

Dialectic Appraisal of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Among Female Undergraduates in South Western Nigeria

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Abstract

Numerous research, over time, indicates that Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a public health problem in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. However, there is still a paucity of knowledge about beliefs and socio-economic implications regarding gender-based violence among Nigerian Undergraduates and how receptive they are to help change this culture by participating in prevention programs. This study, therefore, intends to use findings from a cross-sectional study in selected southwestern Nigerian tertiary institutions, especially institutions like colleges of education, school of health technology, school of nursing and midwifery, and polytechnics, where we have a more significant percentage of female undergraduates and relatively low awareness of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, to measure prevalence, determinants, pattern, beliefs, socio-economic implications, risk factors including rape and SGBV acceptance, and readiness for change. Two research instruments are used for the study; Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Questionnaires (SGBVO); and Sociological Construct Questionnaire (SCQ). More so, a designed survey was administered to 1,200 female undergraduates from the selected schools. The findings provide insight into these undergraduates' prevalence, pattern, determinants, and beliefs, their socio-economic impacts, and how they operate together to scaffold sexual and gender-based violence in Nigerian higher institution settings.

Keywords: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Prevention programs, Socio-economic impacts, and Female undergraduates

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1. Introduction

United Nations (UN) defines sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as any “violence that culminates in physical, emotional, sexual, or mental suffering of girls and women. This violence may include threats, coercion, or deprivation of liberty in public or private life (UN, 2019). No statistics on sexual violence provide a complete picture of the problem or its prevalence. Shame, fear, stigmatization, and many other obstacles significantly prevent an unknown number of victims from reporting or even seeking treatment for sexual or gender-based violence. More so, violence faced by women varies from one country to another. In Nigeria, for instance, women have suffered immense violence, discrimination, rejection, and deprivation due to gender bias. This subjugation, over the years has deprived women of their peace, dignity, and rights as human beings.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is gradually becoming a pandemic and a severe public health concern in Nigeria, especially in our tertiary institutions. Female undergraduates in Nigeria have continued the risk of SGBV victimization and experience it at an alarming rate. Despite the Federal Ministry of Education's affirmative action policies, the proportion of female undergraduates, staff, and women in leadership positions is still very low. A recent study by (UNPFA) submitted that 28% of Nigerian women aged 25-29 had experienced some form of physical violence since age 15. The study also reports that 15% of women experienced physical violence within 12 months preceding the survey. Further, the level of exposure to the risk of violence varied based on marital status and level of exposure, and “44% of divorced, separated or widowed women reported experiencing violence since age 15, while 25% of married women or those living with their spouses have experienced violence, 40% of female undergraduates have experienced sexual violence.

However, the most common violence against women in Nigeria includes sexual harassment, physical violence, harmful traditional practices, emotional and psychological violence, socio-economic violence, and violence against non-combatant women in conflict situations. Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, founding director of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC), declared: “We call on the Federal Government [of Nigeria] to create more institutions that can address the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence, the impunity that often goes with the scourge, implement policies and enact laws, for a more robust national

response that can support victims and survivors of violence. She submitted that SGBV is hindering national productivity as it occurs amongst people in the productive age group, a large percentage of which comprise female undergraduates studying in our tertiary institutions, who have to deal with the damaging physical and psychological consequences of the vice.

Therefore, we can succinctly say that Nigeria's higher institutions have reached a critical juncture in needing to tackle gender-based violence effectively. Given the high rates of SGBV in the country generally and among tertiary institution-aged women in particular, as well as the increasing numbers of female undergraduates in Nigeria, prevention efforts are necessary to address this public health concern. Therefore, this research seeks to contribute significantly to the growing research base about the current contextual culture in Nigerian higher institutions of learning, which scaffolds and tolerates gender-based violence, thus maintaining and reproducing gender inequality, rendering women fearful of disclosure and perpetrators free to act with impunity. The research intends to project that prevention must tackle gender inequality as the root cause of all forms of violence and be gender-transformative (Fenton & Mott, 2017). Prevention efforts need to pay particular attention to these normative constructs of male and female sexuality predicated on male power and dominance, where men are the instigators of sex and women are the submissive gatekeepers, which promote the acceptability of men's violence against women (McCarry, 2009).

