

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF GENDER-BASED HOMICIDES IN  
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## ABSTRACT

Gender-related homicide, especially femicide, is becoming a global challenge. Past studies have concentrated efforts toward alleviating these tragedies in homes, families, and society, with little attention on educational spaces such as universities. In Nigeria, for instance, cases of femicide have continued to rise, with reports claiming that such acts are a result of money-making rituals. This current study investigated the causes and effects of gender-related homicides as well as their preventive measures as perceived by undergraduates in three Nigerian southwest universities. Underpinned by the feminist theory, the study adopted the survey research design. The study population comprised students in Nigerian southwestern universities, with a sample of 315 undergraduates purposively selected from the sampled universities. The Perceived Causes, Effects, and Preventive Measures of Gender-Related Homicide Questionnaire (PCEPMGHQ) was used for data collection ( $\alpha=0.96, 0.94, 0.94$ ) for the sub-sections of the questionnaire, which was administered via Google Forms. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and a t-test at a 5% significance level. Results indicate mental health challenges, feelings of abandonment, financial difficulties, substance and alcohol abuse, home-related factors, history of abuse, and violent relationships as students perceived dominant causes of gender-related homicides. Trauma, grief, stigmatization, and psychological and emotional distress were the effects of gender-related homicides highlighted by the respondents who advocated several preventive measures.

**Keywords:** Causes, Effects, Gender-related Homicide, Perceptions, Preventive measures, Universities.

*Perspetivas dos estudantes sobre homicídios por motivos de género nas universidades nigerianas*

## RESUMO

O homicídio por motivos de género, especialmente o feminicídio, está a tornar-se um problema global. Estudos anteriores concentraram os seus esforços em mitigar essas tragédias nos lares, nas famílias e na sociedade, prestando pouca atenção a espaços educativos como as universidades. Na Nigéria, por exemplo, os casos de feminicídio continuam a aumentar, com relatos que afirmam que esses atos são resultado de rituais lucrativos. Este estudo investigou as causas e os efeitos dos homicídios por motivos de género, bem como as suas medidas preventivas, de acordo com a percepção de estudantes de três universidades do sudoeste da Nigéria. Com base na teoria feminista, o estudo adotou um desenho de investigação por inquérito. A população do estudo foi composta por estudantes de universidades do sudoeste da Nigéria, com uma amostra de 315 estudantes de licenciatura selecionados intencionalmente das universidades amostradas. O Questionário de Causas Percebidas, Efeitos e Medidas Preventivas do Homicídio por Motivos de Género (PCEPMGHQ) foi utilizado para a recolha de dados ( $\alpha = 0,96; 0,94; 0,94$ ) para as subsecções do questionário, que foi administrado através de Formulários Google. Os dados foram analisados por meio de estatística descritiva e um teste t com um nível de significância de 5%. Os resultados indicam problemas de saúde mental, sentimentos de abandono, dificuldades económicas, abuso de substâncias e álcool, fatores relacionados ao lar, histórico de abuso e relações violentas, pois os estudantes perceberam as principais causas dos homicídios por motivos de género. Trauma, luto, estigmatização e mal-estar psicológico e emocional foram os efeitos dos homicídios por motivos de género destacados pelos inquiridos, que defenderam várias medidas preventivas.

**Palavras-chave:** Causas, Efeitos, Homicídio por motivos de género, Percepções, Medidas preventivas, Universidades.

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*Perspectivas estudiantiles sobre los homicidios por razones de género en las universidades nigerianas***RESUMEN**

El homicidio por razones de género, especialmente el feminicidio, se está convirtiendo en un problema global. Estudios previos han centrado sus esfuerzos en mitigar estas tragedias en los hogares, las familias y la sociedad, prestando poca atención a espacios educativos como las universidades. En Nigeria, por ejemplo, los casos de feminicidio han seguido aumentando, con informes que afirman que estos actos son resultado de rituales lucrativos. Este estudio investigó las causas y los efectos de los homicidios por razones de género, así como sus medidas preventivas, según la percepción de estudiantes de tres universidades del suroeste de Nigeria. Con base en la teoría feminista, el estudio adoptó un diseño de investigación de encuesta. La población del estudio estuvo compuesta por estudiantes de universidades del suroeste de Nigeria, con una muestra de 315 estudiantes de pregrado seleccionados intencionalmente de las universidades muestreadas. Se utilizó el Cuestionario de Causas Percibidas, Efectos y Medidas Preventivas del Homicidio por Razones de Género (PCEPMGHQ) para la recopilación de datos ( $\alpha = 0,96; 0,94; 0,94$ ) para las subsecciones del cuestionario, que se administró mediante Formularios de Google. Los datos se analizaron mediante estadística descriptiva y una prueba t con un nivel de significancia del 5%. Los resultados indican problemas de salud mental, sentimientos de abandono, dificultades económicas, abuso de sustancias y alcohol, factores relacionados con el hogar, antecedentes de abuso y relaciones violentas, ya que los estudiantes percibieron las causas principales de los homicidios por razones de género. El trauma, el duelo, la estigmatización y el malestar psicológico y emocional fueron los efectos de los homicidios por razones de género que destacaron los encuestados, quienes abogaron por diversas medidas preventivas.

