

Examining Reporting of Gender-Based Violence Incidents by Men in Intimate Relationships in Zambia: A Case Study of Chilenje Township

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Abstract

Gender-based violence is a very habitually used phenomenon in our society. Women and men are both victims of this crime but in most cases, it turns out that majority of men experiencing gender-based violence from their intimate partners tend to shy away from reporting the gender-based incidents. Therefore, this study examined reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men in intimate relationships in Chilenje Township, Lusaka, using a simple exploratory qualitative research design. The study collected data through semi-structured interview guides from 30 men who were GBV victims. The study results revealed that men experience gender-based violence and are concerned with the depth of this problem in their communities. Forms of GBV experienced by men ranged from sexual harassment, sexual violence, physical violence, and emotional and financial to spiritual gender-based violence. Sadly, these forms of GBV incidents against men are rarely reported by men. Study respondents revealed that it is uncommon for a man to report GBV. Many reasons contribute to men not reporting the GBV incidents against them. Study participants blamed women-centered government policies as contributing factors to ever-increasing GBV against men, lack of awareness and strong cultural traditional values among men, and weak protection of male GBV victims by law enforcement agencies. The study results, therefore, provide essential insights into reporting gender-based violence incidents by men in Chilenje Township, Zambia. This evidence is necessary for developing interventions aimed at curbing GBV against men and may also suggest the need to design programmes specifically aimed to create awareness and sensitization among men.

Keywords

Gender-Based Violence, Violence against Men, Intimate Partner Violence,

Reporting of Gender-Based Violence Incidents

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) has for a long time been beamed and completely recognized as an issue that is only affecting women (Muller & Shahrokh, 2017). In current vocabulary, the term gender-based violence would simply mean addressing the abuse that women and girls go through (Big-Alabo & Itelimo, 2022). Some men are victims of violence caused by women and suffer in silence because of shame, fear, ridicule and the embarrassment that comes with admitting that they have been abused by their wives or a female intimate partner lowering the chance of such cases ever being reported (Mantey & Dzetor, 2018). While it is true that the majority of the gender experiencing gender-based violence is women caused by men (Muller & Shahrokh, 2017), we cannot run away from the fact that men too experience violence from women. According to Mbandlwa (2020), women are just as capable as men when it comes to perpetrating gender-based violence. The only difference between the two is the rate at which violence is done, women do not frequently cause harm as much as men do (Dim & Lysova, 2021).

According to Mbandlwa (2020), domestic violence against men is usually committed by a man's intimate partner. Even though there have been so many cries, petitions, walks and various activities that have been conducted in the past and the present to bring to light domestic violence against women around the world (Muller & Shahrokh, 2017), violence against men is equally a reality and is happening in every society to varying degrees (Yagi, Malette, Mwindo, & Maisha, 2022). However, it is just unfortunate that this particular violence does not get as much attention as it should. Further, a good number of literatures have shown that violence against men has been steadily rising across Africa. The increase in the number of male experiencing GBV needs serious attention. Regardless of how small the number of men going through violence is, there is every need for this type of violence to bring concern in societies. Women who face gender-based violence are highly supported globally and are given meaningful attention they deserve which is a total opposite for men. For instance, the National Gender Policy in Zambia has a provision to provide shelter to battered women while this has not been extended to men (GRZ, 2014).

Moreover, the increasing number of men who are experiencing gender-based violence at the hands of their partners should be a call for concern (Mbandlwa, 2020). In the past few years, there has been a huge shift in Zambia when it comes to gender-based violence as women are now taking the lead role and finding themselves in the spotlight of numerous crimes which are causing physical and psychological damage to the men in society (USAID, 2018). To some this might seem like an awakening by women who have faced so much abuse in the past from men and finally know their rights and are now paying them back (Lub-

bungu, 2017; Muller & Shahrokh, 2017; Big-Alabo & Itelimo, 2022), but as a matter of fact this is a criminal offence that needs to be taken seriously.

Research conducted in Zambia on gender-based violence mainly brings out the reasons on why women are abused and what type of abuse they undergo (Mumba, 2020). Interventions and support for women are clearly put across while very little to nothing is done for men, even if men too deserve compassion (Kalimaposo, Mukando, Milupi, Mubita & Hambulo, 2022). Most cases of gender-based violence are generally not reported by victims because in most instances they choose to view the situation as a private matter or too minor to warrant police arrest (World Bank Group, 2022).

