

A Sustainable Future for all Towards Reduction of Gender-Based-Violence and Femicide in Communities of Learning: A Strategic Perspective

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Abstract

Given the reality of the prevalence of all forms of violence such as but not limited to physical, sexual assault, domestic violence (DV), verbal abuse, harassment, stalking, child marriage, economic deprivation, survival sex in a form of exploitation in exchange for access to subsistence resources and forced prostitution, psychological violence or gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). Being a victim of violence in communities of learning has lifelong impacts on education, health, and well-being of victims. Exposure to violence can lead to educational under achievement due to cognitive, emotional, and social problems. It is argued that GBV is the most extreme expression of unequal gender relations in society and one of the most widespread violations of human rights. While GBV disproportionately affects women and girls, it also affects men and boys. These abuses take place all over the world in homes, places of worship, schools, workplaces, and communities. This paper provides an overview of factors leading to GBVF, impact and effects on the victim as well as methods to eliminate its occurrence were revealed by the analysis. Becoming aware of factors contributing to GBVF and strategies to address this scourge can minimise the occurrence of GBVF in learning communities. Understanding the concepts and strategies to prevent the occurrence of GBV can assist learning communities to minimise these incidences.

Keywords: Contributing factors, campus community, gender-based violence and femicide, learning communities

Abstrak

Mengingat realitas prevalensi segala bentuk kekerasan seperti namun tidak terbatas pada fisik, penyerangan seksual, kekerasan dalam rumah tangga, pelecehan verbal, pelecehan, penguntitan, perkawinan anak, perampasan ekonomi, seks untuk bertahan hidup dalam bentuk eksploitasi dengan imbalan akses terhadap sumber daya subsisten dan prostitusi paksa, kekerasan psikologis atau kekerasan berbasis gender dan pembunuhan perempuan (GBVF). Menjadi korban kekerasan di komunitas belajar mempunyai dampak seumur hidup terhadap pendidikan, kesehatan, dan kesejahteraan korban. Paparan kekerasan dapat menyebabkan rendahnya prestasi pendidikan karena masalah kognitif, emosional, dan sosial. Ada argumen yang menyatakan bahwa GBV merupakan ekspresi paling ekstrim dari hubungan gender yang tidak setara dalam masyarakat dan salah satu pelanggaran hak asasi manusia yang paling luas. Meskipun GBV berdampak secara tidak proporsional terhadap perempuan dan anak perempuan, GBV juga berdampak pada laki-laki dan anak laki-laki. Pelecehan ini terjadi di seluruh dunia di rumah, tempat ibadah, sekolah, tempat kerja, dan masyarakat. Tulisan ini memberikan gambaran mengenai faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan GBVF, dampak dan dampaknya terhadap korban serta metode untuk menghilangkan terjadinya GBVF yang terungkap melalui analisis. Menyadari faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap GBVF dan strategi untuk mengatasi momok ini dapat meminimalkan terjadinya GBVF di komunitas pembelajar. Pemahaman konsep dan strategi untuk mencegah terjadinya GBV dapat membantu komunitas belajar untuk meminimalkan kejadian-kejadian tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Faktor yang berkontribusi, komunitas kampus, kekerasan berbasis gender dan femicide, komunitas pembelajar.

INTRODUCTION

Public schools, from primary level to higher education institutions (HEIs), vocational training and non-formal education, are important learning communities for normative change and have the potential to address gender inequalities and reduce gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). A range of public school-based programmes and HEIs settings, have been developed that not only raise awareness about GBVF, but also build the skills of students and staff to create equitable and respectful relationships. However, learning communities do not have a universal, nor automatically positive, impact on reducing GBVF. Some learning communities at the level of primary schools can for instance also be a site of GBV. Direct exposure to school related GBV (SRGBV) includes sexualised bullying, sexual harassment, forced sexual acts in exchange for good grades, marks or male dominance or aggressions within the learning communities (Daikpor, 2021; Mafa & Simango, 2021; Mafa, Simango & Chisango, 2021). Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is prevalent in learning communities and is a violence committed against a person because of his or her sex or gender (Mafa & Simango, 2021; Mafa, Simango & Chisango, 2021). It is forcing another person to do something against his or her will through violence, coercion, threats, deception, cultural expectations, or economic means. Sexual harassment refers to any form of unwanted or unwelcome sexual behavior ranging from verbal acts such as offensive name-calling and requesting sexual favors (Ringrose, Milne, Mishna, Regehr & Slane, 2022) to physical actions such as groping or sexual assault. Although most victims and survivors of SGBV are girls and women, boys and men can also be harmed by SGBV. SRGBV also include harassment and physical or sexual assault while walking to and from school. Schools need to actively promote a gender equal, respectful, non-violent culture with gender aware pedagogy amongst students, teachers, and other staff. The potential for young people to act as agents of change provides one of the greatest hopes for achieving the social transformation necessary to end GBV and can be unlocked through high-quality, gender sensitive education.

All forms of violence including GBVF in learning communities inclusive of HEIs and public schools, is a persistent, yet under-researched and under-reported phenomenon (De Klerk, Klazinga & McNeill, 2007; Makhene, 2022; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022; Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2017). Evidence shows that GBVF in learning communities remains one of the South African's most widespread, persistent, and devastating human rights violations (Makhene, 2022; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022) and there are direct links between environmental pressures and GBV, and that the degradation of nature, competition over increasingly scarce resources and environmental crime can all exacerbate violence. GBV also prevents victims and survivors from exercising their economic and political rights and limits their access to education and work opportunities. Social stigma against victims can likewise create barriers to justice, reinforcing a culture of impunity. Makhene, (2022) posits that South Africa has one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world, and a femicide rate that is five times the global average, with an estimated 12.1 in 100,000 victims each year. South Africa's GBV statistics are equal to a country at war. In March 2020, when the South African government introduced one of the world's longest and strictest lockdowns in response to the first detected cases of coronavirus, the devastating impact of lockdown on the already severe GBV issue was exposed. The Government's GBV and Femicide Command Centre, a call centre to support victims of GBV, recorded more than 120,000 victims in the first three weeks of the lockdown (Khosa-Nkatini & Mofokeng, 2023).

Systemic gender inequality in the contemporary society has disempowered women and this led to stifling their voices so that they are not heard (Enaifoghe, Dlelana, Durokifa, & Dlamini, 2021 as cited in Makhene, 2022, p. 236). However, often the weak enforcement of these laws is limiting mostly women and

girls' access to safety and justice, and achievement of their full potential (Khosa-Nkatini & Mofokeng, 2023; Makhene, 2022). While learning communities are becoming more aware of the issue of GBV both at public schools and at HEIs in South Africa, there is still a lack of nationally representative research which can give all a clearer understanding of the nature and extent of this phenomenon (Safer Spaces, 2022). This paper is an attempt to find a missing link, of understanding the underlying factors, at the HEIs in South Africa. This would be done with recognition that, through comparative analysis, the performance of the Southern HEIs, are compared with their counterparts regionally and internationally. By aggressively boosting research and development in Africa, Akinwumi Adesina, the president of the African Development Bank (AfDB), says that the continent has the chance to truly achieve sovereignty by finding solutions that truly fit its epidemiological profile, instead of adapting solutions developed for different populations (Adepoju, 2022). Africa's poor public funding for research is well documented (Adepoju, 2022). One of the key issues with funding from government bodies or organisations such as the National Research Foundation (NRF) and other organisations such as the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) is the simple reality that research is expensive, and the effects are generally not noticeable in the short term for basic research, and this is rarely understood in Africa. Moreover, the current environment and the means of financing do not facilitate the expression of research in response to social and environmental challenges. Nevertheless, small steps geared towards contributing to regional and global.

