

Mission Impossible: What will it take to change MENTalities towards reduction of gender-based violence and femicide in higher education institutions?

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Abstract: The scourge of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) has surged as a new pandemic after the COVID-19 pandemic, which took over the baton from its predecessor and continues to ravage and eradicate societal and moral fibre. It is argued that the Post School Education and Training (PSET) sector, as a microcosm of communities, has been significantly affected by this so-called pandemic. It is against this backdrop that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through Higher Health launched Transforming MENTalities Summit 2023 to end off women's month – August. This paper provides a synthesis of existing research on factors contributing to GBVF in higher education institutions (HEIs). Following a five-stage scoping review process, 84 papers, research reports and artifacts, which each related to the topic, were selected for inclusion. Qualitative content analysis was then used to group these elements into inductive themes. An overarching theme of active participation from all relevant role-players was identified, along with four other broad and intersecting themes, namely 1) the role of policy makers in HEIs; 2) Learning communities' obligation; 3) Call for help and access; 4) Student initiatives; and 5) Consequences of GBVF underpinning intentional research approaches towards the reduction of GBVF. Possible recommendations are provided towards a sustainable response to GBVF. These will go a long way to develop effective strategies that can be used to address the possible GBVF attacks.

Keywords: Gender-based violence and femicide, higher education institution, violence, intimate partner violence, campus community

Introduction

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through Higher Health launched Transforming MENTalities Summit 2023 to end off women's month – August, with a higher note where stakeholder engagement dialogue was activated in response to gender-based violence (GBV) and mental health incidences in the Post School Education and Training (PSET) sector. The theme for the 2023 summit explored, amongst others, the emergence and frequent instances of reproduction of societal pathologies on campuses such as rape and violent murders, typically committed against women and girls. The delegates highlighted the importance of engaging males as part of the solution. Men are the principal perpetrators of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and a radical mind-set shift is necessary to bring about lasting behavioural change. However, it is essential to note that marginalising men to empower women only worsens GBV. Given the socio-cultural, economic, legal and political inequalities that drive gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in South Africa, successive post-1994 governments have put several legislative and policy frameworks in place to address the issue. The rights of everyone who lives in South Africa are enshrined in the Constitution, 1996, particularly in Chapter 2 (the Bill of Rights). These rights affirm the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom from GBV. In addition, the state and all its organs are required to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the rights mentioned in the Bill of Rights, which also protects the rights of women and other gender-nonconforming persons (Isike, 2022).

As gender-based discrimination and VAWG continue to be critical human rights issues across the world, there is a growing demand of engaging men in transforming the relations, norms, and the unequal social structures. Even though there are many laws and policies in place to protect women's rights, they are poorly implemented due to the fact that society and social institutions do not fundamentally support them (Olsson, 2019). The scholar concurs that despite these policy and legislative interventions borne from international and regional multilateral efforts, women and girls in South Africa continue to suffer from male violence at alarming rates, which prompted President Ramaphosa to declare that GBVF represented a "second pandemic" in 2020 (Isike, 2022:273). Why is this so? Beyond policy and legislative provisions and the usual challenges of implementing them effectively, there has been very little engagement with male mind-sets and perceptions of the female gender that fuel GBVF in South Africa. GBVF has increasingly been recognised as a global issue.

Although there appears to be political will at the national level to address the demons of GBVF in higher education institutions (HEIs), challenges related to insufficient funding, budgetary limitations and a lack of collaboration and effective coordination among government departments have hindered progress in implementing both the DHET Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the PSET System (2020) as well as GBVF-NSP (2020). Training among HEI communities, police and government departments on the legislative changes has been inadequate. Too few GBV desks have been established at police stations and too few rape kits have been provided. Meanwhile, shelters, which are supposed to care for survivors of GBV, lack funding support. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) faced resistance and a lack of cooperation from government departments as it sought to assess the effectiveness of official efforts to counter GBV. There was a lack of clarity about who was responsible for driving the national strategic plan and its implementation was found to be patchy or non-existent. There was also a lack of transparency in relation to the use of the funds that had been allocated to implementing the plan (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC], 2023).

The purpose of this paper was to examine the prevalence and factors underlying GBVF in HEIs and, what it would it take to change MENtalities towards reduction of this scourge within the PSET environment. Findings may be used by the DHET, PSET environment, government, policymakers, and all other relevant stakeholders to inform policy and practice.

Literature Review

Engaging men and boys – mission impossible?

Engaging men is an increasingly common element in violence prevention work and building gender equality (Olsson, 2019). However, according to Flood (2015 as cited in Olsson, 2019:7), there are some concerns that involving men might have negative consequences for the feminist work. One is that engaging men might indirectly diminish the legitimacy of women-only and women-focused programmes and services by the mistaken belief that all interventions should include men. For Isike (2022:271), citing some sources such as, (Lewin, Williams & Thomas 2013; Wells & Polders 2006), violence is a reinforcement of dominant norms of manhood and patriarchal social power has an impact on all South Africans, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. For example, boys and men also suffer from rape by other boys and men and the violent punishment of people who transgress heteronormative gender roles and identities is an increasing concern in South Africa. For lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer and intersex (LGBTQ+ [LGBTQQIAA]) persons, this translates into the very real experience of homophobic violence, including homicide and rape as a form of persecution. Men, women, and people that transit genders in South Africa are impacted by violence in multiple and intersecting ways. Flood (2015 as cited in Olsson, 2019:7) explains that international networks like MenEngage have pointed out the importance of women's autonomous organisations and leadership. A second concern is that a focus on involving men in this work might create an invalidation and marginalisation of the expertise of women and the women's sector and that men would 'take over'. As an answer to this, Flood says that there are certainly international cases of men taking over individual programmes and projects but barely, if any, cases of men taking over women's or feminist campaigns. However, some individual men in the movement do dominate interaction, claim expertise or act in other patriarchal ways. However, according to Flood, the greater problem is rather that men tend to not show up at all. Most of the work is done by women and, so far, the number of men engaging in these feminist programmes and campaigns are exaggerating (Olsson, 2019).

