The nexus between harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence, a case study

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ABSTRACT

Globally, alcohol use is an important public health concern which often contributes to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Interfacing of alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas has received little empirical attention and interventions for enlightening the crisis of IPV and related social ills. This paper explored the nexus between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas. The study employed a qualitative, exploratory multiple case study design. Purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques were employed. The study was cleared ethically by the registered body at the university. Data was analysed thematically. This study found that the majority of the cases showed a linkage between intimate partner violence and substance abuse incidents. It can be concluded that the availability and affordability of alcohol play a role in IPV. Awareness campaigns about the linkage between substance abuse and IPV should be implemented.

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Introduction

Millions of people worldwide are victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which violates fundamental human rights, has major physical and mental health repercussions, destroys relationships, and affects children (Patra, Prakash, Patra & Khanna, 2018, p.494). IPV is abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship (Breiding, Bastile, Smith, Black & Mahedra, 2015,p.1). Both current and former spouses as well as romantic partners are considered intimate partners. The frequency and severity of IPV are both variables (Breiding et al, 2015,p.1). It might range from a single violent incident that might have long-lasting effects to repeated, severe incidents that endure for years. IPV can manifest in a form of physical violence when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force. Moreover, sexual violence is forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act, sexual touching, or a non-physical sexual event (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent (Breiding et al, 2015,p.1). Another form of IPV is stalking which is a pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a partner that causes fear or concern for one’s safety or the safety of someone close to the victim (Breiding et al, 2015,p.1). In addition, Breiding et al (2015,p.1) also describe psychological aggression as the use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm a partner mentally or emotionally and/or to exert control over a partner.

This paper explores the nexus between IPV and harmful alcohol use, therefore, it is important to also pronounce what is meant by harmful alcohol use, in addition to the description of IPV. It is noteworthy to outline that the harmful use of alcohol causes an estimated 2.5 million deaths every year, of which a significant proportion occur in the young. Alcohol use is the third leading risk factor for poor health globally (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2018, p.3). Harmful alcohol use predominantly encompasses drinking that causes detrimental health and social consequences for the drinker, the people around the drinker and society at large, as well as the patterns of drinking that are associated with increased risk of adverse health outcomes (WHO,2018). It is important to note that to a certain extent, there is a causal relationship between IPV and harmful alcohol use, hence this paper.

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Exploring the nexus of IPV and harmful alcohol use is important to discuss as the latter is exacerbated by several psychosocial pathologies, including amongst others harmful alcohol use. Globally, alcohol use is an important public health concern which often contributes to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV/F) and Femicide and Gender Based Violence (GBV). Researchers and activists have indicated the contribution of harmful substance and alcohol use conditions to the severity and circumstances of intimate partner violence (Du Plessis, 2019; Brodie, 2020 & Boonzaier, 2022). There has been much debate over alcohol use and intimate partner violence on whether it is truly causal. The researchers argue that to date, there has been limited literature evidence about whether interventions to prevent extremely harmful alcohol use and treat mental health issues have an impact on intimate partner violence outcomes. However, harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence are not the same, but it can be argued that are closely related. Moreover, scholars such as Cafferky, Mendez, Anderson, and Stith (2018); Yu et al (2019) and Grigorian et al (2020) came into agreement that alcohol use is a prevalent and well-recognised risk factor for intimate partner violence.

Data for this study was collected from ten (10) participants through semi-structured interviews, who were identified through purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques due to difficulties of access to the participants.

Continently, there is substantial evidence that harmful alcohol use upsurges the incidence of perpetration of intimate partner violence, even though many men drink without using violence against women (Yalch, Levendosky, 2018; Lee, Sacco, & Bright, 2021). A study conducted by Machisa, Christofides, and Jewkes (2017) on a meta-analysis and a systematic literature review found that harmful alcohol use is strongly associated with the recent perpetration of intimate partner violence by men. The researchers are of the view that there is a growing and large empirical literature that reveals a vigorous relationship between alcohol use and the incidences of intimate partner violence. Moreover, In South Africa, intimate partner violence and femicide is now documented as broad, destructive, scarring, and all-to-common societal problem (Lee, Sacco, & Bright, 2021). The problem is no longer unreservedly tolerated or ignored, IPV/F has become the focus of significant attention and resourceful from both Government and Non-governmental organizations. The purpose of this study was to explore the nexus between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas.