One of the founding values of the Constitution of the RSA, 1996 is non-racialism and non-sexism. The Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of Higher Education (Education Department of Education [DoE], 1997) explains that the transformation of higher education requires that all existing practices, institutions, and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era. It further states that successful policy in higher education must also create an enabling institutional environment and culture that is sensitive to and affirms diversity, promotes reconciliation and respect for human life, protects the dignity of individuals from racial and sexual harassment; and rejects all other forms of violent behaviour. Additionally, the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training [PSET](2014) aims to have a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic South Africa. HEIs campuses are subject to different types of criminal activity such as, but not limited to, GBVF, theft, robbery, physical and sexual assault, and the use of weapons such as firearms. The prevalence of GBVF at HEIs is a known phenomenon brought to the media's attention as well to the attention of the general South African public, by students and staff. However, sexual violence and more so GBVF on HEIs campuses in South Africa has been a long-standing issue due various reasons such as but not limited to the under-reporting of this type of violence, as well as to a lack of the accurate and the extent of the challenge brought by limited empirical research, to inform a policy and practice.

It is difficult to understand the full-scale of the problem, as GBV is under-reported, under-researched, and under-estimated in the context of HEIs (Naezer, van den Brink & Benschop, 2019). This happens because victims do not always recognise their experience as violence but tend to underplay the seriousness of what they have experienced; they might refuse the label of victim, fear not being believed, or even retaliation by their peers or institution. Victims might not speak out as they do not feel that it is safe to do so, and allowing leaders in universities and research organisations to deny that there is a problem, and vice versa (Husu, 2001). The response of HEIs to GBV is therefore as important to understand as its prevalence. Responses can originate from different places, such as a dedicated member of staff or via the student union. Complaint systems must provide victims with timely support, and ensure they prevent retaliation and do not engage in victim-blaming (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). Evidence suggests that too often, responses are inadequate as victims do not feel believed, were not offered help, or were

discouraged from making a complaint (Naezer et al., 2019). Understanding what factors affect the responses of HEIs also matters: responses may vary depending on the groups involved in the incidents (e.g., it might be easier to tackle incidents between students, rather than those that involve their staff) or when other forms of violence, associated with other grounds of diversity, operate simultaneously to aggravate GBV. What is clear is that the attitudes, knowledge and experience of the leadership in dealing with GBV at HEIs is a key factor.

The following research questions guided this review:

- What factors contribute to GBV at HEIs?
- What strategies could be used to deal with GBVF at HEIs to inform policy and practice?

The aim was to obtain an understanding of factors contributing to GBVF, impact and effects as well as possible strategies that can be used to inform policy and practice. This paper synthesises current GBVF research at HEIs and identifies gaps in the literature that need further and future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The will at a national level to fight GBVF

At national level, the government has established a national strategy to fight GBVF. Different government departments are expected to establish plans of actions and put together tools, facilities and processes in line with their mandates to manage the scourge. The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, His Excellency Dr Blade Nzimande, in his address in the Foreword - Policy Framework (2020) addressing GBV in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) System, posits that despite South Africa development of a range of programmes and new laws since 1994; yet the scourge of violence, especially GBVF, is becoming more prevalent. “We as the PSET System have to work harder to create a safer, more caring society with a concerted focus on the protection of all people, in particular our female students and staff... It is our vision that this Policy Framework will become part of the solution, not only to address GBV in our institutions, but also to engage society and communities in curbing GBV” (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2020, p. iii).

South Africa has increasingly experienced the crisis of GBVF and its profound impact on the lives and well-being of survivors, children, families, communities and society as a whole (Gouws, 2021; Goldhill, 2015). There is increasing recognition that this context demands a whole of society approach in understanding, responding, preventing and ultimately eliminating GBVF (Bradbury-Jones, Appleton, Clark & Paavilainen, 2017; Crooks, Jaffe, Dunlop, Kerry & Exner-Cortens, 2019). Furthermore, Crooks et al. (2019) allude that the role and duty of the HEIs to ensure that GBVF cases are addressed is a critical role. HEIs are places where teaching and learning takes place (Crooks et al., 2019). The HEIs comprise of campus community members, these campus community members are students, the institution’s employees, and contracted personnel members such as the campus security (Bows, Burrell & Westmarland, 2015; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018). Finley and Levenson (2018) and Gebre, Hagos, Teklu, Fisseha and Abera (2020) share the view of GBVF being a serious crime that has and is being reported at the HEIs in South Africa and in other countries in the world. Given that HEIs are places of teaching and learning, Brown (2018) explains that such places need to be safe and the HEIs management carry the responsibility of providing the needed safety for the campus community. GBVF like many other crimes has factors that contribute to it, by means of identifying these factors, the HEIs can be able to minimise the prevalent occurrence of these cases (Bows et al., 2015; Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Factors that contribute to

GBVF at HEIs in SA have the same common denominator as compared with those experienced by survivors at other HEIs from other countries around the world. Thus, the analysis of the common factors that experienced by survivors at the HEIs in SA, correlate with those perpetrated at other countries in the world.

Research indicates that many HEIs in SA experience a high rate of cases of sexual coercion, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and murders of students, particularly of women and gender diverse students (Moylan & Javorka, 2020). Brown (2018) further explain that the high rate of GBVF attacks at HEIs, poses the threat of its campus community members experiencing GBVF attacks on campus at an alarming rate. The GBVF attacks did not start occurring as of recently, but they have been happening for the longest time (Moylan & Javorka, 2020). Gouws (2021) specifies that after the dismantling of apartheid in 1994, significant changes were made to HEIs in South Africa. Transformation became a key focus, there was a push to devise policies to redress historical inequalities and to expand access to the HEIs system without having much regard to develop effective policies to address GBVF at HEIs (Gouws, 2021). For the policies on GBVF to work effectively, Brennan, Swartout, Cook and Parrott (2018), Bows et al. (2015) and Goldhill (2015) indicate that there must be an assessment on the factors that cause such acts to occur in the first place.

Moylan and Javorka (2020) point out that the identification of factors that contribute to GBVF incidences at HEIs, is critical and can save lives. During the 2019 academic year, some high-profile incidents of GBVF cases reportedly perpetrated on HEIs campuses in South Africa, or within their vicinity, became national headline news (Gouws, 2021; Henkle, Dunlap & Tabachnick, 2019). Gebre et al. (2020) posit that besides the reality that incidents of GBVF continue to occur almost unabated, the dearth of research on the subject is also inexplicable, but it only serves to perpetuate the poor understanding of what GBVF entails, its prevalence patterns, its root causes and conditions that encourage it (Gebre et al., 2020). It also constrains efforts towards finding effective means of not only bringing it under control, but also eradicating completely and consigning it to the dustbins of history (De Gue, 2014; Finley & Levenson, 2018).

