

Towards Development of Security and Safety Education Support Sustainability regime to tackle gender-based violence and femicide on campuses

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to contribute to knowledge on how violence, in a form of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) attacks pose a serious threat to the lives of students on campus. Secondly, the paper posits that sustainable development goals can be supported by security and safety education on campus, where security refers to the state of being free from danger or threats and safety applies to creating protection from risks or dangers. It is argued that both the challenges of civilisation and the evolution of society generate new consequences, which may be harmful for human and sustainable development. Crisis and conflicts, pandemics, poverty of social groups, ethnic tensions within states, disintegration of elements of social ties, lack of care for the environment, non-compliance with the rules of social coexistence, weakening of the system of values and moral norms, intensification of social pathology (i.e., addictions, corruption), and social alienation are some of the factors that create unfavorable external conditions for the growth of humanity. Thus, the safety and security of students on campuses is a critical matter that cannot be compromised or taken lightly. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are places that offer teaching and learning services to many diverse people. Hence, it is important to have strategies in place, such as but not limited to; amendment of HEIs curricula, to address education as a holistic field of security and safety, covering GBVF, is the most effective and cheapest form of counteracting threats. It is the basic path in shaping human development: it provides individuals with appropriate knowledge and necessary skills, to ensure safety in HEIs. Formalising the relationship between the legislator through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Policy Framework and HEIs implementing the directives of security and safety education will allow for the creation of programmes relying on sustainable development promotion. GBVF is a phenomenon that drives numerous acts of violence against women, children and homosexuals that are committed by men at a high rate. These attacks are also prone in the HEIs in South Africa, and in other countries around the world. Safety and security is a tremendous and a human rights issue on campuses, and additional procedures need to be taken to prevent harmful acts to students from happening. GBVF can be prevented on campuses once safety strategies are put in place. The consulted literature review in this paper highlighted some of the strategies that can be used to address GBVF at HEIs in South Africa and other HEIs from other countries. The findings are outlined in this paper such as; the need for a combination of security and safety education with sustainability which might trigger newer and more complex research directions, for instance, the coherent concept of teaching security and safety education, combating threats related to GBVF for sustainable development, or effective teaching about patriarchy and how youth should be taught the values of ubuntu. Future analyses and experiments involving new perspectives and state-of-the-art solutions will open new ways of thinking and contribute to a better, sustainable future. Recommended ways in which these strategies can be used to address GBVF on campuses are outlined.

Keywords: Campus, community, education, gender-based violence and femicide, higher education institutions, safety, strategies

Introduction

The United Nations (UN)' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to create a more fair, just, and equitable world ensuring no one is left behind, which form part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically mention higher education institutions (HEIs) for the first time. For the African continent, Agenda 2063 encapsulates not only Africa's aspirations for the future but also identifies key flagship programmes, one of which is Programme 5, 'Silencing the Guns', which saw the interruptions brought by COVID-19 and still need to be attended to amongst other platforms, among others; through the African Research Chair portfolio at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). The sound of guns, infiltration of dangerous weapons, culture of violence and criminality, have become a way of life on campuses both at HEIs and public schools in South Africa, continentally and globally. In addition, HEIs have centrally important role in delivering a number of the other SDGs, among which should be the development of security and safety education support sustainability regime to tackle gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) on campus. This calls for campus sustainability embodied in a safety and security education regime.

Campus sustainability has become an issue and global concern for policy makers and planners in universities because of the realisation of the campus activities impact on the environment (Alshuwaikhat, Habib M. and Abubakar, Ismaila. (2008). Saleh, Kamarulzaman, Hashim and Hashim (2011) posit that a sustainable campus programme concentrates on the following main elements: 1). Improving efficiency; 2). Protecting and restoring ecological systems, and 3). Enhancing the well-being of all peoples. Sustainable initiatives address for all of these at the same time (Saleh *et al.*, 2011). Velaquez, Munguia, Platt and Taddei (2006) define sustainable campus as "a higher educational institution, as a whole or as a part, that addresses, involves, and promotes, on a regional or global level, the minimisation of negative environmental, economic, societal, and health effects generated in the use of their resources in order to fulfil its function of teaching, research, outreach and partnership, and stewardship in ways to help society make the transition to sustainable lifestyles". Sustainable campus development is carried out to meet current needs without sacrificing the fulfillment of the next generation (Abd-Razak, Utaberta & dan Handryant, 2012). Sustainability affects every sphere of a university, from the classrooms and laboratories, to housing, transportation, and other services, and to the entire campus (Alshuwaikhat, Habib & Abubakar, 2008).

The safety of students at higher education institutions (HEIs), is highly threatened by the increasing cases of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) attacks on campuses. It has been widely documented that GBVF is a scourge that affects a lot of people in all corners of the world (Aiello, Puigvert & Schubert, 2018; Mofokeng, 2022; Tlou, Mofokeng & Pheiffer, 2022). Addressing GBVF at HEIs is a crucial practice that has to be widely realised at a fast pace because GBVF cases, are growing at an exponential rate and this needs to be stopped. Logan and Walker (2017), and Klein, Graham, Treves-Kagan, Deck, DeLong & Martin (2018), show that coherence and integration across GBVF cases and HEIs responses to these cases are largely missing, they indicate that more is needed to proactively bridge existing gaps in GBVF cases and sustainable development programming to respond to these cases. Despite the numerous and widespread challenges that come with GBVF cases at HEIs, proper strategies can help address this threat to the safety of students in HEIs (Masike & Mofokeng, 2014, 2017). Klein *et al.* (2018), stipulate that if proper strategies that can be used to respond to GBVF cases are to be met, the many gaps demand of data, information, innovation, and investment must be addressed. Therefore, more research needs to be done. The elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including sexual and other types of exploitation, is a key target for the South African Police Service (SAPS). However, Jewkes and Morrell (2018), further urge that the seriousness of the scope and impact of GBVF, include a across environment-related context, and requires action to be taken in relation to others by different actors. This includes national governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society, the private sector, donors, academia and communities, from both the environment and gender-equality spheres, as well as broader development and, in some critical cases, humanitarian spheres and most importantly the educational sector.