The nexus between harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence has been studied in other fields such as public health and criminological literature. At least a few explanations have been anticipated to explain the relationship between intimate partner violence and harmful alcohol use: (i) psychopharmacological, meaning that the alcoholic or intoxicating effects of harmful alcohol use cause people to be vicious to gain materials or possessions to support their harmful alcohol use; (ii) the relationship is contributing, in that the harmful alcohol use causes violence among partners; (iii) the relationship is mutual and the arrow between harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence may point in both or either directions (iv) the relationship is forged, as problem behaviours gather as part of a more general problem behaviour syndrome in intimate partner violence. Yalch and Levendosky (2018), argue that harmful alcohol use is a key contributor to the foremost causes of death among intimate partners. The researchers contend that physical aggression and harmful alcohol use are linked to unintended injuries and homicide which are some of the causes leading to death among intimate partners.

The effects of harmful alcohol use, intimate partner violence, and murder of women are far-reaching. Research shows that both harmful and dangerous alcohol use and intimate partner violence are internationally recognized as significant public health problems that require urgent attention (Machisa et al, 2017; Yalch & Levendosky, 2018). Moreover, both national and international health organizations play an important role in advocating policies that address the link between harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence while promoting prevention initiatives that improve public health (Lee, Sacco, & Bright, 2021). The World Health Organization (2020) initiates and conducts research to identify effective preventive interventions, encourages action by the Member States for successful interventions, and promotes harmful and harmful alcohol use and intimate partners.

The collected qualitative data was collected from ten (10) participants through semi-structured interviews, who were identified through purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques due to difficulties of access to the participants. The data was analysed thematically using thematic analysis. This technique was used to find, analyse, and report patterns in a data set, enabling descriptive arrangement of the data in a way that makes it easier to understand different parts of the data.

The discussed introduction presented the general area of this study, by introducing the defining the problem of IPV and harmful alcohol use, particularly in under-resourced communities. The introduction also covered the importance of exploring the nexus of IPV and harmful alcohol use. The data collection process and the methodological process were also outlined. In addition, the study also described the objective of the study which was to explore the nexus between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas.

Moreover, the following sections are discussed. Firstly, the reviewed relevant existing literature studies on this topic were also reviewed, focusing on the nexus between IPV and harmful alcohol use, its effects, and its correlation. Furthermore, critical arguments of literature at a local level were also reviewed. This was done to indicate specific gaps, inconsistencies, and controversies in the reviewed literature. Secondly, the theory of planned behaviour is also discussed as an underpinning theoretical framework, this was done to indicate how the theory offers a thorough analysis of behavioural changes about crucial aspects and it provides a comprehensive consideration of why certain things occur as they do. Thirdly, the adopted methodology comprising a research paradigm and approach, research design, sampling procedures, data collection methods and data analysis is discussed. The paper also
discusses the Findings of the study. Ultimately, the overall conclusion of the study is also described, followed by the limitations of the study.

**Literature Review**

IPV is a serious social and public health problem. The World Health Organisation (2021) reports that nearly one in three women report IPV in their lifetime and as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner. As the fulcrum of this paper, the nexus between alcohol use and IPV has been a contentious issue, especially amongst proponents of alcohol use (alcohol industry professionals) and public health professionals. Even though it is acknowledged that harmful alcohol use is a contributing factor to both (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV), its significance is still debatable. Harmful alcohol use is linked to a twofold increased risk of IPV perpetration by men and a similar increase in the risk of IPV victimization among women (Ramsoomar, Gibbs, Chirwa, Dunkle, & Jewkes, 2021,p.1). Interestingly, Yalch, Christodoulou, Rotheram-Borus and Tomlinson (2022, p.1) opine that women drink in the aftermath of IPV to cope with distress related to the violence they experienced. Other research suggests that higher levels of alcohol consumption among one or both partners in a relationship increases the likelihood of violence (WHO, 2017). It is important to note that IPV is a common traumatic stressor for women worldwide, especially for women living in low-and-middle-income countries. It is incontrovertible that one of the most common correlates of IPV victimization is alcohol use.