Nigeria Nigeria's HEIs are one of the HEIs continentally, that have alarming GBVF experiences occurring on a daily base, the identification of factors that lead to this crime could save many lives. Nigeria is Africa's most populated country, and several reports indicate that there is a high commission of GBVF acts in the county's HEIs (Okolo & Okolo, 2018). Two (2) of the reports that highlight the scourge of GBVF in Nigeria's HEIs informs that in 2018, fifteen percent (15%) and twenty seven percent (27%) of young females reported forced penetrative and attempted rape, respectively while forty four percent (44%) report that they faced unwanted touches at their respective HEIs. In another survey in Ondo state in western Nigeria, twenty seven percent (27%) of schoolgirls state that their teachers pressured them for sex and seventy nine percent (79%) stated that they were sexually harassed by male classmates (Okolo & Okolo, 2018). These reports highlight that student, predominantly females are prone to GBVF in the HEIs in Nigeria. To further highlight the predominance of GBVF on Nigeria's HEIs, several authors (Adebowale, 2018, Ahmed, 2019; Okolie, 2019), posit that a high of three (3) in ten (10) Nigerian women aged less than eighteen (18) years' experience GBVF. Nigeria not so long ago experienced the kidnapping of the young girls which caught the attention of many news media outlets and the attention of the whole world, Osadebe and Nnamani (2017) inform that the kidnapping happened in April 2014, where more than three hundred (300) girls were kidnapped by bandits from a secondary school in Borno State, north-eastern Nigeria without many of the girls being located till to date (2024). The seemingly lack of safety of the students at the HEIs is mind boggling and poses HEIs as unsafe for students.

A Global Perspective United Kingdom (UK)

In the global north, research indicates that GBVF at HEIs is also, a problem that is faced by university students in the United Kingdom (UK) for the longest of time. GBVF experienced by university students in the UK has gained significant media and political interest since 2010 (Fenton, Mott, McCartan & Rumney, 2016). Research further indicates that, in the UK's HEIs one (1) in seven (7) female students experience physical sexual assaults, and sixty eight percent (68%) experience some form of verbal or nonverbal harassment in and around their institutions (NUS, 2016). National statistics on GBV in the UK's universities in 2015 show that gender and age are key determinants increasing the risk of experiencing GBVF, with young women aged 16-25 more likely to be affected than other age groups (NUS, 2016). Furthermore, one (1) in seven (7) female students who experience serious physical or sexual assault; eighty four percent (84%) know their attacker; and twenty five percent (25%) do not know their attacker. As a result, UK has since increased the scrutiny of the ways in which HEIs are responding to acts of GBVF against, and by the campus community. According to Bows et al. (2015), the prevalence and impact of GBVF experienced by women and girls in UK higher education contexts remains a neglected topic. Goldhill (2015) states that, due to increasing national and international attention focused on the issue of sexual harassment and violence, alongside a growth in student campaigning, there has been growing pressure on UK HEIs, to respond adequately to GBVF on and around campuses. The viable way of addressing these cases can be through the identification and containing of contributing factors to GBVF in the HEIs.

Htun and Weldon (2019) highlight how most UK HEIs lack the proper ways of identifying and addressing factors that contribute to GBVF. The above sentiments by Htun and Weldon are supported by Fenton et al. (2016), who posit that reports and recommendations in relation to responding to and preventing various forms of contributing factors to GBVF at HEIs in the UK have been sort over time. Furthermore, Fenton et al. (2016) argue that, despite an increase in the number of research projects and institutional responses and interventions into these factors that contribute to GBVF, but not enough effective results have been found. In 2015, a response to identified factors that contribute to cases of GBVF was made by a university called Durham University. Westmarland (2017) remarks that Durham University created a sexual violence task force to examine existing policy and practice in relation to sexual violence prevention and response, whilst another university named the University of Sussex published an independent review into a high-profile domestic abuse case between a student and member of university staff. Both these universities will keep on making task teams and reviews because they do not deal with the root cause of the problem, which are the factors that contribute to the commission of GBVF cases.

United States of America (USA)

Is one of the most developed nations that has one of the most powerful security cluster, but the United States of America (USA), is not isolated from reported cases of GBVF cases at its HEIs. The HEIs campuses in the USA offer unique composition of communities; and as such, there is no one-size-fits-all process for identifying strategies to address GBVF reported cases at the HEIs (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018). The uniqueness of HEIs is also supported by Daigle, Hoffman and Johnson (2018), who indicate that the USA has community colleges, small liberal arts colleges; mid and large state institutions, historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, faithbased institutions, institutions for students with disabilities, commuter colleges, Hispanic-Serving institutions, among others. Baker, Frazier, Greer, Paulsen, Howard, Meredith and Shallcross (2016) stipulate that there are colleges that are distinct based on their geographic location. Not only is there variation among colleges, but there is also diversity within colleges consisting of

student groups, faculty, and administrators with distinct experiences and needs. Even though there are different kinds of HEIs in the USA, the factors that contribute to the crime are similar to those experienced in SA and other countries, including continentally. The high level of GBVF cases in the USA HEIs is expressed by Henkle et al. (2019) who inform that in 2018, more than one hundred and fifty thousand (150 000) students from twenty seven (27) universities once participated in one of the largest ever studies on sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Administered by the Association of American Universities (AAU), the results indicated that twenty three percent (23%) of female undergraduate and graduate students across the twenty seven (27) schools experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact from kissing to touching to rape carried out by force or threat of force, or while incapacitated from alcohol and or drugs. The same study informs that almost twenty five percent (25%) of transgender, genderqueer, or questioning students experience non-consensual sexual contact.

Afghanistan

There is a high number of incidences of GBVF in Afghanistan's HEIs. Estefan, Coulter and Van de Weerd (2016) mention that the noticeable increase in reports of GBVF cases is reinforced by the observations and recommendations made by the Committee on Elimination of violence against women following the 2013 Afghanistan's second periodic report. Estefan et al. (2016) detail further that this Committee urged Afghanistan HEIs to establish measures, as a priority, to effectively combat impunity and comply with its due diligence, and in so doing, HEIs have been providing technical support to the affected parties in the educational institutions, by addressing GBVF cases that occur at HEIs. In order to strengthen the capacity of educational institutions for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in Afghanistan. Fernandes (2017) suggests that both organisations in close collaboration with Kabul University developed gender mainstreaming models to strengthen the capacity of educational institutions at the national and sub-national levels. Mannell and Guta (2017) indicate that this initiative has put the HEIs in a good position for those interested to study at the university to have a sense of safety and security should they wish to complete their studies with the HEIs in Afghanistan. By means of identifying factors that contribute to GBVF, the HEIs can be able to lessen and contain the GBVF cases.

RESEARCH METHOD

A meta-analysis is considered to elaborate the findings of a study (Cheung, 2019; Eisend, 2017). In the meta-analysis, the main factors that influence the commission of GBVF at HEIs in SA and other countries were identified through systematically reviewing and synthesising relevant published research. Meta-analysis is a methodology employed to synthesise the outcomes of various studies related to the same topic or outcome measured (Gooty, Banks, Loignon, Tonidandel & Williams, 2021). It is typically conducted as a quantitative procedure geared toward the comparison of effect sizes across a variety of research studies. Qualitative meta-analysis, also referred to as meta-synthesis, follows the same replicable procedures of a quantitative metaanalysis; however, it is interpretive rather than aggregative (Cheung, 2019). Different academic databases were therefore searched to identify relevant research on the factors that influence the commission of GBVF attacks on HEIs. The results were further categorised based on the most common factors that influence the commission of GBVF cases at HEIs (Gooty et al., 2021). Several steps were followed in the process of synthesising the facts presented in the various studies. Firstly, the factors that were identified in the studies were extracted. Secondly, the factors were pre-sorted based on their titles only. As a next step, the factor's descriptions provided in this paper were reviewed and concepts were re-sorted. Finally, discussions are provided, and recommendations are proposed.

Emerged themes

Several themes emerged namely patriarchy, economic inequality as well as alcohol as leading contributing factors toward GBVF on campuses. These are discussed in the below section.