Gender based violence among men has existed in our societies for a long time despite most of the research focusing on women as the only victims. This ordeal in recent times has somewhat been unclothed with the advancing of technology like the coming of various social online platforms and media houses (Kalimaposo et al., 2022). Female to male violence should be taken as serious as male to female violence is handled around the world. It has already been established that there is a high level of under reporting of GBV cases among men compared to women (Mbandlwa, 2020; Yagi et al., 2022; Kalimaposo et al., 2022). Some of which include how society views men as strong, patriarchal expectations, African culture norms making it hard to report any physical, emotional and psychological abuse they face from their female partners (Mbandlwa, 2020).

Further, recent research by Lysova, Hanson, Dixon, Douglas, Hines & Celi (2020), reveals that men have to overcome quite a number of internal and external barriers when it comes to seeking help that deals with their abuse and that has a huge impact on how cases are reported. It is for this reason that this research sought to investigate the reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men in Lusaka. The following are the specific research questions pursued in this study:

- 1) What forms of gender-based violence incidents do men experience in Chilenje Township?
- 2) To what extent do men report gender-based violence incidents to the law enforcement agency?
- 3) What are the reasons for not reporting gender-based violence to the law enforcement agency?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence is without a doubt a frequently used term to describe a form of violence existing in our society today (Mumba, 2020). According to European Union (2022), gender-based violence is a term used to cause harm to individuals and groups that are attached to a normative understanding of their gender. When the concept of “gender,” is spoken about, we cannot separate the contrast that exists between gender equality and gender inequality. We cannot

shy away from speaking about the connection that influences the two most important pillars of our society which are men and women. Gender-Based Violence also known as (GBV) has continued to be a prominent problem and a growing human rights and global public health concern that is affecting people of all age groups and sex around the world (Muller & Shahrokh, 2017). This trouble often leads to high rates of mortality, depression, morbidity, substance dependence, suicide and post-traumatic stress disorder (Taha-Thomure, Milne, Kavanagh, & Stirling, 2022).

Culture oftentimes plays an important role in generating and perpetuating GBV, as well as other countless causes that are designed by sophisticated factors functioning at various levels of an individual's life (Taha-Thomure et al., 2022). Zambia in particular has one of the world's highest rates of intimate partner violence (CEDAW, 2021), the Zambian government conceded that GBV is indeed an area of worry and that it requires immediate attention (CEDAW, 2021). According to Malik & Nadda (2019), gender-based violence takes many forms like domestic abuse which involves battering, spousal abuse, dating abuse, family violence and intimate partner violence. Other ways domestic violence is committed on men and women is through physical aggression or assault such as hitting, biting, kicking, slapping, shoving, throwing objects, battery, making threats and also through emotional abuse; sexual abuse; domineering or controlling; intimidation; stalking and economic deprivation.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

According to Maxwell (2013), theoretical framework is a structure that can hold or support a theory of the research work. Every sound research, therefore, needs a theory on which it is built. This research considers two theories that we believe relates to the concept of gender-based violence. The two are social learning theory and the power theory.

Social Learning Theory and Violence

Bandura developed the social learning theory to explain the role that violence plays in relationships. This theory posits that violence is a learned behavior and people model behaviors they have been exposed to as a child (Bandura, 1973). When it comes to the marital violence literature (Malik & Nadda, 2019), social learning theory is one of the most outstanding explanatory standpoints (Kalimaposo et al., 2022). According to Allen, Swan & Raghavan (2009), social learning theory is one of the most popular explanatory perspectives in the marital violence literature. Often conceptualized as the "cycle of violence" or "intergenerational transmission theory" when applied to the family, the theory states that people model behavior that they have been exposed to as children (Bandura, 1973). Violence is learned through role models provided by the family (parents, siblings, relatives, and boyfriends/girlfriends), either directly or indirectly (Allen, Swan, & Raghavan, 2009). Learning in human beings happens by observing how others conduct themselves and from imagining the outcomes of our actions. Modelling the actions of others is another contributory factor to learning violent

behavior (Miller, Lund, & Weatherly, 2012). Subsequently, the theory holds that the chances of a repeated abusive behavior are dependent upon reinforcement (Bandura, 1973). The theory furthermore assumes that by observing and learning, every individual is capable of having characteristics that he or she did not have in the beginning (Wareham, Boots, & Chavez, 2009). Therefore, we can say that women are just as capable as men are when it comes to perpetrating gender-based violence and this is the assumption guiding this research paper.