Addressing GBVF cases on campuses is not easy. It is for this purpose, that this paper aims to contribute to knowledge on how violence, in a form of GBVF attacks pose a serious threat to the lives of students on campus. Secondly, the paper posits that sustainable development goals can be supported by security and safety education on campus, where security refers to the state of being free from danger or threats and safety applies to creating protection from risks or dangers. What makes it more difficult for HEIs to address GBVF cases, is that GBVF is culturally embedded, context-specific and without a one-size-fits-all solution. Attempting to address it may pose its own dangers, but not addressing it poses even more danger. There is an acknowledgement among scholars in the South African higher education context that female students are the most vulnerable to GBVF attacks (Brubaker & Keegan, 2019; Cismaru & Cismaru, 2018; Jewkes & Morrell, 2018; Klein *et al.*, 2018). It has been argued that sexual violence in HEIs is a reality and it

impacts mostly on female students' activities to a great degree. The following section discusses consulted literature on the existence of GBVF, victims as well as interventions needed, in a form of education on safety and security to address the attitude of perpetrators. Materials and methods will follow and thereafter, results and discussion emanating from the findings.

Literature Review

Existence of GBVF at HEIs

Oparinde and Matsha (2021), and Dworkin and Barker (2019), mention that GBVF attacks are of grave concern at HEIs. This seems ironic, given that HEIs are edifices of education housing the best and brightest minds in society, espousing critical thinking amongst students. Furthermore, Crooks, Jaffe, Dunlop, Kerry, and Exner-Cortens (2019: 33), accord that HEIs have also become sites of abduction and homicide. Over the past few years, a number of cases have been reported in the press. The reported cases include: a university student that was abducted, held for ransom and murdered by a fellow bond university student, this was a report on the tragic murder at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) campus of a student by her boyfriend in August 2008 (Dolley, 2008). It was also reported that, in 2018, a student from Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), was shot dead by her boyfriend at an off-campus residence in Durban (Ncobo, 2018). The most spoken of murder case was of the University of Cape Town student, Uyinene Mrwetyana in August 2019, who was killed by a man she hardly knew (Lyster, 2019). These cases and more, show that femicide is a contemporary phenomenon in South Africa.

The above cited examples of GBVF attacks that affect HEIs, reveal that the lives of students, and in particular female students, have been lost due to violence. Additionally, these incidents further buttress the argument that cases of murder in the South African HEIs are on the rise (Manik & Tarisayi, 2021). Statistics from the SAPS database record that reported rape cases had increased drastically over five years (SAPS, 2021). The rising rape statistics are an indication of excessive violent behaviour by men against women in SA. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), estimates that 21% of women have experienced sexual violence by a partner, while 6% of women have experienced sexual violence by a partner. It has been argued that femicide is on the increase, with statistics indicating SA as being crippled because it has one of the highest rates of rape and violence against women (SAHRC, 2020). Oparinde and Matsha (2021), state that GBVF in the education sector is a big challenge that is as yet unaddressed in many communities, yet education itself can cultivate awareness about GBVF that can protect girls and young women from GBVF environments, Oparinde and Matsha (2021), also mention that there is no investment more effective for achieving development goals, than educating students on what GBVF attacks are. Jocelyn, Ausubel, Kenny, Blake, Heckman, Rastogi and Sharma (2021), highlight that creating a safe environment for students requires that threats to the safety of the students be identified first, so that measures can be put in place to proactively deal with those threats. GBVF is a threat to the lives of many people in South Africa, it exists in both private and public environments, measures that are put in place by HEIs can ensure that students are able to feel safe when they are on campuses.

According to Coulter, Mair, Miller, Blossnich, Matthews and McCauley (2017), GBVF can also be the reason that girls do not enroll in school or drop out at an early age. Oparinde and Matsha (2021), also agree that girls experiencing GBVF find it difficult to complete their studies because they live in constant fear of violence and the perpetrators. Women who do not enroll and attend schools long enough are thus not acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes on how to protect themselves against GBVF (Finley & Levenson, 2018; Marine & Nicolazzo, 2020). Safety concerns of students in HEIs has always been the priority of many campuses. This can be noted from security and access control in many HEIs. The ultimate challenge with addressing GBVF attacks, is that this kind of violence is too unique. For instance, a person can be searched by a security officer, a weapon is found, and that person is taken to the police. With GBVF attacks, a person first has to commit such an act, then, depending on the gravity of the committed act, measures can be taken.

Likely victims of GBVF

The GBVF attacks against vulnerable women and children are one of the most prevalent violations of basic human rights globally, that cuts across race, age, borders, gender, culture, social and economic divides (White, Sienkiewicz & Smith, 2019). Dworkin and Barker (2019: 162), indicate that GBVF is an intentional and harmful act perpetrated against a girl or boy, woman, or man. However, women and girls remain the most affected by GBVF, which is attributed to discrimination and gender-based inequalities. GBVF experiences in South Africa are a widespread crisis, affects all sectors, and is embedded in institutions and cultures. Dworkin and Barker (2019), label South Africa as the rape capital of the world, with a high prevalence of GBVF cases on HEIs campuses and its residences. Manik and Tarisayi (2021: 2), further point out that increasing numbers of cases of rape and murder of female students have been

reported in SA, and although the prevalence of GBVF is well documented, there are no national data on the magnitude of GBVF on campuses.

