Violence and Higher Education Quality in Zambia: A Theoretical Framework

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ABSTRACT

Violence, in the same measure as shortage of adequately qualified teaching staff, inadequate infrastructure for teaching and learning, and inadequate capacity to develop curricula, poses a significant threat to the quality of education in the higher education institutions in Zambia. Through the lens of a theoretical framework, this research paper delves into the effects of violence on the educational landscape by examining the perceptions of students, faculty, and administrators. With a comprehensive approach that includes 100 interviews and 10 focus group discussions with students, faculty, and administrators to explore their perceptions of violence and its effects on the quality of education, this study aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics between violence and education quality.

Violence in higher education institutions is a multifaceted issue with significant ramifications for the quality of education provided. In Zambia, where higher education plays a crucial role in national development, understanding the dynamics of violence within these institutions and its effects on educational quality is imperative. This theoretical framework aims to provide a structured approach to investigating the relationship between violence and the quality of higher education in Zambia, drawing on existing literature and secondary data collected by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). By employing a theoretical framework that integrates diverse perspectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of violence in Zambian higher education institutions and its implications for the quality of education. The findings will inform evidence-based interventions to address violence and enhance the educational experience for students and faculty.

Keywords: Nature; Causes; Effects; Violence; Theoretical framework; Higher education institutions; Education quality; Zambia.

1. Introduction

This study examines the causes and effects of violence in the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Zambia, as well as existing prevention and intervention strategies. By synthesizing a wide range of reports on violence in institutions of higher learning in Zambia, the study highlights the magnitude of this issue and identifies significant gaps in research. The findings highlight the importance of promoting a safe and conducive learning environment for students and faculty within higher education institutions in the country as a panacea for enhancing quality of higher education.

Violence in Zambian HEIs refers to the occurrence of physical, verbal, emotional, psychological or sexual aggression within the school set up (Mwale & Chikopela 2016[1]; Mulenga, 2019[2]). Therefore, it is violence that occurs in the school setting and refers to violent acts that disrupt learning and have a negative effect on teaching and learning, students, schools, and the broader community. Bullying and cyber bullying, fighting, rioting, looting and sexual violence are characteristically the major forms of violence in Zambian HEIs (Ndhlovu, 2020[3]; Silwimba, 2016[4]). It also includes violence exhibited on school property, during school-sponsored events and riots. These can be perpetrated by students, staff, or external individuals.

[1] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[2] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[3] Ndhlovu, F. (2020). Addressing student unrest in Zambian universities. Higher Education Policy, 33(2): 267–284.

[4] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in higher learning institutions: An overview of its nature, causes, and possible prevention strategies in Zambian universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

Therefore, this study sets out to not only to identify the challenges posed by violence but also to propose potential solutions and interventions that can mitigate its adverse effects in order to create conducive learning environments in the HEIs in Zambia. In doing so, it aspires to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding violence in educational settings and pave the way for fostering a safer and more conducive learning environment for all stakeholders involved.

The study isolates violence, as a threat to higher education quality from an allay of other threats such as such as limited government support, inadequate operational capacity, inadequate training among staff, low levels of automation, limited acceptability, limited policy framework, insufficient resources and overload due to monopolization of quality assurance (World Bank, 2019[5]: Mushumba, 2022[6]). Without a doubt, quality higher education is a precursor to accelerated national development and the attainment of the country's development objects.

2. Statement of the Problem

Violence in HEIs can have a detrimental impact on the overall learning environment and well-being of students and staff. The reasons behind violence in Zambian HEIs can be multifaceted and may include a lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, poor institutional governance, inadequate policies, insufficient resources, and societal factors (Mwale & Chikopela, 2016[7]). Additionally, high levels of unemployment and limited opportunities for graduates can contribute to frustration and tension within the institutions (Mulenga, 2019).

Violence in higher education institutions in Zambia is a pressing issue that requires serious consideration (Mwale & Chikopela, 2016[8]). The study examines the various forms of violence experienced within these institutions, including physical, psychological, verbal expressions, and sexual aggression (Silwimba, 2016[9]), and their effects on the overall educational environment. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study investigates the underlying causes and contributing factors of violence, as well as its consequences on students, faculty, and the broader educational system.

The study also delves into the institutional response to violence in Zambian higher education institutions, assessing current policies, preventive measures, and support mechanisms. It critically analyzes the effectiveness of existing strategies and initiatives in addressing violence and promoting safe learning environments. Additionally, it explores the role of key stakeholders, such as university administrators, faculty, and student bodies, in shaping the discourse and implementing effective solutions to mitigate violence.

Furthermore, the study sheds light on the broader societal context that influences violence in Zambian higher education institutions. It examines socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that contribute to the prevalence of violence, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to address these underlying issues. Recommendations for

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[5] World Bank (2019). The challenge of higher education quality in Zambia. Washington, DC: World Bank.

[6] Mushumba, M. (2022). Governance Perspectives in Zambia: A Commentary on Fourth Regime Change and Public Policy. Zamart Advertising Limited.

[7] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[8] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[9] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in higher learning institutions: An overview of its nature, causes, and possible prevention strategies in Zambian universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

policy reforms and intervention strategies are proposed, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts between government entities, educational institutions, and relevant stakeholders.

3. Rationale

The rationale behind this research stems from the imperative need to ensure a safe and conducive learning environment for students, faculty, and staff across HEIs in Zambia. Many studies conducted on violence in education institutions have focused on confirming its existence (Mulenga, 2019[10]).

The effects of violence on quality of higher education remains uncovered and more worrying, there is apparent lack of literature on solutions to combat the rising levels of violence in higher education in Zambia. By consolidating existing knowledge and insights, this study fills the gap in the literature on violence within higher education institutions in Zambia and the effects on quality of education.

The findings and recommendations presented aim to inform decision-makers, academics, and practitioners to develop evidence-based interventions and policies that foster a safe and conducive learning environment for all members of the education community. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the sustainable development of higher education institutions in Zambia and promote a culture of respect, tolerance, and non-violence.

4. Research Questions

1. What forms of violence are prevalent in Zambian higher education institutions?

2. How does violence affect the quality of higher education in Zambian institutions?

3. What are the underlying factors contributing to violence in Zambian higher education institutions?

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1. Social Learning Theory: Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn through observing others' behaviour and its consequences (Bandura, 1977[11]). In the context of higher education, students may learn violent behaviours from peers, senior students, faculty, or external influences.

5.2. Institutional Theory: Institutions within higher education, including policies, norms, and practices, shape the behaviour of students and faculty (Scott, 2014[12]). Violence may be influenced by institutional factors such as governance structures, leadership, and organizational culture. Whereas policies could shape the conduct of students and faculty staff, where such policies in institutions of higher learning are weak or prescribe no sanctions against the various forms of violence, it is expected that violence could be higher.

