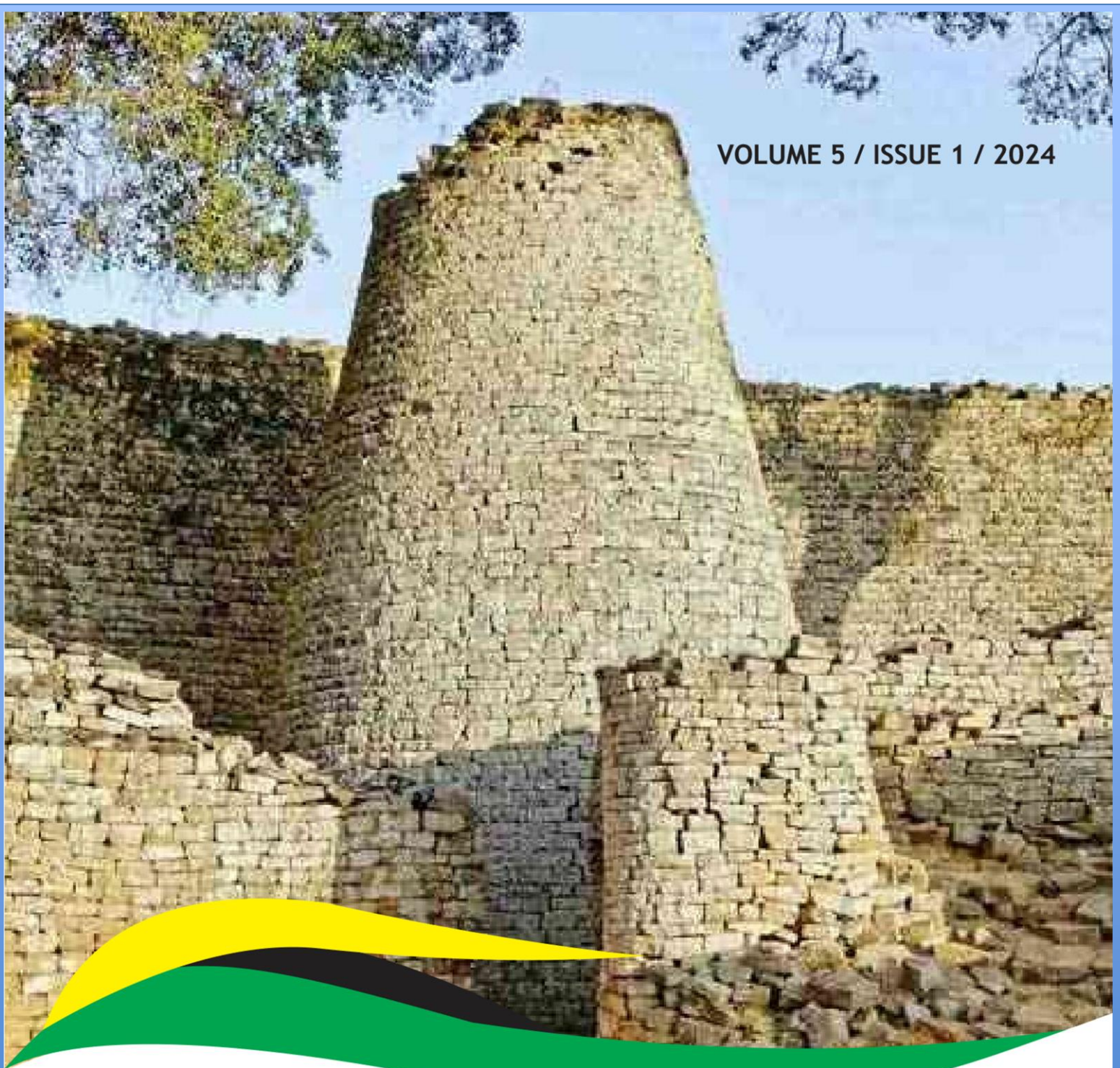


VOLUME 5 / ISSUE 1 / 2024



# Dzimbahwe Special Issue

**GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY / UNESCO CONFERENCE  
ON INTERVENTIONS TO PREVENT AND TACKLE GENDER-  
BASED VIOLENCE, DRUG ABUSE, STIS AND UNINTENDED  
PREGNANCIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN  
MASVINGO PROVINCE**

**Date: 29 August 2024**

**Venue: Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education, GZU**

Book of Abstracts

Edited by

V. Z. Nyawo, T. M. Maravanyika and C. P. Mudzengi

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## Preface

This book contains abstracts of all papers presented at the GZU / UNESCO conference on 'Interventions to Prevent and Tackle Gender-Based Violence, Drug Abuse, STIS and Unintended Pregnancies in Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province' on the 29th of August 2024. The conference took place at the Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education at Great Zimbabwe University. A total of 50 papers were presented by contributors from 16 institutions that included: Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo Polytechnic, Midlands State University, University of Johannesburg, Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Africa University, University of Eswatini, Bondolfi Teachers College, University of Namibia, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Women University in Africa, University of Zimbabwe, Mpilo Center of Excellence, Zimbabwe Open University, Lupane State University, Zhejiang Gongshang University and others. The audience consisted of students, lecturers and non-academic staff from diverse institutions.

The conference presentations took place in 4 breakout groups – each breakout group had a total of 14 presenters. A panel discussion on '**Gender-based violence (GBV) and drug and substance abuse in tertiary institutions**' was organized towards the end of the conference. Panel members included: Mr Redemption Chivorese – Saywhat? Prof H. Zirima – GZU Deputy Dean Simon Mazorodze School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Mr O. Simbo - GZU Dean of Students, Dr E. Zvobgo – GZU Director Nehanda Gender Center. The panel presentations raised educative discussions by listeners.

Select papers will be edited, peer reviewed and published under Dzimbahwe Journal as a book.

We would like to thank the two originators of the conference idea and call for papers Prof V. Z. Nyawo, Director Postgraduate and Publications as well as Dr Munatsi Shoko, UNESCO Representative Masvingo Province. Dr Munatsi availed a special funding opportunity for the conference to happen just before he moved from UNESCO. Special mention goes to all participants, UNESCO team, members of the conference organizing committee and the kitchen staff. The Great Zimbabwe University Management, especially the Executive is appreciated for supporting the conference effort.

From the Conference Organizing Committee

Prof V. Z. Nyawo  
Dr T. Maravanyika  
Dr C. P. Mudzengi

## **Organizing Committee**

- Prof. Vongai Z. Nyawo
- Dr. Claris Princes Mudzengi
- Dr. Tendayi Maravanyika

ZOOM Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85888832178?pwd=vGKSWPFGwAdqu66lalBZseKVYGO51T.1>



**TO PREVENT AND TACKLE GENDER-  
DRUG ABUSE, STIs AND UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN  
MASVINGO PROVINCE**

**INTERVENTIONS  
BASED VIOLENCE,**

**Date: 29 August 2024  
Venue: Great Zimbabwe University  
Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education**

ZOOM Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85888832178?pwd=vGKSWPFGwAdqu66lalBZseKVYGO51T.1>

**29 August 2024**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SESSION / ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FACILITATOR</b>
0700 - 0815	Technical systems set up and registration, <i>GZU IT</i>	Prof Vongai Z. Nyawo
0815 - 0820	National Anthem, <i>GZU IT</i>	
0820 - 0825	University Prayer by the Registrar Great Zimbabwe University <i>Great Zimbabwe University Registrar, Dr S. Gwatidzo</i>	
0825 - 0830	Introductions and housekeeping <i>Director Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof V.Z. Nyawo</i>	
0830 - 0850	Objectives of the Conference and Overview of the O3PLUS Project <i>Associate National Professional Officer: Education, Health and Well Being , UNESCO, Ms Tendayi Katsande</i>	
0850 – 0940	<b>KEYNOTE SPEECH:</b> <b>Strategies for presenting sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies in tertiary institutions</b> <i>Executive Dean Simon Mazorodze School of Medical and Health Sciences, Prof J. Mufunda</i>	
0940 - 1000	Welcome Remarks <i>Vice Chancellor Great Zimbabwe University, Prof R. J. Zvobgo</i>	
<b>1000 - 1030</b>	<b>Tea Break</b>	

<b>TIME</b>	<b>Break Out Group 1 Sub theme <i>Gender Based Violence (GBV)</i> Chairperson: <i>Dr I. Nyambiya</i></b>	<b>Break Out Group 2 Sub Theme <i>Drug and substance abuse</i> Chairperson: <i>Dr K. Nyoni</i></b>	<b>Break Out Group 3 Sub Theme <i>Sexually Transmitted infections (STIs)</i> Chairperson: <i>Dr E. Choto</i></b>	<b>Break Out Group 4 Sub Theme <i>Unwanted pregnancies</i> Chairperson: <i>Dr N. Landa</i></b>
1030 - 1045	An analysis of the legislative and policy frameworks for the prevention of gender-based violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province. <i>Douglas Musebenzi</i>	Drug and alcohol abuse: A case of five Higher and Tertiary Education in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. <i>Tapiwa Mudyahoto &amp; Emilia Ndapandula Mbongo</i>	The football arena: A death trap to college and university students in Masvingo. <i>Jabulani Moyo</i>	Exploring Strategies for Preventing Unwanted Pregnancies among Unmarried Female students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. A case of Masvingo Province. <i>Joburg Mahuyu</i>
1045-1100	Exploring Gender-based violence against male students at a	'Making Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions boundaries and gates non-porous for drug use and	The role of healthcare providers in promoting STI prevention and awareness among Tertiary	Exploring HTEI policies and regulations: Initiatives to prevent

	university in Masvingo Province: underreported <b>Munyaradzi Chidarikire &amp; Farai Chinobva</b>	trafficking.’ Insights from peer educators at selected institutions in Masvingo <b>Emmanuel Maziti &amp; Chenjerai Muwaniki</b>	Education level students in Masvingo. <b>Sam Takawira, Sibusisiwe Moyo, Alphiuous. T Mugari, Tasunungurwa Matinhira, Nellie Maziya &amp; Herbert Zirima</b>	unwanted pregnancy among students in Masvingo Province. <b>Emerge Masiya &amp; Martison Nhamo</b>
1100-1115	Sexual harassment in Masvingo province in Zimbabwe: a case of a higher and tertiary education institution. <b>Ellen F. Zvobgo &amp; Daniel Mawerel</b>	Utilizing library spaces for promoting mental health and substance abuse information resources: A case study of HTEI's in Masvingo Province. <b>Admore Mashokoh, Kunedzimwe Francisca &amp; Beula Goroba</b>	Of Hyena-riding and Forging of identities: Garnishing the front stage and concealing the back stage— Campus sex behaviour in Institutions of Higher Learning. <b>Andrew Mutingwende</b>	Community radio stations and Unwanted Pregnancies: Education and awareness raising initiatives in Masvingo Province. <b>Emerge Masiya &amp; Servious Hanyani Furumele</b>
1115-1130	Gender-Based Violence and Academic Freedom in Higher Education in Zimbabwe: A Critical Feminist Analysis. <b>Simon Vurayai</b>	Lived experiences of Higher and Tertiary Education students struggling with drug and substance abuse in Muccheke Township, Masvingo <b>Chenjerai Muwaniki &amp; Emmanuel Maziti</b>	Perceptions on the use of condoms as a contraceptive method by students: a case study of HTEI's in Masvingo Province. <b>Alibeti Vushe</b>	The Impact of Unwanted Pregnancies on the Academic Performance and Mental Health of Female Students in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province. <b>Christine Khumalo</b>
1130-1145	Gender Based Violence as a Problem that Affects Students in Higher Education Institutions in Masvingo Province: Moral Philosophical Reflections. <b>Alois Rutsviga</b>	The prevalence and possible abatement of drug and substance abuse among university students in Masvingo Province. <b>Nozipho Ndebele</b>	From Risk to Resilience: Strengthening STI Prevention Efforts among High-Risk Engaging Individuals in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo Province. <b>Lorraine Connick &amp; Lydia Chipfupi</b>	Unexpected pregnancies: Insights from 2nd year students on teaching practice. <b>Gladys Nhamburo &amp; Miro Masvosva</b>
1145-1200	Exploring the Prevalence and Perpetuation of Gender-Based Violence amongst students in Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo: A case of one local university. <b>Govathy Charamba &amp; Munyaradzi Chidarikire</b>	‘It Wasn’t Easy’: Unpacking the Everyday Experiences and Recovery Journeys of Substance Users in Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo. <b>Sylvester Dombo &amp; Pauline Chiripanhura</b>	Promoting a culture of respect, equality and safety to curb domestic violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo province. <b>Susan Kasonde</b>	Preventing unwanted pregnancies among students in HTEIs in Zimbabwe: Lessons from on - campus health - expo services provision. <b>Winie Machiyeni &amp; Stella Chikasha</b>

