

Collaborative Knowledge Building and Social Capital in Gender-Based Violence, Northern Iraq

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Abstract: As the number of COVID-19 continue to increase exponentially in an alarming rate, so as the number increase in Gender-based Violence (GBV). Different authorities and human right groups have making effort to tackle the increase in GBV but still more need to be done. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence. To analyse this issue, the study developed a model with 3 constructs; social capital, Crisis preparedness and collaborative knowledge building. The data generated from the survey was analysed using statistical tools in SPSS and model fitness was tested based on reliability and validity. The study's findings indicate that 69% of the respondents believe that women are at risk of increase in domestic gender-based violence due to the pandemic. Respondent's perceptions on collaborative knowledge building and social capital varies significantly. The hypothesis testing has shown that all the hypothesis is supported due to attainment of path coefficient greater than 0.1, t-value of greater than 1.96 and level of significance of above 0.05.

Keywords: Gender based Violence (GBV), Social Capital, Collaborative knowledge building, crisis, crisis preparedness

1. Introduction

The Covid 19 pandemic has led to lockdown of countries and loss of jobs worldwide. This has increased tensions in households and the reported cases of gender-based violence have also increased since the corona virus pandemic started. According to Ismael and Sagsan (2020), despite this organizations have employed creative solutions in order to operate amidst the pandemic. They also pointed out that knowledge management application can be seen in various ways in survival during the pandemic. Knowledge is key to decision making as well as improving competencies (Tehrani et al 2018). One of the approaches that is being used is that of increasing collaborative efforts as the crisis had prompted different parties to come together and find solutions. Amidst crisis, it is fundamental that knowledge be created, shared and applied and there needs to be processes in place to ensure this. Social capital is also being utilized with emphasis on social relationships to provide a wealth of knowledge and encourage collaborations. According to Boyd and Martin (2020) a sense of community goes a long way in reducing the impact of pandemics.

The Cordaid organization is one of the organizations that set up a Context Matters initiative in a bid to decrease the gender-based violence incidences in Northern Iraq. This initiative thrives on collaborative efforts between different parties like the organization employees, religious leaders, the police force and the community at large to facilitate knowledge sharing and transfer between these parties. In addition, solving problems of gender-based violence also require much social capital as it entails relationship building, a solid networking system, instilling feelings of trust and safety to ensure the flow of communication. According to Ismael,G.Y.(2021), This study aims to determine the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence. It will explore the effectiveness of the system of the current set up and how knowledge sharing and transfer is being facilitated and the tools employed and determine any existing challenges and how they can be solved. The COVID 19 pandemic has worsened an already bad situation and with the lockdowns and restrictions in place it would be most valuable to determine how knowledge building and social capital can be employed under a crisis. The study has the potential of improving policies, shedding light on any weaknesses and strengths of the systems; and can add new literature to the current knowledge repositories and enhance learning. This knowledge can be used to improve crisis preparedness as well as for evaluation of any more crisis that may occur.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to determine the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence.

The study objectives are as follows;

- To evaluate the impact of collaborative knowledge building on gender-based violence in a crisis.
- To evaluate the effect of collaborative knowledge building on social capital

- To recommend governmental and non-governmental agencies on the impact of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence

1.2 Statement of Problem

There have been a few studies regarding gender-based violence. However, even fewer have dealt with the relationship between collaborative knowledge building and social capital in Northern Iraq. The corona virus pandemic is a recent development and a crisis of a global scale; no other study of this nature has yet been conducted in Northern Iraq exploring the subject under the COVID crisis hence this is a novel study capable of shedding light on collaborative knowledge building in times of crisis. This therefore is the knowledge gap that the researcher seeks to fill and it has prompted a few questions mentioned below. Are there any tools that are being employed to reduce gender violence during the pandemic and are they effective? What is the role of collaborative knowledge building in dealing with gender violence? What is the role of social capital in gender violence under a crisis? Is there correlation between collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender violence under a pandemic crisis? The model below illustrates clearly these questions and forms the basis of the hypotheses that are represented thereafter.