Power Theory

Power theorists suggest that the origins of violence are rooted not only in the culture, but also in the family structures (Straus, 1977). Gender inequality, and social acceptance of violence and family conflict, are assumed to interact, and lead to the development and maintenance of intimate partner violence. It is presumed that individuals employ violence to settle conflicts within the family and between intimate partners, because this way of addressing conflicts has been learned in childhood by either witnessing or experiencing physical abuse (Straus, 1977). Power theorists suggest that power imbalances between partners may increase tension within the family unit and consequently increase the risk of intimate partner violence (Cascardi & Vivian, 1995; Leonard & Senchak, 1996; Sargrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1999; Mihalic & Elliott, 2005). The power and control theory goes on to state that in a relationship if a couple is able to share power equally then chances of such a couple having conflicts are low and even if they have a dispute they will not turn to violence. On the contrary where one spouse yearns for control and power in a relationship more than the other, such a spouse may end up using abuse in a case of a disagreement and even harm the other by use of inappropriate actions (Mihalic & Elliott, 2005).

2.3. Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence amongst Men in Zambia

Literature addressing gender-based violence amongst men in Zambia is very inadequate and nearly unreal, unlike at global and continental level which have strived to bring to light this injustice against men. Gender based violence is very present and continues to affect so many lives in Zambia. According to the *Zambia Police (2022)*, there were a total number of 7920 cases that involved gender-based violence reported to the police, in the fourth quarter of 2021. Lusaka province had the highest records in terms of GBV reports which totaled to 1004 cases representing (20.3%). The women's reported cases totaled to 4790 representing a (60.5%) and men's reported cases totaled to 1316 representing (16.5%) of those abused throughout the country. The forms of violence consisted of physical violence 3055 cases representing (61.7%), 881 cases of sexual violence representing (17.8%), 728 cases classified as economic violence representing (14.7%) and 272 cases of emotional abuse representing (5.5%) (*Zambia Police, 2022*).

The ODI and Frontiers Group teams conducted research on gender-based violence in 2015 in Chingola, Kalomo, Mpika, Mumbwa, Monze, and Nyimba. This was qualitative research comprised of district key informant interview guide. The findings from the research presented from the interviews revealed

that men can and do also experience GBV (Overseas Development Institute, 2016). However, it was reported that the patriarchal system present in Zambia means that men are required to show their masculinity; which means they have to display signs of being tough, not being fragile and should not shed tears unnecessarily. This makes it extremely challenging for certain men to even consider reporting such a case to the law enforcement because they are scared of being stigmatized (ODI, 2016). Further, the study observed that regardless of how great the occurrence of GBV is, most cases still go unreported particularly in a case that involves a man being physically abused by a woman.

Mundando (2015), equally conducted qualitative research and took an exploratory-descriptive design and used purposive sampling on men and women in Choma. This study consisted of 21 married men and 59 married women respectively. The research study also used an interview guide and focus group discussion guide to collect data, respectively. The research revealed that because women were poorly supported financially by their husbands this led to hostile behavior such as not cooking, not doing laundry and not cleaning. Almost all 29 women participants who claimed poor financial help from their husbands agreed that this withdrawal of services was to punish their husbands for failing to provide for their families. This lack of providing for the family also led to wives denying their husbands sex and some men were beaten by their wives (Mundando, 2015).

Lubbungu (2017) conducted a mixed method research to merely hear views of what could possibly be reason for the dramatic shift in gender-based violence between the first quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2017. The research used a descriptive design which used questionnaires and unstructured interviews for data collection among a sample size of 250 participants. The findings of this research revealed that infidelity (Extra-marital relationships) as one of the reasons for increased Gender based violence. The participants narrated that when a woman suspects or finds out that their partner is having an extra marital affair with another woman they tend to react badly. This is because women by nature do not like to share their partners with anyone, hence the minute they do, some tend to inflict physical injuries on their partners others even end up killing them.