1200-1215	Students' perception on sexual harassment as gender-based-violence. A case of two higher learning institutions in Masvingo. <i>Etwin Machibaya</i>	Indexing the Misery of Drug Abuse among Students in Higher and Tertiary Institutes of Masvingo Province. <i>Prince Chimonero</i>	The role and effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission in ending sexual harassment in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. <i>Musavengana Machaya</i>	Inadvertent reproductive responsibilities by Masvingo tertiary students: uncovering gender disparities in costs incurred. <i>Lilian Manwa, Lokadhia Manwa &amp; Molyn Mpofo</i>
1215-1230	Developing a Checklist and Guidance Model for Implementing a Strategic Approach to Gender-based Violence Preclusion in Institutions of Higher Education in Masvingo Province. <i>Ephraim Chifamba</i>	Prevention Strategies That Can Be Adopted to Prevent Drug and Substance Abuse in HTEIs Masvingo Province. <i>Richard Chingovo &amp; Fortunate Sengai</i>	<b>Gender Based Violence</b>	<b>Drug and Substance Abuse</b>
			Gender-Based Violence in Tertiary Institutions: Forms, Causes, and Possible Intervention Strategies in Selected Institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. <i>Excellent Chireshe &amp; Esther Humbe</i>	Hegemonic masculinities and drug abuse in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province. <i>Martin Charambira, Faith Sithole &amp; Wilfred Chinho</i>
1230-1245	Chatbot Support System for tackling Gender Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. <i>Monica Madyembwa</i>	The Attitudes of Students Towards Drug Abuse: Insights from Universities in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. <i>Annalisah Muzenda, Joyce Machigere, Taygeta L. Zihwi, Nyasha L. Shambare &amp; Herbert Zirima</i>	Towards a Gender-Based Violence-Free Academic Environment: Investigating the impact of a Customized Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) in Zimbabwe. <i>Shepherd Gudyani, Tamuka Davira &amp; H. Jaka</i>	Unveiling the Undercurrents: Drug and Substance Abuse Among Students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. <i>Lydia Chipfupi &amp; Lorraine Connick</i>
1245-1300	Innovative mechanisms for preventing Gender Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province". <i>Paul Sambo</i>	An exploration of the role of VPA activities in curbing drug and substance abuse. A case study of Tertiary institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. <i>Givewell Munyaradzi, Joseph George Mupondi &amp; Dairai Dziwa</i>	Gender Relations Influencing Sexual and Gender Based Violence at Selected Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. <i>Nyevero Maruzani; Ngonidzashe Jemwa &amp; Nicholas Aribino</i>	Experiences of students with disabilities in accessing drug and substance abuse education in selected higher and tertiary institutions in Masvingo. <i>Tatenda Dohwe &amp; F. Mlambo</i>
1300-1400	<b>LUNCH</b>			
1400-1415	Exploring the Forms and Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary	Leveraging the Creative Industries as a Mediation Communication Strategy for the Reduction of Drug and	Mechanisms for the prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions	Prevalence of Drug and Substance Abuse in Higher and Tertiary

	Education Institutions in Masvingo: Implications for Policy and Prevention Strategies. <i>Ngoni P Jemwa &amp; Nyevero Maruzani</i>	Substance Abuse Among Students and Staff at Great Zimbabwe State University: A Musical Theatre Project. <i>Isaac Chidaura &amp; Innocent Mwapangira</i>	in Masvingo Province: Promoting Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments. <i>Ngoni Jemwa</i>	Education Institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe <i>Farai Chinangure &amp; Sandra Chinhema</i>
1415-1430	Phenomenological approach to explore how survivors of sexual harassment comprehend and interpret their lived experiences. <i>F Chinangure, E Sibanda &amp; N Nkomo</i>	Development of an AI powered Chatbot to Address Substance Abuse among University Students. <i>Akim Munthali &amp; Kumbirai Makaruke</i>	Survivors in an unsafe space: stories of gender - based violence in tertiary institutions in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. Can we speak out? <i>Nogget Matope &amp; Wonder Muchabaiwa</i>	Addressing the prevalence of drug and substance abuse in Higher and Tertiary Education institutions: the case of Masvingo. <i>Konyana Shoorai</i>
1430-1445	Interventions to prevent and tackle gender-based violence, drug abuse, stis and unintended pregnancies in tertiary institutions in Masvingo Province. An Overview. <i>Vongai Nyawo, Clarice P. Mudzengi, &amp; Tendayi Maravanyika</i>	Chatbot Support System for tackling Gender Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. <i>Monica Madyembwa</i>	“I am Helpless and Petrified”: Lived experiences of fourth-year female students on gender-based violence at a selected university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. <i>Ephraim Chifamba</i>	Combating Drug Peddling, Abuse and Addiction among Students and Staff in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province. <i>Paul Sambo &amp; Monica Madyembwa</i>
1445-1515	<b>HEALTH BREAK</b>			
1515-1545	Panel discussion on gender-based violence (GBV) and drug and substance abuse in tertiary institutions Mr Redemption Chivorese (Saywhat), Dr M. Shoko (UNESCO), Prof H. Zirima (GZU), Mr O. Simbo (GZU Dean of Students), Dr E, Zvobgo (GZU)			Dr Clarice. P Mudzengi
1545-1600	Vote of thanks			Dr Sinikiwe Gwatidzo

## **GZU/ UNESCO Conference Abstracts**

### **Sub-Theme: Gender Based Violence**

#### **Interventions to Prevent and Tackle Gender-Based Violence, Drug Abuse, STIS and Unintended Pregnancies in Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province: An Overview - V. Z. Nyawo, C. P. Mudzengi and T. Maravanyika**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Great Zimbabwe University

The paper provides a synthesis of research conducted by various stakeholders to tackle gender based violence, drug and substance abuse, STIs and unintended pregnancies in higher and tertiary institutions (HTIs) in Masvingo Province. These issues are critical as they influence performance of students in tertiary education institution and their success and failure later in life - post the education phase. The different studies employed a myriad of approaches including literature reviews, desk studies, action oriented approaches, qualitative and quantitative surveys and observations. Some studies were descriptive in nature and unveiled the breadth and depth of the problems faced around the four key focal themes. Others, in addition, implemented innovative interventions in an action-oriented-fashion (e.g. the use of ICTs in preventing gender based violence in this) and show case the pros and cons of the different strategies used under the four themes. From these studies, it is clear that there is hope for HTIs in Masvingo Province – what is now needed going forward is for the successful innovations to be up scaled in the province and the nation at large.

**Keywords:** GBV, drug and substance abuse, STIs and Unintended Pregnancies

#### **A Comparative Analysis of the Legislative and Policy Frameworks for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province with South Africa - D. Musebenzi**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Great Zimbabwe

Gender-based violence is a worldwide occurrence that distresses women undesirably, including women in higher education and tertiary institutions. The menace of gender-based violence is increasing in Zimbabwe notwithstanding the substantial consideration and increasing awareness of gender-based violence. The consequences of gender-based violence in academic cultures are severe particularly for women who bear the brunt of the menace. Zimbabwe has ratified a number of international and regional instruments which identify the importance of curbing gender-based violence in order to contribute to gender equality. Even though the enactment of several gender-responsive laws and policies, such as the Domestic Violence Act of 2007, women and girls in Zimbabwe, continue to be the victims in 99% of gender-based violence including those in higher and tertiary education institutions. Does Zimbabwe have a strengthened legal and policy framework that sufficiently prevents incidences of GBV at gender based violence including those women in higher and tertiary education institutions? The research aimed to critically analyse the legislative and policy frameworks the prevention on gender-based violence in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province with a comparative of South Africa. The research adopted the descriptive and comparative perspectives. The descriptive method was used to examine the current status of the legislative and policy frameworks on the prevention of gender based violence in higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe. A comparative analysis of how the South African legislative and policy frameworks on the prevention of gender based violence higher and tertiary education was also done. Desktop doctrinal research approach was conducted for the review of international, regional and national instruments for the prevention of gender-based violence higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted at higher and tertiary education institutions on mechanisms in place to prevent gender based violence. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected and correlated. Gaps in the legislative and policy frameworks on gender-based

violence in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province were identified. Recommendations for the amendment of legislative and policy reforms were made to relevant authorities. Having a robust legislative and policy framework to curb gender-based violence is a vibrant strategy to minimize the occurrence of gender-based violence in higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe.

**Keywords:** Gender-based violence, higher and tertiary education institutions, gender inequality, legislative and policy framework, prevention.

## **Exploring Gender-Based Violence Against Male Students at a University in Masvingo Province: Underreported - Munyaradzi Chidarikire and Farai Chinobva**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

- Munyaradzi Chidarikire (PhD): senior lecturer, Health and life Skill lecturer Department: Curriculum Studies, School of Education and Heritage, GZU
- Farai Chinobva, MSc Development Studies student, GZU

The aim of this study is to delve into the underreported issue of gender-based violence against male students at a Government university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The research objectives centre on examining the prevalence and manifestations of such violence, understanding its impact on the well-being of male students, and identifying strategies to mitigate gender-based violence against male students. Three research questions guide the study: 1) What is the extent and nature of gender-based violence experienced by male students? 2) What factors contribute to the underreporting of gender-based violence by male students? 3) What strategies can be employed to mitigate gender-based violence against male students? The research methodology employs a case study design, involving the participation of various stakeholders including male and female students, university counsellors and lecturers, police officers, social workers, and an NGO focused on gender-based violence. Data is generated through focus group discussions with students and adults, ensuring diverse perspectives and minimizing power conflicts. Thematic analysis is then conducted to derive meaningful insights from data. The research findings highlight the prevalence of different forms of gender-based violence against male students and its detrimental effects on their emotional well-being, academic performance, and social integration. Based on these findings, two research recommendations are proposed: 1) Raise awareness and sensitize the community about gender-based violence against male students, and 2) Strengthen institutional support mechanisms to encourage reporting and effectively address incidents of gender-based violence.

**Keywords:** Gender-based violence; Male students; Masvingo Province; University; Zimbabwe

## **Sexual Harassment in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe: A Case of a Higher and Tertiary Education Institution - Ellen Farisayi Zvobgo and Daniel Mawere**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

- Ellen Farisayi Zvobgo: GZU
- Daniel Mawere: Midlands State University (MSU)

The study sought to explore the forms of sexual harassment obtaining in one of the institutions of higher learning in Masvingo with a view to coming up with mechanisms for its prevention as well as proffering possible strategies for tackling the phenomenon. The study was informed by sociocultural and organizational theories of sexual harassment. An exploratory research design was used in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to select two groups of respondents, one of the groups comprised twenty female undergraduate survivors and the other group comprised six university officials tasked with addressing sexual harassment incidents. Data was gathered through individual semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the data was done thematically. Findings indicated the forms of sexual harassment experienced by the respondents as well as the prevalence of the phenomenon at the institution.

From the literature reviewed as well as the study findings, some mechanisms for mitigating incidences of the phenomenon were proffered. Over and above that strategies for tackling the sexual harassment phenomenon in the Masvingo province were advanced.

**Key words:** Sexual Harassment, Fear, Power, Underreporting, Female students, Lecturer.

## **Gender-Based Violence and Academic Freedom in Higher Education in Zimbabwe: A Critical Feminist Analysis - Simon Vurayai**

**Institutional Affiliation:** Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum Studies, Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education, GZU

This study employed the systematic literature review methodology to the link between institutional gender-based violence (GBV) and the increasing erosion of academic freedom in higher education institutions (HEIs). The critical feminist theoretical lenses were borrowed as the bedrock of this study. The study established vast gaps in our understanding of how gender informs the violation of academic freedom. Studies into the GBV-induced impacts of loss of education are largely absent from the academic freedom literature in the context of HEIs. While exploring the gender question illuminates the GBV that occurs within HEIs, studies into gender-related challenges to academic freedom are limited. The absence of gender as a theoretical framework through which such abuses could be understood, explored, and researched may simply be because gender is not recognized as an important social differentiator or as the impetus behind structural inequalities that exist within spaces of formal education. More so there are manifold ways in which gender-ruled societies normalize the marginalization of certain sexed bodies that maintain the structures in which violations of academic freedom are grounded. The article acknowledges and tries to weaken the institutional and disciplinary silos in which discussions about digital and physical violence toward academics and students are so often confined. In so doing, it argues for a conceptualisation of both the digital and offline violence that goes beyond principles of academic freedom within disciplines such as communication for development as a right. This study recommended that higher education institutions (HEIs) should have a responsibility to be safe spaces for both students and academics.

**Key words:** academic freedom, critical feminism, gender-based violence, higher education

## **Gender Based Violence as a Problem that Affects Students in Higher Education Institutions in Masvingo Province: Moral Philosophical Reflections - Alois Rutsviga**

**Institutional Affiliation:** Department of Ethics, Philosophy, Theology and Religious, Great Zimbabwe University

The paper argues that the question of gender based violence, in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province, is common and rampant and hence needs urgent/immediate moral attention. The issue is complex and emotionally sensitive because it triggers feelings of anger, hurt, agony, revenge, and all sorts of excruciating feelings. The concept of violence needs to be re-interpreted and re-aligned because people commonly view violence as morally evil and destructive. This is utter ignorance; a thorough distortion of the concept of violence. And because of these distortions talk about violence now is enough to deter a crowd and thus violence has managed to create cowards. But as a hot issue to handle, violence demands less eloquence but more intellectual and moral scrutiny and maturity. It is one of the most striking and mysterious social phenomena worldwide and it provokes philosophical reflections and debates because it has far-reaching consequences. Using the conceptual analysis technique and applied ethics, the students' experiences of violence are going to be reflected upon. Hard and difficult questions are going to be raised in order to identify the real problem: What is violence? Is violence a problem? It is surprising and shocking that people condemn and hate violence but no one has seen it destroying or beating anyone or anything. No one has ever seen violence in court or behind bars. It is always the moral agent who is found in court and behind bars because of abuse or misuse of violence. In addition, violence has no gender or

existence of its own but exists in the other. It is true to say that violence in the hands of a barbarian it kills but in the hands of good and civilized man, it builds. Thus, it is not violence that needs moral punishment and/or reform but the human/moral agent. Once used or misused, violence ceases to be but becomes what the agent intends. The issue that needs to be set right is not violence but abuse/misuse of it by students in Higher Education Institutions. The students need moral education and reform in hunhu/ubuntu and virtue ethics. In schools, students are trained in mind and not in the perspective of the heart. For this reason, students are now intellectual giants but moral dwarfs; they have big heads but small hearts. Students seriously lack the required moral stamina and thus instead of them controlling/possessing violence, they are controlled/possessed by it. The ethics of hunhu/ubuntu and virtue are going to be utilized to resolve the misuse of violence.