2. Literature Review

Over the past years, discussions on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) have increasingly gained considerable attention from researchers. The subject of gender-based violence has garnered much impetus and attracted intense debate. Arango et al. (2014) define SGBV to include "intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual assault, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and abuse, child abuse, female infanticide, and child marriage". The effects of such violence can be devastating and long-lasting. They pose a danger to the female's reproductive health and can scar a survivor psychologically, cognitively, and interpersonally. A woman who experiences domestic violence and lives in an abusive relationship with her partner may be forced to become pregnant or have an abortion against her will, or her partner may knowingly expose her to a sexually transmitted infection. The accumulation of all these negative impacts of SGBV has impaired the female folk's economic, political and social power.

Taft and Watson (2008) posit that exposure to SGBV is linked with a multitude of adverse physical health outcomes, including acute injuries, chronic pain, gastrointestinal illness, gynecological problems, depression, and substance abuse. Pallito, C et al (2006) and Garcia-Moreno (2013) are of the opinion that SGBV has become a global public health problem that poses challenges to human health, with a higher prevalence in developing countries. SGBV not only plays a significant component in the morbidity and mortality of women, but this form of violence disproportionately affects the health status of women and their children. SGBV is an abuse of human rights that occurs internationally, in both developing and developed countries, regardless of culture, socioeconomic class or religion, and varies in frequency, form, and extent from country to country. Palermo, T et al (2014) refer to it as a 'tip of the iceberg or silent epidemic' as victims are hesitant to reveal their experiences of violence due to many barriers. The barriers that women experience in reporting SGBV include fear of stigmatization and shame, financial barriers, lack of awareness of available services, fear of revenge, lack of law enforcement action, and attitudes surrounding violence as a normal component of life. Subsequently, this results in underreporting and challenges in accurately measuring the prevalence of SGBV [WHO (2012 Hindin, M et al (2008))].

The concept of gender-based violence means violence inflicted or suffered on the basis of gender differences. While the concept is commonly used to mean violence against people as a result of their gender, however, the term sexual and gender-based violence in this study is adopted to encompass women and girls, female undergraduates, who have experienced one form of violent acts at one time or the other as a result of their biological make-up as females. United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (2014) defined gender-based violence as a fundamental violation of human rights and violence that occurs as a result of normative role expectations associated with one's gender and unequal power relationships between genders. According to Sai (1995), sexual and gender-based violence is any forceful or unwelcomed act that is committed against a boy or girl because of his/her gender. He stated further that these acts are likely to result in physical, sexual, or emotional suffering that is inflicted directly through deceit, seduction, threat, coercion or any other means on the victim with the purpose or effects of intimidating, punishing, or humiliating him/her; or of maintaining his/her in stereotype roles.

Zain (2012) referred to sexual and gender-based violence as an extreme manifestation of gender inequity,

targeting women and girls because of their subordinate social status in society. He opined that this can take the forms of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse, and in all of its manifestations; it can have serious implications for a human being's sexual and reproductive health. The International Center for Reason on Women (2009) also referred to gender-based violence as an act or threat or harm inflicted on a person because of his/her gender. It stated further that this act can result in physical, sexual, and psychological harm or suffering. It encompasses sexual violence, sex trafficking, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, forced early marriage, forced prostitution, sexual exploration, bullying, intimidation, and corporal punishment to name but a few.