The literature review above has shown that efforts to discuss gender-based violence among men has been made from the global level to local level even though there is hardly any research that looks at the reporting patterns of men to law enforcement authorities who face gender-based violence especially from their intimate partners. Gender-based violence among men exists in many societies around the world including Zambia and the following studies have acknowledged that fact (Dim & Lysova, 2021; Aliyu et al., 2015; Lysova, 2016; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019). The above literatures, however, mainly focused on the prevalence of GBV in Zambia, causes or types of abuse that men mostly face. The literatures did not bring out the aspect of how men deal with this abuse and whether reports are actually made or not.

2.4. Attitudes of Male Victims of Violence

Some scholars have focused on the attitudes of male victims of gender-based violence. For instance, Mantey & Dzeter (2018) conducted research and disclosed that the attitudes of men who are in abusive relationships displays apathy, low self-esteem and reluctance to report cases of violence to law enforcement agencies. The results from the field data also pointed out that societal prejudice, power relations and low self-esteem usually hinders male victim from seeking help every time they are faced with violent matrimonial situations (Ramsay, 2015). Other scholars revealed that a number of male victims did not actually want their relationships with their partners to end but for the abuse to stop (Le Mat, Kosar-Altinyelken, Bos, & Volman, 2019). Male victims of gender-based violence are reported to be believed by society for what they go through (Zinyemba & Hlongwana, 2022), which might be as a result make men to be viewed as perpetrators rather than victims (Ramsay, 2015). These cultural norms have placed standards of how men should respond to gender-based violence which has attributed to low reporting of GBV cases (Bates, 2019).

Research by Douglas & Hines (2011), revealed that a number of men who have reached out to domestic abuse hotlines or agencies experienced a variety of negative responses like agencies only help women and men were ignored and treated as perpetrators. Male victims who experience such type of unfair treatment are most likely not going to report future cases of violence and intensify their feelings of helplessness, isolation and nowhere to go for support (Zinyemba & Hlongwana, 2022). Furthermore, throughout history a good number of work that surrounds exploring men's experiences in abusive situations have always tilted towards the influence that it has on impairing societal expectations and the stereotypes surrounding masculinity as being important (Malik & Nadda, 2019; Yagi et al., 2022). For instance, in some interviews conducted with men who happen to be victims of violence, the idea and assumptions of men to be strong, dominant, in control of their emotions, stoic and able to cope on their own were dominant in the responses (Yagi et al., 2022). These views have significant impact on how men see themselves as victims or if at all they even acknowledged their victimization (European Union, 2022). Men see themselves as weak for "becoming a GBV victim" and have expressed how society might see them as victims when they are often categorized as abusers (Le Mat et al., 2019). According to Wallace (2019), therefore, lack of recognition has prevented men's ability to acknowledge and admit their abuse which means that there is limited knowledge on services to provide, as there are very low numbers of men reaching out for support.

3. Methods

This study examined reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men in intimate relationships in Chilenje Township, using a simple exploratory qualitative research design guided by the epistemology theoretical approach (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu, & AbuBakar, 2015). In exploratory design, the research is designed to

deal with fresh challenges on which very little or no prior research has been done (Aliyu et al., 2015). Lastly this design method was selected because the topic under study needed to be thoroughly understood. The study strategy was complemented by the desktop research design in which relevant documents were reviewed.

Participants

The study was conducted in Chilenje Township located in Lusaka, Zambia. Chilenje township was selected purposively because it is within a city that reported a high number of gender-based violence cases. The participants in this study were male victims of gender-based violence residing in Chilenje Township. The study targeted males who have experienced gender-based violence to ensure that the perspectives provided by the participants were original based on their own personal experiences. All participants voluntarily participated in the study after the study had been well explained to them and subsequently signed informed consent forms.

Participant Selection

The participants were identified and selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The initial identification of the participants was done at the police station and through the centers where GBV victims go for counselling. In-depth interviews took place in the public places, specifically in spaces preferred by the respondents.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, using an interview guide which allowed for follow-ups, probes and spontaneous questions. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were considered most suitable given the exploratory nature of the study to conversationally elicit personal experiences on the research subject. The researchers conducted data collection, compiled field notes and transcribed the data.

The transcribed data were analysed using thematic data analysis. It is argued that thematic analysis is a method that can be used within a range of epistemologies and research questions to identify, analyse, organize, describe and report themes discovered within a data set (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu, & AbuBakar, 2015). It is also useful in highlighting similarities, differences and generating anticipated insights when examining the participants' perspective and producing a clear report.