**Key Words:** Gender based violence, problem and hunhu/ubuntu and virtue ethics

### **Exploring the Prevalence and Perpetuation of Gender-Based Violence amongst students in Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo: A case of one local university - Govarthy Charamba**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** University of Johannesburg

The phenomenon of gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive global issue that affects girls and women negatively and those in higher education institutions are not spared. The scourge or mystery of GBV has been accentuated in innumerable studies and statistics have shown that instead of ebbing, the incidence thereof is intensifying. This research sought to explore and comprehend the prevalence and perpetuation of GBV among students at one local university in Masvingo province. Engaging in this study came out of the illumination that unmindful of the mitigatory measures in place, the bane of GBV remains a pressing concern or grave problem. The research employed a qualitative approach and used in-depth interviews with selected participants from different faculties or schools at this local university to gather data. The findings indicate that GBV is a concern worth mentioning, with a generous portion of students enduring a version of violence. The results also confess that perpetuation of GBV is propagated by social norms and cultural beliefs; power imbalances and dynamics; perpetrator accountability and leniency; inadequate reporting and response mechanisms; institutional policies and practices in action. The study further established that the prevalence of GBV at this university is spotlighted through rising percentage of students who experienced violence; increasing number of reported incidents; rising number of varying types of GBV commonly experienced (for instance, sexual harassment, physical assault, intimate partner violence etc.). Based on the findings, the study recommends the need for a detailed policy roadmap, educational enlightenment and robust support systems to confront any form of GBV in tertiary education settings. By understanding the complexities of GBV in this context, together we can work towards creating safer and more inclusive environments for all students not only at this university but across other tertiary institutions in the province and country at large.

**Key Words:** Gender; Gender-based violence; Prevalence; Perpetuation

### **Students' perception on sexual harassment as gender-based-violence. A case of two higher learning institutions in Masvingo - Etwin Machibaya**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** GZU

This study explores the perception of students of sexual harassment as gender-based violence in two higher learning institutions in Masvingo Zimbabwe. The study seeks to comprehend how student teachers understanding and experiences sexual harassment and GBV in their tertiary institution. The government have both public sexual harassment and gender based violence policies which was adopted by the Education Council for Higher Education and hence need monitoring their implementation in tertiary institutions throughout the country. A qualitative case study research design was employed to explore the thoughts and experiences of participants at two government institutions in Masvingo. It was chosen on the premise that it enables the participants to share their lived experiences

and reflect on their interpretations and opinions of the phenomenon in context. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, focus group conversations and life history narratives with participants. Twenty participants were purposively selected, (10 from each institution). Out of the study, it was proven that provocative conversations between the survivors, victims, perpetrators, and the rest of the student body can help to understand GBV and sexual harassment. Several intervention strategies can be applied to minimize gender-based violence and sexual harassment in tertiary institutions. The study recommends availability of digital and physical security, teaching of dress codes and its implementation during lectures with students in a safe supportive environment. There should also be scaling up on counselling and allow the survivors and victims to be part of the process of effecting changes among students and faculty.

**Keywords:** gender – based violence, higher learning institutions, perception, sexual harassment,

## **Developing a Checklist and Guidance Model for Implementing a Strategic Approach to Gender Based Violence Preclusion in Institutions of Higher Education in Masvingo Province - Ephraim Chifamba**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Julius Nyerere School of Social Sciences, GZU

The proposed Equally Secure in Higher Education (ESHE) Model is predicated on the Zimbabwe National Gender Based Violence Strategy (ZNGBVS) (2023-2030) which offers a frame and reference point for precluding gender based violence (GBV) in Zimbabwe. The ZNGBVS is validated by an eclectic range of public, statutory and private sector agencies, all of whom play strategic roles in the oversight and delivery of equally secure gender based work places and societies. The proposed model is centered on four major priorities namely: a) Higher and Tertiary Institutions embrace equality and are prepared to cast-off all forms of violence against girls and women; b) Girls and women succeed as equal citizens; c) successful gender-based interventions should come early, precluding violence and make best out of the wellbeing and safety of girls and women in higher and tertiary institutions; d) Men abstain from all forms of gender-based violence against girls and women and committers of such violence should get effective response. The proposed ESHE model presents an opportunity in Higher Education Institutions to contribute to the implementation of equally campuses in Masvingo province and beyond. The ESHE model provides an approach to reduce GBV and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in institutions of higher learning. The model endeavors to create a behavior change, in terms of how higher education institutions approach issues of gender-based violence, IPV, equality and inclusivity. By recognizing the urgent need to address gender-based violence at an institutional level, the envisaged ESHE model aligns itself with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), African Union, SADC and the Zimbabwean government in their acknowledgment that GBV is both a foundation and result of gender inequality in institutions of higher learning.

**Keywords:** GBV Model; Women and girls; Higher and tertiary institutions; Masvingo province.

## **Chatbot Support System for tackling Gender Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions - Monica Madyembwa**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, School of Natural Sciences, GZU

This abstract introduces a Chatbot Support System designed to address the pressing issue of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) within Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. GBV remains a significant challenge globally, particularly in educational settings where victims may face barriers in seeking help. This system offers a novel approach by leveraging chatbot technology to provide immediate and confidential support to survivors, offer information on available resources and reporting mechanisms, and raise awareness about GBV prevention. Through a user-friendly interface, the chatbot aims to empower students, faculty, and staff to navigate instances of GBV effectively and access the necessary assistance. By enhancing accessibility to support services and promoting a culture of reporting and prevention, this Chatbot Support System represents a valuable tool in combatting GBV and fostering safer

educational environments. The model aims to bridge the gap on sense of well-being to the affected students within the educational settings by providing a readily available, confidential, and non-judgmental platform for students to express their concerns and receive guidance. The study seeks to further investigate the use of AI Chatbot System, to GBV victims in providing sense of well-being.

**Keywords:** Chatbot system, GBV, user-friendly, educational setting, educational environments

## **“Innovative mechanisms for preventing Gender Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province” - Paul Sambo**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, School of Natural Sciences, GZU

Gender-based violence (GBV) represents a pervasive challenge in educational environments, including Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. This abstract delves into the exploration of innovative mechanisms focusing on the utilization of social media technology to prevent and combat GBV within HTEIs in this region.

Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for communication, advocacy, and community engagement. Leveraging the wide reach and interactive nature of social media, educational institutions can implement targeted strategies to raise awareness, provide support services, and encourage reporting of GBV incidents within the academic community.

This research seeks to investigate how HTEIs in Masvingo Province can harness the potential of social media to create safe and inclusive spaces, disseminate educational resources, and promote a culture of respect and gender equality. Initiatives may include the development of impactful social media campaigns that address key issues such as consent education, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention.

By engaging students, staff, and the broader community through social media platforms, HTEIs can foster dialogue, advocacy, and collective action against GBV. Through the creation of online support networks, interactive educational content, and real-time reporting mechanisms, social media can serve as a catalyst for positive change in preventing and addressing GBV within educational settings.

This study aims to evaluate the efficacy of social media-driven interventions in preventing GBV in HTEIs in Masvingo Province, shedding light on the transformative potential of technology in advancing gender equality and creating safer learning environments. By exploring innovative approaches that leverage social media as a tool for social change, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to combat GBV and promote a culture of respect and empowerment within higher education institutions.

**Key words:** Social media platforms, GBV, innovative mechanisms, gender equality, bystander interventions

## **Exploring the Forms and Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo: Implications for Policy and Prevention Strategies - Ngoni P. Jemwa and Nyevero Maruzani**

***Institutional Affiliations***

- Zimbabwe Gender Commission

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue that affects individuals, communities, and societies worldwide. In the context of higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, GBV poses significant challenges and threatens the well-being and academic progress of students. At least one in every four women in tertiary education has faced a form of GBV. This research aims to explore the forms and prevalence of GBV in these educational settings and examine the implications for policy development and prevention strategies. The research will be informed by the Social Learning Theory. The problem statement highlights the need for more effective prevention and support strategies on higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo. Despite the potential long-term consequences of GBV on the physical, psychological, and educational well-being of students, there is need to further understanding of the specific forms and prevalence of GBV within these institutions. This research endeavours to close this gap by shedding light on forms and prevalence of GBV in tertiary educations. The objectives of this study are twofold. The research seeks to identify and analyse the various forms of GBV prevalent in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, and economic forms of violence. Secondly, the research aims to quantify the prevalence of GBV by examining the frequency and severity of incidents reported by participants. To achieve these objectives, a mixed-methods approach will be employed with semi-structured interviews and interviews, to gather nuanced and contextual data that can inform policy-making, program development, and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing gender-based violence in high and tertiary education institutions. Quantitative data will be collected through surveys distributed to a sample of students, faculty, and staff in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo. This will provide insights into the prevalence and patterns of GBV. Additionally, qualitative data will be gathered through interviews and focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of personal experience, perceptions and attitudes of individuals towards GBV in these institutions. The implications of these finding will inform the development of evidence-based policies and prevention strategies to address GBV effectively within these educational settings. Additionally, the study will shed light on the underlying causes contributing to GBV, including social norms, power dynamics, and institutional factors. By understanding the forms and prevalence of GBV and its implications for high and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo, policymakers, educational institutions, and relevant stakeholders can work together to create safe and inclusive environments for all students. This research aims to contribute to the realisation of positive health, education and gender equality outcome through sustainable reduction in new HIV infections, unintended pregnancy and sexual and gender based violence. Broader. Further studies to involve key stakeholders, such as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members, in the design and implementation of research and interventions related to GBV. Adopt participatory approaches that empower these stakeholders to contribute their perspectives, experiences, and ideas. This collaborative process can enhance the relevance, acceptance, and effectiveness of policies and prevention strategies.

**Keywords:** GBV, advocacy, contextual data, gender equality, interventions, collaborative processes

## **Phenomenological approach to explore how survivors of sexual harassment comprehend and interpret their lived experiences – F. Chinangure, E. Sibanda E., and N. Nkomo**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

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- E. Sibanda: GZU
- N. Nkomo: University of Eswatini

The research employed a phenomenological approach to explore how survivors of sexual harassment comprehend and interpret their lived experiences, perspectives, and understanding of the harassment. The research involved individuals who have experienced sexual harassment in different settings, including verbal, physical, or online harassment. Data was collected through self-testimonies, where participants shared their personal stories and experiences of being sexually harassed. In addition, focus group discussions were conducted to facilitate group interactions and generate collective insights into the impact and implications of sexual harassment within higher education institutions. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and perspectives that emerged from the data. The findings of this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sexual

harassment in higher education and provide valuable insights for institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop effective strategies for prevention, intervention, and support for victims.

**Keywords:** sexual harassment, survivors, phenomenology, self-testimonies.

## **Gender-Based Violence in Tertiary Institutions: Forms, Causes, and Possible Intervention Strategies in Selected Institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. By Excellent Chireshe and Esther Humbe**

### **Institutional Affiliations**

- Excellent Chireshe: GZU
- Esther Humbe: Bondolfi Teachers' College

Gender-based violence (GBV) is well documented as a pervasive global pandemic that impedes good health and well-being as well as the development of individuals, communities and societies. It appears in many forms and contexts. It includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm as well as threats of such acts, coercion, and deprivation of liberty. It can take place in private or in public. Regardless of how and where it takes place, GBV constitutes violation of the rights of the abused and has negative effects. This pandemic has become rampant in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe, Masvingo province in particular and is affecting the welfare of students away from home. So it is against this backdrop that the need to find ways of tackling GBV in HTEIs cannot be overestimated. This study, therefore, seeks to establish the forms and causes of GBV at two selected tertiary institutions in Masvingo province, with a view to coming up with recommendations on prevention and therapeutic strategies. The study is qualitative and comparative as data gathered from the two institutions is going to be compared. Participants for the study will be conveniently selected. The sample, comprising 32 participants drawn from the two institutions under investigation, will be constituted as follows: 12 female students (6 from each institution), 12 male students (6 from each institution), and 8 members of staff (4 from each institution, among whom will be members from counselling departments). Given the potentially sensitive nature of the object of study, individual, semi-structured interviews will be conducted in private. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, autonomy of and respect for participants, justice, non-maleficence and beneficence, will be observed. Data will be analysed thematically. Recommendations for policy, practice and further research shall be made to various stakeholders including HTEIs, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Gender Commission, and legislators.

