



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Drivers of gender-based violence amongst the students in higher learning institutions: A case of Kwame Nkrumah university

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### Abstract

This study sought to investigate the Drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions in Zambia. The study used a descriptive case study design and data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Simple random sampling procedure was used to target 62 participants and purposive sampling was used to collect data from 2 university staff and 1 District GBV officer. Data was collected and analyzed using themes that emerged from the literature review and objectives of the study. The main findings of the study were that the prevalent levels of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions were ignorance about Gender Based Violence as most students have little or no understanding on what constitutes GBV and the few who understood could not take action because of not knowing where to go. Furthermore, the findings revealed that Alcohol and Drug abuse amongst students was largely responsible for GBV, peer pressure and the environment created by the institutions. High learning institutions should take a deliberate policy to foster equality and protect every student in the institution. Further, the institutions should engage the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) for sensitization programs and also promote student activism. There is need for university management to review the policies to protect every student from abuse by both students and lectures

**Key words:** Gender based Violence; Sexuality; Victims; Higher Institutions of Learning

### 1. Introduction

Globally, gender based violence is prevalent in every society around every country. According to Inter Agency Standing Committee (AISC) (2005), Gender based violence is ‘an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Universities being part of the larger society are also experiencing a sharp increase in gender based violence amongst the student.

In America, a survey conducted at Georgetown Universities (2016) 51 percent of 7 926 completed the forms found that 31 percent of undergraduate students had experienced non-consensual contact (defined as vaginal, oral or anal sexual penetration) or sexual touching (kissing, touching, grabbing, groping or rubbing in a sexual way) as a result of physical force or incapacitation (due to drugs and/or alcohol abuse) since entering Georgetown (Sexual Assaulted Misconduct Task Force, 2016).

Further, the American Association of American Universities (AAU) conducted a large campus climate survey in 2018 revealed the prevalence levels of Gender based violence in campuses, out of 181, 752 survey completions from across 33 schools, 13 percent of students reported experiencing non-consensual penetration, attempted penetration, sensual

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touching by force or inability to consent with the rates for undergraduate women at 20.4 percent compared to undergraduate men at 5.1 percent (Contor, Fisher, Chibnall et al, 2020).

A similar study conducted in UK by National Union of Students (NUS) indicated that, a survey of 2058 women students across the UK found 68 percent of respondents had been subjected to verbal or physical sexual harassment on campus and 14 percent had experienced a series of physical or sexual assault (Universities of UK, 2016). Further, Revolt Sexual Assault (2018) distributed a survey investigating students experience of sexual violence receiving 4, 491 responses from 153 UK institutions found 70 of female students and recent graduates surveyed had experiences sexual violence.

Similarly, studies conducted in Africa show high prevalence levels of Gender based violence in higher learning institutions amongst students. A study carried at Ogan State, South of West Nigeria examined the prevalence of Gender Based violence, specifically sexual harassment, in three Universities discovered that female students' sexual harassment on campus and a number of staff perpetrated sexual harassment (Oorijo, Uche, Nwadiafor & Rotini, 2013). In addition, a similar study was conducted in Kano, Northern of Nigeria involving 300 female students, more than half (58.8%) of the participants reported experiencing one or more forms of Gender based violence (Iliyasu; Abubakar, Aliyu, Galandanci & Salihu, 2011).

In Ethiopia a study conducted by Arnold et al (2008) found 46 percent of 1, 330 female students surveyed in the city of Awasa reported having experienced Gender based violence since enrolling in college. Further, another study conducted in South Africa at the University of the Witwatersrand revealed that Gender based violence was and is much more widespread in the University community than previously expected (CALS, University of the Witwatersrand, 2013).

In Zambia, literature shows that no research has been conducted to ascertain the prevalence levels of Gender based violence in Universities, this does not mean the vice does not exist but rather there is need to conduct and ascertain the levels of Gender based violence amongst students as this is important to mitigate the vice. Furthermore, this has led to the researcher to investigate the drivers of Gender based violence amongst the students in Universities.

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## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Education is an important tool liberating girls and women from historical discrimination and disadvantages thus enabling them to teach the next generation about the benefits of education (UNESCO, 2010). This means that, education itself provides restoration of girls and women liberties as it has been observed in a study by Freidman et al (2011) that girls who are highly educated tend to reject legalization of domestic violence. Literature for this study will be reviewed according to the following sub/headings.