In Nigeria, the prevalence of SGBV is alarming. The social media in agog on daily basis of gruesome records of SGBV. In Edo State, for instance, a 22-year-old University of Benin (Uniben) student, Uwaila Vera Omozuwa, was raped and killed in a church. In Ondo, Tope Onifade's two daughters were defiled by their schoolmates. In Osun, the headless naked body of a female undergraduate was found in a gutter. Equally, in Enugu, Ebube Christy Umeh was violently abused sexually by a neighbor. In Cross River State, Chioma, a 16-year-old, 100-level student was raped by her landlord's son who is a 27-year-old final-year male student, while in Jigawa, a 17-year-old undergraduate lady was raped by 11 men. In Yobe State, Halima's hand was cut off by her boyfriend for not taking permission to attend a wedding. All the aforementioned and many more are instances of SGBV committed against female undergraduates in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Hence, SGBV against female students has become a salient issue, including narrative accounts of harassment, intimidation, physical and sexual violence on the higher institutions' campuses and the towns in which they are located. Risks for SGBV include receiving academic support from male peers, exercising agency in relationship decision-making, having a negative self-concept, believing in stereotypical gender expectations, and engaging in transactional sex and/or substance use. While most students recognized these risk factors, it is also believed that SGBV may be the result of females' "improper" behavior, use of males for personal gain, or personal failure to prevent violence. This paper, therefore, seeks to provide an important starting point for the understanding of how effective and sustainable changes to campus culture require an engagement with a broad range of institutional stakeholders and more so, establish that a "one size fits all" approach that characterizes the extant literature on evidence-based prevention programs may need to be altered to more effectively prevent SGBV in Nigeria tertiary institutions so that prevention programs can be more effectively tailored.

3 Justification of the Study

A higher institution is ideally a place of learning and social interaction for male and female students, cultural and social background notwithstanding. Nevertheless, cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is prevalent in Nigerian higher institutions to the extent that the school environment is no longer conducive to learning (World Bank, 2007). Implicitly, bitter complaints from female students on the issue of bullying, rape, cultism, assault, and use of weapons perpetrated by male students and male staff poses a severe challenge to the success of the tertiary institution system. On this note, Chukwu (2003) asserted that physical pain, emotional stress, and severe psychological effects are associated with gender-based violence and could translate to poor academic performance, depression, and guilt on the part of the victims. In some cases, injuries sustained could lead to hospitalization or even the victim's death in extreme cases.

Over the years, gender-based violence has contributed significantly to women's mental and physical health. SGBV is a significant cause of disability and health problems among females of reproductive age in the developing world. The psychological effects of gender-based violence in females are more debilitating than physical. Fear, fatigue, sleeping and eating disturbances, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are effects of gender-based violence. Moreover, school-related gender-based violence results in sexual, physical, or psychological harm, intimidation, low self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy. (Durrant, 2005) reported that physical and psychological violence, verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual violence are reasons for most academic deficiency and lack of motivation. Could it be that school administrators are not aware of the dangers associated with SGBV or cannot manage the situation to avert such? The need for proper management of SGBV by the government, school management, and the different stakeholders to ensure a healthy environment for teaching and learning for female undergraduates inspired the researchers to carry out this study.

4 Research Methodology

The success of a research work depends largely on the methodological framework adopted. The methodology used for this study has been designed to enhance the realization of the researchers' goal in the work. It takes care of population, reliability of the instrument for data collection, method of data collection etc. These are briefly discussed below

4.1 Sample

The sampled population for the study was derived from the strata of female undergraduates in all the six (6) states that comprise the Southwest region of Nigeria. The empirical investigation was conducted on 1200 female students from these high-level institutions. The sample respondents were selected through Random Probability sampling technique, where each female student of the target population had the same probability of being chosen as the sample of the study.

4.2 Questionnaire Design

The research instruments is a well structure Questionnaire on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBVO) among female undergraduate. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were identified during a search on literature, the questionnaire also includes biographical information and general background (SGBV) sections of selected institutions in various Tertiary institutions in southern Nigeria.

The reliability of this questionnaire was assessed by conducting the Cronbach alpha reliability test.

Table 1. Reliability Test.