**Keywords:** Feminist approach, gender-based violence, higher and tertiary education institutions, Masvingo province, human rights

## **Towards a Gender-Based Violence-Free Academic Environment: Investigating the impact of a Customized Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response at Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) in Zimbabwe - Shepherd Gundyani, Tamuka Davira and H. Jaka**

### **Institutional Affiliations**

- Shepherd Gundyani: PhD Student; GZU
- Tamuka Davira: PhD Student; GZU
- Dr H. Jaka: Lecturer in the Department of Heritage, Historical and Sustainable Development, school of Heritage and Education, GZU

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a pervasive issue in academic institutions globally, with far-reaching consequences for victims, perpetrators, and the broader university community. In Zimbabwe, Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTLIs), including Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) have acknowledged the need to address GBV and

create a safer campus environment. This study examines the effectiveness of a Customized Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in preventing and responding to GBV at GZU. The study employs a mixed method approach, combining literature review and analysis, focus group discussions, and interviews to explore the impact of the CFM on GBV prevention and response at GZU. Literature review and analysis examines existing policies, reports, and records related to GBV within the Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions campus. Three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) engage students, staff, and faculty to gather insights into their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions for improving GBV prevention and response. Thirty-Five (35) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders, including student leaders, academics, and administrators, provide additional context and perspectives. The study aims to examine the current state of GBV at the campus, evaluate the effectiveness of the CFM in preventing and responding to GBV, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) related to GBV prevention and response, and provide recommendations for improving the CFM and creating a GBV-free academic environment. The study argues that the neglect of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in higher education settings can have deleterious consequences on the academic environment, ultimately compromising student learning outcomes and undermining the institution's ability to provide a safe and supportive space for intellectual growth and development. Whilst grounded in the ecological model of GBV, which recognizes the interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors, the study argues that the CFMs provide a positive impact on GBV prevention and response in higher learning institutions' learning environment, leading to increased reporting, improved support for victims, and reduced GBV incidents. The findings will highlight areas for improvement, including policy gaps, resources, and stakeholder engagement. This research contributes to the global effort to address GBV in academic institutions, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of community-led initiatives like the CFM. By exploring the GZU context, this study sheds light on the complexities of GBV prevention and response in Zimbabwean higher education institutions, informing evidence-based strategies for creating safer campuses. By investigating the impact of the CFM on GBV prevention and response at GZU, this study aims to promote a gender-based violence-free academic environment, ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty can thrive without fear of GBV. The findings will be disseminated to GZU stakeholders, policymakers, and the broader academic community, contributing to a safer and more inclusive higher education environment in Zimbabwe and beyond.

**Keywords:** Gender-Based Violence; Community Feedback Mechanism; Prevention; Response; Academic Environment.

## **Gender Relations Influencing Sexual and Gender Based Violence at Selected Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe - Nyevero Maruzani; Ngonidzashe Jemwa and Nicholas Aribino**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

- Nyevero Maruzani: Midlands State University
- Ngonidzashe Jemwa: Zimbabwe Gender Commission
- Nicholas Aribino: MSc Student, Gender and Policy Studies, Great Zimbabwe University

Gender relations are relationships between women and men on the basis of their masculine and feminine identities. They are a kind of relationships that brings females and males as social groups in a particular community. This includes how power and access to/control over resources is distributed between the sexes. Gender relations determine who we are, what our roles and responsibilities are, and what claims we can make; they determine our rights, and the control that we have over our own lives and those of others. While much has been done on causes of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) at Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Zimbabwe there has been limited focus on gender relations as a cause of this problem. This study fitted into that gap. The study was structured as a gender analysis of causes of SGBV at selected HTEIs in Masvingo District and it used Kabear's (1994) Social Relations Approach (SRA) as a theoretical framework that guided the study operationalising Concept 3 (social relations) of the SRA framework. The purpose of this study was twofold(i) to find out how gender relations influence SGBV at selected HTEIs in Masvingo district and (ii)to suggest innovative ways of reducing the occurrence of SGBV HTEIs in Zimbabwe. This study was qualitative in nature where data were gathered through key informant interviews for purposively selected student minister of gender and dean in the student affairs department from each selected

institution. Three chairpersons were purposively selected to participate in the study, that is, one from each selected institution. The study also conveniently sampled 6 students from each selected institution to participate in the FGDs making a sample of 18 participants from the three selected HTEIs. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. Findings from the study revealed that gender socialisation, patriarchy, social norms, cultural and religious beliefs promote relations of gender that keep women in oppressive and subordinate positions to men. Females who challenge the status quo will be victims of SGBV. The study also realised increasing cases of same sex SGBV but most survivors suffer in silence. The study suggested an innovative way of tackling SGBV (the anti SGBV model for use in HTEIs). This model will be pilot tested in Masvingo district HTEIs for approval then it shall be applied to all HTEIs in Zimbabwe.

**Keywords:** SGBV, socialization, innovative, survivors, SRA frameworks, patriarchy

### **Mechanisms for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province: Promoting Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments - Ngoni Jemwa**

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been a pervasive issue in higher and tertiary education institutions (HTEIs), with far-reaching consequences for students, staff, and the broader community. In the context of HTEIs in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, GBV continues to pose significant challenges to the well-being and academic success of students hence, the need to model effective prevention mechanisms. This research aims to explore effective mechanisms for the prevention of GBV in these educational settings, with a focus on promoting safe and inclusive learning environments. The problem statement underscores the importance of addressing GBV in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo Province. Despite efforts to address this issue, GBV remains prevalent, hindering students' personal growth, academic performance, and overall educational experience. This research seeks to identify and examine mechanisms that can effectively prevent GBV and foster an environment free from violence. The objectives of this study are two-fold. Firstly, it aims to investigate existing prevention mechanisms implemented in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo Province. This will involve a comprehensive review of policies, programs, and initiatives designed to prevent GBV and promote gender equality. Secondly, the research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms in creating safe and inclusive learning environments, as perceived by students, faculty, and staff. To achieve these objectives, a mixed-methods approach will be employed. Quantitative data will be collected through surveys distributed to students, faculty, and staff in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo Province. This will provide empirical insights into the effectiveness and impact of existing prevention mechanisms. Additionally, qualitative data will be gathered through interviews and focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and recommendations of participants regarding GBV prevention. The findings of this research will contribute to the identification of effective mechanisms for preventing GBV in higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo Province. The study will provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of current prevention efforts, as well as recommendations for improvement. By understanding the mechanisms that work best in preventing GBV, educational institutions and policymakers can develop evidence-based strategies to create safe and inclusive learning environments. The implications of this research extend beyond Masvingo Province, as the identified mechanisms can serve as a valuable resource for other regions facing similar challenges. By implementing effective prevention mechanisms, higher and tertiary education institutions can contribute to a culture of respect, equality, and non-violence, ensuring that students can thrive academically and personally.

**Keywords:** GBV, learning environments, mechanisms, perceptions, tertiary education, preventions

### **Survivors in an unsafe space: stories of gender - based violence in tertiary institutions in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. Can we speak out? - Nogget Matope\* and Wonder Muchabaiwa**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Midlands State University Gweru

The study explores the growing number of studies on sexual harassment and gender based violence among leaders, organizations and higher education in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. The study seeks to challenge and understand how gender-based violence survivors frame their understanding and experiences of the phenomenon in tertiary institutions. The Zimbabwe government approved a sexual harassment policy and the education council for higher education should adopt the policy and monitor its implementation in tertiary institutions. Our study examines intimate partner violence from an intersectional feminist perspective which view gender-based violence as a result of patriarchy and other discriminatory and repressive policies. Our study explores the lived realities of students in 3 tertiary institutions on Masvingo. The study employs a qualitative approach based on the premise that it enables participants to share their lived experiences and reflect on their interpretations and opinions of the phenomenon in context. The methods to generate data which we adopted include focus group conversations and life history narratives with women students. The twenty participants who participated in our study were selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods to identify participants from diverse backgrounds. The narrated life stories were analyzed through narrative analysis and followed a process of storying stories. Several points of intervention to minimize gender-based violence and sexual harassment in tertiary institutions can contribute to the improvement in the quality of education and promote gender equality. Community driven solutions may go a long way in amplifying the voices of the female students. The recommendations suggested by the participants include digital security, physical security, consultations with survivors and victims to recount their experiences in a safe and supportive environment where they can own their personal narratives. Female students realities differ, overlap and may influence their experiences of gender based violence and strategies to address this intersectionality should not overlook these vulnerabilities and contexts.

**Key words:** intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, women students

### **“I am Helpless and Petrified”: Lived experiences of female students on gender-based violence at a selected university in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe - Ephraim Chifamba**

**Institutional Affiliation:** Great Zimbabwe University, Julius Nyerere School of Social Sciences, Department of Regional and Urban Planning

Despite the existence of institutional and national policies and interventions on gender-based violence (GBV), cases of GBV exist among various institutions of higher learning. Using feminist qualitative methodologies, the study explores the lived experiences of female students on GBV at a selected institution of higher learning in Masvingo province. Snowball sampling method was employed to collect data from thirty-two (32) female students who experienced GBV during their stay on campus. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The results reveal that a substantial number of female students are survivors of GBV at the university. Female students are exposed to sexual, physical, economic, psychological, material, coercive control, stalking, rape among many other forms of gender based violence. Female students’ experience of GBV is characterized by deep infamy, with often irrevocable effects on their plans and hopes for the future. The results reveal how female students experience feelings of helplessness and fear and how they are silenced by ignorance in university domiciliary space. However, at the same time, GBV is ‘normalized’ as part of female students’ experience on campus. A comparison of their lived experiences on GBV against an “imaginary violence” which they regarded as being more “real” than their own, serves to trivialise their experiences. These results have significant implications for university administrators seeking to implement interventions to address gender based violence.

**Keywords:** Gender based violence, prevalence, lived-experiences, female students, university

**Sub-Theme: Drug and Substance Abuse**

## **Drug and alcohol abuse: A case of five Higher and Tertiary Education in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe - Tapiwa Mudyahoto & Emilia Ndapandula Mbongo**

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Drug and alcohol abuse continue to show escalating and worrying statistics in the province. Despite growing evidence, drug and alcohol abuse are on the increase especially among students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in the Province. There is very little, if anything, being done in terms of interventions strategies being conducted by the government and its partners to reduce drug and alcohol abuse among these groups of students. Thus, this study is based on research conducted in five HTEIs in Masvingo Province HTEIs with the aim of understanding the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse among HTEIs students, as well as strategies and intervention strategies that may be employed to curb the problem. Key findings indicate that seventy-one percent of people who paid admission of guilt fines at Masvingo Central Police in the first quarter of 2024 are students from five local HTEIs, a Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (Zimstats) report has revealed. The most common drugs and alcohol abuse are illicit brews, marijuana, crystal meth, and lately the boiling of sanitary wear and drinking the thick white liquid extract to get intoxicated. Peer pressure, experimentation, limited family support systems, as well as limited knowledge about the effects of these are the major driving forces or push factors that drive drug and alcohol abuse among HTEIs students. There is also evidence suggesting that a rise in drug and alcohol abuse fueled by the COVID 19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, led to the potential boom. The criminalization of drug and alcohol abuse continues to make it difficult for HTEIs to seek help when they suffer from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. In response to these challenges, the paper recommends a shift from the legal approach to a public health approach where some remedies and solutions should be found, like intensive counselling and programs focusing on the healing of these traumas. Facilitated programs with trained professional counsellors would work with alcoholics in groups or on one on one sessions. Parents may also need to improve parenting strategies which may include use of non-punitive methods.

**Keywords:** Drugs, alcohol abuse. Criminalization, intervention strategies, peer pressure

## **‘Making Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions boundaries and gates non-porous for drug use and trafficking.’ Insights from peer educators at selected institutions in Masvingo - Emmanuel Maziti and Chenjerai Muwaniki**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

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- Chenjerai Muwaniki: Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum Development, GZU

This study sought to explore the strategies that help scaling down in the short run and ultimately eradicate drug use and trafficking on campuses in Masvingo. The study utilized rational choice theory as the theoretical lens for the study. The qualitative research approach was used within an interpretivist research paradigm adopting an interpretative phenomenological design. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of all the participants. The research participants were peer educators on training at two of the Higher and Tertiary Education institutions in Masvingo province. Data was collected using focus group discussions with students. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The study findings revealed the following major themes in making Higher and Tertiary Education institutions boundaries and gates non-porous from drug trafficking: introduce stricter consequences for drug related offenses, peer led awareness campaigns, mentorship programs, counseling services to sensitize and reduce harm, random unpredictable and uncommunicated raids in hostels, peer support groups, staff training on identification of at risk population, improve security measures, collaborate with law enforcement agents, offering alternative healthy activities, increase substance abuse treatment, anonymous reporting, parent and community engagement. The

study recommends the use of the public health model rather than the criminal justice approach to identify and help students struggling with drugs and substances.

