Fulfilling Obligations: A gender transformative framework for enhanced prevention of gender-based violence at a university in Zimbabwe

Efiritha Chauraya[a]
[a]Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

ARTICLE HISTORY

Abstract

Gender-based violence is a global phenomenon, and institutions of higher learning are not spared of the scourge the world over. In Zimbabwe, despite the considerable attention and increasing awareness of gender-based violence, the vice is on the rise. The contribution of this study is the gender-transformative framework it suggests can curb the menace. A Zimbabwe university formed the locus of this study. A qualitative approach was employed because the intention was to capture and concentrate on the participants' opinions, attitudes, feelings, and emotions on the high prevalence of the scourge and from that, an evidence-guided framework that can mitigate, remedy, and prevent gender-based violence was proposed. The primary method for soliciting the information from the participants was the in-depth face-to-face interview. In the study, 23 interviews were conducted with the Dean of students, three student leaders, the Registrar, and 18 students. A qualitative thematic analysis of the interview data was undertaken, and results revealed that although the university had crafted some measures and mechanisms to deal with the menace, the stumbling block was unsuccessful implementation. A gender responsive multi-pronged framework was innovatively proffered to strengthen implementation initiatives so that the vice is combated.

KEYWORDS: gender-based violence, transformative framework, qualitative, university, empowerment

CONTACT: : Efiritha Chauraya ✉ chaurayae@staff.msu.ac.zw

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global phenomenon, and institutions of higher learning (IHL) are not spared of the scourge the world over (Witts & Zimmerman, 2002; Kanjiri & Nomngcoyiya, 2021; McMillan & White, 2022). In Zimbabwe, and IHL, despite the considerable attention and increased awareness of this scourge, the vice is on the rise. While GBV at IHL may take many forms such as student-to-student abuse (Leach, 2013; Gukurume, 2022), female lecturer-to-male student, lecturer-to-lecturer (Leach, 2013) and contra-power abuse (Mawere & Seroto, 2022) among others, this study narrowed itself to lecturer (male)-student (female) violence. The reason for this was because the study was carried out against a background of continued rise in occurrence of lecturer (male)-student (female) GBV in IHL in Zimbabwe (Zindi, 1994; Ndawi, 2006; Mukeredzi, 2019; Dube, Ncube & Mlotshwa, 2021; Mashininga, 2021; Moyo, 2022).

The definition of GBV adopted by this study is provided by Makhene (2022, p. 1) who defines it as "...violence targeting individuals based on biological sex, gender identity, or social gender norms." In this study, university campus-related GBV refers to acts of physical, sexual, verbal, visual and psycho-emotional abuse impacted on students within the university. The study was undertaken against the background information indicating that although both men and women are victims of GBV, women, more than men are affected (Liyasu, Abubokar, Aliyu, Galadanci & Salihu, 2011; UNICEF, 2012; Akram et al, 2020; Makhene, 2022; Mutinta, 2022). The global conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 long highlighted the phenomenon of more women than men being deprived of their human rights as a result of GBV (United Nations, 1993). Violence against an individual is of itself a violation of their human rights. Makhene, (2022) further highlights that GBV incidences are rising despite the heightened awareness the world over, warranting the scourge of GBV to earn a label, 'another pandemic'. More specifically, in IHL, GBV as observed by scholars such as Akram, Laila and Amiri (2020) can be explicit, such as manifest cases of *quid pro quo,* unwelcome touching, rape, verbal threats, insults and beating among others or can be implicit (McMillan & White, 2022) in which case, institutional structures, programmes and practices breed, reinforce and even exacerbate unequal gender relations (Sundaresh & Himalatha, 2013; Makhene, 2022).

However, while several studies document prevalence of GBV in IHL in Zimbabwe (Zindi, 1994; Ndawi 2006; Mukeredzi, 2019; Mashininga, 2021; Dube, Ncube & Mlotshwa, 2021), the development of frameworks to curb the vice is little and limited in the Zimbabwe context. This is the gap that this study fills as it sets to present an evidence-based framework that forbids, remedy and prevents GBV.

Theoretical Framework

As a result of the complex nature of gender-based violence, no one theory can adequately frame the study, hence the integration of three theories in this study. The integration positioned the three theories: the social exchange theory, the socio-cultural theory and the sexual objectification theory complementing each other as all of them focus on factors that make GBV likely to occur. First, the social exchange theory, which concentrates on the mediating tools on how people think and behave, is explored. This theory views GBV as a social behaviour which is a product of an exchange process, (Vilades, 2010; Sundaresh & Hemalatha, 2013). The theory postulates that human beings feel negatively or positively about their behaviour as a result of a cost-benefit-analysis of the particular behaviour. Adapting the theory to the study, GBV occurs because the rewards out there in the IHL are worth the practice. Male lecturers weigh the potential benefits of sexually abusing the female students *vis-à-vis* the potential risks emanating from and associated with their behaviour, and find the benefits outweighing the risks, and so continue with the abuse. According to this theory, y men have the passion to harass. Otherwise, why would they continue the abuse if it had impactful risks? Of relevance to the study, is the borrowing from the theory that to end GBV, punishment should be deterrent to prevent the desire to abuse. Consequences of committing the abuse must weigh far more than the rewards from committing the abuse. Rewards are the sources of positive reinforcement such as personal pleasure and gratification (Blau, 1964; Vilades, 2010).