Mahabeer (2021) and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), assert that cases of GBVF among university students are rampant, understated, and underreported. Undergraduate female students are most at risk of GBVF, particularly first-year students entering the unfamiliar university space. Coulter *et al.* (2017), and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), deduce that in SA, GBVF incidences outside campuses and residences or prior to attending university are difficult to monitor and report, but have significant implications on the attendance, learning and performance of students. In 2019 the University of KwaZulu-Natal hosted a dialogue in partnership with Higher Health, the DHET, academics, students and other stakeholders, to address GBVF on campuses (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). The prevalence of GBVF emerged from the conversation as did the need for a safer university space. The DHET Deputy Minister pointed out that GBVF on campuses countrywide was a crisis and there was a dire need to address psychosocial support for GBVF victims. Finley and Levenson (2018) and Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), further posit universities not to conceal GBVF statistics, because that puts the campus community member's lives in more danger. Finley and Levenson (2018) and Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), also argue that the university space allows incidences of GBVF to continue, as there are no speedy repercussions for perpetrators. Interestingly, victims expressed experiencing coercion and intimidation to withdraw cases. As GBVF escalated on campuses, students need to voice their fears of victimisation and vulnerability on campus and be heard (Klein & Martin, 2021). Cismaru and Cismaru (2018), further indicate that a forum piece which will conceptualise GBVF and discuss types of GBVF, like sexual violence, harassment, bullying and intimidation, within the university context needs to be organised.

Education on safety and security as strategies toward prevention of GBVF at HEIs

A comprehensive definition of education for security was introduced by Pieczywok (2012 cited in Gawlik-Kobylińska, 2021), who states that education for safety is of particular importance in creating appropriate attitudes and values, acquiring knowledge and skills in the area of counteracting various threats. It is an important part of the didactic and educational process as well as preventive activities, aimed mainly at civic education, communication, as well as pro-health and environmental education. It is also considered a necessary element of education and preparation for living and working in modern conditions. According to Dranzoa (2018) and Wood, Sulley, Kammer-Kerwick, Follingstad, and Busch (2017), the culture of abuse against women emanates from traditional men's belief that they are superior to women in all human endeavours. This is a culture of violence that incorporates patriarchy, sexual harassment or bullying needs to be challenged and addressed as a form of an institutional support and the implementation of security and safety education for all victims of GBVF, which fall within the competence of primary, secondary and higher education. Therefore, security and safety education is closely related to politics, the education system, the state, the authority and the entire system of exercising it, and its issues are, therefore, important to individuals and social groups. Security and safety education is still equated to defense education of the society (as well as civic education). However, it should be noted that these subjects fall within the scope of security and safety education (Gawlik-Kobylińska, 2021). The safety and security of students and the entire campus community is the duty of the management of the HEIs and the entire campus community, as every person has a role to play in preventing GBVF attacks at HEIs. However, campus community members cannot prevent GBVF attacks on their own. Sharoni and Klocke (2019) and Wood *et al.* (2017), also inform that the prevention of violence against women will require community mobilisation, where a change of social norms and attitude are empathised.

Brubaker and Keegan (2019), suggest that local churches are places of safety and can play an important role in preventing violence against young girls by providing a safe space for victims of GBVF attacks and can even build on the spiritual life of victims (Weber & Bowers-DuToit, 2018; Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). HEIs, as places where knowledge is embedded in students, need to make sure that the educational programs in place foster accepted behaviour in young people in intimate relationships. Rasool (2020) and Dranzoa (2018), share the view that places such as supermarkets or kiosks at campuses, where students and staff members usually go to, must have posters that contain messages on how to combat GBVF. In addition, Dranzoa (2018: 7), highlights that, by moving messages of GBVF all around campuses, can ensure that there are no or limited dangerous areas where student's lives are at risk of facing GBVF attacks. When addressing ways of limiting GBVF attacks at HEIs, it is always critical to analyse available approaches to ensure sustainability and sustainable development of safety and security regime on campus. Sustainability and sustainable development are often used interchangeably (Waas, Hugé, Verbruggen & Wright, 2011; Escrig-Olmedo, Fernández-Izquierdo, Ferrero-Ferrero, Rivera-Lirio & Muñoz-Torres, 2019). Sustainability means "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987; Gazzola, Pezzetti, Amelio, Grechi, 2020). The ambiguity and polysemic nature of the concept of sustainability makes it very complex and cross-disciplinary (Salas-Zapata, & Ortiz-Muñoz,

2019). Sustainability is based on systems thinking that describes more integrated and holistic understanding of a specific field of knowledge. According to White *et al.* (2019), the humanitarian setting is considered the most effective approach that role players in social service can use to curb GBVF attacks at HEIs. Fielding and Dunkle (2017), mention that in addressing future incidences of GBVF against students, the focus should be on empowerment programs for students who are victims of GBVF. In addition, Wood *et al.* (2017), explain that programs, such as empowerment programs, that occur in youth work practice, can make sure that the victims of GBVF are provided with the necessary support to participate in economic activities and acquire a source of livelihood. At HEIs there can be victim empowerment programs that take the form of therapy and charity work, in order to help victims feel useful and spend their time constructively.