Sex for marks

Sexual harassment in learning communities also emerged as is an intractable social problem that is just as hard to prove as it is to eliminate (Daikpor, 2021; Mafa & Simango, 2021; Mafa, Simango & Chisango, 2021; Ncube, 2019). The research conducted by Daikpor (2021) highlighted several challenges confronting Nigerian learning communities, amongst which are allegations of sexual harassment by male professors. Daikpor (2021) posits that these allegations are so prevalent in Nigerian universities that many female students claim to either have been either sexually abused by their lecturers or to know someone who has experienced it (Sex for Grades, 2019 as cited in Daikpor, 2021). Aggravating this issue is the fact that many Nigerian universities lack anti-sexual harassment policies that define appropriate relationships between professors and students (Akindele, 2020 as cited in Daikpor, 2021); the few universities that do fail to implement them (Sex for Grades, 2019 as cited in Daikpor, 2021). In Zimbabwe learning communities, Mafa and Simango (2021, p. 138) posit that while it remains uncontested that women and girls continue to face various kinds of sexual harassment at home, at workplaces and within societies, concerns over a trending phenomenon known as “thigh-for-marks” within university institutions have attracted close scrutiny from various interested stakeholders. Some of the findings by Ncube (2019) conducted in South Africa highlighted that, lecturers offer good marks to targeted female students in return for sexual favours. The transaction is preceded by 'sexting' to elicit response as confirmation the lecturer is a willing partner in the academic crime.

Lack of common definition

Before examining the meaning and associated concepts and principles of (international) criminal justice and international criminal law as they apply to violence and GBV, it is first necessary to briefly examine some of the principal reasons for, and implications of, the absence of a universally agreed definition of GBV, including how key institutional and State actors have approached criminal justice solutions in the absence of one. As discussed below, the concept GBV and its impact is not a new one, having existed in different forms for centuries (Khosa-Nkatini & Mofokeng, 2023; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022). The reasons for this are many. GBV and violence against women are terms that are often used interchangeably as it has been widely acknowledged that most GBV is inflicted on women and girls, by men (Khosa-Nkatini & Mofokeng, 2023, 2022; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022). However, using the 'gender-based' aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men (Khosa-Nkatini & Mofokeng, 2023; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022a). The terms are used interchangeably throughout literature review, reflecting the disproportionate number of these crimes against women and children. There are several possible explanations for this, some of which are explored below in relation to ongoing efforts to agree amongst scholars.

What is violence and gender-based violence (GBV)?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2017) define violence as the intentional use of physical force or power

(threatened or actual) against oneself, another person or a group/community that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injuries, death, psychological harm or deprivation. Data on socio-demographics such as but not limited to age, marital status, occupation, income and highest educational level attained, knowledge of GBV definitions, perceptions of and experiences with GBV health services including reasons for refusing GBV health referrals remain elusive towards understanding the extent of the problem. Given that violence against women and children manifests itself in so many different forms, there is no one single, universally accepted definition to describe the phenomenon. Mofokeng and Tlou (2022a, p. 264) posit that the lack of categorisation of GBV phenomenon by the South African Police Service (SAPS) leads to the misunderstanding of it, since it is perceived differently by many. Vetten (2021, p. 2) concurs with the above that an attempt by researchers to collect secondary data in order to indicate the impact of lockdown on victims of GBV, as well as the extent of the problem through the use of statistics, are “thus limited in their ability to illuminate the problem of violence during the lockdown... any errors that may have been made in the categorisation and analysis of the original data... These confirmed the addends to be correct but the sums wrong.” It is important to note that although GBV, domestic violence (DV), and intimate partner violence (IPV) are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences between them (Uzobo & Ayinmoru, 2021). The United Nations (UN) defines GBV as “any act of GBV that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (UN, 2022).

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2015) as cited in Hossain and McAlpine (2017, p. 13) expands this definition further as: “An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. The term is primarily used to underscore the fact that structural, gender-based power differentials between males and females around the world place females at risk for multiple forms of violence. This includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” DV is termed as “any incident of threatening behaviour, violence (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional), or abuse between adults who are or have been an intimate partner or family member, regardless of gender or sexuality” (Karystianis, Adily, Schofield, Greenberg, Jorm, Nenadic & Butler, 2019) against their will, impacting their daily functioning, psychological health, and identity (Mazars, Mofolo, Jewkes & Shamu, 2013). Moreover, IPV is termed as “abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). DV remains one of the global public health concerns (Aphane & Mofokeng, 2018; Sabri, Hartley, Saha, Murray, Glass & Campbell, 2020; Tshoane, Olutola, Bello & Mofokeng, 2024) and priority, given the prevalence and incidence of violence in several countries (WHO, 2013).

Patriarchy at HEIs

GBVF is deeply rooted in many HEIs around the world, and the social context of such violence is linked to the patriarchal society that determines the gender power structure (Boyle, 2019). According to Adebowale (2018), patriarchy is expressed in a way that holds up maleness as central, as opposed to femaleness. This centrality is evident in male domination whereby males hold more power than women, be it in a relationship or any other social setting (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Campbell, Sabri, Budhathoki, Kaufman, Alhusen & Decker, 2017). Patriarchy is a reality to the extent that even when people go to school and reach university levels, patriarchal manifestations, features and dynamics particularly of male dominance over female exists in different HEIs (Campbell et al., 2017). Boyle (2019) argues that this sad reality that is caused by patriarchy continues to be reinforced because of history, perception and practice

which perpetuates male dominance over female. Understanding patriarchy therefore gives a person more understanding to why most female students in countries where patriarchy is rife, have limited access to higher education and excellent achievements (Freyd, 2018; Fedina, Holmes & Backes, 2018). Due to the patriarchal society context, it can be noted that male figures at HEIs feel more powerful and use their might to abuse female students (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Freyd, 2018).

The attacks on students usually catch the attention of the media and the general public. A situation whereby an HEIs is on the news for wrong reasons always badly affect the image of the HEIs. Patriarchy, undoubtably contributes to the attacks of women by men. The attackers hold view that they are stronger than women and there is nothing that their victims can do about the attacks (Campbell et al., 2017; Fedina et al., 2018; McGinley, Wolff, Rospenda, Liu & Richman, 2016; Simelane, Mofokeng & Khosa, 2023). Okolie (2019) stipulates that the existence of patriarchy at HEIs influences the commission rate of GBVF cases, male student see no problem with physically, emotionally, and psychologically abusing female students, because of the believe that females are below them, and they can have their way with them without facing any consequences. Anahita (2017) indicates that the inequalities between men and women reinforce a patriarchal worldview in which women's subordination is normal, natural, and expected.