Second is the socio-cultural theory, which, just like the social exchange theory examines the wider socio-political context in which GBV is created and occurs. Emanating as a theoretical position informing the distribution of power between men and women in society, this theory is of the view that GBV is all about dominance, power, control and authority (Kapila, 2017). To this theory, GBV is rooted and anchored in the gender-based power inequities and inequalities emanating from gender discriminations and biases mainly as a result of entrenched harmful social norms, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, (Akram,

Laila & Amiri, 2020) which give rise to asymmetrical power relations between men and women in society. As such, GBV is both a cause and a consequence of gender unfairness in society (Donaldson et al., 2018).

Adapting the theory to the study, GBV at IHL is mere consequences of the sexism in the wider society because IHL are microcosms of society. Women's inferior status in society trickles down and imports itself into the tertiary institutions. Just as it is in society, so it is in IHL – men express their dominance and power through acts of GBV. That is why they are the major perpetrators, (Connell, 2002).

Tagging on to the social exchange theory, power results from the unequal exchange stemming from the lecturer (male)-student (female) relationship which is tilted in favour of the lecturer. The lecturers extract compliance from the students using their (lecturers) power and authority. To this theory, the lecturers have no regard for the female students, just as men in society have no regard and respect for women as equal beings to men.

The third theory, whose insights were brought to bear on the study, was a derivative of the objectification theory. As espoused by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), the theory has many threads, but the strand pursued by this study is that which assists in exploring the unfolding of the consequences of being a female in a patriarchal socio-cultural context where females are sexually objectified as beings whose value and worth are equated to fulfilling male sexual desires. This interpretation of women is then used to exploit the women. By extension, Szymanski, Moffitt and Carr (2011, p. 8) developed the sexual objectification theory which occurs "when women's body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire." Applying this thread of thought to the study, then, the male lecturers take students as objects of pleasure, fun, and enjoyment, and as part of the fringe benefits from the institution. In the theory's view, this is the reason for the increasing practice of GBV.

Taken together, the three theories see GBV entrenched in a web of pleasurable benefits and toxic masculinities. In this article, the theoretical framework framed the study, assisted in explaining findings and influenced the suggested interventional model.

The global GBV landscape in IHL

International literature indicates that even as IHL are increasingly becoming aware of the ills of GBV, the institutions, to varying levels though, are fertile ground for GBV, (Phipps, 2020; Ajdukovic et al 2021; Orfan, Ibrahimi & Noori, 2022). The prevalence patterns of GBV at IHL indicate that the vice is skewed towards females, be they students or staff (Molla & Cuthbert, 2014; Beyen, Chojenta, Shore, Melka, & Loxton, 2019; Okodugha & Adewole, 2021; Mutinta, 2022). Consequently, because of this skewness, GBV is equated to violence against women, a phenomenon literature records as 'feminisation of gender-based violence' (Sundaresh & Hemalatha, 2013; Kanjiri& Nomngcoyiya, 2021). Asked to define GBV, the response given was "it is something that men do to women" (Sundaresh & Hemalatha, 2013, p. 74).

Existing evidence highlights differences between developed and developing countries as regards, students, and staff perceptions of effectiveness of response to the vice by the resident universities. Perceptions of students at universities in developed countries indicate a significant high level of trust and confidence in institutional responsiveness to the vice (Bystrynski & Allen, 2017; Warton & Moore, 2022), while the opposite was registered for students in universities in developing countries.

Reporting for the whole of Africa, Beyene et al. (2019) note the particular high prevalence of incidences of GBV in African universities, and seemingly lack of faith, sincerity and wholeheartedness in institutional response to, and prevention of GBV. The lack of confidence in institutional responsiveness to GBV in African universities is also observed by Molla and Cuthbert (2014), Singh et al. (2016), Chawiyah et al. (2017), Namaganda, Ssali and Bisaso (2021), Okodugha and Adewole (2021), Makhene (2022) and Warton & Moore (2022). These authors studied different universities in Africa but came up with the same observation.

Namaganda et al., (2021) examined the barriers to reporting sexual harassment in universities in East Africa; Chawiyah, Onkware, Koteng and Ocholla (2017) studied selected universities in Kenya; Molla and Cuthbert (2014) carried out studies at two public universities in Ethiopia while Singh et al. (2016) studied the KwaZulu Natal University (South African) and Warton and Moore (2022) studied Rhodes University (South Africa). Okodugha and Adewole (2021)

captured views and perceptions of lecturers and students in tertiary institutions in Edo State (Nigeria).

The seemingly half-heartedness of African universities in dealing with GBV is attributed to the dilemma that the institutions find themselves in, (Warton & Moore, 2022). Warton and Moore (2022) find African universities caught up in a delicate balancing act where the institutions are conscious of the fact that if water-tight responsiveness to GBV is seriously taken, the likelihood would be an increase in the number of reported cases, and if that happens, the institutions may find themselves in serious reputational risks.

International literature also highlights crafting and implementation of legislation and policies by the universities, but the same literature is quick to caution that the utility of any law or policy depends on its enforcement (Gardner & Johnson, 2010; UNGEI, 2015). Therefore, possession of legislation, policy or structure is not of itself an indicator and measure of responsiveness. Implementation of the said gives shape to the institutional climate which in turn influences the reporting rates. Institutional climates that are tolerant of GBV, trivialising incidences as normal behaviour are associated with low reporting rates. Where implementation is not lax, and victims are listened to, supported, and assisted, reporting is high. It was the interest of this study to establish the GBV climate of the studied university.