5.3. Resource Dependence Theory: This theory suggests that organizations, including higher education institutions, depend on external resources for survival and growth (Pfeffer and Salancik[13], 2003, Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[14]). Violence may emerge as a response to resource scarcity or competition for resources within the

[10] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[11] Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[12] Scott, W.R. (2014). Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities. SAGE Publications.

[13] Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G.R. (2003). The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective. Stanford University Press

[14] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

institution. Some institutions may develop certain survival instincts to endear themselves to those with resources, and as such put themselves in the line of fire to those against this position and also become vulnerable to manipulation by those controlling resources.

5.4. Human Capital Theory: Human capital, comprising the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals, is essential for the quality of education (Becker, 1964[15]). Violence may disrupt the accumulation and utilization of human capital among students and faculty, impacting the overall quality of education. Institutions with higher levels of violence suffer loss of valuable academic time, find themselves using more resources on resolving conflict and experience human capital flight which all have an effect on the quality of education (Bowen and Richman, 2002[16]; Becker, 1964[17]).

5.5. Critical Theory: Critical theory emphasizes the examination of power dynamics and social structures. In the context of violence in higher education, this theory highlights the role of power imbalances, social inequalities, and marginalized voices in perpetuating or addressing violence (Habermas, 1974[18]). There is inherent struggle for power among students, faculty staff and/ or other groups in HEIs shaped by among other factors, social inequality, political patronage, nepotism, and gender discrimination (Mulenga, 2019).

**The Higher Education Authority
Theoretical Framework on Violence in Higher Education**
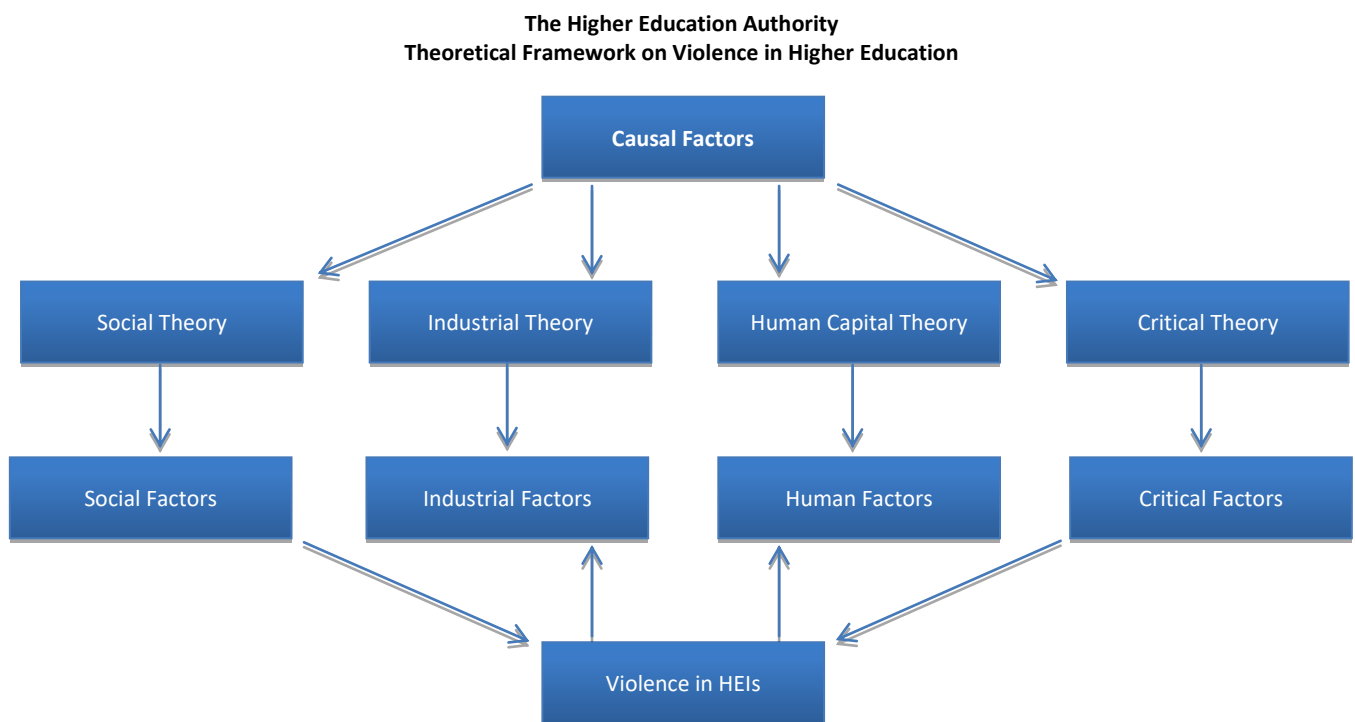
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

6. Methodology

The study utilised various methods to enrich its data and understand the subject of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia.

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[15] Becker, G.S. (1964). Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. University of Chicago Press.
[16] Bowen, G.L., & Richman, J.M. (2002). The school success profile. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work.
[17] Becker, G.S. (1964). Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education. University of Chicago Press.
[18] Habermas, J. (1974). Theory and Practice. Beacon Press.

6.1. Quantitative Analysis

This was employed on data collected by the HEA on incidents of violence in the Zambian higher education institutions. This is information voluntarily reported by the HEIs, students and administrators to HEA on various forms of violence. It was used to analyze the frequency, nature, and distribution of violence across different institutions.

6.2. Qualitative Analysis

This was employed to gather in depth perspectives into violence in HEIs. It involved 100 interviews and 10 focus group discussions with students, faculty, and administrators to explore their perceptions of violence and its impact on the quality of education.

6.3. Comparative Analysis

This was employed to understand the HEIs in terms of their governance and compare institutional characteristics, policies, and practices to identify correlations with levels of violence and educational quality.

7. Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis was subjected to thematic analysis. The data had to be coded and categorized to help with identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships to answer the research questions.

8. Importance of studying violence in higher education institutions

Violence in HEIs can have significant negative effects on the quality of higher education (Astor, Benbenishty et al., 2009[19]). These effects can be categorized into three main areas: academic, social, and psychological (Gottfredson, Gottfredson et al., 2005[20]).

8.1. Academic impacts

Violence often leads to disruptions in the normal functioning of educational institutions, such as class cancellations, faculty strikes, or prolonged lockdowns. These disruptions have often resulted into missed educational opportunities, delayed completion of coursework, and reduced instructional time (Bowen and Richman, 2002[21]). The relationship between violence in higher education institutions and the quality of higher education is an important area of research (Chanda & Mweemba, 2016[22]). While there is limited empirical research directly examining this relationship, some studies suggest that violence can have a negative impact on the quality of higher education. While more research is needed to establish a direct causal relationship, these studies suggest that violence in higher education institutions may have detrimental effects on the quality of education (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008[23]).

