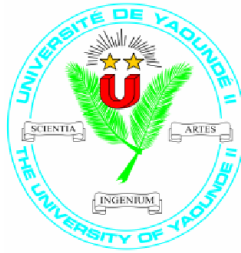


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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
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OF MASS COMMUNICATION
-ASMAC-

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE II



AN ANALYSIS OF PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S STRATEGIES ON FACEBOOK TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

MASTERS THESIS

PRESENTED AND PUBLICLY DEFENDED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD
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OPTION

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PRESENTED BY :

MASSI MARTHA

SUPERVISED BY :

Pr.Esse Corine

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WARNING

The views and opinions contained in this dissertation are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Advanced School of Mass Communication, Yaoundé II, Soa.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my grandmom Massa Martha and My mum, Matsingang Joan Kombowo for her unfailing support and believing in me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, INITIALS AND ACRONYMS

ASMAC-Advanced School of Mass Communication

CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women

DEVAW- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women

DPP- Director of Public Prosecutions

G.A.M- General Aggression Model

GBV – Gender Based Violence

GK- Global Knowledge Conference

GPS- Global Positioning System

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

PC-Penal Code

SIC-Information and Communication Sciences

UNGA- United Nations General Assembly

USA - United States of America

VAWG – Violence against Women and Girls

ABSTRACT

The influence of social media is rapidly growing and as such has become a major part of the modern-day people. It has even affected the communication channel and the evolution of the communication process. It has led to the emergence of new paradigms, approach and perspectives and it has significantly deepened the scope of social sciences in the last decade.

Facebook increases the number of ways bullies which adds to the study on Sustainability 2020, 12 of 25 by Anderson et al talks on the effects of how the adoption of aggressive behaviour affects society, cultural norms and beliefs.

Our focal point levied on the fact that Online media like Facebook have a significant role in the formation of perceptions, attitudes towards online violence. Shared across social media in May 2022. Descriptive demographic, frequencies and distribution where the results were presented in tables and diagrams. 78.8% of Cameroonians attest to been victims of online violence on Facebook, 58.6% and 20.2% of men have been victims.

In Cameroon, on-governmental organisations like Plan International are at the forefront of campaigns to fight against all forms of violence.

Key words: *Violence Against Women and Girls, Gender-Based Violence, Facebook, Plan International Cameroon*

RÉSUMÉ

L'influence des médias sociaux s'accroît rapidement et, en tant que telle, elle est devenue un élément majeur de nos vie aujourd'hui. Elle a même affecté le canal de communication et l'évolution du processus de communication. Elle a conduit à l'émergence de nouveaux paradigmes, approches et perspectives et a considérablement élargi la portée des sciences sociales au cours de la dernière décennie.

Facebook augmente le nombre de manières d'intimider, ce qui ajoute à l'étude sur la durabilité 2020, 12 sur 25 par Anderson et al parle des effets de la façon dont l'adoption d'un comportement agressif affecte la société, les normes culturelles et les croyances.

Nous nous sommes concentrés sur le fait que les médias en ligne comme Facebook jouent un rôle important dans la formation des perceptions et des attitudes à l'égard de la violence en ligne. Les résultats ont été présentés sous forme de tableaux et de diagrammes. 78,8% des Camerounais attestent avoir été victimes de violence en ligne sur Facebook, 58,6% et 20,2% des hommes ont été victimes.

Au Cameroun, les organisations non gouvernementales comme Plan International sont à l'avant-garde des campagnes de lutte contre toutes les formes de violence.

Mots clés : *Violence contre les femmes et les filles, violence fondée sur le genre, Facebook, Plan International Cameroun*

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence abbreviated GBV is a social phenomenon and over the years it has been a predominant issue addressed by International Organisations. Affecting different genders and minorities persons, we will be focusing on violence against women and girls (VAWG) according to the UN Women website affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. With an overwhelming percentage of over 35% of women experiencing some form of physical or sexual violence from their intimate or non-intimate partner. VAWG affects women and girls of all social status and class, be it developed or in developing countries. Analysing social norms with a sustained engagement in order to effectively address the social norms and representation of gender-based Violence on the media, bringing to book stakeholders involve and ways to address GBV in women and girls. GBV are violent acts primarily committed against women and girls due to their gender. It has however, change overtime depending on their society. UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women states, "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women" and "violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men." As declared by Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared in a 2006 report posted on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The word "Girl Child" was one of the major topics addressed in 1995 in the Beijing platform focusing on laws protecting girls: girls' rights under the UN convention to protect them from all forms of abuse like female genital mutilation, gender-based violence and raise ideology of equality in the work place (UN women). The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is campaign done across the world to end violence against women and girls. This campaign run from the 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women right through the 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was first initiated in 1991 by the first ever Women's Global Leadership Institute, held by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University. Since its creation over 6000 organisations in about 187 countries have been a wholesome part of the campaign and social media has been one of the main tools to spread the information. Hashtags and ideologies have been spread across board. One of which is Plan International Cameroon, created in 1996 to further their impact across the world, having worked in over 1,200 communities it currently found in 8

regions with its goal to promote the rights of children and youths especially girls through promoting equality, quality education, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The media is the most impactful means for behaviour change communication which is a medium system of communication, that is the means through which information is transmitted to an audience.

One of the major strategies are the 16 days' campaign against GBV, largely spread across social media to create awareness on the ideologies, norms and effects. Paula S. Tompkins talks about the media from different perspectives and range taking into account the body language and writing. He looks at mass communication from newspapers, television and internet.

We can however clearly see how the advent of social media has become a new medium of communication. Giving a clear insight of how communication channels have changed over time in Routledge outlined; "When a communication medium changes, our practices and experiences of communication also change. The technology of writing liberated human communication from the medium of face-to-face (f2f) interaction. This change affected both the process and experience of communication, as persons no longer needed to be physically present to communicate with one another. The technology of the printing press further promoted the medium of writing by mechanizing the creation and distribution of the written word. This began the new communication form of mass communication in pamphlets, newspapers, and cheap books, in contrast to the medium of handwritten documents and books. Most recently, the medium of digital technology is again changing the process and experience of human communication." In his book titled "Practicing Communication Ethics: Development, Discernment, and Decision-Making." Routledge, 2016. The evolution led to an increasing use of the internet and mobile phones and change the access to information and media delivery.

(Hughes, 2007), Devreese (2010)¹ describes social media as media transformed by digitally interactive tools of information and communication technology based social media networking enabling users share information as everyone is eventually a potential broadcaster. These set of authors in 2011, Puddephatt, Hawtin, Zommer, Brant, Attala, Nagla, Bhat, Lim, Githaiga and Zausmer mentioned how decentralized communication has gotten with little or no editing by publishers and even an extension of Lasswell two step flow of communication. Social media

¹ (Hughes, 2007) Devreese (2010), (<https://www.businesscameroon.org>).

has been used as a point of reference worldwide with about 5 billion users and 2.9 billion on Facebook.

Routledge's viewpoint opens us up to digital technology and how it has changed the process of human communication. Our work focuses on the Facebook social media platform formally called Facemash, which as of 2022 is part of the Meta company. It was created on October 28th, 2003 by its founder Mark Zuckerberg alongside his friends at Harvard University.

Facebook is the most used platform in Cameroon for all genders for communication with over 4,689,500 which accounts for a 17% of the population, a majority of which are between the ages of 25 and 34 years old. A majority of which were men making 57.6%, were between the ages of 25 years to 34 years has the largest number of subscribers (1,623,500).

As one of the most popular platforms, we decided to base our research work on the application instead of other social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter and TikTok, which are less likely to be used to engage topics around VAWG. The period of research is a 6-month period between August to January of 2022, where I spend time doing my research work at Plan International Cameroon in the Communication department.

Facebook as the most used social media platform in Cameroon, has been greatly used by international non-governmental organisations like Plan International in Cameroon to address issues related to violence committed against women and girls. Facebook has been one of the major communication mediums used to carry out campaigns, address issues related to VAWG. The central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) program in April 2018 and UN Women provided face support for over 400 survivors of VAWG majorly from the Far North region of Cameroon fleeing from Boko Haram. Ngwa, Kudi, Shu, Mbarika and Mbarika (2008)² argue that the increasing popularisation and networking through social media came with consequences from cybercrimes, violence against women and many other effects and others like Maxwell (2001) talks about the prevalent increase in violence against women. During the UN General Assembly (UNGA, 2006) it came with an overwhelming 95 per cent of bad and aggressive behaviour, sexual harassment, all forms of abuse and denigrating images aimed at women mostly by former or current partner.

² Ngwa, Kudi, Shu, Mbarika and Mbarika (2008)

The Cameroonian constitution reaffirms to women a right to life, physical and moral integrity, humane treatment in all circumstances. As such in no circumstances, it states. “Shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel inhumane or degrading treatment”.

The Global Database of Violence against Women which was issued by the UN Women, in 2012, the statistics in Cameroon during a lifetime of physical and sexual intimate partner violence stood at 51%. In 2019, Care and Plan International reported violence against women in Cameroon at a statistic of an overall 56.4%. Violence against women, can cause them physical and psychological threats on women leading up to a deprivation of fundamental freedom. Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women states talks about Physical, sexual, psychological violence, occurring within the family from sexual abuse of girls, dowry abuse, rape, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, exploitation.

We however do not have clarity in terms of the effects and implementation of the laws from the state primarily and extensively the media representation of violence against women in the media. It becomes very relevant after my observations during my internship at Plan International Cameroon and also a generic basis to do research a contribute to the science of information and communication contribute to women actively participating online ensuring media representation of violence against women go along way effectively pave a way or road map for policy implementation and enhance behaviour change communication online in international organisations. The research is also meant to bring to live best practices on how to present VAWG on social media platforms like Facebook. This will be in addition to provide data to key into VAWG trends and also enhance the development of policies in Cameroon and Internationally. Conclusively, the study is meant to enumerate gender policies.

1. INTEREST OF THE STUDY

Online violence against women and girls on Facebook is the predominant issue in Cameroon. Even with issues around VAWG addressed by non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon there is a predominant lack of enough research material on violence by women and girls online in Cameroon. There is little research material or scientific papers regarding issues on the problems of online violence on women and girls. Online violence is,

according to the mentioned studies, a common and present phenomenon. This study was made between the period of a 6 months research internship at Plan International Cameroon from August 2021 to January 2022.

A lot of researchers who examined the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of majorly women and girls. However, our studies include male population to add to research works towards a specific marginalized group of people. They were a lot of studies around children but not enough specific data on online violence on Facebook with regards to women and girls. Our research on this topic of online media and online violence will majorly encompass the effects of the online world has on the attitude and behaviour of people and subscribers online. Castro and Osório and by Gentile et al suggest that social and online media influence has a strong pressure and affluence on adolescents, affects social norms and patterns.

Online violence on social media platforms have become increasingly devastating as an outrageous percentage of women get abused on a daily basis through platforms like Facebook. The UN women statistics rate it at 1 in 3 women in Cameroon have been abused and this high numbers include online violence. This application which has given rise to a group of individuals who now have a platform and can hide behind profile to cause mental, physical and even emotional harm on young women. Human trafficking, minor prostitution and even threats have moved online as people now are able to with just a click access, manipulate and cajole young women into different forms of VAWG.

With over 50% and counting rate of women online, it is telling that it has become an easy access an ground to meet and mingle. This is unlike real life were starting conversations and meeting a certain amount of people in real time is even harder. Offline meet up have become harder as more people can now meet online with just a click. Hence a breathing ground for abuse across board. A vast majority of women continuously report cases of threats and online violence on their timelines, this had brought up different conversations on reasons why social media has increased the rate of abuse online and in this case in Cameroon.

Online platforms like Facebook have been considered one of the most influential and powerful tools to influence the attitude, opinions and perceptions of people in different areas. The influence of social media is rapidly growing and as such has become a major part of the modern-day people. It has even affected the communication channel and the evolution of the

communication process. It has led to the emergence of new paradigms, approach and perspectives and it has significantly deepened the scope of social sciences in the last decade.

Different authors have reeled on the fact the online media like Facebook has shaped the attitudes and opinions in both a good and a bad way The study by Barter et al stated that online media tools like Facebook increases the number of ways bullies which adds to the study on Sustainability 2020, 12, 10609 4 of 25 of Anderson et al talks on the effects of how the adoption of aggressive behaviour affects society, cultural norms and beliefs.

The result of this findings is meant to be used for future research purposes as well as guidelines for creators, non-governmental organisations and law makers and as such the results may at the end of the day for researchers and scientists from governments, organisations and stakeholders who find the studies interesting. The first section provides an overview of research studies, hypothesis, materials and methods including a detailed description of our research methodology. We went on to present the overview and results of the research, interpretation while providing limitations and recommendations. It provides the evolution of the communication channel as one of the crucial parts of present-day media and society.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cameroon has increasingly seen an increase in the usage of social media platforms like Facebook with an over 4million Facebook accounts created. This is so with vast availability of cell phones and cheap data. This has eased the access to social media platforms which has however, comes with its perks. With an increasing number of users on social media platforms cyberstalking and violence against women have been perpetuated and as such it has predominantly led to the devastating effects in the lives of young women and girls.

The consistent proliferation of these aggressive behaviour across the Facebook social media platform has increasingly led to the creation and an increasing effort to implement laws against VAWG and also create campaigns across social media platforms to promote sanity and nonviolence against women and girls. The media has been the biggest means to pass across message from a sender to a receiver. The media was majorly made up of print, television and radio. However, with the increase in the usage of usage media, it is highly used globally and

Cameroon is an integral part with a massive percentage of social media subscriptions and accounts created across the board.