Dworkin and Barker (2019), opine that social service practitioners can play an important role in preventing violence against women, by making sure they educate perpetrators on taking responsibility for their behaviour. Dworkin and Barker (2019), further stipulate that social service providers should push for men to undergo attitudinal changes to curb violence against women through programs on campuses. Furthermore, Johnson, Murphy and Gidycz (2017), suggest that this will help men relate with women in a dignified manner rather than see them as the weaker gender that needs a man to make and to do with them as they please. Moreover, White *et al.* (2019), point out that an effective community program that can change gender attitudes and stereotypes are needed in the broader society. In addition, programs that can foster social acceptance in people at a young age should be put in place to change their mindset long before they become adults. These programs should teach men to respect women (Fielding & Dunkle, 2017; White *et al.*, 2019). Aiello *et al.* (2018), state that in some HEIs, students are recruited to programs to participate in youth work activities, such as debates or sports activities which have been proven to play an important role in normative change through the confrontation of gender stereotypes. Through these programs, students can be able to do activities together to dismantle gender stereotypes (Logan & Walker, 2017; Fielding & Dunkle, 2017). Moreover, Aiello *et al.* (2018), mention the importance of bringing students of different genders together in order to provide students with soft skills to identify any sign of GBVF attacks. Thus, those who join, or are part of the programs, could know what GBVF entails and how to help victims.

Johnson *et al.* (2017), inform that mitigation of GBVF attacks require a collaborative approach. In their study that looked at GBVF among female youth at HEIs in sub-Saharan Africa, they recommended the development of intervention programs to curb GBVF by policymakers and stakeholders. Johnson *et al.* (2017), also showed that in Cape Town, sporting activities are used as tools for addressing GBVF, particularly football. Both boys and girls are involved in football games to reinforce positive behaviour and change lives. After that preventing the scourge of gender-based violence against young women requires a holistic approach. The involvement of both boys and girls in programs is an effective strategy in building a connection between students. Aiello *et al.* (2018), assert that, in addition, such initiatives can have a long-lasting impact on creating a violent-free society. More so, community programs under the supervision of youth workers have the potential to influence the boy child to challenge gender roles and respect women (Vidu *et al.*, 2017; Logan & Walker, 2017). Empowering young women to be financially independent has proven to be a good indicator for preventing violence against women. Vidu *et al.* (2017) and White *et al.* (2019), show that financially independent women are more likely to leave an abusive relationship than women who are financially dependent on their male partners (Jocelyn *et al.*, 2021). According to Oparinde and Matsha (2021), unemployed young women suffer economic abuse at the hands of their partners. Young women are more likely to be economically abused by their fathers, uncles, and boyfriends, sometimes resulting in femicide. Therefore, Dworkin and Barker (2019), populate that an economic intervention program is needed to empower young women. Thus, to tackle violence against young women, young boys and young girls need to be taught the importance of working together (Klein *et al.*, 2018). There is an undoubtable need for HEIs to have programs that are put in place to address GBVF attacks, and these programs need to be strategically placed, so that HEIs can positively respond to cases of GBVF at HEIs.

Research Gap

GBVF is a tremendous phenomenon that negatively impacts many people's lives directly or indirectly and has been investigated for a number of years by many different researchers. There is a convincing number of literature on GBVF that covers its meaning, the effect, health hazards, strategies to address it and many other fields. However, even though there is a convincing amount of research on GBVF, given the volume at which this phenomenon keeps on occurring and evolving, there is a need for much more research on GBVF. The data that was collected in this study related to acts of GBVF that are experienced at the HEIs. The challenge that was experienced during the collecting of data, was that of limited literature that is available on GBVF acts that occur at HEIs. Therefore, there is a need for more research on GBVF at places of teaching and learning. The education sector is supposed to be the sector that is driving research on GBVF, because this sector caters its services to large quantities of people, and this sector is where educational

activities such as research are supposed to be exercised. Hence, it is important that there is enough research done on GBVF in the educational sector, so that GBVF cases can be addressed accordingly at all places of learning.

Materials and Methods

A meta-analysis is considered to elaborate the findings of a study (Cheung, 2019; Eisend, 2017). In the meta-analysis, a reflection on the level of the safety of students on campuses, particularly against GBVF attacks, were identified through systematically reviewing and synthesizing relevant published research. Meta-analysis is a methodology employed to synthesize the outcomes of various studies related to the same topic or outcome measured (Gooty, Banks, Loignon, Tonidandel & Williams, 2021). It is typically conducted as a quantitative procedure geared toward the comparison of effect sizes across a variety of research studies. Qualitative meta-analysis, also referred to as meta-synthesis, follows the same replicable procedures of a quantitative meta-analysis; however, it is interpretive rather than aggregative (Cheung, 2019).

Different academic databases were therefore searched to identify relevant research on the need for safety of students on campuses, GBVF attacks at HEIs and the prevention methods. The results were further analysed and discussed so that strategies that can be used to prevent GBVF attacks at HEIs can be identified (Gooty *et al.*, 2021). Several steps were followed in the process of synthesizing the facts presented in the various studies. Firstly, the need for safety measure to protect students from violent attacks were extracted. Secondly, the prevention measures were outlined. As a next step, the prevention strategies provided in this paper were reviewed and concepts were re-sorted. Finally, discussions are provided and recommendations are proposed.

Findings and Discussion

Interventions to combat GBVF at HEIs

According to Collins and Dunn (2018), effective interventions move campuses toward fair and consistent offender accountability and include comprehensive policies that strengthen security and investigative strategies on campuses. They also support appropriate disciplinary actions that hold offenders accountable and enhance the campus response to GBVF. Moylan and Javorika (2020), state that campuses instituting effective survivor-centered services should tailor their efforts to provide intervention that prioritise the needs of the survivor, reflect an understanding of the impact of trauma on individuals, and should be comprehensive, culturally relevant, flexible, and accessible for all victims of GBVF at all campuses (Flecha, 2021). This means that GBVF responses from campuses should be intersectional and take into account the unique circumstances, cultural contexts, and experiences of each survivor, and understand how various forms of oppression or inequality interact and relate with one another in the lives of each GBVF survivor.