[19] Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., & Estrada, J.N. (2009). School violence and theoretically atypical schools: The principal's centrality in orchestrating safe schools. American Educational Research Journal, 46(2): 423–461.

[20] Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Payne, A.A., & Gottfredson, N.C. (2005). School climate predictors of school disorder: Results from a national study of delinquency prevention in schools. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 42(4): 412–444.

[21] Bowen, G.L., & Richman, J.M. (2002). The school success profile. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work.

[22] Chanda, A.V., & Mweemba, L. (2016). Factors influencing quality of higher education in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Educational Research, 12(2): 25–42.

[23] Cowie, H., & Jennifer, D. (2008). New perspectives on bullying. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Dasgupta & Sharma [24](2014) explore the impact of violence on education and health in India. It finds that violence, including violence within educational settings, negatively affects educational outcomes. Kurtis & Adams [25](2015) study the effects of violence exposure on college students' academic functioning. This research examines the effects of violence exposure on college students' academic functioning. It suggests that exposure to violence can lead to post-traumatic stress symptoms, which in turn can negatively affect academic performance. Further, Li, Zhang, & McWhirter [26](2016) examined the relationship between violence exposure, posttraumatic stress, and academic achievement among elementary school students in Cambodia. It shows that violence exposure may significantly impede 0academic achievement.

Besides, acts of violence, such as riots, vandalism or arson, can damage physical assets like libraries, laboratories, and classrooms. The resulting loss or destruction of educational resources can hinder the delivery of quality education.

Similarly, Institutions grappling with violence may allocate their limited resources towards security measures and emergency response, diverting attention and funding away from educational initiatives (Debarbieux, 2003[27]). This shift in focus can curtail the development and implementation of innovative teaching methodologies, research programs, and faculty-development opportunities.

8.2. Social impacts

There are several social effects of violence on higher education and these include:

a. Decline in enrolment rates – where there are higher levels of violence within educational institutions, this could deter prospective students and their families from choosing such institutions, leading to a decrease in enrolment rates (Debarbieux, 2003[28]). This decline in enrolment can threaten the financial sustainability of the institutions, potentially impacting the quality of education they can provide.

b. Diminished campus life – Without a doubt, acts of violence on campus could create an environment of fear and insecurity, negatively affecting the overall social and cultural atmosphere (Cowie and Jennifer[29]). This fear could restrict learners' and faculty members' participation in extracurricular activities, collaborative projects, and intellectual discourse, consequently reducing the richness of the educational experience.

c. Weakening of community bonds - When violence occurs within an educational institution, it undermines the sense of community, trust, and collegiality among students, faculty, and staff (Astor, Benbenishty etal, 2009[30]). A fractured community can hinder collaboration, teamwork, and engagement, hindering the quality of higher education.

[24] Dasgupta, S., & Sharma, N. (2014). Impact of Violence on Education and Health: Evidence from India. Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics, 26(2): 153–170.

[25] Kurtis, T., & Adams, G.A. (2015). The effects of violence exposure on college students' academic functioning: The role of posttraumatic stress symptoms and resourcefulness. Journal of College Student Development, 56(8): 832–854.

[26] Li, D., Zhang, W., & McWhirter, D. (2016). Violence exposure, posttraumatic stress, and academic achievement: A longitudinal study of elementary school students in Cambodia. Educational Psychology, 36(6): 1082–1099.

[27] Debarbieux, E. (2003). School violence and the professional culture of teachers. International Journal of Violence and School, 1: 5–20.

[28] Debarbieux, E. (2003). School violence and the professional culture of teachers. International Journal of Violence and School, 1: 5–20.

[29] Cowie, H., & Jennifer, D. (2008). New perspectives on bullying. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

[30] Astor, R.A., Benbenishty, R., & Estrada, J.N. (2009). School violence and theoretically atypical schools: The principal's centrality in orchestrating safe schools. American Educational Research Journal, 46(2): 423–461.

8.3. Psychological impacts

a. Emotional distress - violence within educational institutions could cause emotional distress in students, faculty, and staff, leading to anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Bowe and Richman, 2002[31]). Such psychological distress could affect academic performance, focus, and overall well-being, thereby impeding the quality of higher education.

b. Impaired learning environment - fear and insecurity stemming from violence could create an atmosphere of tension and unease (Cowie and Jennifer 2008[32]). This could disrupt the concentration and cognitive abilities of students, inhibiting their learning process and academic success.

c. Decreased sense of belonging - experiencing violence in the educational setting can generate a sense of isolation and alienation (Cowie and Jennifer 2008[33]). This can impact students' engagement, motivation, and sense of belonging, which are crucial elements for a quality higher education experience.

9. Forms of Violence

The violence in higher education institutions in Zambia manifests in various forms such as physical assaults, sexual harassment, bullying, verbal abuse, and destruction of property (Mwandi and Mulenga, 2019[34]). These acts of violence not only pose a direct threat to the safety of individuals but also undermine the overall education quality and negatively impact the well-being of the entire academic community (Banda, 2019[35]). Clearly, there are several forms of violence associated with the Zambian higher education institutions according to Higher Education Authority (HEA, 2019[36]). According to Higher Education Authority, the major forms of violence in the HEIs in Zambia are:

9.1. Student-on-student violence: This can include physical fights, bullying, harassment, or intimidation among students. It may be triggered by various factors such as competition, disputes, or personal issues.

9.2. Staff-to-student violence: This refers to instances where staff members use physical force, verbal abuse, or demeaning behaviour towards students. This can occur due to power imbalances, disagreements, or frustration.

9.3. Student-to-staff violence: This arises when students show aggression or violence towards staff members. This can include physical assault, verbal abuse, or disrespectful behaviour.

9.4. Gender-based violence: This refers to violence or discrimination based on an individual's gender (GRZ, 2023[37]). It can include sexual harassment, assault, or intimidation targeting both students and staff. Zambia has been reported as having one of the highest rates of sexual and GBV in the world, with 43% of girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49 having experienced some form of sexual violence (Samakao, and Manda, 2023[38]). Cases of

[31] Bowen, G.L., & Richman, J.M. (2002). The school success profile. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work.

[32] Cowie, H., & Jennifer, D. (2008). New perspectives on bullying. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

[33] Cowie, H., & Jennifer, D. (2008). New perspectives on bullying. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

[34] Mwandi, L., & Mulenga, M. (2019). Exploring student violence: A case study of selected higher education institutions in Zambia. Journal of Education and Practice, 10(20): 1–8.

