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# ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ON FEMALE STUDENTS IN BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI, BENUE STATE, NIGERA

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## Abstract

*The study assessed effects of gender based violence on female students in Benue State University Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of all female students of Benue State University, Makurdi. The study employed a cross sectional survey research design using structured questionnaire to collect data for the study. A sample size of 250female students was drawn from a population of 12500 students. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The result on perpetrators of gender based violence showed fellow students (86.4%), lecturers (82.4%) and strangers/outsiders (50.0%). The result showed the causes of gender based violence were alcohol and drug abuse (80.8%), cultural beliefs and tradition (69.6%), economic dependence on perpetrators (71.2%) and lack of strict laws and enforcement (56.0%). The findings on the forms of gender based violence experienced by females were sexual harassment (3.76), financial exploitation (3.52), emotional abuse (3.48) and physical abuse (2.86). Binary logistic regression analysis on the effect of gender based violence on the affected students showed that, rape (-0.528), emotional abuse (0.860), financial exploitation (-0.538) were statistically significant. The study concludes that rape, emotional abuse and financial exploitation were the effect of gender based violence on students. It was recommended that female students should always attend seminar and workshops on gender based violence.*

***Keywords:*** *Assessment, Gender, Violence, Female, Students.*

## 1.0 Introduction

Gender based violence refers to acts of violence perpetrated against an individual due to their gender and such violence manifests in various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic harm. Gender-based violence within educational institutions constitutes a significant global challenge, with profound and far-reaching

consequences. This issue is particularly pervasive in developing countries such as Nigeria, where systemic inequalities, entrenched patriarchal norms, and institutional inefficiencies exacerbate its impact (UNESCO, 2020). Although both male and female students may be affected, evidence consistently indicates that women and girls are disproportionately affected, largely due to socio-cultural norms that sustain gender hierarchies and normalize violence against women (Amadi and Onyemelukwe, 2022).

In Nigeria, higher educational institutions, which are ostensibly spaces for intellectual and personal development, paradoxically become environments where gender based violence is pervasive. This phenomenon undermines academic equity, impedes personal growth, and poses significant barriers to students' aspirations. The ubiquity of gender based violence in Nigerian Universities not only endangers victims' physical and psychological well-being, but also disrupts their educational and career trajectories, diminishing their capacity to contribute to societal development (Oludayo *et al.,* 2022).

Universities worldwide, are heralded as centres of knowledge and progress; however, these institutions often harbour environments conducive to gender-based violence. In Nigeria, gender based violence manifests through various forms, including but not limited to sexual harassment, coercion, intimidation and gender discrimination perpetrated by peers, lecturers, and administrative staff. Studies underscored the alarming prevalence of such acts within academic settings. For instance, Adelakun (2023) highlights the prevalence of the exploitative practice colloquially known as "sex for grades," where female students are coerced into providing sexual favours in exchange for academic progression. Other manifestations of gender based violence

include stalking, cyberbullying and physical violence, all of which collectively create unsafe and hostile learning environments (Edeh *et al*., 2020).

Despite the high prevalence of gender based violence, many incidents remain unreported due to systemic and socio-cultural barriers. Victims often fear retaliation, which may take the form of academic sanctions, public humiliation, or ostracization by peers and faculty. Onifade and Akinwale (2021) observe that the fear of stigmatization is particularly pronounced, as victims are frequently subjected to victim-blaming narratives that portray them as complicit in their abuse, rather than as individuals seeking justice. Additionally, institutions often lack confidential and accessible mechanisms for reporting gender based violence, leaving victims without adequate support structures (Edeh *et al*., 2020).

Albeit some studies had been carried out on gender harassment in some States of the Federation, not much have been carried out on Assessment of effects of gender based violence on female students in BSU, Makurdi. For instance, Ibitoye *et al*. (2019) worked on Gender based violence and its impacts on female students in Nigerian universities; Ojo *et al*. (2021) worked on the impact of sexual harassment on female students in Nigerian higher institutions; Nwachuku *et al.* (2018) worked on the role of higher institutions in preventing gender based violence in Nigeria. Another research conducted by Terungwa and Ochoche (2022) at Benue State University showed that 45 percent of female students had experienced one form of GBV, with sexual harassment being the most prevalent. The study also found that most victims did not report their experiences due to fear of victimization and lack of trust in the school authorities. Therefore, based on the above identified gap, the study on assessment of effects of gender based violence on female students in Benue State University in Benue State, was

carried out to fill the research gap.