### **2.2. The levels of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions**

Rotunda et al (2004) reveals that Gender Based Violence is constantly on the rise and remains an escalating problem globally. Literature shows that there are high prevalence levels of Gender Based Violence in student communities, which includes high sexual violence on University Campuses (Cantor et al, 2015; Fisher et al, 2006, 2010).

The prevalence levels of Gender based violence in Universities is considered to be under reported (Freidman, Homes and Backes, 2018). Universities in particular, often display the tendency to downplay the magnitude of the scourge of Gender Based Violence on their campuses, they do so because they are driven by concerns of public image and status and not wanting to commit the institutions to providing the necessary responses (Chauke, Dlamimi, Kiguwa, Mthobeleni, Nduka and Selebamo, 2015).

### **2.3. The Drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst Students in Higher Learning Institutions**

There are various factors that influences Gender Based Violence amongst students around the world today. Literature shows that under reporting contribute to the perpetuation of Gender Based Violence as this does not help the cause of fighting the societal malady. Under reporting has an indirect consequence of reprisal and hence the perpetuation (Nuraan, 2020). This has been reported by one US University administrator as a 'dormant volcano' that lies beneath main administration buildings on campus across the country (Smith and Gomez, 2014).

Furthermore, the seemingly unrestricted environment offered by University campuses, in so far as students are away from their homes, add to misconceptions around associations between sexuality and violence and the right by men to have sexual intercourse (Phipps et al, 2018). Further, Collins (2014)) reports that for many young people 18-23 years,

University presents an opportunity to live away from home. The unfamiliar social environment present fewer constraint and greater opportunities for experimentations. Swartz et al (2017) contends that Gender Based Violence exists because of particular contextual structures and systems and therefore Gender Based Violence as a system cannot be separated from the ongoing problem of how a privileged few reproduce a world around their bodies (Ahmed, 2016).

Cultural misconceptions contribute to Gender Based Violence. According to these misconceptions, anything that men do to satisfy their sexual desires, as long as it is done with their wives, girlfriends and female partners is acceptable. In other words, it is inconceivable that husbands and boyfriends can rape their wives and girlfriends or female partners (Phipps, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson, 2018). In addition, the culture, power and influence of social media and widely recognized as enabling new forms of communication in relation to gender and sexual violence (Rentschler, 2015). According to Magasu et al (2018) Gender Based Violence is promoted by social, cultural and religious practices in communities, schools and other institutions which not only perpetuates the devaluation of women but also inflicts unbearable oppression, harm, abuse, suffering and their subordination to men.

Research has shown that many of the behaviors recognized as sexual harassment or rape in legal or policy terms are not perceived as this by students and faculty (Bursik and Geftter, 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence that 'lad cultures' on campuses create 'conducive contexts' (Kelly, 2016) for a range of other manifestations of Gender Based Violence (Phipps and Young, 2012).

In addition, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) found that, the existence of a 'drinking culture' was clearly associated with 'unacceptable behavior', including sexual misconduct. Renate Klein (2018) indicates that, the interplay of drug use, peer pressure, popularity rankings and misogynist practices at parties and around sports events create rape-prone contexts in that they may encourage men to be sexually aggressive, to be respectful to women and boast of sexual conquest to other males.

There is evidence suggesting Universities promote Gender Based Violence for example, in Australia students who reported sexual harassment to University staff, were told that the alleged perpetrator 'might just fancy you' to take [the conduct] as a compliment or that it was 'just the culture'..... get used to it Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017:148; NUS, 2016:26). Further, the commission found that 'easy access to bedrooms' in residential settings including college and university camps was contributing factor to Gender Based Violence in University.

#### **2.4. The extent to which these drivers affect students in Higher Learning Institutions**

Center for Disease Control and prevention, (2016) reported that sexual violations have serious health consequences. A study conducted by Gelaye et al (2009) in Ethiopian Women College Students revealed that there was significant increase in the rate of depression (ranging from mild to severe depression) among students who had any exposure to Gender Based Violence.

Gender Based Violence has adverse effects on University students such as academic performance and an employment prospects due to a range of long-term problems including depression, eating disorders, alcohol or drug use, suicidal thoughts, loss of confidence, fear of leaving the house and difficulty trusting other people (Felters et al, 2012; Horsman, 2006). In addition, victims may miss classes to avoid the perpetrators and some may drop out of Higher Education altogether (Felters et al, 2012; Freeman and Klein, 2013). Sexual assault impacts students' grades with more severe violence associated with worse academic performance (Jordan et al, 2014).