[35] Banda, D. (2019). Challenges facing higher education in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Development, 67: 40–50.

[36] Higher Education Authority (2019). 2019 Annual Report. Seashells Zambia Printers: Lusaka.

[37] GRZ (2023). Etiological exploration of gender-based violence against male survivors in Chongwe District, Zambia. European Journal of Law and Political Science, 2(2): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejpolitics.2023.2.2.70.

[38] Samakao, M., & Manda, H., (2023). Effects of genderbased violence on students' well-being: A case of Mufulira College. HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, 79(3): a8492. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.8492.

GBV in Zambia had been on the rise. In 2019, a total of 25 121 cases of GBV were reported compared to the 22 073 cases reported in 2018. The reported cases showed an increase of 3048 cases, representing 14%. In 2020, a total of 26 370 cases were reported from 01 January to 31 December, 2020, representing a 5% increase. In the 4th quarter of 2022, Zambia recorded a total of 10 241 cases of GBV compared with 7920 cases during the same period in 2021 representing an increase of 2321 cases (GRZ, 2023[39]).

9.5. Political violence: This form of violence occurs as a result of political affiliations or tensions within higher education institutions. This can include physical confrontations, protests, or disruptions in academic activities.

10. Prevalence of violence in HEIs

Violence in higher education institutions is not a recent phenomenon in Zambia. The roots of this issue can be traced back to historical factors such as political instability, economic challenges, and social inequalities (Tambulukani, 2016[40]). These factors have created a fertile ground for violence to thrive within educational settings.

Therefore, violence in higher education institutions in Zambia is a complex issue that has gained attention in recent years. While comprehensive data is limited, there have been instances of violence, including physical confrontations, protests, and harassment, within these institutions.

One prominent factor contributing to violence is student politics and rivalries among different student groups. These groups often engage in conflicts, leading to violent clashes on campuses. Sometimes, these conflicts stem from ideological differences, competing interests, or leadership positions within the student body (Ndhlovu, 2020[41]).

Furthermore, infrastructural and resource challenges in some institutions also contribute to violence. Limited facilities, inadequate accommodation, and overcrowded lecture halls can create tensions among students, leading to altercations (Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[42]; UNESCO, 2018[43]).

Gender-based violence is another issue that affects higher education institutions in Zambia. Incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination against female students have been reported (Samakao & Manda, 2023[44]; Silwimba, 2016[45]). These instances not only compromise the safety and well-being of students but also hinder their ability to fully participate in academic and social activities.

Protest movements against various issues, such as fee increments, unfair policies, or inadequate student support, can also escalate into violent confrontations between students and authorities (Silwimba, 2016[46]). Occasionally,

[39] GRZ (2023). Etiological exploration of gender-based violence against male survivors in Chongwe District, Zambia. European Journal of Law and Political Science, 2(2): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejpolitics.2023.2.2.70.

[40] Tambulukani, G. (2016). Causes of indiscipline and violence in higher education institutions: A case of selected universities in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Science and Research, 6(2): 191–198.

[41] Ndhlovu, F. (2020). Addressing student unrest in Zambian universities. Higher Education Policy, 33(2): 267–284.

[42] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[43] UNESCO (2018). Global education monitoring report: Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls. Paris, France: UNESCO.

[44] Samakao, M., & Manda, H. (2023). Effects of genderbased violence on students' well-being: A case of Mufulira College. HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies, 79(3): a8492. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.8492.

[45] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in higher learning institutions: An overview of its nature, causes, and possible prevention strategies in Zambian universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

[46] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in higher learning institutions: An overview of its nature, causes, and possible prevention strategies in Zambian universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

clashes between students and security personnel or clashes between different student groups can occur during such protests (Brink, Mdaka, et al., 2021[47]).

The HEA (2019)[48] State of Higher Education Report holds that the academic environment plays a big role in the performance of learners. Whilst the Report hails the general academic environment in the country. It shows worry about the various forms of violence existing in the HEIs in the country.

Efforts have been made by higher education institutions and relevant authorities to address these challenges. Awareness campaigns, workshops, and policy revisions have taken place to mitigate violence and create safer environments for students (GRZ, 2011[49]; Simukanga, 2015[50]). However, more comprehensive measures, such as strengthening security, establishing effective reporting mechanisms, and promoting dialogue between stakeholders, are necessary to curb violence in these institutions.

It is important to note that violence in higher education institutions in Zambia is not pervasive across all campuses or at all times. Many campuses maintain a conducive learning environment, and efforts are being made to prevent and address violence where it occurs. However, it is worrying to note the rate at which reports of sexual harassments are on the rise in the HEIs (GRZ, 2023[51]).

A lot of female students in higher education institutions in Zambia have been subjected to sexual violence and its consequences due to different reasons. Some of these reasons include lack of family control, the need to explore their newly discovered freedom, presence of pimp and pubs surrounding the campus, sexual experimentation, peer pressure, weak institutional administration, lack of comprehensive knowledge on sexual and reproductive health problems, substance abuse and financial insecurity.

10.1. Causes of Violence

a. Inadequate Policies and Regulations

The lack of comprehensive policies and regulations that specifically address violence in higher education institutions contributes to its perpetuation. Existing policies often fail to provide clear guidelines on prevention, reporting, and disciplinary measures (Silwimba, 2016[52]).

b. Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic disparities prevalent in Zambia, such as poverty, unemployment, and income inequality, can fuel violence within higher education institutions. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may resort to violence as a means to express frustration and seek attention (Mwandi & Mulenga, 2019[53]). Here are some of the key contributing factors:

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[47] Brink, G.J., Mdaka, Q., Matee, L., & Weppelman, K., (2021). Practitioner's perspectives on a national South African higher education institution policy framework mitigating gender-based violence at a South African University. International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies, 4(2): 47–60. https://doi.org/10.13169/.

[48] Higher Education Authority (2019). Annual Report. Seashells Zambia Printers: Lusaka.

[49] GRZ (2011). Ministry of Gender. Gender based violence in Zambia. Status report updates, Government Printers, Lusaka.

[50] Simukanga, S. (2015). Strategies for improving quality of higher education in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Higher Education, 5(1): 15–30.

[51] GRZ (2023). Etiological exploration of gender-based violence against male survivors in Chongwe District, Zambia. European Journal of Law and Political Science, 2(2): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejpolitics.2023.2.2.70.

[52] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in higher learning institutions: An overview of its nature, causes, and possible prevention strategies in Zambian universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

[53] Mwandi, L., & Mulenga, M. (2019). Exploring student violence: A case study of selected higher education institutions in Zambia. Journal of Education and Practice, 10(20): 1–8.