**Palabras clave:** Causas, Efectos, Homicidio por razón de género, Percepciones, Medidas preventivas, Universidades.

**Introduction**

The commission of a crime, especially those that are life-related, has taken a geometric progression in recent times in the global arena. Homicide is the most severe outcome of human aggressive activity (Whittington et al., 2023). The United Nations defines homicide as "unlawful death inflicted upon a person with the intent to cause death or serious injury," with three essential components: unlawfulness, harmful intent, and interpersonal killing (United Nations on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2015: 1). A distinction is drawn between this and intentional violence in conflict situations, alongside non-conflict violent fatalities like self-defense killings or legal interventions such as assisted suicide and lawful execution (UNODC, 2019), with observed associations to gender dynamics (Gu & Zhong, 2024).

Gender-related homicides refer to the intentional killing of a person based on his or her gender. It is a form of gender-based violence, with the female gender as the most affected (Gu & Zhong, 2024; Shai et al., 2023; Sutton, 2023). Gu and Zhong (2024) and Sutton (2023) maintain that gender-related homicides take the form of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and violence perpetrated by family members or other relatives. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2021) reports that 87,995 of the 457,946 people murdered in homicides globally in 2021 were women or girls, while over 90% of murder suspects in homicides are men (UNODC, 2019).

Jaffe et al. (2020) posit that gender-related homicide is a serious issue that now affects societies worldwide, including Nigeria, and has been attributed to factors such as societal norms, gender inequality/roles, power dynamics, and economic and societal inequalities. Unfortunately, gender-related violence has crept into educational spaces, where female students are reportedly murdered mainly by their male counterparts for unjustifiable reasons (Fawole et al., 2018; Pulido et al., 2011). Since crime is contextual (Pulido et al., 2011), the purpose of this current study is to investigate the causes of gender-related homicides as well as their preventive measures as perceived by undergraduates in Nigerian southwest universities.

Gender-related homicide (also referred to as femicide in this study) is defined as the killing of a woman for no other reason than that she is a woman (Stassi et al., 2024). It has been reported to be the most extreme form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) globally (Shai et al., 2023). The alleged inferiority of women in comparison to men is the common basis for femicide, including sexual murder, misogynist-based killings, "honour" murder, and intimate relationship violence (Garcia-Vergara et al., 2022; Gu & Zhong, 2024). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), gender-related homicides are devastating for individuals, families, and communities

and have a long-lasting impact on mental and physical health as well as the social well-being of individuals (Rikhotso et al., 2023).

Airaoje et al. (2023) maintain that in Nigeria, gender norms and roles impact the dynamics of gender-related homicides, and these are often deeply ingrained in the Nigerian society, which has encouraged the perpetuation of gender-based violence and discrimination. Additionally, power dynamics, such as those between men and women or between different social groups, also contribute to gender-related homicides (Conroy, 2014; Fleming et al., 2015; Gu & Zhong, 2024). Economic and social inequalities such as poverty and lack of access to education and employment opportunities have continued to worsen the prevalence of gender-related homicides in the global space, worst still in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ojemeiri et al., 2022). Although there is currently no universally accepted definition of femicide, it might be termed as utter violence against women (Stassi et al., 2024). The causes, consequences, and effective preventive measures against this scourge are not well documented (Cecchi et al., 2023; Giorgetti et al., 2022; Zara et al., 2019).

### **Problem Statement and Research Gap**

Gender-related homicide is a pressing issue globally and in Nigeria, reflecting systemic inequalities, and typically targets females and other marginalised gender groups, with the intended negative effects on the immediate victims, victims' families, and their immediate communities (Silva et al., 2023; Ukoji & Ukoji, 2023). In Nigeria, especially in several universities, cases of homicides against the female gender (female students) have become worrisome (Okunzuwa, 2024; Ukoji & Ukoji, 2023). Currently, little to nothing is done to address this type of violence.

