

Perception and Effect of Gender Based Violence on Sustainable Development and Education of Girl-Child in South Western Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study examined perception and effect of gender-based violence on sustainable development and education of the girl-child in South Western, Nigeria. Primary and Secondary data were utilised. A structured questionnaire was administered on young females in tertiary institutions, secondary schools, non-governmental organisations, and government establishments dealing with gender-based violence in the study area while secondary data were sourced from journals, books and dailies. Multistage random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 360 respondents who completed the questionnaire for the study. Also, Key Informant Interview Guide was used to elicit additional information for the study from 30 key informants on gender-based violence in educational institutions. The key informants comprised of 15 Gender-based violence desk officers from tertiary institutions and 15 secondary school counsellors who were in-charge of issues bordering on gender-based violence in their institutions. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were applied to the data collected. The key informants' interview responses were analysed using thematic and content analysis methods. The result revealed a high prevalence of gender-based violence and it was perceived to be culturally motivated. Sexual violence, sexual harassment and psychological violence were the significant forms of gender-based violence that adversely affected the Sustainable Development Goal 4 and girl-child education. The study recommended that to avert the adverse effects of gender-based violence on the girl-child, there is need for thorough awareness and sensitisation programmes to build their resilience. Enforcement of established laws against gender-based violence by both government and non-governmental organisations is sacrosanct.

KEYWORDS: awareness; counsellors; harassment; institutions; sensitization

Gender-specific assault is described as any act of harm done against an individual motivated by that individual's biological sexual orientation, gender expression or identification, or perceived conformity to socially mandated gender norms (Ahmad; Khan et al., 2016). It is the most common but least evident human rights breach worldwide, across demographics, social strata, and financial boundaries (UNICEF 2020). According to Ajah; Iyoke; et al.; (2014) & Ekiti State (2019), gender-based violence (GBV) is any conduct that results in coercion, forfeiture of liberty, bodily, sexual, monetary, emotional, or psychological injury or discomfort, or the danger of such behaviour. This definition applies to both public and private settings. Any act of violence that impedes the exercise of basic privileges and human rights as guaranteed by international law or human rights treaties is referred to as gender-based violence (GBV). It's deemed violent when the outcomes for a person or a group are inequitable according to their gender. Ekiti State (2019); Ekiti State Ministry of Education (2020) & Ekiti State University (2022) agreed that gender-based violence (GBV) include artistic expressions that have the potential to cause physical, sexual, psychological, or financial damage. Along with this, it also includes unwanted sexual conduct, rape, sexual assault, harassment, stalking, trafficking, sexual exploitation, fondling or caressing, sexual gestures and rumours, and sexual propositions. According to Ekiti State (2019); Ekiti State Ministry of Education (2020); Usigbe (2020) & World Health Organization (WHO, 2020a) agree that intimate partner violence are all recognised as types of gender-based violence.

In the Middle East and Asia, grisly murder and sexual abuse of women are justified under the pretense of honour murders because they adhere to a long-standing cultural custom. Female genital mutilation is a common practice for girls in Africa, but women who relocate to Western Europe in search of safety risk legal repercussions for violating the ethical and moral values of the new culture. In the misguided idea that it will cure them, sick males in southern Africa often rape and transmit virgin women with HIV. Women are still physically killed by their spouses or lovers in the richest and most developed countries (National Population Commission (NPC), 2018 & World Health Organization (WHO), 2020). It is possible for these many forms of gender-based violence (GBV) to occur in combination rather than separately. Those who have experienced gender-based violence confront significant obstacles to their physical and emotional health. These consist of different levels of physical harm, unintended or coerced pregnancies, risky