There will be a wholesome part linked to the policies around gender-based violence against women and girls with an intersection on social media platforms like Facebook. Highlighting to its that policies that seek to protect women and girls in the media specifically social media, in relation to the representation of VAWG by International non-governmental organisations in Cameroon specifically Plan International. While also contributing to research around the social media representation of VAWG by International non-governmental organisations.

In addition to, how plan International and other non-governmental organisations take actions on promoting girls' rights following Cameroon's constitution and civil code of conducts through its Ministry of women empowerment and the family target young girls between the ages of 15 to 35 years old through their Facebook social media post between August 2021 to January 2022. Even though the legal age to be on social media is 18 years old, lot of young underage girls have increasingly created Facebook account illegally were they become preys to young men and adults who prone to abusive attitudes and tendencies and as such extend it to minors either through post of inbox.

The usage of applications like Facebook to communicate its impact through digital campaign a, workshops, live shows to advocate for the promotion of girls rights. This in turn its meant to get government interest and other decision makers to create laws that protect girls in Cameroon. With a population of about 27million Cameroonians and a female population of 13.7 million. We have a total of 4million on Facebook, it has sum total of 100,000 followers which also limits its reach and impact towards protecting girl's rights.

Authors like Puddephatt, Hawtin, Zommer, Brant, Attala, Nagla, Bhat, Lim, Githaiga and Zausmer (2011)³, address the issues related social media as a decentralized form of information making it easy to share information. Due to the fact everyone with an account is a potential publisher and able to share information to reach an even broader audience

³ Puddephatt, Hawtin, Zommer, Brant, Attala, Nagla, Bhat, Lim, Githaiga and Zausmer (2011)

While other others like Ngwa, Kudi, Shu, Mbarika and Mbarika (2008)⁴ relatively centred their research on the fact that social media has brought up a lot of unintended effects like cybercrimes, sexual harassment and cyber stalking. Clearly bringing light much or less to more of the consequences of social media to the world. Another researcher called Maxwell (2001) also adds that the increasing violence against women and girls is predominantly due to the growth and increasing usage of social media. (UNGA, 2006) also estimates that 95% of aggressive behaviour, violence, abuse and denigrating images in online is aimed at women for the most part by their former or current partner.

This research shines lights on the communications strategies with regards to gender-based violence on women and girls on Facebook by International organisations.

- I) Identify the way the media specifically social media represent gender-based violence against women and girls perpetuated online
- ii) Establish the different causes of violence carried out against women and girls as manifested on the media specifically Facebook.
- iii) Find out the application of Cameroonian laws in the representations of the ideologies around violence against women and girls online by International non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon.

3. START OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of our finding is to provide a response to our finding with regards to the attitude and perception of women and girls with regards to violence online. The research also considers key information with regards to the perception of social media post by Plan International with relations to Facebook post and campaigns on violence against women and girls. We recognise a challenge at the level of getting an even updated information with regards to gender-based violence in women and girls. International studies on VAWG was also considered during this study to add more material.

The research is hindered in different ways from getting an exact statistical information with regards from obtaining the statistics with regards to VAWG and its representation on Facebook. Follow up and getting an exactitude of information has become even more complex. The aim

⁴Ngwa, Kudi, Shu, Mbarika and Mbarika (2008)

is to create an awareness with regards to the causes and effects of violence committed against women and girls. However, with the use of the questionnaire it is meant to improve our findings and research.

- i) What are the forms of violence that are perpetrated against women with the help of social media platforms like Facebook?
- ii) What are the causes of violence against women on social media?
- iii) What is the attitude of women and girls due to their perception of VAWG by NGOS?
- iv) What are the best strategies for handling online violence against women and girls through Facebook?

4. RESEARCH PREMISES

The research premises are a wholesome part of the questions gotten from the research questions, different hypothesis and methodologies and it extensively led us to the give a response to our research questions.

Our research hypothesis gives a more clearing answer to the reason for which the research is done following our different scientific research methodologies in the science of information and Communication. These premises are as follows;

- i) There exist several forms of violence from stalking, to harassment against women and girls online.
- ii) The consistent use of social media without proper rules on harassment have been the main cause of VAWG.
- iii) That VAW on social media has several causes.
- iv) Able to learn and report violence are some ways women and girls respond to abuse.
- v) Responding by policy implementation and lawsuits.

Questionnaire and observation methods were majorly used to carry out our study and detailly sort our different variable for our findings. The questionnaire was able to systematically spell out the different categories of people and their views with regards to their attitude and perception of violence online. Meanwhile, at the level of observation our survey was able to bring out statistics on how information from these organisations in terms of behaviour change

communication was spelled out and percentage while also looking at how it affects the followers and the perception it creates at the end of the finding.

5. HYPOTHESIS

Analysis our background, we are looking at our different variables and hypothesis to investigate the relationship between the variables and the respondents towards violence online specifically Facebook. The assumptions have literally been able to put a divide on social standing knowledge and competence from the male perspective and the female ideologies that shows women are more. In certain research studies, from a negative or stand point from an emotional, social stand points. Definite ideology on behaviour change communication especially when the violence took place in a more visible audience or public in other to be able to defend their individuality cause several different reactions that influence engagement and integration into society.

Our first hypothesis, is the fact that Online media like Facebook have a significant role in the formation of perceptions, attitudes towards online violence. It starts to affect how the media online affects the public and how it often affects their change in style, mindset and general perspective. These reactions caused different views on online media platforms like Facebook where it can create fear, anxiety, panic but it has however majorly distinctively created frustrations in women and girls. It encourages influence in engagement and social integration. This goes on to identify the difference there exist between the opinions and attitudes, identifying different variables from age group, level of education.

Our second major hypothesis rely on the notion that, Attitudes toward online violence depend on viewer's experience, age, level of education and marital status. The popularity of online media has increasingly grown over the years, these are strong platforms used to put out campaigns and address social issues. Violence has greatly been linked to online medias like Facebook because of the ease with which accounts can be created and access to the internet has been facilitated. These challenges differ in terms of age groups and the challenges exposed to this different groups of people. However, this different variable affects how this notion affects the different group of people on online platforms like Facebook.

Our sub hypothesis is in line with the Cameroon's constitution, Cameroon's penal code, Cameroon's civil code which addresses issues related to women and gender and in our context violence against women and girls faced on Facebook. The state shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated in the International Declaration and Conventions.

If girls between 15 and 35 years follow social media campaigns it will lessen their probability of their rights been violated, how can these rights be protected?

Plan International Cameroon behaviour change communication has an effect on the impact of girls, right, how does this affect young girls positively and negatively?

6. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is the quantitative and qualitative research method. While a quantitative research method describes the characteristics of the age group with a closed ended question using structured observations with surveys and questionnaires. We are also going to add details statistics in terms of the number of campaigns and its reach. The demographic model is focused on the attitude towards online violence on social media platform like Facebook as an instrument to preserve time as an online media and how it affects and relates to demographic characteristics. Our questionnaire elaborates different factors like age, marital status and level of education. It is a distinctive demographic illustrating the different forms of violence and the risk involve. It is also a measure of educating people on the different types of violence that can be recognised and prevented.

Our methodology takes into consideration our goals, research questions and the hypothesis of the study. From our hypothesis and our variables mentioned above spelling out research experience on online violence on Facebook. The questionnaire is meant to be send to 125 people in Cameroon using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Email in May 2022 and real time people. In prior we had a six months' observation period between August 2021 till January 2022 on the pattern of how online campaigns on Facebook are done and we further went on to carry out our survey with 15 followers and according to their feedback our questionnaire was improved and we went on to adopt a final version. Our questionnaire was sent to over 125 participants and over 100 out of 125 completed the survey, theses went on to affirm the importance of our research work. With 15 questions encompasses of multiple-choice questions and short answers related to our defined demographics. This was done following our

different variables from gender, marital status, age group and level of education. Which is primary part of the first section and the other parts consist of multiple-choice questions and short answers.

The aim of the questionnaire was meant to identify the different group of people, the different forms of violence and probable causes and measures or ways to ameliorate online effects. And also questions regarding attitude of those that respond with regards the efforts made by international organisations. The research was majorly focused on people s perception of violence against women and girls on social media platforms like Facebook.

The survey was done anonymously and did not include any personal information from those that respondent voluntarily and unanimously agreed to the publication of the result of our findings. The author Cronbach's alpha formula was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire which is a satisfactory level in social sciences, this provided data appropriate for further analysis. The major variables were used in the conceptual model of research. This model extends from the variables right up to the its different interactions.

The Likert scale labels out options to investigate the impact of violence on women and girls using the relative importance index used to determine the different factors of analysing the perception of attitude. One of the focal point of the research is to bring out the problematic and features to present the experience of population in a more detailed analysis against women and girls who faced this issues more often that the other gender. It also focuses on analysis that respond to a descriptive statistics method. From our analysis we were able to get clarity on a vast majority of who the respondents were and how they were and their interest. A majority of which were mostly between the ages of 16-35 years old. We had males and females and it cut across different age groups in our focus and knowing their views with regards to violence committed against women and girls on Facebook in Cameroon.

7. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical framework streaming from our hypothesis and different variables, is based on ‘Research of Attitudes Toward Online Violence Significance of Online Media and Violence Prevention and Behaviour Evaluation’ by Boban Melovi.⁵

It focuses on the attitude analysis on attitude and perception of violence against women and girls represented by International Organisations on Facebook.

The loss control theory on gender-based violence against women states it as a loss of control which was contradicted by batterers’ behaviour where he said violence targets a specific people in a specific time and place. Abusers do not choice their bosses or police officers regardless of how angry and out of control they are. This was through pscho-social support as well as different kind of measures to prevent all forms of violence on the media using the conceptual model conducting an online quantitative research study. The survey conducted with over 100 persons in Cameroon for transitionary segments.

Data analyse used different statistical tests and analysis of variance test to the logistic regression and relative importance index. This research brings light to the vulnerability of women and as such its extension and logic as it is most exposed to violence online. Our theoretical framework addresses issues of violence against women and girls fundamentally on their attitude and perception on how issues of violence are addressed online by international organisations to create awareness and redirect impact. The result will be able to highlight the different means and measures this impact will affect followers of the page and how the information presented is done, from the procedure, the colours and the consistency for which Plan International addresses these issues and their reach. The results as much as it differentiated the different genders, was able to to distinctively spelled out the age group and their views, academic qualifications and expositions.

In terms of gender, it was spelled out in terms of females were the majority affected are mostly divorced percentages less than that of single girls and women. In terms of education women who are more educated were less likely to be victims of social media violence on Facebook.

⁵ *Prevention and Behaviour Evaluation’ by Boban Melovi*

The higher the educational background the less likely the individual was most likely to be a victim of social media violence on Facebook.

The research brings out the need to continuously carryout research and also informing the public on the causes and effect of online violence committed against women and girls on Facebook and how it is addressed by organisations on social media platforms like facebook.an over, 40% of respondents identified Facebook as a major social media platform for violence.

The findings of the research may be extensively used for different laws and policies to enhance and better understand and identify cases of violence committed against women and girls on social media.

The theory emphasis a typical conversion into the development of a cultural human process in a space of cultural modernity.it rises the overview on reflection laying emphasis on human choices and autonomy for women. (Inglehart & Welzel 2005; Welzel 2003; Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann 2003)⁶. This different author made it known and create massive awareness and promote social inclusiveness, emancipation and female leadership. The theory makes changes on different aspects of present-day modern society with conducive women empowerment and gender equality.

The theory is meant to analyse attitudes towards online violence in other to be able to analyse the current rate of this problem through its psychological analysis while preventing all sorts of violence through online media like Facebook (Boban Melovi). The first theory talks about gender-based violence against women as a loss of control which was contradicted by batterers' behaviour where he said violence targets a specific people in a specific time and place. Abusers do not choice their bosses or police officers regardless of how angry and out of control they are. The theoretical model incorporates the complex analysis of different factors. This is so because studies show that the reaction of people who are violent online are different from those in real life. As such our theory links between social media and violence against women and girls on social media applications like Facebook.