1.3 Significance of the Study

As the number of COVID-19 cases continue to surge exponentially in shocking rate, so as the increase in GBV across the world. This is attributed to the curfews, lockdowns or confinement, restriction of movements and quarantines. However, different authorities and groups such as the government, police, justice department, women right activists, civil society groups etc have been making effort to counter GBV around the globe and states (Mittal and Singh, 2020). Despite their effort, more is needed to be done especially in underdeveloped countries such as Iraq with slow crime intervention, inadequate social amenities, lack of domestic violence helplines, policies and shelters. Even before COVID-19 pandemic, domestic GBV was already one of the biggest threats to humanity and human right violations. The increase in GBV must tackle with urgent response by creating measures which embedded social capital in the form of economic support (i.e., stimulus package) (Johnson et al., 2020). Other measures include collaborative knowledge sharing among agencies, communities and groups in creating awareness and how to deal with GBV effectively. Thus, this study is to determine the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter discuss about the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence. It offers a theoretical background on each construct separately by conceptualizing collaborative knowledge building, social capital and gender-based violence.

2.1 Collaborative knowledge building

Sorensen et al (2019) pointed out that collaborative efforts improve crisis preparedness. This notion was also supported by Norhstedt et al (2018) who pointed out that where there is effective collaboration amongst organizations, a community can easily prepare and recover from crises. The scholars also explained that in dealing with crises there are several aspects of utmost importance which include the leadership, the costs, urgency of the matter, the magnitude of the crises and the level of uncertainty involved. Prytz et al (2015) pointed out that in a crisis the decision-making process is done at a much faster rate and usually there is lack of adequate information to go by. This is also worsened by bureaucratic tendencies and in cases like these collaborative efforts may prove to be a cause for conflict as they try to cut through the usual routine (Magnussen et al 2018). Hayton (2005) pointed out that there is a shift in the creation of knowledge and more organizations are harnessing external collaborations and communities of practice in building their knowledge.

Stahl (2000) developed a model for collaborative knowledge building which shows the interactions in a social context that provides learning for organizations. Examination of the model above reveals that collaborative knowledge building is a social process. They reflect that social interactions are a vital tool in the process of knowledge building as they are used for argumentation and rationale where new insights can be gained. Aspects like shared understanding reveal aspects that are also forged as a result of social capital. According to Stahl (2000) knowledge is a result of social interaction. They explained that a person has their own understandings and preconceived notions and it is through interactions with others that they gain new knowledge. They explained that knowledge stems from the individual experiences, sense of rationality, cultural traditions and discussion.

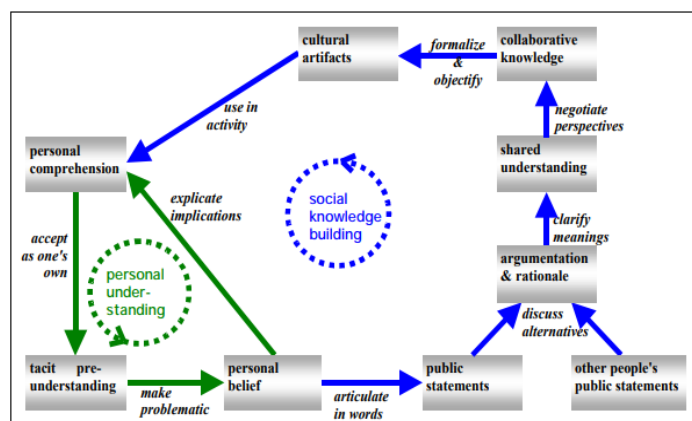


Figure 2.1: Model for collaborative social building (Stahl, 2000)

2.2 Social capital in a crisis

Liu et al (2016) defined social capital as the total value of an organization's relationships that stems from all its social networks and provides connection between the organization and the society. According to Nafei (2016) proactiveness allows the organization to utilize its physical and intellectual capabilities for application of knowledge to ensure survival in a turbulent environment. Several authors point out that intellectual capital is one of the key resources that foster proactiveness in a crisis (Liu et al 2016, Wu (2021), Rennenkampf (2017), Tu (2020). They explained that organizations are social beings and through social capital they are able to forge relationships that allow them to obtain and share tacit and explicit knowledge as well as enhance their learning process.