For instance, multiple incidents of female student homicides have been reported across various Nigerian university campuses (Okunzuwa, 2024; Ukoji & Ukoji, 2023). Previous studies have centered their efforts on providing a solution to violence in families, communities, and societies, with little or no attention towards addressing the same issue (gender-related homicides) in the educational setting, a gap this current study wants to address. Intending to alleviate or put an end to this unpalatable occurrence, there is a need to collate what university students perceive to be the causes and effects of this gender-related homicide, as well as the preventive measures. Therefore, this study investigated undergraduate students' perceptions of the causes and effects, as well as preventive measures for gender-related homicide in Nigerian universities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The feminist theory serves as the foundation for our investigation. Feminist theory was propounded by Navajo Myth in 1851 and is used to analyze the gender dynamics and power relations that contribute to gender-related homicide (or any form of violence against the female gender). This theory emphasizes the social construction of gender and how gender intersects with other social categories, such as race, class, and sexuality (Veenstra, 2011). According to Corradi et al. (2016), the theory offers a thorough comprehension of the root causes and societal ramifications of femicide. It draws attention to the part played by patriarchy, a societal structure in which men predominate in positions of moral authority, political leadership, social privilege, and property ownership (Heyes, 2013).

Consistent with the theory, violence against women is an expression of structural gender inequality, where oppressive beliefs are ingrained in societal structures and culturally accepted (Corradi et al., 2016; Heyes, 2013). According to feminist researchers, femicide is a social problem that stems from the power relations between genders and is frequently reinforced by norms around hegemonic masculinity and male supremacy rather than just being an isolated act of violence (González Rodríguez, 2012). Given its patriarchal culture, Nigeria is likely to witness an increase in femicide incidents if intervention programmes and preventative measures are not implemented. This study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceived causes and effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria? We also wanted to

determine what preventive measures can be adopted to alleviate gender-related homicide as perceived by undergraduates in these universities.

## Literature Review

### Gender-Related Homicide in Nigeria

According to the Nigerian Coalition for the Protection of Women and Children (NCPWC) (2020), gender-related homicides refer to killings motivated by gender-based discrimination, primarily targeting women and girls. It includes homicides committed by intimate partners or family members, often involving prior abuse or sexual violence (NCPWC, 2020). The common forms of gender-related homicides include femicide, honour killings, and dowry-related deaths (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023). Silva *et al.* (2023) assert that several female students are continually being killed in Nigerian tertiary institutions every year, making the learning environment unsafe for female students, which invariably hampers their academic endeavours and outcomes.

Chinonye (2024) posits that homicides in Nigeria represent the most extreme form of violence against women, a lethal act on a continuum of gender-based discrimination and abuse, which is an outright violation of human rights and a reflection of deep-seated gender inequality and discrimination in society (Campbell *et al.*, 1998). The leading cause of gender-related homicide in Nigeria has been acclaimed to be the pervasive gender inequality and patriarchal norms that perpetuate violence against women (Johnson, 2022), as females are often treated as subordinate to men, and this can lead to a culture of impunity where males feel entitled to exert control over females through violence (Azeez *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, limited access to education, economic opportunities, and support services for women makes them more vulnerable to violence and less able to escape abusive situations, which could result in homicide (Airaoje *et al.*, 2023).

### Causes of Gender-related Homicide

Marcuello-Servos *et al.* (2020) assert that societal, cultural, and individual factors cause gender-related homicide. Additionally, cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender stereotypes, which often place women in subordinate roles and justify their abuse, contribute significantly to gender-related homicides (Perrin *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the normalisation of domestic violence and the lack of effective legal protections for women necessitate violence against the female gender (Ajayi *et al.*, 2022). According to Vyas and Jansen (2022), the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, gender-based discrimination and inequality, socially constructed norms of masculinity and femininity, and gender stereotypes are the major causes of femicides. DeGue *et al.* (2023) and Lomazzi (2023) contend that globally, homicides against women are most prevalent in societies where gender roles are rigidly defined and enforced and where the concept of masculinity is associated with toughness, male honor, or dominance.