Further, a codebook was developed after reading all the transcripts as part of familiarization with the data, a necessary step to qualitative data analysis. The coding process assisted in making sense of the data and identifying themes and sub-themes. The data was then analysed into themes and sub-themes using epistemology theoretical approach. Epistemology clarifies how researchers acquire the truth or knowledge, as it is a theory of knowledge of what can be known and the criteria used to justify if being knowable (Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu, & AbuBakar, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

The study obtained clearance from the University of Lusaka ethics committee. All potential participants were fully informed about the study prior to signing informed consent forms. Participation was strictly voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all the study participants and the names used to references their verbatim quotes are not real names, but pseudonyms.

Limitations

The researcher's limited familiarity with the setting did not place her in good standing for recruiting information-rich participants that would help us deepen our understanding of the phenomenon. The fact that the researcher was a young female who interviewed males may have rendered the study prone to social desirability bias. However, this was mitigated through a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study and the value of truthfulness. While efforts were made to document the study processes correctly, the transferability of findings may have been affected by the sampling and recruitment strategy weaknesses.

4. Results

Three main themes and eight sub-themes emerged from the analysis (Table 1), and these varied from intrapersonal to interpersonal issues. A total number of 30 respondents were interviewed, with 57% having had tertiary education. In contrast, 23% and 20% had secondary and primary education levels, respectively (Table 2). Half (50%) of the participants were married, with single and divorced constituting 30% and 20%, respectively (Table 2). More than half (53%) of the participants were in employment, while 33% and 13% were self-employed and unemployed, respectively (Table 2).

Forms of gender-based violence incidents do men experience in Chilenje Township

There was a convergence of views among participants in that GBV against men is a huge problem, not only in Chilenje Township but also in Zambia. Participants shared stories of different forms of GBV incidents that men experience. The GBV forms mentioned include sexual harassment, sexual violence, physical violence, and emotional, financial and spiritual gender-based violence.

My wife believes that denying me sex is a good punishment to me. Usually, most of time sex is used as a bargaining tool especially when she wants money or

Table 1. Main themes and Sub-themes from the data analysis.

Forms of gender-based violence incidents do men experience in Chilenje Township	Forms of GBV, GBV problem in Zambia,
The extent to which men report gender-based violence incidents to the law enforcement agency	When men report incidents of GBV, the likelihood of reporting GBV incidents to relevant authorities
Reasons for not reporting gender-based violence to the law enforcement agency	Love, fear and shame, men are strong, traditional or culture

Table 2. Participants profile.

Characteristics	Number	%
Level of education		
Primary	6	20
Secondary	7	23
Tertiary	17	57
Marital Status		
Single	9	30
Married	15	50
Divorced	6	20
Employment status		
Self-employed	10	33
Employed	16	53
Unemployed	4	13

something from me. This usually causes a lot problem in our marriage. I suffer mental torture and when I am thinking of going out to find someone else it becomes a big problem because I would be considered as a liar. (Respondent 4, married, employed).

You I will tell you one thing. I am a taxi driver (hahahaha) and being a driver sometimes am called at awkward hours when there are emergencies, for example two weeks ago, I was called by client who arrived from abroad 2 am to drive to the airport to pick him up but my wife could not understand. She accused me of having connived with some friends of mine to call me so that I can go and see my girlfriend. She complained and complained until I just decided to go without her approval. Now that did not sit well with her, she was upset with the whole day for wrong reasons, such as suspicions, she couldn't wash for me and prepare my clothes for work...when i knock off, I would find no food, not even a welcome greeting, i have to cook for myself while she watches "Pali on the television". (Respondent 2, married, Self-employed).

My wife used to shout at me on top of her voice and in front of my children. Sometime could call me names such as foolish, and calls me dog. I feel very bad and useless even embarrassed. Later on, I just decided to divorce her and now I am free and living happy life with my sister. (Respondent 20, Self-employed, divorced).

Participants were also of the view that women are capable of killing men when they are angry. The respondents further emphasised the point that gender-based violence against men should not be treated as a small problem in our society because a lot of men are being abused by women.

Men are suffering in these relationships you are seeing and some women can even kill you. For example, in my house, my wife gets really mad at me when I come from drinking and she beats me. One time she got a knife and threatened

to cut my throat but I overpowered her and grabbed the knife from her, it was such a bad evening, my children were traumatized. (Respondent 25, employed, married man).