Policies on GBVF are a common prevention strategy that is utilised by some HEIs. Klein *et al.* (2018), opine that such policies should include sustainable development goals, human rights, and exist within the confines of the Constitution. Klein *et al.* (2018), also deduce that recent National Strategic Plan on GBVF; Human Dignity and Healing, Safety, Freedom and Equality in our Lifetime are planned official papers of the South African Government to eradicate GBVF. Despite these overarching policies, the many legal processes in place, and national strategic plans, GBVF continues unabated. Vidu *et al.* (2017) and Logan and Walker (2017), urge South African girls and women, and those in rural communities, to report cases where their equality is not recognised and where GBVF is perpetrated against them, even though the laws and policies are intended to ensure gender equality and human rights for all. Without official reported cases, there is little that can be done to address GBVF cases, particularly at HEIs.

Irek and Saunders (2018), assert that some of the reasons for underreporting of GBVF cases is caused by victims having to travel long distances to police stations to report the case, fear of victimisation, poor action by law enforcement agents, and perpetrators not being arrested. As a result, victims continue to find it difficult to report cases of violence. Another prevention strategy is promoting gender equality which has been a critical part of violence prevention. Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020), Johnson *et al.* (2017) and Aiello *et al.* (2018), indicate that promoting gender equality has included interventions that oppose the deep-rooted beliefs and cultural norms from which gender inequalities arise, as well as efforts to engage all sectors of society from the ground up to address GBVF cases. Jewkes and Morrell (2018), populate that some of these interventions, as pointed out, rely on ordinary people, to make the decision to be against GBVF attacks and willing to fight these cases head on.

In many other cases, but not all, customary laws favour the rights of men over women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2018). National laws may reference customary law or codify specific customary law provisions that are discriminatory. Or formal law might be silent on matters, leaving the gap to be filled by customary law that disadvantages women. Irek and Saunders (2018) and Klein *et al.* (2018), stipulate that in many cases, it is expected that the husband or his family

will financially sustain the wife, so it is assumed that women themselves do not need to work. Levy, Darmstadt, Ashby, Quandt, Halsey, Nagar and Greene (2019), outline that the laws reinforce the norm of women's dependence on male partners and relatives to access extension and financial services, or benefit from land programs and agricultural schemes, among other things. When national and customary legal systems clash, gender-based inequity is reinforced.

Crooks *et al.* (2019) and White *et al.* (2019), share the remark that the rural areas are overwhelmed by the socioeconomic challenges on the ground, leaving many parents and youth without an income, compelling students to leave school to find work as labourers in order to earn an income, or to send most of the little money they get from the financial aid, home. This is experienced by many young South Africans, according to Statistics South Africa (2021: np). The unemployment rate has increased from 29.1% in 2019 to 34.9% in 2022, causing the youth unemployment rate to be above 50%. Most of the unemployed youth are located in rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape, where nearly 80% of the households that are fortunate enough to generate an income in rural communities, get no more than R1 760 a month, much of it from government social grants. These socioeconomic conditions are worsened by Covid-19 and limited access to services like water, health care and education. Challenges facing IHL are many and cannot be sorted out all at once, therefore HEIs have to develop strategies that can be used to address cases of GBVF at HEIs, so that these places of teaching and learning could be safe for those that access them.

HEIs policies on GBVF

HEIs play a significant role in the intellectual life of society and influence the social, economic and cultural well-being of the nation. Pettit (2020), mentions that as of 2019, there are 26 public universities located across all nine South African provinces. Mahabeer (2021: 52), further specifies that each public university is responsible for the development of their own policy on sexual assault, sexual harassment or rape on campus and/or involves a student or university staff member. These policies provide definitions of sexual harassment and sexual assault, the universities' stance on such acts, and the procedures followed to respond to complaints of sexual harassment and sexual assault (Mahabeer, 2021). Klein and Martin (2021), further mention that the review of sexual assault/harassment policies from the top 10 universities in South Africa shows that while there are slight variations in the policies, the processes followed to handle such complaints are similar.

According to Pettit (2020), comprehensive policies addressing GBVF cases relating to students or staff was found in all ten major universities (North-West University in 2011; Rhodes University in 2018; Stellenbosch University in 2018; University of Cape Town in 2008; University of the Free State in 2018; University of Johannesburg in 2005; University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2017; University of Pretoria in 2016; University of the Western Cape in 2014; University of Witwatersrand in 2013). In these policy documents a preamble or policy statement is provided in which it is declared that the university will not tolerate rape, sexual assault or sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual misconduct, and that the university is committed to providing an institutional environment that upholds human rights, where all can pursue their studies, careers, duties and activities free from the threat of sexual harassment. Pettit (2020), further indicates that in the ten policies, the universities' aim to provide complainants of GBVF attacks with all the necessary and appropriate support, including informing the complainant of their rights and options; ensuring the complainant receives medical attention and counselling services; assisting in filing a report with the SAPS should the complainant decide to do so and protecting the complainant at all costs. In the policy documents of the universities, it is specifically mentioned that the university will assist with obtaining a no-contact order for the complainant if needed.

It is important to note that reporting procedures for GBVF attacks varies between the universities and colleges. Once a report of GBVF attacks, such as a sexual harassment complaint has been made, the HEIs will deal with it internally, regardless of whether the complainant decides to pursue a case with the SAPS. In the ten university policies reviewed, it is stated that either an informal process may be followed in which external parties may mediate to come to a mutually agreeable solution between the complainant and alleged perpetrator. The complainant may decide not to pursue a formal hearing. However, it is stated that the university may decide to pursue a formal hearing if it is believed that the case is serious or that the alleged perpetrator poses a risk to others. In such cases the reporting officer would make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor of the University to proceed with the formal hearing (Pettit, 2020).

