



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Campus Voices: University Students' Awareness of Gender-based Violence Against Women, Girls, and Children

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV), closely used interchangeably with violence against women (VAW), violence against women and girls (VAWG), and violence against women and children (VAWC), are global problems and harmful acts disproportionately affecting women and girls, including children. These pervasive issues encompass various forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. This study aimed to determine the degree of GBV awareness among the selected university students. It also aimed to explore the differences in their GBV awareness when grouped according to sex and age. The study involved 112 students from Ifugao State University (IFSU) – Tinoc Campus, Ifugao, Philippines. Quantitative analysis was done on gathered data using the survey method and a self-developed questionnaire. Results show that the university students were extremely aware of all the forms of GBV. They were most aware on physical violence, followed by sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. This indicates progress in societal attitudes and educational efforts, suggesting that they are informed, engaged, and sensitive to GBV issues. Based on sex, there were no significant differences in the university student's awareness of all GBV forms. When it comes to age, there were no significant differences in their GBV awareness of physical, psychological, and socioeconomic violence, except for sexual violence. The lack of significant differences may suggest that the university students, regardless of their sex or age, share a common understanding and recognition of the importance of addressing and preventing GBV. It may indicate that the campus' educational efforts and awareness campaigns have successfully raised their GBV awareness, effectively reaching and resonating with the university students of both sexes and age groups. Considering the results, the researchers encourage continuing ongoing efforts in education, advocacy, and commitment to translate this awareness into tangible steps towards a more equitable and violence-free society to create lasting positive change.

INTRODUCTION

Acts of violence toward women, girls, and children are extensively and deeply entrenched societal issues that transcend socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical boundaries. It encompasses a spectrum of abuses that infringe upon the fundamental human rights and dignity of women, girls, and children (Akudolu et al., 2023; Council of Europe, 2023a; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Patel et al., 2021; Tsapalas et al., 2020; United Nations, 1993; World Bank, 2019; World Health Organization, 2021). This alarming phenomenon reflects power imbalances and ingrained gender inequalities that persist in various societies worldwide. The consequences of violence affecting the women, girls, and children population are far-reaching,

affecting the immediate victims and also undermining the fabric of communities, and hindering societal progress (Council of Europe, 2023a; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; United Nations, 1993). Addressing this multifaceted challenge demands a comprehensive approach that includes social awareness campaigns, legal reforms, and a collective commitment to dismantling the deeply rooted structures perpetuating this issue (Lumidao, et al. 2024).

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a dense violation of human rights and a potentially lethal concern for health and safety (UNHCR, 2023). It includes any form of violence inflicted upon an individual or a collective based on their actual biological sex, perceived sexuality, gender, and gender identity (Council of Europe, 2023a; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). GBV consists of threats of violence, manipulation, coercion, and the infliction of sexual, physical, emotional or psychological, and economic damage, either privately or publicly (Council of Europe, 2023a; European Commission, 2024; UNHCR, 2023). It affects both females and males, but the majority of individuals who encounter such violence are females, particularly women and girls (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). Violence against women (VAW), more often called violence against women and girls (VAWG), is a more specific form of GBV. The United Nations defines it as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1993).

GBV and VAWG are frequently used synonymously, as it is commonly recognized that the majority of GBV incidents are perpetrated against women and girls, predominantly by men (Council of Europe, 2023; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). However, in most cases, the inclusion of the gender-based aspect is crucial, as it underscores the fact that numerous manifestations of violence targeting women and girls originate from power differentials that exist between males and females (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). In this case, some literature uses the same concepts of GBV and VAWG, noting that the terms are used interchangeably. These infringements include threats of such acts, using force to make women and girls do things they do not want to do, and depriving them of rights and economic and social benefits (Akudolu et al., 2023). In this study, the researchers have used GBV, VAW, and VAWG synonymously since most literature presented that women and girls commonly experience GBV.