Extent to which men report gender-based violence incidents to the law enforcement agency

When asked if it is common practice for men to report gender-based violence cases to the police in the community of Chilenje, respondents did not agree with that statement. Some respondents believed that it is uncommon for a man to report GBV to the police due to stigmatization and continuation of masculine stereotypes which leads to GBV against men to be often under reported and not acknowledged.

It is not common for men to report, personally I have never thought of doing that. You know man is a man. It is unheard of in our family to hear of a man being manhandled by a woman. Lately it used to be a tube but now you hear someone has been beaten by his wife. Usually, friends would even laugh at you. So, I think because of all those societal perceptions it is not common to see a man going to the police. (Respondent 4, married, employed).

However, other respondents believed it is perfectly okay for a man to report a GBV incident to the police because violence against any human being whether perpetrated by a man or woman is a crime that needs people to be reported. They also believed that men too are human beings that feel pain, therefore, reporting perpetrators is the best option.

Yes, it is okay to report, you know things I have changed. we all human beings capable of doing anything, my partner is capable of harming me and when she does, I don't think I should just sit and watch her. No -- no -- no...she has to be reported. Me I can even leave her alone in that relationship, why should be with someone is capable of killing me. (Respondent 15, Single, unemployed).

Further, when asked to what extent do men report GBV? Respondents expressed mixed reactions. Some respondents mentioned that a man will only report a case of violence to the police when his life is at risk and when the situation is beyond control.

We only hear of reports when a man has been harmed, but it is a different case with women. For cases relating to women, we hear them immediately. I tell you there are a lot of GBV incidents against men that are not being reported. But when it concerns life and death you will hear it being reported. Last week my friend shared an experience of his brother who was physically harmed by his wife and how they rushed to the house to chase the wife. (Respondent 1, Married, employed)

A man will report violence when it goes to the extreme⁹. In my case, I reported my wife to her family, after several warnings. We then later divorced. (Respondent 20, Divorced, employed)

It was also revealed that gender-based violence against men is only reported when physical injuries are visible such as a man being assaulted or stabbed to death.

You see how my eye is looking, three days ago, when I knocked off from work, I found that my wife was still drinking at the bar and when I went to fetch her, she called the bar attendant and other guys to beat me up and I was badly beaten. Where you see me here, I have a medical report and I want to go and report my wife to the police. Because this is not the first time, she has done this, last time she hit me with a log and I sustained a deep cut on my forehead. Even I am to hide and lie about, it is hard for me to do it. I just have to report her. (Respondent 18, self-employed, married).

Reasons for not reporting gender-based violence to the law enforcement agency

When asked why men do not report cases of gender-based violence to the police. Some respondents revealed that some men are in love with their partners and find it very difficult to report if and when they are abused. Further some respondents indicated that they fear of being laughed at by friends and the community.

Because people in the community have a tendency of laughing at men who are experiencing gender-based violence at the hands of a woman (respondent 16, employed, single man).

On the other hand, some respondents revealed that when they decide to report a case of gender-based violence, they are not taken seriously by the police officers. One respondent narrated situation where police officers at times would make a joke about a male victim predicament before taking their statement which tends to put men off.

The police officers sometimes do take men seriously especially if no physical harm is seen. Police officer can laugh at you when you go with a small issue. Maybe this should change, the society as whole should start taking GBV cases against men serious and we all have rights. (Respondent 13, self-employed, married).

We as man have no one who is protecting us but women, the government protects them. The police take them seriously. So, reporting as a man is just time wasting (Respondent 23, employed, divorced).

Other respondent highlighted that cultural or traditional systems. Men grow up in a society where that they are brought up believing that they are the strongest. This makes them feel special and rarely to report cases of gender-based violence.

Men find it hard to believe when they experience violence which makes it even hard to open up to others; traditionally or culturally we live in a patriarchal society which places men above women, so it is very difficult to imagine a man being mistreated by a woman and some might consider it a taboo. (Respondent 30, Self-employed, married).

Usually abused men face a great amount of stigma so reporting can be a challenge for some. Men from an early age are taught to be strong so even when faced with issues of abuse that is why some choose to still man up and pretend as if everything is okay. (Respondent 3, Employed, married).