According to Pettit (2020), policies that are not comprehensive and are poorly implemented are consequently expected to not be able to effectively address GBVF cases at HEIs. This is because such policies are often unclear and not easily accessible to the general campus community. Many HEIs also lack the necessary support structures to address and respond to cases of GBVF and lack clear reporting mechanisms for survivors. Consequent of the gaps in policies and structures to prevent and respond to GBVF are that first, fewer victims or survivors report their victimisation and seek assistance; and there is an increased likelihood of perpetration of GBVF attacks with impunity (Moylan & Javorka,

2020). HEIs in South Africa that do not have policies on GBVF cases, can use the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Policy Framework to address GBVF in the Post-School Education and Training System (PSET), which was published in 2018 as guidance to deal with reported GBVF cases or even to draft their own policies on GBVF.

Implementation of institutional GBVF policies

Educational institutions have formulated plans and implemented interventions to prevent, tackle and respond to incidences of GBVF cases in a fair and consistent manner that is safe and legal (Klein & Martin, 2021; Mahabeer, 2021). However, Levy *et al.* (2019), Fedina, Holmes and Backes (2018), add on to inform that various factors mitigate against successful implementation of institutional GBVF policies include lack of reliable data, vague policies and unclear procedures, low levels of reporting, as well as poor implementation and monitoring of interventions. Mahabeer (2021) and Klein and Martin (2021), further suggest that a lack of data on GBVF cases at HEIs cause challenges in linking incidences with the development of effective preventative measures. Governments and institutions have an obligation to eradicate GBVF, yet it is argued that efforts to reduce it by merely prosecuting perpetrators may not achieve the anticipated result (Klein & Martin, 2021; Fedina *et al.*, 2018). It is recommended that government enforce stricter measures to prevent GBVF on campuses, and regularly monitor, report and appraise implementation for efficacy (DHET, 2019). GBVF and its manifestations in universities are signs of dysfunction and failure, and regrettably, many universities fail to address it and even hide allegations to protect the institutions' reputation. The more this scourge is constantly tackled, the better the teaching and learning environment will be.

Institutional interventions against GBVF: A reactive response

Interventions to address GBVF can be split into response and prevention. Response supports and helps victims or survivors and aims to prevent GBVF, while prevention initiatives aim to prevent GBVF from reoccurring (Levy *et al.*, 2019; Klein & Martin, 2021). At HEIs, GBVF efforts have focused mostly on the response approach. Eriksen, Chib, Katz, Barba, Rayburn and Aldridge (2021), opine that response efforts should be reinforced with prevention interventions and policy development. Eradicating GBVF cases and ensuring the safety of women is a priority (Eriksen *et al.*, 2021). Mahabeer (2021), advocates three key prevention intervention strategies or shifts to end GBVF at HEIs. The first is a shift to promoting gender equity and changing gender norms early in the lives of boys and girls; second is the prevention approaches to a shift in seeing women as 'survivors' instead of victims and focusing on women empowerment and agency; and the third is a shift from response to prevention' interventions. To prevent GBVF and to protect and bring justice to survivors, Mahabeer (2021), has organised strategies that include preventing violence, reinforcing legal and policy frameworks to stop impunity for GBVF perpetrators, and developing response services for survivors or victims.

The South African government has endorsed and espoused policies that direct them to recognise and practise gender equity, and empower women in higher education spaces (McMahon, Palmer, Banyard, Murphy & Gidycz, 2017; Levy *et al.*, 2017). Most HEIs in South Africa have discrimination, violence and harassment policies for equity and fair treatment. However, Fedina *et al.* (2018) and Jewkes and Morrell (2018), argue that without a tragic incident on campus that makes media headlines, HEIs are not seen working at full speed to prevent GBVF at campuses. The authors further argue that GBVF policies are then seen as just a response rather than a preventative measure. GBVF cases are not cases that should be taken lightly, the social context of GBVF and all its forms of harassment, bullying and sexual violence behaviours, alongside its legal implications, need to be addressed proactively at HEIs in order to save lives and to create a safe space for teaching and learning.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa prohibits GBVF in all its manifestations, and it advocates for a society that is free from violence, harassment, and intimidation behaviour, privately or publicly (Constitution, 1996). Nevertheless, White *et al.* (2019), explain that the Government is often accused of indirectly tolerating GBVF cases unofficially, as it legitimises power imbalances and propagates GBVF through the representation of prejudiced laws and policies. It is the fiduciary duty of the university to protect students from harm on campus and in university residences, and to put in place comprehensive awareness and prevention policies to create a positive working environment (DHET, 2019). According to the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), university councils are to improve and review their institutional policies to align with the policy frameworks governing them (DHET, 2019).

The above-mentioned strategy, positions the management of institutional structures which can limit the efficacy of responses to GBVF interventions at universities; fragmented responses cut across the integration of human resources, student affairs, campus security, legal offices, and police services (DHET, 2019). Most confusion is linked to the lack of knowledge and experience of staff and students, who to report to, who to follow-up cases with, and how to manage

processes. With an increasing number of GBVF cases reported in HEIs in SA, in and out of residences, proactive GBVF policies envisage a range of preventative intervention measures to assist vulnerable groups of students (DHET, 2019). This means adopting a 'zero tolerance' approach to any form of a GBVF case; treating all cases seriously; providing proficient security, investigation and prosecution teams to deal with GBVF cases; providing appropriate counselling and support to victims; ensuring legal and disciplinary action is taken against perpetrators; and providing emergency numbers and structures accessible to staff and students at all hours (DHET, 2019).