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abortions, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, stress, sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In the worst situation, survivors could potentially pass away (United Nations Population Fund (UNPF, 2020). In addition to its detrimental impacts on health, GBV has negative implications on job creation, efficiency, and general economic growth. The National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) reported that 33% of Nigerian women within the years of fifteen to forty-nine have suffered either bodily or sexual abuse; 24% have only gone through assault, 2% have only encountered intimate partner violence, and 7% have gone through both (National Population Commission (NPC), 2018). According to (Ekiti State, 2019); (Ekiti State Ministry of Education, 2020) & (Ekiti State University, 2022), there are several causes of gender-based violence (GBV). These factors include, but are not confined to, impoverishment, ignorance, unrest, harmful cultural and religious convictions, gender stereotypes, and misuse of drugs. Ekiti State University (2022) showed that gender-based violence may lead to a number of negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, premature births, risky abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, and even mortality. Furthermore, gender-based (GBV) has a significant negative impact on academic achievement, which causes many youngsters to either completely, stop going to school, score below average, or evade it entirely.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Worldwide, one in three women may encounter some kind of gender-based violence at some point in their lives, with sexual assault being reported more often than physical and emotional abuse (National Population Commission (NPC), 2018). According to Perrin, Marsh et al., 2019), up to 38% women victims died at the hands of intimate partners. African countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, have been shown to have the highest rates of intimate partner violence, either physical or sexual (65.64%) (Beyene, Chojenta et al., 2012). In addition to physical and sexual abuse, socioeconomic and psychological violence are additional types of violence that Nigerian girls have reported experiencing. Others include destructive customs such female genital mutilation and assaults on civilian women during hostilities (Usigbe, 2020). Numerous studies indicate that women who originate from low-income families, have never attended college, and live in countries with inadequate court systems, are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence (Ahmad, Khan et al., 2016; Chika, 2012; UNICEF, 2020 & United Nations Population Fund (UNPF, 2020). Furthermore, (Ajah, Iyoke et al., 2014)) shows that a bigger proportion of rural women than urban women had experienced gender-based violence when comparing the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Enugu, South-east Nigeria, between urban and rural areas.

The persistent incidence of gender-based violence, the systematic denial of women's rights, and the abuse of children's rights will need a more coordinated response to effectively address them (Ekiti State, 2019). It is important to highlight that despite laws, regulations, and policies, violence against women and children in Nigeria is still on the rise. While there have been admirable cross-sectoral efforts in Nigeria to combat gender-based violence and an increase in the number of organisations involved directly or indirectly, the results of these efforts are still in jeopardy because of many fresh issues. Gender-based violence is pervasive at most post-secondary institutions in Nigeria. A great deal of rape incidents and the many instances of both mental and physical abuse of women and girls serve as evidence of this. Several studies have looked at the prevalence, expressions, and causative elements of gender-based violence. The majority of these studies were carried out in Nigeria. However, the impact of gender-based violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and girls' education is seldom discussed, especially in South Western Nigeria.

According to Merry (2011) asserts that respecting protection orders and putting in place the right laws to improve women's wellbeing are essential to creating a society free from violence. Enhancing employment, education, mental and physical health, and economic stability are vital. In a nutshell, socioeconomic policies should aim to create a safe space that makes it easier for abused women to access the judicial system. The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of UN Women from 2015 states that all girls ought to have an opportunity to receive high-quality, equitable schooling alongside possibilities for perpetual learning. By 2030, all boys and girls will have free chances for elementary and secondary education thanks to this aim. In a divided society, conviviality, collaboration, and solidarity dynamics are essential to accomplishing sustainable development goals (Lima & Guedes, 2024)). This depends on social design's capacity to effect transformation and serve as an instrument for people in places of power to deal with problems like gender parity and abuse of women and girls. Its capacity to generate dialogue about concepts, individuals, and settings encourages the development of fresh forms of cooperation, love, self-worth, and presence throughout the world. The experimental elements of social innovation, gives members of the system the opportunity to take charge of experience, comprehends, and respond, which heightens their feeling of responsibility and consciousness of oneself. In addition, it needs to express the concept of human development as a design principle, which holds that people may change the world by strengthening networks of friends and empowering one another to take essential liberating, systematic, conscious, and logical activities (Lima & Guedes (2024).

According to Christina, Jansen et al., (2006)) contends that unless violence against women and girls is eradicated, nations will not be able to meet the goals of sustainable development. According to UN Women (2022) asserts that gender equality is a fundamental human right. Realising that freedom presents mankind with the best chance to solve some of the most pressing problems of the day, including the rising number of conflicts, the recession, healthcare inequalities, worldwide warming, and violence against women.

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Women are not just affected by these problems, but they also have the imagination and drive to come up with answers. Gender discrimination still hinders women and the world. This prejudice against women may make it more challenging for any society to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 4.