**Keywords:** drug and substance abuse, Higher and Tertiary Education, rational choice theory

### **Utilising library spaces for promoting mental health and substance abuse information resources: A case study of HTEI's in Masvingo Province - Admore Mashoko and Kunedzimwe Fransisca.**

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The study explored utilisation of Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) library spaces for promoting resources which provide information on mental health and drug abuse. It is against this background that this study was constituted, based on the continued challenges in managing mental health and drug misuse issues among the student population in HTEIs in Masvingo Province. Drug and substance abuse is emerging and widespread, yet students lack information, resources, and systems for proper health management. Despite the growing prevalence of these problems, many students lack access to the necessary information, resources, and support services to effectively manage their well-being. The study used a mixed method approach. There were one hundred (100) participants in the study. The participants of the study were 20 library employees and 80 students who were purposely selected from the three HTEIs in Masvingo Province. The study was guided by the Integrated Service Delivery model. The study revealed that the incorporation of services/information related to mental health and substance abuse has dramatically improved the utilization of the HTEI library spaces. The study found that integrating mental health and addiction-related information sources in libraries improved their visibility and accessibility for students. The study revealed that, curating and prominently displaying mental health and addiction-related information resources in the libraries, helped students in understanding drug and substance abuse and available support services. Findings revealed that more students utilized the mental health and drug abuse resources when they are housed within the HTEI libraries. The study concluded that library spaces in libraries were underutilized. The study suggested an exhaustive schedule of workshops, support groups, and awareness campaigns implemented in the spaces that the HTEI library offers. The study also recommended for an aggregating sponsored e-books and other digitized information, with additional online resources and various digital tools for the management of substance misuse and mental health, the library to be designed must be marketed into an all-encompassing one. The study also recommended that comprehensive procedures for evaluation should be established to monitor the impact and utilization of library resources on mental health and drug abuse.

**Key Words:** Library, Library spaces, Mental health, Substance abuse

### **Lived experiences of Higher and Tertiary Education students struggling with drug and substance abuse in Muccheke Township, Masvingo - Chenjerai Muwaniki and Emmanuel Maziti**

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- Emmanuel Maziti: Department of Psychology, GZU

The study sought to explore the lived experiences of Higher and Tertiary Education students struggling with drug and substance abuse in Mucheke Township, Masvingo. The study utilized Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as the theoretical lens for the study. The qualitative research approach was used within an interpretivist research paradigm adopting an interpretative phenomenological design. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of all the other research participants except for adolescents selected using snowball sampling. The research participants were as follows: (two Social workers, two registered psychologists, four Student Affairs representatives, and twelve Higher and Tertiary Education students from institutions in Masvingo province). Data was collected using key informant interviews with Social Workers, Psychologists, Student Affairs representatives from selected institutions; and in-depth interviews with students. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The study findings revealed the following major themes in the lived experiences of Higher and Tertiary Education struggling with drug and substance abuse: educational challenges, health challenges, sexual abuse, and criminal tendencies. The study recommends the use of the public health model rather than the criminal justice approach to identify and help students struggling with drugs and substances.

**Keywords:** drug and substance abuse, Ecological Systems theory, Higher and Tertiary Education

### **The prevalence and possible abatement of drug and substance abuse among university students in Masvingo Province - Nozipo Ndebele**

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Drug and substance abuse (DSA) has become the greatest threat in the lives and future aspirations of youngsters. It has long been a pandemic that invades all places including Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs). DSA's impact on students has dire consequences and it requires urgent attention and resolution. It ultimately results in addictions, students dropping out of learning institutions, criminal activities, mental problems and sometimes to their unfortunate demise. The continued practice of DSA with no abatement will impede the goals of Zimbabwe Multi-Sectoral Drug and Substance Abuse Plan 2024-2030 (MDSAP) that seek to achieve a healthy and secure nation, free of illicit drug and substance abuse. The MDSAP strategic pillars amongst other approaches will play a contributory role in tackling the adverse detriment caused by DSA and these pillars encapsulate Supply Reduction, Policy and Legal Enforcement, Harm Reduction, Treatment, and Rehabilitation, to mention but a few. This trajectory calls for doubled collaborative efforts by stakeholders including communities, educators, parents, churches and students. Taking measures against DSA will be congruent with the national, regional and global plan to end this social ill. In order to successfully prevent this hassle, it is significant to look into the root causes of luring and subjecting students in HTEIs to DSA so that adequate recommendations may be highlighted and thereafter implemented to its declension. It is the aim of this paper to discuss the prevalence of drug and substance abuse amongst students in universities in the Masvingo Province, unpack its causes and adverse consequences on the life of young learners, their wellbeing and studies. It is also the aim of this study to delineate strategies and approaches that may be employed to deter drug peddling, to prevent DSA and to overcome addictions for those who have succumbed to the excessive use and abuse of drugs.

**Keywords:** DSA, MDSAP strategies, HTEIs, harm reduction, addictions, secure nation

### **'It Wasn't Easy': Unpacking the Everyday Experiences and Recovery Journeys of Substance Users in Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo - Sylvester Dombo, Pauline Chiripanhura and Vongai. Z. Nyawo**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** GZU

This study immerses itself with the everyday life experiences of students who use substances in tertiary education institutions in Masvingo. It focuses on the everyday experiences, challenges and triumphs in their journey to recovery. The research explores the journey of substance users from the onset to addiction, the impact on their academic, social, and personal lives, and the various recovery paths they have taken. The study attempts to uncover the complexities of substance abuse, the role of support systems and the resilience of individuals in overcoming addiction. By zeroing on the voices and stories of substance users, this study seeks to inform and educate tertiary students on the dangers of substance use as well as proffer sustainable strategies for effective recovery and well-being. This study makes use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to capture the everyday hassles by students who use substances as they attempt to extricate themselves from the problem.

**Keywords:** Substance abuse, tertiary education, addiction, recovery paths, sustainable strategies, extricate

### **Indexing the Misery of Drug Abuse among Students in Higher and Tertiary Institutes of Masvingo Province - Prince Chimonero**

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Drug and substance use have putative cognitive enhancing impact despite profound global public health concerns and associated risks. This study explored the impact of drug and substance abuse among students in Higher and Tertiary Learning Institutions of Masvingo Province. High rates in drug misuse among young adults prompted this study to be conducted. Its design was a descriptive cohort anchored on a quantitative approach. The Problem-Prone Behaviour and Deviancy conceptual framework underpinned this study. Study participants were selected through random sampling. Questionnaires were used as data collection tools for the study. Collected data was presented on tables using descriptive statistics. Emerging findings statistically revealed soaring rates of substance abuse in Higher Learning Institutes of Masvingo Province. Multiple interdisciplinary problems linked to drug abuse are rampant. Cultural rot is at a high level of extinction. There is high networking of clandestine drug paddling activities in Institutes of Higher Learning. The study recommends that WADA-based drug testing and counselling platforms be established in all Higher and Tertiary Learning Institutions. Multi-sector-driven interventional programs by all line ministries are essential. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education is encouraged to provide legislative Policy that modularise drug and substance use in all Higher and Tertiary Institutes of learning.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, Higher Education Institutes, culture, health, students

### **Prevention Strategies That Can Be Adopted to Prevent Drug and Substance Abuse in HTEIS Masvingo Province - Richard Chingovo.**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Zimbabwe Open University

This study provides a comprehensive set of prevention techniques that higher institutions of education in Masvingo province might use to address drug and substance abuse. Drug and substance addiction is becoming increasingly prevalent in Zimbabwe's Masvingo province's higher education institutions. Drug misuse has a negative impact on students' academic performance, mental health concerns, physical health problems, and increased risk-taking behaviours. Drug and substance abuse (DSA) is a significant concern to public health, security, economic growth, and social stability both globally and regionally, including in Zimbabwe. The study will use a qualitative design with ten randomly selected students from two higher education institutions in Masvingo Urban. Given the numerous causes of drug and substance use, the problem must be handled holistically using a multi-sectoral strategy, which necessitates consolidating techniques and integrating a variety of viewpoints on drug concerns. The trafficking of practically all drugs and illicit substances has been significantly connected to crime, corruption, violence,

unintentional injuries, traffic accidents, a variety of medical and health issues, and mental health disorders. The findings show that requiring mandatory drug education classes or workshops for all students is an effective technique for raising awareness and knowledge about the dangers of substance usage. The society recommended that individuals, families, and communities who have suffered as a result of alcohol and substance abuse, putting a strain on health, social and security institutions, as well as the national economy should be apprehended. The researcher recommends that comprehensive drug education programs be established on campus counselling and mental health services to identify and assist students struggling with substance abuse for prevention strategies that can be adopted to prevent drug and substance abuse in high tertiary education institutions (HTEIs) in the Masvingo Province.

**Keywords:** Drug, Drug abuse, Substances, Higher and Tertiary, Strategy.

## **The Attitudes of Students Towards Drug Abuse: Insights from Universities in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe - Annalisah Muzenda, Joyce Machigere, Taygeta L. Zihwi, Nyasha L. Shambare, Herbert Zirima**

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The prevalence of drug abuse among university students has become a serious cause for concern worldwide, and in Zimbabwe, the number of cases of drug abuse among the youth has increased exponentially, leading to the government taking urgent measures to conscientise the youth against the abuse of drugs. The study investigated the attitudes of university students towards drug abuse, primarily focusing on Masvingo province. It sought to establish psychological explanations behind students' interest in drug abuse, and proffer policy recommendations that can foster positive attitudes against drug abuse in universities. A mixed methods research approach was employed involving a survey questionnaire with both open-ended questions, for qualitative insights, and closed questions, for quantitative data. A sample of 50 students was drawn from two universities in Masvingo using stratified sampling to ensure that students from all academic levels were represented. Collected data was analysed using statistical methods (SPSS) and thematic analysis. Findings indicated that peer pressure, curiosity, and academic pressure are the key drivers of drug abuse among university students. The majority of participants were of the view that peer pressure is a major cause of drug abuse due to the need to conform. Additionally, family background, cultural norms, education and awareness, and the media play a critical role in shaping attitudes, either positively or negatively, towards drug abuse. A greater percentage of the participants were not aware of universities' policies to prevent drug abuse, hence they suggested a need for awareness intensification and rolling out of mental health services for students to deal with academic pressure and resist drug abuse. Most participants concurred that there were gaps in university policies to curb drug abuse, in the sense that there was a lack of enforcement and awareness. Thus, this study recommends the availing of on-campus mental health and rehabilitation services to promote students' overall well-being, intensification of awareness campaigns, enhancement of university policies, and collaboration among the universities and other stakeholders for a multidisciplinary approach. Conclusively, the findings of this study are important to ascertain the focus of intervention strategies and policy development at universities.

**Keywords:** attitudes, prevalence, university students, drug abuse, peer pressure

## **An exploration of the role of VPA activities in curbing drug and substance abuse. A case study of Tertiary institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe - Givewell Munyaradzi, Joseph George Mupondi and Dairai Dziwa**

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This study aimed to inspect the major roles of Virtual Performing Arts activities in curbing drug and substance abuse in tertiary institutions in Masvingo province. A qualitative approach was adopted. The sample comprises 5 students of Art and Music in each stream per selected institution. Open-ended questionnaires were distributed to students, lecturers, and administrators in the student affairs department. Interviews were carried out with selected staff members in the clinic, canteen, and counseling service departments. Observations of VPA activities were conducted in selected institutions, one activity per institution was observed. Documents (registers, case reports, and provincial statistics) were examined. Data were presented in narrative form where themes were analyzed in descriptive form. Incipient themes were grouped and analyzed inductively in verbal form. Phenomena were explained using tentative hypotheses and data collected. The study established that drug and substance abuse is mainly caused by peer pressure and lack of entertainment among the youth mostly in institutions of higher learning. Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that VPA activities such as weekly and monthly exhibitions of art galleries and musical performances align with themes that discuss drug and substance abuse. Recommendations were that institutions with the help of the Ministry of Higher Education are encouraged to have a formal calendar of VPA activities that focus on educating students on the dangers of drug and substance abuse. The time allocated for heritage-based courses can include topics on issues of drug and substance abuse. In line with the above, studies of drugs and substance abuse are encouraged to be taught at various levels in Zimbabwean institutions of Higher learning. In addition, universities, colleges, and schools are advised to collectively tackle underlying issues of depression as well as constantly be in touch with the community.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, Substance abuse, VPA, Tertiary institutions, art education, music education, drug peddling, UNESCO

## **Leveraging the Creative Industries as a Mediation Communication Strategy for the Reduction of Drug and Substance Abuse Among Students and Staff at Great Zimbabwe State University: A Musical Theatre Project - Isaac Chidaura and Innocent Mwapangira**

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Drug and substance abuse has become a critical challenge threatening the youth dividend, which is essential for Zimbabwe's national development, particularly among students and staff at higher and tertiary education institutions in Masvingo Province. Despite the growing recognition of media as a valuable tool for promoting behavioral change and successful reintegration into society, Great Zimbabwe State University (GZU) faces communication strategy challenges in effectively reaching out to its students and staff to combat this issue across its seven campuses. The existing top-down, rigid communication approaches at GZU tend to negate dialogue, participation, and feedback from the affected student and staff communities. This study proposes the adoption of

musical theatre as a more sustainable and appropriate communication strategy to address drug and substance abuse at GZU. The research examines how musical theatre, as a creative tool for engagement, interaction and sharing of ideas through music, dance and dramatization, can be utilized as a mediation communication tool to reach out to the university's student body and staff members. The theoretical framework of the study is grounded in experiential learning theory, social cognitive theory, role-play theory, and drama in education theory. Using a participatory case study approach within a qualitative action research paradigm, the study gathered data through seven musical performances held across GZU's campuses with willing student and staff member participants, each performance having no less than 15 participants. Participants were actively involved in the performances, which utilized sing-along tunes, invited them to dance, and encouraged them to co-create the story with the actors. Reflections and discussions were held following the performances. Additional data was collected through focus group discussions, participant observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and audiovisual recordings. The findings demonstrate how the safety and distancing provided by music and theatre can foster a deeper understanding of the negative impacts of drug and substance abuse among higher and tertiary education students and staff. The study concludes by calling for the implementation of drug and substance abuse awareness campaigns through musical theatre across higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. This creative industry-based approach has the potential to drive behavioral change and facilitate the successful reintegration of affected individuals into society.