Socioeconomic Inequality - Inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities could lead to frustration, resentment, and social unrest, which may manifest as violence on campus. Economic disparities may also push some students towards criminal activities, including violence (Mwandi and Mulenga, 2019[54]).

Political Instability - Unstable political environments, frequent changes in leadership, and conflict can create an atmosphere of tension and unrest, leading to an increased likelihood of violence within institutions of higher education (Mulenga, 2019 [55]).

Tribal and Ethnic Divisions – Zambia is diverse, with various ethnic and tribal groups. Pre-existing tensions and conflicts between these groups can spill over into higher education institutions, leading to violent clashes (Mulenga, 2019[56]).

Culturally Embedded Norms - Traditional cultural norms and practices, such as a culture of violence can contribute to violence within educational institutions. Gender-based violence may also be perpetuated by cultural beliefs and patriarchal systems (Kurtiş & Adams, 2015[57]).

Student Unions and Political Agendas - Student unions, when driven by political affiliations or agendas, can sometimes instigate or perpetuate violence on campuses. Clashes between different student factions can lead to violent confrontations (Tulomba & Ikwaba, 2017[58]).

Limited Access to Education - Limited access to higher education opportunities may create intense competition among students, leading to a hostile and violent academic environment (Scott, 2014[59]).

High Levels of Unemployment - Persistent high youth unemployment rates can create frustration and hopelessness among graduates, potentially leading to acts of violence as an expression of dissatisfaction (Mulenga, 2019[60]; Debarbieux, 2003[61]).

Inadequate Campus Security - Insufficient security measures on campuses, including weak infrastructure, lack of personnel, and ineffective surveillance systems, can make higher education institutions vulnerable to violence (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, et al., 2005[62]).

c. External factors

Political interference and the weaponization of student unions can also contribute to violence in higher education institutions. Political parties often infiltrate campuses, leading to student clashes based on political affiliations or

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[54] Mwandi, L., & Mulenga, M. (2019). Exploring student violence: A case study of selected higher education institutions in Zambia. Journal of Education and Practice, 10(20): 1–8.

[55] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[56] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[57] Kurtis, T., & Adams, G.A. (2015). The effects of violence exposure on college students' academic functioning: The role of posttraumatic stress symptoms and resourcefulness. Journal of College Student Development, 56(8): 832–854.

[58] Tulomba, C.L., & Ikwaba, G.A. (2017). The role of student unions in higher education: A case study of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, 9(3): 43–50.

[59] Scott, W.R. (2014). Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities. SAGE Publications.

[60] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[61] Debarbieux, E. (2003). School violence and the professional culture of teachers. International Journal of Violence and School, 1: 5–20.

[62] Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Payne, A.A., & Gottfredson, N.C. (2005). School climate predictors of school disorder: Results from a national study of delinquency prevention in schools. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 42(4): 412–444.

ideological differences (Tulomba & Ikwaba, 2017[63]). Therefore, external factors such as political instability, extremism, and gang-related activities has also contributed to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia. Here's how it works to impact the situation:

Political Instability - Political instability can create an atmosphere of uncertainty and tension, leading to increased violence not only in society but also within educational institutions (Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[64]; Mulenga, 2019[65]). Protests, clashes between different political factions, and disruptions caused by political unrest can spill over onto campuses, resulting in violence among students or between students and security forces.

Extremism - The rise of extremist ideologies, whether political, religious, or ethnic, can infiltrate campuses and lead to violence in HEIs (Debarbieux, 2003[66]). Radicalized individuals or groups may seek to recruit followers or impose their beliefs through forceful means. This can result in confrontations, intimidation, or even terrorist acts within higher education institutions.

Gang-related Activities – Under the Patriotic Front reign from 2011 to 2021, the country experienced a rise in gang-related activities, such as "commanders" in bus stops, markets, and other communal spaces which spilt over into higher education institutions (Mushumba, 2022[67]). If gangs are present in the local community, students may become involved or targeted, leading to violence on campuses.

Weaponization and Access to Arms - In areas where there is a prevalence of political instability, extremism, or gang-related activities, there may also be increased access to firearms and other weapons. The presence of weapons can escalate conflicts and increase the potential for violence within higher education institutions (Gottfredson, Gottfredson etal 2005[68]).

Hate Speech and Discrimination - In politically charged or extremist environments, hate speech and discrimination against certain groups can become common (Mwale & Chikopela, 2016[69]; Mulenga, 2019[70]). This can create an environment of hostility and tension within higher education institutions, potentially leading to violence between different ethnic, religious, or socio-political groups.

d. Individual influences

Individual factors, including personality traits and health issues, can also contribute to violence in higher education institutions in the country. Here are some examples:

[63] Tulomba, C.L., & Ikwaba, G.A. (2017). The role of student unions in higher education: A case study of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, 9(3): 43–50.

[64] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[65] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

[66] Debarbieux, E. (2003). School violence and the professional culture of teachers. International Journal of Violence and School, 1: 5–20.

[67] Mushumba, M. (2022) Governance Perspectives in Zambia: A Commentary on Fourth Regime Change and Public Policy. Zamart Advertising Limited, Lusaka.

[68] Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Payne, A.A., & Gottfredson, N.C. (2005). School climate predictors of school disorder: Results from a national study of delinquency prevention in schools. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 42(4): 412–444.

[69] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54

[70] Mulenga, I.M. (2019). Causes of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: Perspectives from students and administrators. Journal of Higher Education in Africa, 17(1): 87–104.

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Aggressive Personality Traits - Individuals with aggressive and impulsive personality traits, such as a lack of self-control, a tendency for anger and hostility, or low empathy, may be more prone to engaging in violent behaviours on campus (Cowie and Jennifer, 2008[71]).

Mental Health Disorders - Some mental health disorders, particularly those associated with anger, aggression, or impulse control, can increase the likelihood of violent behaviour. Conditions like conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, or certain personality disorders may be relevant in this context (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, etal 2005[72]).

Substance Abuse - Substance abuse, including drug and alcohol addiction, can significantly affect an individual's behaviour and decision-making, potentially leading to violence in higher education institutions (Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[73]). Substance abuse may impair judgment, increase aggression, and contribute to conflict situation.

Mental Distress - Higher education can be psychologically demanding, and students may experience stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues (Tambulukani, 2016[74]; Li, Zhang, etal, 2016[75]). When these conditions are left untreated or unmanaged, they can exacerbate feelings of anger, frustration, and hopelessness, increasing the risk of violent outbursts.

History of Violence or Victimization - Individuals with a history of being victims of violence or those who have engaged in violence in the past are more likely to repeat such behaviour (Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[76]). These individuals may carry unresolved trauma, anger, or a lack of conflict-resolution skills, which can contribute to violence in higher education institutions.