In South Africa, a country with high levels of harmful alcohol use (WHO,2018), the correlation between IPV and alcohol use is particularly widespread. Several research studies (Roman & Frantz, 2013; Tenkorang, Asamoah-Boaheng & Owusu, 2020) report that just like the global trends South Africa has as many as a third of women who experience physical violence from their intimate partners in their lifetime. In one South African longitudinal study by Yalch et al (2022), it was found that in fact, IPV victimization drives alcohol use rather than the other way around (Yalch et al, 2022, p.1). This supports the assertion that women drink alcohol as a way of coping with the IPV they experienced (Khantzian, 1999). However, these results were disputed by Ramsoomar et al (2022, p.2) who moot that harmful alcohol use is a contributing factor to intimate partner violence (Ramsoomar et al, 2022, p.1).

To add more to the contention, research from low-and-middle-income countries has not always found consistent associations between alcohol use and IPV. This is supported by the study by Abramsky, Watts, Garcia-Moreno, Devries, Kiss, Ellsberg and Heise (2011) which found that the association between women’s past-year’s IPV experience and their male partner’s alcohol use was inconsistent. only three of the nine urban and rural settings included in a six-country study on men's aggression in Asia and the Pacific showed a relationship between lifetime IPV perpetration and harmful alcohol addiction. However, in four settings in the pooled sample, women’s reports of their partner’s alcohol use were associated with them having a higher risk of past year IPV experience. Community-based research in South Africa with men on perpetration found that they used drugs in the past years but not alcohol use (Abramsky, 2011).

Studying the correlation or nexus between IPV and alcohol use has its limitations and constraints. Mostly because many of the studies conducted are either systematic, scoping reviews, or cross-sectional studies. Hence this paper undertook empirical research to understand the pragmatic correlation between harmful alcohol use and IPV. Some studies, albeit limited, exist which undertook empirical research on the nexus between alcohol use and IPV. For example, an Australian study by Wilson, Graham and Taft (2017) explored the dynamics of harmful alcohol use and IPV from the perspectives of women with lived experience of alcohol-related IPV. Wilson et al (2017, p.116) found that the majority of women in the study experienced physical, emotional and economic abuse from their partners who abused alcohol. Moreover, the study (Wilson et al, 2017, p.118) found that the participants frequently spoke of a cycle of growing hostility surrounding their partner's drinking, which was divided into safe and risky stages. It was revealed that the initial level of alcohol use was not a problem, but rather severe alcohol use (harmful alcohol use) was a problem (Wilson et al, 2017, p.118). This indicates that, if people were to drink alcohol responsibly there wouldn’t be high rates of IPV cases. This is shared by the same study by Wilson et al (2017, p.119) which averred that “the worst phase of the cycle occurred when a drunk partner displayed increased, "uncontrollable," physical or verbal violence.
As the contention on whether harmful alcohol use contributes to IPV continues, there has been limited evidence about whether interventions to prevent harmful alcohol use and treat common mental health problems have an impact on IPV outcomes (Ramsoomar, Gibbs, & Machisa, 2019, p.2). In all the debates regarding the causal relationship between alcohol use and IPV, the most important element that most researchers agree on is that harmful alcohol use negatively affects psychological functioning and lowers inhibitions. It might cause more conflict, which might foster the development of violent conflict. When couples consume excessive amounts of alcohol together, this escalation may be exacerbated (Ramsoomar et al, 2019). Another Conclusion based on the causal relationship between alcohol use and IPV is that there is evidence that women with alcohol use conditions are more likely to experience IPV and women who are victims of IPV tend to have harmful alcohol use patterns (Ramsoomar et al, 2019; Wilson et al, 2017).

Theoretical framework

The Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB) is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behaviour. The theory maintains that three core components, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, together shape an individual's behavioural intentions (Abbasi et al, 2021). Therefore, a tenet of TPB is that behavioural intention is the most proximal determinant of human social behaviour.

Applying this theory to real-life practical situations is beneficial since theories offer a thorough analysis of behavioural changes about crucial aspects and it provides a comprehensive consideration of why certain things occur as they do. For example, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) can be used as a practical framework to understand important factors of the relationship between harmful alcohol use and IPV, and most importantly the behavioural control or lack thereof especially after a person is under the influence of

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**Figure 1:** A visual presentation depicting the cycle of alcohol-related intimate partner violence; *Source:* Wilson, Graham & Taft, 2017, p.120).