Conceptualisation of GBVF

Raphael, Rennison and Jones (2019:26) point out that more than 50 000 women are likely to be raped in South Africa every year and Williamson (2020) concurs on what is mentioned by Raphael et al. (2019) by stating that a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six hours. The country's history and the current postcolonial and post-apartheid

context play a role in these extremely high rates of GBVF attacks (Noble, Ward, French & Falb, 2019). Numerous authors, such as Stark, Asghar, Yu, Bora, Baysa and Falb (2017), Enaifoghe (2019) and Morris and Ratajczak (2019) highlight how the system of apartheid may have normalised extreme levels of GBVF attacks. Along with this, both the apartheid state and the liberation groups struggling against apartheid were often characterised by GBVF attacks, with little effort being made to achieve gender equality, as gender was relatively unimportant in the context of race oppression (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Noble et al. (2019) note that South Africa displays a continued tolerance of aggression toward VAWG; thus, the occurrence of GBVF attacks at places of teaching and learning.

Ford and Becker (2020), Wood, Sulley, Kammer-Kerwick, Follingstad and Busch-Armendariz (2017) insist that the narrow focus on GBVF attacks can result in the exclusion of violence against gender non-conforming individuals, as well as others in the lesbian, gay, trans, queer, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) community and violence between men. The mentioned notion is supported by Hayes, Abbott and Cook (2016), Mamaru, Getachew and Mohammed (2015) and Steele, Abrahams, Duncan, Woollett, Hwang, O'Connell, van Cutsem and Shroufi (2019) who deduce that a narrow application of the concept of GBVF in prevention efforts may fail to address the full range of gendered violence and instances of GBVF on university campuses; it may lead to the rare report of these attacks to the campus authorities.

Ward, Artz, Leoschut, Kassanje and Burton (2018) further inform that the rare report of GBVF attacks makes it difficult to gauge the prevalence of this problem, which in turn affects efforts for prevention. Although there are constant calls for campus officials to recognise a wide spectrum of student experiences of GBVF attacks, including power-based and noncontact abuse and develop strategies to address these attacks, these calls have not yet been heeded to accordingly, because if they had, the GBVF related attacks would not be as high as they are at campuses. To develop evidence-based prevention/response policies and programmes for PSET environment or HEIs, Breetzke, Fabris-Rotelli, Modiba and Medelstein (2019) and Beres (2020) suggest that empirical information is needed concerning GBVF attacks among students, including how GBVF attacks can come in different forms and be committed by different genders. South Africa's men and boys are a crucial part of combatting the scourge of VAWG. There is an urgent need to include men and boys to all campaigns and platforms towards changing the narratives and challenging toxic masculinity, which is the idea that being a man means one must dominate and demean women. This conversation must include the influence of culture and media depictions of men, boys including women and girls.

GBVF attacks on campus are a major public health and human rights issue, with recent reports indicating that approximately 20% of women and 6% of men experience victimisation while attending HEIs in SA (Carlson, Quian, Doan & Mabachi, 2018). Banyard (2014) and Carlson et al. (2018) outline that HEIs have developed several prevention efforts to address GBVF attacks on campuses, but more cases of GBVF attacks are still prevalent in HEIs. Carlson et al. (2018) and Banyard, Rizzo, Bencosme, Cares and Moynihan (2018) stipulate that this is because GBVF attacks' prevention efforts often focus heavily on challenging the male students only, without also recognising that at times female students can be perpetrators of GBVF attacks, even though not often. Increasingly, Beres, Treharne and Stojanov (2019) opine that there are calls for the prevention of GBVF attacks, to span multiple levels beyond just the individual and to work toward changing campus culture from only paying attention to female victims to also paying attention to male victims.

Beres et al. (2019:12) outline how low levels of awareness of the various forms of GBVF attacks, especially the non-penetrative acts are a major contributor to the low reporting of GBVF attacks among victims. Worryingly, the burden of GBVF attacks and the associated impacts are not well understood due to poor documentation and under-reporting, which affects the development of effective measures and policies for combating the challenge (Ajayi, Mudefi, Yusuf, Adeniy, Rala & Ter Goon, 2019; Landström, Strömwall & Alfredsson, 2016). Unless the silence around GBVF attacks/incidences in HEIs is broken, the burden of GBVF attacks and the associated impacts might linger for a long time. Ajayi et al. (2019) assert that many HEIs are faced with an exceedingly high rate of GBVF attacks, with studies reporting a lifetime prevalence of 26.2% in academic institutions and 24.9% among women and 1.3% being amongst males. Morgan and Kena (2018) concur that a lot of victims do not believe that the criminal justice system is doing a good job when addressing GBVF cases; they mention that the judicial structures in the country have failed to convict offenders in many cases of GBVF attacks, which to some extent worsens the problem, resulting in a low level of reporting (Lorenz & Ullman, 2016; Morgan & Kena, 2018). Victims are often scared of the justice system and the possibility of re-traumatisation. Morgan and Kena (2018) and Lorenz and Ullman (2016) further reiterate that only one out of nine cases of GBVF attacks get reported.

PSET sector across the country are undergoing the process of enacting and implementing strategies centred around addressing GBVF attacks, ensuring justice for victims, providing support for victims and ultimately reducing the burden of GBVF attacks (Beyene, Chojenta, Roba, Melka & Loxton, 2019; Finchilescu & Dugard, 2021). Jouriles,

Krauss, Vu, Banyard and McDonald (2018) and Kilgore, Lehmann and Voth Schrag (2019) further suggest that strategies are better implemented with adequate data and the understanding of the kinds of GBVF attacks. Thus, there is a need for more empirical research assessing what works, what is promising and what still need to be modified to inform policy and practice. McCauley, Campbell, Buchanan, and Moylan (2019) also acknowledge that reliable data is required to formulate evidence-based and effective strategies to combat GBVF attacks in HEIs.