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.759	44

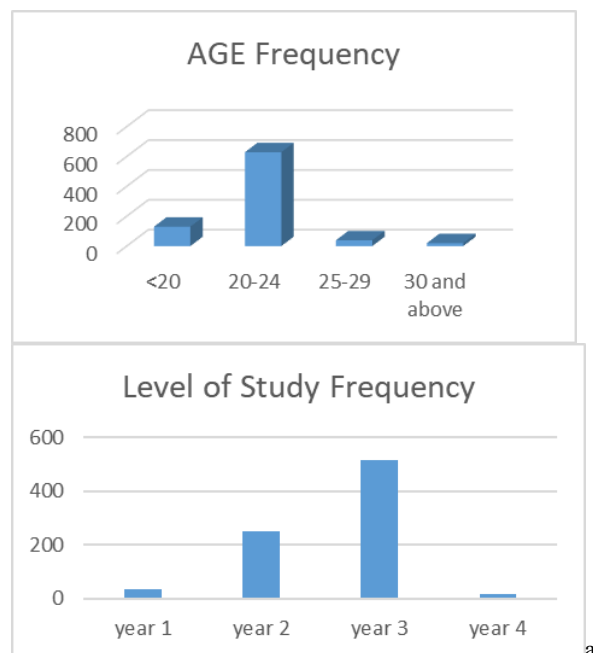
Since the value is higher than the minimum required value of 0.6, it was asserted that the questionnaire used is reliable. Hence, further analysis could be conducted.

4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected survey responses from the student were coded in MS Excel and transferred to SPSS v16.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentage scopes, frequency counts, chi-square, Pearson product-moment correlation (r) statistics, and Multiple Regression analysis were carried out.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Biographic information



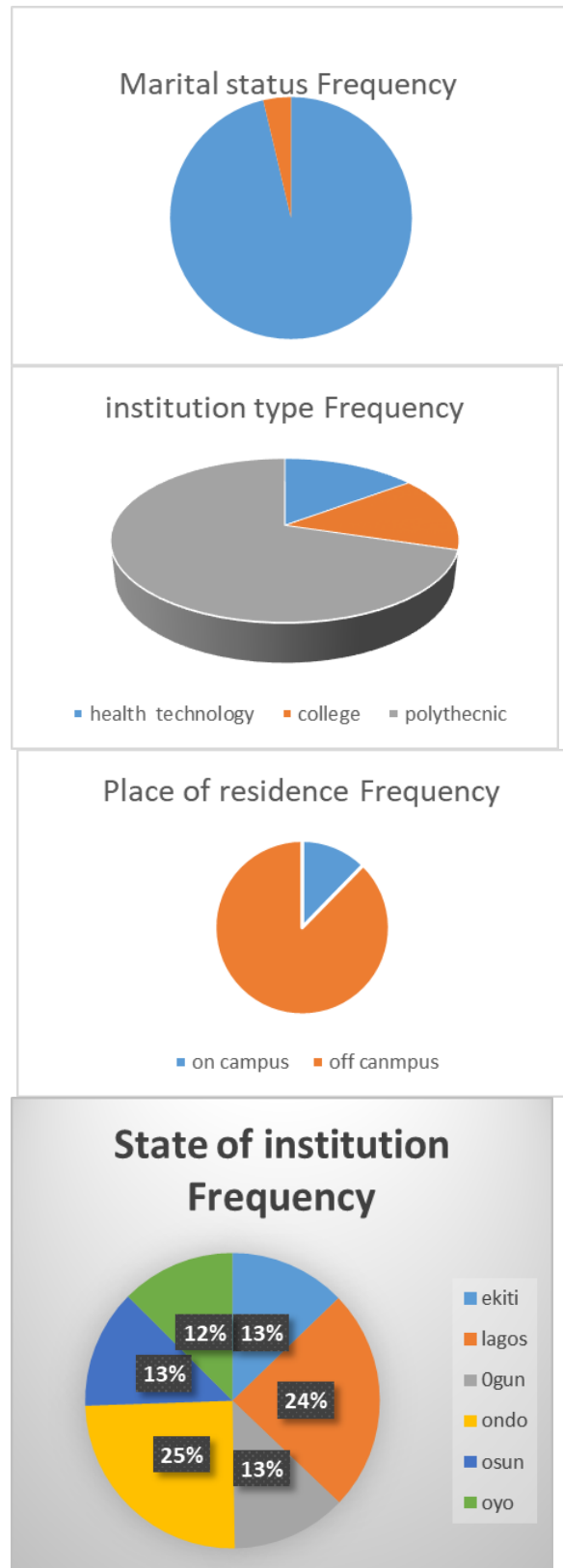


Figure 1: The below chart shows the biographic information of the respondent.