The Zimbabwe IHL GBV landscape

The prevalence of GBV in Zimbabwe IHL has been so high to the extent of pushing a local non-governmental organization, Students and Youth Working on Reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT), to petition the government of Zimbabwe to formulate a new law that criminalises GBV, (Mashininga, 2021). The petition followed numerous reports by various entities that GBV, especially sexual harassment by male lecturers on female students in tertiary institutions had reached intolerable levels. Cases of GBV in the country are prominent in newspapers on almost daily basis. SAYWHAT carried out a longitudinal study from December 2019 to April 2021, (funded by the United Nations Population Fund) whose findings revealed that GBV was rife in IHL in Zimbabwe (Mashininga, 2021).

Another non-profit organisation, the Female Students Network Trust Zimbabwe, carried out a similar study that revealed that 98% of the female students at tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe had experienced GBV (Mashininga, 2021). These were almost the same statistics registered by Zindi (1994) who found out

that 97% of the female university students experienced GBV. Ndawi's (2006) study on 'sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe', a shadow report prepared for FAWE, corroborated Zindi (1994) findings. Related studies by Dhlomo, Mugweni, Shoniwa, Maunganidze and Sodi (2014) and Mukeredzi (2017) established that the scourge was on the rise. Dhlomo et al. and Mukeredzi's referred to studies, revealed that although GBV had been receiving considerable attention in research and public awareness in Zimbabwe, the scourge kept on the rise.

It is these alarming levels that prompted SAYWHAT to petition the government and prompted the parliament of Zimbabwe to constitute a Joint Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, and Women Affairs, Community, and Small to Medium Enterprise Development, to carry out independent consultations on the issue of GBV in tertiary institutions (Mashininga, 2019). The joint committee visited the tertiary institutions in the country to establish and get a clearer understanding of the extent and nature of the phenomenon. The report by the committee affirmed that indeed GBV was on the rise in IHL (Mashininga, 2021; Moyo, 2022). The analysis of the GBV climate at the institutions found that the fuelling and stumbling block was the absence of legal frameworks on GBV such as policies that among other things, punish the perpetrators; deter others who may want to commit the same crime and eliminate GBV altogether (hence their being labelled zero-tolerant). This development saw IHL that did not have the mentioned policies urgently craft them. Despite fulfilling the obligation through crafting and implementing the benevolent policies, Mashininga (2021) reports that GBV is still rampant in Zimbabwe's IHL.

It is against this Zimbabwe IHL GBV landscape that this study sets out to achieve three things:

- Establish the nature, patterns and trends of GBV at the studied institution.
- Provide reasons to the prevalence of GBV in institution of higher learning despite implementation of zero-tolerant GBV policy.
- Suggest a GBV framework that forbids, remedy and prevents GBV.
  .

Methodology

A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted for the study. A Zimbabwe public university formed the locus of the study. The all-encompassing factor in locating the study within the qualitative research approach was the need to capture the participants' opinions, attitudes, emotions and feelings towards GBV at the institution, with the intention of using these to inform and suggest a framework for remedy and prevention of the menace.

Research design

In sync with the qualitative approach, a case study design was adopted because of its facilitation in getting a deeper and detailed investigation of GBV issues at the institution. The design was exploratory as it examined both surface and deep level data (Stake, 2010) which guided clarification of GBV encounters. The primary flaw of utilising this research design was its disallowing generalisability and transferability of the research findings, given that the design was context and time bound (Merriam, 2009). However, this flaw also tended to be the prime strength of the study, as the adopted framework was tailored to the specific context. This was a guiding priority as the key purpose of the study was designing a framework of remedy and prevention of GBV. Going by Stake's (2005 p. 455) argument, the mentioned flaw might have its impact diluted by the author's observation that case researchers:

> …will, like others, pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and relationships…They know that the reader, too, will add and subtract, invent and shape… reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it…more likely to be personally useful….

Thus, going by this observation, even as the utilised case study registered the limitation, and in full cognisance of the fact that the Zimbabwe IHL are not a homogenous group, the study still contributes in the field of GBV as definitely some commonalities exist.

Study sample

The site was conveniently identified, and the participants were purposively chosen based on their felt proximity to issues of GBV at the institution as either a crafter of the GBV policy and programmes at the institution, implementer of the said or as consumers of the policy programmes. The first category saw the inclusion of the Registrar, the second category encompassed the Dean of

Student Affairs, while the last category comprised the members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the ordinary students.

Even as the study focused only on one type of GBV, the lecturer (male)-to-student (female) abuse, male students were included in the sample because the researcher felt it more informing to tap into male and female students' nuances and perspectives of GBV at the institution. In all, twenty-three people participated in the study. These were: the Registrar, the Dean of Students, three members of the SRC and eighteen students. All levels of the study for the students that were on campus at the time of carrying out the study were included. More finalist students were included in the sample than other groups as it was felt that they had a fuller feel of the institution than the other students, and also that they had nothing to hide as people soon leaving the institution. These participants, it was felt, were positioned to offer rich and relevant insights into GBV issues at the institution. Table 1 provides the distribution of the student sample.

