



Suffering in Silence: A Case of Gender-Based Violence against Men's Well-being at Kwaai-Draai Village, Limpopo Province (South Africa)

Mukwevho M. H.

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education,
University of Venda, Thohoyandou 0950, South Africa

Abstract

The paper focused on the effects of gender-based violence against men's well-being in Kwaai Draai village, Limpopo Province. It examined a variety of factors leading to gender-based violence (GBV) and its consequences against men in Kwaai Draai village. The paper will use a sociological lens to explore gender-based violence against men within a family set-up. GBV is a global pandemic in which women and children are solely assumed to be victims due to their vulnerability whilst, in contrast, men are subjected to suffering in silence in the same patriarchal societies. The paper is qualitative research that is explorative in design. The snowball sampling method was employed in the selection of participants. Semi-structured interviews were used to solicit data from participants. In its integration, the study used social learning theory. The findings emphasised that law enforcement personnel, and community and sector dialogue campaigns should begin to take matters seriously if men are affected and came to report to them the cases of IPV. The findings also highlight that little has been written about GBV in males as compared to women and children.

Keywords

Emotional Violence, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Physical Violence, Coercive control, Well-being

INTRODUCTION

Several variables influence gender-based violence against men in a family environment. Domestic abuse resulting in family instability due to violence and abusive behaviour toward a partner is referred to as "Intimate Partner Violence" (IPV) (Wallace, Wallace, Kenkre and Bradford, 2019). Madzivhandila(2015) argued that physical abuse can take the form of throwing objects at someone, kicking, punching and biting. Physical abuse of men by their fiances is under-reported and scantily researched because female criminality is comparatively neglected (Kubai, 2014). Few women commit fewer crimes and appear less on social media than men, hence being seen as less of a societal problem. The paper is comprised of a literature review,

The concept of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): A literature review

In South Africa, men are associated with domestic, economic and social issues due to inequality and patriarchal tendencies (Keith, Hyslop, and Richmond, 2022). The World Health Organization (2016) regarded IPV as a serious public health problem that results in social and economic costs. Neshunzhi, et al. (2022) defines it as any behaviour within an intimate relationship (past or current) that has the potential to cause physical, psychological or sexual harm through acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours including financial abuse. Low-paying jobs for men reflect negatively on assertive female partners in well-paid jobs. Men in low-paying jobs face economic and social challenges in the household. Kuo et al., (2018) linked this ideology, to the traditional gender role model in which work domain and instrumentality are more important for men than for women, whereas the home domain and expressiveness are more important for women. Men's experience or how they conceptualize violence is poorly understood without identifiable attributes to the abusive acts or experiences. For instance, what it means to be a man, and social expectations related to gender influence not only the construction and expression of violence but also how men define and respond to IPV.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many nations proclaimed a national state of calamity (Yesufu, 2022). With the drop in demand and operations, several businesses closed and many people who worked in the traditional workforce (which required physical presence) were laid off (Elboj-Saso, Iiguez-Berrozpe, and Valero-Errazu, 2022). Consequently, the majority of males who supported their households lost their employment and contributed to instability at home (Hoosen, Adams, Tiliouine, and Savahl, 2022). In addition, men experience social pressure to conform to hegemonic masculine norms. Sometimes a man becomes a casual worker, but the female partner is not laid off (VanVolkenburg, Vandeplass, Touré, Sanfo, Baldé, and Vasseur, 2022). To maintain the family lifestyle and status, this pushes the female to put in more hours at work. The males, on the other hand, are therefore limited to doing housework, which can be stressful, including cooking and cleaning which deviate from hegemonic masculine expectations.