GBVF attacks are increasingly being recognised as a serious issue worldwide. As a result, a slew of legislation, policies and intervention efforts have been implemented in South Africa to try and address it. However, the already available attempts to address this problem have not yielded good results (Enaifoghe, 2019; Ford & Becker, 2020). It is therefore important to know to what extent men and boys are engaged and whether there are low hanging fruits for the PSET sector to collaborate with these men and boys to reduce GBVF on campus. Additionally, it is also of crucial importance to count the gains realised and the setbacks, and how these challenges can be addressed. GBVF is a broad term describing behaviours that cause harm to individuals for reasons associated with gender (Marsil & McNamara, 2016). While men and boys can be equally victims of GBVF (Tshoane, Bello, Mofokeng & Olutola, 2023; Tshoane, Olutola, Bello & Mofokeng, 2024; Tshoane, Olutola, Bello & Mofokeng, 2023), Finchilescu and Dugard (2021), Khosa-Nkatini and Mofokeng (2023), Mofokeng, Simelane and Mofokeng (2023), Mofokeng and Tlou (2022a, 2022b) and Simelane, Mofokeng and Khosa (2023) report that women and girls are disproportionately affected. The forms of GBVF attacks that are most widely reported and studied are intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence, with estimates suggesting that 35% of women worldwide have experienced either or both during their lifetime (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2021; Wood et al., 2017). Coker, Bush, Brancato, Clear and Recktenwald (2019:154) note that women suffer both short- and long-term exacerbated consequences when compared with male GBVF victims. This does not however mean the GBVF attacks on males are less impactful on their lives. For these reasons, this review concentrates exclusively on GBVF attacks that occur in HEIs. While the paper by Coker et al. (2019) debates the efficacy of routine screening for GBVF attacks, it also investigates the use of strategies to address the issue competently in practice, regardless of whether or not an attack has been disclosed.

South Africa's legislation around GBVF in HEIs is relatively progressive and yet to realise its impact across HEIs. In response to GBVF within the PSET sector, the DHET has developed a Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the PSET System (2020). This policy framework was developed by Higher Health in consultations with all HEIs inclusive of TVETs and PSET system management, student leadership and student bodies. This policy framework equally recognises the fact that GBV is a societal issue hence it calls for collaboration between civil society organisations, sister departments and PSET institutions in the development and implementation of advocacy programmes against GBV. The change in mindset should not only be system-wide in the education and training system but should also be in the entire society. The launch of the Transforming MENTalities Summit 2023 will either be judged by the generations down the line, as well as survivors of GBV as effective or just another rhetoric, where great speeches and policies gathered dust in shelves and libraries.

Thus, it will take more than great speeches and clapping of hands, great food and taking of pictures at this event towards effective monitoring and evaluations of the reading and submitting declaration made by the Honourable Minister Dr Nzimande at this auspicious event. Thus, as part of establishing an enabling environment both within DHET and PSET institutions to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of the DHET GBV policy framework, there is a need for the Higher Health. Higher Health is a national agency that seeks to inspire success of two million students that attend 26 universities and 50 TVET colleges by improving their health and wellbeing. The agency develops and implements a range of health, wellness, and psychosocial services across 420 campus sites and rural, informal and urban settings in all 52 districts across South Africa. With a national office in Centurion, Gauteng, HIGHER HEALTH operates through a network of 70 district-based offices and three regional offices (in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town). The agency's vision is to be the primary instrument for improving student success rates and completion of studies through enhanced levels of holistic health and psychosocial wellbeing. The mission of HIGHER HEALTH is to inspire success through improving wellbeing among students across the post-schooling education sector (Higher Health, 2023). Thus, it is the mandate of Higher Health to activate this process through the enhanced collaboration of the PSET GBVF Technical Task Team, which is a multi-sectorial stakeholders inclusive of all the DHET branches, Department of Women, South African Police Service (SAPS), Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Universities South Africa (USAf), South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO), South African Union of Students (SAUS), South African Vocational Education and Training Students Association (SAVETSA), South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), civil society and the private sector.

A shift in mind-set on GBV is a call for a paradigm shift. This paradigm shift of ending GBV was also acknowledged by the late, former South African president, Nelson Mandela (Mandela, 1994) said: "Freedom cannot be achieved

unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. Our endeavours must be about the liberation of the woman, the emancipating of the man and the liberty of the child” (Mandela, 1994). The above quote symbolises the start of a new era, when all forms of oppression upon all men and women of different races are eliminated. Liberty was the driver of the new democratic South Africa and encompassed the drafting of new liberation policies. Its impacts included the entry of women in varied sectors of the work force, especially areas of work, which were regarded as male domains (Moraka, 2016).

Current rhetoric around GBVF should translate into effective implementation of GBV programmes and move away from just sympathising with women and girls as victims (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Goldberg, Sklad, Elfrink, Schreurs, Bohlmeijer & Clarke, 2018). LGBTQIA+ individuals may also experience GBVF, particularly in contexts when this violence is targeted at someone based on their gender identity or sexual orientation or being gender non-conforming and/or not practicing heterosexuality (McCauley et al., 2019; Marsil & McNamara, 2016; Ford & Becker, 2020). Violence may also be used to feminise men, or undermine their masculinity, ensuring that they are not exempt from some forms of GBVF attack (Ford & Becker, 2020).

Ford and Becker (2020) further posit that the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act declares that all forms of sexual penetration without consent, irrespective of gender, are considered rape; and the country officially recognised rape within a marriage as a crime in 1993. Along with this, Elias and Rai (2018:201) deduce that the Domestic Violence Act includes same-sex couples under their definition of a domestic relationship. Despite this, official policy documents in the country have still tended to conflate VAW with GBVF attacks, such as in the White Paper on Safety and Security, which only mentions GBV under the heading of VAWG (Elias & Rai, 2018; Enaifoghe, 2019). For Ford and Becker (2020), South African government’s response to GBVF attacks has typically fallen under the Dep Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), rather than the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD), implying a narrower focus on VAWG, rather than GBVF attacks more broadly. Considering the widely accepted severe impact of GBV on victim’s well-being, both physical, psychological, educational and professional performance not to mention the moral, as well as legal, obligations to tackle GBVF attacks as mentioned by Traves-Kagan, Maman, Khoza, MacPhail, Peacock, Twine, ... Pettifor (2020), is therefore critical for HEIs to overcome the challenges that come with GBVF attacks by design and implement effective responses. In this context, from a clear understanding of what GBVF attacks are, the HEIs can be able to develop strategies that can be used to limit these attacks and the implications thereof.

