workers skills, not only for their competitive advantage at the workplace but also to improve the quality of workers' lives and support worker job markets mobility. In this case, recommendations by the SDA would curb lack of knowledge of the employees if adhered to. Managers and the HR departments are the channels to facilitate employee knowledge. The study revealed that management at the organisation has failed to meet the expectations of some labour law regulations and have failed to empower the workers of their crucial work policies.

[4] Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.(2010). www.saqa.org.za/docs/legislation/2010/act97.pdf

Workers perceived that the best way to get to be competent and know the GPP is through being coached, having some training sessions without waiting for workers to complain first as expressed, "*Employees [workers] must have an opportunity to be taught about the policy through facilitative sessions, attend training and not wait until a problem strikes"* (Worker, male). Section 23 (1) [5]emphasises on human rights and the protection of human rights, employee rights are also human rights that ought to be observed. One of the workers expressed that, "*In meetings the management must focus on the employees [workers] not only on how the work is being done but also to talk about the difficulties we are facing…"* (Worker, male). This worker emphasises on the interest of the employer that is mainly on output of work and not human resources as an asset that needs to be taken care of. Marchington et al. (2016) agrees with Einarsen et al (2016), that best organisational achievements are seen were the major efforts of input are invested in the worker.

Learning in a work environment has been identified as a form of primary knowledge to the worker as discussed by Kitching (2008), who mentions that an induced effort of learning from the employer impacts primary knowledge in the work environment to empower the workers. Empowering workers, avoids chances of exploitation of workers by the employer. It is a common feature to realise that the lack of knowledge regarding policies that the organisation is not taking responsibility towards is already a form of exploitation and such perceptions paint negative attitudes towards the whole work environment. One of the participants related to the findings of Kitching (2008), by echoing these sentiments, "*Awareness must be done through workshops and so that they get to familiarise with the procedure,"* (Manager, male). Perceptions of deprivation of policy knowledge gives an impression that such strategies to help workers are non-existent but they stand as mere belongings of the employer. Knowledge sharing regarding the GPP can improve the policy utilisation and administration at the organisation. Managers lack managerial skills by failure to empower their workers.

Another participant perceived that managers must involve workers in the ownership of the policies. This may be a tedious activity considering that when policies are drafted, they are not stand-alone policies but are substantiated and they co-exist with other policies and regulations for example from the LRA, ILO, the constitution and so forth. This may mean

[5] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No 108 0f 1998

workers need to be well versed with all these disciplines before partaking in decision making. A transformation in the workplace is of much great importance to facilitate friendly working conditions by supporting workers with not only their concerns but also integrating their lifestyles to their occupations (Moss and Deven 2015). Supporting workers will provide a link that bridges issues from were conflict could sprout. Managers therefore need to be proactive in creating and maintaining a fair workplace.

Brand et al. (2016) highlighted the relationship amongst conflict, grievances and disputes as co-relating incidences. The existence of grievances alludes to the fact that there is rampant conflict within the organisation and as it is not well managed it progresses to being a grievance or a dispute. A lack of management skills in conflict resolution is evident at the organisation by the recorded transcripts, *"Employees [workers] are at times switched to avoid conflict, when the HR personnel approaches me for example for switch [transfer of a worker to another department without the worker's consent] I know there is a reason"* (Manager, male). ILO (2013) substantiates the negativity of avoiding conflict by mentioning that avoidance is an ineffective way of resolving matters. Motlogelwa (2015) states that the transfer of a member of staff who lodges a grievance amounts to an act of victimisation and should not be used as a means of resolving conflict.

Avoidance of conflict is a managerial strategy in attempting to maintain peace at the organisation deduced from the manager's sentiments earlier on, regarding switching workers within the different teams. Switching workers is not an effective way to deal with grievances in a workplace because mere avoidance of grievances does not mean grievances are solved. Managers at the SME construction company lack effective ways of conflict resolution. Hamberger (2009) acknowledges that effective conflict management relies heavily on the ability of managers to generate trust and create good communication with workers, thereby assisting informal and speedy resolution that can curb progression of a grievance to the formal stages. A significant emphasis on the confidence and competence of managers in dealing with difficult issues and working within the emotional contexts of workplace conflict is called for. One participant said:

… Usually our workers have problems with their own supervisors at times it is successful when they talk within themselves but usually it is difficult for an employee to clear out issues with their supervisor. People are afraid to an extent that when it is a complaint regarding the supervisor one just reports to CCMA. During meetings we usually pick up friction amongst the supervisor and the employee but it becomes difficult to facilitate it at that moment (Manager, female).

This participant deduces that there is an established revelation of workplace turmoil in terms of manager and worker relations. The study revealed an unstable nature of work relations at the company; friction between managers and workers is noticeable during meetings but there is no way to address it. When understanding this level of conflict mismanagement from the PIE model it is clear that workers are not supported in conjunction to their environment. Managers have an obligation to assess workers and relate worker's support to the workers' environmental and contextual needs. It is in the mismanagement of conflict that workers look for external help as explained by Bacharach and Bambenger (2004); Motlogelwa (2015); Pavlak, et al. (1992); Public Service Commission (2007) who confirm that high rates of grievance filing reflect ineffective management of workplace conflict specifically in non-unionised companies.

One worker pointed to the sensitive issues erupting from mismanagement of worker's grieving ways by commenting on the Marikana incident and echoed these words:

The whole thing must be removed and there be another way to have workers deal with problems because the policy thing doesn't work…people at Marikana died but there is this policy so what did it do for them… (Worker, female).

Workers feel that there are exposed to some form of anticipated danger within their grieving systems that are not helpful. Results of the study revealed an unchanging trend of reporting and laying grievances in organisations that has created perceptions of workers not being prioritised and appreciated which creates tension in a workplace.

The role of managers in nurturing and supporting workers at the organisation regarding their grievances was insignificant. An acknowledgement of workers as valuable human resources is crucial and hence to be able to achieve cohesion workers must be assessed at different levels to

determine their needs while at the same time the assessment sessions can cement work relations. In the second phase (promotive interventions) of the OSWPM, a worker's social functioning can be supported, one worker said: "We *cannot use the procedure because we don't have any information about it*" (worker, female). The workers can be accommodated since the promotive phase promotes social functioning and well-being of workers through prevention, education and development as discussed by Van Breda & Du Plessis (2009). Induction sessions towards the GPP would be promoted, workers would learn about the GPP in a systematic manner with ample time allowing workers to have a better understanding of their policy through the second phase of the OSWPM. Following that some workers said, "*The GPP cannot help the workers it belongs to the company to benefit the employer"* (Worker, male). The sentiments deduce that workers feel excluded from the policy and have no sense of ownership. The OSWPM would rectify such perceptions if the third phase (work person interventions) of the OSWPM were implemented since in this phase the worker is viewed in relation to the employer and to the work environment. Synergy would be easily created, curbing negative perceptions relating to power dynamics. In this case the worker will know what a grievance entails and what the employer expects and in return there is much mutual understanding from both sides and a collaborative way of looking at the grievance policy can be achieved.

Instances where workers expressed these sentiments, *"The whole thing must be removed people at Marikana died but there is this policy so what did it do for them…"* (Worker, female). The fourth phase (workplace interventions) of the OSWPM can remedy such fears as it will stabilise the work environment by focusing more on the workplace, the policies, work structures and processes that shape workers. Dissatisfied workers tend to divert to other ways of resolving their issues as the study has already indicated that employees perceive that power dynamics are threatening and they need to voice as a team which may unpredictable erupt as strikes as workers do relate to the Marikana incident. Application of the fourth phase "workplace interventions" of the OSWPM would enhance strategic planning towards a better management of grievances reducing violent reactions.