Statement of the Problem

Gender-based violence is a worldwide problem that stems from a system of power relationships rooted in early sexism. It is especially prevalent in underdeveloped countries and seriously endangers the health of women (Christina, Jansen et al., 2006; Garcia-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013; Msugther, Yaradua et al., 2020). Global gender-based violence has taken numerous forms, and they have had an effect on female economic standing and validity in the international community. In addition to impacting women's social standing in the wider society, it has typically raised the rates of newborn and maternal mortality (Garcia-Moreno & Pallitto, 2013).

Gender-based violence refers to the global violation of women's and girls' human rights by males who use it as a means of control. Gender-based violence is a global issue that affects both developed and developing countries. It is not predicated on the victims' socio-economic standing, religious beliefs, or cultural perspectives. Furthermore, the frequency, form, and extent of it differ in every country (World Bank, 2019). Gender-based violence has mostly gone unpunished while being increasingly acknowledged as a public health concern. Countries with patriarchal beliefs—traditions that place a higher value on males than on women—have some of the highest rates of male-perpetrated gender-based violence (UNFPA, 2020). Because of the strict gender norms that are placed upon them, women and girls in these patriarchal nations are seen as beneath them, which has an effect on their present and future. Furthermore, as is the case in many African nations, including Nigeria, gender inequity compels young girls to be married against their choice and undergo circumcision (Gibbs, Dunkle et al., 2020).

Regretfully, a significant portion of men, women, and society in these civilisations condone gender-based violence, which limits the ability to provide solutions or provide critical and creative assistance. Thus, the cultural views of both men and women have played a significant role in promoting, upholding, and preserving this kind of uncivilised violence or gender-based struggle for supremacy, especially against women and girls (Okolo & Okolo, 2018). However, there is a dearth of research on the impact of gender-based violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4, as well as its possible implications on the education of young girls, especially in this area of the world. The continued growth in the frequency of gender-based violence against young people at Nigeria's higher institutions is a reason for significant anxiety. This problem and the paucity of research on the subject call for a study like this one, which concentrates on what people think and effects of gender-based violence on sustainable development and girl-child education in South Western Nigeria. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the respondents' perceptions on gender-based violence in the study area?
- ii. What are the effects of gender-based violence on sustainable development goals vis-a-viz goal 4?
- iii. Who are the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls?
- iv. What are the effects of gender-based violence on the education of girl-child?

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the perception and effect of gender based violence on sustainable development and the education of the girl-child in South Western Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the level of perception on gender-based violence in the study area;
- ii. determine the effect of gender-based violence on sustainable development goal 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education) in the study area;
- iii. identify the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls; and
- iv. identify the effect of gender-based violence on the education of girl-child in the study area.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a quantitative approach to its investigation. The study design used was a descriptive survey. All young female students enrolled in secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies that address gender-based violence made up the study's population.

For the research, both primary and secondary data were employed. A standardised questionnaire that was given to young women at secondary and post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies that deal with gender-based violence in the research region was used to collect primary data. Books, journals, and newspapers served as the primary sources of secondary data. Out of the six South Western States included in the research, respondents were chosen using a multistage random sample approach from Ekiti, Ondo, and Osun. To complete the questionnaire, a sample of 360 respondents who agreed to take part in the research was chosen. Regression analysis and descriptive statistics were used on the gathered data. Also, Key Informant

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Interview Guide (KIIG) was used to elicit additional information for the study from 30 key informants on gender-based violence in educational institutions. The key informants comprised of 15 GBV Desk Officers from tertiary institutions and 15 Secondary School Counsellors who are in-charge issues bordering on gender-based violence in their institutions.

Study Area

The research was conducted in Nigeria's southwest. Nigeria is situated on the West Coast of Africa, approximately 10° North of the Equator and 8° East of the Greenwich Meridian. Niger, the Republic of Cameroon, and the Republic of Benin are her neighbours to the north, east, and west, respectively. The dry and the wet seasons are the two different seasons in Nigeria. The wet season extends from April to October, while the dry season lasts from November to March. Nigeria has a population of about 190.9 million people living in its entire geographical area of around 923,763 km² (National Population Commission (NPC), 2018), with over 60% of them living in rural regions.