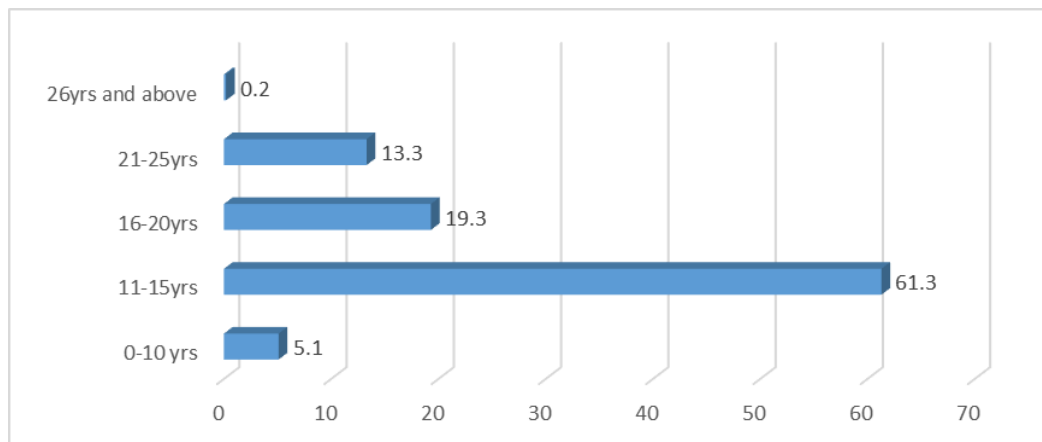


Chart1: Respondent age range of first sexual encounter

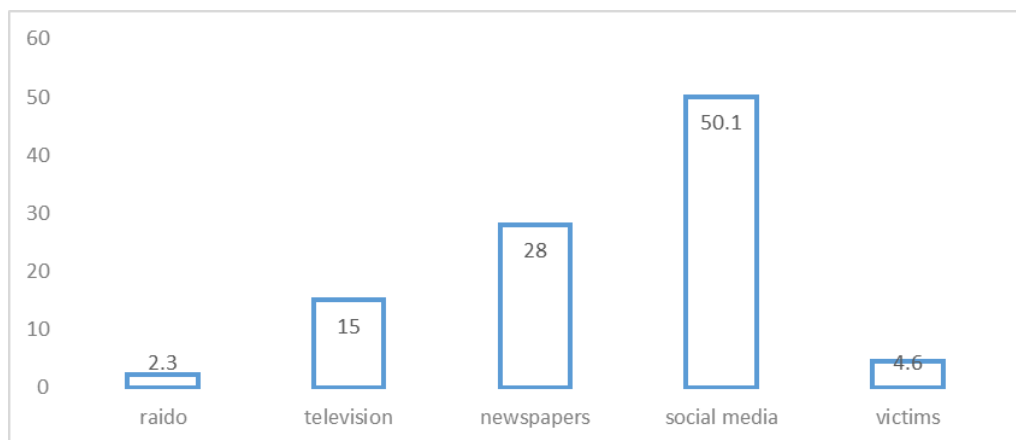


Chart 2: shows platforms via which student get to know about issues on SGBV.