### **Development of an AI powered Chatbot to Address Substance Abuse among University Students - Mr. Akim Munthali and Ms. Kumbirai Makaruke**

#### ***Institutional Affiliations***

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Substance abuse among university students is a significant public health concern with detrimental impacts on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. Traditional intervention methods often face challenges related to accessibility, stigma, and resource constraints. This study aimed to address these issues by developing and exploring the potential of an AI-powered chatbot as an innovative and accessible tool to support students struggling with substance abuse. This research is grounded in the theoretical framework of technology acceptance model, aiming to bridge the gap between evidence-based substance abuse information and at-risk populations. The primary objectives were to develop a chatbot capable of delivering accurate information on substance abuse and to evaluate its usability and performance. Utilizing a dataset of 873 question-answer pairs, the chatbot was developed using the Llama-2-7b generative pre-trained model and tested for accuracy and user interaction. Findings indicate an 88% accuracy rate in response accuracy, highlighting the chatbot's effectiveness in addressing substance abuse inquiries. Key implications include the potential for chatbots to enhance accessibility to support resources, reduce stigma, and engage users in a non-threatening manner. This research underscores the role of AI in promoting student well-being and suggests directions for future enhancements in usability and knowledge expansion.

**Keywords:** Substance Abuse, AI Chatbots, Mental Health, Technology-Assisted Interventions, University Students

### **Hegemonic masculinities and drug abuse in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province - Charambira Martin, Sithole Faith & Chinho Wilfred**

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Drug and substance abuse (DSA) is a public health concern amongst youths who constitute the majority of those enrolled in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) worldwide. Contrary to societal perceptions of students as enlightened and not engaging in drug and substance abuse, there is a notable rise in prevalence of DSA in HTEIs, which are a microcosm of the wider society. Whilst past research has consistently revealed the high prevalence of DSA particularly amongst male students, hardly enough is known on the nexus between male cultural ideologies and drug abuse in general and within HTEIs in particular. This lack of attention to hegemonic masculinities in addressing DSA directly exposes males to risks and adverse impacts. Informed by the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) and Butler's Queer theory, this paper seeks to qualitatively unpack the hegemonic masculinity and drug abuse nexus, and suggest ways of dealing with drug abuse induced by cultural ideologies. We examine how hegemonic masculinities (characterised by male patriarchal power, risk taking, aggression and competitiveness, emotional control and stoicism, dominance and authority, physical strength and toughness, & independence) negatively drive male students into social vices like drug and substance abuse. Data will be solicited through in-depth-interviews with 20 DSA survivors and six key informant-interviews (KIIs) complemented by documentary review. Key informants will be purposively sampled within HTEIs whilst DSA survivors will be selected using snowball sampling technique. Thematic content analysis will be adopted for data analysis and presentation.

**Keywords:** hegemonic, masculinities, drug abuse, youth

## **Unveiling the Undercurrents: Drug and Substance Abuse Among Students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions - Chipfupi Lydia and Connick Lorraine**

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This abstract captures a comprehensive study on the prevalence, causes, consequences, and interventions related to drug and substance abuse among students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo province. This follows highlights from institutions in Masvingo, through the implementation of 03 PLUS project initiated by UNESCO, on drug and substance abuse. Thus drug and substance abuse among students in Masvingo Higher Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) is a growing concern, with potential consequences for academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. The research delves into the complex nature of drug and substance abuse and its effect on the academic, social, and psychological well-being of students within the HTE setting. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and focus groups to gather data from a diverse sample of students from two HTE institutions. A survey questionnaire was administered to 500 young adults aged 18-35 years. Interviews were employed to 20 individuals (students and some authorities from the institutions). Through this rigorous methodology, the research seeks to distinguish the underlying factors contributing to drug and substance abuse, such as peer pressure, stress, accessibility, and individual vulnerabilities. Furthermore, it aims to identify the specific drugs and substances most commonly abused within the HTE community, shedding light on emerging trends and patterns. The consequences of drug and substance abuse are also examined, encompassing academic performance, mental health, interpersonal relationships, and future career prospects. By examining these consequences, the research endeavors to underscore the urgent need for proactive interventions and support systems within HTEIs, as well as the broader community. In exploring potential interventions, the study assesses existing prevention and treatment programs, evaluating their effectiveness and relevance in the context of HTEIs so as to foster a safe, supportive, and conducive environment for the holistic development of students within the HTE landscape. Additionally, it investigates the role of institutional policies, peer support networks, counseling services, and educational initiatives in addressing and alleviating drug and substance abuse.

**Keywords:** Drug and substance abuse; HTEIs; mental health; prevalence; vulnerable; 03 PLUS project.

## **Experiences of students with disabilities in accessing drug and substance abuse education in selected Higher and tertiary institutions in Masvingo - Tatenda Dohwe and F Mlambo**

*Institutional affiliations:* GZU

### **Abstract**

Consumption and utility of substance and drug abuse result in negative externalities within different societies depending on the type of substance abused, level of uptake and its response to an individual after consumption. To enhance a wider reach of the global population, various stakeholders are collaborating to ensure that, the necessary information is disseminated to the targeted groups with accommodating and suitable access in order to ensure sustainable health security as one of the pillars of human security. Such information is disseminated through the different modes of media, such as modern and traditional media. Since the causes, short and long term effects of substance and drug abuse are not selective to race, colour, religion, ethnicity and or disability after consumption, it is a worthy cause to ensure that education on substance and drug abuse is fully accessible to all, stretching with similar magnitude towards information dissemination and the right to education irrespective of one's religion, race, gender, ethnicity, color and/or disability. As a result of this the researcher seeks to explore the experiences of students with disabilities (SWDs) in accessing substance and drug abuse education in their tertiary institutions in Masvingo province Zimbabwe. The researcher will adopt a qualitative research using in-depth interviews and focus groups to collect data from 30 students with different disabilities taking much into consideration issues of gender balance in participation. The study will be guided by the critical theory of disability to better understand both the impairment and environment concerning a wider reach of the world's population within the spectrum of information dissemination on substance and drug abuse education. Data will be analyzed thematically in order to generate fruitful narratives of students with disabilities' lived experiences about the challenges faced by SWDs in accessing substance abuse education and potential measure that could be taken to overcome these challenges. The study will contribute to existing knowledge by providing a way forward towards evoking thinking and fully strategizing capacitated movements towards a world of zero substance abuse.

**Keywords:** drug abuse, stakeholders, negative externalities, modern and traditional media, SWDs, sustainable

## **Prevalence of Drug and Substance Abuse in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe - Farai Chinangure and Sandra Chinhema**

### *Institutional Affiliation*

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- Chinhema Sandra: Zhejiang Gongshang University

Drug and substance abuse within Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, presents significant health and academic challenges. This research aims to assess the prevalence of substance abuse to formulate intervention strategies tailored to HTEIs. Operating within an interpretivist paradigm, the study will gather data through a survey involving 500 students and staff members. To corroborate the survey findings, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 50 participants, encompassing students, faculty, healthcare providers, and administrators will further delve into the motives behind substance use and the current obstacles to prevention. Utilizing statistical analysis with SPSS, the study intends to unveil prevalence rates and correlations between demographic factors and substance abuse. Moreover, thematic analysis will reveal recurring themes and viewpoints extracted from the interviews and discussions. The primary goal of this investigation is to furnish detailed insights into the scale and trends of substance abuse, pinpointing at-risk demographics. It will propose evidence-based prevention strategies, such as educational campaigns, peer-led initiatives, and bolstered counseling services. Holistic approaches to combat substance abuse and addiction will be outlined, encompassing support systems, on-campus treatment facilities, and partnerships with local health services. By furnishing actionable insights and recommendations to HTEIs in Masvingo Province, this study advocates for a safer and healthier academic milieu. By addressing drug and substance abuse comprehensively, the well-being and academic achievements of both students and faculty members can be significantly enhanced.

**Keywords:** drug abuse, substance abuse, Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs), prevalence, intervention strategies.

### **Addressing the prevalence of drug and substance abuse in Higher and Tertiary Education institutions: the case of Masvingo - Konyana Shoorai**

**Institutional Affiliation:** Konyana Shoorai: Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum Development Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education; GZU

The prevalence of drug and substance abuse has emerged as a significant public health concern among students in Higher and Tertiary Education institutions (HTEIs) globally. It is a threat to the achievement of SDG number 4 that is on the promotion of inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 due to its impact on students' academic achievement and their mental health. This study aims to explore lecturers' and students' views on the patterns, contributing factors, and implications of substance use among the students in Masvingo HTEIs. *Through the lens of Social Cognitive theory and Learned Behavior theory, the study adopted a qualitative approach and utilised the case study design to purposively sample sixteen students and four lecturers from two HTEI in Masvingo to participate in the study. Data was mainly gathered through lecturer interviews, students focused group discussions and document analysis. It emerged in this study that a number of students engage in substance abuse. Commonly abused substances including alcohol, cannabis, and prescription medications. Contributing factors include response to academic pressures, social influences, and mental health challenges. The study also revealed negative effects of substance abuse on academic performance, and long-term health complications and impaired cognitive function, hindering students' overall development. The study recognized efforts by HTEIs to curb drug and substance abuse and these include the establishment of counseling services, awareness campaigns, and peer education programmes which aim to promote healthier lifestyle choices. The study recommends effective strategies that address both the immediate needs of students and the underlying factors contributing to substance abuse so as to foster a supportive educational environment. There is need for continued collaboration among educational institutions, health services, and community organisations in order to develop preventive measures and support systems tailor made to the unique challenges faced by HTEI students in Masvingo Province.*

**Keywords:** Learned behavior theory, Drug and substance abuse; academic achievement; Peer education; supportive education environments

### **“Combating Drug Peddling, Abuse and Addiction among Students and Staff in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province” - Paul Sambo and Monica Manyembwa**

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The rampant issues of drug peddling, abuse, and addiction among students and staff in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe, demand innovative solutions that leverage Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This abstract underscores the strategies aimed at combating drug-related challenges within the academic environment through the effective use of ICTs. ICTs offer a powerful toolkit for addressing drug-related issues within HEIs, enabling the implementation of targeted interventions, data-driven approaches, and real-time monitoring systems. This research delves into how ICTs can be harnessed to prevent and mitigate drug peddling, abuse, and addictions among the academic community in Masvingo Province. The study seeks to explore the utilization of digital platforms, mobile applications, and online resources to deliver drug education, counseling services, and support mechanisms to students and staff. By leveraging the ubiquity and accessibility of ICTs, HEIs can reach a broader audience, provide personalized interventions, and facilitate timely assistance to those affected by drug-related challenges. Furthermore, the research investigates the role of ICTs in enhancing early detection,

intervention, and recovery support for individuals struggling with drug abuse and addiction. Through the integration of telemedicine, virtual counseling sessions, and online peer support groups, HEIs can create a virtual ecosystem that promotes well-being, resilience, and healthy lifestyle choices.

The study also examines the potential of data analytics and predictive modeling using ICT tools to identify patterns of drug abuse, assess risk factors, and tailor intervention strategies accordingly. By harnessing the power of big data and machine learning, educational institutions can proactively address emerging trends in drug peddling and abuse, fostering a safer and more secure campus environment.

By embracing a technology-driven approach that prioritizes prevention, early intervention, and community engagement, HEIs in Masvingo Province can effectively combat drug-related challenges among students and staff. Through the strategic deployment of ICTs, academic institutions can empower individuals to make informed decisions, access support services, and embark on a path towards recovery and well-being.

This research contributes to the discourse on leveraging ICTs to address drug peddling, abuse, and addictions in Higher Education Institutions, emphasizing the transformative potential of technology in promoting a culture of health, safety, and resilience within the academic community in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe.

**Keywords:** telemedicine, drug abuse, support groups, HEIs drug peddling, strategic deployment, support services

## **Sub-Theme: Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

### **The football arena: A death trap to college and university students in Masvingo - Jabulani Moyo**

#### ***Institutional Affiliation: GZU***

Dubbed as the 'World's most beautiful game', football has a hypnotic effect upon both players and fans alike. It is a highly emotive sporting discipline which has claimed the scalps of many great players and fans alike. While crowd violence is the most notable danger site in football matches, sexual promiscuity and drug abuse usually affect footballers, with the majority falling prey to HIV-AIDS related deaths, while others equally die from the damage of drugs. This gruesome spectacle is not confined to the general populace per se; but it is also taking a toll on the critical human capital resource at colleges and universities; among footballers and fanatic fans from the contingent of students. This paper explores the dynamics of HIV-AIDS and seropositive exposure among Masvingo-based college and university soccer players and fans. Using the case study design with a group of 20 participants (8 players; 8 female fans; 2 sports administrators; 2 health personnel), the qualitative study explores how the football arena exposes male players and female fans to sexual drives that prompt unprotected sex; the impact of promiscuity on the health of students; ways to use the football arena as a platform for life-skills education and prevention of STIs and HIV-infection. The Social Learning Theory and Structural Violence Theory informed the study. The players selected featured in two of the three ZIFA Eastern Region Division 1 teams of Masvingo City and were students from a teacher's college (1), a polytechnic college (3) a university (4), respectively. The eight (8) participating female students were drawn from a Masvingo-based university which has a professional Division 1 football club. The study noted that the songs sung in the terraces and accompanying buzzing arouse the fans to dare men into unprotected sex; hence, exposing the female students. In like terms, the players (including college and university students) usually find themselves ensnared by sex workers after a good performance in Mucheke or Gatshmine stadium, leading to sex with usually infected sex workers. Against this background, football administrators should take a proactive role of guarding against sex-related behaviors or drug and alcohol consumption. Rather, discipline should go beyond mere personal conduct in the football field but beyond that to ensure that football becomes an avenue for colleges and universities to educate the general populace on responsible pleasure-seeking and restraint alike. Equally, the paper proposes that football management at college and university level should be primed upon dictates of the Public Health Approach which provides for collaboration among various stakeholders to deal with the menace holistically and pragmatically.