The theories use was deemed useful in linking social media and violence against women. Bandura (1977) and General Aggression Model (GAM) is a social learning theory guiding research on social media in various aspects from observing people's attitude directly or through the media and how things are portrayed and its direct perception on the recipient. Gunter

⁶ Inglehart & Welzel 2005; Welzel 2003; Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann 2003

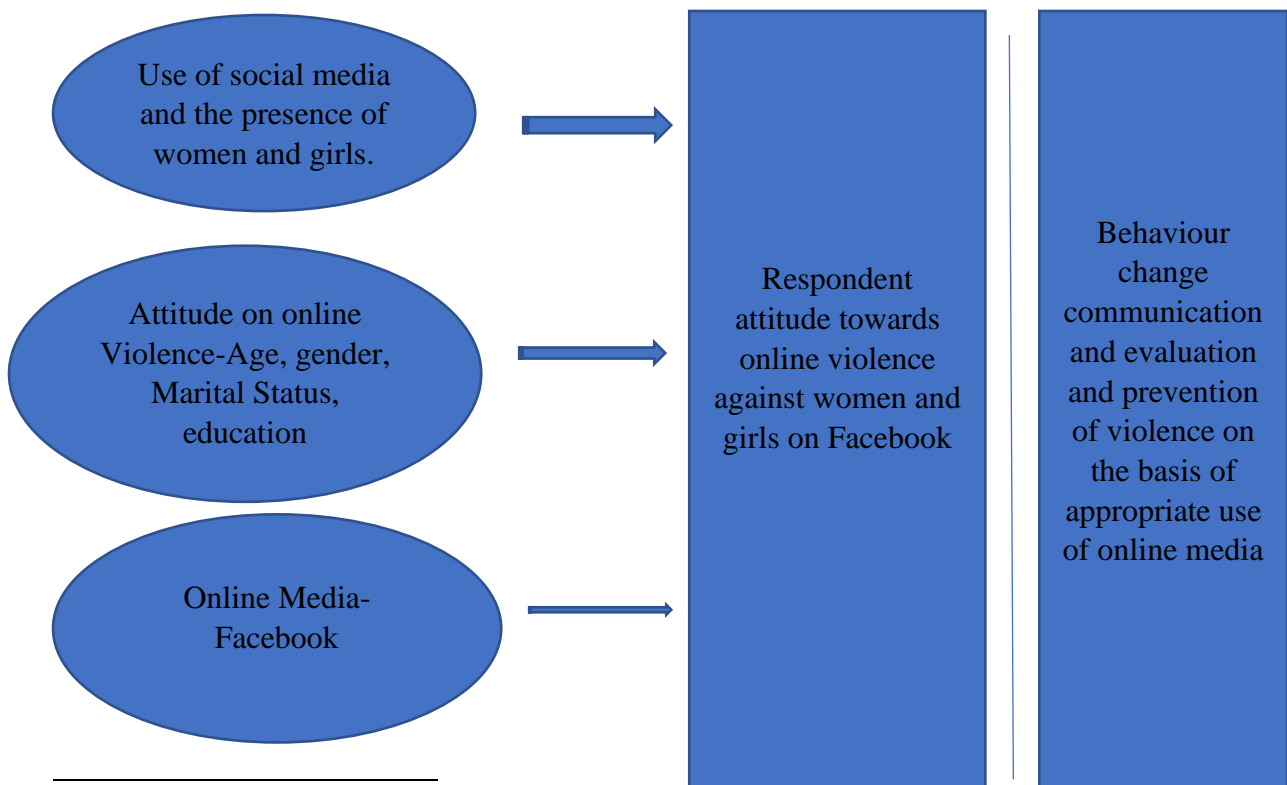
(2002), Huston, et al. (1998) and Linz (1993)⁷ further research on this topic and how it contends exposure with relation to media perception, norms and socially acceptable behaviour. In Bandura theory he spelled it out that learning does not always lead to behaviour change which he explains with the fact that people consume a lot of negative images on a daily but not mimic it in real life.

GAM explains how the average citizen can become a perpetrator on violence online. Talks about an increasing aggressive attitude, belief and desensitization of future violence. It views violent media as an initiative for violent behaviour. The spread of violent videos, lyrics and music videos constantly shared on social media affect attitude but however this theory states that and suggest that observation on its own does not lead to violence. However, the easy access and anonymity on social media with the growth of social media is an increasing factor for VAWG online.

8. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual model is based on the attitude towards online violence, specific vulnerable group, demographic and variables and the role of the online violence in the media as well as ways to prevent violence on women and girls online.

Table 1: Demographic variables



⁷ Gunter (2002), Huston, et al. (1998) and Linz (1993)

The conceptual model is based on the responses on the respondent and their attitude towards online violence on Facebook. The demographics and role of the non-governmental organisations in the usage of online media platforms to prevent violence of women and girls online. Their response was affected by whether or not their demographic follows suit and variables from gender, age, marital status and level of education. The respondents were also affected by the online media which serve as an important instrument of educating people regarding the different types of violence carried out on social media like Facebook. Understanding of relationships and the attitudes towards violence online⁸.

⁸ (Inglehart & Welzel 2005; Welzel 2003; Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann 2003)

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CASE OF FACEBOOK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This part we will be reviewing literature that relates to the different forms of violence, its causes, effects and strategies to overcome violence against women on Facebook. We will be discussing on the different ideologies and point of views of different authors in relation to their views of online violence and how it affects the people's attitude and perception. Different authors state that online violence is even more dangerous as it is more difficult to escape because of the feelings of how unsafe the world can be.

This is so because it is not bounded by place or time. Social media or online media is greatly characterised by anonymity and as such encourages unwarranted aggressive messaging online comparatively to real life. However, online violence on women and girls is readily available for thousands and millions of people to see it at an instant. Authors like Barlińska et al. suggests that the increasing accessibility of online platform like Facebook creates a conducive environment for bullying and spreading offensive posts, videos and audios and this is predominantly due to the absence of direct contact with the victim and thus affects peoples view of the Declaration of Violence against women states'' violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private'' which aligns with article 6 relating to the penal code of Cameroon.

The United Nations has reports of more than 4300 cases of abuse in 2022 of both women and children. The social construct creates a less mindfulness that abuse is a constant and recurrent in Cameroon.

The UN women's statistics shows that 1 in 3 women in Cameroon, experience some sort of domestic violence by their intimate or non-intimate partner and an overwhelming 31% of

domestic violence cases in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon due to the ongoing crisis. Less than 2% of women report cases of domestic due to diverse socio-cultural factors that will be discussed in this dissertation.

In recent statistics, With a population of over 26, 5 million Cameroonians according to World Bank statistics. Women make over 52 percent of the population. In Bamenda, Cameroon, like many other countries in the world over 54 percent of women and girls go through domestic violence. It is a reflection of the socio-political and social discrimination against women.

In a community in Cameroon known like Eton, domestic violence is an expression of love. Women are groomed to believe that the perfect expression of affection is been battered. Most women grow to even demand to be beaten and manhandled. Popularly called “5 minutes de folie” in French, 5 minutes of madness, is the most popular excuse to domestic violence, mostly used as a defense mechanism by the abusers.

women right experts sexual and reproductive health a Rape has been on a constant rise in the North West and South West region of Cameroon. As a minority state, the 2 regions have had crisis since 2016.

In Bamenda alone, there have been an increasing amount of dead toll and abuse where our study is focused on and this has increased to over 30% and counting at a constant pace.

This abusers have move this situations to online platforms where an increasing percentage of women who have reported constant abuse and attack from people online especially during the period of the anglophone crisis, which created a massive divide in the political system and has thus translated to an increase in online violence directed towards women and in this case, those from the English regions of Cameroon by diverse group of people, who feel the need to express their opinion through a suppressive method.

1.2 FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The most common forms of violence against women and girls on Facebook as spelled out by International non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon are as follows:

I) Cyberbullying

The term cyber-bullying has over the test of time been attached to different terms of bullying that involve modern technology. Different technologies are used like cell phones, computers and tablets an extensively the use of text messages, chat and websites, wilful and consistent repetitive harm inflicted through the usage of computers and electronic devices’’. However, certain authors have been able to distinguish between direct and indirect forms of online violence. These different forms of violence include disturbing messages, social media threats and insults of all sorts directed to victims, impersonation, publishing of private date, information and even videos without approval. While indirect violence is realised through third party profiles. Researchers like Lewis et al talks about the fact that feminist are more likely to get exposed to the different forms of online violence way more than in the real world.

II) Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is the repeated use of electronic communication to stalk be it an individual, group or an organisation. Cyberstalking exists in several forms from threats, slander, solicitation of sex or black mail. Different authors like Fascendini and Fiavola (2011)⁹ states that this are various outline and ways through which privacy is been denied to women and girls online. which could involve tracking their devices, monitoring their text messages and incoming calls, using GPS to track their locators, emails and social networks. These perpetrators are fond of getting the passwords of their victim’s computers, emails and instant messaging application. Fascendini and Fiavola, 2011 states that such actions can eventually lead to abusers impersonating the victim’s social media platforms like Facebook to have details on their lifestyle and eventually prey on this victim. Preying on victims on social media platforms are issue that have been addressed by authors like Hitchcock and Page (2006). The Cameroonian Penal code how however, not spelled out policies on online violence against women and girls on social media platforms like Facebook.

⁹ *Fascendini and Fiavola (2011), Hitchcock and Page (2006). Hitchcock and Page (2006), the penal code of Cameroon (2016)*

Highly active users are predominantly exposed to these different forms of violence against women and girls most especially feminist who are outspoken and would dare to put out their thoughts on certain subjects.

In as much as the Cameroonian penal code does not detail out laws on online violence, international policy makes like the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights from 2015 and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on violence negates online violence. Non-governmental organisations like Plan International have been active participants of the campaign to “END GBV NOW!” which is however limited in terms of reach, diversity of the campaign as a fundamental fight against online violence on Facebook.

III) Video and image circulation

In recent years there exist an increasing number of disregard and disrespect of private images and videos. Due to accessibility and cyberstalking some individuals take it upon themselves to rate the privacy of others. The Cameroonian civil code article 6 section 1 talks about image privacy Stating that individual images should not be made public without approval. Burton (2009) talks about a form of sharing secrets and images on social media called “happy slapping” were young people mug others with camera phones and extensively we could talk about the rise in pranks were individuals are frighten and captured on Camera. These images and videos are shared to peers while others publish it on social media for different reasons. Some people post videos of nudes of young women and girls on Facebook and even images of their private parts without permission. We have seen situations in Cameroon where people are being killed and it is recorded and distributed online.

In 2021, a school was rated in the south west regions of Cameroon and the children were asked to walk around stalk naked, while pictures of them were recorded and posted online. A lot of young women and girls like the situation of dauphin for miss Cameroon 2022, her nude videos were recorded and posted online by her ex-partner and has not been able to actively get justice from the Cameroon government or any engagement from non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. The National Plan of action for the promotion and the protection of justice of human rights in Cameroon (2015-2019) and the penal code of Cameroon (2016) neither of these laws have been able to properly implement policies and laws to protect women and girls on social media platforms like Facebook. Non-governmental organisations on Facebook in Cameroon, have however not been able to create enough post or campaigns on

the forms of violence against women and girls online to effectively reach the 4million plus Cameroonians existing online. There is consistent misuse and alteration of trust Through aggressive and nude videos posted routinely on such platforms. Ibid (2007) and Hasinoff (2014) make mention of the inappropriate usage of images by partners as a form of blackmail, harassment and intimidation.

IV) Virtual trafficking

As of May 2022, one of the trends on Facebook was the Dubai Porta Potty website were girls from around the world were sometimes traffic to Dubai from different online agencies for sex works with animals etc. The UN women submitted as of 2020 a report to the UN general assembly on the measures taken by different states of the United Nations to evade trafficking. From their statistics women and girls make up to 80% of the estimated 800,000 people trafficked across the borders nationally.

From interviews form BBC Africa, a majority of women and girls trafficked are gotten from online platforms like Facebook. Studies from Hughes (1999) indicate that pimps and traffickers use social media side to popularise their atrocities. Traffickers explore women by exposing their pictures and videos on pornographic sites with or without their knowledge, leaving them to suffer from the stigma of these actions (Hughes and al 1999).

Studies from Fascendini and Fialova (2011) also shows that many websites promote fake work and study to cohence women into force marriages in their home land and abroad. Women are constantly tricked and lured into situations they never dreamed of or wanted. The states government made mention of the fact that Cameroon through the anti-trafficking inter-ministerial committee has however continuously create awareness on trafficking. In 2011, the Cameroon legal framework spelled out a 10-20 years punishment and a fine of between 50,000FCFA and 1million FCFA to defaulters.

1.3 CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In this section, we will be discussing the different reasons why they have been an increasing usage of the online media like Facebook to cause violence against women and girls. Non-

governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon, have consistently addressed issues around violence against women and girls through behaviour change Communication¹⁰.

There have different different segments from quiz on Fridays and Mon'talk on Mondays with include their different aspects of communication to reach out to their audience on Facebook through live sessions and the different slots on the importance of creating a safe space for especially women and girls. This section we discuss the different causes of online violence on women and girls.

I) Attitude towards gender divide on online media like Facebook

The natural instinct of an individual is to react in a certain way amidst violence. Men and Women in Cameroon are still moving along the lines of gender equality, which is a major part of the campaign of Plan International. However, the disparities in real life have been transferred on online media like Facebook. Technology creates a heightened sense of aggressive through fake accounts and anonymity and as such is of great attraction to offenders (Ellison et al.,1998). With the heightened openness and availability on social media platforms it makes it easy for perpetrators to network and communicate, Kee(2005) and Maltzahn (2012). Chat rooms, instant messaging, private groups have increased the ability to abusers to prevail and thrive. Social media platform has continuously tightened their policies on but it has however created its own unique problems (Jensen,2014) were there are consistently ways created to bypass this laws.

II) Sanitization of Violence Facebook

Different authors have attributed an increase in online violence against women due to an increasing phase of nudity on social media from music videos to virtual games and even lyrics, authors like (Linz, Donnerstein&Penrod,1984; Dietz,1998 and Donnerstein, 1980) and Hald et Al (2009) thing this exposure online is one of the main causes of violence against women and girls. The authors in their research talk about the way women are portrayed online is a continuous factor for violence as it normalises the view of women as passive and objects.

These actions glamorise perpetrators as actors. In several instances we see men been hailed for a certain behaviour towards a woman because of how she looks and instead for the perpetrator to be punished, it becomes a question of whether or not the woman was

¹⁰ (Inglehart & Welzel 2005; Welzel 2003; Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann 2003)

appropriately dressed in order for them to be seen as wrong. Experimental studies by Berkowitz (1993) and Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth and Wartella (2003) in their findings show proof of the fact that lyrics and videos objectifying women and girls lead to a very high likelihood of violence and encourage misogynistic attitudes towards women. Hughes (2007) states that most of the pornographic content is very highly misogynistic and encourages the objectification of women online.

Women are often portrayed as instruments with no form of humiliation and can take any kind of pain. Kee (2005) mentioned the ease at which content can be posted and shared online, which gives predators the ability to do and undo and the average man can in effect post any video of their choice without any repercussion.

The continuous distribution of degrading content on women and girls has been seen as one of the factors that cause violence against women and girls. Extensively Kee (2005) talks about explicit videos that portray very degrading images of women that worsen the problematic as women are seen going through real pain, ejaculation of their face.