Further underlying reasons for these homicides are historical discrimination against women and girls and the unequal power dynamics between men and women in society (UNODC, 2021; s2022). According to Campbell *et al.* (2007), most femicides involve a history of domestic violence and abuse, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, particularly in cases where women have fewer resources or less influence than their male counterparts. As reported by Stassi *et al.* (2024), a 32-year-old woman was murdered by her ex-husband, who was unwilling to accept the dissolution of their marriage. These authors also state that constant physical and/or psychological abuse, death threats, abusive relationships, intense jealousy, separation or divorce, authority, possessiveness, and women's subservient status are the main causes of gender-related homicide. Research made by McFarlane *et al.* (2002) expresses that stalking of women results in killings that are connected to gender. To better understand gender-related killings, Walz *et al.* (2024) examined the traits of male and female homicide victims. Results show that substance abuse, addictive disorders, and perpetrator-victim interactions are the leading causes of gender-related homicides.



The reasons for intimate partner homicide and the impact of gender variations in empathy, psychopathy, and perceived social support were investigated by Topcu et al. in 2022. Their study concluded that lack of social support, envy towards spouses, and physical abuse by partners were the leading causes of femicide. The contextual elements linked to gender-based violence and related homicides committed by partners and in-laws in India were investigated by Sabri and Young (2022). The results indicated that relationships, internalised weakness, societal/cultural factors, and a lack of resources were the primary reasons for femicides. Whittington et al. (2023) establish that government policies and structural elements, such as uneven distribution of wealth and economic inequality, are the root causes of femicide.

### **Effects of Gender-related Homicide**

Gender-related homicide has profound effects on individuals, families, and communities. Sutton (2023) proposes that the loss of a loved one through such a violent act leaves behind emotional scars that can take years to heal. For the immediate family and friends, grief is often compounded by the societal stigma and judgment that can accompany discussions of gender-based violence, and this can lead to isolation and a reluctance to seek support, exacerbating the pain and suffering experienced by those left behind.

Similarly, Ojemeiri et al. (2022) contend that gender-related homicides contribute to a cycle of violence and fear within communities. This author affirms that such killings perpetuate a culture of toxic masculinity and aggression where resolving conflicts through violence becomes the norm rather than the exception. This not only affects the mental health and well-being of individuals but also undermines social cohesion and trust within communities. Also, the fear of becoming a victim can lead to increased tension and a communication breakdown, making it harder for communities to unite and support one another (Johnson, 2022).

Moreover, gender-related homicide has significant implications for public health and safety. It reflects more profound issues of gender inequality and societal norms that condone or even glorify violence, and addressing these issues requires comprehensive efforts, which include education, policy changes, and support systems for victims and their families (Keyser et al., 2022). Additionally, hate crimes, sexual assault, domestic abuse, and other types of violence and prejudice frequently overlap with gender-related homicide. Women who are victims of gender-related homicide may face additional challenges in seeking justice and support due to societal perceptions of masculinity and the vulnerability of women (Marcuello-Servos et al., 2020). In Peru and Latin America, Hernández (2021) investigated how femicide affected women's physical and mental well-being as well as the physical health of their offspring. The findings indicate that femicide causes abuse of alcohol and tobacco as well as depressive symptoms. Aka's (2023) mixed-methods research demonstrated that femicide elicits profound feelings of anger, mistrust, helplessness, and sadness, especially among the victim's family members.

### **Preventive Measures to Curb Gender-related Homicide**

Addressing gender-related homicides could require a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, intervention, and support for victims and their families, and this involves strategies such as education and awareness campaigns, policy interventions, support services for victims, and legal and justice system reforms. Wanjiru (2021). Addressing gender-related homicides could require a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, intervention, and support for victims and their families, and this involves strategies such as education and awareness campaigns, policy interventions, support services for victims, and examining femicide prevention strategies in Brazil using mixed-methods research. The results emphasise the need for improved risk assessment and management, a more intersectional approach to gender, race, class, and immigration status, early reporting of domestic abuse by women, and improved integration of the legal system with psychosocial assistance as prevention measures.

According to Weil (2020), promoting education and awareness about the gender-related homicide issue is crucial. It entails educating young people about healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and the consequences of violence. Also, public campaigns can help challenge societal norms that condone or glorify violence and promote a culture of respect and non-violence (Weil, 2020). Governments and policymakers should work toward enacting and enforcing laws that protect individuals from gender-based violence. This includes strengthening legal frameworks, improving reporting mechanisms, and ensuring that law enforcement agencies are adequately trained to handle cases of gender-related homicide (Ramaccio & Tholaine, 2020). Policies that promote gender equality and protect the rights of all individuals can also help reduce the incidence of gender-related violence (Chinonye, 2024).