**Keywords:** Football arena; Freudian slip; hypnosis; seropositive; HIV-AIDS; promiscuity

## **The role of healthcare providers in promoting STI prevention and awareness among Tertiary Education level students in Masvingo - Sam Takawira, Sibusisiwe Moyo, Alphious. T Mugari, Tasunungurwa Matinhira, Nellie Maziya, Herbert Zirima**

### ***Institutional Affiliations***

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The main purpose of the research was to evaluate the current strategies being employed by healthcare providers in promoting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) awareness prevention, healthcare givers' attitudes towards STI prevention and treatment, as well as looking at barriers encountered by these healthcare providers in their quest to prevent STIs among tertiary education level students in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. A preventive framework was also developed.

The mixed methods research design was employed. Research participants were picked through the snowballing sampling technique among healthcare providers who interact with tertiary education level students in Masvingo province. Data was collected through interviews. The interview form was meshed with both closed and open ended questions.

The interpretive paradigm and statistical presentation was used to record the data and thematic and comparative analysis was employed to analyze the gathered research data. From the research findings, the major roles of healthcare providers are healthcare education through on campus health seminars, peer education, condom distribution, medical treatment of infected students who come forward for treatment to avoid further infecting others and providing counselling services to infected students. The research findings revealed that the execution of the aforementioned services was not a smooth ride as a number of barriers were encountered in the quest. These included, among others, general lack of resources and funding, inadequate training of the various healthcare providers, stigma and discrimination of both the healthcare providers and the students who would want to participate in the various activities of combating the scourge of STIs, lack of student interest, some of which had roots in perceived cultural and religious beliefs. Furthermore, the institutions' academic timetable is overly congested and therefore leaves little or no room at all for other important slots such as the STI awareness and preventive measures. To add to that again, there is not a well-defined and structured implementation of the STI prevention programme.

An array of mitigating measures to the challenges were brought forward. These included partnering with the community and corporate world in funding and other resources mobilisation, making health education a core component of the academic curriculum, meaningful and purposive training of healthcare providers as well as improving the methods of information dissemination to make them more user friendly. The healthcare provider-client ratio requires upsizing as well to enhance efficiency. Religious and cultural barriers through reproductive health information sharing myths can be dispelled by engaging prominent traditional and religious leaders and activists in the fight against this epidemic.

**Keywords:** STI awareness, Healthcare providers, Barriers, Preventive framework, Education and training

## **Of Hyena-riding and Forging of identities: Garnishing the front stage and concealing the backstage—Campus sex behaviour in Institutions of Higher Learning - Mutingwende Andrew**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Masvingo Teachers' College

The phenomenon of campus sex behaviour in higher and tertiary education institutions (HTEIs) has been escalating above imaginable levels and continuing to pose threat and despondency to administrators and students. In the case of Zimbabwe's HTEIs, the scourge persists to project its ugly face more on its surface or visible forms than on its subterranean or underlying forms. This Janus-faced scope of the phenomenon has led to the reaping of more losses than gains in terms of research efforts and resources. So far, a large body of extant scholarship has invested immense effort on the phenomenon's visible forms while overlooking its hidden forms. The underlying forms are the acts of sex providers clandestinely hawking their bodies to clients for enterprise, while the visible or surface forms become the underlying forms' subsequent manifestations like crime and violence, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, academic underperformance and sundry. As a theoretical departure point, this paper adopts Goffman's Dramaturgy model to explore the scope of campus sex mystery for a more in-depth whodunit inquiry in order to locate the source causes and motivations endorsing this veiled act. The Dramaturgy model distinctively and effectively theorises how actors theatrically assume various self-presentation tactics, choosing what actions or qualities they consider worthy to garnish on the front stage for the public gaze and the ones to conceal on the back stage from the public gaze. Building upon this framework, I conceptualise campus sex agents as theatrical performers who decide to falsify identities by garnishing forged identities for the public gaze while concealing their 'night-time' sex sprees in the 'back stage,' an act apt to my new coinage- 'hyena-riding,' to qualify the sex traders' nocturnal sex romps. I, therefore, maintain that most students, especially from HTEIs, forge and garnish new identities on social media platforms while concealing their real campus experiences. As demonstration, I targeted two HTEIs; the Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) and the Reformed Church University (RCU) situated in Zimbabwe's Masvingo urban area. I adopted a qualitative purposive sampling technique to obtain the data from Masvingo City's three public bars and from students' Facebook and WhatsApp platforms whose groups the researcher joined as a participant observer. Interviews were also administered on sixteen campus sex workers, four night clubs and two surgery owners selected using snowball sampling criteria. Obtained data were analysed dramaturgically and findings revealed that ramifications of campus sex behaviour are elusive to eradicate as most administrators, researchers and policy makers are not aware of the phenomenon's unique back stage modus operandi and magnitude. Therefore, the recognition of both surface and underlying forms of the act should make it imperative to put forward measures for the implementation of intervention strategies. Future research also needs to be more circumspect when dealing with commercialised sex.

**Keywords:** campus sex, cyber-sex, Dramaturgy, impression management, prostitution, sex trade, sex trafficking

## **Perceptions on the use of condoms as a contraceptive method by students: a case study of HTEI's in Masvingo Province - Alibeti Vushe**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** MSc. Degree in Counselling Psychology Student, GZU

The study is on perceptions on the use of condoms as a contraceptive method by students HTEIs in Masvingo Province. The study was prompted by higher unprotected sexual tendencies among students in these institutions of higher learning. There has been reports of heightened sexual activities at colleges, universities and tertiary institutions across the country divide, and despite the availability and accessibility of condoms, there has been also reports of increased rate of HIV and AIDS infection among students in universities across the country in Zimbabwe. The used qualitative approach. The study population was made 50 Fourth Year Undergraduates students who were purposively sampled to give a sample size of 20 participants. The study was guided by Social Cognitive Theory. The study revealed that students in HTEIs were engaging in unprotected sexual activities. The study found that students in HTEIs had contracted STIs during the course of their studies. The study also established that students perceive the use of condoms as limiting their sexual pleasure. The study concluded that students in HTEIs were no longer using

condoms despite being freely available. The study recommended that students in HTEIs are educated more on the importance of using condoms. The study recommended for regular self-testing kits to be made available on campus to reduce the spread of STIs among students. The study also recommended that students in HTEIs to be in the forefront in promoting the use of condoms through involvement and support.

**Keywords:** Perceptions, Condoms, Contraceptive methods, Students

### **From Risk to Resilience: Strengthening STI Prevention Efforts among High-Risk Engaging Individuals in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo Province - Lorraine Connick and Lydia Chipfupi**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Masvingo Teachers College

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) pose a critical public health challenge, particularly among young adults in higher and tertiary education institutions (HTEIs). The High-Risk Engaging Individuals (HTEIs students) in Masvingo Province face increased risks of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), threatening their health, well-being and socioeconomic stability. Masvingo Province in particular, has seen concerning trends in STI prevalence, driven by factors such as risky sexual behaviors, limited access to preventive services and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The consequences of STIs extend beyond the physical, impacting mental health and academic performance. Affected students often experience anxiety, depression and social isolation, which can adversely affect their educational achievements. Therefore, addressing the psychological aspects of STI prevention is also exceptionally important. This study aims to investigate and promote the transition from risk to resilience in the context of STI prevention among HTEIs in Masvingo Province. This study seeks to strengthen STI prevention efforts among HTEIs by exploring effective strategies, identifying and addressing gaps and promoting resilience with the aim of minimizing STI prevalence, improving student health outcomes and augmenting overall academic performance. The study will also analyze the current STI prevention knowledge, attitudes and practices among HTEIs, and aids to effective prevention. By transitioning HTEIs from risk to resilience, this study aims to reduce STI incidence, promote healthy behaviors and improve the overall well-being of this vulnerable population. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys, focus group discussions and interviews will be employed to gather data from 450 HTEIs students and 15 healthcare providers from 3 HTEIs in Masvingo Province. The findings will inform the development of targeted interventions, including: contextualized health education and awareness campaigns, improved access to STI testing, treatment and counseling services, community-based initiatives that promote safe sexual practices and risk reduction and capacity building for healthcare providers to address HTEIs' unique needs.

**Keywords:** Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs), prevalence, prevention, resilience, Sexually Transmitted Infections.

### **Promoting a culture of respect, equality and safety to curb domestic violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo province - Susan Kasonde, Dianah Chengera and Preacher Mafukidze**

***Institutional Affiliations:*** Masvingo Teachers' College

This mixed method study investigates the effectiveness of a multifaceted approach to promoting a culture of respect, equality and safety in curbing gender- based violence in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) in Masvingo province. The study explores the impact of both students and staff involvement in creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Domestic violence is a pervasive problem affecting individuals, families and communities worldwide. It stems from power imbalances, gender inequality and societal norms perpetuating violence and control. Addressing it requires shifting cultural attitudes, norms and behaviours that perpetuate

violence and discrimination. Fostering a culture that values mutual respect, equality and safety can help prevent domestic violence and create a society that values healthy, equitable relationships. Data were collected through surveys, focus groups and interviews with students and staff at the HTEI. Stratified random sampling was used for surveys and purposive sampling for focus groups and interviews. Results show that a comprehensive approach that involves both students and staff is critical for promoting the culture of respect, equality and safety for the eradication of gender-based violence in HTEIs. The study contributes to the development of evidence-based strategies for policymakers, practitioners and organizations working to prevent domestic violence. It highlights the importance of addressing domestic violence and promotes a culture of respect, equality and safety. It contributes to the existing body of research on domestic violence prevention and informs future studies. The study is a critical asset to reducing the physical and mental health impacts of domestic violence on survivors. It encourages a shift in societal attitudes and norms that perpetuate domestic violence. Ultimately the study's findings have the potential to save lives by preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors. HTEIs which are free from domestic violence promote inclusive and safe learning environments, ultimately enhancing student success and well-being for sustainable development of the global village.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, equality, safety, culture, respect

## **The role and effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission in ending sexual harassment in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions - Musavengana Machava**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** Lecturer, Herbert Chitepo School of Law and Business Sciences, GZU

Sexual Harassment is a pervasive issue in higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe, with many students and staff members experiencing various forms of harassment on a regular basis. In response to this problem, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission was established to address gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality in all sectors of society, including education. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) is an independent institution that was formed with the main aim of creating a gender-equal society where women and men enjoy equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities and where gender-based violence is eradicated. One of the key functions of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission is to investigate complaints of sexual harassment in educational institutions. The Commission has the authority to conduct inquiries, gather evidence, and make recommendations for disciplinary action against perpetrators. By holding individuals accountable for their actions, the Commission sends a strong message that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in Zimbabwe's education system. Its operations are guided by Section 246 of the grundnorm, the Constitution of Zimbabwe and also the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act established the Zimbabwe Gender Commission to perform specified functions, including the investigation of and making of recommendations on the removal of barriers to the attainment of full gender equality. This Commission has been instrumental in addressing issues of sexual harassment around the country. Through its mandate to promote gender equality and investigate gender-based violence, the ZGC has investigated numerous cases of sexual harassment around the country. The commission also works closely with Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions to develop and implement policies and guidelines to prevent sexual harassment, and has provided support services to victims. In Masvingo, the ZGC has conducted awareness-raising and training programs targeting students, lecturers, and staff, to promote a culture of tolerance and respect. Although the ZGC has made significant efforts to end sexual harassment in institutions of Higher Learning, there are still numerous cases of sexual harassment in these institutions. The effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission in ending sexual harassment in higher and tertiary education institutions can be measured by the number of complaints received, the outcomes of investigations, and the implementation of policy changes. By providing a platform for victims to report harassment, the Commission empowers individuals to speak out against abuse and seek justice for their experiences. This study examines the ZGC's role and effectiveness in ending sexual harassment in HTEIs, with a focus on Masvingo, highlighting best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement.

**Keywords:** Zimbabwe Gender Commission, sexual harassment, grundnorm, awareness, a culture of tolerance

## **Sub-Theme: Unwanted Pregnancies**

### **Exploring Strategies for Preventing Unwanted Pregnancies among Unmarried Female students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions. A case of Masvingo Province. By Joburg Mahuyu**

***Institutional Affiliations:*** Final year PhD Candidate at UNISA, Full-Time Research Fellow- Gender Institute, Midlands State University

#### **Introduction and Background**

Unwanted pregnancies among unmarried female students in Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions (HTEIs) pose significant challenges that can disrupt academic progress, future career prospects, and overall well-being. In the context of Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe, this issue requires urgent attention and the exploration of effective strategies to address it. This research study aims to investigate factors contributing to unwanted pregnancy and establishing strategies for preventing unwanted pregnancies among unmarried female students in HTEIs.