Similarly, a study conducted at the University of Witwatersrand revealed that students who experience Gender Based Violence may find their well-being and their studies suffering in one of the several ways "i. A decrease in grades; ii. Failing courses, iii. Changing degrees; iv. Abandoning activities, they enjoy; v. changing Universities or vi. Dropping out of Universities" (CALs, University of the Witwatersrand, 2013).

According to Magasu et al, (2018) Gender Based Violence not only reinforces inequalities between men and women in terms of treatments, accessing opportunities and resources but it also causes damage to victims hinders them from enjoying their rights and is a major constraint to their development.

#### **2.5. Measures that can be taken to address Gender Based Violence in Higher Learning Institutions**

The Hunting Ground Australian Project proposed stand-alone sexual assault and harassment (or sexual misconduct) policies, enhanced signposting of student misconduct policies and support services on their websites to provide clearer access to relevant information, training of staff and students who may receive initial disclosures or report incidents of sexual assault and harassment, the development of education resources about what constitutes unacceptable behavior

and key by stander actions and the introduction of sex ethics training program for residential assistants and college social coordinators and student leaders from academic, sporting and cultural bodies with a view to embed aspects of training into orientation and induction briefing for students each year (The Hunting Ground Australian Project, 2016:6-11; The Hunting Ground Australian Project, 2017a:12-18).

In American Universities federal government began to intervene to ensure Universities that accept federal funding report on and tackle Gender Based Violence on campus (Hull, Sheplary and Hull, 2015). Further, student activism is surviving and flourishing as part of a wider resurgence in feminism in and beyond the UK (Dean and Anne, 2015). Therefore, the task of the Universities, is to recognize the seriousness of Gender Based Violations and to conceptualize their policies, particularly those that relate to Gender Based Violence in line with issues and discourses of human rights and social justice (Nuraan, 2020).

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### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Study Design**

Descriptive method design was adopted. A descriptive design was adopted because it gave the researcher holistic and detailed picture of the Drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst the students in Higher Learning Institution.

#### **3.2. Descriptive Study Design**

Using the arguments of Huczynski and Buchanan (1991) the researcher has opted to describe, clarify and explain the inner relationship and properties so as to give an accurate account of the drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst the students in Higher Learning Institutions. Descriptive design allows the researcher to describe in details the drivers of GBV amongst students in Higher Learning Institutions.

#### **3.3. Study Population**

Polit and Hugler (1999:37) refer to population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. In this study, the population was 8000 students at the selected Higher Learning Institution of Kabwe district.

#### **3.4. Study Sample**

A sample is a representative subset of the population from which generalization are made about the population or sampling is simply stated as selecting a portion of the population, in the research area, which will be representative of the whole population (Micheal, 2012:24). The sample size was made up of 62 students and 2 University staff including 1 Gender Based Violence officer. With exams in progress, the sample was appropriate because of the busy schedule of most students on campus.

#### **3.5. Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals from the population of interest (Kamangar et al, 2013). Sampling is an important tool for research studies because the population of interest usually consists of too many individuals for any research project to include as participants. This study used simple random sampling on 62 students as this gave everyone of interest an equal chance to being selected as research participants. Further, it employed purposive sampling on the 2 University staff and 1 GBV District officer as these are key informants and can give more accurate and reliable information on the drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in Higher Learning Institutions.

#### **3.6. Data Collection**

Data Collection is the methodology of gathering, estimating and investigating precise experiences for research utilizing standard approved procedure (Quadri, 2021). This study used questionnaires and interview guild as research instruments. This because it is easy to administer and later be collected at an appropriate time convenient by the respondent especially that there was limited time for data collection.

#### **3.7. Questionnaire**

A question according to Kotari (2004) is a data collection instrument consisting of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. Semi-structured questionnaires will be administered to 62

respondents at the institutions of higher learning which will consist of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions was used where the answers categories were discrete, distinct and relatively few in number. This was used because it is easy for participants to answer and only choose a category. Further, open-ended was used because they allow the respondent to express their thoughts about an issue under study and give more detailed information which the research might not have put into consideration.

### **3.8. Interview Guide**

An interview guide is a data collection instrument which is simply a list of the high level topics that are planned on covering in the interview with high levels questions on which the participants answers under each topic (Bird, 2016). Interviews were conducted with the two university staff and one GBV District officer as they are key informants in this study. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions which allowed the researcher to probe for more specific answers and a question could be repeated when the response indicated the respondent misunderstood the question. Open-ended questions were used for complex questions that could not be answered in a few simple categories but required more details and discussion as this allowed participants to answer adequately, with the amount of detail they require and also qualify and clarify their answers.