Fig 1: Map of South West Nigeria showing the six States

Sample and Sampling Procedures

There were 360 young females in the sample. In this investigation, a multi-stage sampling approach was used. The South West Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria is made up of the following six states: Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Osun, Ogun, and Oyo. Three (3) States (Ekiti, Ondo, and Osun) were chosen at random from the six (6) States in the first stage. In the second phase, four Local Government Areas (LGAs) from the three States that were chosen for the research were purposefully chosen based on the presence of secondary and postsecondary education, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies that address gender-based violence. Thirty (30) young women were chosen at random from three sets of institutions for the third stage: secondary schools, tertiary institutions, and non-governmental organizations/government institutions that address gender-based violence (3 States X 4 LGAs = 12 X 30 young females = 360 respondents). In addition, Key Informant Interview Guide (KIIG) was used to elicit additional information for the study from 30 key informants on gender-based violence in educational institutions. The key informants comprised of 15 GBV Desk Officers from tertiary institutions and 15 Secondary School Counsellors who are in-charge issues bordering on gender-based violence in their institutions.

Method of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were employed in the investigation. A questionnaire on young women in secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies that deal with gender-based violence in the research region was used to collect the primary data. The respondents' sex, age, marital status, number of children, and size of home were among the details requested in the questionnaire. Additionally, data was gathered about the respondents' opinions of the prevalence, reasons, and perceived impacts of gender-based violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and education of the girl-child. Sources of secondary data included books, journals, and libraries. Also, Key Informant Interview Guide (KIIG) was used to elicit additional information for the study from 30 key informants on gender-based violence in educational institutions. The key informants comprised of 15 GBV Desk Officers from tertiary institutions and 15 Secondary School Counsellors who are in-charge issues bordering on gender-based violence in their institutions.

Research Instrument

The instrument is a structured questionnaire titled, 'Perception and Effect of Gender Based Violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Education of Girl-child Questionnaire' (PEGBVSDG4EGQ). The questionnaire contained four sections. Section A

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contained items on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Section B consisted of items on the level of perception on gender-based violence. Section C consisted of items on the perpetrators of gender based-violence against women and girls. Section D contained items on the effect of gender based violence on sustainable development goal 4 (Equitable Quality Education). Section E consisted of items on the effect of gender based violence on the education of girl-child. Also, Key Informant Interview Guide (KIIG) comprising 10 questions was used to elicit additional information for the study from 30 key informants on gender-based violence in educational institutions. The key informants comprised of 15 GBV Desk Officers from tertiary institutions and 15 Secondary School Counsellors who are in-charge issues bordering on gender-based violence in their institutions.

Validity of Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the two instruments, a professional reviewed the questionnaire and the Key Informant Interview Guide (KIIG) used for the study. The researcher closely followed the corrections made in the two instruments.

Reliability of Instrument

The consistency of the questionnaire instrument used for the study was pilot tested in a tertiary institution in Ekiti State on 20 young females who were not part of the respondents twice at two weeks intervals. The scores of the two tests were collated and analysed using t-test. The result was 0.87 and this indicated that the instrument was good enough for reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, frequency counts, percentages, and multiple regression analysis were used to examine the acquired data. For the analysis, a significance threshold of 0.05 was used. The key informants' interview responses were analysed using thematic and content analysis methods.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the data supplied by the respondents by notifying them that their names and other personal information would not be used in the study. Furthermore, informed consents signed by the respondents were obtained. No one was forced to participate in the poll; everyone who participated in the study did so willingly.

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of the all-female respondents	Number	Percentage (%)
States: Ekiti, Ondo & Ogun	360 (120 from each State)	100
Age group		
13-18 years	140	38.9
19-24 years	160	44.4
25-30 years	60	16.7
Religious affiliation		
Christianity	300	83.3
Islam	50	13.9
Traditional	10	2.8
Respondent category		
Respondents from tertiary institutions	150	41.7
Respondents from secondary schools	150	41.7
Respondents from non-governmental organisations/The three States Ministries of Women Affairs	60	16.6
Marital status		
Single	250	69.4

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Married	110	30.6
Ethnic Group		
Yoruba	300	83.3
Igbo	50	13.9
Hausa	5	1.4
*Others	5	1.4

(*Others such as Ijaw, Edo, Efik etc)

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The analysis indicates that 33.3% (120) respondents were used in each of the 3 States used for the study. The age group of the respondents from Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States were 38.9%; 44.45 and 16.7% for age range of 13-18 years; 19-24 years and 25-30 years respectively. The analysis shows that 88.3% respondents were Christian; 13.9% were Islam while 2.8% were of traditional religion.