Today, it is widely conceded that GBV or VAWG is a severe global human rights violation and health issue (Akudolu et al., 2023; Dlamini, 2020; Gaba et al., 2022; Gordon et al., 2022; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Mittal & Singh, 2020; Patel et al., 2021; Tsapalas et al., 2020). It impacts every 1 in 3, or 30% of women in their lifetime (World Bank, 2019; World Health Organization, 2021). Throughout their lives, these women have encountered instances of physical and sexual violence from their intimate partners, as well as instances of sexual violence from non-partners, with the majority of such incidents being perpetrated by their intimate partners. Further, 27% of women aged 15 - 49 who have been in a romantic partnership disclose experiencing physical and sexual assault at the hands of their intimate partner. An additional 6% of women disclose experiencing sexual assault at the hands of an individual other than their intimate partner (World Health Organization, 2021).

GBV and VAWG occurrences escalated during the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, where several women and girls were assaulted by their intimate partners (Akudolu et al., 2023; Dlamini, 2020; Gaba et al., 2022; Gordon et al., 2022; Mittal & Singh, 2020; World Health Organization, 2021). Reduced access to services, the disruption of social and protective networks, and stress have all contributed to an increased vulnerability of women and girls to violence (Mittal & Singh, 2020). The acts of violence against children have also surged. Some children were subjected to maltreatment by their parents or other caregivers in every nation. Aside from neglect, they have experienced physical, psychological, and sexual abuse (Gordon et al., 2022; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

Research Significance

A study on university students' GBV knowledge can inform effective prevention, support, and institution-wide initiatives. Understanding student awareness helps create focused educational programs that promote consent, respect, and gender equality. The researchers anticipate this study would help educational institutions identify knowledge gaps and areas for improvement, enabling them to prevent GBV, intervene early, and support victims. University students' understanding of GBV helps create a safer, more inclusive atmosphere, a collective commitment to fighting it, and a mutual respect and well-being culture.

Research Gap

Although it has a worldwide impact, GBV, VAW, VAWG, and VAWC are still significantly underrepresented due to stigma and societal pressures (Mittal & Singh, 2020). There is a need to obtain a deeper understanding of the extent and characteristics of various types of violence against women, girls (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005), and children. There is a lack of exploration of students' awareness of GBV among universities, especially in the locality. It is believed that university students who are well-informed about GBV, VAW, VAWG, and VAWC are more likely to contribute to fostering respectful and safe communities in their future workplaces and personal lives. They can contribute to broader social change and promote more equitable gender equality and equity. Further, documenting, evaluating, and building knowledge surrounding GBV are vital elements to mitigate its forms of violence (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Lumidao et al., 2024).

Research Aim and Questions

The study aimed to determine the degree of awareness regarding GBV among the selected university campus students. Additionally, it aimed to explore the differences in the university students' GBV awareness degree when grouped according to their sex and age. The following questions guide the conduct of the study:

1. What is the extent of GBV awareness among university students?
2. Are there significant differences in the extent of GBV awareness among university students in terms of sex and age?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender-based Violence

In general, violent acts are typically classified as either physical, sexual, or psychological. Nevertheless, these many manifestations frequently intersect and give rise to an intricate pattern of conduct in which psychological violence is conjoined with sexual and physical abuse in specific contexts (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). GBV comes in various forms, including physical, psychological, sexual, and socioeconomic violence (Akudolu et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2023; Council of Europe, 2023a; Dahal et al., 2022; Ellsberg et al., 1999; European Commission, 2024; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; UNHCR, 2023; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002; World Economic Forum, 2022).

Overtly hostile actions such as slapping, kicking, beating, biting, or even strangulation and the use of weapons are manifestations of physical violence. Deliberately caused harm is frequently concealed under the pretext of unintentional incidents. Occasionally, women sustain severe injuries and, in certain instances, succumb to their injuries. It may result in distress, health complications, and, in extreme circumstances, fatality (Akudolu et al., 2023; Ellsberg et al., 1999; European Commission, 2024; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). Dahal et al. (2022) determined that most of their women participants experienced physical violence from men intoxicated with alcohol. Battered wives, quarrels, and verbal abuse were also commonly experienced by these women (Dahal et al., 2022).

Physical violence in South Asia may also be attributed to the rejection of a female's rights as influenced by discriminatory cultural norms and institutional circumstances (Ali et al., 2023).