Anahita (2017) supported by Brennan et al. (2018) clearly explain that patriarchy can pose a serious threat to the safety of vulnerable students, the perceived view of inconsequential act of perpetrator because of their gender, can lead the HEIs in disarray. Furthermore, Brown (2018) substantiates what is mentioned by Anahita (2017) and Brennan et al. (2018) by stating that for some men, power and sexuality are linked such that women's subordination is a must. These men would use their money to persuade women so that they can do as they want to them. Some students that come from opulent families carry these examples at HEIs, they would use their family wealth as a mechanism to attack vulnerable students without facing consequences of their actions. Brennan et al. (2018) also mention that men who connect masculinity with being able to control and dominate their partners are more likely to be abusive. GBVF may reflect the discrepancy between men's belief that they should be more powerful than their partners and the reality of their power. Claiborne and Lyn (2017) also mention that men who perceive they are not as powerful as they should seek to redress the situation through use of physical dominance. Finley and Levenson (2018) suggest that dissatisfaction with the level of power in dating relationships is correlated with violence for both women and men, but the predictors of using violence differ depending on the perpetrator's gender. Given what the authors mention about patriarchy, HEIs need to have a proper plan to directly address patriarchy, because if not addressed properly, the learning period of female students might be very difficult.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Patriarchy, Gender Inequality, Social Injustice, and Cultural Norms that Reinforce these Harmful Behaviours

The culture of a country consists of cultural norms, societal rules, gender-based stereotypes, and social taboos which provoke GBV. Research in this field have found that cultural norms which comprise of societal stigma, gender-based rules, and societal prejudices are major factors that contribute to GBV (Jewkes, Jama-Shai & Sikweyiya, 2017). GBV is pervasive across all social, economic, and national strata (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013), but the type of GBV, the intensity of GBV, people's reactions, and opinions for any GBV event is not the same across the globe Research indicates that owing to the influence of the

patriarchal ideology in the South African society and despite many women possessing the cherished 21st century soft skills for leadership roles, there are some men who still consider them inferior (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012). No wonder some women continue to suffer the patriarchal hegemony exercised by their male counterparts over them (Dlamini & Adams, 2014).

Unpacking the patriarchal hegemony, Lerner (1986) contends that the term describes a mind-set that regards men as not only superior but more capable than their female counterparts of leading in virtually all social institutions. It also covers the manifestations and institutionalisation of male dominance over women and children in all social structures and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general (Makhuba, 2017). Further to the above, Setlhodi (2018) maintains that the current high prevalence of violence in South Africa is associated with patriarchy, which promotes gender inequality in the society and because men are uncomfortable with the challenge of their hegemonic masculinity, they resort to physical violence towards women who dare challenge them. Cultural identities contain the histories of a people that include traditions, struggles, achievements, and triumphs. Cultures nourish pride, resilience, belonging, intersectional identities, and connection to community. But culture is used to justify gender violence and inequality by evoking traditional beliefs and practices about how women and girls should be treated. If culture defines the spaces within which power is expressed and gender roles are enshrined, then our movement is here to push back. After all, some traditions and explanations do have an expiration date and cultural Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), just like individual DNA, changes with every generation. The culture of GBV and misogyny devalues women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals; normalises or minimises abuse; claims GBV is accidental; ignores sexism; promotes aggressive or even toxic masculinity; and uses men's achievements to exonerate, excuse, and/or deny the impact of their behaviour.

Makhuba (2017) posits that some African women have gone to the extent of writing books portraying nasty experiences at the hands of their male counterparts. Others have satirised their portrayal by men as weak and fragile species yet conveying their frustrations as women in an effort to raise societal awareness of their ill treatment and marginalisation at the hands of men. Thobejane, Mogorosi and Okere (2017) are of the opinion that despite the global acceptance of the patriarchal ideology and practices, gender inequalities need to be vigorously dealt with. The patriarchal ideology and practices affect the social division of labour especially where leadership roles are involved because women must grapple with their male counterparts who assume a male gender supremacy. It is in this sense that this paper intends to explore and expose the manifestations and ramifications of the GBVF on HEIs campuses. The cultures of ethnic and identity-specific communities prescribe and maintain traditional, patriarchal gender norms and roles; define 'transgressions' from these norms; patrol the boundaries of what they deem is and is not culturally acceptable, enforcing compliance by violence, coercion, pressure, rejection (Madigele, Mogomotsi & Mogomotsi, 2021) The cultures of systems can erect barriers to services and resources, where race and gender bias compromise access to justice (Biko, 2000). Culture influences how gender violence is viewed: minimised by society as an accidental problem, used as a convenient explanation by communities, or linked to stereotyping by systems.

Prevalence of GBV on Campus

It is not known regarding the extent or prevalence of GBVF at HEIs in South Africa (Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022a, 2022b). Under-reporting is a fundamental challenge to addressing GBV at HEIs. Mahabeer (2021) and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), assert that cases of GBVF among HEIs students are rampant, understated, and underreported. Undergraduate female students are most at risk of GBVF, particularly

first-year students entering the unfamiliar communities of learning spaces. Finley and Levenson (2018) and Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), also argue that the university space allows incidences of GBVF to continue, as there are no speedy repercussions for perpetrators. Interestingly, victims expressed experiencing coercion and intimidation to withdraw cases. As GBVF escalated on campuses, students need to voice their fears of victimisation and vulnerability on campus and be heard (Klein & Martin, 2021). Cismaru and Cismaru (2018), further indicate that a forum piece which will conceptualise GBVF and discuss types of GBVF, like sexual violence, harassment, bullying and intimidation, within the HEIs context needs to be organised.

Coulter, Mair, Miller, Blosnich, Matthews and McCauley (2017), and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), deduce that in SA, GBVF incidences outside campuses and residences or prior to attending university are difficult to monitor and report, but have significant implications on the attendance, learning and performance of students. In 2019 the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) hosted a dialogue in partnership with Higher Health, the DHET, academics, students and other stakeholders, to address GBVF on campuses (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). The prevalence of GBVF emerged from the conversation as did the need for a safer learning communities spaces. While, as previously mentioned, South African literature regarding GBV at HEIs is limited, the issue of under-reporting has also been identified in local literature (Chauke, Dlamini, Kiguwa, Mthombeni, Nduna & Selebano, 2015; Gouws & Kritzing, 2007; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022a, 2022b). The factors which contribute to under-reporting appear to be similar to those noted in the international literature, they include: a) fear of the perpetrator finding out and the potential repercussions if he/ she does find out (Chauke et al., 2015; Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022a, 2022b); b) lack of confidence in institutional response mechanisms; and c) anxiety over how the PSET system and/or police would handle the case. Under-reporting is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it means that survivors often do not receive much needed assistance and support (Magadla et al., 2021). Secondly, it can make it more challenging to bring perpetrators to justice. Thirdly, owing to under-reporting, it is difficult to determine the nature and extent of GBV on campuses and consequently harder to develop interventions to effectively prevent and respond to GBV.

South Africa is no stranger to gruesome cases of GBV. In 2013, 17-year-old Anene Booysen was brutally attacked, raped, and disembowelled in Bredasdorp (September, 2013). In 2017, 22-year-old Karabo Mokoena went missing, and her body was later found burnt in an open field in Johannesburg (Saba, 2017). In 2019, 19-year-old university student Uyinene Mrwetyana was raped and murdered at a post office in Cape Town (Adebayo, 2019). In 2020, the body of 28-year-old Tshogofatso Pule, who was eight months pregnant, was found stabbed and hanging from a tree outside Johannesburg (Seleka, 2020). A year later, 23-year-old law student Nosicelo Mtebeni was killed and dismembered, her body found stuffed inside a suitcase (Dayimani, 2021). These crimes left the nation reeling, but they are just a few of many. Releasing second-quarter crime statistics for 2023/2024, Police Minister Bheki Cele reported that South Africa recorded 10,516 rapes, 1,514 cases of attempted murder, and 14,401 assaults against female victims in July, August, and September. In the same period, 881 women were murdered (South African Government, 2023a; Felix, 2023). During the global coronavirus outbreak, President Cyril Ramaphosa described GBV as a “second pandemic” (CGTN, 2020). South Africa’s weapons to fight GBV range from the Constitution, the National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality, and the National Strategic Plan on GBVF to support structures such as the GBV Command Centre, a 24/7 helpline for victims of GBV (RSA, 1996; Department of Justice and Constitutional Development [DoJ&CD], 2020, 2022). In South Africa, most citizens say physical force is never justified to discipline women, but many report that GBV is a common occurrence in their communities and constitutes the most important

women's-rights issue that the government and society must address. Most consider DV a criminal matter and believe that the police take GBV cases seriously (Mofokeng & Tlou, 2022b).