The table reveals that respondents from tertiary institutions in the 3 States were 41.7%, secondary were also 41.7% while respondents from NGOs and the 3 States Ministries of Women Affairs were 16.6%. Single respondents were 69.4% while married ones were 30.6%. The analysis indicates that Yoruba respondents were 83.3%; Igbo were 13.9%; Hausa were 1.4% while others that include Ijaw, Edo, Efik etc. were also 1.4%.

Objective 1: Perception of Respondents on Gender Based Violence in the Study Area.

Table II: perception on gender based violence in the study area

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender Based Violence Incidence		
Yes	242	67.0
No	118	33.0
Causes of Gender Based Violence		
Cultural value	297	82.4
Economic value	45	12.5
Others	18	5.1

Table 2 above shows the respondents' perception on various forms of gender based violence in the study area. The result generally revealed a high (67.0%) incidence of gender based violence in the study area and (82.4%) of the respondents perceived it to be culturally motivated.

Table III: Perception of respondents on prevalent forms of gender based violence

Forms of GBV	Frequency	Percent
Intimate partner violence	112	31.1
Sexual violence	86	23.8
Child marriage	45	12.5
Female genital mutilation	145	40.2
Trafficking for sex exploitation	64	17.7
Psychological violence	186	51.6
Sexual harassment	225	62.5
Forced marriage	46	12.7
Forced abortion	71	19.7
Female infanticide	5	1.3

Table 3 reveals that majority (62.5%) of the respondents' perceived high rate of sexual harassment as the most prevalence form of gender based violence in the study area. These include touching, caressing, hugging, kissing among others. About (51.6%) of the respondents perceived psychological violence as high and only 23.8% of them perceived prevalence of real sexual violence such as rape as high. The result also shows that about (40.2%) and (17.7%) of the respondents perceived female genital mutilation and trafficking for sex as high respectively. Others include intimate partner violence, (31.1%); child marriage, (12.5%); forced marriage, (12.7%); forced abortion, (19.7%) and female infanticide, (1.3%).

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Objective 2: Identify the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls

Table IV: Perpetrators of gender-based against women and girls

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Perpetrators of Gender Based Violence Incidence against women and girls		
Men	200	55.5
Boys	100	27.8
Women	50	13.9
Girls	10	2.8

Table 4 shows that men were the major perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls with 55.5% of the respondents affirming this. Also, the table shows that 27.8% of the respondents identified boys as perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls. This means On the other hand, 13.9% of the respondents identified women as the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls while 2.8% of the respondents indicated that girls were the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls. This means that only 16.7% (13.9+2.8%), claimed that females perpetrate gender-based women against women and girls.

Objective 3: Determine the Effects of Gender Based Violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality Education) in the Study Area.

Table V: Regression analysis of the effects of gender based violence on sustainable development goal 4 (equitable quality education)

Variables	Coefficient	t-values
Intimate partner violence	0.205	0.128
Sexual violence	- 0.601***	-2.105
Child marriage	- 0.251	-0.482
Female genital mutilation	0.047	0.482
Trafficking for sex exploitation	0.144	1.224
Psychological violence	-0.040*	-4.862
Sexual harassment	- 0.014***	-3.264
Forced marriage	- 1.956	-0.829
Forced abortion	1.526	0.672
Female infanticide	- 1.064	-0.546

**** implies significant level at 10% and 1% respectively.

Table 5 which shows the result of the regression analysis used in determining the effect of gender based violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality of Education) shows a significant relationship with the adjusted R square of 0.876 revealing an overall significance of the model. According to table 4, sexual violence ($P < 0.01$), psychological violence ($P < 0.10$) and sexual harassment ($P < 0.01$), negatively and significantly affect the quality of education in the study area. In the same vein, sexual violence ($P < 0.01$), harassment ($P < 0.01$) and psychological violence ($P < 0.10$) were the forms of gender based violence that significantly affect Sustainable Development Goal 4. The negative sign implies that, a unit increase in the incidence of sexual violence, psychological violence and sexual harassment causes a decrease in the quality of education. However, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking for sex exploitation, forced-marriage, forced abortion and female infanticide were insignificant and have no effects on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality of Education).