4.5.8.2 Nature and frequency of policy induction

Nine 9 (90%) of managers mentioned that workers are made aware of the grievance policy upon being recruited. One participant regarding induction echoed, *"It is the mandate of the company*

to tell the employees [workers] their rights about grievances." (Manager, male). The managers perceive that workers are aware of the GPP since there are told about it. Induction is supported by Marchington et al. (2016), who states that it is the right of workers to know their systems of which HR personnel must facilitate. One participant said:

> *I have never seen the procedure I remember Ms X telling me how things work around here when we feel there is a problem but I do not know that I must know the process to follow but I know that I tell my manager I think my manager can take it up (*Worker, male).

It is evident that there is no in-depth facilitation of the policy. The response highlighted that workers do not perceive the grievance policy as a policy that they must know but rather perceived it as the manager's responsibility. Data collected from the study revealed that workers are made aware of the GPP with all other policies at once soon after being appointed and before signing the contract. Einarsen et al. (2016), mentions that communicating the policy on a once off incident is insufficient and the policy may be taken for granted hence it is essential to still communicate the existence of the policy after launching it. Regarding the frequency of policy awareness to workers, one of the managers had this to say:

> *We do make employees [workers] aware of the GPP when they sign the contracts; we sit down with them and explain it. We only go back to the employee's [worker's] contract if a grievance arrives to say we spoke about this before you signed the contract* (Manager, male).

Deducing from the sentiments, the GPP is only referred to should an employee feel aggrieved. Implying that, should no grievance be raised, then the induction time is the only time of discussing the policy at the time an employee is excited about getting a job before the reality of challenges strikes at a later stage. The most damming findings from the SME construction company is the failure of workers to comment on the language used in the GPP mainly because they have not seen the grievance policy as one worker expressed that, *"I do not know the language used in the policy document, I have not seen it" (Workers, male).* This aspect denies workers of a feeling of involvement in the company policy, hence the perceptions that this policy belongs to the company and management excluding all workers becomes apparent. One

participant said, *"I guess I would furnish every employee [worker] with the policy, discuss it and have them ask questions and learn what document it is"* (Manager, male). At the time of the study none of the workers had a copy of the GPP. Marchington et al. (2016) mentions that policies are ignored as they are not taken seriously by management who do not realize the need to emphasize on them, instead, they seemingly become organizational office property and not available to workers. Policies at the SME construction company are like belongings of the company and management only, where no worker has the policy as a document to refer to, little knowledge and understanding of the grievance procedure is due to insufficient induction.

Managers also perceived that workers need time out of work for inductions. In addition, managers agreed that workers must be furnished with the policy document so that there is an opportunity for workers to reflect on the document. The once off induction at the time of recruitment was perceived insufficient. One manager expressed that, *"I think I would schedule and allow out of work time for inductions and not only talk about policies after recruiting an employee [worker]*" (Manager, female). Induction and re-addressing issues of work policies must be an on-going exercise; policies that are never emphasised or exercised become non-existent and may deprive the organisation's positive growth (Marchington et al., 2016). Other workers expressed that, *"The legal jargon must be explained to the worker so that the policy does not only benefit the employer since the worker may find it difficult to understand"* (Worker, male). If the PIE theory were utilised in the organisation, assessment of the worker's knowledge and level of education would guide managers towards the best ways of inducting workers.

Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2011), substantiates that all work policies must contain a formal procedure however, an effective procedure is one that has a far wider purpose and includes guiding statements. The latter kind of document can be very beneficial to workers that may not have proper induction since the document will be very easy to understand without confusing vocabulary. Marchington et al. (2016); Moss and Deven (2015), both agree that managers and supervisors must also keep embracing learning in order to effectively assist workers. One manager echoed these sentiments:

I think I would consult with CCMA and labour so that they can team up with HR and teach the stuff. Because no one is immune if I have a challenge regardless of the fact that I am a manager I have to report it so we all need to keep learning (Manager, male).

Motlogelwa (2015) agrees that everyone involved in the GPP needs to have all facts right towards practising it. Einarsen et al. (2016), adds that proper training and induction is necessary after drafting a policy, communication in this regard is vital in policy enforcement and promotion. One participant perceived the time for induction as insufficient by echoing these sentiments, *"I think it is done hurriedly and the employee [worker] is too excited before they face the reality that grievances are not an exception in the work place"* (Manager, female). These sentiments do show that managers and workers both agree that the time for induction is not enough for workers to grasp the concepts of the policy. Another participant added*:*

I learnt from the other job about the GPP …I know they also have it here, I was briefly told about it ... but I do not know their steps (Worker, male).

Clearly, the worker has learnt something about the GPP from a previous company and not necessarily at the current organization. The worker knows that the grievance policy is a process of stages, requiring support or representation and that lodging a grievance must not come with any punishment. The worker further mentions that at his current organization he was **briefly** told about the grievance policy but do not necessarily know the steps of lodging a grievance at the company. The latter denotes to poor induction substantiated by Motlogelwa (2015), who adds that in any organization, information for workers must be shared adequately for workers to gain knowledge should they be required to use it.

There is information overload on the day a worker signs up the contract as all policies and procedures are verbally discussed prior to signing up the contract, evident from these sentiments, *"…an employee [worker] is inducted on all the policies at once before signing up the contract*" (Manager, female). Workers can hardly grasp one concept of the GPP due to the organisational loophole depriving workers of an opportunity to explore the policies.

4.5.10.2 Review of policy

Reviewing of policies aims to remedy constraints and failures of the policy. Marchington et al. (2016), emphasises that policy reviews aim to improve the policy and can improve usage and

utilisation of the policy. On the other hand, Wilson and Blackmore (2013), ascertain that a policy review reflects management efforts in creating occupational harmony. During the study, the managers all voiced that there were unsure of when the grievance was last reviewed. One participant having been working at the company for four years said, *"Since I started working here 4 years ago that has never been looked at" (Manager, female).* Evidently, the GPP has not been reviewed in the last four years; however, the company document does have a review date. Human resource documents seem to be compiled according to regulations governing organisations; however, the practicality of implementation is not achieved. Despite litigation cases that the organisation has underwent, whereby in most cases workers won over the company, the company has still not reflected on their internal grieving procedure. Moss and Deven (2015) ascertain that review of policies is necessary in changing times to suit life trends and other issues that could directly affect workers.

Managers are aware of their duties regarding policy reviews but do not seem to implement them. There seems to be very little studies towards the auditing of the HRM and training therefore reasons behind non-performance of such crucial duties are difficult to conclude on. Another aspect is that there is a less utilisation of the GPP hence no consideration of reviewing of the policy. Policy reviews aim to remedy previous negative experiences, denoting that the organisation has not shown eagerness in improving their GPP.

4.5.11 Theme11: Unionisation

At the time of the study, the notion of unionisation emerged due to an expression of a burning need from workers towards voicing as a team, which seemed to be an apparent perception amongst participants. Therefore, the question on unionisation was only posed to the workers as it had emerged relevantly to their need. The need for teamwork triggered an assumption that perceptions of the benefits of having a GPP could change due to presence of a worker's union and the study aimed at clarifying the assumption.

A worker shared that:

> *…we spoke about it jokingly as a group to say that person leaves all the work to us… maybe because we spoke as a group, we had power and the manager managed to share the work equally* (Worker, male).

The latter denotes that group representation may be more powerful than having one worker voicing a concern. Deducing from the above transcript, there is more power in voicing as a team than as an individual. Power within the group supports the prediction that a worker representing council such as a union would better propel, organise, administrate and manage to achieve positive outcome on grievances. Non-unionised and private institutions such as the case of the SME construction Company; seem to achieve grievance settlements to a lesser extent due to absence of unions which could otherwise assist in that regard

Regarding unionisation, 9(45%) of workers perceived a union as an asset and showed trust in unions to fulfil obligations set for them and in this case in helping with the GPP. The main aim of a union should be to assist the work environment through aiding workers to attain an ideal working environment. Unions achieve an ideal environment by supporting and addressing worker's concerns, one participant shared these sentiments, "*A union is number one because they will stand for us and help us to work as a team"* (Worker, male). Another participant added, "*Definitely having a union will increase our power and we will have leaders that feel for us"* (Worker, male).