Economic Inequality

GBVF poses significant costs for the economies of developing economies, including lower productivity and incomes, lower rates of accumulation of human and social capital, and the generation of other forms of violence both now and in the future (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021; Cahill et al., 2019). Reuter and Wahrendorf (2020) mention that economic problems are known factors that exert enormous pressures on students making them violent or docile in the face of social challenges. McGinley et al. (2016) and Buiten and Naidoo (2021) allude that economic factors include lack of money for fees, accommodation or even food, these factors combine to make tertiary institutions hotbeds of deviant gender behaviour with females mostly, but not exclusively, at the receiving end. Such behavioural patterns include sexual harassment and other acts of GBVF, this is so because men who finance the needs of women feel entitled to the women's body (Cahill et al., 2019). Mahlori et al. (2018) further explain that the outcome of economic factor that is mentioned by Reuter and Wahrendorf (2020) may include a feeling of insecurity, particularly among female students thereby discouraging them from enrolling in higher institutions and further accentuating the skewed student population in favour of males. Hence, the economic injustices do represent a serious obstacle to teaching and learning for the affected students.

Historical economic injustices resulting in enduring poverty among women and their families presents a significant determinant of GBVF attacks on the affected women (Wahrendorf, 2020; Naidoo, 2021). Poverty and GBVF are mutually reinforcing with poverty increasing women's risk of experiencing violence, and GBVF increasing risk for poverty. Poverty leads to economic dependency on abusive male partners while economic stress may increase the likelihood of arguments over resource priorities (Boyle, 2019; Brown, 2018; Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Poverty, together with low education and unemployment, increase women's vulnerability to experience attacks, while unemployment among men may cause strain and stress over their failure to fulfil household expectations. The lack of financial independence that women need contributes as a factor to cases of GBVF that are experienced at HEIs (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). According to Brennan et al. (2018), lack of financial independence by female students often reflects inequitable gender relationships that serve to maintain the legitimacy of male violence. Sales, Krause and Levenson (2017) opine that stigma and associated emotion of shame combine to become a powerful form of social control. Lack of financial independence is experienced as both stigmatising and shameful. Freyd (2018) stipulates that shame can be identified as a factor in inhibiting women from disclosing their experiences of violence to others and from seeking help. Shame may also moderate outcomes of violence, in which the victim does not report the case, or they drop the case once reported.

Freyd (2018) specifies that shame experienced by poor students, who fear reporting GBVF attacks from those students that are rich, can lead to underreporting of GBVF cases at HEIs. These cases are not opened, the perpetrators would not see the need to stop the attacks, and others that plan to victimise other students would not deter from committing such acts (Swartout, Flack, Cook, Olson, Smith & White, 2018; Wood, Hofer, Kammer-Kerwick, Parra-Cardona & BuschArmendariz, 2018). There is also the assumptions of male entitlement and privilege and functions as a form of lack of financial independence, that maintains a subordinate social and political status for women (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2017; Cahill, Kern, Dadvand, Cruickshank, Midford & Smith, 2019; Swartout et al., 2018). The lack of finances by female students has also resulted in most female students engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse that result in unwanted pregnancies and lifetime diseases and even injuries. The economic factor is one factors that

is experienced worldwide but difficult to address, because even through there is funding for students to complete their studies, these fundings do not reach all students (Swartout et al., 2018; Swartout et al., 2018). Furthermore, for some students, the financial aid offered not enough because they have to take care of their families with the very same money that they receive for their studies. It is due to these reasons and more that some female students fall victim to acts of GBVF.

Alcohol

South Africa has amongst the highest levels of alcohol consumption across the globe, and harmful drinking such as heavy episodic drinking is a common occurrence (Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; McGinley et al., 2016). Alcohol's associations with interpersonal violence, crime, health and harmful behaviours resulting in detrimental social impacts are well documented (Swartout et al., 2018). Daigle et al. (2018) and Estefan et al. (2016) deduce that it is therefore no surprise that both men and women's use of alcohol are associated with GBVF, but the relationship between women's use of alcohol and their vulnerability to being abused is far worse (Daigle et al., 2018; Estefan et al., 2016). Also, alcohol has a bidirectional relationship between GBV and mental illhealth (Wood, 2018). Wood (2018) further posits that traumatic stress due to GBVF may cause poor mental health and alcohol may be consumed to cope and deal with the consequences of the abuse. Similarly, this very use of alcohol may also increase the likelihood of abuse from a partner. Onyemelukwe (2018) reports of that a major factor that influences GBVF among students at HEIs is alcohol.

Lower risk of sexual violence among males and females can be observed among those who do not drink alcohol and as such, alcohol contributes heavily to GBVF accounts, and it causes a lot of problems at HEIs, which affect women more than men. Similarly, further research indicates that alcohol consumption at HEIs is a major contributing factor to GBVF acts, and HEIs are places where alcohol and drugs should not be easily accessed and consumed (Logie, 2017; Marakalala, Mofokeng, Khosa & Motlalekgesi, 2022; Masike & Mofokeng, 2014, 2017; Mathosa & Mofokeng, 2017). Some students turn to have their minds mislead them when they are intoxicated, students that are under the influence of alcohol and drugs tend to attack those around them, and particularly those they know would not be able to defend themselves (Wood et al., 2018; Cahill et al., 2019). There are many instances of students are raped and only realising that they have been violated the day after when the alcohol is out of their system (Logie, 2017). Alcohol is a global factor that contributes to GBVF acts because, it is sold everywhere in the world, and it use has been linked to the commission of many GBVF attacks.

Cahill et al. (2019) insist that alcohol consumption at HEIs is poorly controlled. For many students, living at campus residence is their first experience of not living under adult supervision, their encounter with alcohol is usually their first experimentation (Moylean & Javorka, 2020; Sales et al., 2017). Mengo and Black (2016) state that alcohol misuse is a threat to a student's health, as its consumption impacts negatively on the development of students, as well as on their academic performance, which leads to promiscuous behaviour. Kheswa and Hoho (2017) further inform that alcohol use remains a serious health hazard among students, alcohol intake amongst students is on the rise and, as a result reported health risks, such as development of schizophrenia, lower levels of psychological well-being, and subsequent disruption of executive mental function are increasing at HEIs. Alcohol misuse also contributes to high diseases and injury related health conditions, such as cancers (Hlengiwe, Mthabela & van der Heever, 2021; Kheswa & Hoho, 2017). Many of the GBVF attacks happen at places where alcohol consumption is high, places such as clubs, pubs and even parties (Hlengiwe, 2021). Kheswa and Hoho

(2017) and Freyd (2018) assert that students that are not using drugs or not consuming alcohol are rarely attacked, if attacked, they would have clear memory of what happened and can aid in the apprehension of the perpetrator. Students usually get attacked or attack others when they are under the influence of alcohol and drugs (Brown, 2018; Cantalupo & Kidder, 2018; Goldhill, 2015). After committing acts of GBVF or being violated, they are unable to recollect their ordeal or the problems they have created themselves. Students are known to be fascinated by the use of alcohol, and the use of alcohol does contribute or influence dearly to the commission of GBVF attacks on campuses globally.