III) Easy access of social media platforms by perpetrators

Addressing individuals in a particular way can cause a lot of problems in real life and can even lead to physical violence, threats or harm. Due to this, perpetrators use social media platforms where they feel it's easier to say what you want to whomever without any consequences of any sort. Many at times in countries like Cameroon where sexual exploitation and trafficking lead to jail time, these people use social media, since they can mask themselves, become anonymous and have access to everyone on the platform. Ellison et al., 1998 talk about the fluidity of identification that exists on social media platforms.

These give grounds for people to create fake accounts and go unmasked for their doings. Kee (2005) makes mention of how hard it has become for law makers to track down perpetrators and for the most part issues of online violence are majorly addressed by non-governmental organisations when it comes to issues of women and girls, which is a 100 times compared to policy makers who have not consistently implemented measures to curb these

practises. Manltzahn(2012) adds that the continuous evolution of social media tools has made it very easy and accessible to exploit and harass women online¹¹.

1.4 EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Plan International speaks on gender-based violence as a disproportionate form of violence affecting women and girls from different angles that is child marriages, intimate partner violence and female genital mutilation. While the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) program in April 2018, the UN Women and its partners have supported over 400 survivors of gender-based violence. There isn't a clearly define pattern of the effects of online violence against women and girls. With an over 80% of women in Cameroon living below the poverty line due to unemployment, it is a factor of increasing presence on social media. Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women distinguishes the different forms of violence and due to lack of enough data on the effects of violence against women, this finding is pertinent.

During research finding by Ybarra Diener-west and Leaf (2006), it talks about the effects of cyberbullying as it creates distress and anxiety in the mind of victims. Willard (2006) additionally talks about cyberbullying as a factor that can consequently cause suicide and for students it can lead up to failure and trauma. Online violence and perpetrators of such acts most times prey on the shortcomings of individuals and consistently troll them into depression and fear. Because they a lot of time operate anonymously sometimes the victim fear for their life and can't live their life freely I real life.

Sheridan, Davies and Boon (2001) and Maxwell (2000) in their research, talk about how violence online lead to low self -esteem and creates a sense of shame in victims who tend to want to change certain aspects of their lifestyle to fit the standard acceptable by the abusers to avoid been harassed.

Other authors talk about the aspect of viral images and videos and how the more viral the video or image become and how it affects the life. Bauman (2007) adds that constant bullying and

¹¹ *Ibid (2007) and Hasinoff (2014), (Ellison et at.,1998), Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth and Wartella (2003)*

harassment through comments and images distributed online without permission a lot of times. In a lot of cases it leads to suicide, school dropout. Ybarra (2007) suggest that victims cyberbullying is more likely to report depression, anxiety, emotional distress and eventually become abusers themselves. Violence against women and girls create long-lasting effects in the mind and lives of victims.

1.5 STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING GBV ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Different studies on violence against combine socio-economic and demographic factors to formulate societies attitude towards gender-based violence on the media specifically online media. Studies around online violence in Cameroon dwells a lot on the socio-cultural norms of our society and the lack of proper awareness on the rights of women and girls, invasive spread of articles, post, images and videos by non-governmental organisations has been very limited in terms of reach. With over 4 million people online in Cameroon with Facebook accounts, women make over 60% of this population but these organisations have not been successful able to create trends that last and create an unforgettable experience on this platform for Cameroonians to be able to understand the forms, causes, effects and strategies of violence against women online.

Some of the strategies to survive VAWG online in Cameroon have been the Central Emergency Relief Fund program of April 2018 which partnered with the UN women and its partners to support over 400 survivors of gender-based violence. The consistent input by non-governmental organisations to impact policy creations, create campaigns around violence online on Facebook. The consistent reaching out to the audience through different post to continuously create an impact were both genders understand both side of the spectrum and how it feels.

The evolution and growth in social media have a very strong consumer market and there have been a consistent need for individual rights are to be protected. It is important that laws on violence against women be serious implemented online and owners of social media applications need to be stricter with implementation of their laws around violence and punish offenders. (Summary of E. U legislation, 2014).

Across the globe, in countries like the United States of America there have increasingly created laws to regulate social media abuse, harassment and stalking. In states like Michigan, Arizona,

Alaska, Connecticut, New York, Oklahoma and Wyoming (Ellison, 1998) were different acts such as sharing pornographic content is a criminal offense. A clear case was the conviction of 66 individuals for cyber porn probe.

In countries like China social media usage is greatly filtered In South Korea, the Minister of Communication can order an ISP to delete and restrict any harmful content against youths' character, emotions and a sense of value. (Kim, 1996). The laws in places like Hong Kong laws regulating social media existed as far back as 1997.stating the "Regulation of Obscene and Indecent Material through the Internet".

While in Canada, the Fix Bill C-11 is the first digital bill to control digital streaming platforms which is currently in review in their parliament to curb violence online¹².

¹² (Kim, 1996), (Ellison, 1998) Manltzahn(2012), Ybara(2007), Bauman (2007

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This next chapter we will be looking into the methodology of our research were authors like Clarke and Clarke said it is a careful, systematic and objective investigation. This is conducted in order to obtain a valid fact, bring out conclusions of the findings with established principles solving an identifiable problem in a certain field. The chapter discusses the research design, the survey of the population and data collection procedures, while sampling the technique, use and presentation procedures. In this chapter, the reliability and validity of research instruments is being discussed.

The final form of the questionnaire is consistent of 15 questions consisting of the different variables, the attitude and perception of people with regards to violence against women and girls online. The causes and measures to prevent violence against women online. The first part consists of the demographic variables of gender, age, level of education and marital status. The second part of the attitude of the respondents with regards to attitude towards online violence on social media in Cameroon and then to the measure's efforts put in place by international organisations like Plan International Cameroon with regards GBV and its effects.

With regards to our topic, it should be noted that the survey followed research standards. It was done anonymously without including the personal information of the respondents. The different respondents who took apart of this research questionnaire did it voluntarily. The participants in the survey informally agreed to the publication of the research results.

The authors used Cronbach alpha to test the liability of our questionnaire. With a value of 0.796 which is a satisfactory level in the science of information and communication and as such the data provided during our survey is appropriate for further analysing the impact of respondent's attitude and perception to violence against women and girls.

We also had to an observation and interview session for over a six plus month period working with Plan International Cameroon in the Communication department and mostly working on

social media strategies to fight for the rights of women and girls. It was a time for me to conduct my research aligning to the methodology of scientific research in Information and Communication. It was to have a better understanding of my topic and social media attitude and perception. Also understanding the demographic involve and how the Cameroonian public uses social media to engage around issues concerning violence against women and girls.

We can definitely conclude with saying in terms of methodology, we use both questionnaire and observations together our data and get to a conclusive analysis of what our research work looks likes from a scientific research stands.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Saunders, et al. (2012) talked about research design and termed it as a systematic approach to conducting a scientific inquiry, while bringing together different components, strategies and methods to collect and analyse data. The research puts together different parts of the components of research in the field of Science of Information and Communication. It puts together a clear systematic approach to conducting a research quiry in other to get a confirmative answer. This was following a methodological approach to enable us achieve the results we are looking forward to in our research. This was in line with Trochim (2005) on the other hand termed it as a glue that holds a research project together. This was meant to put the research in perspective and just holding it down to align with a scientific research thesis.

Exploratory research designs are a qualitative methodology approach in other to investigate and answer questions which is our case particularly in Cameroon, were it has not been studied in depth. It is for the most part referred to as an interpretive research approach due to its open-ended nature. In this case it was aimed at developing research questions which haven't been studied till depth. The mindset was to get into the field in itself and takeout time to work on the research for months in other to understand how issues of women are treated by non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. We had a six plus months of observing the strategies that were use to fight gender-based violence but at the same time also been part of the communication team to put this plan of actions into effects. And extensively through different conversations and chats and just reading into the policies used.

In our exploratory design, we would be identifying the attitude and perception of individuals with regards to the online media representation of violence on women and girls by non-

governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. Studying the perception here is a lot of times based off analysis of back and forth reaction from different post and interactions on the Plan International Facebook page and sometimes even messaging to be able to report or talk about attitudes or perceptions that affect them personally or in a much more global level.

2.3 SITE OF THE STUDY

Our study was primarily conducted in Cameroon on social media platform Facebook. The study like in our variables incorporated the two genders that is male and females Cameroonians who have Facebook accounts to access their attitude towards their experiences with regards to different prepositions by non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. Their perceptions about it causes and effects of users on the platform with violence directed towards women and girls online. We further break down our research to those in the English regions in the North West regions and specifically Bamenda as our research was conducted in mostly this area, since our research and observation period highlighted mostly those in this region.

Cameroon was chosen mostly based on the fact that is the location we did our observation and in terms of platforms, Facebook came out as the most used social media platform across the country and no other social media platform came as close, this is seen in the statistics levelled in our introductory chapter where we mentioned a more than 50% of Cameroonians especially young people including women and girls in the youthful age group. With more than 50% Facebook definitely beat all other social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Tiktok with a lesser that 30% of the population of Cameroon found in this social media application. This was in addition to the fact that Plan International Cameroon has most of its presence on Facebook with over 110,000 followers and about 500,000 reach monthly. This reach good percentage of Cameroonians online compared to their other social media platforms like Instagram with 5000 followers and a lesser reach same as twitter with less than 2000 followers. Hence why this added o our decision of choice of selection.

2.4 STUDY POPULATION

Our study population targets the subset of our population at the same time broader than the concept sample frame. Our study dives into the virtual population on Facebook majorly women and girls comparatively to men and then our physical population comprises respondents who are Cameroonians, have an active Facebook account in addition to following non-governmental organisations and for some had an in-depth knowledge of what violence against women and girls online looks like a while as those consistently learning and trying to understand the forms, causes and effects of violence against women and girls. We targeted young people from the ages of 15 and above, different levels of education and marital status. We also did our research by observing the different post and the impact it could create on the online community.

Routledge in his study opens talks about digital technology and how it has changed the process of human communication. Our work focuses on the Facebook social media platform formally called Facebook, which as of 2022 is part of the Meta company. It was created on October 28th ,2003 by its founder Mark Zuckerberg alongside his friends at the Harvard university.

Facebook is the most used platform in Cameroon for all genders for communication with over 4,689,500 which accounts for a 17% of the population, a majority of which are between the ages of 25 and 34 years old. A majority of which were men making 57.6%, were between the ages of 25 years to 34 years has the largest number of subscribers (1,623,500).

Our target study population is the virtual population of women and girls on Facebook in Cameroon within the ages of 15 to 35 years old, who according to UN women statistics have a 1 in 3 ratio of abuse by intimate or non-intimate partners.

We can conclusively say it is a study of the virtual subset of people in Cameroon using the Facebook social media application as our analysis to get to our results in line with the laws of Information and Communication in scientific research.

2.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Our sampling technique is a crucial survey based on research problems taking into account the demographics and statistics. This is in order to appropriate the problematic of the theory, while assuring or reassuring a quality survey, methodology and a sampling of the statistics subset.

Our sample survey was sent to about 125 individuals who are first and foremost Cameroonians, have a Facebook account and as also aware of the issues around violence against women and girls and are followers of the works done by for non-governmental organisations in Cameroon like Plan International Cameroon.

In terms of our research instruments, the study made use of both contemporary and traditional methods to reach out to the targeted population. Our questionnaire was majorly shared using online devices like google forms and also physically shared amongst some Facebook users. We were able to get information from Plan International Cameroon through interviews and observations through a period of a six-month professional internship in Communication and advocacy.

The test-retest techniques were used to validate the authenticity of our instruments of research. Due to the fact that our research included both multiple choice and answers, it was able to give us an inside on the different attitudes and perspective on different individuals and their views and takes of online violence on Facebook.

The main distribution of our surveys online was done on different social media applications including Facebook and WhatsApp to individually and in group reach out to our target respondents to be able to adequately get the right information we are looking at analysing in other to reach our research finding results.

Both methods were use in other to use the authentic techniques to adequately carry out a research method were by both the observations, interviews and most importantly the data collected from the interviews following all the safe precautions of scientific research in other to arrive at a satisfactory result.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Our data was collected at different levels. Firstly, from the surveys and observations and our standard social science questionnaire that were shared across the board to our different target population to get their view point on online violence related to women and girls. This was meant to have a more factual results driven from our research questions, problematic, hypothesis and right down to getting our results.

Additional data was research by non-governmental organisations in Cameroon in addition to different research works, books, theories and authors who have written on the effects of social media on women and girls or just the active participants of social media platforms like Facebook.

Our questionnaire was made through google forms, which was the same application used to analyse our findings, which was later interpreted for us to arrive at the results of our research. Google forms was best used to go through the scientific research approach starting from gathering informing that's appropriate for our research right through sharing and getting back feedback and moving on to interpreting data for purpose of analysis to arrive at a specific result.

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION PROCEDURES

After our data was collected from our respondents, we were able to identify and start our analysis by identifying those in the different variables and selected from how our questionnaire was segmented from identifying our target audience, their perception of online violence and their general attitude and approach to online violence on women and girls.

We were able to identify the responses and partition the questionnaire into specific categories. We used both the qualitative and quantitative research methodology which were segmented into the following approach. Analysis of the descriptive demographic, frequencies and distribution where the results were presented in tables and diagrams.

In terms of the qualitative data approach, it was analysed using the ethical standard of social sciences following the set patterns and themes to ease the understanding of the finding to reach

a result and recommendations. The research was meant to get the views of the respondents without getting into their personal life information.