The latter shows that unions' role does help to a greater extent in addressing workplace issues. A union that works in the best interest of workers; will be practically effective since there are so many organisational internal factors that may accommodate a biased union which may act inappropriately. On the other hand, a possible change of having a union seemed uneasy since participants had no idea about the possible effects of a worker's union due to lack of exposure about unions. 35% of workers shared the same concern expressed by one worker as follows, *"It is difficult to determine the help of a union as we have never been exposed to it"* (Worker, male).

20% of workers were objective about the presence of unions and stated that the effectiveness of unions was circumstantial, depending on the individuals propelling the union, and was expressed by one of the participants as follows, *"The grievance procedure can be better if there is a worker's union with union leaders that are knowledgeable and have people concerns at heart"* (Worker, male). Amongst the 35 % of workers indicating their uncertainties about a union, 6 workers pointed out that unions may worsen the situation of workers as one of them echoed, *"I think unions can be part of management, I do not know how fair they are. I do not*

think unions are helpful they can be a spy for management…" (Worker, male). Participants added that it is better for workers to unite amongst themselves as they are in the same situation fearing that a union may become another small management team towards the workers. One worker echoed that, "*Unions also want to eat from us so it is the same with not having one. But if we workers have one voice it is much better*" (Worker, male). Workers fear that the presence of a union is unpredictable, as it may not offer their expectations of the role of a union.

Findings of the study reveal that there is a lot of anxiety and uncertainty that a union can effectively help workers towards a better grieving system. The main barrier for workers affecting workplace unionisation is the lack of external support for worker's unionisation efforts (Kallerberg, 2009). Another participant said, *"W*e *have never had one here so I am not sure"* (Worker, female). This participant does not know the pros and cons of having a workers' union by virtue of not having experienced it, meaning the external environment of the organisation which may be socio-economic and perhaps the political affairs of South Africa may not be supporting the thriving and spreading of workers unions. Enhernberg and Smith (2016), support that workers may find courage in addressing the common issues at work with one voice as it equally affects them. Another worker supported employee teamwork by saying, *"I think if people voice as a team with leaders going in for everyone it is better and there are no pointing fingers because if you are one there is a lot of risk"* (Worker, male). Workers feel safer addressing their complains collectively than as individuals and much better results are anticipated since the addressed challenge becomes a collective and burning organisational need rather than a personal or individual need.

Another perception amongst the consulted workers regarding utilisation of a union is that of lack of knowledge:

> *Yes, definitely the union can do the queries for us because they know everything about the complaints and the policy and also the law so it can be easier and no one can look down upon them because they are trained for the grievance* (Worker, male).

This shows that workers feel looked down upon as they are of less knowledge regarding the law and policies. Pollert and Charlwood (2009), agree that unrepresented workers are less likely to use formal grievance procedures. Workers perceive that they are belittled and taken for

granted should they not have support. Workers perceive a union or team work as a form of protection and power. However, workers did not conclude that a union will positively affect their desired changes in terms of the GPP.

4.6. SUMMARY

This study explored perceptions of workers regarding their GPP. Workers (non-managerial) and managers (managerial staff) were included as they are all employees at SME Construction Company. Workers have shown an understanding of knowing what a grievance is as they could define it. Most of the workers voiced that they did not know the grievance policy as they had not seen it and they are not taught about it. Despite the ability to define what a grievance is, the workers lacked the procedural knowledge of the policy.

Workers perceived the GPP as a work document that is meant to be at work due to regulations but does not help them. The GPP has been viewed as an unfair procedure meant to only benefit the organisation. Workers mentioned that they do not make use of the GPP as they lack support and they perceive it as a procedure that causes a lot of stress and anxiety of which the worst fear is job loss. Some workers have resorted to working with suppressed grievances, some leave after lodging the grievance while others are transferred from one team to the other should tension in their initial groups be identified. Workers' views regarding a union was unclear, most workers do not have experience of a union and illustrated that it was unpredictable if a union was going to be effective. In that regard, 40% workers perceived that team work within the organisation was rather better than a union. Team work was also perceived better than individual lodging of a grievance since team work would eliminate being undermined, but would rather escalate worker power. Workers did not conclude on the benefit of a union as an advantage of power, some workers perceived that unions may be inspired by the organisation and have lesser interest about the worker.

Managers knew precisely what a grievance is and what it entails. The challenge is that not all managers had an HR function hence some could not answer some questions relating to direct HR duties. Managers perceived that workers do not make use of the grievance policy due to their lack of knowledge. Another reason of less utilisation of the GPP was that conflict is avoided by switching workers should tension be identified. Other aspects not supporting the use of the GPP were the first step to report to the immediate supervisor/manager who in most cases

is said to have caused the grievance. Delay in finalisation, lack of confidentiality, lack of support to the grieving employee and possible litigation processes did not support utilization of the GPP. Managers did concur with workers that reporting a grievance to the immediate manager was the worst challenge terminating the procedure from being used. Managers also believed that they needed training and further learning with regard to the GPP as they are also consumers, facilitators and decision makers of the policy.

The SME construction company voiced an issue of powerlessness as it is non-unionised which should be a reason why workers supress their grievances. However, workers remained uncertain that the union will be effective especially considering that workers were not exposed to a union. Substantiating, the possible plight of non-unionised organisation, Pollert and Charlwood (2009), agree that unrepresented workers are less likely to use formal grievance procedures. Results show that there is more risk for one worker to voice out a grievance, a lack of power and neutrality weakness the willingness of proceeding with a grievance. Justice is therefore not being achieved when a worker is not heard simply because they stand alone while other workers may be silent about the same circumstances around them. Workers resort to being silent about their dissatisfaction, hoping to get employment elsewhere or rather reporting their grievances directly to the CCMA or the DoL as their copying mechanisms. Regardless of the fact that the GPP has a review date it was found out that in the last four years there has not been any review of the policy.

CHAPTER 5

5. KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. *INTRODUCTION*

This section marks the final chapter of the research study, consisting of the summary of key findings, the conclusion and recommendations of this research. This study aimed at exploring the perceptions of a SME construction company's non-management employees (workers) and management employees (managers) regarding their GPP. The study revealed that despite the fact that managers and workers had both similar and different perceptions about their GPP they shared to a higher extent the same sentiments derived from their intuition and experiences at the organisation.

In this section, an outline of objectives and how they were met is discussed. A summary of key findings follows; synthesising a holistic view of managers and workers regarding their perceptions on the grievance procedure. A culture and trend that has emanated from the perceptions of managers and workers is discussed and the causative external and internal factors are examined. The analysis of the culture of grievances and the perceptions of workers and managers at SME construction company is brought out. A generalised culture of perceptions of employees that are likely to prevail in non-unionised organisation regarding policies, particularly the grievance policy are discussed.

An evaluation of perceptions of workers and managers at SME construction company organisation was laid out in this chapter. Facilitative measures are discussed in support of the positives brought about by the perceptions of workers and their managers regarding their policy and amendments are discussed to remedy the negatives. Recommendations were presented regarding the perceptions of the SME construction company workers and managers about their grievance policy. SME construction company experiences were discussed and how they impacted negatively or positively towards workers and managers. Objectives of the study were also discussed including how they were met and eventually a conclusion summed up the study revealing how the aim of the study was fulfilled.