Actions such as isolating a woman from her loved ones, consistently demeaning or humiliating her, imposing financial limitations, engaging in violence, or making threats against her valued possessions, encompasses psychological, emotional, or mental violence. It includes psychologically other sorts of manipulative behaviors and abusive behaviors, such as controlling coercion. Cross-cultural and cross-national definitions of this type of violence are challenging due to its varied manifestations (Akudolu et al., 2023; European Commission, 2024; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Every type of violence possesses a psychological component, as its foundation is the intention to inflict harm upon another individual's honor and dignity. In addition to this, there are specific manifestations of violence that occur by means that cannot be classified under other forms of GBV, thus resulting in a form of pure psychological violence. It may include intimidating behavior, disinformation, information withholding, confinement, intentional indifference, and disregard for another individual (Council of Europe, 2023b).

The involvement of forced sex through the use of physical force, threats, and intimidation, as well as forced participation in demeaning sexual practices and the denial of the use of contraceptives or precautions against sexually transmitted illnesses are characteristics of sexual violence. While sexual violence is commonly associated with intimate partner violence, it can also occur in various other contexts. Sexual assault can be perpetrated by a relative, romantic partner, friend, or stranger, targeting both young girls and adolescents as well as adult women. Sexual violation can occur when a woman is subjected to sexual acts against her will, either by one individual or by a group of persons, as in the case of gang rapes (Akudolu et al., 2023; European Commission, 2024; Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005). Participants of Dahal et al. (2022) identified rape and attempted rape as cases of sexual violence where the men perpetrators were influential and wealthy, and the victims had low social standing. Most settlements of these rape cases involved financial negotiations rather than legal actions (Dahal et al., 2022). Cases in South Asia can be associated with child marriage, which is still commonly practiced and accepted, imbalance in the population sex ratio, and neglect of women's health (Ali et al., 2023).

The unemployment rates have had an upward trend and have consistently maintained a more significant level for women which may prevail socioeconomic violence. It may be attributed to the persistent systemic obstacles and social and technical changes in the labor force (World Economic Forum, 2022). Socioeconomic violence might increase a victim's vulnerability compared to other forms, as it often denies women the opportunities necessary for economic viability and social protection (Akudolu et al., 2023). This can be due to the observed increase in childcare among women particularly during the pandemic since childcare facilities and schools were closed (World Economic Forum, 2022). Asian countries continuously experience socioeconomic disparities. Although there have been advancements in women's recent economic growth and education, South Asia still lags behind other regions worldwide in female labor inclusion (Ali et al., 2023). Women are frequently assigned risky and low-paying jobs due to their distinctive burden of unpaid work, affecting their workforce participation. Women and girls confront significant obstacles in employment and social protection. They face challenges in health and nutrition benefits caused by cultural practices. They still face significant obstacles in becoming self-reliant and obtaining property (Ali et al., 2023).

Overview of Gender Equality in the Philippines

The Philippines practices a patriarchal culture. Traditional gender norms in the country place males as household heads and women as caregivers. Conventionally, men have been expected to earn money and make decisions, while women have done housework. Although changes have occurred over time, with increasing recognition of women's rights, aspects of these traditional structures persevere. While there is progress in addressing gender inequality, challenges remain. Various

organizations and movements work towards dismantling patriarchal structures, promoting gender equality, and empowering women in the country.

Most related activities to empower women are based on the country's gender and development (GAD) programs. The development process and perspective are defined by empowerment and involvement, equity, sustainability, absence of violence, respect for human rights, self-determination, and human potential. GAD aims to establish gender equality as a foundational principle that ought to be manifested in decisions regarding development, endeavors to reshape society's economic, political, and social frameworks, and challenges the validity of gender roles traditionally ascribed to men and women. It asserts that women are proactive contributors to development rather than passive development aid recipients. It emphasizes the importance of women organizing and engaging in political processes to bolster their position (Official Gazette, 2009; Philippine Commission on Women, 2023a).

The Philippines has also actively promoted gender awareness and equality these past years in observation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or Global Goals. The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and aimed "to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity" (United Nations, 2024; United Nations Development Programme, 2023). The country's commitment to gender equality is specifically anchored in SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. These SDGs are dedicated to pursuing genuine and enduring gender equality for women and girls across all aspects of life. Its objectives include eradicating VAWG, preventing child and forced marriage, ensuring equal opportunities for leadership participation and advancement, and guaranteeing global availability of sexual and reproductive health liberties (Philippine Commission on Women, 2023b).