#### **Existing Knowledge**

A situation analysis by UNESCO (2018) in selected HTEIs in Zimbabwe and Tanzania revealed that for many students, the age of sexual debut coincides with entry into university or college. This sexual debut also coincides with low knowledge on condom use or contraceptives. The study revealed that 66% of female students and 47% of male students had not used a condom the first time they had sexual intercourse. Report by UNICEF (2023) estimated that globally, about 257 million women are currently not using any method of contraception despite their desire to prevent pregnancy. The overall prevalence of contraceptive use among adolescent girls and young women in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) was estimated to be 24.7%. The prevalence of contraceptive use was highest in Southern Africa (52.3%) and lowest in West Africa (5.4%). By country, the Chad Republic recorded the lowest prevalence of contraceptive use (5.1%) while Lesotho recorded the highest with 59.2% and Zimbabwe was the third highest with 50.7%. A cross-sectional survey by Mutinta (2022) of 1269 female students from universities in Eastern Cape in South Africa found that the prevalence of unplanned pregnancy was 12.31%. According to Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) report (2016), about 25% of unmarried female students in Masvingo's universities and colleges have experienced an unwanted pregnancy during their studies.

#### **Methodology**

A mixed methods assessment design including both quantitative (primary and secondary data sources) and qualitative (Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Case Studies (ICS) and document/desk review approaches will be used. Primary data will involve a mixed method cross sectional survey on unmarried female students in HTEIs in Masvingo Province. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data to be analysed using thematic and constant comparison analytical approaches. Secondary data analysis shall include literature review and documentary analysis. This would make the findings more generalizable to other universities and colleges in the country.

#### **Findings**

The findings shall reveal an array of factors that influence unwanted pregnancies among unmarried female students in HTEIs. The study will proffer strategies that can be used to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

#### **Policy implications**

The study shall recommend various policy changes to prevent unwanted pregnancies among unmarried female students in HTEIs.

**Keywords:** Unwanted pregnancies, adolescent girls, unplanned pregnancies, contraceptives, HTEIs

## **Exploring HTEI policies and regulations: Initiatives to prevent unwanted pregnancy among students in Masvingo Province - Emerge Masiya and Martison Nhamo**

***Institutional Affiliation:*** GZU

Research indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa, 38% of girls marry before turning 18 and 12% before turning fifteen. The National Abortion Federation (2020) argues that seventy-eight percent of teenage pregnancies are unintentional. A myriad of factors influence the creation of unwanted pregnancies. These include lack of sexual and reproductive health knowledge, lack of resources to access services, inability to openly discuss and make contraceptive decisions as well as forced marriages. Though there is research on the factors affecting unwanted pregnancies and the consequences thereof, there is little research on the effectiveness of the initiatives, if any, laid down to prevent unwanted pregnancies in HTEIs. More so, there is no research on the role played by institutional policies in furthering or diminishing unwanted pregnancies. This study is unique as it analyses the effectiveness of the laws and regulations of HTEIs and whether they are a hindrance or an aid in preventing teenage pregnancies. The aim of this study is to explore whether the laws and regulations of HTEIs in Masvingo sufficiently aid in combating teen pregnancies and zoom in on the unwritten and null policies that fuel the proliferation of unwanted pregnancies in Masvingo. A doctrinal approach is used to investigate the national legislative framework, the regulations, and policies of three institutions within Masvingo. The institutions are Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo Polytechnical College, and Masvingo Teachers College. An intersectional analysis of the policies of the HTEIs will show the interconnectedness of the various disadvantages that accumulate to create a unique abusive experience for female learners learning in HTEIs in Masvingo. Though the policies have their own deficiencies, the combination of deficient policies, and the socio—economic, and religious disadvantages create a distinct disadvantage to females in Masvingo Province. The article will reflect on the inevitable underlining disadvantages faced by female learners because of explicit and hidden policies of HTEIs in Masvingo. The article will use a human rights-based approach as well as the intersectional approach to show the human rights abuses that are created by inefficient regulations and the interconnectedness of the violations with other disadvantages that are already plaguing female students in Masvingo. Lastly, the article will proffer recommendations for policy reform of HTEIs that acknowledges social, religious, and economic factors that disadvantage students, and policies which are not blinded to the differences in the socio-economic and religious standing of female students in Masvingo. Keywords: intersectionality, policies, human rights, law, unwanted pregnancy.

**Keywords:** Intersectionality, policies, human rights, law, unwanted pregnancy

***Institutional Affiliation:*** GZU

- Emerge Masiya: is a Lecturer at Herbert Chitepo Law School, GZU.
- Servious Hanyani Furumele: community development practitioner and a member of the Chiredzi Rural Communities Development Initiatives Trust

Radio stations have been credited as a popular medium that is useful in the dissemination of valuable development messages in communities, especially marginalised communities. Sibanda and Nkomo note that community radio has a greater potential to play an invaluable role of ‘strengthening access to information through localized content which includes hyper-local news, music, and other forms of content that articulates communities’ concerns, aspirations, and interests. One of the ‘concerns’ plaguing Masvingo Province is unwanted pregnancies and the trickling effects thereof. Research indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa, 38% of girls marry before turning 18 and 12% before turning fifteen. The National Abortion Federation (2020) argues that seventy-eight percent of teenage pregnancies are unintentional. The Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe has a total of 14 licensed community radio stations. Avuxeni FM in Chiredzi is one of the first to commence broadcasting in February 2022. Thus far, the radio station has reached over 15000 people and an average 3000 people per show with 2000 listeners, mostly youths, that actively engage in the programs. Community radio stations enable people to enjoy their right to access information concerning socio-economic development and other issues. The niche of community radio is that it provides first hand grassroots level information about the community's response to socio-economic and legal issues as well as provide an avenue to reach out to the community through providing education and awareness initiatives that help better the community.

Unwanted pregnancies have been a recurring problem that has plagued Zimbabwe for a while. One of the reasons for the recurring problem of unwanted pregnancies is the lack of educational awareness on issues of sexual reproductive health and community radio possess the right tools to actively engage the community. The article aims to investigate the role played by Avuxeni FM in Chiredzi to provide sexual health awareness programs for youths that guard against unwanted pregnancies. Since its establishment in 2022, the first radio station in Zimbabwe prides itself for creating a doorway to reach out to marginalised communities like Shangani people on issues that speak to their day-to-day challenges. Though other scholars have explored the potential advantages of community radios in furthering socio-economic issues in general, the dissemination of agricultural information and the novelty of community radio as a community media outlet, no research has been done on how community radios help further women's rights, especially female students in Masvingo province. The research will be a quantitative approach using radio interviews to show the extent of the reach that the radio station must determine its influence on sexual health awareness. The article will also investigate the challenges faced by community radios, especially Avuxeni FM, in advancing awareness campaigns against unwanted pregnancies. More so, the articles will recommend that stakeholders like the state and NGOs use community radio as a means to achieve sexual educational awareness and increase the reach of community radios.

**Keywords:** Unwanted pregnancies, sexual reproductive health, awareness, potential advantages

## **The Impact of Unwanted Pregnancies on the Academic Performance and Mental Health of Female Students in Higher and Tertiary Institutions in Masvingo Province - Christin Khumalo**

**Institutional Affiliation:** Department of Inclusive and Special Needs Education, School of Heritage and Education, GZU

**Background:** The impact of unwanted pregnancies on academic performance and mental health among female students in higher and tertiary institutions has been debated lately globally and in Zimbabwe. The study sought to provide insights into the experiences of Masvingo female higher and tertiary education students dealing with unwanted pregnancies to inform strategies for support and prevention of unwanted pregnancies. Understanding the impact of unwanted pregnancies may help higher and tertiary institutions provide targeted support services such as counselling, academic accommodations and health care resources. Therefore, the study was guided by the following hypotheses and objectives.

For the **quantitative strand**, it is hypothesized that;

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant association between unwanted pregnancy and academic performance

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no association between unwanted pregnancy and mental health wellbeing.

The qualitative strand sought to find out how female students who have had an unwanted pregnancy perceive the impact of such unwanted pregnancies on their academic performance and mental health.

**Methodology:** The study employed a mixed-method approach using a parallel convergent design.

**Results:** The linear analysis revealed that unwanted pregnancy was a significant predictor of decreased academic performance ( $\beta=0.25$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) it was also revealed that unwanted pregnancy was associated with increased symptoms of anxiety (OR=2.5,  $p<0.001$ ) and depression (OR=3.1,  $p<0.001$ ). The qualitative strand of the study established that emotional turmoil, academic struggles, mental health concerns and a lack of institutional support during unwanted pregnancy largely overwhelmed the female students.

**Implications:** It envisaged that the study may influence higher institutions of learning in Masvingo Province, to develop a comprehensive support service for students experiencing unwanted pregnancies and provide academic accommodations, like temporary leave policies, flexibility etc.

**Keywords:** Higher and tertiary institutions, unwanted pregnancies, academic performance, mental health, anxiety, depression.

### **Unexpected pregnancies: Insights from 2<sup>nd</sup> year students on teaching practice - Gladies Mhamburo and Miriro Masvosva**

***Institutional Affiliations:*** Masvingo Teachers' College

When students enroll at Masvingo Teachers' College, they are given two to three-week orientation period. During that orientation these students are educated about reproductive health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has sections on family planning, pregnancy and reproductive health shared during orientation. The Health and Life Skills (HLS) learning area would also introduce the new students on life skills at college. Issues to do with pregnancies and even unwanted pregnancies would be talked about. This matter has some significant ethical and personal implications if the pregnancy falls under wanted or unwanted. The human rights policy would also be a topical subject so that the new students would not feel robbed of their personal rights. The human rights policy has given female students opportunities to fall pregnant and continue with their schooling without anyone chasing them away. This policy protects all female students falling pregnant during the course. This is an inclusive policy welcomed by all females. Even though there is that policy which allows continuity, pregnant students especially unwanted ones seem to have challenges. A comparative study would help identify and address the challenges more effectively. Purposive samples would be drawn from the second years who are on TP. The study would compare the challenges faced by the pregnant students in rural schools and those in urban settings under wanted and unwanted to find out if the challenges could be alleviated. The purpose is to explore and identify the challenges in an effort to solve and reduce the challenges from recurring. It would be easy to get the samples from the documented maternity application letters. Students on TP write application letters to go on maternity leave which are endorsed by the TP personnel. From the applications there were 5 females from urban schools and 10 from the rural schools. The researcher sampled all 5 in urban schools and chose 5 from rural schools. The 5 chosen from rural schools were above 6 months' pregnancy just like the urban counterparts. Some reports had reached TP office about pregnant ladies often absenting themselves from classes due to various illnesses associated with pregnancies as well as inadequate support from the people who are supposed to support them. The pregnant students' voices would be heard by many due to this study. Challenges such as physical and mental health issues are quite common. It seems the needs of pregnant students need to be explored and addressed in order for them to pass and finish their courses in the stipulated times. The study would also help fellow pregnant students when they encounter similar situations.

**Keywords:** unwanted pregnancy, challenges, physical and mental health, rights,

### **Inadvertent Reproductive Responsibilities by Masvingo Tertiary Students: Uncovering Gender Disparities in Costs Incurred - Lilian Manwa, Lokadhia Manwa, and Molyn Mpofu**

***Institutional Affiliations***

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- Molyan Mpofu: Senior Lecturer, Department of Consumer Science Education and Community Development at the University of Eswatini

This study sought to investigate the inadvertent reproductive responsibilities and gender disparities in costs incurred by female tertiary students. To uncover the range of costs incurred, the research employed a descriptive survey covering three tertiary institutions in Masvingo. A sample of thirty female students was purposefully selected to participate in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The prevalence of unplanned pregnancies among tertiary students leads to inadvertent reproductive responsibilities, resulting in deficits that are difficult to manage such as poor results. The study's findings established that there is an unequal distribution of responsibilities between male and female students, leading to gender disparities. These

demands derail academic programs and incur significant financial costs for the institution, the family, and the individual, who is often the female student. When a female student's academic life is disrupted by an unplanned pregnancy, the male student's life generally continues as usual. At a psycho-social level, the female student and her family often lose standing in the community due to the shame of an unplanned pregnancy and the birth of an illegitimate child, or the trauma of a positive HIV diagnosis accompanying pregnancy. The damaged public image impacts the female student's future, whereas the male student's future remains largely unaffected. The results also indicated that a lack of sexual knowledge contributes to unplanned pregnancies among unmarried, sexually active college students, exacerbating these problems. Additionally, factors such as peer pressure, a low rate of contraceptive use, and substance abuse contribute to unplanned pregnancies among students in higher education institutions. The study recommends intensive awareness campaigns and the adoption of policies that emphasize sexual abstinence and the use of contraceptives, including condoms. The study concluded that to reduce the negative personal and economic impacts, students should use long-term injectable contraceptives.

**Keywords:** Inadvertent pregnancies, reproductive responsibilities, tertiary students, gender disparities, sexual knowledge