HEIs can continue to reproduce gender relations and hierarchies that propagate GBVF or strive through committed action to change and prevent GBVF cases by creating a non-toxic, safe university environment in an integrated, resourceful, all-inclusive approach (Marine, & Nicolazzo, 2020; Brubaker & Keegan, 2019). In doing so, GBVF prevention interventions should be theoretically related, evidence-based, and tailor-made to suit the particular university context and student demographics. White *et al.* (2019) and Mahabeer (2021), postulate that policy is adept for endorsing change and intervening in specific decisions. However, much emphasis has been on the success rate of interventions and on cause and effect (intervention and outcome). Seemingly, Jewkes and Morrell (2018) and Dworkin and Barker (2019), highlight that vital gaps exist in the knowledge of effective policy prevention strategies among vulnerable groups like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) persons, women with disabilities. Sharoni and Klocke (2019), further state that young women entering university, are at higher risk of experiencing violence. By understanding the role of policy on GBVF intervention practices, this study informs institutional policy interventions and other strategies on GBVF. It also discussed hindrances that may cause the implementation of strategies and policies to not be as successful as envisaged by HEIs.

Hindrances to combatting GBVF in HEIs

Challenges to the implementation of strategies that are developed to address GBVF cases at HEIs cannot be avoided if HEIs are to effectively address these cases. Finley and Levenson (2018), point out that where there is a perception that government is ineffective in dealing with GBVF and therefore social media becomes a key influential factor in the condemnation of such violent acts. Mahabeer (2021), argues that South Africa should transform from being passive and ineffective in dealing with GBVF and should determine the underlying and real reasons driving GBVF (Klein & Martin, 2021). Law-driven action should be assessed for its effectiveness, and the real reasons GBVF keeps increasing in South Africa despite governmental efforts, should be analysed. Jocelyn *et al.* (2021) and Fielding and Dunkle (2017), stipulate that one of the reasons presented is the ineffective criminal justice system whose weaknesses are often exposed on social media platforms. Finley and Levenson (2018), suggest that the criminal justice system in South Africa works very slowly. Forget GBVF for a moment, even on other serious crimes. It takes years and years for a case to be solved. Finley and Levenson (2018), have expressed disappointment on how women are often turned back at police stations when reporting GBVF cases and told that such matters can be resolved domestically. In addition, the perpetrators of GBVF are not given harsh sentences, but often receive short prison sentences.

The second most violent perpetrator of GBVF in South Africa and a continued hindrance to addressing GBVF is substance abuse, understood better as the compulsive, harmful, habitual, and excessive use of substances like prescribed medication, illicit drugs, and alcohol which lead to dependence and addiction, and often has a physiological and psychological effect on the dependent users (Dranzoa, 2018). These types of substances have detrimental effects on first the users, then their partners, families, and ultimately the entire community. This abuse results in several psychological, social and economic ills. Both substance abuse and GBVF have been historically analysed to show how the former influences the latter globally, although not contextualised to the South African case in point.

This paper advances the argument that both substance abuse and GBVF should be interlinked in HEIs, as documented by Mahabeer (2021), 70% of domestic violence cases are associated with alcohol abuse. Irek and Saunders (2018) and Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), mention that it is argued strongly that students that are under alcoholic influence become less capable of self-control and are more likely to cause harm to other students, or anyone, to an implausible extent, including brutal killing. Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), further argued that the correlation between alcoholic students and sexual violence towards their partners is high, as women who are dating men who drink alcohol excessively are more vulnerable to GBVF attacks on campuses than those who are dating men who do not drink alcohol. Worst of all, these victims, at times, do not wish to report their violent partners.

Reluctance to report incidences of GBVF

According to White *et al.* (2019), there is a reluctance to report incidences of GBVF in HEIs in South Africa and many other countries. In the United Kingdom (UK) for instance, levels of reporting GBVF and its forms, like verbal or physical harassment and intimidation, are low. In Britain one-third of the female population endure sexual harassment

and assault, and 97% of incidences go unreported, because students feel that the university would not act (Manik & Tarisayi, 2021). They further inform that other factors regarding under-reporting of GBVF include vague policies, unclear reporting processes, insufficient knowledge about existing policies and laws, inadequate support for victims/survivors, absence of trust in institutional structures to take action, fear of victimisation and stigmatisation, and reluctance to endure long disciplinary processes.

Understanding why students do or do not report incidences of GBVF is important in reducing the obstructions to reporting (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2020; Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). Gialopsos (2017), stipulates that victims seldom report their ordeals due to embarrassment, lack of self-confidence and support incapacity to self-admit, and perhaps varying conceptions of GBVF and its forms. Some students might self-blame and feel that they will be questioned as if they did something wrong. Cismaru and Cismaru (2018), suggest that, although aware of GBVF, bystanders are also reluctant to intervene directly or indirectly because of fear, ignorance, and powerlessness to act, as well as a lack of trust due to the unresponsiveness of the university when reporting bullying and sexual harassment.

Brubaker and Keegan (2019) and Sharoni and Klocke (2019), argue that such unresponsiveness condones such behaviour and makes the bystanders as guilty as the perpetrators. Educational initiatives should emphasise the importance of bystander intervention programmes by empowering students with the skills and knowledge to act when witnessing any form of GBVF (Crooks *et al.*, 2019; Gialopsos, 2017). Another reason for reluctance to report cases of GBVF on campuses is the inefficient training and lack of diversity of campus security officers. Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), accord that reporting GBVF incidences can unsilence violence within higher education institutions and give victims or survivors a say, so that proper action can be taken. Therefore, it makes it clear that the implications of the low level of reporting make it complex to address the problem of GBVF at universities.