Through GAD and SDG endeavors, the country has become the second most gender-equal nation in East Asia and the Pacific, according to regional rankings (World Economic Forum, 2022). It signifies that the Philippines has successfully established a societal framework fostering equal opportunities, rights, and treatment for individuals of all genders. This accomplishment covers education, work, politics, healthcare, legal rights, cultural standards, and societal expectations. This acknowledgment also shows that men and women have equal access to resources, opportunities, and social benefits, promoting a fair and unbiased society where people are judged by their ability rather than their gender.

The State of Gender-based Violence in the Philippines

In reflection of GBV and VAWG, the Philippines focused on the protection of not only women but also the inclusion of children. Accordingly, children refer to "those who are below eighteen (18) years of age or over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition" (Official Gazette, 2009; Philippine Commission on Women, 2010). The unending incidents of violence against women and children in the country necessitated the creation of Republic Act (R. A.) 9262, also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004. It identifies all forms of VAWC as a public crime. This law defined VAWC as "any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (Official Gazette, 2004; The LAWPhil Project, 2004).

Despite the abundance of legal bases protecting women and children, GBV persists in the country. The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) report of 2017 by the Philippine Statistics

Authority (PSA) determined that one in four, or 26% of Filipino women aged 15 - 49, were victims of physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Among these, 14% of the women reported being subjected to physical violence, 20% to emotional violence, and 5% to sexual violence at the hands of their current or former spouse or partner (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018). One contributing factor to the vulnerability of Filipino women to violence is the accusation that they are neglectful of their marital responsibilities, leading to physical abuse by their spouses. One reason is that the majority of women are being subjected to sexual assault as a result of their flirty behavior. Reports of workplace sexual harassment can occur due to physical attraction (Philippine Commission on Women, 2023a).

During the pandemic lockdown, GBV cases increased, like in other countries. Abuse during the epidemic was linked to stress-related financial issues (Baron, 2021; Commission on Human Rights, 2022; Lagsa, 2022; Valdez et al., 2022). Many people were isolated during pandemic lockdowns and quarantines. Victims were forced to stay home with their perpetrators, increasing violence risk. Victims had trouble getting aid due to mobility and support issues. Many families suffered economically during the pandemic. Financial hardship and uncertainty may have intensified home tensions, increasing violence. Job losses, economic insecurity, and financial strain can cause household power imbalances and control challenges. The pandemic's worry and fear may have strained family connections. Mental health difficulties may have caused violence and hostility.

Basuil et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic has affected women greatly. For instance, all firms closing has jeopardized the livelihoods of highly represented women in manufacturing, tourism, retail, and hospitality. In education, rural female teachers were either unpaid or underpaid. Female teachers at public schools with poor technology had to manage online classes with little planning and technical support while keeping their houses. Due to economic hardships, most Filipinos had low incomes, which increased online sexual exploitation of children and women. The epidemic has restricted women's access to sexual, reproductive, and health services, including psychological support and counseling (Basuil et al., 2020; Commission on Human Rights, 2022).

It can be inferred that many abuse cases were not reported to the police and did not undergo legal actions (Commission on Human Rights, 2022; Lagsa, 2022; Pabelonia, 2023). Many female victims were hesitant to report their offenders, who are usually their spouses or male partners. Many victims only attend VAWC counters in local barangays to solicit immediate and temporary help, but not to report the incident to the police. They believe their husbands or partners will change their minds. Some women cannot admit to spouse physical or sexual abuse. They fear controversy (Lagsa, 2022) and are embarrassed about their experiences (Philippine Commission on Women, 2023). Many battered women depend on their husbands for financial support and cannot cope without them, and thus, tolerate abuse because their children need care (Lagsa, 2022).