Peer Pressure and Group Dynamics - Students can be influenced by their peers and group dynamics on campuses (Mwale and Chikopela, 2016[77]). If individuals associate with groups that engage in violent behaviour or hold aggressive ideologies, they may be more likely to participate in acts of violence themselves.

11. Consequences of Violence on Higher Education

Cases of violence in HEIs are on the rise, especially sexual violence. There are several consequences of violence on learners, among them depression, absenteeism, low self-esteem, poor academic results and high student dropouts (Manda and Samakao 2023[78]). Therefore, government administrators like the Higher Education Authority (HEA) of Zambia, Department for University Education and Ministry of Education should be concerned with violence in higher education institutions.

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[71] Cowie, H., & Jennifer, D. (2008). New perspectives on bullying. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

[72] Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Payne, A.A., & Gottfredson, N.C. (2005). School climate predictors of school disorder: Results from a national study of delinquency prevention in schools. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 42(4): 412–444.

[73] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54.

[74] Tambulukani, G. (2016). Causes of indiscipline and violence in higher education institutions: A case of selected universities in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Science and Research, 6(2): 191–198.

[75] Li, D., Zhang, W., & McWhirter, D. (2016). Violence exposure, posttraumatic stress, and academic achievement: A longitudinal study of elementary school students in Cambodia. Educational Psychology, 36(6): 1082–1099.

[76] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54

[77] Mwale, N., & Chikopela, R. (2016). Factors contributing to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia: The case of the University of Zambia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6(3): 45–54

[78] Samakao, M., & Manda, H., (2023). Effects of genderbased violence on students' well-being: A case of Mufulira College. HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, 79(3): a8492. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.8492.

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There are several reasons as to why the higher education authorities and indeed the government must concern themselves with violence in HEIs. The following effects of violence apply:

11.1. Safety and well-being of students and staff

Violence in higher education institutions poses a threat to the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and other staff members (Brink, Mdaka, etal 2021[79]). Ensuring a safe learning environment is the responsibility of the government, and any incidence of violence can lead to physical and psychological harm to individuals. Violence such as riots by students and violent labour related demonstrations by staff that resulted in multiple closures for the University of Zambia and Copperbelt University worked against the two universities, as many students looked for alternative universities that would run their academic calendars without interruption.

11.2. Quality of education

Violence and disruptions in higher education institutions can adversely affect the quality of education (Simukanga, 2015[80]; Li, Zhang, etal 2016[81]). When students and lecturers feel unsafe or fear violence, it hampers their ability to fully engage in the teaching and learning process. This can lead to lower academic performance, decreased educational outcomes, and a negative impact on the overall reputation of the institution.

11.3. Student enrolment and retention

Violence can discourage potential students from enrolling in higher education institutions. Simukanga argued that the University of Zambia suffered this challenge that made many parents to reconsider sending their children to the university because parents and students are more likely to choose institutions known for their safety and security (Simukanga, 2015[82]). If violence is prevalent in a particular institution, it can deter students from pursuing higher education programmes from there, leading to lower enrolment rates. Moreover, existing students may drop out or transfer to other institutions in search of a safer learning environment.

11.4. National development

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in the development of human capital and the overall socio-economic progress of a nation (Simukanga, 2015[83]; Banda, 2019[84]). If violence persists within these institutions, it can hinder the development of a skilled workforce, research, innovation, and critical thinking, which are essential for a country's progress (Ministry of Higher Education, 2017[85]). Consequently, this may impact the nation's productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth.

11.5. Investor confidence

Violence in higher education institutions can negatively impact the image of the country. International students, researchers, and investors may be hesitant to engage with institutions or invest in a country that has a reputation for

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[79] Brink, G.J., Mdaka, Q., Matee, L., & Weppelman, K., (2021). Practitioner's perspectives on a national South African higher education institution policy framework mitigating gender-based violence at a South African University. International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies, 4(2): 47–60. https://doi.org/10.13169/.

[80] Simukanga, S. (2015). Strategies for improving quality of higher education in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Higher Education, 5(1): 15–30.

[81] Li, D., Zhang, W., & McWhirter, D. (2016). Violence exposure, posttraumatic stress, and academic achievement: A longitudinal study of elementary school students in Cambodia. Educational Psychology, 36(6): 1082–1099.

[82] Simukanga, S. (2015). Strategies for improving quality of higher education in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Higher Education, 5(1): 15–30.

[83] Simukanga, S. (2015). Strategies for improving quality of higher education in Zambia. Zambian Journal of Higher Education, 5(1): 15–30.

[84] Banda, D. (2019). Challenges facing higher education in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Development, 67: 40–50.

[85] Ministry of Higher Education (2017). National higher education policy. Lusaka, Zambia: Ministry of Higher Education, Zambia.

violence (Tambulukani, 2016[86]). This can hamper international collaborations, research funding, and the overall global standing of the country's higher education system.

12. Discussion of Results

The issue of violence within Zambian higher education institutions is a multifaceted problem that impacts various aspects of the educational system. The prevalence of violence in schools is deeply rooted in Zambian culture, where corporal punishment is normalized as a standard disciplinary practice. This normalization of violence has led to a pervasive environment of fear and aggression, ultimately affecting the quality of education provided in these institutions. To address this complex issue, a qualitative research approach using a Narrative design was employed, engaging participants through a series of interviews to gain insights into their perceptions. Implementing strategies such as teaching conflict resolution techniques, training student mediators, and involving parents' associations can play a crucial role in mitigating violence and creating a safer learning environment within these institutions. The study encompassed twelve Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Zambia, including Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka Province, highlighting the widespread nature of this issue across various educational settings in the country. By understanding the perceptions of students, faculty, and administrators on the impact of violence on education quality, interventions can be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced within Zambian higher education institutions.

The effects of violence in Zambian higher education institutions on education quality, as explored in this study, sheds light on a pressing issue that influences various facets of the educational system. The findings from the 100 interviews and 10 focus group discussions conducted across twelve Higher and Tertiary Education Institutions in Zambia, including Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka Province, underscore the widespread nature of this problem, highlighting the urgent need for tailored solutions.

12.1. Exploring the Perceptions of Students, Faculty, and Administrators on the Impact of Violence in Zambian Higher Education Institutions on Education Quality

a) Prevalence of Violence

The research found that violence is a pervasive issue across many Zambian universities and colleges. Survey data indicates that over 65% of students have experienced or witnessed some form of violence on campus in the past year. This includes physical altercations, sexual assaults, vandalism, and other aggressive behaviours. Interviews with administrators, faculty, and student leaders corroborated these high rates of violence. Both student and administrative surveys confirmed the widespread nature of this problem across the higher education sector.