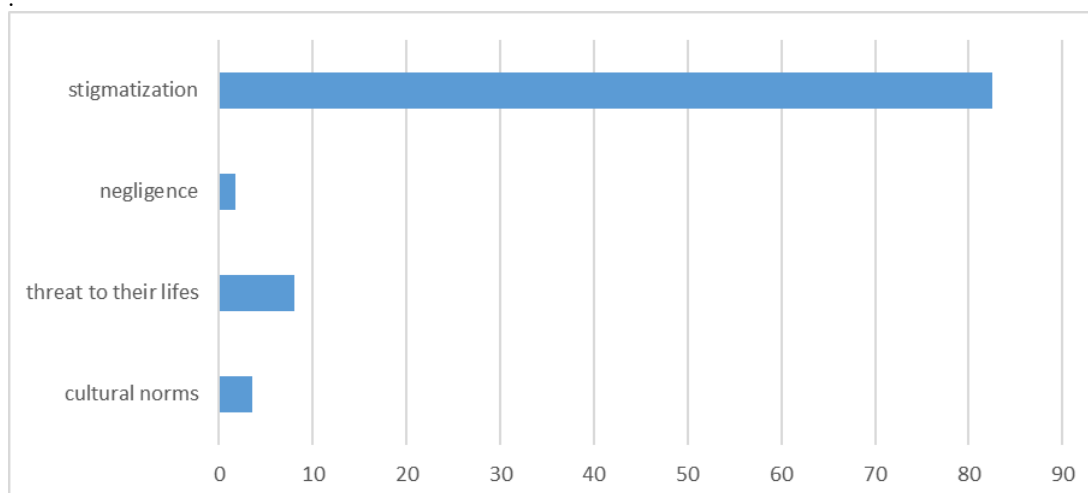


Chart 3: Reasons why victims of sexual and gender-based violence do not report their experiences.

Chukwu (2003) asserted that physical pain, emotional stress, and, severe psychological effects are associated with gender-based violence, also (Durrant, 2005) reported that physical and psychological violence, verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual violence are reasons for absenteeism, dropping out, and lack of motivation for academic achievement.

Moreover, this study discover in its finding and added that stigmatization as a result of verbal and physical abuse is a major factor that led to the aftermath dropout of female students from their institution of learning. This has some other untellable yet devastating effects on their study.

5.2 Inferential Analysis

Hypothesis Statement

H₀: intrinsic factors are dependent on an extrinsic factor at 5% significant level.

H₁: intrinsic factors are independent of extrinsic factors at a 5% significant level

*Significant → intrinsic factors are dependent on an extrinsic factor at 5% significant level

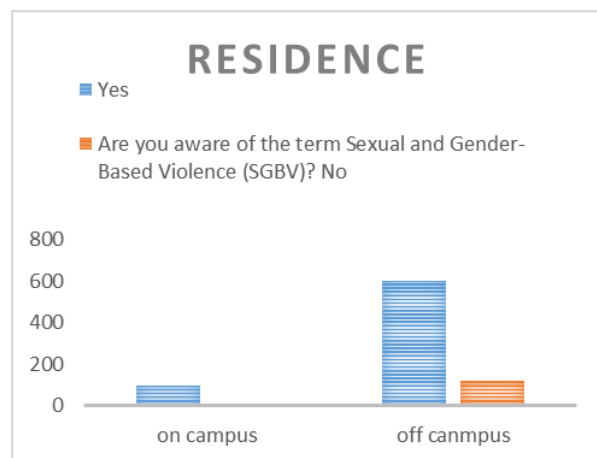
Not significant → intrinsic factors are independent of extrinsic factors at a 5% significant level.

The Table 2 below shows the Chi-Square analysis of the intrinsic factors that are (sex, age, school location, and institution of study) and extrinsic factors which are (awareness and knowledge about SGBV (A&K), prevalence, patterns and determinants (PPD) of SGBV, Effects of changes to campus culture (ECCC) and Preventive strategies towards curtailing (PSTC) of SGBV) respectively .

Table 2: General Chi-Square table

Pearson Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Sig
Institution vs Have you heard of, read about, or come across cases of SGBV among females	8.912	6	.179
Place of residence vs Have you heard of, read about, or come across cases of SGBV among females	2.762a	4	.598

The analysis shows that the intrinsic factors are generally independent of the extrinsic factors i.e. sex, age, school location, and institution of study are not jointly associated with the extrinsic factors to influence any significant effect of (SGBV), Except for one perimeter inside the factor group A&K which shows the variation of dependence when tested with the intrinsic factor (institution and place of residence). Bar chart is drawn below to investigate the dependency relationship between the factors