The involvement of schools and teachers in addressing gender issues and promoting gender equality in the Philippines (Canuto & Espique, 2023) in implementing the Anti-VAWC Act of 2004 recognizes the crucial role of the educational sector. Academes can serve as effective agents in the prevention of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). SRGBV includes all forms of violence and abuse towards students. It is rooted in gender stereotypes and unequal power relations that have a detrimental impact on both the offenders and the individuals who experience it. This matter encompasses human rights and education concerns, as it involves the infringement of fundamental human rights and is a significant obstacle to knowledge acquisition (UNGEI, 2023). Zain (2012) concluded that university students understand GBV issues. It is noted that if students are aware of this, acts of GBV will decline. Being aware of GBV prevents students from falling victim to violence. It suggests that awareness of GBV lies in the crucial role of academic institutions (Lahelma, 2014; Zain, 2012). As such, awareness about GBV empowers students to recognize and prevent abusive behaviors. Knowledge of the signs and consequences of GBV allows individuals to intervene early, potentially preventing further harm.

METHODOLOGY

Research Designs

The study employed a quantitative approach to determine the degree of GBV awareness among university students and the significant differences in their profiles. Specifically, it employed the survey research method to record phenomena, obtaining data samples from respondents who are representative of a given population (Williams, 2007) at the university. The study systematically collected and analyzed numerical data from the students' responses to attain the research aims and answer the research questions. It is characterized by its structured and standardized data collection methods, which allow for measuring specific variables and applying statistical techniques for data analysis (Creswell, 2009).

Participants

The study involved 112 students officially enrolled at Ifugao State University (IFSU) – Tinoc Campus, Ifugao, Philippines. They were selected through purposive sampling. The students were enrolled under the Teacher Education and Agriculture Programs during the second semester of Academic Year (AY) 2022 – 2023. The university students included first-year students to senior levels, all of whom were of the legal age of 18 and above. As presented in Table 1, the university student participants comprised 25% (N = 28) males and 75% (N = 84) females. A majority of students ages 20 – 24 years old at 74.11% (N = 83) consisted the population, followed by 18 – 19 years old at 14.28% (N = 16), 25 – 29 years old at 9.82% (N = 11), and 30 – 34 years old at 1.79% (N = 2). The selection of the university students was conceived in response to the institution's call to conduct GAD-related studies in reflection of the country's Anti-VAWC Act of 2004, and the context of SDGs 5 and 10. The university students' year levels were not considered a variable since some had irregular statuses where they were enrolled in subject courses not per their curriculum. They were enrolled in specific subject courses across year levels to meet their target units for graduation. Differences based on students' course programs were not also involved. The researchers focused on assessing the university students' degree of GBV awareness in general and did not necessitate consideration of the course programs.

Table 1. Demographic Profiles of the University Campus Students

Profiles	N = 112	Percentage
1. Sex		
a. Males	28	25.00%
b. Females	84	75.00%
2. Age		
a. 18 – 19 years old	16	14.28%
b. 20 – 24 years old	83	74.11%
c. 25 – 29 years old	11	9.82%
d. 30 – 34 years old	2	1.79%

Instrument

The researchers self-developed the survey questionnaire used in the study. The survey's content and structure were based on the Anti-VAWC Act of 2004 and the different forms of GBV, as discussed in the literature. The different violence and abuses in the survey were also based on the reported cases from the locality's Police Stations. This led to the structuring of 30-item statements categorized under

forms of GBV regarding sexual, physical, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. The questionnaire was evaluated by three experts in VAWC from the local government unit, including Police Officers and Social Workers. The computed validity coefficient was .94 using Aiken's Validity Coefficient, indicating that the questionnaire items were valid. A pilot test involving 30 student participants from a different university campus was done. As a result, the questionnaire items were reliable, with an overall Cronbach's Alpha of .98 and excellent internal consistency. The survey questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section requires the university campus students' sex and age. The last section contained the 30-item statements regarding GBV. To measure university students' GBV awareness, this section used a 4-point Likert scale: 4 = Extremely Aware (EA), 3 = Moderately Aware (MA), 2 = Slightly Aware (SA), and 1 = Not at all Aware (NA).