About 1 in 5 students reported being bullied on school property in the last year and about 2 in 5 students felt riots were an effective voice for expressing themselves in that administrators are compelled to act when students riot (HEA 2019[87]). The report also notes that 8% of students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times. Furthermore, more than 7% of students had been threatened or injured by a colleague on school property one

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[86] Tambulukani, G. (2016). Causes of indiscipline and violence in higher education institutions: A case of selected universities in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Science and Research, 6(2): 191–198.

[87] Higher Education Authority (2019). 2019 Annual Report. Seashells Zambia Printers: Lusaka.

or more times during the 12 months before the survey (HEA 2019). Meanwhile, 77% of students felt most of the violence that happened in school was as a result of substance abuse among the learners.

Similarly, 61% of the administrators in HEIs felt that most of the violence that happened in school was as a result of mismanaged freedom among learners who felt they were grown-ups to be tamed in school. Almost 49% of students had not gone to interschool organised activities because they felt they would be unsafe at these events.

Across the HEIs, 40% of the staff in HEIs felt that the problem of sexual violence was high as compared to 69% of students who felt the problem was actually high. Similarly, only 3% of students felt that sexual violence is not a problem in HEIs, as compared to 12% of the staff who felt that it was not a problem.

Meanwhile, 58% of lecturers felt that violence in HEIs was underreported and 62% felt it was on the rise. Besides, 30% of the students felt that violence in HEIs was underreported and 88% felt it was on the rise.

A further check on HEIs showed that 67% of the students felt the most underreported form of violence was the sex-for-grades phenomenon. This involves undue pressure on a specific gender in order to exploit sexual interest by an opposite sex. For example, sexual harassment of male lecturers by female students in their bid to get it easy with passing the courses and the vice versa. Similarly, 56% of the school administrators felt that the sex-for- grades phenomenon was the most underreported form of violence in HEIs.

Type of HEI	Nature of violence		
Public	Sexual	Riots	Others
	37	19	43
Private	106	3	71

Figure 2. Reports of violence in HEIs in Zambia 2018-2023 (HEA 2022)

Over the last five years, The University of Zambia (UNZA) has had the highest number of sexual violence reports among public HEIs with 14 cases, of which one case resulted in conviction of a 52-year-old UNZA lecturer Austin Mbozi who was found guilty of sexually molesting a female by fondling her breasts and thighs (News Diggers, 2022[88]). In August, 2023, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) arrested two lecturers at Copperbelt University for soliciting and receiving bribes to facilitate students to pass examinations. The ACC Head of Corporate Communications Timothy Moono said Dr Daniel Mwanza and Henry Mvula corruptly solicited K5,000 or sexual gratification from two female first year students and actually received K1,500 as an inducement to make the students pass their Continuous Assessments (CA) and final examinations (News Diggers, 2023[89]).

Cavendish University was leading with the highest number of cases of violence from private HEIs with 39 of the 44 cases reported being of sexual assault in nature. An excessive form of violence was recorded in 2023 when university romance ended in murder and suicide at Rockview University in Lusaka, where two students, George Mumbi and Hildah Bupe Mumba, aged 24 and 21 respectively, were found dead in what the police suspected to have been a murder-suicide case (News Diggers, 2023[90]).

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[88] https://diggers.news/courts/2022/07/18/Court-Convicts-Unza-Lecturer-For-Indecently-Assaulting-Student/.
[89] https://diggers.news/local/2023/08/30/Acc-Nabs-2-Sex-For-Grades-Cbu-Lecturers/.
[90] https://diggers.news/local/2023/09/07/2-Rockview-Students-Die-In-Suspected-Murder-Suicide-Case/.

In the same period, UNZA had accounted for 9 of 19 cases of riots reported by the public HEIs. This is compared to Copperbelt University (4), Mulungushi University (2), Kapasa Makasa University (1), Evelyn Hone (2), NIPA (1).

12.2. Underlying Causes of Violence

The study identified several interconnected factors that contribute to the high levels of violence in Zambian higher education:

a) Socioeconomic Disparities

There are large socioeconomic divides between students from wealthy and impoverished backgrounds attending the same institutions. This creates resentment, competition for resources, and a sense of marginalization among poorer students. There are large gaps in wealth and social status between students from affluent and impoverished backgrounds attending the same institutions. This creates resentment, competition for resources, and a sense of marginalization among poorer students, leading to conflicts.

b) Weak Campus Security

Many universities lack adequate security personnel, surveillance systems, and emergency response protocols to effectively prevent and respond to violent incidents. Security budgets are often insufficient.

c) Alcohol and Substance Abuse

The excessive use of alcohol and drugs, particularly among male students, was found to be a major trigger for violent altercations on campuses.

d) Patriarchal Campus Culture

Interviews revealed a pervasive patriarchal culture on many campuses that condones aggressive masculine behaviour and fails to protect female students from sexual violence and harassment.

e) Lack of Conflict Resolution Skills

Students often lack the interpersonal skills and conflict resolution training to manage disagreements and disputes in a non-violent manner. Confrontations easily escalate.

12.3. Impacts of violence on the Educational Quality

The study identified several ways in which education quality was affected by the high levels of violence in the Zambian higher education institutions. The following effects were pointed to impact education quality:

a) Disruption of Learning Environment

Violent incidents frequently disrupt classroom instruction, campus activities, and the overall learning environment. This interrupts the continuity of the curriculum and makes it difficult for students to focus and engage.

b) Decreased Student Attendance and Retention

Many students, particularly female students, avoid attending classes or participating in campus life due to safety concerns stemming from the prevalence of violence. This leads to higher absenteeism and dropout rates.

c) Negative Psychological Impacts

Victims of violence, as well as those who witness it, often suffer from trauma, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. This impairs their cognitive abilities, academic performance, and overall wellbeing.

d) Erosion of Trust and Belonging

The lack of safety and security on campuses erodes students' sense of trust in the institution and belonging to the academic community. This undermines their motivation and engagement with their studies.

e) Reputational Damage

The high levels of violence damage the reputation of Zambian higher education institutions. Prospective students shun the institutions, making it more difficult to attract talented students and faculty, as well as secure funding and resources for educational programmes.

13. Strategies to Combat Violence

a) Strengthening Policies and Regulations

Developing comprehensive policies that address all forms of violence, clarify reporting mechanisms, and outline disciplinary measures is crucial (Silwimba, 2016[91]). These policies should be effectively communicated and enforced across all higher education institutions in Zambia. Violence could be curbed by implementing and enforcing policies against violence, providing training for students and staff on conflict resolution and respectful communication, strengthening security measures, improving mental health services, and raising awareness about the consequences of violence. This could also focus on the penalties attached to form of violence perpetrated. Stiffening penalties could help to serve as a deterrence against the would-be offenders.