According to Helliwell et al (2014), better social capital results in better ability and effectiveness in dealing with crises. Many scholars pointed out that social capital improves the ability of individuals and communities to prepare, respond and recover from crises (Klineberg 2003), Aldrich 2012, Helliwell et al 2014, Hikichi et al (2017), Wu (2021). Kawachi et al (2008) pointed out that social capital can be on individual and group level. They explained that the groups enhance crisis preparedness through collective socialization. At individual level they explained that this could be anyone from a vulnerable individual to a powerful leader but at some point, they all need to get to resources through socializing. A community with social cohesion is able to weather the effects of a crisis better and to prepare for it. Koh (2008) also supported this and added that social capital supported disaster preparedness through spread of information within social channels, mobilization of volunteers, strengthening the relationship and trust between the community and officials. Makridisid and Wu (2021) pointed out that the most essential aspect in social capital that helps in crises is the trust and social relationships. They explained that these two fuels the concern for one another and lead to unity towards a specific purpose.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Grimsdottir and Edvardson (2018) and Jafaridehkordi et al contended that social capital is a corporate asset that can yield value and strengthen the organization's performance. Khalid et al (2020) explained that the COVID 19 pandemic led to growth in social networking and collaborations which have led to a new knowledge repository being formed. Social media provided a platform where a wealth of information was created, shared and encouraged collaborative interactions in times of crisis (Kim 2020, La et al, 2020). Magnussen et al (2018) conducted a study based on collaboration and crisis management in the maritime industry in Norway. The study used a mixed method approach employing observations, interviews and surveys. The sample consisted of emergency personnel. The study revealed that collaboration was positively associated with learning and that it prompted work with regards to the crisis. Al-Omouh et al (2020) examined social capital and collaborative knowledge creation of e businesses in response to the COVID 19 pandemic in Spain. The study was based on essential services during the pandemic and obtained data from managers through a survey. The study revealed that collaborative knowledge creation and social capital provided management with the necessary tools to respond to crises as well as to manage the pressure that are associated with crises especially the corona virus pandemic; through enhancing organizational agility. On the other hand, Khaled et al (2020) conducted a study exploring the effect of sense of community in collaborative knowledge creation with regards to the COVID 19 pandemic. The study showed that sense of community triggers the need for collaborative knowledge creation. The scholars also pointed out that social media was a powerful tool in enhancing social capital and knowledge

amidst a pandemic. It provided the public as well as organizations with a platform where ideas, problems, experiences, solutions and opinions could be shared.

3. Methodology

The methodology section focuses on the research approach based on postpositivism research philosophy, deductive research approach based on qualitative and quantitative methods. The chapter also presents questionnaire or survey developments, sampling method, research participants and research model and tools.

3.1 Research Design

According to Saunders, research design addressed the step-by-step component on how the researcher plan to carryout the research work. It is also regarded as path taking to resolve the research questions (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005). The step-by-step components includes theoretical background, literature review, hypothesis development, collection of data, sampling technique and mode of data analysis. Thus, the basic approach for collection of data includes quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (categorical). Thus, in this study both methods were explored. In the case of qualitative data, literature review is conducted to compiled data through journals, reports, books and other online sources. These sources were reviewed to obtain themes, expert and professional's perceptions, suggestions and opinions. While questionnaire is designed to collect primary source of data from respondents in Bagdad Iraq. As a result of the current pandemic, the questionnaires were distributed through emails and social media platforms.

3.2 Survey Development and Research Respondents

The gender-based domestic violence questionnaire items were adopted from the study conducted by Kirkuk et al., 2020 which contain 4 items. Collaborative knowledge building was adopted from study reported by Nonka & Takechi, (1995); Chen et al., 2016; Faccin & Balesterin, (2018) and Muukkomen et al., 2019 which contain 8 items. While social capital was adopted from study reported by both Hayton (2005) and Liu et al., 2016 which contain 5 items. The study targeted 200 people working in different sectors Bagdad which include Accounting and Finance, Government agencies, Human right agencies, Hospitality and Tourism sector, Healthcare, Food and agriculture etc.

3.3 Research Model

As shown in figure 3.1. The structural equation model (SEM) comprises of 3 constructs which include social capital, Crisis preparedness: GBV and collaborative knowledge building (which include knowledge transfer and sharing). According to the model, it proposed that there is direct effect between social capital and collaborative knowledge building in preparedness of GBV in responding to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the model also postulates the direct effect of collaborative knowledge building on preparedness of GBV.