However, it was made to have their personal view on this topic without necessarily exposing them but ensuring it was clear the research work was meant for scientific purposes only. Their right to privacy was well explained so they understand the purpose for which the research work was made in order to get their view point.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter majorly consist of analysing our data and the interpretation of our research questions. Although the main aim of the research was to point the causes and effects of online violence against women and girls in Cameroon, specifically from the North West region. Our survey however consisted of both women and men. It was important for us to state a realistic representation of online media in Cameroon which includes both genders in other to get their views of online violence against women, while bringing out it's a realistic representation, the causes and effects and the part played by non-governmental organisations and the Cameroonian law through our survey.

We present a realistic expectation of their experience and a detailed and deep analysis of their perception of online violence on Facebook carried out against women and girls. Different authors analyse the demographics and characteristics of the different correspondents. We went on to present information regarding the different forms of violence, the causes and effects of online media and strategies to make it better. The study was done through observations and questionnaires which was done online to know the view point of our different respondents. The data was collected over a period of one week while the observations was done over a period of six months from August 2021 to January 2022.

Table 01 : Response Rate of Questionnaires

Day	Number of questionnaires filled	Note
1	30	About 25 questionnaires send out was not filled
2	25	
3	15	
4	10	
5	8	
6	10	
7	2	
TOTAL	100	

The responses were put together after our distribution of our survey obtained from over 100 respondents out of 125. The questionnaire was filled more on day one and as days goes by, we had the number of respondents consistently decrease. We however rate the questionnaires as satisfactory as more than 50% of those that received the questionnaire filled it out. In terms of our elimination, we focused on those who were Cameroonians and mainly those who had Facebook accounts and also follow pages of non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon, this was in addition to incomplete responses send in my respondents who send in their questionnaires in person.

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

According to our survey it shows that over 78.8% of Cameroonians have been victims of online violence on Facebook. Are survey was segmented into the different genders and we could make out that 58.6% of women and girls have been victims of online media violence on Facebook while just 20.2% of men have been victims. Over 47.5% are said to have experience some form of gender-based violence on Facebook. Victims of online violence were in most cases those within the ages of 26 to 40 years old with a 53.8%, while it is closely followed by those within the ages of 19 to 25 years old have a percentage of 41.3%. The older population of respondents were the least affected by online violence. Our survey shows that 35% of those in the faculties have experience some form of violence online.

Table 02: Characteristics of respondents

GENDER		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Female	69	73.8%
Male	31	26.3%
AGE		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
15-18	2	2.5%
19-25	43	41.3%
26-45	53	53.8%
MORETHAN 45	2	2.5%

LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Secondary school	7	8.8%
College	34	30%
Faculty	44	42.5%
Masters	14	17.5%
PHD	1	.2%
MARITAL STATUS		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single	69	83.8%
Married	12	12.5%
Divorced	13	13.8%
Widowed	6	6.3%

From the characteristics of the table, the majority of the respondents who faced violence online were women and girls. Women made over 73.8% have experience some form of violence at least once. With the over 31 male respondents of our survey over 26.2% experience some sort of online violence on Facebook. We can also tag this to as one of the reasons why they were a lot lower percentage of men interested in our survey. From our research it clearly shows that the majority of those who have been abused online are those I the younger age group that is between 19 to 45 years old. We can conclude and confirm our first hypothesis that women and girls are more likely to be exposed to social media violence specifically on Facebook.

The survey was also meant to know the experience of respondents whether it is different in terms of different variables using the ANOVA test.

Table 03: Characteristics of respondents

Variables		Victims of online violence on women	
		Once	More than once
Gender	Female	20%	53.8%
	Male	16.3%	10%
	15-18	15%	5.5%

Age	19-25	8.8%	20%
	26-45	17.4%	25.82%
	More than 45	5.74%	2%
Level of Education	Secondary School	4%	6.12%
	College	13.18%	18%
	Faculty	8.8%	30%
	Masters	7%	10%
	PHD	2%	1%

Our previous hypothesis put respondent's different experiences regardless of their educational background or social status. It goes to show there is a significant difference in the experiences of individuals. It still goes to show that younger people are more likely to be affected or experience violence online. Plus, we can also see that the more your educational level the less likely you are to experience violence online. We examined the gender, marital status and educational level to understand what the effects.

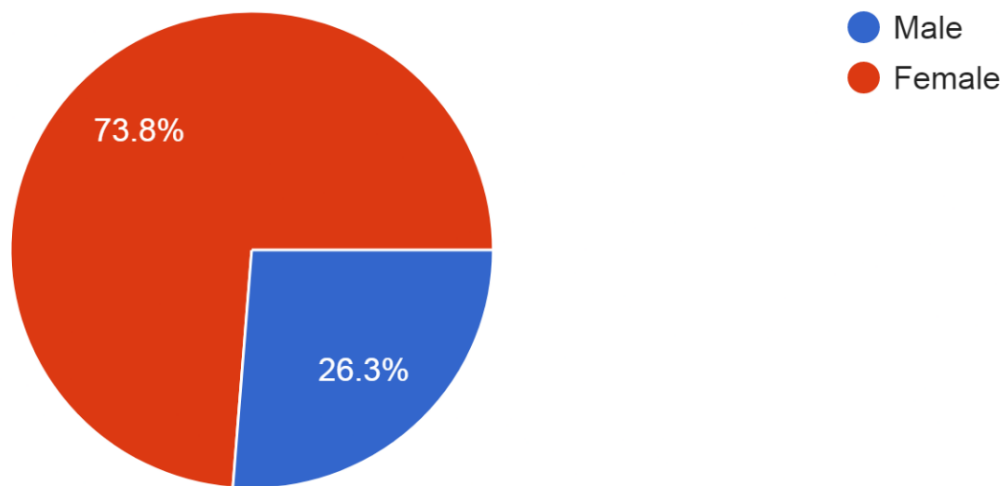
The main aim of the logistic regression is to be able to determine whether or not women and girls who have been abused online on Facebook belong to the same age group and social status whether they are married or not and to also know the most affected group as stated in demographic.

It looks at the interactions between independent variables ranked accordingly. Both variables are dependent and independent were been tested by logistic regression. The results show that more millennials within the ages of 26 and 40 years are more likely to experience online violence compared to those above 45 years old. If we look at the experience women and girls have with regards to online violence, we would analyse the marital status or social status. We saw that 83.8% of single people are more likely to experience online violence compared to married people with 12.5%, divorced individuals with 13.8% and finally widows with a 6.3%. This shows that singles experience online violence more often in Cameroon.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

To understand the respondent's attitude towards certain prepositions during our study, we sort out to use the gender, sex, age group, educational status and marital or social status. Our research targeted over 125 people. However, the correspondent's who did not meet the requirements or answered our survey for whatever reason were not a part of the of our final data collection process and analysis. Our final analysis takes into consideration 69 men and 31 females.

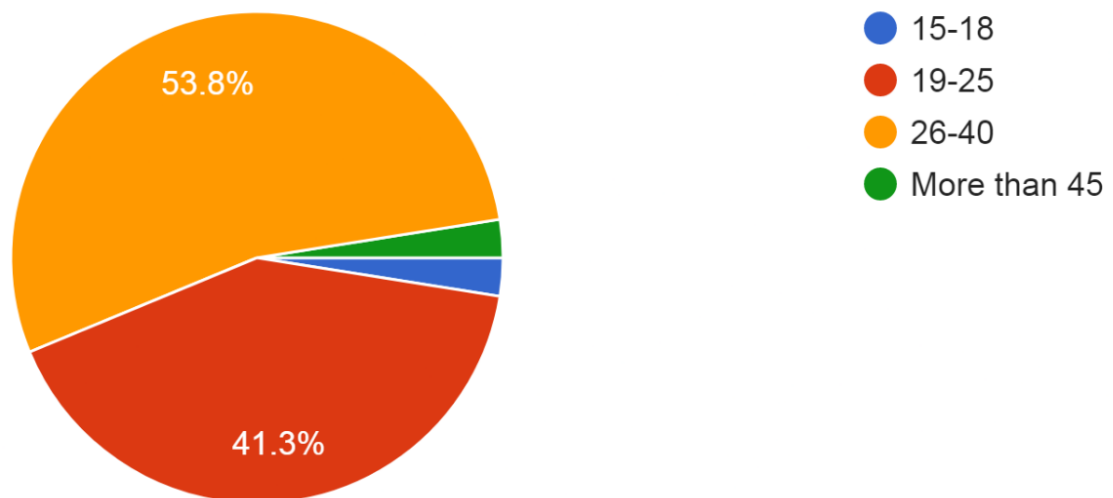
Diagram 01: Respondent category



Our diagram shows that 73.8% of our respondents were women while 26.3% were men. This is mainly because the questionnaire was mostly targeted towards women and girls. Several studies like that of Maxwell (2001) did finding and research works Halt Online Abuse (2000) statistics show that the main perpetrators of VAWG are men.

In terms of age groups, the main groups targeted were those between the ages of 19 and 45 years old, who are legally allowed to have an operate a Facebook account and share their view points.

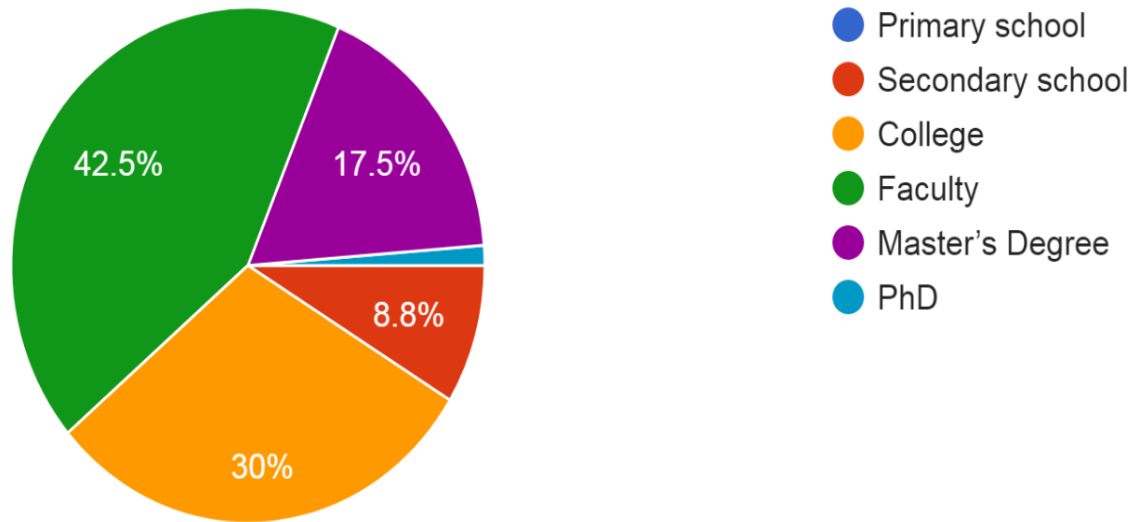
Diagram 02:Age Group



From the above diagram the age distributed shows the different age groups and people involved. The majority of those affected were millennials between the ages of 26 and 40 years old and it is closely followed by those within the ages of 19 and 25 years old and ends with the younger generation of those between 15 and 18 who of recent years have been active parts of this applications and those above 45 years who are for the most part not very active on social media applications like Facebook who are also amongst the most active and were the most subscribed to this applications like Facebook and also interested in the actions of non-governmental organisations in Cameroonians.

Our next variables was the distribution by educational status in other to understand the attitude of different social class in terms of their educational level and how they see VAWG and also their experiences if at all they have experience any form of violence on Facebook. Educational level can sometimes be a factor or reason why people are more affected by VAWG.

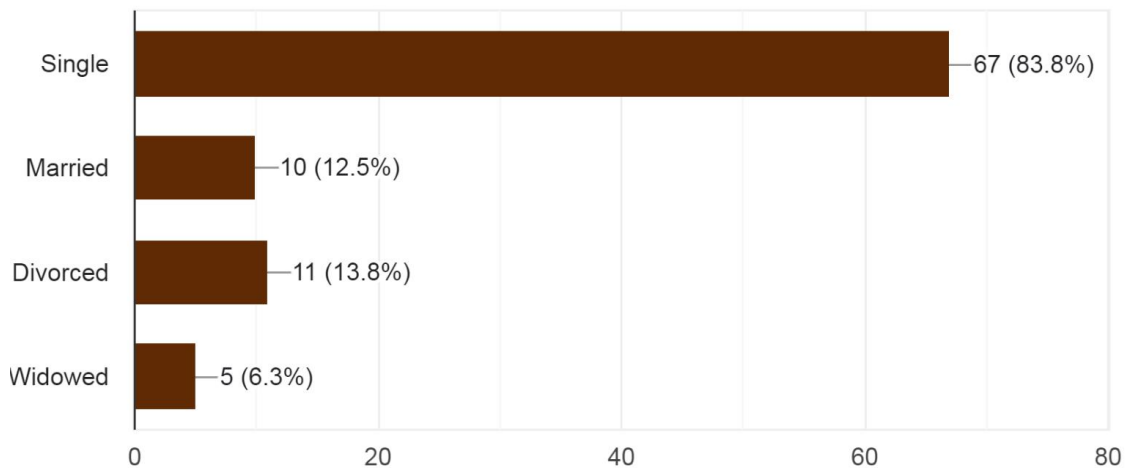
Diagram 03:Level of Education



From our survey we can definitely see that there is a 0% of those in primary school and moving onto those in secondary school who for the most part are not of the age group to be on Facebook, which is 18 years old had an 8.8%. College are were the most people are of age and are actively ready to socialise with a 30% rate and for the faculty had over 42.5% while those with the PHD had the least in terms of rate. This goes to show that those in college and Faculties are most likely to have such experiences.

The next part of this survey is in line with the distribution of marital or social status of the person and how they are seen and people's perception and which group of people are more likely to be affected due to their status.