Implications

The following collected data outlines the reasons why the application of a narrow understanding of GBVF attacks is problematic. The first is that it risks implying that all women are at equal risk of violence, which ignores the multiple intersecting social identities that increase a woman’s risk of GBV (Cheung, 2019; Gooty, Banks, Loignon, Tonidandel, & Williams, 2021). Secondly, it may serve to exclude awareness of and attention to violent attacks against and among those in the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as the numerous gendered forms of violence both between and against men (Rubenstein, Lu, MacFarlane & Stark, 2020; Kiss, Quinlan-Davidson, Pasquero, Ollé Tejero, Hogg, Theis, Park, Zimmerman & Hossain, 2020). Overall, Kiss et al. (2020) are of the opinion that 30% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual IPV or non-partner sexual violence. Rao, Tchoumke Pangroup, Dakota, Ross-Reed and Forster-Cox. (2019:40) further inform that 36.6% of women have experienced violence in their lives, with adolescent girls and young women being at high risk of IPV. Exposure to GBVF attacks is associated with long-term health consequences, including HIV (Eisend, 2017). Longitudinal studies have shown that GBVF attacks increases HIV acquisition for women, especially for adolescent girls, who are at risk of transactional or forced sex (Harris & Linder, 2017; Wiersma-Mosley & Jozkowski, 2019).

Graaff and Heinecken (2017) suggest that the majority of cases of GBVF attacks take place before age 24 and the first year of study. Since the HEIs encompasses students that range around that age, this makes the HEIs campuses a high-risk environment and a significant and strategic place for interventions aimed at combating GBVF attacks (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017). Female students are particularly at a higher risk, Graaff and Heinecken (2017) mention that at least one in five females experience GBVF attacks during their college years (Goldberg, Jadwin-Cakmak & Harper, 2018; Graaff & Heinecken, 2017). Goldberg et al. (2018:21) argue that HEIs have limited investments in addressing GBVF attacks, particularly in the healthcare sector.

GBVF screening in the campus’s healthcare settings is almost nonexistence, owing to insufficient evidence on improved outcomes for women and to potential harm when no staff capacity or referral are available (Finley & Levenson, 2018). Sivaraman, Nye and Bowes (2018) and Stockman, Lucea and Campbell (2013) specify that in the arena of mental health, depression and anxiety, suicidality, self-harm, harmful substance use, post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) and personality disorders are more commonly found among women exposed to GBVF attacks. The mental health impact is recognised as mediated by responses to chronic stress associated with experiencing GBVF attack, which is most commonly a repeated or enduring occurrence, with emotional and economic aspects of violence being the most pervasive forms (Burrell & Flood, 2019; Pantalone, Rood, Morris & Simoni, 2014). Prevention of experience of GBVF attacks is thus critical for improving women's mental health. Enaifoghe (2019) finds that GBVF attacks can prevent survivors from realising their full potential, as a result of stigma, physical and psychological trauma caused by the violence. The exceptional HEIs issues of GBVF attacks have over the years nurtured a culture of violence that has reproduced itself in every social and cultural structure ever since (Edwards, Waterman, Lee, Himlin, Parm and Banyard, 2019). Even though the commission of GBVF attacks against victims encompasses but is not limited to the following: Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the campuses, the attacks that might receive much attention are those that are directed against female students (Freyd, 2018; Javorka & Campbell, 2019).

Gender roles and gender binaries

A primary issue arising from GBVF attacks is its focus on relatively traditional gender roles and gender binaries, predominantly focusing on men's VAWG and portraying women as the most vulnerable people to GBVF attacks by men (Bonistall, 2017; Graham, Mennicke, Rizo, Wood & Mengo, 2018). Graham et al. (2018) further engages that traditional gender roles and gender binaries can lead to the sense of uncertainty in settings whereby males and females have to exist, this means that the view of women being prone to GBVF attacks makes women to be seen as weak and vulnerable (Kroshus, Paskus & Bell, 2018; Monahan-Kreishman & Ingarfield, 2018). Leek (2019) suggests that a woman's overlapping socio-cultural identities, such as being a black woman, or a queer disabled woman, or a trans woman, or a migrant woman, will expose them to increased levels and risk of violence, as they are punished both for being a woman and for transgressing other societal norms or for being a member of marginal, othered communities. Leek (2019) and Javaid (2017) highlight the varying identities that may result in increased risk for women. that women with disabilities in low and middle-income countries experience two to four times the rate of GBVF attacks as non-disabled women. Hardesty and Ogolsky (2020) support Leek (2019) and Javaid (2017) shared view by suggesting that their societal precarity as a result of having a disability and particularly the likelihood of their being dependent on a person who may also be their abuser, exacerbates their risk of violence. Thus, they are targeted not only because they are women, but also because they are women with disabilities.

Hardesty and Ogolsky (2020) deduce that when referring to GBVF attacks, women are the most affected gender. This group has experienced more attacks than any other gender group. Carlson, Leek, Casey, Tolman and Allen (2019:99) assert that women are not as strongly built as men, this factor plays an important role when the women have to defend themselves from GBVF attacks, but they are unable to effectively defend themselves (Canan, Jozkowski & Crawford, 2018; Robbins, 2017). In most GBVF attacks men use extreme force to subdue women, they know that women cannot win the fight against them because they are much stronger than them (Treffry-Goatley, De Lange, Moletsane, Mkhize & Masinga, 2018). Women are therefore the most vulnerable gender to GBVF attacks, Treffry-Goatley et al. (2018) points out that in recent times, there are different sexualities, this means that some women identify as males and some males identify as women. GBVF attacks that are committed against homosexuals are considered as GBVF attacks on their own merit.