5.2. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY IN RELATION TO SET OBJEVTIVES

This study explored the perceptions of SME construction company employees (managers and workers) regarding the company's grievance procedures and the objectives set brought about the following key findings, respectively:

5.2.1 Objective 1: To explore general understanding of the GPP by the workers at SME construction company

Participants showed remarkable understanding of the term grievance and they related it mostly to a work problem. The grievance was described as a problem leading to dissatisfaction either towards the work environment or the management or employer. Workers showed in their responses that they perceived their grievances as being caused mostly by salary issues, unsound work relations between managers and their subordinates and general unfairness in the workplace. Workers reported that they needed to be equipped with more knowledge in order to be able to stand for their rights of lodging grievances and achieve fair outcomes thereof. Most of the workers highlighted that the grievance policy is designed by management and therefore was compiled to suit the employer, lacking neutrality in catering fairly for the workers. Workers feel it is unlikely to get justice through the grievance system as they are not involved in designing it. Workers also perceived power dynamics as a threat restricting them from lodging grievances since most grievances are perceived to be caused by the managers themselves, while the grievance is required to be reported to the same managers who have more control than workers.

Regardless of the know-how in defining what a grievance is, workers had no knowledge of the unfolding of the procedural steps of the policy. Workers knew particularly the first step of the grievance, it was evident that workers lack knowledge of their GPP and therefor use it to a lesser extent. The workers perceived that the grievance policy is designed by management without their input hence it becomes difficult for them to use it. Exclusion of workers in designing the policy supported workers' perceptions of lack of knowledge regarding the full understanding of the policy and this brings perceived complexities of the policy. The policy is perceived unfair before it is attempted probably due to anxieties associated with initiating a process while lacking knowledge to complete it. The negative perceptions that workers have, were built mainly through their observations and not necessarily their experience in lodging a grievance. Workers feel that lodging a grievance comes with vast negative consequences which can be curbed by avoiding the utilisation of the grievance, being silent or looking for alternative

employment. Workers were not decisive on their need to have a union and there is no clear conclusion that unions will definitely aid workers as expected. It is rather perceived that grievances can be better addressed through the teaming up of workers with one voice other than individual relaying of dissatisfaction. Workers also emphasised that lodging an individual grievance singles them out as bad workers, putting their jobs at risk. Some form of power in terms of numbers (teaming up) was perceived as an advantage that would make workers to be heard rather than using the grievance procedure**.**

The objective to establish the understanding of employees was achieved; workers can define the concept grievance to a larger extent. Theoretical knowledge of the concept was not doubted however participants lacked the understanding of the steps of the policy, hence lacking the knowledge to utilise it.

5.2.2. Objective 2: To explore general understanding of the GPP by the management at SME construction company

The SME construction company managers showed a full understanding of the concept grievance despite findings of the study that established a lack of knowledge of the managers in effectively administrating the policy. Managers at the SME construction company understand the theoretical component of the grievance however have shown many loopholes in effective implementation of the policy. Managers viewed a grievance as work dissatisfaction towards the work environment, emanating due to unfulfilled promises. Managers, further on included in their definitions, that a grievance is an expression that would not only be verbal but a formal complaint put in writing.

Managers perceive that workers are; inducted regarding the policy once off before signing the contract hence they know about the procedure. It is the managements' perceptions that the grievance procedure having a series of steps could be easy for workers to follow. Managers have also shown that there is an expectation from their side for workers to be in a position of knowing the grievance fully and be accountable in any way since managers believed that they inform workers about the policy. It was established from the managers that workers do not use the right channel of reporting their grievances. There was a general understanding from managers that those workers who report their grievances in the right way usually get the grievances resolved amicably and those that do not use the right channel experience challenges in having their grievances resolved amicably.

The objective to assess managerial knowledge was achieved; managers know the structure of the procedure and understand what the procedure must afford and how it must be utilised. However, the procedural implementation of the policy established ignorance of management. The latter was deduced when the theoretical understanding of the policy was according to labour regulations yet the practical integration thereof was established to be antagonistic. Managers have also failed to share their knowledge to their subordinates hence they concurred the lack of knowledge of the workers regarding the GPP.

5.2.3. Objective 3: To understand affordances of the grievance procedure as viewed by workers at the SME construction company

Workers view the GPP as a tool that can assist them to have their occupational dissatisfaction heard although there are stumbling blocks within the organisation hindering that achievement. The minimal usage of the policy at the organisation gave a platform to air workers' dissatisfaction and afforded workers an opportunity to reflect to management the needs of the work environment. This study managed to reveal the negative nature of relations existing between managers and workers at the organisation which has promoted further resentment to using the policy.

Affordances of the GPP were established; there is less benefit of the GPP as expected of its nature and purpose. The GPP must serve a purpose of resolving dissatisfaction of workers and this is to a far less extent achieved. The GPP must reflect workers' needs, however at the few attempts to make use of it, the GPP revealed more of stumbling blocks instead. Complexity of the procedure, lack of knowledge of workers to use the policy, strained power relations between managers and workers, delay in finalisation time, lack of neutrality from management and many other flaws that hinder workers from making use of the procedure. Results revealed that workers benefit less from the procedure and experience more challenges in the grieving system.

5.2.4. Objective 4: To understand affordances of the grievance procedure as viewed by the management at the SME construction company.

Managers have a theoretical understanding that the grievance procedure is a tool that aims to bring workplace peace by resolving and attending to matters relating to the work environment. The GPP is considered a tool that reflects on the needs of workers and also reflects on the work relations at the company. However, the underutilisation of the policy hinders a proper and

accurate assessment of the strengths of the policy. The prevailing situation regarding grievance lodging at the SME construction company have helped managers, though to a lesser extent, to be aware of workers' needs and work relations. Managers also view the grievance policy as a way that reflects upon their management skills through how the policy is handled and how workers perceive the whole process. The GPP therefore can assist managers in assessing and amending their management skills. The latter perceived affordances of the GPP has proven that at the SME organisation, the workforce struggles with constrained manager-worker relations, lack of information, lack of management skills, fears and anxieties in the utilisation of the GPP. Workers may struggle with the constrained worker-manager relations and fear of using the GPP. Workers are aware of the availability of CCMA and the DoL, two Government structures that free services to the public. The objective to figure out affordances of the procedure was established to a lesser extent as the practical use of the policy was insignificant.

5.2.5. Objective 5: To explore the constraints of the grievance policy procedure as viewed by workers and managers at the SME construction company

Workers at the SME construction company have a view the GPP as having significant constraints, hindering them from utilising the procedure. The most apparent aspect of the procedure that workers see as the worst step of the procedure is reporting the procedure to their direct manager. A major reason towards the constraints is that, there are strained relations between managers and subordinates making reporting a grievance to the manager difficult or impossible. The second challenge accompanying sour supervisor-worker relations is that most of the grievances that the workers intend to report have been caused or perpetuated by the same manager that the worker must report to. Workers perceive that it is not possible to report a grievance to a person whom you feel aggrieved to. The latter perceptions bring workers to think that the grievance is unfair and does not cater for them as it was never meant for them, but designed to benefit the employer.

Workers perceive other constraints of the grievance procedure as being a lengthy process that management keep postponing before a resolution can be achieved, some perceive that the GPP takes too long due to the large number of people involved in the decision-making panel. The way the grievance is technically designed in terms of language and the legal jargon is also very limiting to workers, though many workers confessed not having seen the grievance policy,

they assumed that the language used with legal jargon may not be easy to understand for the lay person. Workers believe that the use of an interpreter or the translation of the grievance into the native languages will be beneficial; otherwise, the grievance remains a tool that is unfair for the worker if such remedies are not considered. Confidentiality issues are some concerns that were raised by workers; it is felt that despite management efforts to maintain confidentiality, the worker's actions such as frequenting to the offices of management the many people involved in the panel may not guarantee confidentiality.