Table 1: Distribution of the student sample

Level of study	Female	Male
First year	2	2
Second year	4	2
Fourth or fifth year	5	3
Total	11	7

Research instrument

A semi structured open-ended face-to-face interview was used in the collection of data for the study. The choice for this type of interview was made because of the freedom the instrument allowed the participants to air their responses and the flexibility it allowed the researcher to rephrase the questions where it was felt the participant had not understood the question. Questions were framed around the research questions.

Data analysis

Qualitative thematic analysis of the interview data was instituted to eventually reduce data to a level where conclusions were drawn. Five distinct stages in order of progression, as shown in Figure 1, were followed by the analysis process. The process followed the steps as outlined by Trent and Chao (2014).
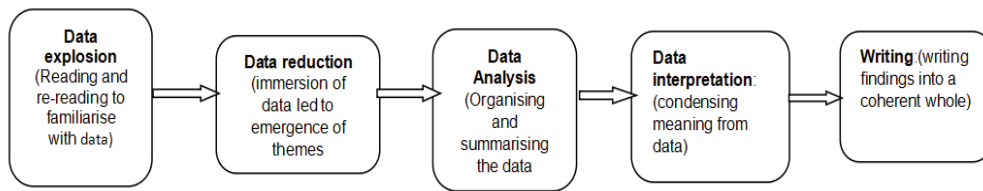
Figure 1: The thematic process of data analysis as utilised by the study.

Findings

The study findings were organized around the research objectives. The study narrowed investigations on GBV to only one type of violence, the male lecturer-to-female student abuse. A more comprehensive study that investigates into many types of GBV is necessary.

Research objective 1: Nature, patterns, trends and dimensions of GBV

The dimensions of GBV that the study uncovered were of a contact and non-contact nature, registering both explicit and implicit abuse. Of the 18 students, six boldly confided about their own encounters of GBV as they came face-to-face with it. These shared their own experiences. The six reported about GBV meted on them through actions (3); gestures (1) and words (2). The other 12 (7 males and 5 females) talked about their friends' and peers' accounts and experiences. One remarked that her friend made it in a certain course because of marker's manipulation in exchange for sex. She is hooked on in that relationship because of fear.

Thus, issues of vertical-power differentials came into play. This is a case of the lecturer procuring sex using threats and students consenting under duress. This finding tags on to what Goldner (2018) observed that given the power differences between lecturers and their students, the demarcation between consensual and forced relationships is weak.

In all the student interviews, the abuse was inflicted on the female student by the male lecturer. This finding corroborates literature studies that reveal that at IHL, female students are the victims of GBV more than their male counterparts (Sundaresh & Hemalatha, 2013; Kanjiri & Nomngcoyiya, 2021; Okodugha & Adewole, 2021; Orfan, Ibrahimi & Noori, 2022).

Explicit GBV manifested itself in the form of open requests for sex so that the student passes the lecturer's module (38.9%); inappropriate sexist remarks about the female gender such as sarcastic criticism of their body (especially buttocks, breasts and legs)(88.9%); sexually oriented comments on their appearances and dressing clothing(66.8%); unsolicited physical contacts, such as buttock patting (44%); intimidations, insults, humiliations and threats (55.6%) and severe starring that made the environment offensive, limiting the student's ability to participate in class. Such actions were not only misplaced but inappropriate for a healthy and respectful lecturer-student relationship. A few interview transcripts from four different students are captured below:

> GBV is an issue that needs positioning as a priority at this institution. Male lecturers now take it as normal behaviour. They pass on comments about female students that leave one tongue-tied. Most of the young boys you see close to the male lecturers are the conduits that arrange the deals. In return, they are provided with meals and sometimes passes in certain modules. This is why the lecturers who indulge in such behaviour are called 'donors' or 'blessers'.

> I was molested without understanding the condition of the action and immediately promised beneficial treatment in exchange for sex.

> We have lecturers who get annoyed if you turn them down. Next thing he passes nasty comments about you in class just to annoy, humiliate and embarrass you.

> A male lecturer took nude pictures of a female student whom he had asked out. The pictures were taken without her noticing. The male lecturer is now using that as blackmail and intimidation weapon as he now asks her out against her will. She had wanted to report him, but she fears the stigma that may go with that.

Discerning on the conversations with the students, and following the views advanced by the sexual objectification theory, one would be tempted to interpret the comments and actions of the male lecturers as unwarranted sexism revealing men who look at women as objects of male fun and enjoyment who they can touch with no regard to their wishes. This, then, gave the male lectures an appetite to indulge in the horrendous behaviours and acts of violence.

It would appear that the male lecturers did not recognize the acts as an egregious human right violation. Failure to have a voice that condemned it as a human right violation, and therefore, unacceptable only worsened the situation. As directed by the social-cultural theory, policies and programmes designed to eliminate GBV have to content with deeply engraved societal attitudes, conceptions, beliefs, and values. This dilutes and undermines effectiveness of the GBV policies.

Research objective 2: Why the continued prevalence despite the GBV policy Implementation?

Responding to a direct question on prevalence rate of GBV at the institution, the Registrar vehemently denied the experiences of such at the institution, arguing that judging by the frequency of the recorded student complaints and grievances of that nature, GBV was not a matter of concern at the institution. The Registrar explained that in the very few cases that GBV happened, the male lecturer had sort of taken advantage of the student's vulnerability because of high cost of living prohibiting the student from accessing decent accommodation, meals and sometimes even tuition fees. The Dean of Students, however, did not deny the existence of GBV on campus and remotely insinuated that female students encountered it more than the male students, and quickly hinted that:

> most cases go unreported or are resolved without going by the book. The policy is there, but it is not accessible to staff and is rarely referred to.