Standish and Weila (2021) posit that community-based initiatives can play a significant role in preventing gender-related homicide. The authors added that programs that promote conflict resolution, mediation, and non-violent communication could help reduce the likelihood of violence. Additionally, creating safe spaces and support networks for individuals at risk can provide them with the resources and support they need to escape violent situations, including femicides (Dayan, 2020). Lomazzi (2023) confirmed that engaging men and boys in the conversation about gender-related homicide is crucial. Hence, encouraging them to challenge traditional norms of masculinity and promoting positive examples of male behaviour can help reduce the incidence of gender-based violence. Also, implementing programs that promote healthy relationships, emotional intelligence, and respect for others can empower men and boys to contribute to a culture of non-violence (Lomazzi, 2023).

Gender-related homicide is a global issue that requires international cooperation and solidarity. Ajayi et al. (2022) affirm that sharing best practices, gender equality, and protecting human rights, resources, and knowledge across borders will help countries develop more effective strategies to address femicide-related crimes. A study on femicide prevention tactics was carried out in South Africa by Shai et al. in 2022. The study's findings highlight that strengthening institutions, promoting leadership and responsibility, creating evidence-based and practice-informed femicide prevention, and enhancing laws and regulations can all help prevent femicide. The study by de Avila et al. (2021) examined ways to stop femicide, highlighting the significance of ongoing education, the fortification of legal safeguards, professional training in preventing femicide, an effective system for gathering and evaluating femicide data, and enhanced institutional collaboration as critical elements in preventing femicide.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a survey as its research design. Survey research entails collecting data on and systematically describing a given population's characteristics, features, or facts (Onen, 2021; Ruegg, 2021).

### **Population, Sampling Technique, and Sample**

Undergraduate students at universities in the southwest region of Nigeria comprised the study's population. Three (3) universities where femicide was recorded in the past ten years were purposively selected for this study. Undergraduates who volunteered and provided informed consent were chosen using the random sample technique. The study comprised a sample of three hundred and fifteen (315) undergraduates.

### **Instruments**

The Perceived Causes, Effects, and Preventive Measures of Gender-related Homicide Questionnaire (PCEPMGHQ) was used to collect the data for this study. Items for the instrument were developed through insights from extant literature (Ortiz-Prado et al., 2022; UNODC, 2019). The Instrument had four sections, A to D. Section A consists of the respondents' bio-data,

including gender, level, and faculty. Section B consists of 23 items that measured the Perceived Causes of Homicide ( $\alpha=0.96$ ) and were placed on a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. This same scale was used in sections C and D. Section C consists of 16 items that measured the Perceived Effects of Gender-Related Homicide ( $\alpha=0.94$ ), and Section D contained 15 items on the Preventive Measures for Gender-Related Homicide ( $\alpha=0.94$ ). This research instrument was administered online via Google Forms and hosted for 5 weeks to allow for more responses. Following ethical approval from the faculty officers of the three sampled universities, the researchers and two research assistants administered the online survey.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this research were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a t-test at a 5% significance level.

### Results

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the respondents. As indicated, 52.7% of respondents were males, while 47.3% were females. In terms of academic levels, it was found that 34.3% of the respondents were in their fourth year, 26.0% in their fifth, and 22.5% in their third, while the remaining were in their second and first year. Based on respondents' faculties, Table 1 also reveals that the number of respondents in Social Science (33.3%), Management Science (31.7%), and Science (18.3%) was higher, compared with those in the faculties of Engineering, Arts, Medical Sciences, and Education.

**Table 1.**  
Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	166	52.7
Female	149	47.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Level</b>		
100 (1 <sup>st</sup> year)	13	4.1
200 (2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	41	13.0
300 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	71	22.5
400 (4 <sup>th</sup> year)	108	34.3
500 (5 <sup>th</sup> year)	82	26.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Faculty</b>		
Arts	16	5.1
Education	7	2.2
Engineering	17	5.4
Management Science	100	31.7
Medical Science	12	3.8
Science	58	18.3
Social Science	105	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100</b>

**RQ 1.** What are the perceived causes of gender-related homicide in Southwest universities in Nigeria?

Table 2 presents the perceived causes of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria. As indicated, a large proportion of the respondents agree that all the items are the causes

of gender-related homicides. However, mental health issues, feelings of abandonment, financial challenges, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, home-related factors, history of abuse, and violent relationships are perceived as dominant causes of gender-related homicides in the sampled campuses.