Procedure

The researchers presented first the study's proposal to their institutional affiliation. This allowed the presentation of the study's objectives, integration of recommendations from experts on VAWC, and modification of the study's structure. Approval from the university officials followed through with conducting the study. Once approved, informed consent was sought from the selected university campus student participants. The informed consent discussed the study's specific aims and an overview of the study's conduct. It included the expected duration of the study and the time commitment required from the university students. Potential risks associated with answering the survey, such as distress, anxiety, or emotional discomfort, were presented. For this case, the researchers have collaborated with the university's guidance center to mitigate potential risks and seek appropriate action. Benefits among the university students were highlighted, such as determining support systems and university-wide interventions. Confidentiality of university students' personal data and responses and their voluntary participation were emphasized. They can withdraw from the study without facing any negative consequences. The researchers' contact information was included for the students' perusal if they had questions or concerns relevant to the study. With the approval of the university campus students, the researchers personally provided the survey questionnaires. This allowed the researchers to explain the content of the survey, directly cater to the students' queries, and immediately respond to any potential risks the students may have had experienced. After collecting all the data, the researchers compiled the university students' responses in a spreadsheet using one of their personal computers. The answers to the questionnaires were stored and kept by the researchers. Statistical tests and analyses were conducted with the researchers' expert colleagues. The presentation of data in tables, interpretation, and analysis of results followed.

Data Analysis

The data on the extent of university campus students' GBV awareness was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency count and percentage were used to determine the specific profiles of the students. Mean (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) were used to determine the extent of university students' GBV awareness. A t-test was used to compare the differences in GBV awareness when the university students were grouped according to sex. Likewise, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used regarding the university students' age. A statistical range to analyze the university students' responses included 3.50 – 4.00 = Extremely Aware (EA), 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Aware (MA), 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Aware (SA), and 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at all Aware (NA).

Ethical Considerations

The researchers presented the study and sought approval from the university's ethics review committee. The study was conducted with the commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards to ensure the well-being and rights of the university campus student participants. Approval from the university was requested, and informed consent was obtained from all university

student participants, clearly outlining the purpose of the study, procedures involved, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any point without facing negative consequences. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their data. All efforts were made to secure and protect participants' sensitive information. The study was conducted in compliance with relevant laws and regulations and the university's research protocol.

RESULTS

Results in Table 2 show that the university students were extremely aware of all the forms of GBV. Although all forms indicated extreme awareness, mean data show that the students of the university campus were more aware of physical violence compared to the others. It is followed by sexual violence and psychological violence. Socioeconomic violence received the lowest mean value.

Table 2. Extent of Gender-based Violence Awareness of Students

Forms of Gender-based Violence (GBV)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Level
a. Physical Violence	2.79	0.97	Extremely Aware
b. Sexual Violence	2.72	0.19	Extremely Aware
c. Psychological Violence	2.68	0.15	Extremely Aware
d. Socioeconomic Violence	2.56	0.15	Extremely Aware

The difference in the extent of GBV awareness among the university campus students according to sex is presented in Table 3. The data show no significant differences between the male and female university students. Both male and female students perceived the same awareness regarding the forms of GBV as to physical, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. It is also noted that females perceived higher extreme GBV awareness compared to males. Additionally, both sexes are extremely aware of the physical, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. The males have moderate GBV awareness than females in terms of sexual violence.

Table 3. Differences in the Extent of Gender-based Violence Awareness Among the Students According to Sex

Forms of Gender-based Violence (GBV)	Male		Female		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
a. Physical Violence	2.67	1.10	2.82	0.91	-.639 ^{ns}	.527
b. Sexual Violence	2.39	1.25	2.70	0.83	-1.27 ^{ns}	.214
c. Psychological Violence	2.58	0.42	2.70	0.83	-.738 ^{ns}	.464
d. Socioeconomic Violence	2.53	0.54	2.70	0.84	-.945 ^{ns}	.350

Note: * = significant ($p < .05$); ns = not significant ($p > .05$)

In Table 4, results indicated that there is a significant difference in the GBV awareness among the university campus students about sexual violence when grouped according to age. There are no significant differences in the extent of awareness about the physical and psychological forms of GBV. There is also no significant difference across the university students' ages in terms of socioeconomic violence. Further, results indicate that the students have extreme awareness regarding all forms of GBV across all age groups.