The remarks by the Dean of Students signalled that although the policy was in existence, its implementation was flawed, hence its impact very dilute. The remark 'without going by the book' reveals a weak or zero compliance with the policy. Responses from the students indicated that GBV was an issue. Each one of the 18 students knew of self or another student having gone through or going through GBV at the hands of a male lecturer. One female student chronicled her ordeal:

> What I am telling you is a sign of institutional failure. He invited me to his office, together with all the other students who had not done well in the practical exam. But we would enter his office one by one to receive individually-targeted assistance since our shortcomings were varied. When I entered the office, he came very close to me and touched my buttock without me reading the intention. I made a report to the Chairperson of my department and was asked to put the report in writing, which I did. When I went with the report to the Chairperson, he read it and remarked 'He did only this?', with contempt written over his face. That was that with my case.

In another case of contact violence of similar nature, the complaint was honoured but thereafter downplayed. The lecturer had been reported of a similar abuse by a different student but seemingly nothing was done to him. In the student's words:

> *Student affairs tend to find it easier to deal and tackle GBV incidents among students, than those that involve staff. At this institution there is a strong culture of reluctance to speak ill of a staff member, especially with issues of sexual harassment.*

Observations from the remarks by this student, accusing the institution of having a strong norm of overlooking GBV when committed by staff, tend to fit into observations made by Warton and Moore (2022), who, discussing possible reasons for 'perpetuation of GBV with impunity', noted that some institutions do not pay due diligence to cases of GBV deliberately, especially where they feel that it may dent the institutional reputation. Cases such as these, where either the complaint or the complainant is not taken seriously, accepts, normalises, sustains and even exacerbates the violence.

It was also reported that lecturers' offices were unsupervised spaces where GBV occurred. The offices were reported to be arenas for sexual abuse.

Policy issues

Conversations with the Registrar and Dean of Student Affairs established that the institution did have a zero-tolerant GBV policy that was crafted before pressure by government was put on IHL to have such policies in place. Conversations further established that the policies had been cascaded to the student board, a claim which was met with mixed feelings and reactions by the students. One male student outrightly declared:

> I disagree with the information you said university authorities told you about, that there is GBV policy. If it is there, I and my friends do not know about it.

This was the view eight other students shared. Another student, who was a member of the student representative board said he was aware that the university had a GBV policy but did not think the policy was being implemented. This was the view shared by five other students. Yet another student who was a member of the SRC, who knew a friend's case that was downplayed, bemoaned what she summed up as pathways that are marred with red tape, complicated and threatening reporting structures and procedures. It was apparent then, from some of the students' remarks, that students did not report because of lack of trust in their institution acting rationally and sensibly on their complaints.

While a study by Bystrynski and Allen (2017) registered 86% of the university students having confidence in their institutional reporting structures, and handling of GBV complaints, this study registered virtually no credibility and confidence with both the reporting structures and grievance handling systems. This study registered a great fit in results with Molla and Cuthbert's (2014) study of two Ethiopian universities, and Orfan, Ibrahimi and Noori's (2022) study on` sexual harassment of female students in Higher Education in Afghanistan where students had no faith and trust with the reporting system. Thus, while the institution had a zero-tolerant GBV policy, it did not walk the talk in the policy.

Efficacy of the reporting structure

Of the 33% of the students who narrated their own encounters of GBV, only 50% of that had tried to report. Two of the cases have already been reported on. The third case was that of unwarranted insults from the lecturer purportedly because his request had been turned down. This case was classical in that while reporting to the Dean of a Faculty, the student met with further abuse.

> I went to the Dean with my complaint and ended up being abused again.

Regarding the three cases, the survivors said they stopped reporting and even advised their friends who talked about similar abuses not to report if they did not want to further hurt themselves. When the students took a stance not to report as expressed by this student, they played into the views of the sexual objectification theory which sees females getting acculturated to habitualise the abuser's perspective as a view of themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It was thus observed that the students' voices got muffled by the behaviour, consequently resulting in low officially reported cases, thus giving a false impression that GBV is not a serious matter or issue. Thus, at the institution, GBV, though seemingly latent (refer to conversation with the Registrar), was in fact manifesting (refer to conversations students and dean of students) and remained an unspoken force as the students lacked a support system and network. The institution, therefore, contributed to the challenge by reinforcing existing gender power structures.

Students indicated that the reasons most cases went unreported was that the victims feared retaliation should the systems go loose, as they did not feel confidently and assuredly protected by the system (55.6%), ridicule and stigma (66.7%) and being failed by both the culprit and other accomplices (77.8%).

Related to this, thirteen students rated the institution as underprepared to effectively prevent and remedy the GBV situation and the other five ranked it 'moderately prepared'. The Dean of Students rated the same 'moderately prepared', while the registrar maintained that the system was adequately prepared. Perceptions of credibility and effectiveness of the reporting structure and handling procedures influence the likelihood of reporting. Where the feeling by the students is that it is effective and mechanisms are fair, reporting is high.