## 2.0 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to assess effects of gender-based violence on female students in Benue State University, Makurdi.

The specific objectives were to:

i. identify perpetrators of gender based violence on University campus;
ii. ascertain the causes of gender based violence on University campus;
iii. identify the forms of gender based violence experienced by female students on University campus; and
iv. determine effects of gender based violence on female students in the study area.

## 3.0 Methodology

### The Study Area

The study was conducted in Makurdi Local Government Area. Makurdi Local Government Area is located in Benue State, Nigeria. It is situated at latitude of 7.7146° N and longitude 8.5283° E. The Local Government Area was created on May 29, 1989, during the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. The town covers an area of 800 km2, and is boarded by Guma, to the North, Gwer-east to the South, Gwer-west to the west and Doma Local Government Area of Nassarawa State to the North

Makurdi Local Government Area is one of the 23 Local Government Areas in Benue State and is the capital city of the State. It is an urban area that serves as a major political, administrative, and economic center in Benue State. Makurdi Local Government Area is politically divided into 11 council wards, which include: Ankpa-Wadata, Central South Mission, Modern Market, Clerk Market, Wayomaya, Fiidi, Mbalaagh, North Bank I,

North Bank II, Agan and Bar Wards (Muhammad and Atu, 2018).

**Method of Data Collection**

Primary data were used in this study. Primary data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire that was be administered to all female students of BSU.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and Logistic regression which was used to determine effects of gender based violence on female students of BSU.

**Model Specification**

**Logistic regression**

A logistic regression model is appropriate for analyzing the relationship between independent variables and the likelihood of experiencing GBV (dependent variable).

$$\ln Y\left(\frac{p}{p-1}\right) = \beta_0 + \backslash\beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

P(Y=1) is the probability of experiencing GBV

$\beta_0$ is the intercept of independent variables (age, sex, financial dependence, causes of GBV, academic impact, constraints, etc.)

$X_1$=Sexual harassment (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_2$=Rape (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_3$=Emotional abuse (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_4$=Physical abuse (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_5$=Financial exploitation (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_6$=Intimate abuse (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_7$=Decline in grades (agree=1, otherwise=0)

$X_8$=Loss of interest in studies (agree=1, otherwise=0)

Ɛ is the error term

## 4.0 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Perpetrators of gender based violence on the University campus

Table 1 shows that, majority (86.4%) of the respondents attest and that fellow students were the perpetrators of gender based violence, 82.4% attest and that lecturers were the perpetrators of gender based violence, 50.0% attest and that strangers off campus were perpetrators of gender based violence, 35.2% attested to security personnel on campus and 12.0% attested to intimate relationship. This indicates that, gender based violence is perpetrated by numerous individuals of different status and calibre. It is shown that fellow students were the most perpetrators of gender based violence, and this is one among cases of sexual harassment, which could be physical and emotional which results to rape most a times on the campus. Surprisingly, lecturers who are supposed to be those who will frown at gender based violence are as well perpetrators themselves. The lecturers who perpetrated gender based violence are hated by female students, who most times consider to be absent in lectures (of such lecturers) and tend to perform poorly in most courses of studies. Another striking perpetrator of gender based violence is among intimate relationships. In most intimate relationship, the benefits make it impossible for female to report issue of gender based violence carried out. This finding agrees with Olusegun (2020) who reported that, most gender based violence were perpetrated by peers and fellow students. This was agreed by Olusegun (2012) who reported that fellow students are perpetrators of gender based violence on campuses. In another study carried out by Muhammad et al. (2018) who

reported that lecturers also perpetrate gender based violence such as sexual harassment on female students. Burke et al. (2023) reported that most lecturers indulge in sexual relationships with female students due to awarding of marks to pass examinations, Heywood et al. (2022) also reported that, individuals in communities where universities are situated tend to sexually harass female students and perpetrate gender based violence.

**Table 1: Perpetrators of Gender Based Violence (n=250)**

| S/No. | Perpetrators of gender-based violence | Frequency | Percentage * |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Lecturers | 206 | 82.4% |
| ii. | Fellow students | 216 | 86.4% |
| iii. | Security personnel on campus | 88 | 35.2% |
| iv. | Strangers/outsiders (off campus) | 125 | 50.0% |
| v. | Intimate relationships | 30 | 12.0% |

*Multiple Responses
Source: Field Survey (2025).