The act of lodging a grievance may come up with negative outcomes such as being labelled as a bad employee further complicating relations with management, ill-treatment and possible job loss. These perceptions of workers regarding constraints of the GPP are the major causes of underutilising the procedure. Workers perceive that there is a lot of emotional distress coming along with lodging a grievance. Workers also discussed the emotional drain, anxiety and fear factors as deterring factors in using the GPP. To a greater extent, the objective regarding the constraints of the GPP was achieved. Constraints of the GPP dominate over the advantages that the policy must offer hence workers managed to a higher extent to explore all the hindrances of the policy and this was the most prevalent reality at the organisation.

5.2.6. Objective 6: To explore the constraints of the grievance policy procedure as viewed by the management at the SME construction company

Managers view that workers do not use the right channels of lodging grievances; hence many grievances do not get to be resolved. The step to report a grievance to the direct manager has been viewed by managers themselves as a stumbling block. Managers concurred with workers that the first step of the GPP was a hindrance. The similar perception was dominant due to unsound work relations between managers and subordinates and also due to the fact that in most cases it is the managers that the workers feel aggrieved against. Managers have shown that the language used in the GPP can be explained by translating it into native languages, explaining terms further or by making use of an interpreter are constraints of the procedure that can be looked into. There is also a perception amongst managers that workers are not mindful of a process that has to take place when lodging a grievance, instead they want quick answers yet a grievance is procedural. Managers believe that the decision-making panel having many members also makes it difficult to achieve a grievance outcome within a shorter space of time. SME

construction company managers concluded that workers lack trust towards management and do not attempt to lodge grievances internally but they rather go to CCMA and DoL. Managers have indicated constraints resulting from external reporting as costly to the company.

Management views regarding the GPP Constraints were achieved largely. Managers and workers concurred to most constraints of the policy hence their views correlated in most cases. Managers by virtue of being the policy administrators also gave socially desirable views regarding the constraints of the policy by indicating that workers lack knowledge and do not use the right channels to report.

5.2.7. Objective 7: To compare and contrast views of workers and managers about the grievance policy

Views of managers and workers were two-fold with some differences and similarities at the same time. On defining the grievance term, it showed that through observation and experience, workers mostly related the grievance to a problem towards management and towards the work environment, and echoed negative connotations associated with the term. On the other hand, managers defined the term to bring out mostly the positive aspect of resolving work dissatisfaction and it showed that managers showed the aim of the policy which was purely a positive aspect as compared to workers. Managers perceive that workers are inducted regarding the GPP while workers believe that there is no proper induction done; it is a once off induction before signing the contract making it impossible to grasp the information at once. There is information overload at the time an employee signs a contract since they are told about all work policies coupled by an excitement of securing a job deprives workers from paying detailed attention to policy issues that are cumbersome.

Workers also perceived that there are many steps to follow in the procedure which is a strain while others believe that steps to follow make the procedure easy. On the other hand, managers believe that grievance steps are not too long making the grievance procedure easier to follow. However, managers seemed to bypass the reality that should steps be few then it is easy for the procedure to be quickly exhausted internally and thrown to litigation, which is a negative aspect. Managers and workers believe that the step of reporting a grievance to the line manager is a stumbling block to the utilisation of the grievance. Workers feel that they may report to any

manager they believe may hear their grievance and this according to management is not the right procedure despite that it could help an employee at least have a way to voice out.

Workers and managers believe that representation or accompaniment is not utilised in the grievance procedure; managers think that workers may not know that they have the right to representation. On the other hand, workers believe that managers do not support workers in lodging grievances. Managers indicated that workers are not neglected when a grievance reaches a dead end but are advised on how to proceed externally. However, managers did not have tangible evidence of precise actions they undertake to support the workers in that regard. Workers on the other hand believed that there is insufficient support from the managers regarding litigation whereby workers expect the employer to contribute to workers' litigation costs. The latter may not be possible since managers indicated that at the time of advising the worker of ways to further their grievance the organisation on the other hand will be also preparing for litigation.

5.2.8 Unionization

Workers view that having some form of power can help them to gain fair outcomes of the grievance policy and this was perceived achievable through teaming up or having a union. However, it was not conclusive that a union would resolve challenges around the grievance policy procedure. Workers perceived that unions that have worker interests at heart would be effective. However, by virtue of never experiencing a union, workers were sceptical about them. Workers fear that a union may not fulfil their obligations, may be biased, become a spy of the company or it may become another management team that workers would need to deal with.

5.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study ascertained that there is no cohesion between workers and their managers regarding the grievance procedure. Managers perceive that workers are instructed towards the grievance while the workers feel that there is insufficient induction towards the policy. The study did show that there is insufficient induction of the policy at the organisation since workers are briefly inducted towards the policy at a once off occasion at the time of signing a work contract. At the time of signing the contract, many other policies are brought to the attention of workers; it becomes overwhelming for workers to grasp the concepts of each policy. The grievance policy is

discussed and looked at diligently when an actual grievance is being addressed, without an incidence of grievance lodging there is no other time set aside towards policy induction.

Managers at the SME construction company avoid conflict despite that it is brought to their attention. Avoidance of conflict is achieved by switching workers from a group were tension exits to other groups. This act could be an act contributing to the little utilisation of grievances as the organisation strives to avoid conflict from the onset. Avoiding conflict does not necessarily eliminate the conflict or resolve it. The latter act from management could be another cause why workers report their grievances externally to the CCMA and the DoL since the unresolved conflict still exists regardless of the manager's effort to avoid it. Management is unhappy about the workers that lodge grievances externally as it puts the organisation on the spotlight and attract litigation costs. Both managers and workers, were found to be in the same position of agreeing that lodging of grievances pulls workers away from work, creates some tension and anxiety, lessens production, may come with legal costs and can be emotionally draining. The managers at the SME construction company have no proper channels of assisting workers should a grievance fail to be resolved at organisational level, rather they focus on their own litigation and statutory preparations. The latter could be another contributing factor that compels workers not to consider their internal grievance system.

Workers do not have the proper understanding and knowledge pertaining to the grievance policy; they have an unclear picture of the wholeness of the policy. Workers are well versed with the first step of the grievance policy that is to report to management and it is this step that most workers find it difficult to make use of the procedure. The GPP is not utilised mainly because it requires to be reported to the manager whom the worker does not have a good relation with and is aggrieved against. Managers and workers believe that the first step of the GPP is an obstacle to the utilisation of the grievance system.

A lack of power is also another factor that makes workers perceive an unequal field of play in lodging a grievance. The management has power in terms of their hierarchical positions while the worker seems not to have much power in the procedures and outcomes of the grievance policy, therefore workers perceive themselves as victims of unfairness.

Workers mentioned that it was inconclusive that unions would be helpful with fair administration of the GPP, unless they have workers interest at heart.

In a nutshell, workers feel that lodging a grievance comes with various challenges and unexpected fears thus they resort to avoiding a grievance as the first copying mechanism by mostly keeping quiet about their issues and anticipating towards getting another job. A tremendous lack of trust exists between the managers and workers at the SME construction company regarding the grievance system. Managers expect workers to follow the right procedure that they also recognise as limiting. On the other hand, workers feel that lack of power, knowledge and support makes the whole procedure difficult to use.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The SME construction company workers perceive that the GPP is unfair, too lengthy and difficult to understand due to the language used and the perceived "many" steps. The policy is perceived as a policy only meant to benefit management. Both, the managers and workers, at the SME construction company perceive that the step of reporting the grievance policy to the immediate manager cripples the whole procedure due to strained worker-manager relations. The reality of the workers is that managers are usually the cause of grievances. It is the hope of workers that there could be part of decision making regarding the policy; although it may not be easy to achieve due to many factors such as a need to provide training to all employees with relevant knowledge because the GPP is intertwined with other regulations and constitutional stipulations. Having too many decision makers may impact negatively on the order and hierarchical structures of the organisation as well.