### **3.9. Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in the field and making deductions and inferences. It involves uncovering underlying structures, extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. It involves sanitizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in analyzing data allowing easy processing and interpretation. Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft excel. The analysis involved frequencies and percentage of particular responses which were represented using tables and graphs. The qualitative data was analyzed manually using thematic framework analysis. From the information recorded, the researcher identified major themes and sub-themes and critically analyzed various expressions with a view to giving deeper insight into the subject matter.

### **3.10. Study Area**

The study was conducted in Higher Learning Institutions of Kabwe district, Central Province because it gave access to respondents of a diverse cultural background. Kabwe district is situated in the central part of Central Province and covers several public and private Institutions of Higher Learning such as Kwame Nkrumah University, Paglory University, Mulungushi University, Kabwe College of Nursing, Kabwe Institute of Technology Education etc. This means that several students in Higher Learning Institutions may be experiencing Gender Based Violence and this makes it agent that the study is conducted to ascertain the drivers and propose solutions to this vice.

### **3.11. Setting**

Qualitative data was collected at the one Higher Learning Institutions of Kabwe District.

### **3.12. Institution A**

Institution A is located 4.6 km South East of Kabwe District. It was established in 1987 and by 2022 the institution had 11 000 students with a total number of female students being more than half the total number of all students at the institution.

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## **4. Review of the findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The researcher presents the findings of the study. The findings are based on the responses of the research participants from the study. The study explored the Drivers of Gender Based Violence in higher learning institutions. These findings are presented and analyzed in form of tables and bar chart in accordance with the objectives of the study.

### **4.2. Levels of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions**

Under this objective, the researcher sought to find out the levels of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institution. The study targeted 62 students of the higher learning institution of Kabwe district. The respondents were issued with questionnaires and from their responses table shows the levels of GBV at the institution.

**Table 1** The levels of GBV amongst students

	Low	Medium	High	Very High	I Don't Know
Male	1	3	7	10	0
Female	3	5	15	18	0
Total	4	8	22	28	0

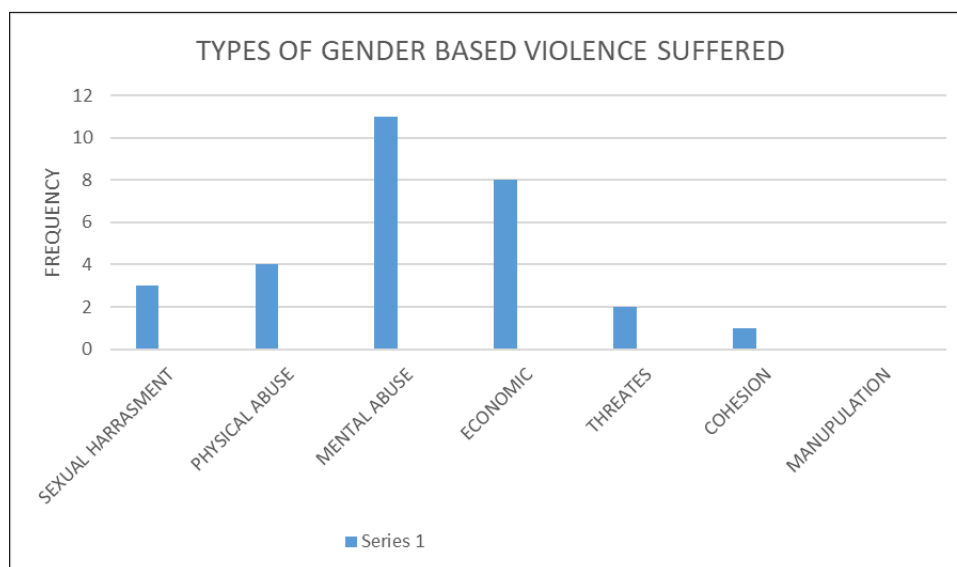
The table shows that the levels Gender Based Violence amongst students is very high with 45%, this is mainly due to among factors ignorance amongst students on campus about what constitutes GBV and with 35% of the students suggesting that it is high. Further, 13% said it was medium while 7% of the students said it was low.