Table 4. Differences in the Extent of Gender-based Violence Awareness Among the Students According to Age

Forms of Gender-based Violence (GBV)	19 y/o & below		20 – 24 y/o		25 – 29 y/o		30 – 34 y/o		<i>f</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
a. Physical Violence	2.69	1.14	2.81	0.94	2.73	1.01	3.00	1.41	0.110 ^{ns}	.954
b. Sexual Violence	2.90	0.35	2.70	0.17	2.68	0.26	2.50	0.10	5.766*	.001
c. Psychological Violence	2.94	0.26	2.65	0.15	2.60	0.22	2.59	0.20	0.628 ^{ns}	.598
d. Socioeconomic Violence	2.74	0.30	2.54	0.11	2.52	0.31	2.58	0.20	0.307 ^{ns}	.821

Note: * = significant ($p < .05$); ns = not significant ($p > .05$)

DISCUSSION

The determined level of extreme awareness among university campus students generally suggests that they are highly informed and sensitive toward the forms of GBV. It confers with Zain's (2012) verdict that university students comprehend GBV issues. It may suggest that they were actively engaged in understanding and addressing issues related to GBV and VAWC. It reflects the Philippines' acknowledgment as the most gender-equal country in Asia by the World Economic Forum (2022). This level of awareness may be attributed to the country's GAD and SDG-related activities and programs and the strict implementation of the Anti-VAWC Act of 2004, as the Philippine Commission on Women (2023a) supports.

A higher level of GBV awareness among university campus students may also be attributed to the country's various measures and mechanisms of anti-VAWC activities as underpinned by the Philippine Commission on Women (2023a). For instance, the Philippine government has implemented the yearly conduct of the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW from November to December. It mandates agencies, including the educational sector, to raise awareness of the problems of violence and the elimination of all forms of VAWC and GBV. Schools in the country are adopting gender-responsive approaches and progressively integrating them into their educational practices, as Canuto and Espique (2023) determined. In the university campus, anti-VAWC activities include seminars, workshops, brochures, strengthening guidance services, and the inclusion of GAD and SDG activities in the curriculum.

The non-significant differences in the extent of GBV awareness among the university campus students according to their sex and age indicate that awareness of GBV is relatively consistent across both sexes and different age groups among them. It could be a positive sign, indicating that educational efforts and awareness campaigns have successfully raised GBV and VAWC awareness. It indicates that the university campus initiatives addressing GBV effectively reached and resonated with university students of both sexes and age groups. It implies that efforts to raise awareness are inclusive and appeal to many of the university campus students. The lack of significant differences may also suggest that the university students, regardless of their sex or age, share a common understanding and recognition of the importance of addressing and preventing GBV and VAWC.

The study found that there was a moderate perceived sexual violence awareness among the males compared to females. This does not, however, imply that males are inherently less aware of sexual violence compared to females. Awareness of sexual violence can vary widely among individuals of any gender, and various factors influence it. One factor can be due to societal norms and culture, as

shared by Ali et al. (2023), where males are expected to be strong, stoic, and less vulnerable, which can discourage sensitivity toward sexual violence. They may have no personal experience or have not witnessed sexual violence, causing them to be less aware of its prevalence and impact. As Mittal and Singh (2020) indicated, there is also a stigma associated with discussing sexual violence. Individuals, regardless of gender, feel shame or discomfort addressing the issue, as Lagsa (2022) and the Philippine Commission on Women (2023a) reported, hindering open conversations and awareness of sexual violence. It is therefore essential to approach discussions about sexual violence with sensitivity and recognize that awareness is a complex and multifaceted issue.

Similar to Dahal et al.'s (2022) results, battery or partner beating is the prominent physical violence focused in the study's questionnaire. Thankfully, physical violence towards women and children, as influenced by culture and social norms as determined by Ali et al. (2023), is not pervasive in the locality. Related to the abuses given by Akudolu et al. (2023), Dahal et al. (2022), European Commission (2024), and Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2005), the acts of lasciviousness, rape, treating women as sex object, sexual harassment, and prostituting the woman were included in the survey under sexual violence. The survey also indicates coercing a woman to view explicit publications and attend indecent performances, as well as compelling her to perform indecent acts and produce films, physically attacking the sexual parts of a victim's body, and imposing acts causing or attempting the woman to engage in sexual activity by coercion, threat of force, physical or threat of physical harm.