**Table 2.**  
Perceived Causes of Gender-Related Homicide

S/N	Items <i>Perceived Causes</i>	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Mental health issues	67	21.3	20	6.3	228	<b>72.4*</b>
2	Feelings of abandonment	68	21.6	21	6.7	226	<b>71.7*</b>
3	Anger	74	23.5	30	9.5	211	67.0*
4	Marital discord	70	22.2	28	8.9	217	68.9*
5	Marital separation	91	28.9	36	11.4	188	59.7*
6	Domestic violence	91	28.9	36	11.4	188	59.7*
7	Financial challenges	44	14.0	27	8.6	244	<b>77.5*</b>
8	Gender discrimination	118	37.5	34	10.8	163	51.7*
9	Substance abuse	65	20.6	20	6.3	230	<b>73.0*</b>
10	Alcohol abuse	76	24.1	10	3.2	229	<b>72.7*</b>
11	Envy	108	34.3	27	8.6	180	57.1*
12	Unemployment	56	17.8	40	12.7	219	69.5*
13	Home-related factors	49	15.6	41	13.0	225	<b>71.4*</b>
14	Low self-esteem	75	23.8	25	7.9	215	68.3*
15	Belief of abuse	93	29.5	25	7.9	197	62.5*
16	History of abuse	72	22.9	18	5.7	225	<b>71.4*</b>
17	Violent relationship	66	21.0	16	5.1	233	<b>74.0*</b>
18	Stress	92	29.2	49	15.6	174	55.2*
19	Social isolation	83	26.3	32	10.2	200	63.5*
20	Patriarchal factors	82	26.0	58	18.4	175	55.6*
21	Inferiority complex	66	21.0	40	12.7	209	66.3*
22	Low level of education	137	43.5	43	13.7	135	42.9*
23	Inadequate legal protections for women	94	29.8	40	12.7	181	57.5*

\* = High level of agreement

**RQ 2.** What are the perceived effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria?

Table 3 shows the perceived effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria. As shown in the Table, most of the respondents agree that all the items are perceived effects of gender-related homicides. However, traumas, grief, stigmatization, and psychological and emotional distress are perceived as the most dominant effects.

**Table 3.**  
Perceived Effects of Gender-Related Homicide

S/N	Items <i>Perceived Effects</i>	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Traumas	50	15.9	22	7.0	243	<b>77.1*</b>
2	Grief	52	16.5	33	10.5	230	<b>73.0*</b>



3	Community fear	61	19.4	37	11.7	217	68.9*
4	Normalization of violence	74	23.5	42	13.3	199	63.2*
5	Stigmatization	67	21.3	24	7.6	224	71.1*
6	Loss of economic contribution	71	22.5	45	14.3	199	63.2*
7	Increased healthcare costs	96	30.5	36	11.4	183	58.1*
8	Strain judicial system	87	27.6	42	13.3	186	59.0*
9	Policy reforms implications	84	26.7	64	20.3	167	53.0*
10	Setbacks on gender equality	77	24.4	41	13.0	197	62.5*
11	Mobilization for change	71	22.5	55	17.5	189	60.0*
12	Psychological distress	50	15.9	23	7.3	242	<b>76.8*</b>
13	Emotional distress	53	16.8	16	5.1	246	<b>78.1*</b>
14	Reduced life expectancy	71	22.5	31	9.8	213	67.6*
15	Increased violence	80	25.4	31	9.8	204	64.8*
16	Educational impact	67	21.3	44	14.0	204	64.8*

\* = high level of agreement

### RQ 3. What preventive measures can be adopted to ameliorate gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria?

Table 4 presents the preventive measures that can be adopted to ameliorate gender-related homicide in the sampled Nigerian universities. Most respondents affirm that all the items are gender-related homicide prevention measures, with specific attention to items 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20.