LGBTQI+ community

Related to the problem of presenting all women as a homogenous group, is the GBVF attacks that those in the LGBTQI community face (Maotoana, Govender & Nel, 2019; Coker, Bush, Cook-Craig, DeGue, Clear, Brancato & Recktenwald, 2017). The LGBTQI+ community is often excluded from the understandings and applications of GBVF attacks, despite the obvious gendered basis of the violence (Coker et al., 2017). Jouriles et al. (2018) opine that an issue which is particularly widespread in South Africa is that of homophobic rape and even murders. Lesbian women and particularly Black lesbian women who are more masculine (butch), are raped with the stated intention of altering their sexual orientation, or turning them straight, sometimes, after raping these lesbians, they murder them. In these instances, Black lesbians in South Africa are raped, tortured and murdered because they refuse to conform to dominant heterosexual, patriarchal norms and values (Maotoana et al., 2019; Jouriles et al., 2018). Coker et al. (2018) states that LGBTQ+ people are raped because their sexuality is not correctly represented, their sexual orientation, therefore, puts them at a higher risk of GBVF attacks than if they were heterosexual.

Maotoana et al. (2019) outline that if the focus in GBVF attacks was based on GBVF attacks within the queer relationships, or same-sex sexual violence, such as between two women or two men, such attacks would not have been identified as GBVF attacks. The forms of attacks between same sexes do not amount to GBVF attacks but assaults or assault with intent to cause grievously bodily harm if excessive force was used and the victim is badly injured

(Hurtado, 2018). This means that two lesbian partners (both female), cannot be accused of GBVF attacks if they are involved in a fight, it is only when a different gender attacks the opposite gender that such an attack amounts to be identified as a GBVF attacks. While the fact of this exclusion from understandings of GBVF is jarring enough, the extremely high rates of violence that homosexuals in particular experience makes it a cause for even greater concern (Olomi, DePrince & Gagnon, 2019; Hurtado, 2018). Dixon, Treharne, Celi, Hines, Lysova and Douglas (2020) further inform that across all intersecting identities, lesbians are mostly attacked by straight men that feel entitled to the lives of other people (Dixon et al., 2020; Olamo et al., 2019). The attack on lesbians in HEIs is common because some male students are not well educated about sexuality and human rights (Ford & Becker, 2020). Several students perceive their views as correct and those of others as incorrect, they end up attacking and taking advantage of lesbians because they want to get a sense of what it feels like to be with a lesbian (Ford & Becker, 2020; Olamo et al., 2019). Should the lesbian resist, then force is used. The attacks of women and the LGBTQI+ are usually perpetrated by men. As much as men are, in most cases, the perpetrators, they are also victims at times.

Men and boys as targets

The notion that GBVF attacks exclude violence against and between men is concerning. As an important caveat, Flood (2018) and Ford (2018) acknowledge that there is significant discomfort with the notion of including violence against men when GBVF attacks are mentioned. While men undoubtedly experience GBVF attacks, it does not imply that this violence is predominantly being perpetrated by women, those in the LGBTQIA+ community, or any other marginalised groups (Donne, DeLuca, Pleskach, Bromson, Mosley, Perez & Frye, 2018). Ford (2018) stresses that it is important to note that the vast majority of GBVF attacks on men is largely perpetrated by men. The problem overwhelmingly remains men's use of violence. Donne et al. (2018) posit that the attacks on men usually come from straight men that attack gays. These attacks usually occur for different reasons that are justified as correcting the gender of the victim, or even just hate towards the victim's choice of gender. Given the societal expectation of violence in many versions of masculinities, or their contextual gender norms, Ford and Becker (2020) argue that most forms of violence perpetrated by men are gendered to some extent. Meyer (2020) notes that men's violence is not simply about dominance over women but can also be viewed as establishing hierarchies among men. Meyer (2020) further indicates that most violence perpetration by men has at its roots norms of masculinities. Thus, fighting between males for dominance is the most likely reason why males, more than females, die from violence (Meyer, 2020). It is important to note that not all masculinities will require violence and that these masculinities are fluid and changeable, rather than static (Ford, 2018; Messerschmidt, 2018).

In a related matter, while women undoubtedly experience certain forms of GBVF attacks at extremely high rates, men experience other forms of violence, such as murder, at significantly higher rates than women. Ralston (2020) reports that South African men had one of the highest mortality rates in the world. Along with this, Süssenbach, Eyssel, Rees and Bohner (2017) found that 81% of adolescent homicide victims in Johannesburg were male; while Stemple, Flores, Ilan and Meyer (2017) report that urban young black men (aged 20 to 40) were up to nine times as likely to die from homicidal violence as black females in the same age group. Furthermore, Stemple et al. 2017 and Kiss et al. (2020) suggest that even though women and girls experience higher rates of GBVF attacks, men and boys do also experience GBVF attacks, at the hands of both women and other men. However, the stigma against men who experience such violence is strong, due to the perceived shame and 'feminisation' of being a male survivor of GBVF attacks, meaning that reporting rates among men may be even lower than those of women (Kiss et al., 2020; Stemple et al., 2017). This shame highlights the extremely gendered nature of the crime and the way in which, when it is perpetrated against men, it is also specifically because of their societal gender roles. Senkans, McEwan and Ogloff (2017) assume that excluding any form of violence against men from the applied understanding of GBVF attacks is problematic for several reasons. The first is that it excludes the fact that GBVF attacks against gay, bisexual, or trans men is extremely gendered, as it punishes them for deviating from the heterosexual norm. The second is that it assumes that any form of GBVF attack against men is just violence, rather than gender-based violence and is simply an inherent fact, rather than something that can be researched or problematised or addressed (Senkans et al., 2017). This may therefore limit the effectiveness of interventions which are attempting to prevent GBVF attacks through working with men. Thus, work on masculinities urgently needs to include a focus on violent attacks between men.