Morgan and Wells (2016) assert that pressure to fit with the context of IPV and adhere to dominant gender ideals not only affects men's sense of self but also their own and others' appraisal and identification of the violence experience. Male victimization by female perpetrators, according to Ekstein and Cherry (2015) results in dual violation of gendered and relational expectations. Male victims are faced with obstacles with the law. For example, male victims have to prove that they are the victims of the circumstances and also to ensure that children are protected because children might be the next victims of violence. Walker et al., (2019) argued that police exhibited gender biases by accusing male victims of being perpetrators of the violence and threatening them with arrest. Such perceptions and actions are significant gender stigmatization that impedes men from showing emotional vulnerability or seeking help. Hence, health and other challenges related to the violence meted out against males go unaddressed.

Men, irrespective of their sexual orientation, experience GBV but the reality is that violence in their relationships is rarely discussed because society does not believe that men can be the victims. India has been a male-dominant society for ages, and it is hard to believe that males can be victims and females a perpetrators. Malik and Nadia (2019) argued that domestic violence against men in India is not recognized by the law either. However, contrary to common belief, there are a growing number of men who are at the receiving end of harassment and face psychological and physical abuse by women (Malik and Nadda, 2019).

The male victims of gender-based violence do not disclose the abuse to anyone because of fear of humiliation and stigma, even when the abuse is life-threatening. According to Deshpande (2019), financial hardships brought on by the wife's greater income or the husband's lower income, together with stress at work, a lack of anger management skills, and frustration and rage over unmet expectations, can all contribute to violent conduct. As a result, men promise to do whatever their partners ask or demand as a household leader.

The statistics on gender-based violence against men in South Africa are not accurate because men reluctantly report IPV to the police or their relatives due to stereotypes or perceptions regarding gender-based violence stigma. In the study conducted, Myhill (2015), found that childhood trauma, emotional abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, physical neglect, depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are some traits shared by abusive wives. Since many male victims of gender-based violence do not come forward to report the abuse and there is seldom help or services for IPV available to assist male victims of gender-based violence in rural areas, even if reported, they would not always be an accurate reflection of the real situation.

In South Africa, several programmes are in place to address human rights issues including the National Crime Prevention Strategy, the Sexual Offence Guidelines, the Justice Department's Gender Policy and National Plan of Action for Children, the Victim Empowerment Programme, 16 Days of Activisms against Gender-Based Violence. However, what is noticeable about all these programmes is that their target audiences are women and children, neglecting the other victims of gender-based violence, i.e. men.

Walker *et al.*, (2020) argued that men are viewed as perpetrators, particularly by the police, courts, and other support services exposing victimised males to additional traumatic situations. Some men who experience abuse in their relationships stated that they suffer in silence because their friends refuse to believe them or take them seriously when they broach the subject. This also discourages them from seeking assistance because they fear they will not be taken seriously. Men are expected to take on the dominant role in the heterosexual relationship and they are afraid of being seen as weak.

Wright (2016) argued that men experience shame, emasculation, and marginalisation of being abused. As a result, they either conceal the abuse or refuse to seek assistance. Male victims are often unaware of their rights, which deters them from seeking assistance (Wright, 2016). Some men remain silent about the abuse because they are afraid of further conflict in the relationship. They are also worried about jeopardising their relationships and if they have children, they are worried about how it will impact their lives. Such remarks and attitudes suggest that the fight against this IPV is difficult, and this situation is likely to escalate.

Msomi (2011) assert that men stay in abusive relationships for several reasons, ranging from being seen as failures, and also being unable to talk about their family problems. Msomi reiterates that victims stay in abusive relationships to protect their families, and because they are also ashamed about what their families, friends, and colleagues will think when they leave their relationships. Men are more likely to experience shock, astonishment, doubt, scorn, ridicule, and apathy than to report their abuse (Hogan, 2016). Men fear that if they leave the perpetrator with their children, then the perpetrator might also abuse their children. The societal belief that men should not hit back at women is contributing to violence against men in intimate relationships.