Fear of job loss was the worst circumstance hindering workers from lodging a grievance. The study noted that there was no worker who felt that the grievance procedure was an empowering tool, although workers noted in their definitions of a grievance that the GPP is meant to address workplace issues and give a reflection of what transpires in a work environment.

Findings point out that power differences, of having management being the spear headers of the policy limits the exercising of the workers' rights. Workers feel powerless as they perceive that the grievance policy is meant for the manager and the employer.

This study revealed that there is insufficient research regarding the GPP in non-unionised workplaces, as in this case study it shows that more work in terms of advocating for workers' needs and facilitating a harmonious workplace needs to be facilitated. The use of occupational models such as the OSWPM can be beneficial to remedy situations whereby workers need to be well versed with their policies and exercise their rights. Workers must be considered in relation to their environment in order to close gaps that do not support their functionality in that particular environment.

Perceptions of workers are built in through their observations and experiences. SME construction company workers feel a need to be involved in the GPP and attain more empowerment and power in that regard. Workers may be involved in their GPP not necessarily in decision making rather in issues of policy review suggestion. An involvement of workers in their governing policies such as the GPP is crucial in maintaining a peaceful work environment that workers have a better understanding of. Perceptions of workers at SME construction company regarding their GPP has built a certain negative culture of how the grievance system is experienced or may be experience; this includes refraining from reporting grievances, reporting grievances directly to higher offices such as the CCMA and DoL, working towards finding another job, anticipation of team power to address dissatisfaction and so forth. The latter culture and trend develops due to perceptions built by workers through their observations and experiences; hence a fostering of positive perceptions is crucial for a positive workplace and the creation of synergy in a workplace.

An alarming conclusion from the study is that despite availability of a review date on the policy documents, policies do not get to be reviewed. Monitoring and evaluation of policies affecting workers must be prioritised by the designated authorities. Precisely, the GPP had a review date yet managers who had been in the organisations for four years never reviewed the policy despite organisational experiences.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

5.5.1 Training for managers on conflict management and conflict resolution

The study revealed failure of managers to resolve conflict. Instead of resolving conflict managers avoid conflict by a method referred to as "switching workers" from a zone prone to disputes and grievance lodging to an anticipated safer zone as a means of dealing with conflict. Switching is done when the supervisors identifies tension within a group or between workers and a supervisor then transfers workers with such tension within themselves or against a manager to different group so that conflict does not occur. If a worker highlights some dissatisfaction there is always a way to quick fix and avoid dealing with the conflict. Avoiding conflict does not resolve it; rather suppresses it and gives room to possible organisational retaliations. Management at the SME construction company do not have the necessary skills to resolve conflict and training in this regard is crucial. Conflict management and training can be offered by the Department of Justice (DoJ) through accredited training providers. Instead of switching workers, managers can face conflict challenges through training in alternative dispute resolution methods (ADR) and implement them appropriately.

5.5.2 Implementation of Mediation as an Alternative Dispute Resolution method

Workers view the grievance procedure as complicated, lengthy, traumatising and unfair process designed by management in favour of the organisation. On the other hand, managers themselves do agree that the first step of the grievance policy is very difficult to execute and that workers do not have sufficient knowledge to make use of the GPP. Alternative dispute resolution can be put in place while making amends to improve the GPP or to review it. The grievance procedure and other ADR means can coexist to facilitate better administration of workplace conflict. The recommended ADR method would be mediation.

Mediation is recommended following findings that pointed out to a lack of neutrality in the grievance procedure, fear and costs related to litigation, many personnel involved in the process and a possible breach of confidentiality. Mediation counters the latter characteristics that are prevalent at the SME construction company. Mediation was designed to be neutral, friendly, and less costly compared to litigation which uses procedures to determine a win or lose in a case. There is no feeling of powerlessness in mediation processes as both parties involved are given

control through empowerment in terms of knowledge, it is a peaceful process since negotiation is also encouraged.

Mediation makes use of professionally trained mediators who are impartial and seek to arrive at a verdict wanted by both disputing parties. Social workers by nature of their profession are equipped to handle the mediation role. Mediation will preserve work relations while resolving conflict at the lowest informal level. Mediation avoids achieving a formal lodging of the grievance procedure that many workers seem dissatisfied with.

5.5.3 Employing social workers in occupational services/referring

One crucial recommendation is the employment of occupational social work practitioners in the workplace. These practitioners are trained to synergise a workplace by using models and theory inherent a workplace. For example, these practitioners can facilitate induction of policies, resolve difficult grievance matters , counsel workers that feel overwhelmed regarding lodging a grievance or that are anxious about a grievance outcome. Occupational social workers will achieve a better understanding of workers through in-depth employee assessments from an individual level to an organisational level by use of occupational models and theories such as the OSWPM. Utilisation of some workplace models such as the OSWPM and theories such as the PIE model can direct managers towards better administration. Assessing workers can be done by consulting work models and theories inherent in occupational social work such as the Occupational Social Work Practice model (OSWPM). The adoption of the Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) can support managers to enrich their management skills by utilizing the four phases of the OSWPM that are; restorative, promotive, work person interventions and workplace interventions. These phases of the OSWPM work together in promoting both workers and managers towards workplace harmony. In restorative interventions the workers' level of education can be assessed to determine the mode of facilitating inductions and perhaps how an employee can receive some industrial education depending on their initial level of education and understanding. This assessment of the workers on an individual level can help determine employees' needs in terms of their language preference and so forth for the need to translate work policies for example. The restorative position restores the mind-set of the workers towards their work environment fostering a positive mind-set, without this positive

mind-set workers' perceptions regarding their work environment remain negative. However, the organisation may select a model or theory that best suit their occupational environment.

5.5.4 Improvement of induction

Induction sessions must be catered for intensively within the organisation. Workers can be told about the GPP on the day of employment; however, it must not be a once off induction. The employer must dedicate time for the worker to understand the policy, have reflective sessions to check if the workers have questions regarding the policy, support the worker regarding lodging a grievance and allow for reasonable changes of the policy to suit both the employer and the workers towards attaining a peaceful work environment in terms of the grievance system.

It is essential that managers get training on both the theoretical component of the policy and the reality of practical implementation of the policy. Managers must be consulted regarding their training needs pertaining to grievances and get further training regarding the unique cases of employee grievances. It must be acknowledged that managers are policy users as well; they also need to know how the policy is made use of besides training the workers. Since managers are the ones that have more power of shaping perceptions of workers by how they administer the lodged grievances; call for proper training to achieve shaping of positive mind-sets in the organisation as far as grievances are concerned.

5.5.5 Availing the policy document to workers

Workers in the study felt that the grievance policy is for the organisation and managers and is designed to suit only the organisation hence its unfairness to the workers. It was of paramount importance that the study revealed that workers did not know the contents of the GPP because they had not seen it; the policy document was not made available for workers. In this case, evidently it can be substantiated that ownership of the policy rests with the organisational superiors only. To curb the negative perceptions created through observation and experiences of the workers, the grievance procedure document must be supplied to the employee so that they can study it at their free time assimilating each and every step, highlighting their possible questions, getting clarity on some aspects from HR and so forth. Workers must have access to their policy documents and be well versed with the contents thereof instead of waiting until a challenge erupts, triggering a panic mode, fear, anxiety and other stressors particularly because the worker never had an opportunity to explore the GPP document.