### 1.1 Causes of gender based violence on the University campus

Table 2 shows that, majority (80.8%) of the respondents stated that alcohol and drug abuse were the major cause of gender based violence, 71.2% stated that economic dependence on perpetrators, 69.6% to cultural beliefs and tradition, 56.0% to lack of strict laws and enforcement, 47.6% to peer pressure, and 5.2% to indecent dressing were the causes. This implies that gender based violence had several causes. By implication, most girls who depend on male counterparts, who are not their parents for sponsorship atimes find it challenging to resist gender based violence. This dependency limits most females ability resist or escape abusive relationships, perpetuating the cycle of violence. Also, culturally, male atimes are not seen to be at fault when harassing girls sexually, and this cultural acceptance of male superiority, discourages victims from reporting abuse and normalizes violent behaviors. In most cases, partners and males who engage in alcohol and drug abuse tend to perpetuate gender based violence without knowing. Most atimes,

intimate relations have difficulty with their spouses as their libido rise due to alcohol and drug intake. This finding agrees with Akor (2022) who reported that, most cultural beliefs are causes of gender based violence. Similar to Oyekanmi and Oyekanmi (2022) reported that most females do not resist sexual harassment due to economic stress and difficulties. Ochinya (2022) also reported that, lack of strict laws has been a cause of gender based violence.

**Table 2: Causes of Gender Based Violence (n=250)**

| S/No. | Causes of gender based violence | *Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Economic dependence on perpetrators | 178 | 71.2% |
| ii. | Cultural beliefs and traditions | 174 | 69.6% |
| iii. | Alcohol and drug abuse | 202 | 80.8% |
| iv. | Lack of strict laws and enforcement | 140 | 56.0% |
| v. | Peer pressure | 119 | 47.6% |
| vi. | Indecent dressing | 13 | 5.2% |

*Multiple Responses
Source: Field Survey (2025).

### 1.1 Forms of gender based violence experienced by female students on the University campus

The result on forms of gender based violence experienced by female students is presented in Table 3. The result was based on a cut off mean of 2.50, which was considered as the bench mark. Table 3 shows that sexual harassment (3.76), financial exploitation (3.52), emotional abuse (3.48), physical abuse (2.86) were the most forms of gender violence experienced by female students on campus. This implies that, female students were sexually harassed, which could be through touching of body publicly, which is the most common gender based violence perpetrated by fellow students on the campus. Most atimes male students are seen hugging, wrapping their hands on ladies shoulders and waist. A times, spouses who have misunderstanding concerning intimacy result to physical abuse of partners for denial. In other scenarios, most female students

due to economic conditions, tend to succumb to financial exploitation since they depend on men for their needs. This findings agrees with Oduro and Ofori-Attah (2022) who reported that, female students are sexually harassed on campuses. This finding was corroborated by Adejumo and Olorunsola (2022) who reported that most spouses who could not speak out succumbed to physical abuse. Igber (2023) also reported that most ladies who can not speak out experienced financial exploitation. Again, the findings were corroborated by Mouzos and Kakkai (2019) who reported that, most females were threatened not to speak out on their experiences with gender based violence.

**Table 3: Forms of gender-based violence experienced by Female students (n=250**

| s/no. | Gender based violence | Mean | Standard deviation | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **i.** | Sexual harassment (e.g., unwante touching, suggestive remarks) | 3.76 | 0.554 | Accepted |
| **ii.** | Rape orattempted rape | 2.25 | 0.815 | Accepted |
| **iii.** | Emotional abuse (e.g., threats intimidation) | 3.48 | 0.602 | Accepted |
| **iv.** | Physical abuse (e.g., beating slapping) | 2.86 | 0.776 | Accepted |
| **v.** | Financial exploitation (e.g. demanding sexual favors for money) | 3.52 | 0.700 | Accepted |
| **vi.** | House arrest by spouses | 1.29 | 0.956 | Accepted |

Cut off mean of 2.50

Method: SPSS analysis output

Source: Field survey(2025)

### 1.1 Effects of Gender Based Violence on female Students

The binary logistic regression result on the effect of gender based violence on the affected students is presented in Table 4.