Several variables influence gender-based violence against males in a domestic set-up. In South Africa, males who work in lower-paying occupations deal with domestic, economic, and social issues (Keith, Hyslop, and Richmond, 2022). This worldview is connected to the conventional gender role paradigm, according to Kuo et al. (2018), in which males place more value on the house and expressiveness than women do on the work domain and instrumentality. More often than not, males who experience GBV typically experience effects at work, where they may arrive late, give several excuses, or take time off (Leddy, Weiss, Yam, and Pulerwitz, 2019). Men suffer psychological integrity through coercion or threat (Yesufu, 2022). There are signs of psychological violence, for example, "isolation from others," "verbal aggression," "threats, intimidation, control, harassment, or stalking," "insults, humiliation, and defamation" (Elboj-Saso, Iiguez-Berrozpe, and Valero-Errazu, 2022). Consequently, men are victims in their lives; they also experience fear, mistrust, depression, or, in some cases, suicidal thoughts that are uncontrollable (Hoosen et al., 2022). So, most men carry a lot of burden, stress, and depression (VanVolkenburg et al., 2022). Hence, if they are being victimized by their women, the chances of them dying very fast are very imminent and uncontrollable (Kholofelo and Tirivangasi, 2022). The reason is that they fear what society will say if they find out that they are being controlled or victimized by their wives. They will become a laughingstock. So for them, no male could bear such pain, which is why some end up divorcing if not try everything to make sure they are free (Odwe, Undie, and Obare, 2018).

Males, just like their female counterparts, experience social violence in addition to psychological abuse (Odwe, Undie, and Obare, 2018). According to Tappis et al. (2016), a few instances of social violence include fear of the unknown, loneliness among men, and job loss brought on by absenteeism at work. The majority of men who experience gender-based violence experience torture in their daily lives, especially in social situations (Atuhaire, 2018). Male victims of gender-based violence are easily identified because they are socially isolated and, while with friends, they are always checking their phones out of concern about what might happen at home if they don't answer (Badu et al., 2022).

Accordingly, individuals typically get disinterested in hanging out with friends and prefer to spend their time alone at home (Hopkins, Doherty, and Gray, 2018). Furthermore, the majority of men who experience gender-based violence are sometimes impacted at work, where they may arrive late, make several excuses, or take time off (Leddy, Weiss, Yam, and Pulerwitz, 2019). Therefore, the objective of this paper is to determine the nature of the experiences' frequency and their impact on male victims.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For this study, the researcher opted for a qualitative approach. Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that the research approach is a tactic that researchers use in conducting a study to gather more in-depth data. The study explored IPV among men in the KwaaiDraai location. It helped the researcher to know more and understand why males are also victims of gender-based violence and why they are not taken seriously when reporting to police or colleagues about their plight. The explorative research design adopted by Creswell and Path (2018), propagates a strategy that identifies a concise and logical approach for addressing established research question(s) through data gathering, interpretation, analysis, and discussion. The design or strategy was adopted to help understand the effects of IPV on men at the KwaaiDraai location. In other words, this strategy greatly aided the researcher by making the less-known subject matter clear. It helped the researcher gain a better understanding of why males are victims, even though they are in a patriarchal society.

Study Population

The study is located in the Hlanganani area of Limpopo Province. According to Kenton (2019), location is the surroundings of the place where something is situated and where an event happens. The population of the study chosen were males between the ages of thirty to sixty who were married or unmarried in heterosexual relationships. The reason why the researcher chose this category of people is that most of the males understood what GBV was, some were separated because of GBV, and some are still in marriage and subjected to suffering from IPV.

Sampling and sampling procedure

The paper used a non-probability sampling method as proposed by Crossman (2019) in which a purposive predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population. For this study, the researcher also adopted "snowball sampling" to identify often silent and hidden male participants.

Cresswell (2018) argued that snowball sampling is a sampling technique in which a researcher begins with a small sample of known individuals and expands the sample by asking the initial participants/informants to identify others who share the characteristics of the study. Males who are affected by IPV are less known, so this type of sampling helped the researcher to identify the first participant through personal knowledge. After that, the remaining ones were identified by the first and succeeding participants/informants until a sample saturation point was reached.

Study Tools (Interview)

To collect data, the researcher chose the interview method. In research, there are three categories of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. However, because of the nature of the study, the researcher chose semi-structured interviews.

Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush (2016) state that a semi-structured interview is "a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open-ended questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for

the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further." The most important reason why researchers chose semi-structured interviews is that it is efficient, save money and time, and allow for more probing, which allows for more information to be gathered in a short period with reduced bias (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). So, the researcher chose this instrument to partially structure his or her question; the rest is gathered through probing. Also, it allowed the researcher to gather an in-depth understanding of the effects of IPV on males at the KwaaiDraai location. The questions were administered in a face-to-face interview, which allowed for more probing. The questions allowed the researcher to observe the participant's emotions, gestures, and how they were responding. Also, the researcher followed all the COVID-19 regulations and protocols of wearing face masks and being sanitized, whilst maintaining an appropriate sitting distance during the interviews.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Participants

Table 1

Participants	Age	Gender	Period of Marriage	Location
A	46	Male	15	Kwaai-draai
B	52	Male	19	Kwaai-draai
C	55	Male	15	Kwaai-draai
D	40	Male	12	Kwaai-draai
E	49	Male	14	Kwaai-draai

The biographical information comprises five males between the ages of 40 to 55 who live in the KwaaiDraai village and were either employed and/or unemployed. All participants were married men at the time of conducting the study. All participants are victims of gender-based violence in their homes. It was not easy to locate the participants, as some felt embarrassed to talk about their experiences.

Gender-based violence (GBV) amongst men at the Kwaai-Draai village

The participants were asked about how they perceived the nature of gender-based violence. Their responses ranged from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological to financial abuse in nature.

Participant A had this to say *"Abusing someone based on their gender or hurting someone using words or actions towards either male or female is demoralizing and dehumanizing."*

Participant B said, *"GBV of abusing your partner by assaulting him/her or sexual harassment is inhumane."*

Participant C said, *"I think GBV is violence that is directed against an individual based on their gender. It involves both men and women who disregard human rights."*

Participant D said, *"Gender-based Violence is when one partner abuses the other opposite partner by beating or insulting him or her."*

Participant E said, *"I think gender-based violence may involve the killing of one's spouse or any other person of the opposite sex. Some men like myself are no longer recognized in their houses. Hence, there is an increase in homicide".*

The majority of participants showed knowledge of intimate partner violence. They all view gender-based violence amongst intimate partners as brutal, demeaning, and a violation of human rights, notwithstanding the differences in their responses. According to the participants, gender-based violence is any act that damages a person's feelings, emotions, or sense of value. It supports the UNHCR's (2021) assertion that gender-based violence is defined as an act of harm committed against a person because of their gender. Its foundations include detrimental gender inequality, power abuse, norms and grave human rights violations that pose a threat to life. Intimate partners or acquaintances may commit acts of physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse.

Through probing, a follow-up question was asked: "How do you feel about gender-based violence subjected to men by their partners?"

Participant A said *"Of course, I feel bad. As a man and a breadwinner in my family, I never thought that my wife, my darling would treat me the way it is unravelling. Couples need to embrace each other and show love and respect."*

Participant B said: *"It seems like the society is used to women being abused especially in rural areas. Many people do not believe when told that a certain man is being maltreated by his woman. Generally, gender-based violence is associated with women being the victims of men. People who commit this crime must be punished harshly."*

Participant C had this to say: *"I feel humiliated to be treated like a child in front of my children. She will use vulgar language in front of the kids. When I try to calm her, she will shout at me in such a way that even the neighbours are forced to intervene and encourage us to solve our issues indoors."*

Participant D said: *“People do not recognise abused men. They regard it as a joke. I do not get it because abuse does not consider sex, nor does it consider age or masculinity. Men are being victimized in their houses. It looks like gender-based violence against men is not taken seriously in our families, villages, police stations and in courts like when women were violated by men.”*

Participant E, said, *“I am in the process of divorcing. I am concerned about the plight of my three children. I love them so much and wonder if she will treat them well after the dissolution of the marriage.”*