Objective 4: The Effects of Gender Based Violence on the Education of Girl-child in the Study Area

Table VI: Effects of gender based violence on the education of girl-child

Effects	Frequency	Percent
Loss of concentration	212	58.9

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Sexual Practices exposure	86	23.8
Unwanted pregnancy	125	34.7
Shame and Depression	241	66.9
School drop-out	194	53.8
Psychological disorder	112	31.1
Poor academic performance	225	62.5
Inferiority complex among peers	185	51.3

Table 6 above shows the perceived effects or consequences of gender based violence on the education of the girl-child in the study area. The table further reveal that, loss of concentration (58.9%), shame and depression (66.9%), school drop-out (53.8%), poor academic performance (62.5%) and inferiority complex among peers (51.3%) were the most common perceived major effects of gender-based violence on the education of girl child in the study area.

Responses of Key Informants drawn from GBV Desk Officers in Tertiary Institutions and Secondary School Counsellors

Responding to the question on informants' mandates in respect of issues of gender based violence against female students in their institutions, 25 informants (83.3%) out of 30, said that they had the mandate to receive and respond to complaints/reports on gender-based violence (GBV) from students and staff; prevent GBV from occurring; create awareness about GBV and its impacts in their institutions; ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of survivors; provide support services and counselling for survivors; maintain and ensure confidentiality of survivors and collaborate with academic and non-academic staff to handle issues of GBV. However, the remaining 5 informants (16.7%) were not able to state their mandates on issues of GBV in their institutions.

On the informants' perception on gender-based violence in the institutions where they worked, 20 (66.7%) of the informants affirmed high incidence of GBV in their institutions while 10 (33.3%) claimed that there were low incidence of GBV in their institutions in the three South Western States. Majority of the low incidence of GBV were from secondary schools while the high percentage of GBV was mostly from tertiary institutions in the States.

On the question on identifying the perpetrators of gender-based violence against women and girls, majority of the respondents, 24 (80%) responded that males were the perpetrators of gender-based while 6 (20%) of the 30 respondents, said that some women and girls physically and psychologically/emotionally abuse women and girls too.

Responding to the questions on causes of GBV in tertiary and secondary institutions, out of 30 key informants interviewed, 15 (50%) claimed that GBV was caused by cultural beliefs, 8 (26.7%) identified economic gains as one of the causes while 7(23.3%) mentioned others like power imbalances, peer pressure, family factors and substance abuse as causes of GBV in educational institutions in the South Western Nigeria.

For perception on the prevalent forms of GBV in educational institutions in South Western States, 9 (30%) of the key informants identified intimate partner violence as the most common prevalent form; 6 (20%)identified sexual violence; 5 (15%) for child marriage; and 3 (10%) for psychological violence; 3 (10%) indicated sexual harassment; 2 (8%) was for forced abortion; 1 (3.5%)picked forced marriage and 1 (3.5 %) mentioned female genital mutilation.

On the effect of GBV on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality Education), 21 (70%) of the key informants agreed that sexual violence, sexual harassment and psychological violence had the highest negative effect on Sustainable Development Goal 4. The remaining 9 (30%) of the 30 informants, stated that female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion, trafficking for sex and intimate partner violence had no effect on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality Education) in the educational institutions in South Western, Nigeria.

Responding to the question on the effect of gender-based violence (GBV) on the education of the girl-child in universities and secondary schools in South Western Nigeria, 9 (30%) of the informants said that shame and depression have the highest negative effect on the education of the girl-child; next was poor academic performance with 8 (25%); followed by loss of concentration with 6 (20%); school dropout was identified by 5 (18%) of the key informants as having negative effect on the education of the girl child; inferiority complex among peers was 5 (15%) ;unwanted pregnancy was identified by 3 (10%) of the informants; psychological disorder by 3 (10%); while sexual practices exposure had the least negative effect on the girl-child education in South Western States as identified by2 (6%) of the key informants. It is worthy to note here that the key informants picked more than one options

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of the suggested effects of forms of gender based violence on the education of the girl-child and this was the reason for more than 100% result.

On what would be the recommendations of the key informants for the eradication of gender-based violence against the girl-child in tertiary institutions and secondary schools? Responding, majority of the key informants recommended intensive sensitisation and advocacies against gender-based violence in tertiary institutions and secondary schools in South Western Nigeria. The others recommended that social supports and rehabilitation should be provided for victims of gender-based violence in all educational institutions in Southern Western States to ameliorate the effect of abuses.