Binary logistic regression was run using eight explanatory variables to determine effects

of gender based violence on female students. The log likelihood value was 261.714 and the associated Chi-square value was 12.67, which is statistically significant at 1 % level of probability. This implies that, the model can be relied upon to explain probability of the effect of gender based violence on female students. The $R^2$ of 0.145 implies that 14.5% of the variation in gender based violence is experienced by the explanatory variables. Furthermore, the significant of the associated Chi-square at 1 % level of probability implies that, gender based violence has significant effect on female students, hence the null hypothesis III, which states that "gender based violence does not have significant effect on female students" is rejected. Among the variables included in the model, only rape (P>0.01), emotional abuse (P>0.01), financial exploitation (P>0.01) and loss of interest in studies (P>0.01).

Rape has a negative coefficient (-0.528) and statistically significant at 1% (p>0.01), which implies that, increase in rape will reduce gender based violence by 0.528%. This is a counter intuitive result. This by implication entails that, most perpetrators of gender based violence do not adopt use of rape but other means as such cases of rape are not on a rise. This is true due to the penalty attached to rape, which is a jail term and most perpetrators would avoid rape, but may indulge in harassment and intimate abuse of spouses. Rape cases are not increasing and thus will rather reduce gender based violence. This is not in line with Olusegun (2020) who reported that increase in rape increases gender based violence.

Emotional abuse has a positive coefficient (0.860) and statistically significant at 1% level of probability (P>0.01), this implies that, increase in emotional abuse will increase gender based violence by 0.86%. This is true and in line with a priori expectation which states that, when perpetrators adopt the use of emotional abuse as a gender based

violence, the number of students affected will increase. This agrees with Tyokase (2022) who reported that, increase in emotional abuse will increase gender based violence. Besides, he reported that, use of emotional abuse by perpetrators can lead to increase in gender based violence.

Financial exploitation has a negative coefficient (-0.538) and statistically significant at 10% (p>0.1), which implies that, increase in financial exploitation among female students will lead to decrease in gender based violence by 0.538. This is also a counter intuitive result. This implies that, use of financial exploitation to perpetrate gender based violence will rather decrease gender based violence. This is not true, because it should rather increase gender based violence. But this might be because, perpetrators are not financially buoyant to spend their money and this could reduce gender based violence. This coincides with the findings of NCAVP (2018) and Mouilso and Calhoun (2016) who reported that use of finance/money to get at female students will increase gender based violence.

**Table 6: Binary Logistic Regression Result on the Effect of Gender Based Violence on the affected Students**

| Gender based violence | Coefficient | S.E. | Wald | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Constant | 0.540 | 1.143 | 0.223 | 0.637 | 1.715 | | |
| Sexual harassment | 0.028 | 0.320 | 0.007 | 0.931 | 1.028 | 0.549 | 1.926 |
| Rape | -0.528*** | 0.202 | 6.805 | 0.009 | 0.590 | 0.397 | 0.877 |
| Emotional abuse | 0.860*** | 0.270 | 10.146 | 0.001 | 2.364 | 1.392 | 4.013 |
| Physical abuse | 0.163 | 0.230 | 0.503 | 0.478 | 1.177 | 0.750 | 1.850 |
| Financial exploitation | -0.538* | 0.267 | 4.063 | 0.044 | 0.584 | 0.346 | 0.985 |
| Intimate abuse | 0.180 | 0.151 | 1.425 | 0.233 | 1.198 | 0.891 | 1.611 |
| Decline in grades | 0.068 | 0.219 | 0.096 | 0.756 | 1.070 | 0.697 | 1.643 |
| Loss of interest in studies | -0.671 | 0.240 | 7.857 | 0.005 | 0.511 | 0.320 | 0.817 |
| Nagelkerke $R^2$ | 0.145 | | | | | | |
| Cox & Snell $R^2$ | 0.107 | | | | | | |
| Chi-square | 12.657*** | | | | | | |
| -2 Log Likelihood | 261.714 | | | | | | |

***,**, * significant at 1%, 5% and 10%, respectively
Source: Field Survey (2025).
Method: SPSS data analysis output

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that rape, emotional abuse and financial exploitation were the effects of gender based violence on students. It is recommended that, female students should always attend seminar and workshops on gender based violence.

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