It is evident from the oral transcripts that feelings of being abused are socially unacceptable, uncomfortable and unimaginable feeling (emotionally). Abuse portrays the feeling of not being loved, respected and accommodating to others (Badu et al., 2022). However, rural areas seem to acknowledge and understand women abuse more than men. Abuse is so humiliating especially in front of children by the so-called spouse. This is supported by Hopkins et.al. (2018) that one becomes disinterested (alienated) in hanging out with friends. Family violence put a spotlight on marriage, but family members, villagers and courts took a long time to get convinced by the scourge of violence meted out to men by their spouses. This brings to question why men are not assertive enough to convince the public about their plight. Gender-based violence affects all family members, society, government departments and private stakeholders. This concurs with Leddy. Et al. (2019) assert that it impacts work and relationships through several excuses.

A follow-up question was asked to the participants as follows:

“Is the government and the law providing fair treatment to gender-based violence victims?”

Participant A had this to say: *“I think the appropriate laws have been promulgated but it seems to favour the historically disadvantaged (women) in South Africa. For example, should you report the violence issue meted out to men by women to the police, they will not take you seriously. But if a lady comes and reports, immediately trouble will consume you”.*

Participant B said, *“The constitution of South Africa has a Bill of Rights which protects us all. On the other hand, one hardly finds the court's verdict favouring men in family disputes and social media. Should it occur, it is instantly removed to cater for more economically productive items that are marketable.”*

Participant D said, *“The most reported cases are from women who face abuse in their relationships with men. So, I do not entirely blame the law for being unfair because police stations have few or no records of men reporting abuse. Something needs to be done to convey the voice of vulnerable men to legal institutions.”*

Participant E said, *“I am deeply traumatized by acts of extreme violence perpetrated on me by my women in front of the children. Although there are human rights in our country, I am ashamed to go and report my wife to another policeman or woman at the police station. I do not see a clear way out for me in this predicament.”*

The oral transcripts indicate that participants are aware of the Bill of Rights that protects us all. However, there is a perception that the law caters for historically disadvantaged groups (women and children). If a women or a child report a case of abuse to the police, the law immediately takes its course and vice-versa. It seems like the law takes time to prosecute a female abusing her husband/partner (Hogan, 2016). Prevalences of cases reported to police are mostly those of women and children. Few cases of men being abused are few and far apart signifying that the country has a problem of violence, especially femicide. Men victims of abuse according to Msomi(2011) are ashamed to report the abuse to policemen and women (inferiority complex). Reporting the abuse is like exposing oneself to incapacity (psychological) (Wright, 2916).

The researcher asked a follow-up question as follows:

“Do you have any idea why men are abused by their wives/ partners?”. In that regard, they responded as follows:

Participant A said, *“When I was laid off. I have been employed on a contract basis. The issue arose when she made a comparison between my values and those of the men in our neighbourhood. She got irrationally angry and abusive every time we talked. She recently flung a knife at me, cutting my forehead. She never expressed even the slightest regret, and I bleed. She went so far as to say that I did not deserve to live and that she wanted me to bleed until I died. However, things were going well for us and our marriage before this happened.”*

Participant B said, *“She used to get paid less than I did at first. Things changed significantly when she was promoted at work and began earning significantly more than I did. She began assaulting me because my money was insufficient to support her, and there were moments when I was unable to eat anything she prepared. Her advice to obtain a more steady employment came often. There seems to be no respect left in the house, and sometimes I feel like our marriage is about to fall apart. I can no longer bear the hardships of living in the house. She advised me to look for a job that pays more than hers when I sought to speak with her.”*

Participant C said, *“My wife stopped sleeping with me when she found out that I lost my job due to retrenchment. I found myself with a lot of debts and she refused to help me pay them. My family siblings were the ones that helped me out of debt”.*

Participant D said, “What I know is that most men become victims of abuse when they have lost their jobs when they become sick, it could be chronic diseases or disability. I had an accident and could not return to work. That is where my marital relationship changed for the worse”.