Six female students shared similar views and had this to say *'at this institution, most of the male students like forcing things and they feel they are more superior than female students'*

Four other students had the same observation as they shared that *'the longer one stays in university the more superior you become, with this in mind seniors always feel they rule the university hence you cannot disobey a senior especially with alcohol and drugs sold just across the road most seniors are always drunk including school days.'*

#### 4.3. The causes of gender based violence amongst students in higher learning institutions

The research sought to ascertain types of GBV suffered before by the respondents. Therefore, when asked to rank the main drivers of Gender Based Violence beginning with the most that the student has suffered, the students ranked the main drivers as shown in the table below.

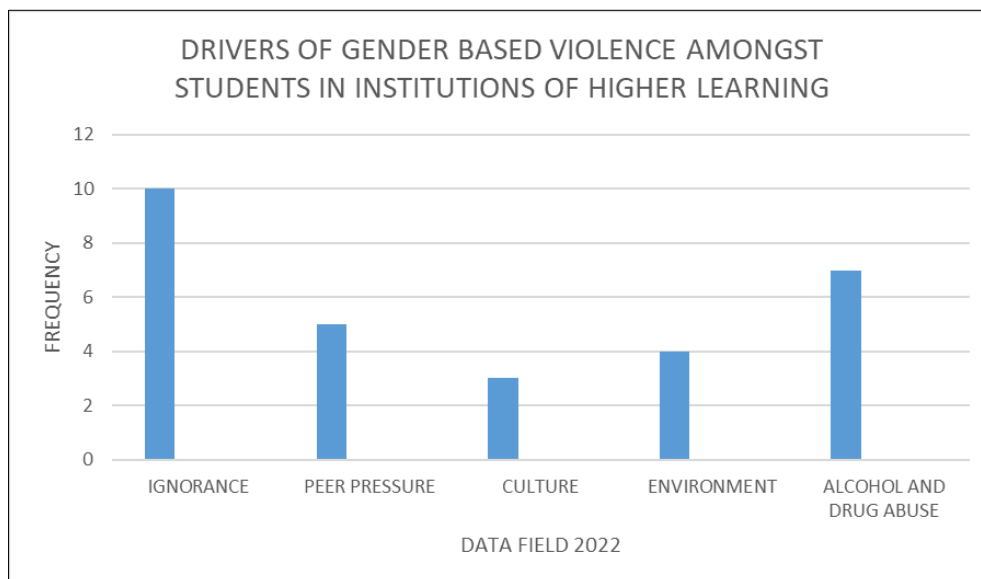
**Figure 1** Types of Gender Based Violence Suffered

When asked to rank the most common type of Gender Based Violence suffered 37% of the students ranked mental abuse as the most frequently gender based violence they had suffered, 26% ranked economic abuse and 16% ranked physical abuse while 10% ranked sexual abuse as the most frequently suffered form of GBV. Further, 7% ranked threats/violence and 4% ranked cohesion as the most frequently suffered form of GBV in the university.

Four of the female students shared similar sentiments and had this to say *'since I started relationships, University relationships have been the most difficult ones I receive abuse both physically and mentally from my boyfriends that I have gone out with'*

Mostly students go through various forms of GBV without even realizing it. It was imperative for the researcher to ascertain the forms of GBV suffered so that rightful remedy is provided to victims as well as the perpetrators.

When students were asked to indicate the drivers of Gender Based violence suffered amongst the students in institutions of higher learning. The table below shows responses from respondents.



**Figure 2** Drivers of gender based violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning

The figure 4.2.2 shows that 34% of students are ignorant about what constitutes Gender Based Violence hence most of them feel its normal and part of growing up, the society where students are coming has imparted different values and norms which makes most of the student ignorant about this vice in higher institutions of learning, 26% of respondents indicated Alcohol and Drug Abuse amongst students as the one of the drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students, alcohol and drugs are easily accessed by students just across the road this has had an adverse effect on mostly female students are on the receiving end of such abuses while 16% of the respondents indicated peer pressure, the behavior of students is easily influenced by peers especially that they are yet to attain maturity in order for them to make informed decisions on their own.

Furthermore, 13% of the respondents indicated the environment, the university from time to time organizes cultural nights where students exhibit their cultures and invite musicians to perform during the event, this event is characterized by various incidences ranging from alcohol and drug abuse, physical fights, threats etc this unrestricted environment contributes to the perpetuation of GBV amongst students on campus and 11% indicated culture as the another driver of Gender Based Violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning. Zambia is a multicultural nation, which implies that students are taught a variety of cultural norms and values hence with others a man is always taught to be brave and superior to women. This makes it difficult to respect and value women on campus as they are viewed less human and always want to be seen in control of women.