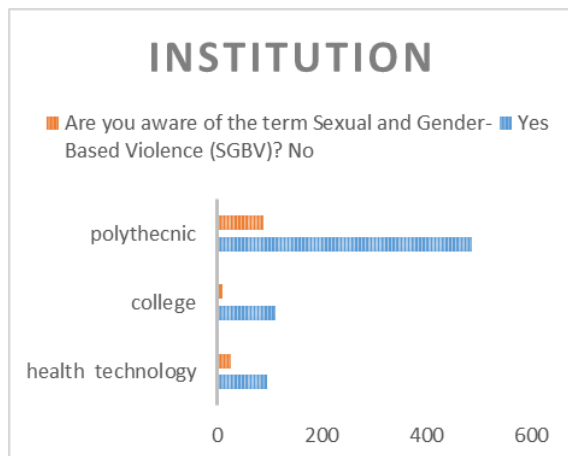


Chart 4: showing rate of awareness vs Residence and Institution plot

The chart, therefore, reveals a positive dependence where the higher the intrinsic factor the higher the extrinsic factors also which implies that the higher the number of females residing in either off or campus irrespective of the institution of learning the higher the awareness rate about SGBV literally numbers encourages the awareness of SGBV.

Table 3: Correlation analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Correlations		A&K	PPD	ECC	PSTC
AGE	Pearson Correlation	-.327**	.192**	-.120**	.186**
institution type	Pearson Correlation	-.071*	-.332**	.013	.063
State of institution	Pearson Correlation	.301**	.511**	-.220**	-.430**
Level of Study	Pearson Correlation	-.232**	-.137**	.124**	.047
Place of residence	Pearson Correlation	.072*	-.416**	.205**	.130**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The correlational analysis at glance generally shows a poor or low relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of (SGBV) in that all the correlation coefficients are lesser than (0.5) and this qualifies the reliability of the chi-square test such that any female student could be aware of SGBV also may know about the prevalent and determinant or causes of SGBV, more especially they may understand full the effect of campus culture and preventive measure of SGVB regardless of their age, institution level, etc.

5.3 Regression Model

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 \quad (1.1)$$

Where:

Y = Awareness and Knowledge of (SGBV)

$X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4,$ and X_5 are independent factors (5 intrinsic grouping factors were taken into the study to be responsible for Awareness and Knowledge of (SGBV)

α = intercept, β = slope

Table 4: Summary of Model, ANOVA, and Regression coefficients for Regression of Factors Leading to Awareness and Knowledge of (SGBV)

Model	Standardized co-efficient (Beta)	t	sig	R ²	F	Model Significance
(Constant)		10.704	.000	0.487	50.565	.000
AGE	-.302	-9.664	.000			
institution type	-.018	-.530	.597			
State of institution	.309	8.862	.000			
Level of Study	-.160	-5.145	.000			
Place of residence	.132	3.986	.000			

a. Dependent Variable: Are you aware of the term Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)?

From the table above the regression model shows a significant R^2 value (0.487) which implies that 48.7% of the variation in the dependent variable was a direct result of the independent variables (antecedents of Awareness of SGBV).

Also, considering the ANOVA results, the F-value of 50.565 and a high significance of this model at $p = .000$, confirm the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. Regression coefficient analysis was done to determine the significance of the predicted variable and how the independent variables (5 parameters) influenced awareness of SGBV. From the table, it can be seen that only a few variables were significantly influencing the Awareness of SGBV among the female undergraduates.

When evaluation of the standard coefficients was done it was found that; the “State of the Institution” (.309) showed the highest influence on the awareness among the female undergraduate as a result of its high Standardized co-efficient values, this signifies that the state of the institution is a major factor among the few that mostly contributes to increasing the appraisal of SGBV among the female undergraduates of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions, also “place of residence on campus” ($p = 0.132$) was seen to be positively contributing to the awareness of SGVB. Thus all this claims conform to the Chi-Square analysis result. Furthermore, age, Institution type, and level of study have a negative relationship where the negative t-statistical value also supports this claim .generally the model rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternates, which indicates the significance of the model. Hence clarifying the proportional effects of age, level of study, state of institution and residence where they all have their dimensional impact.

6.0 Discussions of Result

The research in its systemic approach access the level of sexual gender-based violence in Nigeria using the southern region as case study, the sample is the buildup of female students between year 1 and year 2 and a very good number are between ages 20 to 24 where the majority of the student are not married (singles) and mostly stay off Campus. Ondo and Lagos State ranks the highest among the six sampled southern state.