Material and methods

A content qualitative technique was employed for this paper following a scoping review, which was deemed appropriate because of its potential to map the extent of existing research in the field and establish "working definitions and conceptual boundaries" of best practice in the research process (Peters, Godfrey, Khalil, McInerney, Parker & Soares, 2015:141). Scoping reviews share with systematic reviews a focus on rigor, transparency and replicability of

methods, though they are less focused on quality assessment of the studies identified (Grant & Booth, 2009; Weeks & Strudsholm, 2008). Consequently, scoping reviews are more suited to addressing broad, exploratory research questions rather than the narrower focus of a systematic review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). This review adopted the framework described by Arksey & O'Malley (2005) and elaborated upon by Levac, Colquhoun and O'Brien (2010), which sets out a five-stage approach: identifying the research question; identifying relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; and collating, summarising and reporting the results.

Results and discussion

Role of policy makers in HEIs

The role of academic staff is important and the role of the HEIs' administration is also critical because the administrators are the ones that put plans in motion. Hence, developed programmes to prevent GBVF attacks on HEIs' campuses can be implemented better through the help of the administrators (Kroshus et al., 2018). Carlson et al. (2018:57) outline that HEIs' administrators set the tone for the campus community, shape the school ethos and climate, create and implementing policies and providing direction for students and staff. While the HEIs' leadership is critical in conceptual models, Storer et al. (2017) highlight that there is less empirical research available about what their specific role in whole school and socio-ecological approaches to student well-being looks like. This then makes it difficult for a programme that is developed to include the administrators, even though they are the main group that can respond better to GBVF attacks. There have been several calls for HEIs' administration to play a visible role in addressing GBVF attacks on campuses. Storer et al. (2017:90) found that students' trust in campus authorities was a significant factor in predicting whether they were willing to report a peer who threatened to commit an act of violence. Banyard (2014) and McCauley et al. (2019:113) suggest that attitudes and behaviours of campus community leaders may be an important area for bystander intervention within the context of GBVF attacks but present this conceptually not empirically. While the need for institutional leadership appears clear, there are several barriers to achieving this (Jouriles et al., 2018). Some leaders may be on board with openly discussing GBVF attacks, but others may be hesitant due to several institutional concerns such as reputation and subsequent enrolment, litigation by students who believe they were treated unfairly, or the issue of resource allocation or lack of their own knowledge about the issues.

Sisneros and Rivera (2018) describe coaching up as those individual working directly with survivors (such as counsellors and advocates) that can help educate senior leaders to better understand the issue and impact on students (Sisneros & Rivera, 2018; Jouriles et al., 2018). This includes ensuring that senior leaders are equipped with data, anecdotes, talking points to accurately communicate about the issues to students and the greater campus community (Carlson et al., 2018:57). Sisneros and Rivera (2018) and Jouriles, Krauss, Vu N, Banyard and McDonald (2018) suggest faculty involved in research can make sure that studies like campus climate surveys include key measures of variables that are central to a campus' mission like academic persistence and intent to continue at the institution, variables that are central to the concerns of administrators. Once senior leaders understand what GBVF attacks are, they are better able to create, support and sustain needed services, procedures and policies. Beres (2020) highlights that without institutional ownership that includes necessary resources as well as multiple champions, this type of comprehensive approach will not be sustained. Edwards et al. (2019:92) deduce that this work should also attend to what campuses are doing well, helping to message strengths as well as challenges. Involving administration is an area that needs further conceptual and empirical work on the HEIs. Evans et al. (2019) and Beres (2020) further informs that this can include determining how visible and vocal key campus leaders are in addressing GBVF attacks, monitoring the weight of the administration's commitment to the issue, determining what types of human and monetary resources are allocated to address campus sexual violence, whether the issue is included as a priority in strategic plans and visionary statements, examining the content of policies and exploring whether the leaders are perceived as supportive by members of the campus community.

Learning communities' obligation

Mofokeng, Mofokeng and Simelane (2024:102-103) argue that "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". For Mofokeng et al., (2024:102). Learning communities especially HEIs, 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 learning communities, law enforcement, relevant stakeholders and policymakers". Ensuring a safe learning environment necessitates robust relationships between HEIs and the police, effective reporting

mechanisms, and swift action against perpetrators (Mofokeng et al., 2024:103). In addition to the central positioning of students especially boys and men in GBVF prevention programmes, the role of academic staff is critical in these programmes (Storer et al., 2017; Banyard, 2014). Engaged academic staff headed by male lecturers, professors and administrators not only provide models for students, but they may also provide resources and support, intervene in incidences of sexual violence and can help shape the larger classroom and school environment (Beres et al., 2019; Carlson et al., 2018). Carlson et al. (2018:57) stipulate that the lecturer's presence at student identified hot spots for GBVF attacks, can be more effective in reducing these attacks than the presence of other students. The general trust that is developed between students and lecturers also serves as a protective factor against GBVF attacks (Carlson et al., 2018), GBVF attacks can also be reduced if no staff member is involved in any of the attacks on the campuses, which means there has to be a zero tolerance for any form of GBVF attacks between staff and students.

Coker et al. (2019) highlight that through collaboration between teaching staff and student, GBVF attacks can surely be reduced, and this can be of the benefit of many. Academic staff could incorporate activities related to sexual violence and healthy relationships by partnering with student organisations to provide educational programmes and events that build community, reflect a commitment to social justice and inclusion and provide spaces for students to address prevention. Coulter and Rankin (2017) point out that it is particularly important for those staff working on campus on addressing vulnerable genders to GBVF attacks such as homophobia to connect with students that also work towards reducing GBVF attacks on campuses. There are also staff who serve as significant adult mentors in the lives of students such as academic advisors, coaches, internship directors and employers (Edwards et al., 2019). There is evidence that coaches, for example, can have a significant impact on setting expectations for appropriate student behaviour (Kroshus et al., 2018). In addition, McCauley et al. (2019:111) inform that there are ways that staff that may not be as obviously connected to developing educational opportunities for students can still have an influence. Staff from departments such as facilities, dining, recreation, libraries, student centres and elsewhere observe day-to-day interactions among students, where they may have opportunities to intervene when they witness certain behaviours (McCauley et al., 2019).