5.5.6 Representation/ accompaniment/ unionisation

Managers and workers realised the lack of representation in the grieving process. Despite accompaniment and representation being stipulated in the company's grievance procedure, it is neither practised nor supported. This study recommends that the aspect of representation be considered greatly to help workers with the grievance procedure. Representation or accompaniment of grieving workers will help workers, realise that they are supported in lodging grievances. On the other hand, workers recognise a need of some form of a union. Workers perceive that they need some power to enable them exercise their rights. Workers would feel confident about their grieving system should worker representation or accompaniment from their colleagues be facilitated. Workers perceive that power can be achieved through a worker's council, affirmative action group or a union. However, it was evident from the findings that workers associate a union with positive change though it workers deemed it inconclusive that a union will have employee interest at heart. Some workers perceived an affirmative action group best to break powerlessness. Representation or the formation of an affirmative action group could be ideal in neutralising power differences since a private institute may not be coerced into having a trade union. Workers must be informed about their rights towards representation, accompaniment and their rights to be part of a union or have a worker's council, should these aspects be encouraged, workers will feel cared for.

5.5.7 Reviewing of the GPP

HR managers must adhere to the policy review dates and review the GPP to enable restorative changes. The GPP has never been reviewed in the past four years. Incidences of matters escalating to the CCMA and the DoL could have initiated concerns of re-looking into the policy. The SME construction company has lost revenue towards litigation of which reviewing the policy would minimise such occurrences. Gaps of the GPP can be addressed if the policy is reviewed, policy review may further encourage policy utilisation.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY EMPLOYEES

Workers are recommended to take measures that defend their rights of which attainment of developmental skills in a workplace as encouraged and stipulated by the SDA is one of them. Workers must attend to induction classes regarding the GPP, have a copy of the policy and must have courage to point out questions regarding the policy should they not understand it. Approaching the DoL or the CCMA for information regarding employment and grievances is

encouraged to the workers. Should the SME construction company despise having a trade union, workers are encouraged to form a workers' council and/or an affirmative action group so as to have some form of power and exercise it accordingly, however, leaders involved in the council or the affirmative action group must comply with labour regulations thereof.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL FOR CONCILIATION MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION (CCMA)

The CCMA being the platform for employment disputes mediation upon receiving complains must assist the worker in their capacity but most importantly revert to the organisation from where the employee is coming. Reporting back to the organisation of the complainant must aim to encourage internal, informal dispute resolution strategies and also attempt to identify loopholes in the system that is depriving the worker from reporting internally. The CCMA must have a collaborative relationship with the organisation in question and identify the nature of escalated complains, relevant changes that can be made to the policy and also offer training for managers to attain peaceful work environments with no consequences such as litigation. The CCMA must however be strategic in enquiring with the particular company in order to preserve confidentiality.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR (DoL)

The DoL must provide training to the organisation regarding the labour law regulations concerning the GPP. The use of monitoring and evaluation tools from the DoL will be effective in restoring a just workplace. The DoL must also empower workers regarding their rights and responsibilities through workshops. Intervention of the DoL will also help to decentralise power that is perceived to be only possessed by managers of the SME construction company. The DoL must after evaluation of internal procedures and previous cases ascertain fairness and issues of neutrality and further recommend better management strategies. None of the workers at the SME construction company mentioned anything about constructive dismissal; pointing to the fact that workers are unaware that should employment become circumstantially difficult to continue they can be dismissed constructively. Constructive dismissal will not allow the worker to suffer a double portion of job loss and forfeiture of benefits. This crucial information must be disseminated to workers.

5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study revealed a need for further research to be conducted regarding support given to workers pertaining their grievance policy procedure. The first objective to determine the knowledge and understanding of the GPP revealed that there is a paramount need in private companies for workers to be empowered about their policies and knowledge inherent to their governing labour regulations. The GPP did not seem to afford workers what it is intended to, and future research in this regard must focus on factors and innovative methods that can promote and ensure organisational adherence to procedural justice. Future research must also focus on effective ways to assess the utilisation of the SDA that promote employee empowerment. An investigation into the effectiveness of trade unions must be considered. Future research, therefore, must be able to conclude on what workers deem effective to utilise in voicing their work dissatisfaction. It has to be established if workers prefer trade unions, their own worker's council or affirmative action groups. Another focus of research maybe an investigation of grievance lodging in relation to gender; to explore grievance lodging in a workplace were one gender dominates the other such as the SME construction company that was investigated. Specifically tapping from this research, further studies on how females perceive lodging grievances in a male dominated environment must also be explored or how gender influences the utilisation of the grievance policy procedure.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION LETTER

I the undersigned student; EDLINE MOVHA, student number 1512116 hereby declares that this is my own personal work; a research proposal on the perceptions of employees about the grievance policy procedure to be undertaken as a case study at a construction company. I have been warned with regards to plagiarism as an academic and commercial crime and its possible consequences.

I have hereby used correct referencing techniques according to the APA style of referencing to acknowledge opinions and writing of other authors hence freeing my work from academic theft. This research proposal is based on current findings and has not been sent to any University before.

Name: Edline Movha (1512116)

Signature: _____

Date: 03/03/2019

Witness:

Perceptions regarding the grievance policy procedure:

The case of a small to medium (SME) construction business enterprise in Johannesburg

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR WORKERS AT SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Good day,

My name is Edline Movha, I am a post graduate student registered for the degree MA in Social Work by dissertation at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research about the perceptions of employees with regards to the grievance policy procedure. It is hoped that this information may help and improve knowledge and understanding of the grievance policy procedure.

I hereby wish to invite you as an employee at SME construction company Company to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. The researcher is also not available to resolve some pending grievances or assist with lodged grievances. If you agree to take part in the study I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place suitable for you. The interview will last approximately 20 minutes. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. I will ask for permission to tape record the interviews. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedule will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study and all computer files

will be password protected. Please be ensured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be exposed.

The interviews may include sensitive issues, there is a possibility that you may experience feelings of emotional distress associated with your own experiences regarding grievance. Should you feel you need supportive counselling following the interview, I have arranged for this service to be offered free of charge by Christian Social Council Organisation in Midrand that I have contact with the organisation and the professional counsellors. Your contact person will be Charlotte Rossouw whom you can contact on 0648864031, the contact person can further refer you according to your concern to either Shirley Van Rooyen (0820519436) specialising in trauma counselling, or Nichola Johnson (0849115599) an occupational social worker or Matlou Tuba (a generic social worker. Please contact me, Edline Movha on my email 1512116@students.wits.ac.za / cell 0785259118 or contact my supervisor Roshini Pillay on 011 717 4485, or email at Roshini. pillay@wits.ac.za, if you have any questions regarding the study. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study; an abstract will be made available on request after the study.

If you have any queries, concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, email hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za/ Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely,

Edline Movha

Perceptions regarding the grievance policy procedure:

The case of a small to medium (SME) construction business enterprise in Johannesburg

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR MANAGERS AT THE SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Good day,

My name is Edline Movha, I am a post graduate student registered for the degree MA in Social Work by dissertation at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research about the perceptions of employees with regards to the grievance policy procedure. It is hoped that this information may help and improve knowledge and understanding of the grievance policy procedure.

I hereby wish to invite you as a management employee at SME Construction Company to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. The researcher is not available to you as management to facilitate how you can manage grievances at SME Construction Company, resolve some pending grievances, assist with lodged grievances or help you with refer grievance cases for further intervention. If you agree to take part in the study, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place suitable for you. The interview will last approximately 20 minutes. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. I will ask for permission to tape record the interviews. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedule will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications

or for six years if no publications emanate from the study and all computer files will be password protected. Please be ensured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be exposed.