**Table 4.**  
Gender-Related Homicide Preventive Measures

S/N	Items <i>Preventive Measures</i>	Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Review legislation in favour of the female gender	49	15.6	32	10.2	234	74.3*
2	Develop policies that promote gender equality	32	10.2	25	7.9	258	81.9*
3	Develop policies that protect women's rights	25	7.9	20	6.3	270	85.7*
4	Provide training programmes for police to respond effectively to gender-related violence	17	5.4	9	2.9	289	<b>91.7*</b>
5	Provide training programmes for the judiciary to respond effectively to gender-related violence	20	6.3	12	3.8	283	89.8*
6	Establish systems for collecting/analyzing data on gender-related homicides to inform policy	24	7.6	18	5.7	273	86.7*
7	Conduct awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal attitudes that condone violence against women	8	2.5	19	6.0	288	<b>91.4*</b>
8	Organise educational programs in schools that challenge gender stereotypes	14	4.4	14	4.4	287	<b>91.1*</b>
9	Organise educational programs in communities that promote gender equality	22	7.0	15	4.8	278	88.3*
10	Encourage media outlets to adopt ethical reporting standards that respect victims' dignity about women	11	3.5	24	7.6	280	88.9*
11	Encourage media outlets to adopt ethical reporting standards that prevent harmful stereotypes about women	16	5.1	21	6.7	278	88.3*
12	Support initiatives that enhance women's economic independence	19	6.0	14	4.4	282	89.5*
13	Involve males in discussions about gender equality	36	11.4	21	6.7	258	81.9*

14	Involve males in discussions about gender violence prevention	21	6.7	11	3.5	283	89.8*
15	Establish safe spaces, especially for women	19	6.0	17	5.4	279	88.6*
16	Provide access to counselling support services	7	2.2	9	2.9	299	<b>94.9*</b>
17	Provide access to legal aid support services	15	4.8	12	3.8	288	<b>91.4*</b>
18	Provide access to healthcare support services	7	2.2	6	1.9	302	<b>95.9*</b>
19	Implement confidential hotlines for reporting violence	21	6.7	8	2.5	286	<b>90.8*</b>
20	Implement confidential hotlines for seeking immediate assistance during violence	10	3.2	10	3.2	295	<b>93.7*</b>
21	Enforce regulations on firearm possession	32	10.2	33	10.5	250	79.4*
22	Develop effective risk assessment tools for law enforcement to evaluate threats against women in domestic situations	14	4.4	20	6.3	281	89.2*

\* = High level of agreement

**RQ4:** Is there any significant difference between gender and perceived causes of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria?

Table 5 presents the results on whether there is a significant difference between gender and perceived causes of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria. The result reveals that the mean score ( $\bar{x}=77.50$ ,  $SD=21.37$ ) of males is less than the mean score ( $\bar{x}=87.23$ ,  $SD=18.98$ ) of female and this was statistically significant ( $t_{(313)} = -4.26$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that gender in favour of females significantly influences undergraduates' perceptions of the causes of gender-related homicide in the universities under study.

**Table 5.**

Significant Difference Between Gender and Perceived Causes of Gender-Related Homicide

Gender	Mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Male (166)	77.50	4.508	0.035	-4.255	313	0.000	-9.735	2.288
Female (149)	87.23							

$N=315$ ;  $SD$  for male = 21.37;  $SD$  for female = 18.98

**RQ 5:** Is there any significant mean difference between gender and perceived effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria?

Table 6 presents the results on whether there is a significant difference between gender and perceived effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria. As indicated in the Table, the mean score ( $\bar{x}=54.77$ ,  $SD=14.47$ ) of males is less than the mean score ( $\bar{x}=60.76$ ,  $SD=12.76$ ) of females and this was statistically significant ( $t_{(313)} = -3.88$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that gender in favour of females significantly influences the perceived effects of gender-related homicide in southwest universities in Nigeria.

**Table 6.**

Significant Difference Between Gender and Perceived Effects of Gender-Related Homicide

Gender	Mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference

Male (166)	54.77	5.111	0.024	-3.880	313	0.000	-5.993	1.545	
Female (149)	60.76								

$N=315$ ;  $SD$  for male = 14.47;  $SD$  for female = 12.76

## Discussion

This research was aimed at investigating undergraduates' perceptions of the causes, effects, and measures for the prevention of gender-related homicides (femicides). The study was conducted in three selected universities in southwest Nigeria. Findings reiterate that mental health issues, feelings of abandonment, financial challenges, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, home-related factors, history of abuse, and violent relationships are perceived as dominant causes of gender-related homicides in the sampled campuses. These denote that gender-related homicide stems from several causes that range from mental health challenges, isolation, financial problems, substance and alcohol abuse, past experiences of abuse, and violent relationships. These results are supported by the findings of Marcuello-Servos et al. (2020), Perrin et al. (2019), DeGue et al. (2023) and Lomazzi (2023), UNODC (2021; 2022), Stassi et al. (2024), Walz et al. (2024), Topcu et al. (2022) and Sabri and Young (2022), who assert that societal, cultural, and individual factors, constant physical and/or psychological abuse, death threats, abusive relationships, intense jealousy, separation or divorce, authority, possessiveness, women's subservient status, substance abuse, addictive disorders, and perpetrator-victim interactions are the main causes of gender-related homicides.