There is a continued need to find ways to bridge work between faculty, staff and administration on these issues so that there is a unified approach (Jouriles et al., 2018; Sisneros & Rivera, 2018). Graham et al. (2018) further inform that such integration allows for more mutually reinforcing messaging and the exposure to multiple dose messaging that is a cornerstone of effective prevention efforts. Engaging academic staff and students has the potential to help diffuse prevention messages across campus and thus decrease the single reliance on campus victim service offices who are often charged with delivering prevention and education while also often providing crisis intervention and supporting survivors (Beres, 2020; Javorka & Campbell, 2019). To increase staff and student engagement, specific GBVF attacks training may be required as well as guidance about self-care (Graham et al., 2018; Sisneros & Rivera, 2018). The management of the HEIs has the power to get enough programmes that can be used to address GBVF related attacks on campuses.

Call for help and access

Women do not usually keep the violence they experience hidden. In most cases, they look for someone to confide in. Research carried out by Gourlay et al. (2019) indicates that 75% of women tell someone about the violence they experienced and they usually go to informal sources of support, such as family and friends. Elias and Rai (2018) found similar results. In the latter case, in report that 87% of women are reported to confiding in at least one informal source. Rollè, Giardina, Caldarera, Gerino and Brustia (2018) inform that in cases of physical or sexual violence from a partner or ex-partner, 67% of women went to the police or other services or told someone about it. These findings leave 30% of women who do not report it, a proportion that must not be ignored. In an analysis of GBVF attacks in HEIs context, victims need to feel safe enough to can report the cases to relevant structures. Victims in a situation that they are violently attacked follow three steps of decision making which are outlined by Beyene et al. (2019) as defining the problem, deciding to seek help and selecting a source of support. During these stages, Beyene et al. (2019) specify that the response women receive when seeking help plays a critical role. These responses can help women define the problem, move forward in the attempt to live their own lives and help in the recovery progress, or they can have the opposite effect (Beyene et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2018). Javorka and Campbell (2019) inform that women who receive supportive responses from the first people they confide in about the violence they are experiencing show greater confidence and are more likely to seek help in the future (Beyene et al., 2019). In contrast, fear that a confidante will insist that the woman end the relationship or will impose their own judgement about what the victim is experiencing is an important barrier in help-seeking processes (Javorka & Campbell, 2019). In such situations, some of the patterns the woman has already experienced during the violent relationship repeat themselves, placing the victim again in a power relationship with the helper.

The main reasons that lead victims to seek help and try to leave the relationship are the feelings of fear of death or injury and the desire to be treated with respect and self-love (Rollè et al., 2018; Stemple et al., 2017). Furthermore, Canan et al. (2018) indicate that the reasons why victims do not seek help is because they decide to stay or return to the relationship, lack of social support, external pressures from the abuser and the immediate environment, believing that they will be stigmatised and hoping that it will change. Help-seeking is not a uniform or linear process; Elias and Rai (2018) suggest that it is influenced by geographical location, culture, available resources, immigration status, previous experiences of abuse and the responses received when help was sought, among others. Victims of GBVF attacks in HEIs that seek help can get help from within the campuses. These programmes are there for the whole campus community, which includes male and female students, academic staff inclusive of males at various levels from lecturers to full professors and the management of the institutions.

Student initiatives

Students are at the core of programmes that intend to prevent GBVF attacks; recognising that they are not only the recipients of programmes and services but should be engaged as partners and critical contributors (Beres et al., 2019; Breetzke et al., 2019). Breetzke et al. (2019:80) suggest that programmes that include students in engaged ways may have better outcomes. The HEIs models should employ strategies to engage students that move beyond a tokenistic level and encourage genuine participation where students have influence over decisions and activities rather than simply taking part in them (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Storer et al., 2017). Sisneros and Rivera (2018) further assert that students can be engaged as critical contributors by inviting them to design and deliver the prevention materials themselves or to participate in curriculum development meetings. Other methods involve engaging peers as active bystanders, which empowers them to intervene proactively when they witness GBVF attacks (Banyard, 2014; Coker et al., 2019; Storer et al., 2017).

Banyard (2014) opines that training students to serve as active bystanders that help to interrupt and disrupt situations involving GBVF is a key component to addressing these issues on HEI campuses. Evaluation of bystander intervention programmes has demonstrated a number of positive outcomes, including an increase in students' willingness to intervene in prosocial ways and to a lesser, yet significant extent, an increase in actual prosocial bystander behaviours (Beres et al., 2019; Jouriles et al., 2018;). Coker et al. (2017) state that there is also preliminary evidence that bystander approaches address social and community-level norms around peers' acceptance of GBVF attacks. In fact, recent research by Coker et al. (2019:159) indicates that HEIs that have bystander programmes present have lower rates of sexual violence victimisation, perpetration and other GBVF forms of attacks. What is more, students' perceptions that they have influence on their campus are related to greater bystander intervention.

Another way that HEIs can engaged students in efforts to address sexual violence is through peer education, both within formal programming and within informal social networks (Banyard et al., 2018; Coker et al., 2019). Student leaders on campuses have to receive bystander training precisely because they already hold a high status on campus and can use that status to model prosocial behaviour for their peers (Coker et al., 2019; Banyard et al., 2018). Kilgore et al. (2019) suggest that for more meaningful change, peer health leaders be embedded in already existing social groups on campus. Although there is a strong body of literature on the role of students in addressing campus sexual violence, it is very crucial for students to take caution when they see a GBVF attack taking place; they first need to assess the situation and if they see that their lives might be in danger, they should opt to go seek help from the campus security members.

Through HEIs programmes that aim to deter GBVF attacks, better connection between HEIs and student activists, can find ways to elevate their voices and include them in decision-making as stakeholders, researchers and consultants (Storer et al., 2017; Wiersma-Mosley & Jozkowski, 2019). Sivaraman et al. (2018) further highlight that work is needed to explore how students can be more active in curriculum building, programme creation, educational outreach, event planning, policymaking, and research (Olomi et al., 2019; Banyard et al., 2018). Given that programmes that can be used to prevent GBVF attacks are aimed at being inclusive of the entire campus community (Beres et al., 2019) hold the view that it is essential to seek opportunities for the engagement of students from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those from sexual and ethnic minority groups, students with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.