Diagram 04:Status of Respondents



From our diagram the singles over right the participation and the rate of those involve in violence online on Facebook with 83.6%, which is closely followed by divorcee with 13.8% and the married people a rate of 12.5% and finally the widows with a 6.3% rate.

3.4 FORMS OF VIOLENCE SURVEY

The different forms of violence from virtual trafficking, cyberbullying, cyberstalking and the circulation of videos and audios were further analysed in our questionnaire in other to under the attitude of our respondents with regards to online violence carried out on Facebook. We began by analysing the Over 72.5% of people believe that there is a rampant rate of online violence on Facebook in Cameroon, the non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon are not doing enough campaigns for the public to be aware of the effects it.

They however agree with 53% that non-governmental organisations are doing but they further voted that with a 46.3% that they need to put in a lot more work and consistency to get the information to the masses and specifically men and women in Cameroon.

The result of our survey showed that over 13.8% of our respondents have received unsolicited pornographic content be in video or audios, circulated to them via their private messaging or

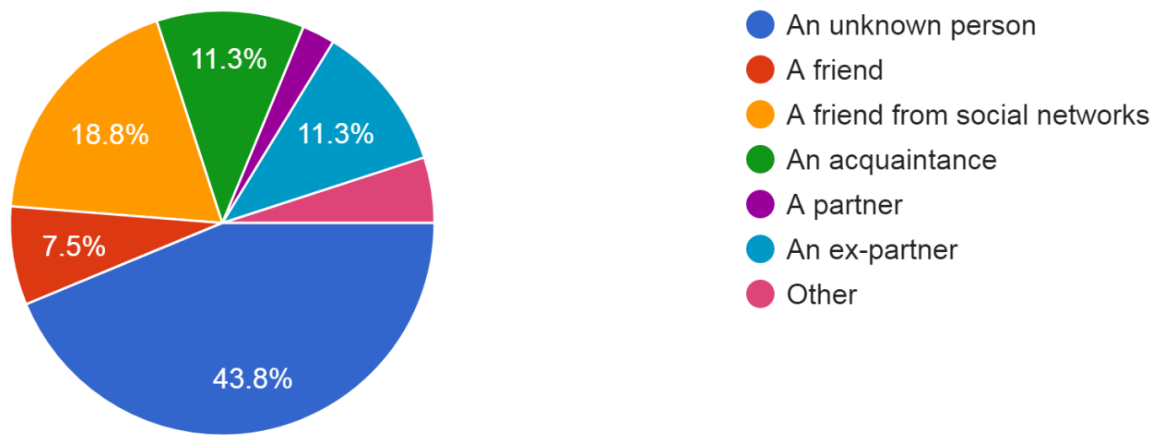
found on them explore page without their opinion. A 12.5% have been sexually harassed. A 16.3% of our respondents reported to have received solicited content at least once. Cyberbullying is one of the forms addressed and 13.8% of people have been threatened online and in them same light over22.5% have been molested privately online and lastly,13.8% have been stalked on Facebook.

Table 4: Description of Their View on VAWG

FORM OF VAWG	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Unsolicited pornographic content	14	13.8%
Have you been sexually harassed	13	12.5%
Have anyone send you unsolicited content online	16	16.3%
Have you been threatened online	14	13.8%
Have you or anyone you know information be leaked online without their permission	21	22.5%
Have you ever been stalked on Facebook	13	12.5%
Other forms of violence like virtual trafficking and much more	9	8.8%

From the table above, we can clearly see that a whole 22.5% of people have someone or their information have been leaked online, gotten sexually harassed with sexual or non-sexual content with 16.3% and 12.5%. Hasinoff’s(2014) talk about violence from a perspective of sharing image circulation and in popular lingua it is known as revenge porn and a lot of their partners are involve.

Diagram 05: Respondent View



Our research sees Hasinoff view as factual were our respondents voted for 43.8% of the content or some form of bullying was carried out by ex-partners, who sometimes put out revenge porn in terms of pictures or videos of ex partners to spide them. This type of experience according to Hasinoff's (2014) classification. Some go as far as recreating through Photoshop sexual images of women and girls and post it online for revenge or just self-gratification. We have had a case of a contestant of the miss Cameroon where her nude videos were posted online by her ex-partner after been harassed, stalked and threatened to pay a certain sum of money in other to get away with such bad behaviour.

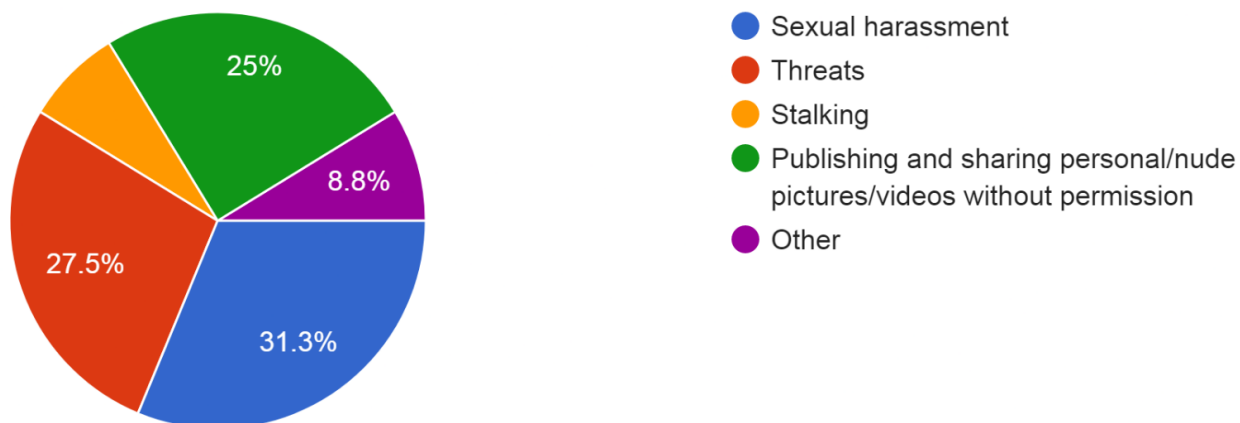
There have been outrage on social media comparing public figures in the Cameroonian context like Nathalie koah and their explicit books and international women like Kim Kardashian with narratives that her nude video made her popular. This has added to women consistently been trolled online for their looks or attitude on different post majorly posted by men. Sample post on annex 01

Different post like this have consistently been a push factor for different forms of violence were men make jokes and go ahead to look at women and girls from the perspective of just using them as tool or sees them as object of gratification. Another post from a Facebook blog on annex 02

This are two situations of cyberbullying where single mother is put in the box and this young women and girls are made to feel a certain way and the narratives are put across this platform by social media blogs on Facebook to make fun of serious actions and for most part it comes without consequences, hence why there is an increasing need for more campaigns on this platform for women and girls and also men to check their attitude and perceptions of VAWG.

Over 63% of respondents reported been harassed online while a 27% of them attest to have seen different people been harassed and have come across different online adverts of escorts services, pornographic or different form of virtual trafficking. We have had different pages named ‘fuck boys’ and girls’ of Facebook in Cameroon exposing mostly women and girls with the tag of them Chawki and Shazly (2013) conducted research during an undergraduate study in the United States compared the physical form of violence vs the online form of harassment and as such that women found online dirty jokes even more offensive than those jokes been made in real life. Burton (2009) and lacey (2007) talks about the effects of violence in terms of damaging their reputation.

Diagram 06: Types of Abuse

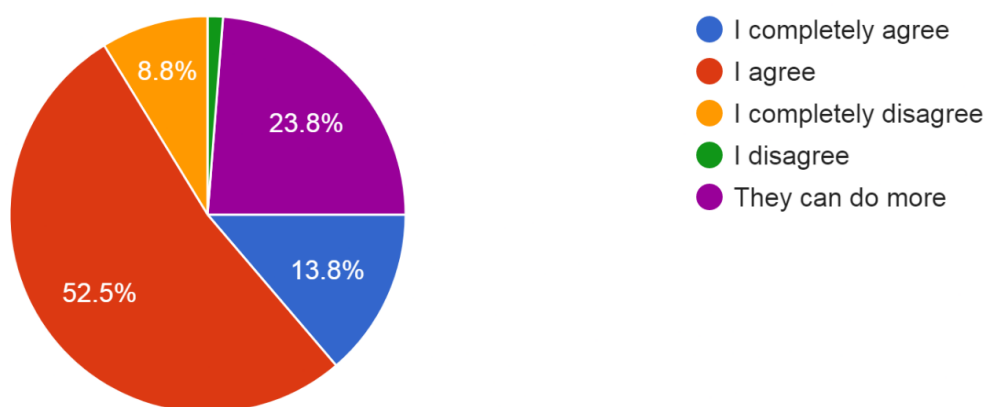


We can conclusively say that one of the most popular forms of violence faced online is sexual harassment with over 31.3% which shows the rate at which pornographic content is exposed online and it is followed with the ideology of publishing and sharing personal and nude videos of people without permission with 25% and threats which came second with an over 27.5% of women and girls have been threatened on Facebook and it went on to stalking with an 8.8%.

3.5 CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

This section sorts out the causes of online violence on Facebook to know people attitude and how it encourages violence. The respondents were asked their opinion with regards online violence specifically from the perspective of the work put in by Plan International Cameroon who predominantly talk about issues around violence towards women and girls with over a 110,000 they carried out on Facebook form the 26th of November right up to the 10th of December 2021 and thereafter we are rarely see different post with regards to violence related to women and girls on Facebook.

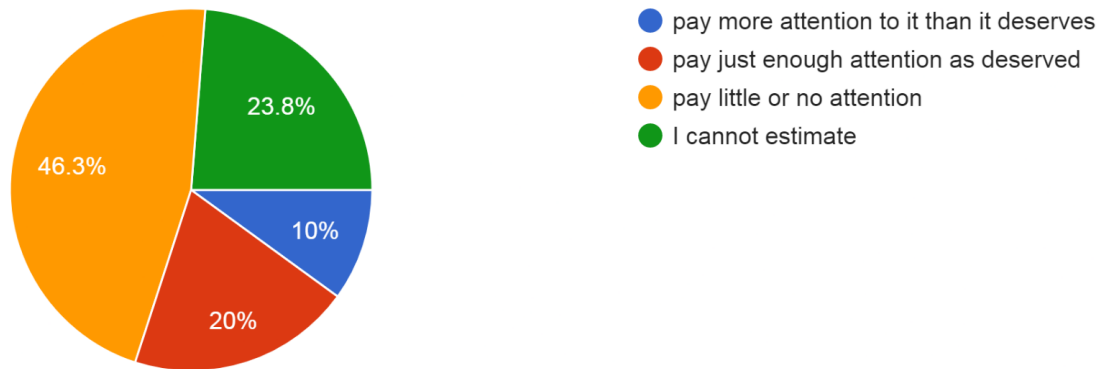
Diagram 07: Respondent view on VAWG



The above diagram shows that a majority of people appreciate the work done with over 52.5% but however we can clearly see the 23.8% of our respondents voting in for the non-governmental organisations to do more and ensure that these campaigns are often put out to ensure or reach out to even more Cameroonians. Hertlein and Stevenson (2010) ¹³talks about the fact that the internet is more accessible and easier for perpetrators to use due to the high rate of anonymity and Citron (2011) adds to the fact that it is a place where people can easily put out misogyny attitude without any reparcautions.

¹³ Hertlein and Stevenson (2010)

Diagram 08:How much attention on VAWG



Our survey also asked about the fact that does different post on gender-based violence made by non-governmental organisations in Cameroon pay as much attention to VAWG and the answer was predominantly a 43.3% said they pay little or no attention and was followed by a 23.8% who cannot estimate and a 20% pay just enough attention as it deserved it shows the ratio of the post and goes on to tell us that there is a lot of laxity addressed in terms of VAWG carried out online and even in terms of consistency with post over 71.3% said they see it sometimes and a 15% talked about the fact that they see the post daily. If we look at both we see that it has not been addressed enough. Ellison, et al. (1998) talks about the fact that anonymous online communication is one of the main causes of abuse online. While, Jensen (1996) says that it is even more difficult to enforce laws on VAWG online due to the advanced of technology and anonymity. Linz, et al. (1984), Dietz (1998) and Donnerstein (1980)¹⁴ research talks about the ideology of perpetrators been made to look attractive and look like normal and let to disrespect women and young girls for their looks or behaviour and the views were backed up with Beck,Boys,Rose and Beck(2012) adds on the lack of adequate research around online media and its causes.

Also there increase in explicit lyrics, videos and pictures been popularised and adds to the fact that a lot of them do some of these things for fun and even video games and adverts now our days on Facebook mainly objectify women and girls in other to gain traction. Pornography has been consistently promoted online from stories to reels where different parts of the female body

¹⁴ Linz, et al. (1984), Dietz (1998) and Donnerstein (1980)

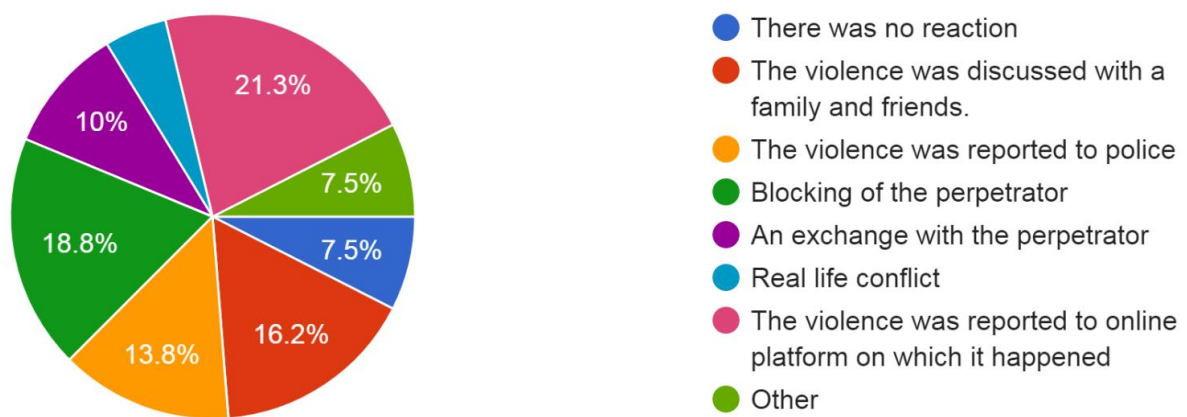
are predominantly used to attract views and sometimes this woman is put in bondage or tortured and people laugh and make jokes about it on Facebook. People now use their Facebook stories to literally traffic young girls and women online to different people on annex 3.