Three female respondents shared similar views and said *'I did not know that manipulation, threats and cohesion constitutes Gender based violence, all I have known is that its normal and part of life especially here at university what I only knew was physical violence. All along I have never taken threats as a serious violation of my human right.'*

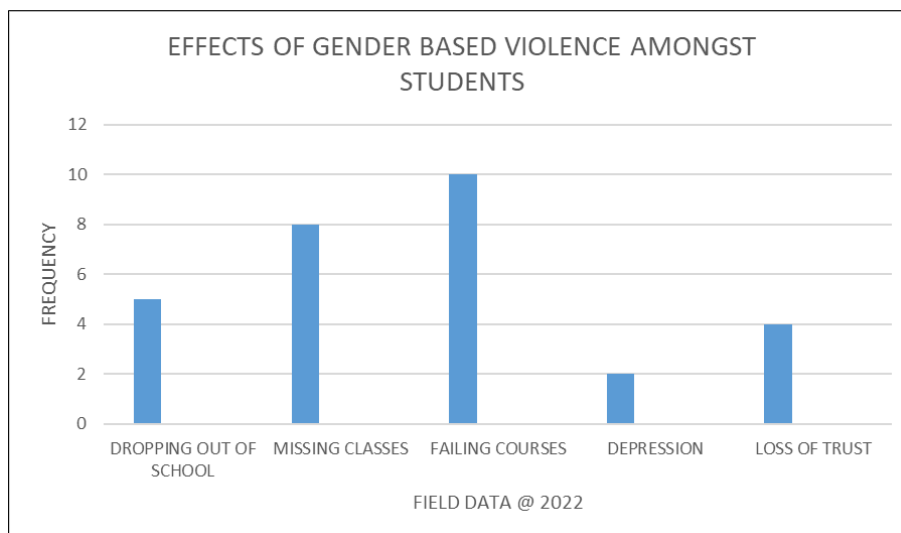
#### 4.4. The effects of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions

The effects that Gender Based Violence poses on the students may be short and long term. When asked to indicate the effects that they had experienced, they frequency of the respondents as shown below.

Gender Based Violence amongst university students has damaging effects on the individuals. 34% of the respondents indicated that they failed some courses and had to repeat the course, 28% were missing classes to avoid meeting the perpetrators of the vice while 17% indicated that they had previously dropped out of school. 14% of the respondents indicated that they had lost trust in people and 7% indicated that they had suffered depression before.

Two respondents shared similar sentiments as they had this to say

*'I received threats from my Ex-boyfriend after I told him I can no longer continue going out with you due to drug and alcohol abuse. He then threatened me using abusive language and that I better be prepared to leave the university and find another institution as he would make sure I don't have peace if I stayed'*



**Figure 3** Effects of Gender Based Violence Amongst Students

#### 4.5. Measures that can be taken to address Gender Based violence in higher learning institutions

When asked about the measures that should be put in place, the respondents indicated that there was need for the institution to quickly put up an office for Psychosocial counsellors and also to operationalize support for victims where they would quickly be assisted with transport in case of threats on lives of the victims.

Furthermore, the respondents indicated that police and Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) should be conducting sensitization tours in institution of higher learning twice in a term i.e at the beginning and atleast after two months during the course of the term. Additionally, there is need to involve the Student Guild so as to promote inclusiveness and make them feel part of the fight.

The study also revealed that there is need to make the office public as most students are unaware about where to go once they face such devastating predicament. Most students have no idea on where to go hence the agent need to publicize the office, such ignorance perpetuates the vice amongst students in higher institutions of learning. Furthermore, the study revealed the need for the institution to put deliberate policies which will enhance protection and promote equality amongst students in the institution.

## 5. Implication and recommendations

### 5.1. Introduction

The finding of the study gives a clear picture and the sincerest truth that is contained on the Drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions. However, this will stress to discuss the findings which have been presented earlier. All these findings are as the objectives states and are headed as such (per objective).

### 5.2. The levels of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions

Institutions of higher learning have been regarded as the safest places in the past. However, nowadays they seem to be the most traumatizing to individual students as they are subjected to human rights violations. While the prevalence levels in most higher learning institutions are not ascertained due to failure to acknowledge the existence of Gender Based Violence by Authorities, it has made it problematic to fight the scourge. The findings are similar with the findings of (Freidman et al, 2018) who posits that the prevalence levels of Gender based violence in Universities is considered to be under reported. This made it difficult to ascertain the prevalence levels of GBV amongst the students in institutions of higher learning.