Participant E said, “Initially things were going very well in the family until my partner stopped respecting and sleeping with me alleging that I have extra-marital affairs.”

The oral transcripts denote that the violence emanates when one loses a job through either downsizing or sickness. The change in family status is attributed to failure to accept or cope with changes (Kuo et al., 2018). Some women showed irrational anger Myhill (2015), becoming abusive, hurling insults and assaulting their husbands where possible. Only a better rewarding job could be taken as the salvation of the marriage. Men are denied conjugal rights and benefits such as sleeping together and sex (Hoosen et al., 2022). The oral transcripts portray gender-based violence as a war against humanity, dignity and equality.

“How are you coping with such experiences? In that regard, this is what they noted:

Participant E said “I now spend most of my time outside my house because of the disrespect that I get from both my wife and kids, sometimes I just sit in the bedroom alone thinking about a lot of things. My family no longer come to the house because every time they come they feel that they are not welcome. So to avoid stress and depression I go out to spend time with my friends or go have a beer at the local bottle store”.

Participant D said “I once visited police offices to report the matter, but while laying charges on my wife. I thought of my children and I stopped doing that, so I went back home and loved my wife even though she was acting like that”.

Participant A “I depend on drinking alcohol almost daily because the stress is too much”

Participant C said I feel like I don't have a purpose in my life anymore the only thing that keeps me going In my life are my kids, I drink alcohol almost every day to forget all the troubles that I am facing”.

Participant B that “I depend on drinking alcohol and spending most of my time at bottle stores. My daughter, maybe you might be asking yourself where do I get money to drink alcohol, I depend on my sisters and brother they are really helpful and give me money every month's end”.

Based on the oral transcripts participants indicated that the only way to cope and address violence is by reporting, which they have tried. However, the police did not take them seriously because of societal norms and machismo. Hence, some end up killing themselves or their wives. In other words, most men are reporting GBV, and law enforcement is not acting because they are men; if it were women, it would be another story to tell. Some people suggested that visiting therapists would be beneficial. To concur with Mingude and Dejene (2021), therapies help most men deal with anger, stress about not being employed, or stress about failing in performance in bed. A lot of things could help men who are victims of intimate violence. Furthermore, Mingude and Dejene (2021) stated that psychological therapy can reduce GBV in men in South Africa. In addition, some have expressed a desire to give up on life as a result of their circumstances. Above all, the majority argued that the police are taking matters into their own hands; some are abusive and refuse to assist them.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The harmful effects of intimate violence, whether verbal or hidden, can follow victims for the rest of their lives. The evidence is overwhelming in favour of the detrimental effects of sexual abuse. Men are more likely than women to experience health issues in their later years, including cancer, diabetes, hypertension, heart attacks, and strokes. There is little doubt about the psychological and emotional fallout: elevated anxiety and sadness, addiction, and suicide. Nightmares and flashbacks are frequent symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Hendler, 2021).

Parental relationship disruption and experiences of alienation might have an impact on the connection with the child or children. Children suffer both short-term and long-term consequences from divorce. But in the heat of a heated argument, it's frequently hard for a couple to think about, or assess, the suffering their kids may endure following a divorce.

The effects of violence are frequently felt at work, where it is difficult to focus and finish duties. Additionally harmed are interpersonal interactions, especially when they involve an intimate partner. It may be difficult for victims to form enduring, meaningful connections. They can struggle to find fulfilment in life and struggle with a sense of emptiness.

The victims show signs of embarrassment, humiliation, and shame. Regardless of gender, obstacles to identifying abuse and requesting assistance are commonly mentioned as reasons why victims do not come forward. Regarding the definition of "gender-based violence," every participant indicated that they regarded it to be an intentional act of hurting someone's feelings, either physically or financially, because of their gender. Montle's (2020) claim that GBV is associated with

causing pain—physical, sexual, emotional, and financial—and that it can be committed by both strangers and intimate partners lends credence to these findings.