From our post we see individuals telling women and girls what do and how to behave with regards to their dressing and how it gives them the right to get disrespected. Scantly dressed is seen as one of the causes and different blog believe that your dressing should be the reason why people should have disrespected, bullied, threatened or disrespected on Facebook.

People are allowed to make jokes about violence online and it has become normalcy where comedians are allowed to use it as a joke and society had made it become normalcy and due to this mechanisms people can no longer tell the difference between when you are serious and when it's a joke and when you find it offensive you are being mocked at or threatened and made to feel like you are on the wrong.

Another reason is the fact that there exists lack of an effective policy or reporting mechanism and those are one of the triggers of online violence on Facebook.

Diagram 09 : How Respondents React to Violence



Over 21.3% of people stated that violence was reported online to Facebook followed by a 16.2% of people who just discussed it amongst their friends and families and an 18.8% who blocked the individuals. We can however, see that although there exists online policy on reporting or even laws in Cameroon with regards to online violence, a lot of individuals

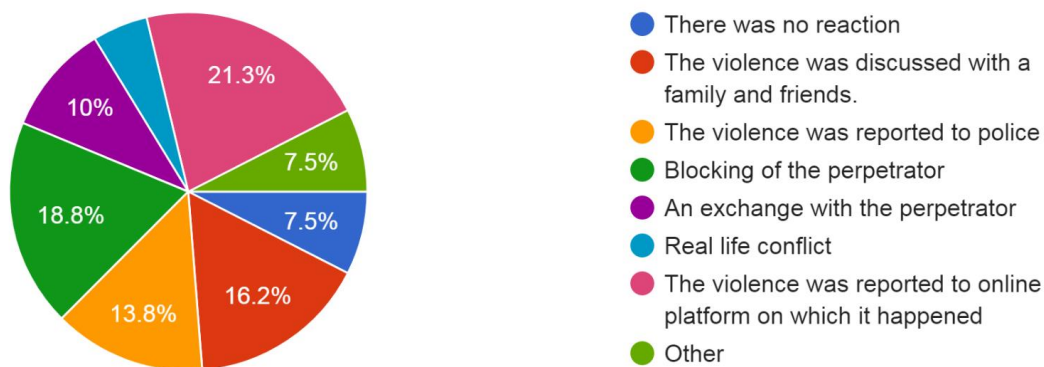
especially women and girls do not report or better still do not think the government or online Facebook policies properly punish or even punish those who are perpetrators of abuse online.

4.6 EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS EXPERIENCED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE VICTIM

We were able to look into the question of the effects of VAWG on Facebook. Our different respondents gave us an insight. They were able to give an account on how it made them feel and their reaction to it.

It was important to know how the respondents felt and their reaction to online violence on Facebook. The respondents did express a very negative emotion was associated to people's attitude.

Diagram 10: Respondents Reaction to Online Violence



The diagram shows the reaction of our respondents with regards to how they react to been abused online on Facebook and for the most part 21.3% of people reported the situation to Facebook, while some blocked the individual others just discussed it with their friends and family and moved on from it.

Online violence has become a joke and for most part makes the victims to be in fear, anxiety and even been humiliated. Violence on Facebook sometimes lead to physical harm and been threatened and stalked lead to women and girls been afraid even in real life. We see different post been made online to justify it in forms of comedy

This leads to people laughing at serious issues and creates a norm reaction towards the sensitivity and the effects or memories it brings to women and girls who have been violated by their partner or ex-partner. Our research went on to sought the attitudes of individuals after experiencing any sort of violence online.

A lot of our respondents talked about the fact that it made them to withdraw and be less active and also trying to change their attitude online to fit the stereotypes. Some went on to delete their accounts or change their password and try to play safe on Facebook. Authors like Cohen (2000) talks about the fact when a victim experience abuse online and withdraws it hinders their creativity of building an online presence to push their career. Depression and anxiety have in recent years been highly linked to violence on social media. Different authors like Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor (2006)¹⁵ indicates that victims of online violence feel distressed and delinquent as they further get into psychosocial problems.

Table 5: Respondent Reaction

RESPONDENTS	SAMPLE RESPONSE
1	I was angry and replied
2	I made sure to report them and also blocked the individuals
3	We reported him to the police for threats and cyberstalking.
4	I did not give them the attention they needed, I just talked about it with friends.

VAWG on Facebook does affects women’s attitude and perception of social media and go on to affect their presence. It affects how they react and behave online and for most part the abusers operate anonymously or sometimes with their real account because they feel it’s funny or don’t care at all.

¹⁵ Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor (2006)

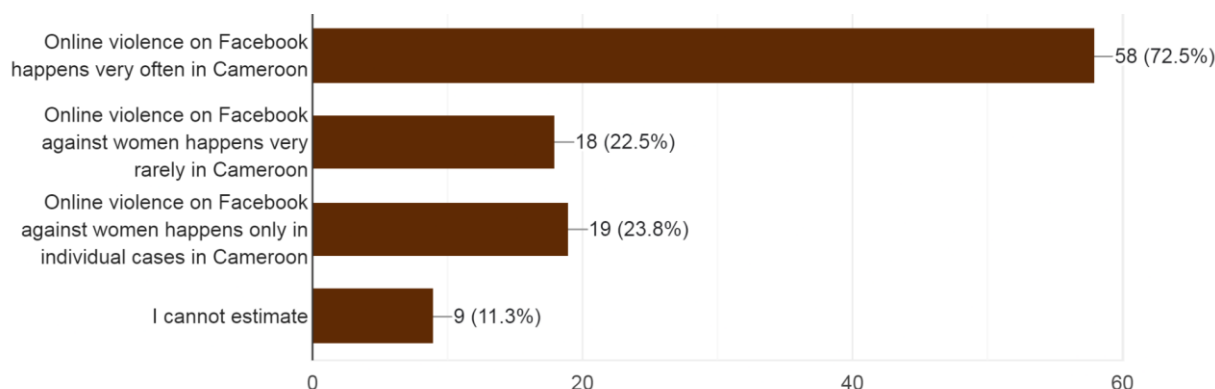
3.7 STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ONLINE VIOLENCE

Our survey was meant to determine the role of online media in preventing social media violence this is due to the fact that the presence and usage of online media is the main cause of social media violence, and as such can be used as a tool for the prevention of online violence. Different respondents talk about the need for some sort of psychosocial support and offcourse campaigns like that one organised by Plan International Cameroon with regards to the 16 days campaign against violence online.

Different campaigns to create awareness on gender-based violence are one of the online strategies to fight against violence on social media. In our study it is essential to mention the important role the online media and other forms of communication play in the prevention of violence on Facebook.

In our survey our results showed the following results addressing online violence in Cameroon.

Diagram 11: Addressing Online Violence



Our survey shows that over 72.5% of people experience some sort of violence on social media specifically in Cameroon. The government even though they play a significant role according to our survey, we still see lapses in terms of post made by non-governmental organisations which stands at 71.3% of respondents seeing post or campaigns on violence against women and girls just sometimes and on the other hand, we ask our respondents on whether or not the government of Cameroon is doing enough in terms of this rights and with a majority been no, which however, relates to the real life were the laws on gender-based violence on women and

girls in the Cameroon penal code applied mostly to physical violence and as such more laws need to be put in place to protect violence online in Cameroon.

Table 6: How to Handle GBV

RESPONDENT	REASONS WHY GBV IS PREDOMINANT I CAMEROON	HOW TO HANDLE GBV
1	Cameroon doesn't have enough laws on VAWG	The government need to implement more laws to fight violence online
2	The existing laws are not reinforced by the authorities.	The laws implemented should be reinforced both off and online.
3	There are possible to be anonymous and by pass laws	Facebook should put in more effective laws to compact GBV
4	Non-governmental organisations do not create enough online campaigns during the course of the year in Cameroon	Non-governmental organisations should create more campaigns around VAWG regularly
5	Authorities snoop reported cases	Cases reported should be taking seriously by the authorities
6	Comedians are allowed to make hurtful jokes online.	Jokes on VAWG should not be allowed on any social media.
7	There is no form of psychological support for victims.	Psychosocial support should be given to victims of violence online

Adapting and the Inclusion on gender-based violence should be a part of the curriculum at all educational levels. This is all meant to aid in policy making to enhance quality education as it is one of the most predominant situations in today's society were the online media in one of the most used forms of Communication.

The results of our finding clearly shows that women and girls are more exposed to violence online on Facebook, which leads to why emphasis was majorly put on women and we went on

to examine the sex, age, educational level ,marital status showed that those who are majorly exposed to violence online are those between the ages of 25 and 45 years old who are the most active part of Cameroonians online while those who were above the ages of 45 years old were And in terms of educational level, the more educated you were it became less likely for you to be abused on social media in Cameroon. The main causes were cyberbullying, threats and cyberstalking or putting out images and videos of people without their consent and in terms of strategies in was more linked to creating better policies, implementing the policies and lastly, on-governmental organisations putting throughout more campaigns around VAWG.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarise our research findings, recommendations and possible suggestions for further research. The purpose of this study was to understand the attitude and perception of people with regards to violence online carried out against women and girls and the roles played by non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon to teach people about the forms of violence, causes of violence, its effects and ways to prevent violence online. Our study used an exploratory research design with our targeted audience being mostly women even though we survey a couple of men and our target was between 15 and 45 years' old. We used gender, age, educational and marital status as our variable.

Our target population included young people who live in Cameroon and also follow non-governmental organisational in addition know about gender-based violence online. We send out over 125 questionnaires and got back over 100 and for our sample population we send out questionnaires online through google forms and also physical questionnaire and this was in addition to a 6 months' observation period as a professional intern in Plan International Cameroon in Communication and advocacy.

4.2 FORMS OF VIOLENCE PERPETRATE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS ON FACEBOOK

The main objective of our study was to identify the attitude a perception of people with regards to online violence and it other to get into our study proper we started by looking into the different forms of violence on social media which went from cyberbullying, cyberstalking, threats, unsolicited sexual or unwanted image and video send out on social media without permission. Most women reported that the most frequent forms of violence online are sexual harassment directed to them without their permission.

General aggression model was one of the theories used in line with the fact that for the most part violence are acts learned and or observed online by individuals and as such can be unlearned. Violence evaluation was used as a method for the prevention and behaviour. This are some of the forms and ways through which perpetrators fine to exert violence online on women and girls.

4.3 CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS MANIFEST IN FACEBOOK

In this part, we establish from the forms of violence, the different causes of online violence of Facebook. Some of the major causes of online violence on Facebook was the attitude towards gender divide online, easy access to social media application online and anonymity. Because this perpetrator uses fake accounts and even impersonate individuals, they use it as a means to abuse other women and girls online to avoid any reparcautions. Even with Facebook policy on impersonation it is still very much recurrent amongst users of the platform in Cameroon.

The normalisation of this acts is some of the causes of violence online where comedians are allowed to make weird and unfunny jokes, video games, lyrics and music videos trivialise issues regarding VAWG. This goes a long way to have a long and short-term effect on the attitude of girls online, who have to behave a certain way and this negative reaction can even cause people to respond negatively by threatening or even stalking and in worst case it causes anxiety and depression.

Not having enough campaigns to sensitise online media followers about the effects of social media, is one of the major causes perpetrators can argue not been aware of the effects of their actions, it is necessarily to let them know what they are doing affects these individuals and the effects it causes and consequently, consequences of their actions.

Our respondents felt that violence online affect them in that it makes them depressed, anxiety, panic and fear is a wholesome part as they feel objectified and ashamed and, in some cases, worried and threatened. This leads them to want to change their attitude to fit the narrative and becoming even more cautions when adding or accepting friend request on Facebook.

4.4 BEST STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS EXPERIENCED THROUGH THE FACEBOOK

Here, we sought to bring out strategies from our respondents on different ways through which online media can be prevented online. Some of the strategies that were discussed were making new laws and policies around VAWG, implementing these laws, this was in addition to adding VAWG studies in the curriculum and also carried out more campaigns during the course of the year.

Our study took into consideration the effects it has on individuals and encouraging psychosocial support for victims of VAWG. It is important to make sure that victims whose self-worth have been affected in several ways from being depressed to trying to change the way they think and behave due to a comment or threat. However, some ways perpetrators are being punished is through legislatures, laws and policies around gender-based violence in Cameroon. The study for the most part shows a majority of the people especially women and girls did not report the case to the police.

We added that they should create awareness around and create more campaigns around VAWG in such a way that both genders and even authorities can apply these laws and make sure offenders are being punished and some sort of help is given to the victims.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

From our study we can definitely say that women and girls in Cameroon experience some sort of violence on Facebook and in our research, we see that a lot more needs to be put in place to curb such practices online as the online media has become a wholesome part of the communication chain and social sciences.