Conclusion

Contact and non-contact GBV was reported, and manifested itself in the form of actions, words and gestures. Most students professed rather insufficient knowledge of the policy and resultantly no opportunity to use the policy to own protection. The main conclusions drawn were that:

- Even with the existence of the GBV policy at the institution, cases were worrying. The policy, though in place, was flawed in its implementation. The majority of the students did not know about it as they were not informed of such.
- Underreporting or not reporting was not an indicator of non GBV prevalence, but most likely of GBV cases being dismissed, trivialised or normalised. The study registered underreporting for various reasons, chief being the lack of confidence in the reporting and supporting structures, fear of lecturer knowing and the resultant repercussion and backlash.

Research objective 3: The suggested framework

The framework adopts and builds on Heise (1998)'s integrated framework for the prevention of violence against women, which heavily borrows from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development. Both these frameworks were developed to explore human behaviour and its linkage with the social environments. The departure that this study's framework makes is that while Heise's concentrates on 'personal history, microsystem, exosystem and macrosystem' factors responsible for violence, this one goes beyond to focus on prevention action centering mostly on mitigating factors, supporting survivors and addressing root causes.

The suggested framework is premised on the belief that individuals can be heavily influenced by their environments, a view shared by the socio-cultural and the social-exchange theories. The proposed framework draws from the

theoretical works and empirical findings. The framework is multi-focused to address the multiple factors that contribute to GBV at the university. The levels of ecology are not discrete but overlap to emphasise their interconnectedness as the war against GBV should be fought from different fronts and sustainable prevention efforts taken at the same time.

From the findings and literature, the people at greatest risk of GBV are female students, making it imperative to concentrate on assisting them, but this study pays equal attention to the whole university. Thus, even as GBV is disproportionately tilted towards the females, the proposed framework is framed within a gender rather than feminist strategy.

The framework not only seeks to understand the context of GBV (the very reason the case study design was settled for) but promotes interventions that target prevention and protection through setting up systems and structures that build spaces for reporting, programmes that educate and empower, and services such as counselling and partnerships. The framework thus adopts 'the whole university approach' as the goal is to transform the whole university into an intolerant environment to GBV.

Figure 1. expresses the proposed framework of behaviour change. The framework is useful for the future prevention. Preventive strategies for each level are explained after the figure. The strategies show the preventive potential, efficacy, and utility of the framework, as each level is addressed by some intervention(s).
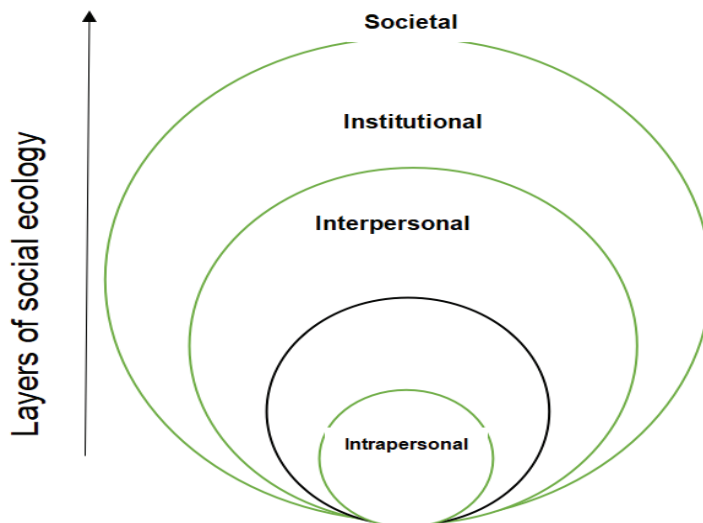

Figure 2: Gender-based violence framework: Forbid, remedy and prevent

Intrapersonal level

The intrapersonal level is primarily concerned with the knowledge levels of lecturers and students about GBV and how the individuals are disposed to it, and to the overall threats and consequences of indulging (for the abusers) or victimisation (for the survivors of abuse). This is because knowledge about GBV makes the individual understand it better. Even though on its own, knowledge may not change the attitudes, it all the same, influences and facilitates change of attitude. Characteristics of both lecturer and student that influences knowledge and self-efficacy are targeted

Interpersonal level

The interpersonal level shifts and places preventive focus on the individual's relationship with others, specifically relationships in the immediate context in which the violence occurs. Encouragement is on establishing and enhancing trust-based relationships.

Institutional level

At the institutional level, focus is now on the institution which should lead and take upon itself to keep its climate and environment GBV free and protective of everyone through crafting and enforcing behaviour-determining regulations, laws, policies, and restrictions. The level targets "social structures…that impinge on the immediate settings in which a person is found and thereby influence, delimit or determine what goes on there", (Belsky, 1980 p. 321). The institution, as a setting in which people have the social relations, can do this through identifying the areas of these settings that affect GBV and setting up of robust systems and structures for it is at this level that national policies are translated into specific guidelines. Some of what can be focused upon include, among others:

- Capacity building and mobilisation through providing education about GBV to all members of the university community on regular basis. This is important so that no such can go unnoticed as what obtains if individuals are not knowledgeable. If they do not know what GBV is, how then can they report it. Empowerment and related support systems and programmes increase university awareness of abuse. Some of these include but not limited to whistleblowing and tip-off anonymous, billboards warning individuals about dangers of GBV, 24-hour GBV help-line, institution radio station, compulsory courses on GBV. A growing body

of evidence suggests that prevention of GBV is more effectively achieved through empowering the abuser (to manage themselves and overcome the appetite to abuse), the abused (to discourage passivity about abuse) and the whole community (to be intolerant of the vice). Focus is mostly on change of attitude which fosters abuse. Effective empowerment is itself prevention of risk situations and builder and strengthener of egalitarian masculinities as offenders alter their ways as a result of self-recognizing that their behaviour is unacceptable.