Further, the findings of the study revealed that Gender Based Violence amongst the students is very high in the institution. This is similar with the findings (Cantor et al, 2015) who postulates that there are high prevalence levels of Gender Based Violence in student communities, which includes high sexual violence on University Campuses. There is need to ascertain the prevalence levels of Gender Based Violence in universities around so as to allow the bull be held by its horn in both public and private higher learning institutions around the country.

### **5.3. The Causes of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions**

Gender Based Violence is the most abused human right which is mostly overlooked by most people especially amongst students in institutions of higher learning. The findings of the study revealed the main drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst the students some themes were developed and these are;

- Ignorance
- Peer pressure
- Culture
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Environment

#### **5.4. Ignorance**

The most neglected human right amongst the students in institutions of higher learning is Gender Based Violence. Students do not take it as an abuse but consider it as part of growing and so they feel it is normal. The findings revealed that students feel where ignorant about Gender Based Violence as they regarded it to only exist in society, this has made it to continue amongst students. These findings are similar with the findings of (Bursik et al, 2011) that many of the behaviors recognized as sexual harassment or rape in legal or policy terms are not perceived as this by students and faculty. Ignorance has no defense at law therefore there is need to scale up sensitization amongst students in higher learning institutions as this will help to transform the minds of students before they leave universities and go back as productive citizens who are ready to contribute to the development of the country.

#### **5.5. Peer pressure**

Most students are easily influenced especially that they are at age which is full of experimenting as their feelings are still developing. The study revealed that students where influenced by their peers to commit Gender Based Violence especially on female students who are mostly victims of the vice.

The study further revealed that male students are in a habit of using abusive language and threatening female students whenever they turn down their proposals which in most cases affects the attendance of lectures. These findings are similar to the findings of Renate Klein (2018) who indicated that, the interplay of drug use, peer pressure, popularity rankings and misogynist practices at parties and around sports events create rape-prone contexts in that they may encourage men to be sexually aggressive, to be respectful to women and boast of sexual conquest to other males. Emotional intelligence is a very important aspect of growth; students' needs to be helped to understand that a rejection is not the end of the world but part of growth this can be done through peer organizations in higher learning institutions.

#### **5.6. Environment**

The findings of the study revealed that the environment is one of the main drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning as students are considered grown-ups and no proper guidance is given after orientations. Students find the environment unfamiliar and in trying to adapt they find themselves as victims or perpetuating the vice. University presents itself as the first experience for most of the students to be away from home hence too many experiments which mostly makes them vulnerable and victims of Gender Based Violence, these sentiments are shared by Collins (2014) who reported that for many young people 18-23 years, University presents an opportunity to live away from home. The unfamiliar social environment present fewer constraint and greater opportunities for experimentations.

Furthermore, the university environment excites students during the organized events such as student bash where students abuse alcohol and drugs in the name of enjoying themselves. Such events make students victims of Gender Based Violence because once intoxicated or high one is likely to lose senses hence can do anything without realizing it, this was also noted by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) who found that, the existence of a 'drinking culture' was clearly associated with 'unacceptable behavior', including sexual misconduct. There should be deliberate policies put up by the universities to guide such activities, organizers should meet some certain criteria for them to be allowed to host the event.

### **5.7. Culture**

Zambia is a multicultural nation and the university consists of students from various cultural background. Culture has greatly contributed to the peace and harmony the country enjoys. However, some cultural practices have negatively contributed to Gender Based Violence amongst the students in higher learning institutions.

The findings from the study revealed that male students always want to dominate in every activity and decision making at the institution. Furthermore, it was revealed that male students can do anything (from insulting, physically abuse, harass female students etc) to girlfriends as culture has made them feel they have control over females. This idea is supported by Phipps, et al (2018) alluded that these misconceptions, anything that men do to satisfy their sexual desires, as long as it is done with their wives, girlfriends and female partners is acceptable. In other words, it is inconceivable that husbands and boyfriends can rape their wives and girlfriends or female partners. Civic education has been compulsory in all secondary schools across the country, this now transform the minds of the learners before they go to higher learning institutions, learners should be to understand that every human being has equal rights regardless of gender.