The interviews may include sensitive issues, there is a possibility that you may experience feelings of emotional distress associated with your own experiences regarding grievance. Should you feel you need supportive counselling following the interview, I have arranged for this service to be offered free of charge by Christian Social Council Organisation in Midrand that I have contact with the organisation and the professional counsellors. Your contact person will be Charlotte Rossouw whom you can contact on 0648864031, the contact person can further refer you according to your concern to either Shirley Van Rooyen (0820519436) specialising in trauma counselling, or Nichola Johnson (0849115599) an occupational social worker or Matlou Tuba (a generic social worker. Please contact me, Edline Movha on my email 1512116@students.wits.ac.za / cell 0812832341 or contact my supervisor Roshini Pillay on 011 717 4485, or email at Roshini. pillay@wits.ac.za, if you have any questions regarding the study. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study; an abstract will be made available on request after the study.

If you have any queries, concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone + 27(0)11 717 1408, email hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za/ Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely,

Edline Movha



APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

I …… as an employee at SME construction company agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. It has also been explained that the information will be kept in safe lockable cabinets and that before publication password protected computers will keep the information safe which will be destroyed in five years should there be no publication. The information collected has been explained to be mainly for academic purposes. I understand that the researcher is not conducting research to help me as an individual to handle my grievances that I have towards SME construction company, or that I have lodged or to teach how grievances must be handled or administered at SME construction company but to understand my perceptions of the grievance policy procedure at SME construction company. I also understand that should there be any form of sensitivity arising by virtue of being exposed to this discussion, counselling will be made readily available from the researcher. Only my lunch times will be used for the interview and not any other time that may disturb production.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO	(please circle)
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his research report	YES	NO	
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO	
I agree that the researcher may take photos of me (but not my face)	YES	NO	
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously by other researchers following this study	YES	NO	
I agree to share my employee experience with regards to grievances to help in the study	YES	NO	

Name of participant……

Date……

Signature……



APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR SME CONSTRUCTION COMPANY MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

I …… as a manager employed at SME construction company agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. It has also been explained that the information will be kept in safe lockable cabinets and that before publication password protected computers will keep the information safe which will be destroyed in five years should there be no publication. The information collected has been explained to be mainly for academic purposes. I understand that the researcher is not conducting research to help me as an individual to handle my grievances that I have towards SME construction company, or that I have lodged or to teach how grievances must be handled or administered at SME construction company but to understand my perceptions of the grievance policy procedure from a managerial view at SME construction company. I also understand that should there be any form of sensitivity arising by virtue of being exposed to this discussion, counselling will be made readily available from the researcher. Only my lunch times will be used for the interview and not any other time that may disturb production.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO (please circle)

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his research report YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded YES NO

I agree that the researcher may take photos of me (but not my face) YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously by other researchers following this study YES NO

I agree to share my management experience YES NO

Information to help in the study

Name of participant……

Date……

Signature……



APPENDIX F: COUNSELLING REFERRAL

Details of the referring organisation/ personnel

From		Tel:	Fax
Reference/ Case Number		Email	

Details of the organisation the client is referred to:

To			
Address		District/code	
Contact Person		Contact Number	

Details of the client:

Full names	
ID no. / DOB/ Passport	
Physical Address and postal code	
Contact details	

Referral of client:

Dear Sir/Madam

The above named client was interviewed at SME construction company Company on……You are kindly requested to assist him/her with services linked to the following. (Mark X where applicable.

Focus areas	X	Focus areas	X
Occupational stressors		Psycho-social stressors	
Mental health/ Trauma		Victim empowerment	
General counselling		Other / unspecified	

Provide brief background /specify client needs

……
……
……
……
……
……
……
……
……....

Your assistance is always appreciated.

…… …….. …….

Researcher Signature Date

Thank you

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Movha

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H17/11/37**
PROJECT TITLE	Perceptions regarding the grievance policy procedure: The case of a small to medium (SME) contruction business enterprise in Johannesburg
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Miss E Movha
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development/
DATE CONSIDERED	17 November 2017
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved
EXPIRY DATE	03 May 2021

DATE 04 May 2018 **CHAIRPERSON**

(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr R Pillay

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature **Date** 12/01/2018

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES



APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WORKERS

Demographic details

Section A: Biographical details

A1. Age

A2. Gender

Male		**Female**	

A3. Job designation

……

A.4 Standard of education

……

A5. Length of employment

……

Section B: Questions pertaining to the grievance matters

B.1 Please can you explain what a grievance is in your own words?

……

B.2 Do you have a copy of the grievance policy procedure?

Yes		**No**	

B.3 Do you know the basic steps to follow in a grievance procedure?

Yes		**No**	

If yes can you describe the steps?

B.4 Can you explain to me the reasons why an

employee will lodge a work complaint?

……

……

……

B.5 Have you lodged a grievance yourself?

Yes		**No**	

B.6 If yes, would you be prepared to share with me the experience and outcome?

…….....

……

……

……

……

……

……

B.7 What do you think can be outcomes of lodging a grievance?

……

……

……

……

B.8 What would be the aspects you think about before lodging a grievance?

……

……

…….

B.9 Do you think the grievance policy procedure is an easy process to follow, if not what makes it difficult?

Yes		**No**	

Motivate if no

……..

……..

……..

…….

B.10 What would you change about the grievance:

The type of English / language/ terms used? (Motivate)

The whole grievance procedure itself, which aspect? (Motivate

…….

……

B.12 Can you explain to me what are the best ways to make employees understand the grievance procedure

…….

…….

……

……..

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MANAGERS

Section A: Biographical details

A.1 Age

A.2 Gender

Male		**Female**	

A.3 Job designation

……

A.4 Standard of education

……

A.5 Length of employment

……

Section B: Questions pertaining to the grievance matters

B.1 Please describe to the process followed by employees when they use the grievance procedure?

……

……

……..

B.2 Do you make employees aware of the grievance procedure?

Yes		**No**	

B.3 If yes, when and how often?

……

……

B.4 Can you explain to me, what are the strengths of the grievance procedure at the ….. company?

…….

…….

…….

…….

B.5 What could you say are the weaknesses of the grievance procedure at the …company?

…….

…….

…….

…….

B.4 What are the employees' expectations after lodging a grievance?

……

……

…….

B.5 Do employees follow the right steps in lodging a grievance?

Yes		**No**	

B.6 What seems to be the most difficult step of the grievance policy procedure?

…….

…….

……..

B.7 If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome of a grievance procedure what steps are taken?

……

…….

B.11 If any steps are taken would you mind sharing such experiences?

……

……

……

……

……

……

B.8 What are misconceptions of the grievance policy from the employees?

……

……

…….

…….

……..

B.9 How often is the grievance policy reviewed?

……..

……..

……

……

…….

B.12 What would you change about the grievance policy procedure?

…….

……

…….

B.13 Have employees complained in the past about maltreatment after lodging a grievance?

Yes		**No**	

If yes, would you mind sharing the experiences?

……

……

……

……

B.14 If you were the CEO of…… Company what would be the measures you will introduce to make employees aware about the Grievance Policy

……..

……..

……..

……..

……..

……..

AGREEMENT LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

This serves to confirm that the director of Civil Contractors Pty Ltd has agreed that Edline Movha a Social work Masters candidate from the university of the Witwatersrand can undertake research at Civil Contractors regarding perceptions of employees about the grievance policy procedure.

It is hoped that as the student said, that every information will be held confidential and is only accessible to academic supervisors. The student has also mentioned that employees will be contracted with and consent forms to undertake research will be issued to voluntary participants. The student has also hoped to begin the research in July and end it approximately in August; however it may be subject to change.

We hope that this will be beneficial to Contractors, the employees and the student. trusts that the student will ethically conduct the research.

For any information please do not hesitate to contact Contractors at the above mentioned telephone numbers and address.

Sincerely yours

(DIRECTOR)

(HR ADMINISTRATOR)