Aside from the psychological acts of GBV listed by the Council of Europe (2023b) and European Commission (2024), the survey included acts for public ridicule or humiliation, inflicting or permitting physical, sexual, or psychological harm on the victim at the hands of a family member, property damage, repeated verbal abuse, unlawful or unwelcome deprivation of visitation and guardianship rights of children, and stalking. Under socioeconomic violence, the survey included prevention from engaging in any legitimate business, occupation, and profession, as based on Akudolu et al. (2023), Ali et al. (2023), and World Economic Forum (2022). The survey added financial resource deprivation or the potential for financial resource deprivation, deprivation of the right to the use and enjoyment of community or conjugal properties, destruction of household properties, and control of victims' money or property.

The university campus students' extreme awareness of GBV means that they possess a greater understanding of the prevalence, dynamics, and impacts of violence rooted in gender inequality. It affirms that the university students understand that GBV and VAWC encompass a broad range of abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. They recognize the existence of violence in various settings, not only in the institution but also in the community. Their awareness may involve an understanding of the underlying factors contributing to GBV, such as power imbalances (Dahal et al., 2022), societal norms (Ali et al., 2023), and harmful gender stereotypes (UNGEI, 2023). University campus students may be aware that violence often results from unequal power dynamics between genders. Students with higher awareness are more likely to empathize with survivors of GBV and understand the challenges they face, and thus, can be supportive of efforts to help survivors, whether through advocacy, counseling, or other means. The university students' awareness may include knowledge of available resources, support services, and reporting mechanisms for GBV. This knowledge empowers students to seek help for themselves or others and contributes to a safer and more supportive environment. As Zain (2012) emphasizes, this eliminates their chance of falling as victims.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

GBV, VAW, VAWC, and VAWG are global problems and harmful acts perpetrated against an individual, disproportionately affecting women and girls, including children. This pervasive issue encompasses a spectrum of physical, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic abuses. It not only inflicts immediate physical and emotional harm, but also perpetuates a cycle of fear, silence, and

disempowerment, hindering victims' ability to participate in social, economic, and political aspects fully. Addressing GBV, VAW, VAWC, and VAWG necessitates multifaceted efforts, including legal reforms, education, awareness campaigns, and promotion of gender equality to challenge ingrained social norms and foster a safer and more equitable society. This study aimed to determine the degree of GBV awareness among selected university students and explore the differences in their awareness when grouped according to demographics. It is found that the university campus students are extremely aware of physical violence, followed by sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence. Generally, there were no significant differences in GBV awareness among the students according to sex and age.

The high level of awareness regarding GBV among the university students is a positive indication of progress in societal attitudes and educational efforts. When university students exhibit extreme awareness, it suggests that they are informed, engaged, and sensitive to the issues surrounding GBV. It indicates that educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and cultural shifts have reached a diverse university campus student population. Students who are well-informed about GBV are likely to be more understanding of the challenges faced by survivors and may actively contribute to creating a safer and more inclusive environment. This can foster a culture of respect, empathy, and zero tolerance for GBV, VAW, VAWC, and VAWG. While extreme GBV awareness is generally positive, it is essential to ensure that this awareness is channeled into constructive actions and efforts. It is also crucial to recognize that awareness alone may not be sufficient to address the root causes of GBV. Concrete actions, policy changes, and cultural shifts are often necessary to create lasting change. Ongoing efforts should translate this awareness into tangible steps towards a more equitable and violence-free society. Continued education, advocacy, and commitment to fostering a culture of respect and equality are essential for building the foundation of awareness and creating lasting positive change.

The study's findings contributed to literature exploring students' awareness of GBV among universities. It also provided crucial insights for targeted educational programs and activities enhancing GBV, VAW, VAWC, and VAWG awareness. Conversely, the study only involved a selected and small number of university campus students and does not represent a larger population. Other demographic profiles of the university students, such as year level and course program, were not included. Lastly, the acts of violence in the study were based on a specific societal and cultural context, which may not be applicable to populations with different social and cultural norms and practices. Further studies are suggested to be conducted.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the conceptualization, review-editing, literature review writing, and the conduct of the research. All authors contributed to data collection, acquisition, and analysis. All authors have read and approved the final and publishable version of this article.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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