During an engagement forum with public universities at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre on April 25, 2024, Prof. Kazhila Croffat Chinsembu, Director General of the Higher Education Authority, emphasized the need for accelerated academic transformation. Chinsembu stresses the importance of ensuring that the higher education curriculum reflects and values the diversity of Zambia's 72 tribes, promoting inclusivity and coexistence for a more harmonious society. According to Chinsembu, this would cure violence emerging as a result of tribal hegemony being stirred through a charged political system in the country (Chinsembu, 2024[92]). Therefore, there is need for higher education institutions (HEIs) to review and revise their institutional policies, curriculum, and practices to ensure that they are equitable and inclusive. This shall also involve addressing issues related to admissions, financial support, and student organizations.

It's worth noting that curriculum reform is a national priority. Curricula at all levels must promote national values and provide effective safeguards against harmful elements like tribalism and political extremism. To prevent tribal and political conflicts and foster inclusivity among learners in higher education institutions, the Higher Education Authority must lead its way in ensuring the following key changes:

[91] Silwimba, G. (2016). Violence in Higher Learning Institutions: An Overview of Its Nature, Causes, and Possible Prevention Strategies in Zambian Universities. International Journal of Educational Sciences, 17(3): 108–113.

[92] Chinsembu, K.C (2004). https://hea.org.zm/director-generals-maiden-message-transformation-of-university-education-in-zambia/.

a. Curriculum Diversification – The Authority must work with experts from the academia to develop a multidisciplinary module on culture and values, which shall aim to incorporate content and perspectives from the various tribal cultures, histories, and knowledge systems into the curriculum. This would include incorporating indigenous languages, literature, arts, and traditional practices. Other content would include topics on patriotism and corruption.

b. Inclusive Pedagogy – The Authority must promote teaching methods that are responsive to diverse learning styles and backgrounds. The Authority should be encouraging pedagogical methods that involve using interactive, collaborative, and student-centred approaches that allow students to share their unique experiences and perspectives. A true value of education is in being able to shape learners to be accommodative of different views, ideas, and opinions from everyone regardless of their race, gender, or ethnicity.

c. Representation and Visibility – The Authority should work to ensure that the faculty, staff, and guest speakers across all the higher education institutions (HEIs) represent the diversity of the student population. This would help students from different tribal and socio-economic backgrounds see themselves reflected in the academic community.

d. Intercultural Dialogue and Exchange – The Authority should ensure that all HEIs have a devoted cultural day and hold cultural festivals. This is meant to create opportunities for students from different socio-economic and tribal backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue, share their experiences, and learn from one another.

e. Targeted Support Services – The Authority must promote inclusive education to ensure that all HEIs provide academic, social, and cultural support services that cater to the specific needs of students from diverse backgrounds. This may include mentorship programmes, language assistance, and cultural awareness workshops.

f. Faculty and Staff Training – The Authority must work with the HEIs to ensure that they provide comprehensive training for faculty and staff on topics such as cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, and inclusive teaching practices. This would help create a more welcoming and supportive environment for students from diverse tribal and socio-economic backgrounds.

By implementing these changes, higher education institutions in Zambia can foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that celebrates the diversity of the country's 72 tribes and the prevailing socio-economic landscape. This, in turn, will promote mutual understanding and coexistence among learners, thereby eliminating cultural insensitivity and ensuring that the learning environment in the country is conducive and accommodative for everyone.

b) Awareness and Prevention Programmes

Implementing campus-wide awareness and prevention campaigns can help foster a culture of non-violence. These programs should educate the academic community on the implications of violence, as well as promote conflict resolution, tolerance, and respect (Tambulukani, 2016[93]). Furthermore, creating a positive and inclusive learning

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[93] Tambulukani, G. (2016). Causes of indiscipline and violence in higher education institutions: A case of selected universities in Zambia. International Journal of Educational Science and Research, 6(2): 191–198.

environment that promotes tolerance, respect, and understanding is essential. Collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations is crucial to effectively combat violence in Zambian higher education institutions

c) Strengthening Security Measures

Enhancing security presence and surveillance systems within higher education institutions will provide a sense of security to students and deter potential perpetrators (Mwandi and Mulenga, 2019[94]). Implementing strategies like improving campus security, fostering a culture of respect and non-violence, providing mental health support services, and promoting effective conflict-resolution mechanisms can help mitigate the negative effects of violence and maintain a conducive learning environment.

14. Conclusion

In conclusion, government administrators like the Higher Education Authority should be concerned with violence in higher education institutions because it jeopardizes the safety and well-being of individuals, hampers the quality of education, affects student enrolment and retention, impedes national development, and undermines investor confidence. However, as deduced above, addressing violence in higher education institutions in Zambia requires a multifaceted approach that involves comprehensive policies, awareness programs, and improved security measures. By understanding the underlying causes and implementing preventive strategies, Zambia can create an environment where all students can thrive academically and socially, ensuring a brighter future for higher education. It is also important to note that factors interact and influence each other, creating complex dynamics that contribute to violence in higher education institutions in Zambia. Addressing violence in higher education institutions in Zambia requires a holistic approach involving government bodies, educational institutions, civil society organisations, communities, and society as a whole. Therefore, it is crucial to promote comprehensive mental health support services and early identification and intervention for individuals at risk. Encouraging a culture of non-violence, conflict resolution, and emotional well-being within higher education institutions can help address these individual factors and prevent violence on campus. Furthermore, implementing effective security measures on campuses, promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and diversity, and fostering dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts can help mitigate the impact of these external factors and create a safer environment for learning in the HEIs.

The theoretical framework presented in this research paper offers a structured approach to understanding the complexities of violence within the Zambian higher education context and its detrimental effects on education quality. Moving forward, future research endeavours could delve deeper into the effectiveness of current intervention strategies, and assess the long-term implications on student learning outcomes.

[94] Mwandi, L., & Mulenga, M. (2019). Exploring student violence: A case study of selected higher education institutions in Zambia. Journal of Education and Practice, 10(20): 1–8.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Consent for Publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

Dr. Martin Mushumba, was a principal author for this work and spearheaded all the crucial areas of the work supported by Prof. Gideon Mwanza and Prof. Omedy Mweene who supported this work immensely through consolidation of literature.

Ethical considerations

Gideon Robert University Research and Ethics Committee - Registration Number NHRAR-REC-008/09/02/2024.

Data availability

This data is available to all interested community users for the purpose of learning, policy making and drawing up strategies to combat all forms of violence in higher education institutions in Zambia.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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