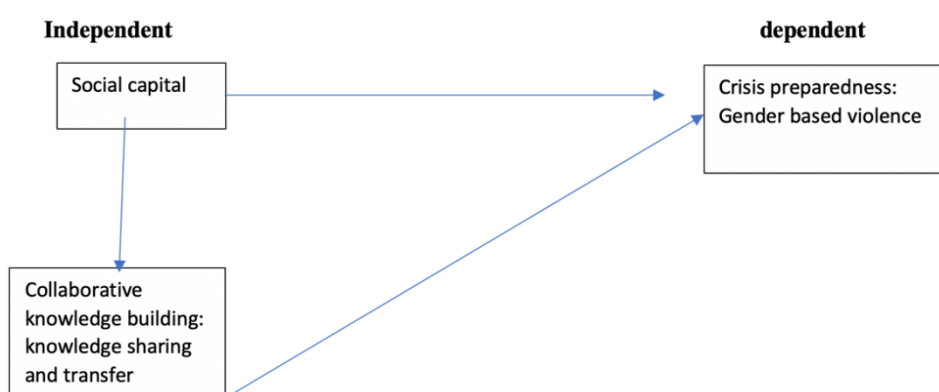


Figure 3.1: The Study's Model

3.4 Hypothesis

After conceptualization of the research constructs, the following hypothesis are outlined below:

H1 collaborative knowledge building has an impact on gender-based violence in a crisis

H2 collaborative knowledge building has an impact on social capital

H3 social capital has an impact on crisis preparedness in gender-based violence

3.5 Research Tools and Data Analysis

In every quantitative and qualitative research tool play a vital role in analysing data and interpretation of research findings (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). As mentioned by Krauss (2007) the use of research tools is critical for achieving accurate, valid and reliable result. Thus, in this study, the data generated from survey is exported to IBM SPSS software and analysed using statistical techniques such as frequency, percentages, standard deviations, means etc. in terms of assessing the model fitness, discriminant and composite reliabilities were conducted while correlation analysis was also conducted to check the relationship between variables.

4. Result and Discussion

The main aim of this study is to determine the role of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in the fight against gender-based violence. Different statistical analysis and model fitness analysis were conducted. The outcomes generated from the listed analysis are presented in the form of frequency distribution tables (based on frequency and percentages) and figures (based on pie chart, bar chart and histogram). The first part of this section is characterized by demographic results of the respondents followed by outcomes generated from the survey according to frequency distribution tables. The final parts of this section contain model fitness measurements in terms of reliabilities and correlation analysis

4.1 Demographical Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Age

As mentioned earlier, 200 questionnaires are distributed which resulted in 184 (92.3% response rate). In terms of age variation, 83 (45.0%) are less than 25 years of age, 67 (36.5%) are between 25 to 40 years and 34 (18.5%) are older than 40 years as shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1

Table 4.1: Age Variation of Respondents

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<25	83	45.0
25-40	67	36.5
>40	34	18.5
Total	184	100

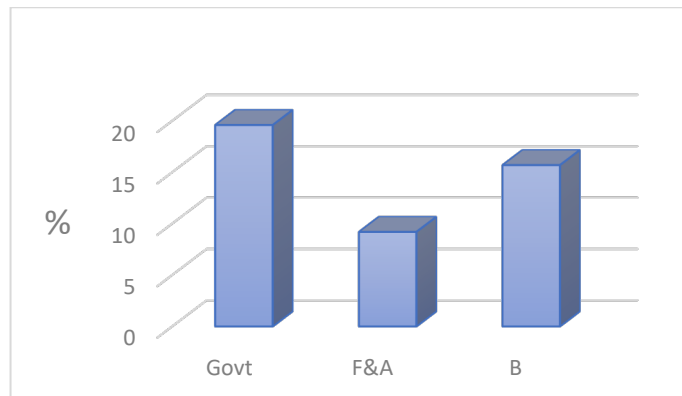


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

4.1.2 Gender

In terms of gender distribution, 115 (62.5%) are males and 69 (37.5%) are females as shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2

Table 4.2: Gender distribution of Respondents

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	115	62.5
Female	69	37.5
Total	184	100

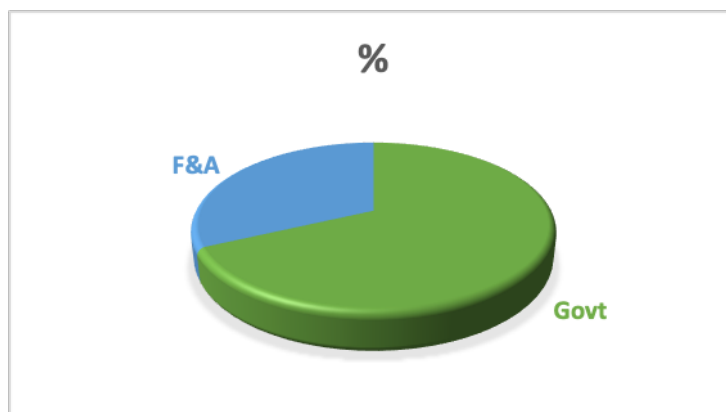


Figure 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

4.1.3 Educational Level

In terms of educational level, 13 (7.1%) attended primary school, 25 (13.6%) graduated high school, 78 (42.4%) have diploma or advanced certificate, 51 (22.7%) have bachelor certificate, 17 (9.2%) have master's or doctorate certificate as shown in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.2: Educational Level of Respondents