It is worthy of note that the findings from the qualitative research method are inline/related and confirmed the findings from the quantitative research method used in the study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of the research indicated a noteworthy incidence of gender-based violence. Majority of the perpetrators of gender-based violence are men, followed by boys. Few women and girls are perpetrators of physical and psychological violence against women and girls. Most respondents believed that gender-based violence was caused by cultural reasons. This finding is in line with the findings of (Mboho & Udoh, 2018), who claimed that cultural factors have a major effect on how women respond to violence against them. Though they felt deceived by the dehumanisation they had experienced, they choose to accept the situation as set out by their traditional culture rather than opting not to endure it. However, despite the fact that culture influences the prevalence of gender-based violence, the evil act can still be eradicated because certain cultural practices are now being pulled down in South Western Nigeria. The issue of men supremacy has reduced due to sensitisation and awareness creation in the region.

Sexual harassment was found to be the most prevalent kind of gender-based violence in the area under investigation. There was also an increase in the perception of psychological hostility. The findings also showed that there were several instances of sex trafficking and female genital mutilation, respectively. This is in line with research by (Fawole, Dagunduro, 2014) & (Obinna, Nduaguban, Orji, 2022), who found out that sexual violence was the gender-based violence type most often reported in Nigeria, with more instances than physical and emotional violence.

Other cases of gender-based violence found in the investigation included forced abortion, child marriage, intimate partner abuse, forced marriage, and female infanticide. The results of the study align with the list of gender-based violence against women provided by (Mboho&Udoh, 2018).The list includes male abuse, female genital mutilation, forced prostitution, verbal abuse, hitting or battering, rape, assault, humiliation, widowhood customs, early marriage, and human trafficking. Despite substantial financing and campaigning from government and non-governmental organisations against them, sexual harassment, psychological assault, and female genital mutilation are still common practices in Ekiti State.

The findings showed a significant relationship between the effects of gender-based violence and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality of Education). Sexual assault, psychological abuse, and sexual harassment had a negative and severe influence on equitable quality education or Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the study region. On the other hand, forced child marriage, female genital mutilation, intimate partner violence, sex trafficking, forced abortion, and female infanticide were insignificant and had no effect on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality of Education).

The results showed how gender-based violence was thought to have an influence on female students' education in the study area. According to the findings, female students in the study area most often reported experiencing lack of focus, sadness and guilt, dropping out of school, poor academic performance, and an inferiority complex among classmates as a consequence of gender-based violence.

This is due to the fact that most respondents thought the aforementioned incidents of gender-based violence were the primary reasons why they were unable to pursue higher education. This is consistent with research by (Ojemeiri, Aondover &Aruaye, 2022), who found that STDs, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, physical harm, and immediate psychological reactions like shock, shame, guilt, and anger are some of the health effects of gender-based violence that prevent girls from completing their education. Anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide thoughts, and concerns are among the long-term psychological effects. Furthermore, they claimed that other health conditions that have a detrimental influence on girls' learning include mental instability, gynaecological difficulties, miscarriage, and lifelong damage.

CONCLUSIONS

The study looked into the perception and effect of gender-based violence on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the education of girl-child in South West, Nigeria. It was concluded from the study's analysis and results that gender-based violence was common in the area under investigation and that cultural factors were likely to be its main cause. The main perpetrator of gender-based violence against women and girls were male and bots. The three main types of gender-based violence prevalent in the research region were

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sexual violence, harassment, and psychological violence. The study revealed that the main variables influencing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Equitable Quality of Education) were sexual violence, harassment, and psychological violence. Perceived impacts of gender-based violence on the education of female children in the research region included low academic performance, school dropout, inferiority complex among peers, lack of attention, feelings of shame and melancholy, and poor performance in school. Thus, comprehensive awareness and sensitisation campaigns are required to increase the resilience of girls in order to prevent the disastrous effects and consequences of gender-based violence. Enforcing legislation against gender-based violence is vital for both governmental and non-governmental entities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations.

1. Comprehensive awareness and sensitisation campaigns against gender-based violence are necessary to prevent catastrophic damages and harmful impacts, and they will also increase the resilience of girls.
2. There should be adequate enforcement of established laws on gender based violence by both government and non-governmental institutions which would strengthen war against the evil act, gender based violence.
3. All perpetrators of gender-based violence should be punished and shamed by posting their pictures and the offence committed in their towns/villages.
4. Programmes for social integration and rehabilitation geared towards victims of gender-based abuse need to exist. This will lessen the detrimental consequences that gender-based violence has on the education of girls.

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