5. Discussion

The research examined the reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men in Lusaka. The following research questions were pursued in this study: what forms of gender-based violence incidents do men experience in Chilenje Township? To what extent do men report gender-based violence incidents to the law enforcement agency? Why do not report gender-based violence to law enforcement agencies? The research established that gender-based violence does occur in Lusaka among the male folk, and the community is aware of it. Even though it was hard for some men to openly admit to experiencing GBV first-hand from their intimate partners (who are female), other respondents did admit to having a friend or knowing someone close who has gone through first-hand abuse. The study revealed that men experience gender-based violence and are concerned with the depth of this problem in their communities. Forms of GBV experienced by men ranged from sexual harassment, sexual violence, physical violence, and emotional and financial to spiritual gender-based violence. These findings agree with the study by [Mundando \(2015\)](#), who equally conducted qualitative research and took an exploratory-descriptive design and used purposive sampling on men and women in Choma. This study consisted of 21 married men and 59 married women, respectively. The findings further confirm ([Thobejane & Luthada, 2019](#)) acknowledgement that gender-based violence among men exists in various forms in many societies worldwide, including Zambia.

Sadly, these forms of GBV incidents against men are rarely reported by men. Study respondents revealed that it is uncommon for a man to report GBV to the police due to stigmatization and continuation of masculine stereotypes, leading to GBV against men being often underreported and not acknowledged. According to [Malik & Nadda \(2019\)](#) and [Yagi et al. \(2022\)](#), throughout history, a good number of work that surrounds exploring men's experiences in abusive situations have always tilted towards its influence on it impairing societal expectations and the stereotypes surrounding masculinity as being important. For instance, [Yagi et al. \(2022\)](#) conducted some interviews with men who happened to be victims of violence. The idea and assumptions of men being strong, dominant, in control of their emotions, stoic and able to cope independently were dominant in the responses. These views significantly impact how men see themselves as victims or if they even acknowledge their victimization ([ODI, 2016](#)). Furthermore, respondents from this study also revealed that it is perfectly okay for a man to report a GBV incident to the police because violence against any human being, whether perpetrated by a man or woman, is a crime that needs people to be reported. However, other participants believed that gender-based violence against men could only be reported when physical injuries are visible such as a man being assaulted or stabbed to death.

Many reasons contribute to men not reporting the GBV incidents against them. These reasons are embedded in several factors, such as cultural and traditional practices, gender inequalities and discrimination. Study participants blamed

women-centred government policies as contributing factors to ever-increasing GBV against men, lack of awareness and strong cultural traditional values among men, and weak protection of male GBV victims by law enforcement agencies. Culture as a critical factor in GBV was supported by the findings of Le Mat et al., which indicated that cultural factors are usually used as an excuse for violent behaviours, consistent with our findings (Le Mat, Kosar-Altinyelken, Bos, & Volman, 2019). The study participants in our study asserted that men grow up in a society where they are brought up believing that they are the strongest. This makes them feel special, and they rarely report gender-based violence cases. A study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal revealed that some men belonging to the Zulu nation used culture to justify their patriarchal practices (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Culture has generally been used to justify power imbalances, often resulting in GBV (Zinyemba & Hlongwana, 2022), a phenomenon continuously reinforced by the patriarchal value system. These cultural norms have placed standards on how men should respond to gender-based violence, attributed to low reporting of GBV cases (Bates, 2019).

6. Strengths

This study makes an essential contribution to the body of evidence in Zambia on GBV from a men's perspective since most studies are female-focused. The study aimed to examine the reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men in Lusaka. The study targeted males who have experienced gender-based violence, thereby making our observations and other data collected full of participants real experience from their perspective.

7. Contribution of Evidence-Based Research

There is a paucity of data on reporting gender-based violence incidents by men in Zambia. The study findings can guide the government and stakeholders on the design strategies to reduce GBV, both against women and men.

8. Conclusion

The study results provide essential insights into reporting gender-based violence incidents by men in Chilenje Township, Zambia. These results revealed that forms of GBV experienced by men ranged from sexual harassment, sexual violence, physical violence, and emotional and financial to spiritual gender-based violence. However, several factors, such as cultural and traditional practices, gender inequalities and discrimination, work against men's rights to report the incidents of GBV against them. While there is a large body of evidence on GBV in Zambia broadly, there is a paucity of evidence on the reporting of gender-based violence incidents by men; hence this study aimed to develop these data using qualitative research methods. This evidence is necessary for developing interventions aimed at curbing GBV against men and may also suggest the need to redesign programmes targeting men so that certain stereotypes can be uprooted.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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