### **5.8. Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

The university environment gives so much freedom to students which promotes alcohol and drug abuse. Most students would want to experiment without thinking about the consequences of abusing alcohol and drugs. The university creates an environment with a culture where students can miss classes anytime they feel like hence become prone to abusing alcohol and drugs. This was also noted by Kelly (2016) when he stated that, there is evidence that 'lad cultures' on campuses create 'conducive contexts' for a range of other manifestations of Gender Based Violence (Phipps and Young, 2012). The Drug Enforcement Commission should help with sensitization on the dangers of abusing alcohol, higher learning institutions can schedule for such programs atleast twice a term. This make those students who abuse drugs and alcohol realize how bad it is and the extent of damage it can cause to an individual.

### **5.9. The effects of Gender Based Violence amongst students in higher learning institutions**

Gender Based Violence has devastating effects on student victims in both short and term. The study revealed that Gender Based Violence affects students' performance and grades which has made most of them have repeat courses. Furthermore, the study revealed that Gender Based Violence has led to an increase in the failure rate amongst students in the institution. These findings are similar to the findings of CALS, University of the Witwatersrand (2013) who conducted a study at the University of Witwatersrand and revealed that students who experience Gender Based Violence may find their well-being and their studies suffering in one of the several ways "i. A decrease in grades; ii. Failing courses, iii. Changing degrees; iv. Abandoning activities, they enjoy; v. changing Universities or vi. Dropping out of Universities."

The findings of the study revealed that Gender Based Violence amongst students has led to students' missing classes and a high dropout due to economic challenges that they go through, with these challenges students' go through they suffer from mental abuse which has greatly contributed to depression and suicide amongst students' and in most cases loss of trust. These findings are similar to the findings of the study conducted by (Felters et al, 2012; Horsman, 2006) who stated that Gender Based Violence has adverse effects on University students such as academic performance and an employment prospects due to a range of long-term problems including depression, eating disorders, alcohol or drug use, suicidal thoughts, loss of confidence, fear of leaving the house and difficulty trusting other people.

### **5.10. Measures that can be taken to address Gender Based violence in higher learning institutions**

The effects of Gender Based Violence are adverse on students and therefore there is need to put in place measures that can help fight this scourge and save lives both on short and long term as this will allow students' remain focused on achieving their academic goals and engage in self-development as well as improving financial support to their families in order to alleviate poverty both in the family and the nation as they will be able to contribute positively. The findings of the study revealed the agent need to engage in student guild who will help to foster student activism. These findings are similar to the proposal made by The Hunting Ground Australian Project, (2017a) that advocates for the introduction of sex ethics training program for residential assistants and college social coordinators and student leaders from academic, sporting and cultural bodies with a view to embed aspects of training into orientation and induction briefing for students each year.

In addition, the study revealed that there was agent need to put in place deliberate policy which will foster equality and protect every student in the institution. Lack of policies leaves students vulnerable to Gender Based Violence perpetrators hence students leave in fear and the perpetrators violates their human rights with impunity. A similar study conducted by Nuraan (2020) shares similar sentiments as he implored the Universities to recognize the

seriousness of Gender Based Violations and to conceptualize their policies, particularly those that relate to Gender Based Violence in line with issues and discourses of human rights and social justice.

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## 6. Conclusion

the conclusion drawn from the findings highlighted. The study focused on exploring the drivers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning. The study brought out key aspects of the prevailing situation on the divers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning. Further, the study has revealed that the university environments has influence on the perpetuation of Gender Based Violence which is exacerbated by ignorance of the students. The study has also highlighted the other divers of Gender Based Violence amongst students in institutions of higher learning such as culture which is a critical component of a nation like Zambia with more than 70 tribes, what this means is that in as much as we would like to preserve our cultures we need to move with time as women are now partners in development and less human beings to abuse at will, this will help reduce peer pressure amongst students because others feel not doing what other friends are doing then they are not man enough. Furthermore, alcohol and drug abuse amongst student to be driving this vice. It is not a deniable fact that during this period of human development, young people are at a stage when they would want to experiment with a lot of things hence others find themselves abusing alcohol and drugs, this makes them to behave inhuman and end up abusing fellow students.

This study concludes that Gender Based Violence is escalating in institutions of higher learning institutions with female students being the most vulnerable therefore, the devastating effects on students can lead to suicide and mental suffering. This should urgently be addressed by putting in deliberate policies which will protect and enhance equality amongst students by the institution as this will improve performance and give full access to developing the students' potential which will bring about self-development and help fight poverty around the country.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to disclosure.

### *Funding*

This research has not been funded by anyone since its inception

### *Data availability*

Data was collected from one of the universities in Kabwe District of central province

### *Disclaimer*

All the views expressed in this study are the views of the researcher and not the institution or any other institution influencing the outcome of the research.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study

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