Perception of what might happen after helping victims

Sharoni and Klocke (2019) and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), state that bystander intervention is encouraged in settings where institutions take clear action when faced with violent incidents. However, witness involvement may be undermined at institutions that do not act in support of victims. For example, a campus that is perceived as being less receptive to complaints of a GBVF case may also be perceived as being threatening for students who are willing to report or intervene when confronted with sexual violence. Brubaker and Keegan (2019), further outline that when students feel that their institution take GBVF cases seriously and respond appropriately to incidents, they will be more willing to intervene in risky situations. Brubaker and Keegan (2019), also point out that university programs or policies need to be backed up with a real commitment to implementing such programs and policies.

Brubaker and Keegan (2019), deduce that in the specific cases of GBVF, the fear of negative repercussions or retaliation stands out. Typically, a bystander will weigh the possible reactions of the person who commits the violent act and individuals who are close to the attacker. In addition, Sharoni and Klocke (2019) and Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), point out that when a violent incident occurs in an institutional setting, the possible reaction of the authorities concerned will also be weighed. In regard to this last point, White *et al.* (2019) and Brubaker and Keegan (2019), stress the importance of the role played by the institution itself. Both studies stress that individuals evaluate how the university and individuals in leadership positions react, both to incidents of GBVF and, more specifically, to individuals who have taken a stand to support the victim or who have reported incidents of which they are aware.

Victimisation of people who support victims

The victimisation of those who try to help victims of GBVF attacks at HEIs is not a foreign concept. According to Fedina *et al.* (2018), many students have faced retaliation against people who commit GBVF at HEIs (Mahabeer, 2021; Manik & Tarisayi, 2021). Very little research has been focused on the repercussions faced by people who intervene in incidents of GBVF. The consensus is that bystanders who intervene are exposing themselves to real danger. However, Brubaker and Keegan (2019), point out that there is no consensus as to the level of that risk or the repercussions. Brubaker and Keegan (2019), also stress that the type of intervention and the setting where the conflict occurs are the main factors that influence risk levels and outcomes.

As for the setting, Marine and Nicolazzo (2020), indicate that interventions in settings associated with nightlife entail an increased risk of victimisation, especially due to alcohol consumption. Scholars Crooks *et al.* (2019), Dworkin and Barker (2019) and Klein and Martin (2021), have also evaluated whether the presence of other bystanders had any impact on the victimisation of people who intervene. They have discovered that there is not much that they can do, but their presence can help a lot. According to Oparinde and Matsha (2021), the presence of other witnesses do not necessarily reduce the risk of victimisation of people who intervene in dangerous situations.

Limitations

Although this paper attempted to include as much literature as possible in the analysis, this study had some limitations which need to be taken into consideration when reviewing this study. Firstly, the study was based on content analysis, conducted as desktop research for a doctoral inauguration lecture, with constrained time and budget; hence mostly academic open-access papers were considered. Secondly, the research considered keywords such as gender-based violence and femicide, institution of higher learning, Safety, campus community, strategies, which poses the possibility that some sources might have been disregarded for not including in their keywords the set of keywords used for this study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has highlighted the impact of GBVF at HEIs, and the severity of not having proactive strategies to respond to the reported cases of GBVF. This paper has shown that there are a number of initiatives by the government education department to help HEIs to respond to GBVF cases on campuses. But HEIs either have not utilised these initiatives or have not even considered them at all. GBVF cases at HEIs have now become a serious topic that has to be addressed with proper plans and not just words. This paper has also looked into ways in which not to place the responsibility of a safe campus only on the campus management, but to also include the entire campus community to play a part in proactively tackling cases of GBVF on campus. The call for measures to be put in place to prevent GBVF attacks on campuses is a genuine call, even though it would not be an easy mandate to fulfill, a lot has to be done to ensure that students are safe from GBVF attacks at HEIs.

Following are the recommendations:

- A compulsory short training course that teaches students about GBVF can be introduced in HEIs. This should be done for all course levels, each year.
- Security protection service personnel have to be equipped with the necessary skills which they can use to deal with GBVF cases on campuses.
- Drafting of GBVF policies should be a universal crucial mandate for HEIs in South Africa. There is an existing framework on GBVF at HEIs by DHET. This document can be used to pave the way for HEIs without GBVF policies, to develop them.
- A bystander approach can be one of the strategies used by HEIs to respond to GBVF cases.
- The SAPS and the HEIs have to work hand-in-hand to help address GBVF on campuses. Some of the strategies that can manifest from this partnership, is the pasting of SAPS GBVF pamphlets on campuses or a help desk on campus.

Future Research

It was highlighted in this paper that students' safety on campuses is threatened by GBVF attacks. These attacks need to be addressed by the management of HEIs, by means of the use of strategies that can effectively address GBVF attacks on campuses. GBVF is a crime that is grappled by many countries. To have such a crime occurring in HEIs is not a surprise, but allowing it to spread unabated is a problem that can lead to the closure of many HEIs. It is therefore recommended that more research be conducted on the prevention methods that can be used to the commission of GBVF on HEIs campuses and the response of the HEIs to addressing these GBVF attacks. There is a lot that can be done by HEIs to address violent attacks that lead to GBVF at HEIs. This involves the before-mentioned recommendations in the study and many more initiatives that can be identified through more research. The work of campus employees is to ensure that students, who are their clients, are well taken care of. This involves the campus management, academic staff and all other employees. The development of strategies that can be used to address GBVF attacks in HEIs can help ensure the campus community members that they could be and feel safe when they are at the HEIs. The core argument of ensuring a safe learning environment involves a good relationship between the campus community and the police. That is once one commits an act of GBVF, the victim should know where to report it, the perpetrator must be apprehended, and the police should be notified and involved in the case.

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