**Figure 2:** A visual presentation depicting the theory of planned behaviour; *Source:* Worthington, 2021.
alcohol. The Theory of Planned Behaviour asserts that an individual’s intentions and sense of behavioural control directly influence their behaviour (Worthington, 2021). When predicting intents, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control may not necessarily predict intentions equally. Sometimes, an individual’s intentions may be determined largely by attitudes, and subjective norms may have little or no influence (Worthington, 2021). Other times, an individual’s intentions may be determined largely by subjective norms, and attitudes may have little or no influence.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that intentions lead to behaviour; however, intentions do not always guarantee behaviour. In the context of this paper, for example, someone might intend to avoid alcohol on a weekend but not follow through. This means that the strength of the link between intentions and behaviour is influenced by several factors including factors such as action, target, context, and time. Therefore, a person might intend to avoid alcohol use, however, over time, the environment the person finds themselves in, or triggers from other people might lead to the person drinking alcohol.

In essence, the Theory of Planned Behaviour focuses on rational reasoning and excludes the role of emotional and subconscious influences (Ramsoomar et al, 2019). This means that a person might not have intended to be violent against their partner but due to lowered cognitive functioning, the person might be violent due to intoxication and other factors such as the passage of time, environmental triggers, or the context in which the person finds. This theory best explains the relationship between harmful alcohol use and IPV.

Furthermore, it is often argued that the propensity for violent behaviours amongst those with harmful alcohol use becomes normative behaviour, hence the perpetrators struggle to cease their violent behaviour. This is corroborated by Sniehotta, Presseau, and Araújo-Soares (2014), while explaining the theory of planned behaviour, who wrote that past behaviour could have a significant influence on future behaviour, specifically when the past behaviour is habitual or routine. According to the theory of planned behaviour, the basic explanation of repeated perpetrators of IPV is that habitual violent behaviour is oftentimes automatic instead of fully intentional and thus can influence intentions. As the behaviour becomes more habitual it becomes very difficult to stop violating people.

Perpetrators of IPV often lack behavioural control, hence even though they know that IPV is a punishable offence, however, due to lower inhibitions and lack of behavioural control they find themselves abusing their partners (Worthington, 2021). According to the theory of planned behaviour, an individual’s perceived behavioural control for a given behaviour is a joint function of their assessment of the likelihood or frequency that a specific control factor will occur and the potential for the control factor to impede or facilitate the behaviour (Worthington, 2021). It can be concluded that the theory of Planned Behaviour is better placed to understand the causal relationship between harmful alcohol use and IPV. Changing an individual’s perceived behavioural control can be accomplished in many ways. Social Behaviour Change (SBC) is one of the best interventions to ameliorate the high rate of IPV as explained by the theory of planned behaviour.

Research paradigm and approach

Since researchers were interested in gaining in-depth data on the nexus between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas, they chose an interpretive paradigm. In support of this position, Thomas, and Hodges (2010, p.6) found that qualitative researchers prefer using the interpretative paradigm because it ‘portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing. Similarly, Neuman (2006) and Thanh and Thanh (2015) averred that researchers using the interpretative paradigm use observations and interviews for data collection. To that end, the researchers used qualitative data collection methods, that is, individual semi-structured interviews to make sense of the world using meaning that participants give to the ramification of alcohol use and IPV through participants’ lenses. On the same wavelength, Willis (2007, p.90) postulated that ‘interpretivists tend to favour qualitative methods such as case studies and ethnography. Given the nature of this study, the researchers chose an interpretative paradigm as they wanted to adopt a case study as the research design to guide the study.

Research design

For the study, the case study design is an appropriate design that was used to gain contextual and in-depth information about the nexus of alcohol and IPV. Beverland and Lindgreen (2010, p.57) define a case study as [A]n exploration of a ‘bounded system’ [bounded by time and place] or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. Moreover, Simons (2009) aver that case study design examines the experiences of individuals with an aim to understand how individuals put, interpret, and give meaning to their situations.

Therefore, it could be concluded that deduced that case study design is used to explore the in-depth phenomenon in its context, using the perspective lens.

Exploratory multiple case study design

Considering that the authors adopted a qualitative approach to the study, an exploratory multiple-case study design was selected. Yin (2014) explains exploratory case study design as a design that attempts to answer the question of ‘what’ in research. According to De Massis and Kotlar (2014, p.16), an exploratory case study design ‘should be used when the aim is to understand how a phenomenon takes place. In the context of the study, the researchers were interested in unpacking the nexus of alcohol and IPV.
Population and sampling