Discussions Deterrence of Patriarchy at HEIs

Patriarchy at HEIs is one of the most common factors that contribute to the commission of GBVF cases at HEIs (Lubaale, 2021). The unjustifiable thought by men of being more superior than women contributes to men forcing themselves on women. Patriarchy is detrimental to the existence of the HEIs because it makes women to will feel unappreciated, unworthily, weak and it can push vulnerable students to not want to complete their studies at the HEIs (Gebre et al., 2020). The literature review consulted highlighted the effect of GBVF, and how these effects can be severe and should adequately responded by HEIs administrators and policy makers before many lives are ruined or even lost. Neupane (2017) posits that patriarchy contribute to the academic lives of valuable students in situations such as when a lecturer imposes the idea of the students dating them and getting good marks in return. The above statement is supported by Neupane (2017), who adds that patriarchy is one of the major factors behind girls' poor educational attainment, because if the student declines the lecturer's proposal, they will find it difficult to complete their studies.

Tanka, Keith and Susan (2021) posit that patriarchy influences female students' participation in school. This study has found that some female students would after being attacked by male students refrain from coming school. The direct handling and limiting forms of patriarchy on campus can and in reducing the dropout rate of female student (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Thus, the extent of the participation and roles that the HEIs have to play is a crucial role. Tanka et al. (2021) concur that patriarchy contributes to female student's lack of trust in the HEIs' ability to contain cases of GBVF, because some of the perpetrators are the HEIs' employees. The exchange of marks for sexual pleasures is one of the acts that are usually mostly performed by cruel male lecturers who take advantage of vulnerable students. Patriarchy is the structuring of society on the basis of family units, where fathers have primary responsibility for the welfare of their families. Arising from this duty to members of their families, men exercise authority over them (Neupane, 2017). Hence, it becomes logical to uphold the view that matriarchy as constituting a stage of cultural development is presently discredited; or simply put, a strictly matriarchal society does not exist (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Student's lives are structured in a way which they supposedly live without adult supervision, since they are adults. When they start to be in a relationship, they end up choosing to cohabit and their partners become their providers in the relationship, which at times leads to their partners developing the thought of being superior to them and even abusing them.

This study has highlighted the importance to addressing patriarchy, it has shown how patriarchy can influence other factors that contribute to GBVF cases at HEIs. For instance, Tanka et al. (2021) mention that patriarchy and sexism are likened to two (2) sides of the same coin. Sex per se is not the problem but the use made of it by society that borders on gender. In differentiating the two (2), van Niekerk (2018) opines that while sex refers to physical differences of the body, gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. Sexism refers to unfair and unwarranted

discrimination of people based on the biological phenomenon of sex. As it is obvious, sexism is decipherable in both the individual and institutional spheres. What is common to the two (2) levels is that sexism and patriarchy functions in such a way that they preserve and reinforces inequality between men and women, such as differential sexual access to education.

Economic Factors

Lack of economic independence among women is a key driver of GBVF, particularly on campus (Boyle, 2019; De Gue, 2014; Mengo & Black, 2016). It is hard for female students who are economically dependent on their male partners to leave such abusive relationships (Boyle, 2019; De Gue, 2014). The previous mentioned statements highlight that there is a strong link between poverty and GBVF. Changes in the economic status of female students can help reduce GBVF on campus, but in some instances may increase it (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Buiten and Naidoo (2021) also found that educated, economically independent women are less likely to be abused. This is because they are more confident about leaving such relationships or reporting the abuse to relevant authorities (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). As noted, the female student's economic empowerment may be an abuse risk factor for women in relationships. Boyle (2019) asserts that since 1994, many South African women have become educated and have entered the labour market. For some men who date female students, this represents a loss of power, authority, and fear of losing their partners once they are educated and employed.

The current South African social and economic conditions, including the impact of the global financial crisis, make it difficult for many men to achieve 'complete' masculinity, such as securing jobs, marrying, fathering children, or establishing their own households (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021; van Niekerk, 2018). van Niekerk (2018) indicates that unemployment in South Africa is high, many young men do not work, and some are wholly dependent on women for survival. Some men feel that women have usurped the roles that were previously allocated to men, resulting in uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety (Fernandes, 2017; Finley & Levenson, 2018). In this context, GBVF becomes a prominent mechanism through which to reinforce male power and authority. Fernandes (2017) assumes that in the crisis of male identity, violence is sometimes used as a tool to try to maintain power over women. Some men become frustrated and angry when they cannot provide for their partner's materially and financially needs, which often leads to them reacting violently to their economically independent female partners (Boyle, 2019). It is important that HEIs engage the campus community in various interventions to deal with the problem of economic factors as a contributor to GBVF attacks. Interventions can include fair accessibility to financial aid opportunities so that students do not have to depend on others to take care of them.

Limitation of Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol abuse is linked with an increased risk of all forms of interpersonal violence, including GBVF. Alcohol abuse has been positively linked to GBVF at HEIs in many studies (Hlengiwe et al., 2021; van Niekerk, 2018). Kheswa and Hoho (2017) found that sixty seven percent (67%) of men consume alcohol before abusing their partners, most female students that abused by their partners share the experience of being attacked by drunk partners. Men often use alcohol as an excuse not to be held accountable for their abusive behaviour. Hlengiwe et al. (2021) suggest that some female students find themselves trapped in the cycle of violence and even justify their partners' violent behaviours, instead of reporting the abuse. Hlengiwe et al. (2021) further inform that victims at times create excuses for their partners, they mention things such as 'he was drunk but he is generally sweet when he is not drunk. Kheswa and Hoho (2017)

deduce that female students who live with men who drink are five (5) times more likely to be assaulted by their partners than those who live with non-drinking partners. Men who have consumed large amounts of alcohol can inflict more serious violence at the time of an assault which can then even escalate to death (Kheswa & Hoho, 2017). The level of violence increases if both partners are drinking, this then leads to fights that can amount to unbelievable acts of violence from both partners (Hlengiwe et al., 2021). Alcohol abuse also impacts negatively on communication between partners and increases the occurrence of arguments (Kheswa & Hoho, 2017; Hlengiwe et al., 2021). Gebre et al. (2020) states that drunk men are more likely to accuse their partner of disrespect or infidelity, depending on the circumstances in which the woman is drinking. The violence meted out against their partner may escalate if she tries to respond, challenges her partner's authority or fights back while she is drunk (Gebre et al., 2020).

The majority of university female students that abuse alcohol, are financially unstable, have unclear sexual values and impaired self-esteem (Gebre et al., 2020). Once they relocate from their home villages to pursue education at the HEIs, some students abandon their parents or guardians' guidance and adopt a new culture of being unruly (Buiten & Naidoo, 2021). Kheswa and Hoho (2017) assert that students that constantly consume alcohol demonstrate patterns of being susceptible to rape, because they stay at the clubs until it is very late, while knowing that they do not have transport to take them back home. In this regard, Gebre et al. (2020) state that they demonstrated a lack in making informed choices and decisions. Furthermore, Buiten and Naidoo (2021) posit that when under the influence of alcohol, some students tend to make life threatening decisions, such as engaging in sexual activities without the use of protection, and such decisions contribute to unwanted pregnancies, STIs and even trauma. The findings in this study corresponds with the findings by Gebre et al. (2020) who inform that among female students in most public HEIs, alcohol is the major contributor to unwanted pregnancies, STIs, rape and even death of students.

These findings align with the study by Buiten and Naidoo (2021) who found that most female students who experience university life for the first time tend to go to the parties, make friends and learn to abuse alcohol. For fear of rejection and loneliness, they tend to conform and become sociable and extroverts. This study also found that there is strong evidence that when female students have abused alcohol, they are most likely to act invincibly and risk their lives by being alone at night when leaving the entertainment settings. Students that abandon the moral teachings from parents by being involved in risk-taking behaviours usually make rash decision when under the influence of alcohol. Mentions that many students that fall pregnant usually opt to do an abortion, because they know that their parents would be shattered if they find out that they are pregnant.