The findings also indicate that trauma, grief, stigmatisation, and psychological and emotional distress are perceived as the most dominant effects of gender-related homicides. Since homicide or any form of murder is usually a horrific event, victims and their families suffer the accompanying consequences of trauma, grief, and other forms of distress for a long time. This argument is in accordance with Sutton's (2023) opinion, which states that the loss of a loved one through acts of homicide leaves emotional scars behind that can take years to heal and are compounded by societal stigma and judgment. Also, the research made by Hernández (2021) and Aka (2023), whose study results showed that gender-related homicide leads to negative effects on an individual's physical and mental well-being and intense feelings of anger, mistrust, helplessness, and sadness.

The results showed the preventive measures against gender-related violence to include reviewing legislation in favour of protecting the female gender, developing policies that promote gender equality, and protecting women's rights. Providing training programmes for the police to respond effectively to gender-related violence and for the judiciary to respond effectively to gender-related violence, establishing systems for collecting/analysing data on gender-related homicides to inform policy. Also, conduct awareness campaigns aimed at changing societal attitudes that condone violence against women, organise educational programmes in schools that challenge gender stereotypes, and organising educational programmes in communities that promote gender equality. Similarly, other preventive measures as perceived by this study's respondents, include: to encourage media outlets to adopt ethical reporting standards that respect women's dignity, preventing harmful stereotypes about women, supporting initiatives that enhance women's economic independence, involving males in discussions about gender equality and gender violence prevention; to establish safe spaces, especially for women; to provide access to counselling, legal aid, and healthcare support services, implementing confidential hotlines for reporting violence and for seeking immediate assistance during violence; to enforce regulations on firearm possession, and to develop effective risk assessment tools for law enforcement to evaluate threats against women in domestic situations. The aforementioned measures for preventing or ameliorating gender-related homicide are supported by the findings of previous studies (Dayan, 2020; Standish & Weila, 2021; de Avila et al., 2021; Lomazzi, 2023; Ajayi et al., 2022; Wanjiru, 2021; Weil, 2020) that share similarities with the results of this research.

The data achieved indicated that gender, in favour of females, significantly influenced perceived causes and effects of gender-related homicide in the universities under study. Since most of the reported homicide cases in the context are most often targeted at the female gender, females, in general, may have accepted the notion that they are the main target of homicides. Many times, these homicides have been linked to forceful sexual harassment and abuse and the quest for money-making (human rituals), especially among male youths who now perpetrate this evil with the hope of getting rich within a short time. Eckhardt and Pridemore's (2009) results reiterate this current finding.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The university space is expected to be a haven for knowledge acquisition and transmission. University staff and students should feel safe and belonging to the university community. Unfortunately, in several universities, cases of murder (especially femicides) seem to have taken center stage, causing fear, distress, and despondency. This study has examined the perceived causes and effects of gender-related homicides and possible preventable measures that could address or eradicate the menace in a few sampled universities in southwest Nigeria. The study's results have shed light on the perceived causes and effects of homicides in universities, as well as potential preventive actions. To address this issue, we recommend strategically deploying well-trained security personnel and utilising advanced security technology to discourage homicides on university grounds. It is recommended that laws, legislation, and policies to empower and protect females within university settings and the broader society be implemented. Awareness and enlightenment programmes must be organised for members of university communities (and elsewhere) to inform people of the causes and effects of gender-based violence. Equal rights, equity, and equality should be advanced by both government and non-governmental organisations, as a means to discourage or eradicate the perpetration of gender-related homicides (and any other forms of homicides). A review of Nigerian legal frameworks is recommended to advance a feminist agenda and foster gender equity and equality, in contrast to the prevailing patriarchal system. However, this study is without limitations: being a survey, and with the use of questionnaires for data collection, cases of self-bias, over- or under-reporting may have impacted this study's results. Also, sampling bias with regard to the selection of only three universities in the study's site does not actually represent the population thereof. A larger population scope and the adoption of research methodologies such as qualitative or mixed methods could yield more generalisable findings. Future research should improve beyond these.

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### Declarations

**Availability of data and materials:** The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

**Ethical Consideration:** Ethics Approval for this study was obtained from the Faculty of the Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee (Department of Sociology, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria: FUOYE/EDU/GCE/2023/009).

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