In the context of this study, the researchers targeted victims of IPV from the under-resourced and rural areas in Mpumalanga Province. The area was chosen because researchers had a piece of prior knowledge about the extent of the challenges besetting the community. The researchers used the purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques because the population is hard to access and has special characteristics. According to Kumar (2018), purposive sampling is a technique wherein the researcher chooses participants because of the qualities that they possess and because they will be able to meet the researcher’s aim. The researchers purposively, snowballing and conveniently selected victims of IPV. Greeff (2015) posits that there should be a fair selection of participants using inclusion and exclusion criteria depending on the study objective. As such, the pre-selection criterion was that participants had to be victims of IPV. The study was qualitative in nature and its essence was about the depth and richness of the information on the nexus of alcohol use and IPV. Marshall et al (2013) assert that in a qualitative study, there is a lack of recognition of sampling size as it is based entirely on the concept of saturation. Therefore, data were collected until saturation.

Data collection methods

For any empirical research to be completed, data need to be collected. There are various methods to collect data depending on the approach and design of the study. Gill et al (2008) aver that there are a variety of methods of data collection, which include observations, textual or visual analysis (from books or videos) and interviews (individual or group). In addition, Grix (2010) asserts that data collection is the process through which empirical data are collected via several different data sources. In this study, the researchers used individual semi-structured interviews to collect data from the victims of IPV.

Data collection and analysis procedures

The researcher conducted individual interviews with the victims of IPV for a period of two weeks. Data collected from different participants are unorganised and meaningless. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships amongst categories of data, building on grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, as cited in De Vos et al, 2011). In this study, the researchers used thematic content analysis (TCA) to analyse the data. According to O’Leary (2014), TCA is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in (rich) detail. The researchers chose TCA because of its ability and potential to further interpret and highlight emerging themes and aspects about the victims of IPV. Braun and Clarke (2006) revealed that when using thematic analysis, the researcher must also indicate if he or she chooses deductive or inductive thematic analysis. In the context of this study, the researchers followed inductive TCA in data analysis as the method allowed them to develop themes from the emerging research findings.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that participants’ ages ranged from 26 to 49 years, and the participants were from different social, economic, and educational backgrounds. Eight (8) participants were Xitsonga speaking and two (2) were IsiSwati speaking. Out of ten (10), three (3) were professionals and seven (7) were domestic workers.

Harmful alcohol use

The study found drinking alcohol that becomes dangerous is given the clinical conclusion of alcohol use disorder. Harmful alcohol use can harm people other than the drinker and does have negative consequences in society (Cafferkey, Mendez, Anderson, & Stith, 2018). Based on the findings of this study it could be noted that most participants have experienced harmful alcohol use in their lifetime. Research shows that harmful alcohol use is causally related to more than 65 different medical conditions and 5% of the global burden of disease is attributed to alcohol which accounts for about as considerable disability and death globally (Ramsoomar, Gibbs, & Machisa, 2019; Lee, Sacco, & Bright, 2021). Moreover, Monckton (2020) posits that harmful alcohol use has a major economic and social impact. Most participants reiterated having witnessed sexual and physical violence, and the murder of a close friend or family member because of harmful alcohol use. The researchers argue that such exposure to traumatic events may result in harmful alcohol use being frequently used as a response and coping mechanism. For example, exposure to traumatic events may be associated with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The finding was expressed as follows:

**Participant 2:** I know that in almost every family, there is that one person who is a heavy drinker and as a result, there is a story to tell aftermath, in my experience. I have seen how alcohol abuse affects many people... I live with the experience of my niece being killed by a drunkard today and that experience has stayed with me to date, when you ask for questions, we are told he was drunk and as a result, he ended up killing my niece. It is a painful reality that I live with almost every day.

**Participant 5:** I can tell you a sad story of my harmful alcohol use which caused me and everyone around me an intense amount of pain. I would disappear for days cause of alcohol which caused too much stress and pain to my family and my fiancée. And when people ask me why I drink so heavily, I will reply by saying it is because I am sad...I can tell you that most of the fights I had with my wife were from the moment I will come home very drunk and start fighting everyone.
The impact of harmful alcohol use and violent behaviour is complex. A study conducted by Wilson, Graham, and Taft, (2017) found that violent behaviour and harmful alcohol use are associated. Consulted literature shows that both harmful and dangerous alcohol use and intimate partner violence are internationally recognized as significant public health problems that require urgent attention (Kabashi et al, 2019; Flentje et al, 2020 & Johansson et al, 2021). Moreover, a similar finding by Machisa, (2019) posits that the initial level of alcohol use is not a problem, but rather harmful alcohol use is a problem. Therefore, the researchers conclude that if people drink alcohol responsibly, we will have low rates of IPV cases.