Male victims worry that authorities will not take them seriously (Hogan, 2016). According to the participants' perspectives, GBV is not beneficial at all since it affects not only the sufferers but also those who are close to them. The majority of participants stated that relationships suffer greatly as a result of IPV and that those who engage in such horrible behaviour ought to be held accountable.

Male victims frequently experience obvious psychological and emotional effects, such as elevated anxiety and sadness, addiction, and suicide. According to Myhill (2015), it makes sense that the majority of males keep their secrets to themselves. They can struggle to find fulfilment in life and struggle with a sense of emptiness. Although males are also victims of gender-based violence, stereotypes about men's abuse prevent communities from realizing this.

In agreement, Hoosen, Adams, Tiliouine, and Savahl (2022) contended that when breadwinner husbands lose their employment, it typically causes issues in the home, leading to the wife asking family members for assistance with food and financial support. Since a husband is expected to be the provider in a rural family, this frequently leads to strained relationships within the family (VanVolkenburg, Vandeplass, Touré, Sanfo, Baldé, and Vasseur, 2022). COVID-19 caused many breadwinners to lose their employment.

Participants speculated on the reasons behind the rise in gender-based violence among men, including men working in low-paying jobs and wives who lack humility after starting a family. In agreement, Keith, Hyslop, and Richmond (2022) contended that "the issue of lower-paid jobs is the reason why men are being abused by their wives in their house or homestead." Furthermore, VanVolkenburg *et al.* (2022) reiterated that a wife can hold a well-paying profession yet demonstrate an unwillingness to deal with the demands of both the rural home and workplace, in contrast to her husband. While some women would never bow to their husbands, others will attempt to exert control over their marriage which ultimately leads to daily arguments.

The participants said that they were concerned about what the community would think of their acts, which prevented them from divorcing their wives or from leaving. Men who lose their employment find it hard to leave their spouses or children since it is not easy to start anew. It can be challenging to petition for divorce after more than ten years of marriage. It is unjustified to be afraid of being looked down upon, losing custody of your children and having to start over, or facing the future by yourself.

Some had absolutely no psychological resilience. For the sake of their families, communities, and their children, none of the male victims are prepared to divorce their wives. They appear anxious and socially impacted. In agreement, Hoosen *et al.* (2022) indicate that the majority of men suffer from dread, mistrust, despair, or, in certain situations, uncontrollable suicidal impulses. They remain with their wives out of fear, and others pass away early from stress-related causes. According to VanVolkenburg *et al.* (2022), some men pass away more quickly than women because they are burdened with a great deal of stress and depression.

Some say that seeing a therapist would be helpful, but they are prevented from doing so by several issues, including cultural barriers, cost, and relevancy. In agreement with Mingude and Dejene (2021), therapy assists the majority of men in managing their stress and anger related to unemployment, poor performance in the bedroom, and anger. Men who are GBV sufferers could benefit from a variety of things. Some men fear that their masculinity will be questioned if they disclose abuse. Healthcare providers may not think to inquire about whether injuries sustained by men are a result of domestic abuse, and there are fewer resources available for male victims of domestic abuse in remote areas.

CONCLUSION

A cultural tendency known as "fear of reporting" has led men to act less assertively. Some men believe they are not living up to the norms of manly principles or even their responsibilities as a man. The male victim(s) in most cases would rather keep this information to themselves.

Male victims of intimate partner violence are completely devoted to their partners, some remain in violent relationships, and others are unable to jeopardize their parental rights over abusive partners. Violence at home is a matter of human rights that restricts other rights, such as freedom of expression and access to information. The implications can therefore be daunting and can have a considerable effect on behavioural disorders, including anxiety, depressive complex inferiority, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and, worse, victims' suicide.

LIMITATION

It is not impossible to rule out the possibility that women's physical defence is driven by fear or self-defence.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marubini Harry Mukwevho is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Youth in Development at the University of Venda. His research interests include youth work, gender studies, labour relations, social policies, and organizations. He can be contacted at Harry.Mukwevho@univen.ac.za.

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