The effects of Facebook bullying are predominant in how this group of people behave online. It is important that people are aware of the different forms of violence online in Cameroon and its causes. We have to go further to recognise the effects it has from mental, emotional, physical attitude and behaviour of people and the fact that it can reshape and reorientate your mindset and perception of social media in general and your behaviour towards people online. Sometimes it creates a lot of fear and also makes different people according to our research to not be as creative and also extremely cautious with what they post and whose request they accept.

Our research was able to identify the possibility of online media as a factor of prevention with the use of and aid of non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. Our research shows that it is a common practise in Cameroon and the respondents who are aware believe that online violence should be talked about even more often by non-governmental organisations and also consequently, talk about measures and have consequences comes after such practices. We can conclude by saying our research provide both practical and theoretical contributions analysing the attitude of people's perspectives and as such can aid researchers in future research.

Our hypothesis focuses on the fact that Facebook have a significant role in the formation of perceptions, attitudes towards online violence while affecting how the media online affects the public and how it often affects their change in style, mindset and general perspective. These adverse reactions causing diverse views on online media platforms like Facebook where it can create fear, anxiety, panic but it has however majorly distinctively created frustrations in women and girls. From our hypothesis, research questions and premises, our research has able to conclusively with over 100 questionnaire gottens proofs our problematics true.

Also, it has been able to give answers to whether Attitudes toward online violence depend on viewer's experience, age, level of education and marital status.

Through our empirical tested model which focused on the relationship our respondents had with Facebook and their attitude towards violence online against women and girls and from our responses we can be sure that women and girls are more likely to be in such situations where we used to be main variables like gender, age group, marital status and level of education. This went on to show that they millennials or younger generation are more likely to be in this situation comparatively to the men.

From our hypothesis, theory and our findings, we have been able to do our findings and from the answer we did our data analysis and as such, we have been able to come out with the following recommendations:

Our first objective of this study was to be able to start from the basis of analysing the forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls on Facebook and the role of non-governmental organisations. From our research we recommend that Facebook implement strict roles on

VAMG, while non-governmental organisations should have carried out more campaigns and in unison with this application raise more awareness on the different forms of GBV and blocked out different that are insulting to women and girls.

We also went onto to establish the causes of violence against women and girls. Facebook administrators should put in effective ways to unveil the identity of anonymous accounts or blocked the accounts.

We went on to examine the effects of violence against women and girls on an online media. The different effects termed from depression, anxiety, fear. The effects go from physical, mental or an emotional span and as such we recommend psychosocial support, therapy and emotional support for victims of violence online. Also, adequate training on ways and channels to report to the police and Facebook should be publicised.

Our next strategies for VAWG on Facebook, from the finding recommend that should come out with better measures to ensure that offenders of VAWG are punished, some sort of help is granted them and policy makers should make and ensure that laws around VAWG are existing and implanted to punish offenders of violence online against women and girls.

From the discussions and conclusions of our study, we were able to come with different recommendations for our study and as such from the different findings we have, we came out with the following suggestions for further research around the attitude of people online with regards to violence against women and girls on Facebook.

We suggest a further study on the attitude of women and girls online on different social media platform and the perception of physical violence displayed on the media.

Our study is focused on women and girls and even if we used some men in our respondents, further studies focusing on men on different online or media platforms. Studying the attitude and perception of study and be able to produce the data to understand their involvement in violence online in both perspectives.

We can do further research to understand the stand point of abusers and perpetrators of VAWG on social media, their behaviour and characters and ways to avoid or compact VAWG from their point of view.

Further research can be able to study different individuals and study their environment and frequency of VAWG in able to have data with regards to how often violence on social media happen in Cameroon.

Lastly, further research can be carried out to understand the different framework in terms of putting in place regulations and policies in Cameroon or better still different policies that can be implemented to prevent online violence on the different genders.

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APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This survey is done to determine the attitude and perception towards violence against women and girls on social media specifically on Facebook in Cameroon. The research is conducted for scientific purposes, aimed at improving the research topic. The research contains 15 questions we would like to get you to assist us by providing answers to our questions. Your answers and information will be treated with full confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you?

- 15-18
- 19-25
- 26-40
- More than 45

3. Level of Education

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- College
- Faculty
- Master's Degree
- PhD

4. Marital Status

- Single
- Married

- o Divorced
- o Widowed

5. Please estimate your attitude to the following statements:

1 = I completely disagree; 2 = I disagree; 3 = I cannot estimate; 4 = I mostly agree;
5 = I completely agree

- o Online violence against women is very frequent nowadays in Cameroon
- o The level of online violence against women is continuously increasing
- o Consequences of online violence against women are not significantly different from any other type of violence
- o Girls and women are more exposed to online violence than men
- o Marginalized groups are more exposed to online violence compared to non - marginalized ones
- o Men commit violence more often than women
- o Online abusers are usually violent in real life as well
- o All kinds of online violence against women should be reported to relevant institutions
- o International organizations in Cameroon have adequate mechanisms to deal with cases of online violence
- o It is necessary for Non-governmental organizations to work continuously on raising awareness about online violence against women and its consequences
- o It is necessary to work continuously on raising awareness about measures and activities which may be carried out in order to sanction online violence against women and girls.

6. Click the answer that you agree with

- o Online violence on Facebook happens very often in Cameroon
- o Online violence on Facebook against women happens very rarely in Cameroon
- o Online violence on Facebook against women happens only in individual cases in Cameroon
- o I cannot estimate

7. Have you ever been the victim of online violence on Facebook?

- o Yes, once
- o Yes, more than once

- o No, but I know victims of violence against women on Facebook
- o No, and I don't know any victim of violence against women on Facebook

8. Which types of violence have you/a person you know experienced?

- o Sexual harassment
- o Threats
- o Stalking
- o Publishing and sharing personal/nude pictures/videos without permission
- o Other

9. The perpetrator of online violence on women and girls on Facebook was

- o An unknown person
- o A friend
- o A friend from social networks
- o An acquaintance
- o A partner
- o An ex-partner
- o Other

10. How did you or the person you know react to violence online?

- o There was no reaction
- o The violence was discussed with a family and friends.
- o The violence was reported to police
- o Blocking of the perpetrator
- o An exchange with the perpetrator
- o Real life conflict
- o The violence was reported to online platform on which it happened
- o Other

11. Have different posts made by non-governmental organizations change your views on the effects of violence against women and girls on Facebook.

- o I completely agree
- o I agree
- o I completely disagree

- o I disagree
- o They can do more

12. Do non-governmental organizations, campaigns on violence against women online:

- o Pay more attention to it than it deserves
- o Pay just enough attention as deserved
- o Pay little or no attention
- o I cannot estimate

13. Do you feel the Cameroonian government is doing enough to protect the rights of girls on Facebook? yes/no

- o If yes, in which way
- o If not, why

14. How often do you see post on gender-based violence by international organizations in Cameroon

- o Daily
- o Monthly
- o Yearly
- o Never
- o Sometimes

15. Have you experienced any form of violence on Facebook?

- o Unsolicited pornographic content?
- o Have you ever been harassed online?
- o Have anyone send you unsolicited content online
- o Have you been threatened online?
- o Have you or anyone you know private information been made public without permission?
- o Have you ever been stalked on Facebook?
- o Others (please specify)

2. START OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i) What are the forms of violence that are perpetrated against women with the help of social media platforms like Facebook?
- ii) What are the causes of violence against women on social media?
- iii) What is the attitude of women and girls due to their perception of VAWG by NGOS?
- iv) What are the best strategies for handling online violence against women and girls through Facebook?

3. RESEARCH PREMISES

The research premises are a wholesome part of the questions gotten from the research questions, different hypothesis and methodologies and it extensively led us to the give a response to our research questions;

- i) There exist several forms of violence from stalking, to harassment against women and girls online.
- ii) The consistent use of social media without proper rules on harassment have been the main cause of VAWG.
- ii) That VAW on social media has several causes.
- iii) Able to learn and report violence are some ways women and girls respond to abuse.
- iv) Responding by policy implementation and lawsuits.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our study was primarily conducted in Cameroon on social media platform Facebook. The study like in our variables incorporated the two genders that is male and females Cameroonians who have Facebook accounts to access their attitude towards their experiences with regards to different propositions by non-governmental organisations like Plan International Cameroon. Their perceptions about it causes and effects of users on the platform with violence directed towards women and girls online.

Our sample survey was sent to about 125 individuals who are first and foremost Cameroonians, have a Facebook account and as also aware of the issues around violence against women and girls and our part of the community for non-governmental organisations in Cameroon

The test-retest techniques were used to validate the authenticity of our instruments of research. Due to the fact that our research included both multiple choice and answers, it was able to give us an inside on the different attitudes and perspective on different individuals and their views and takes of online violence on Facebook.

5. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Our data was collected at different levels. Firstly, from the surveys from observations and our standard social science questionnaire that were shared across the board to our different target population to get their vie In terms of the qualitative data approach, it was analysed using the ethical standard of social sciences following the set patterns and themes to ease the understanding of the finding to reach a result and recommendations. w point on online violence related to women and girls

August 2021 to January 2022.

Response Rate of Questionnaires

Day	Number of questionnaires filled	Note
1	30	About 25 questionnaires send out was not filled
2	25	
3	15	
4	10	
5	8	
6	10	
7	2	
TOTAL	100	

According to our survey it shows that over 78.8% of Cameroonians have been victims of online violence on Facebook. Are survey was segmented into the different genders and we could make out that 58.6% of women and girls have been victims of online media violence on Facebook while just 20.2% of men have been victims. Over 47.5% are said to have experience some form of gender-based violence on Facebook. Victims of online violence were in most cases those within the ages of 26 to 40 years old with a 53.8%, while it is closely followed by those within the ages of 19 to 25 years old have a percentage of 41.3%. The older population of respondents

were the least affected by online violence. Our survey shows that 35% of those in the faculties have experience some form of violence online.

Characteristics of respondents

GENDER		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Female	69	73.8%
Male	31	26.3%
AGE		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
15-18	2	2.5%
19-25	43	41.3%
26-45	53	53.8%
MORETHAN 45	2	2.5%
LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Secondary school	7	8.8%
College	34	30%
Faculty	44	42.5%
Masters	14	17.5%
PHD	1	.2%
MARITAL STATUS		
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single	69	83.8%
Married	12	12.5%
Divorced	13	13.8%
Widowed	6	6.3%

The result of our survey showed that over 13.8% of our respondents have received unsolicited pornographic content be in video or audios, circulated to them via their private messaging or found on them explore page without their opinion. A 12.5% have been sexually harassed. A 16.3% of our respondents reported to have received solicited content at least once.

Cyberbullying is one of the forms addressed and 13.8% of people have been threatened online and in them same light over22.5% have been molested privately online and lastly,13.8% have been stalked on Facebook.

FORM OF VAWG	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Unsolicited pornographic content	14	13.8%
Have you been sexually harassed	13	12.5%
Have anyone send you unsolicited content online	16	16.3%
Have you been threatened online	14	13.8%
Have you or anyone you know information be leaked online without their permission	21	22.5%
Have you ever been stalked on Facebook	13	12.5%
Other forms of violence like virtual trafficking and much more	9	8.8%

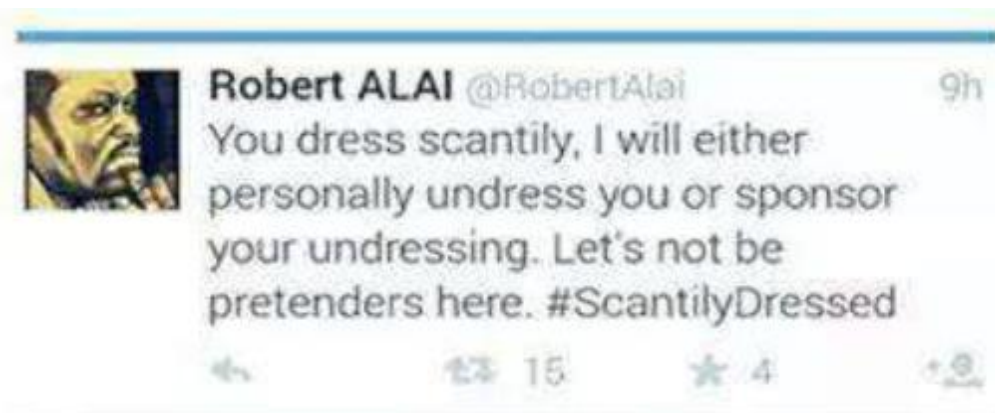
6. FACEBOOK POST ON VAWG 01

If you're rapped by a man and he immediately apologized with 10 Million cfa will you report him to the Police or accept the money?

7. FACEBOOK POST ON VAWG 02



8. FACEBOOK POST ON VAWG 03



9. PLAN INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS ON FACEBOOK

The poster features the Plan International Cameroon logo in the top left corner. The main headline reads "ORANGE THE WORLD: END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!". A large number "6" is displayed in a white circle on the left. The central text states: "HATE AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR ARE HABITS AND AS SUCH CAN BE UNLEARNED. NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS TOWARDS THE OPPOSITE SEX CAN BE UNLEARNED!". Below this, the French translation is provided: "LA HAINE ET LES COMPORTEMENTS ABUSIFS SONT DES HABITUDES ET PEUVENT AINSI ÊTRE DÉSAAPPRISES. LES COMPORTEMENTS NÉGATIFS À L'ÉGARD D'UN AUTRE GENRE PEUVENT ÊTRE DÉSAAPPRISES". At the bottom left, the hashtags "#END GBV NOW!" and "#SAYNOTOGENDERBASEDVIOLENCE" are listed. At the bottom right, it says "16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE". The background is orange with a faint graphic of a hand.

10.FACEBOOK POST ON VAWG 04