Consequences of GBVF

A growing body of evidence documents the consequences of GBVF attacks for a victim's health and well-being, ranging from fatal outcomes such as homicide, suicide and AIDS-related deaths to nonfatal outcomes such as physical

injuries, chronic pain syndrome, gastrointestinal disorders, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections (Evans, Burroughs & Knowlden, 2019; García-Moreno, Hegarty, Lucas d'Oliveira, Koziol-MacLain, Colombini & Feder, 2015). Süssenbach, Eyssel, Rees and Bohner (2017) insist that physical and sexual violence has consequences for a victim's mental health; they further suggest these mental health effects are post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, as well as behavioural outcomes such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual risk-taking and a higher risk of subsequent victimisation (Süssenbach et al., 2017). It has become increasingly clear that injuries represent only the tip of the iceberg of negative health effects and that violence is more appropriately conceptualised as a risk factor for health problems than as a health condition.

Stark et al. (2017) deduce that GBVF attacks in HEIs have several devastating mental, physical, social and somatic effects such as poor relationships with peers and increased psychological disorders like depression, anxiety, insomnia, posttraumatic stress disorder, self-harm, poor academic performance and physical disability. Storer, Casey and Herrenkohl (2017) suggest that female students are particularly at a higher risk and at least one in five women experience sexual violence or assault during their academic years. Elias and Rai (2018) and Gourlay, Birdthistle, Mthiyane, Orindi, Muuo and Kwaro (2019) level factors such as multiple sexual partners, alcohol or substance abuse, prior history of victimisation and socio-economic status as consequential acts that are caused by GBVF attacks. It is clearly crucial for HEIs to ensure that they create a safe learning environment where students can receive help if they have been victimised or know a victim.

Future Research

It was highlighted above that despite strategies made in HEIs to address GBVF attacks in HEIs, the issue of more of such attacks occurring is constantly showing its face, even though some HEIs have implemented different strategies, such as policies on GBVF. It is, therefore, recommended that more research be conducted on the HEIs' understanding of GBVF attacks; backed by far more philosophical training that should be conducted. This training should involve all the campus community members, because the HEI management, on its own, cannot prevent GBVF cases. Research on GBVF attacks in HEIs is minimal in South Africa, even though the country is riddled with cases of GBVF attacks. By means of more research on this topic, HEIs can be able to develop effective strategies because they will not only be relying on a few researched studies. It is crucial for HEI administrators to research this phenomenon sufficiently because the HEIs are the places where teaching and learning occurs. This means all genders, sexualities, races, people from different backgrounds and other social factors come together to live together for a measured time. A clear strategy that engages male stakeholders would go a long way for greater awareness and seek the active participation of their willingness to change of attitudes towards GBVF on HEIs campuses.

Limitations

There are several methodological limitations to this study. First, the literature included was not critically appraised and so we have not commented on the rigor of each of the papers examined. Rather than evaluating each of the studies included, the authors instead focused on the range of themes or topics fitting the profile of this study, to consider the breadth of possible elements that could inform this paper. The authors initially aimed to evaluate the extent to which men are engaged in HEIs but due to limited research, no information to form a concise study could be ascertained. Hence, a decision to holistically identify factors at play to ascertain what are the challenges and how their recommendations had been developed. Secondly, the identification, selection and charting of the data was completed by the first author and so may have been impacted by the researcher's disciplinary perspective and interpretation of the value, relevance and significance of the literature. Third, the authors are aware of a range of relevant literature that was not included in this review because it did not meet the criteria for inclusion. The focus of this paper or interest was in the intersection of methods, GBV and the HEIs.

Conclusion

To tackle power inequalities within the research process, the literature highlights the importance of genuine collaboration and shared ownership by all stakeholders inclusive of males, of all stages of the anti-GBVF campaigns on campuses. Despite efforts by the DHET through Higher Health to promote reciprocity and empowerment of women and men on campus, there continues to be a risk that lack of active participation of relevant stakeholders, including men, as seen by the slow pace at which GBV policies are developed and implemented in HEIs. The context of GBVF attacks at the HEI campuses, if not understood, can lead to an unsafe learning and teaching environment. As such, GBVF attacks are seen as a form of systemic discrimination that manifest within an unequal gender system in which dominant forms of masculinity, or hegemonic masculinities are privileged over forms of femininity and alternative masculinities (Enaifoghe, 2019; Elias & Rai, 2018). Although GBV is most commonly and regularly used to assert

male power over women, Finchilescu and Dugard (2021) state that it can also be used to maintain male power within male groups and to challenge both heterosexual and homosexual men who do not act according to expected masculinity norms (Carlson et al., 2018:60). This study provides some insights into the prevalence of GBVF incidents in HEI campuses and the need for those incidents to be prevented. More systematic research across all universities in the country is needed to accurately guide policy development and prevention efforts. It is important for all HEIs in South Africa to recognise their responsibility in addressing GBV and to find ways of supporting the victims in a reasonable and fair fashion. Thus, the developed programmes by HEIs to address GBVF attacks can end up being ineffective.

The following recommendations are provided:

- The use of all-inclusive strategies by HEIs, supported by Higher Health, that clearly identify the meaning of GBVF and those that are vulnerable to GBVF attacks.
- Where HEIs campaigns seek to address inequalities, further recruitment of men within these spaces is needed towards fast-tracking of creating conducive environment in the short-term context of the campaigns and also its broader impact within the learning communities.
- The role of institutional leadership is critical in establishing a university-wide commitment to prevention, initiate decisions that shape the school ethos and climate, create, and implement policies and provide direction for students, faculty and staff.

Despite collaboration of think-tanks towards conducting research on GBVF in HEIs to inform policy and practice, there is a need for a holistic bottom-up approach, which should also play an essential role of mobilising men within learning communities towards changing the societal perception of men and boys at the grassroots.

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