The descriptive tool shows that a higher percentage of the students are aware of SGBV, claimed to have heard of or come across cases of SGBV among females, and more than 75% of the sampled population have experienced sexual experience between ages 11 to 15 years. Majority of the respondents agreed that verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual violence are the major factor that led to the aftermath of dropout, perpetual failure of female students from their institution of learning, and some other untellable yet devastating effects on their study.

The inferential analysis section of the Chi-square test shows that the intrinsic factors are generally independent of the extrinsic factors i.e. sex, age, school location, and institution of study are not jointly associated with the extrinsic factors to influence any significant effect of (SGBV), correlational analysis at glance generally shows a poor or low relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of (SGBV) in that all the correlation coefficient are less than (0.5) and this qualifies the reliability of the chi-square test such that any female student could be aware of SGBV also may be well informed about the prevalent and determinant or causes of SGBV, more especially they may understand full the effect of campus culture and preventive measure of SGVB regardless of their age, institution level, etc.

Furthermore, the Regression model depicts that age, institution type, and level of study have a negative relationship where a negative t-statistical value also supports this claim .generally the model rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternates, which indicates the significance of the model. Hence clarifying the proportional effects of age, level of study, state of the institution, and residence where they all have their dimensional impact.

7.0 Conclusion

This systemic review and design (SRD) of this study is to access the dialectic appraisal and awareness of the sexual gender-based violence and basically sexual, physical, and emotional violence among feminine undergraduates’ in Nigeria which was perceived to be high within the last few decades in that females and the major vulnerable genders. The research was gender biased in that it resisted its scope to the female undergraduate students.

Furthermore, this study, focused exclusively on perceived heightened vulnerabilities and different impacts that SGVB has on female student well-being and their general psychology, composition, and behavioral pattern in society at large. Stigmatization a result of verbal and physical abuse and sexual violence among others plays a lead role in the perpetual failure of female students from their institution of learning and some other untellable

yet devastating effects on their study.

Moreover, the intrinsic factors such as age, level of study, state of the institution, and residence are independent of the awareness of SGBV which is most probably a result of the academic environment and we are in the world of globalization even though, most information about SGBV is surfed online with news or social media platforms which argumentatively implies that any female in higher institution of learning in Nigeria is aware regardless of their status.

Moreover, the model concludes a dimensional and significant independent effects of the intrinsic factors on Sexual gender-based violence. The research their by four sectional recommendation approaches to properly combat the spread of SGBV in Nigeria most especially in Nigeria's higher institutions of learning.

8.0 Recommendations

Institution Authority

- A comprehensive educational institution-based prevention strategy and effective interventions should be developed to mitigate gender-based violence
- Creating awareness among students' ranks the highest and appropriate cognizance should be paid to these student needs to be trained from gender perspectives (female based) on how they could be guided and coordinated when around potential violators.
- Institutions should also work on creating a general awareness of the possible risk that could be incurred when keeping things to themselves and the dangers of stigmatization.
- Institution authority should also work on laws that protect the interest of students generally especially female students so the student could feel safe to relate their problems to their authority. This will facilitate the prevention of SGBV.

Government and Government Agencies

- Government policymakers, non-governmental organizations, program designers, and other stakeholders to develop effective intervention and prevention strategies, and programs to reduce gender-based violence in educational institutions
- Government and institutions should Enactment laws to punish offenders when needed so as to create fear and reduces the prevalence of (SGBV)
- Authority need to empower the organization the extra on legal guidelines and buildings that inhibit the increase and improvement of SGBV essentially with the aid of punishing offenders and defending the right of the college students when needed

Family

- Parents have a very major role to play on the issue of SGVB as they need to spend more time with their family and not the siblings by themselves
- Parents ought to recognize their imperative factor of influence, and they need to make sure they are accurate function gamers such that their lady-child should relate matters bordering them instead than bearing on it to their unskilled siblings or friends.

Female Student

- Females student should be more aware of how delicate and blessed their gender his and should be able to play with respect to this effect in dressing, speaking, and general mental and emotional sense of co-ordination so as to reduce the risk of SGBV

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