Flawed Campus Spaces

The nature of campus spaces is an important institutional contributing factor to GBVF (Mengo & Black, 2016). This relates to the environmental design of institutions and where incidents more frequently occur (van Niekerk, 2018). In terms of the location of GBVF on campus, incidents of GBVF can occur on campus grounds, in campus buildings (e.g. lecture venues, tutorial rooms), in residences, while students and staff are moving to and from campus, including in the immediate vicinity of the campuses; as well as during off-campus site visits (Mengo & Black, 2016). It is highly important that HEIs limit the chances of commission of GBVF acts in and around campuses. Students must be and feel safe wherever they go in the campuses, it must be difficult for a person can attack a student on campus. van Niekerk (2018) outlines that the environmental design of HEIs can increase or decrease the likelihood of GBVF occurring. Gebre et al. (2020) further inform that environmental design is an overlooked risk factor in cases of GBVF, as

compared to other forms of campus crime, such as theft, robbery, and hijacking, as such incidents are often perpetrated by strangers, whereas incidents of GBVF at HEIs sing or decreasing the risk of GBVF (Gebre et al., 2020). The lack of a good environmental design includes the risk of stalking and harassment and other attacks in and around campuses (Brown, 2018). A poor design of residences including poor access control can be a risk factor for sexual assault and other crimes. In addition, environmental design can also either increase or decrease the fear of victimisation. A good environmental design that includes good access control, proper lighting, enough security, and no bushes can limit the commission of GBVF cases at HEIs.

HEIs should have safe places that victims of GBVF can go to, and while it is important that survivors feel safe on campus, it is perhaps just as important that perpetrators of sexual violence feel unsafe on campus (Brown, 2018). In this quotation, the culture on campus is seen to be related to how survivors feel rather than related to how the perpetration of sexual violence is supported by this culture (Gebre et al., 2020; Brown, 2018). Given that this study has shown that GBVF cases are more likely to be perpetrated by individuals who are known to the victim (Neupane, 2017), a good environmental design will make it possible for victims to get help and difficult for perpetrators to go unpunished. This is so because a good environmental design makes it difficult for perpetrators to even commit GBVF acts on campuses. The best if not good environmental design for the HEIs, will be able to expose offensive and criminal behaviour, express the intolerance of it, educate the students about GBVF and ensure that its environment supports the survivors and others that get affected by trauma caused by the GBVF attacks (Tanka et al., 2021). Tanka et al. (2021) also mention that HEIs that fail to provide the education and awareness of GBVF on their campus communities, will find it hard to address GBVF cases because the perpetrators would not stop attacking those vulnerable. The HEI that does not specify what frames its assertions of condemnation of GBVF, whether that be a feminist stance, based on human rights, or some other position will also not be doing justice to the safety of the campus community (Kheswa & Hoho, 2017).

In a comprehensive model, campuses create policies and implement responses that establish conduct for those affiliated with the institution as well as set out the protocols that will be used to ensure fair and consistent resolution processes (Kheswa & Hoho, 2017; Tanka et al., 2021). It is critical to assess systems and services on an ongoing basis and to create a feedback loop to ensure that systems for enforcement and accountability methods are evaluated (Kheswa & Hoho, 2017). Brown (2018) suggests that the HEIs that are interested in creating a safe environment for teaching and learning can begin their planning and preparation phase by first completing a department assessment on response to GBVF crimes, this planning will assess strengths and gaps at HEIs strategies used to ensure that the campuses are safe. Brown (2018) continues to point out that by identifying training needs, guide policy and procedure review, HEIs can be at a better position to create a safe environment, that is fit for teaching and learning. This assessment can also assist in identifying possible campus partners to develop a comprehensive response to GBVF cases that is unique to the affected campus.

The Significance of the Research Chair at TUT and in South Africa

The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) (2020) embraces engaged scholarship by integrating learning, teaching, and research engagement into everyday realities (TUT Institutional Strategic Plan 2020-2025). TUT's mission, as indicated in the Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) focuses on, inter alia, solving pressing societal problems. Consequently, a key strategic goal in response to the DHET Policy Framework (2020) is the establishment of the African Research Chair for the Campus and School Public Safety to inform policy and practice in learning communities. The significance of this portfolio among

others; is to review of current practices and processes in line with DHET Policy Framework (2020), within TUT is important to provide data analytics /information to inform policy and practice. This portfolio relies on an ambitious comparative multi-level research design and a holistic analytical model to develop the necessary knowledge to combat and eradicate all forms of violence in learning communities. One focus of this portfolio is on collecting empirical evidence of the prevalence of GBVF in all HEIs in South Africa, and where possible, to some of the public schools understanding how this relates to its determinants and consequences. This paper provides an integrative review on factors contributing to GBVF, how prevalence it is and how HEIs respond to the roles of HEIs towards reduction, protecting, prosecuting, providing services supported by policies and partnership. Each of these mechanisms will be investigated on national, organisational, and individual levels.

Furthermore, the establishment of this portfolio also marked the birth of another platform geared to act as a catalyst towards contributing to the ideals of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Both the inauguration and the launch on 7 April 2022, marked the re-dedication of African Research Chair towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of ‘an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena.’ The agenda 2063 is the concrete manifestation of how SaferSpaces (2022) coins it ‘nationally representative research’, this portfolio, through its strategic partnerships continentally and beyond the borders of Africa, intends to achieve this vision within a five (5) year period from 2022 to 2027. Agenda 2063 encapsulates not only Africa’s aspirations for the future but also identifies key flagship programmes, one of which is Programme 5, “Silencing the Guns by 2020”, which saw the interruptions brought by COVID-19 and still need to be attended to amongst other platforms, through the office of the Research Chair. The sound of guns, infiltration of dangerous weapons, culture of violence and criminality, have become a way of life at campuses in South Africa, continentally and across the globe. The African Research Chair launch will go a long way to ensure that Agenda 2063 - Programme 5 - “Silencing the Guns by 2020”, informs the activities of the Research Chair and forges partnerships with various stakeholders, to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 and work towards reducing GBVF, victimisation on residences and violent activities in and around campuses.

CONCLUSION

This paper delves into the common factors influencing gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) cases within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa and selected countries. Drawing from a synthesis of literature, it identifies key contributors to GBVF, such as patriarchy, alcohol, and environmental design. Failure to address these factors not only jeopardises the safety of students and staff but also poses a threat to the existence of HEIs themselves. Through comprehensive prevention programs aimed at raising awareness and knowledge of GBVF policies and services, HEIs strive to create safer learning environments. Strategies proposed include educational activities, dialogues, and collaboration with stakeholders to raise awareness and empower students to prevent GBVF.

Despite the significant research on GBVF, particularly its impact and strategies to address it, there remains a dearth of literature specifically focusing on GBVF within educational settings. Limited available data on GBVF incidents within HEIs underscores the necessity for further research in this area. The education sector, being a crucial platform for research and service provision to large populations, should spearhead efforts to understand and combat GBVF effectively. However, constraints such as limited resources and time frame may hinder comprehensive investigations. Addressing the factors contributing to GBVF at HEIs requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between campus communities,

law enforcement, and policymakers. Ensuring a safe learning environment necessitates robust relationships between HEIs and the police, effective reporting mechanisms, and swift action against perpetrators. Despite the limitations of this study, including its reliance on content analysis and constrained resources, it underscores the urgent need for further research to inform policy and practice in combating GBVF within educational settings.

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