- Crafting, enacting and cascading GBV policy. The policy should be formulated with the input and buy-in of all stakeholders and should spell out what GBV is, that it is not tolerated and how the university responds and deals with it. The community should know about the policy before it can assert itself. A code of conduct for staff, especially lecturers should be developed, which among other things prohibit gender abuse.

- Setting up effective grievance handling and reporting procedures as well as response systems that protect and support survivors of GBV, ensuring that victims do not report their cases and grievances to people who have a direct stake in their day-to-day university life. The complaint system must provide support and prevent retaliation.

- Effectively deal with incidents and act, when need be, to send a clear message that the institution means what it says.

- Appoint posts of responsibility to people who are aware of their responsibility in ensuring a GBV free environment.

Societal level

This level focuses on factors that inform and permeate the other three levels. The government, as a governing body that covers the country population, takes charge of prevention at this level. The government may craft policies, enact laws, enforce the policies and laws and fund research that can figure out and advocate for more effective ways that enable attacking of social norms, structures and practices that promote GBV. The target is to assist in cleaning up and impairing the GBV climate. At country level, the cleaning up of GBV is achieved through the many international human rights instruments ratified by Zimbabwe, chief among these being: UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979; African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 1981; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003; UN Resolution on Elimination of Domestic Violence Against Women, 2004; Additionally, although not explicitly and tersely providing for

GBV, the Zimbabwe Constitution article 20 of 2013; Labour Act (28:01), article 58 (h) on unfair labour practices; the Public Service Act, S1 of 2000; policies such as the National Gender Policy and laws such as the Crimes Against Morality and the Domestic Violence Act are some of the voices that forbid and condemn GBV as a human right violation and unacceptable behaviour.

The merit of the proposed framework is that it conceptualises GBV broadly and pays attention to the multiple factors that affect it simultaneously, as GBV does not involve a standardized or homogenous set of behaviours. Any attempt to reduce these behaviours to a single, universal motivation may be a distortion of reality. The framework is cognisant of the complex processes that build and strengthen a GBV free environment.

What is important is coordinated collective action as one level affects the other. This is why all the levels intersect at some point. The intersecting and interacting with each other compounds punch and power. Literature is inundated with evidence that individualised interventions are of limited effectiveness. The other merit of the framework is that while offering services for survivors of GBV, it simultaneously focuses on prevention of the blight.

References

Ajdukovic, D., Car, I., Paivinen, H., Sala- Bubare, A., Vall, B. and Husso, M. 2021. Building capacity for prevention of gender-based violence in the school Context. *Frontiers in Psychology,* https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021720034

Akram, M.; Laila, U. and Amiri, A. 2020. The relationship between education and gender-based violence. Doi:10.13140/RG2.2.34469.73442. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344771918_The_Relationship_Between_Education_and_Genderbased_Violence.

Belsky, J. 1980. Child maltreatment: An ecological integration. *American Psychologist*, 35, 320-335.

Beyene, S. A., Chojenta, C. Shore, H., Melka, S. A. and Loxton, D. 2019. Gender-based violence among female youths in educational institutions of Sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Systematic Reviews*, 8(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-019-0969-9

Blau, P. 1964. *Exchange and power in social life*. Hobokon, New Jersey: John Wiley& Sons.

Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979. *The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bystrynski, J. and Allen. N.E. 2017. *Sexual misconduct and perceived campus response survey.* University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign. https://wecare.illinois.edu/docs/SMPCresponse_exe_summary.pdf

Chawiyah, R.; Onkware, K.; Koteng, G. and Ocholla, A. A. 2017. Effectiveness of institutional frameworks in curbing gender- based violence in selected public universities in Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Science and Technology*, 3(7), 967-974.

Connell, R.W. 2002. *Gender.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013

Dhlomo, T., Mugweni, R., Shoniwa, G., Maunganidze, L., and Sodi, S. 2012. Perceived sexual harassment among female students at a Zimbabwean institution of higher learning. *Journal of Psychology in Africa,* 22(2), 269-272. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2012.10820529.

Donaldson, A., McCarry, M. and McCullough, A. 2017. Preventing gender-based violence in UK universities. https://core.ac.uk/download/84146725.pdf

Dube, T., Ncube, S. B. and Mlotshwa, S. 2021. Perceptions of sexual harassment and drivers of reporting in two higher learning institutions in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. *Udayana Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 18(3), 284-299.

Fredrickson, B. L. and Roberts, T. 1997. Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21, 173-206.

Gardner, S. and Johnson, P. 2010. Sexual harassment in healthcare: Strategies for employers. *Hospital Topics*, 79(4), 5-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/00185860109597912

Gill, R. and Febbraro, A. 2013. Experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in the Canadian force combat arms. *Violence Against Women*, 19(2), 269-287. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801213478140

Goldner, V. 2018. Sexual Harassment: Seeking the Pleasures of "Consent" Under Duress. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 19(4), 235-240. https://www.doi.org/10.1080/15240657.2018.1531513

Gukurume, S. 2022. Transactional Relationships Within a University Campus in Zimbabwe. *The Oriental Anthologist: A Bi-annual International Journal of the Science of Man*, 22(1). https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0972558X211033374.