**Intimate Partner Violence**

Most explanations suggest that there is a link between harmful alcohol use and intimate partner violence. The study found that harmful alcohol use is commonly involved in a higher percentage of attacks between partners. Research shows that Intimate Partner Violence and harmful alcohol use is the leading cause of femicide and homelessness which precipitates and exacerbates poor health conditions (Ramsoomar, Gibbs, & Machisa, 2019; Lee, Sacco, & Bright, 2021). This implies that the fact that two partners live together creates more opportunities for assaults which may be caused by harmful alcohol use. This study supports the idea that IPV is more likely when a partner is alcohol dependent (harmful alcohol use) or when a partner drinks heavily. Nonetheless, a study conducted by Robinson, Ravi, and Voth Schrag (2021) indicates that given the high occurrence of intimate partner violence and its negative consequences for health and society, implementing operative preventive and response strategies is a priority for public health globally.

The finding was expressed as follows:

**Participant 4:** I felt like whenever he is drunk, he was getting joy of seeing me suffering... to a point I thought it is ok to be sad, it is ok to suffer, it is ok to be angry, but I was physically assaulted by my partner and mostly this will occur when he is heavily drunk.

**Participant 8:** I didn’t talk much about my relationship challenges because it is regarded as secret culturally, you’re not allowed to talk bad things about your relationship

...we both abused alcohol to a point that we will fight every time we are drunk, and it went on to a point I realised that this is abusive.

**Femicide**

The researcher’s understanding of femicide is limited, we know that a large number of femicides are of women in abusive relationships and are committed mostly by their current or former spouses. The World Health Organization (2020:1) defines femicide as “generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls”. In the context of the study, the violent acts that are mainly perpetrated by male counterparts include among others, emotional, physical, economic, and psychological violence. The study found that femicide is habitually perpetrated by men. Literature indicates that more than 35% of murders of women are reported to be committed by an intimate partner globally (Miller & McCaw, 2019; Cotter, 2021 & Gosangi et al, 2021). However, it is not disputed that femicide is one of the most terrible acts that are the main cause of premature deaths of girls and women who experience GBV in South Africa.

The study found that the violation of women’s human rights often leads to a regrettable number of fatalities that victims succumb to daily. Literature searches show that nothing has been done to critically examine the right to life for women in light of the horrendous femicide atrocities committed in South Africa without regard for women's human rights (Yalch & Levendosky, 2018, Ramsoomar, Gibbs, Machisa, 2019 & Boonzaier, 2022). Furthermore, a study conducted by Mathebula (2021) postulates that campaigns against lethal and brutal violence perpetrated against women have been increasingly gaining traction over the past five decades. Several studies concur that femicide is a matter of fundamental public health and human liberties, which requires collaborative efforts from different societal stakeholders to ultimately eradicate or mitigate it (Weil, 2016; Monckton, 2020; Dawson, & Carrigan, 2021). Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that homicide fails women who get murdered by their spouses daily.

**Conclusions**

A thorough research of the literature that the authors conducted to develop the content of this paper yielded intriguing and original findings on the topic of intimate partner violence and femicide. Femicide is a phenomenon of gender-based violence in South Africa that is sustained by a web of interconnected variables. It is a deadly and heinous crime against women and girls. There is a causal relationship between harmful alcohol use and IPV. Victims of IPV tend to resort to harmful alcohol use to cope with their distress and the compounding effects of IPV. Several men become violent around their partners while under the influence of alcohol use, especially those drinking alcohol irresponsibly. It cannot be disputed that there is a relationship between harmful alcohol use and IPV.

Thus, the following recommendations are presented in this study:

i. There is a need for further studies to study how IPV is a psychosocial driver of harmful alcohol use.
ii. There is also a need for further studies studying the prevalence of IPV in rural areas with high alcohol use.
iii. Evidence-based practices and interventions need to be developed to deal with harmful alcohol use.
iv. Much needs to be done at the policy level to deal with IPV perpetrators.
Limitations of the study

This paper has increased our knowledge of the impact between alcohol use and intimate partner violence. This paper explored the nexus between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in under-resourced and rural areas, therefore, generalising findings of this paper which was qualitative in nature with few people is a limitation because of the specific geographic location of this kind of study. Therefore, carefulness should be taken not to generalise the findings of this study to the general population.

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