Heise, L. L. 1998. Violence against women: An integrated ecological framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), 262-290.

Kapila, P. (2017). Theoretical Perspectives to Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Innovation*, 6(9), 32-35. https://ijhssi.org/v6(9)/version-4/F0609043235.pdf.

Leach, F. 2013. Corruption as abuse of power: Sexual violence in educational institutions. In, G. Sweeney. K., Desporta, and Lindner S, *Transparency International, Global Corruption Report: Education*, pp 88-98. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Lliyasu, Z., Abubokar, S. I., Aliyu, H. M., Galadanci, H. S. and Salihu, M. H. (2011).

Prevalence and correlates of gender-based violence among female university students in Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 15(3), 111-119z. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41762351.

Makhene, A. 2022. *Gender-based violence in higher education: An integrative review. Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(3). Doi; 10.4236/jss.2022.103017.

Mapuranga, B., Musoda, B. and Tom, T. 2015. Sexual harassment of female employees at a state university in Zimbabwe. *Developing Country Studies*, 5(12), 25-30

Mashininga, K. 2021. 22 July. Sexual harassment to be criminalized to protect students, University World News Africa Education, https://www.universityworldnews.com

Mawere, D. and Seroto, J. 2022. Academic contra power sexual harassment in public universities in Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(1). https://www.dx.doi.org/10.20853/36-1-4515

Mays, N. and Pope, C. 2020. Sythesising qualitative research. In C. Pope and N. Mays (eds) *Qualitative Research in Health Care* (pp 151-168). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Merriam, S. B. 2009. *Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Millet, K. (2017). *Sexual Politics,* Catedra: Madrid, Spain.

Molla, T. and Cuthbert, D. (2014). Qualitative inequality: Experiences of women in Ethiopian higher education. *Gender and Education*, 26(7), 759-775. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.970614

Moyo, S. (2022). Rampant sexual harassment at tertiary institutions. *The Chronicle*, 10 May 2022.

Mukeredzi, T. (2019). Calls for practical steps to end campus sexual violence. University World News Africa Education, Zimbabwehttps://www.universityworldnews.com

Mutinta, G. (2022). Gender-based violence among female students and implications for health intervention programmes in public universities in Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8 (1): 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2079212

Namaganda, A., Ssali, S. and Bisaso, R. (2021). Examining the barriers to reporting sexual harassment in universities. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, 8(1), 6-15. https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0801002.

Ndawi, O. P. (2006). Sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning. A shadow report on the solemn declaration on gender in Africa, prepared for FAWE. https://fasng.org/asserts/files/publications/shadow%20report.

Ohio State University. (2017). Campus climate survey on sexual misconduct. Ohio State University.

Okodugha, G. and Adewole, M. E. (2021). Perception of Lectures and students on sexual harassment in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 11(5), 30-38. https://www.iosrjournals.org

Orfan, S. N., Ibrahimi, F. and Noori, A. Q. (2002). Sexual harassment of higher education female students in Afghanistan: A case study. *Issues in Educational Research*, 32(2), 659-680. https://www.iier.org.au>iier32>orfan

Phipps, A. (2020). Reckoning up: Sexual harassment and violence in the neoliberal university. *Gender and Education*, 32(2), 227-243. https://www.doi.org/10.1080/0954025.2018.1482413

Public Service Act, 2000.

Singh, S., Mabaso, B., Mudaly, R. and Singh-Pillay, A. (2016). Policy for prevention of sexual assault on campus: Higher education students' perspectives. *Alternation Journal,* 23(1),113-134. https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/soa/article/view/1342

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp.443-466). City: Sage Publication Ltd.

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying how things work*. New York: Guilford Press.

Sundaresh, N. and Hemalatha, K. (2013). Theoretical orientation to sexual harassment at work place. *Journal of Business Management and Social Science Research*, 2(4), 74-81.

Szymanski, M. D., Moffitt, B. L and Carr, R. E. (2011). Sexual objectification of women: Advances to theory and research. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 39(1), 6-38.

Trent, A. and Chao, J. (2014). Interpretation strategies: Appropriate

concepts. In P. Leavy (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp 639-658). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNICEF, 2013. *Annual Report on the implementation o the UNICEF Gender Action Plan.* UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session, 16-19 June 2015.UNGEI. 92015). School related gender-based violence is preventing the achievements of quality education for all. https://www.ungei.org

United Nations. (1993). Vienne Conference on Human Rights. https://www.ohchr.org.

Vilades, G. T. (2010). Arrested Justice: The multifaceted plight of immigrant Latinas who faced Domestic Violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(6), 533-544. https://www.proquest.com/docview/603601265

Warton, G. and Moore, G. (2022). Gender-based Violence at Higher Education Institutions in South Africa. Report prepared for the Safety and Violence Initiative. https://www.saferspaces.org.za

Watts, C. and Zimmerman, C. (2002). Violence against women: global scope and magnitude. *Lancet*, 359(9313), 1232-1237. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)08221-1

Yin, R. (2018). *Case study research and applications: design and methods* (6th ed). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zimbabwe Labour Act (28.01).

Zindi, F. (1994). Sexual harassment in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher learning. *Zambezia*, 21(2),177 - 186. https://doi.org/10.10520/AJA03790622_122.