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	13	7.1
High school	25	13.6
Diploma and certificate	78	42.4
Bachelor's degree	51	27.7
Masters/ Doctorate	17	9.2
Total	184	100



Figure 4.3: Educational Level of Respondents

4.1.4 Sector

In terms of Respondents working sector, 36 (19.6%) work in the Government Agencies, 17 (9.2%) work in Finance and Accounting sector, 29 (15.7%) are into business, 31 (16.8%) work in healthcare sector, 44 (23.9%) work in Tourism and Hospitality sector, 18 (9.8%) are into food and agriculture and 12 (6.5%) are neither as shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4

Table 4.4: Specialization of Respondents

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government Agencies (GA)	36	19.6
Finance and Accounting (F&A)	17	9.2
Business (B)	29	15.7
Healthcare (HC)	31	16.8
Tourism and Hospitality (T&H)	44	23.9
Food and Agriculture	18	9.8

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Others	12	6.5
Total	184	100

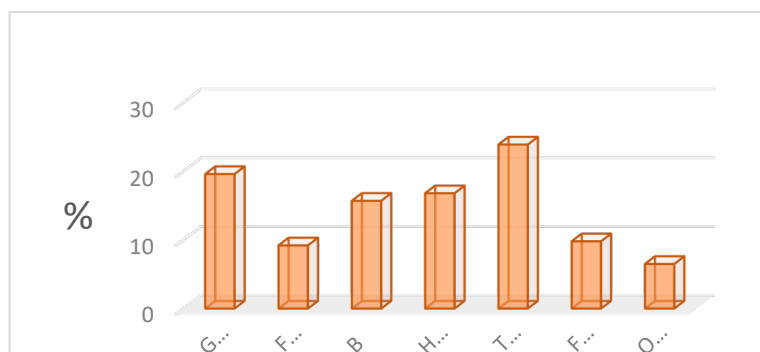


Figure 4.4: Specialization of Respondents

4.2 Survey

4.2.1 Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Based on the responses generated from the questionnaire as presented in table 4.5. It is quite clear that respondent (i.e., 69%) perceived that women are facing increase in the risk of Gender-based Violence due to coronavirus pandemic. However, 65% indicate that they don't have idea on how to report Gender-based Violence in Bagdad, indicating that there are no service mobile hotlines (i.e., 78%). Moreover 93% of the respondents indicates that assuming if there is confidential hotline, women will surely use it.

Table 4.5: Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Items	Yes	(2) A	No	(4) S D
	Freq	%	Freq	%
GBV1	127	69	57	31
GBV2	63	34.2	121	65.8
GBV3	339	21.2	145	78.8
GBV4	171	92.9	13	7.1

4.2.2 Social Capital

Based on the responses acquired from the survey questions as shown in table 4.6. Majority of respondents (A=53 and SA=54) believe that organization/company's social networks with other organizations promotes opportunities for acquiring cutting edge insight and ideas. In terms of close connection and collective actions with other organizations, majority of the respondents (A=47, SA= 60) believe that their organization collaborative and collective actions. However, the frequency slumped down in the case of collaborative decisions on matters that affect the organizations.

Table 4.6: Social Capital (SC)

Items	(1) SA	(2) A	(3) N	(4) S D	(5) D
SC1	21	40	16	53	54
SC2	33	24	20	47	60
SC3	28	22	40	58	36

4.2.3 Collaborative knowledge sharing and building

Based on the responses generated from the survey question as presented in table 4.8. Getting ideas and innovative techniques from other organizations, partners and social media is among the top priorities of majority of the organizations the respondents are working with. However, sharing knowledge and innovative ideas are not widespread among the organizations, companies or agencies in Bagdad.

Table 4.7: Collaborative knowledge sharing and building

Items	(1) SA (%)	(2) A (%)	(3) N (%)	(4) S D (%)	(5) D (%)
CKB1	33	28	24	51	48
CKB 2	19	35	40	31	51

Items	(1) SA (%)	(2) A (%)	(3) N (%)	(4) S D (%)	(5) D (%)
CKB 3	26	32	49	27	50
CKB 4	35	29	35	44	41
CKB 5	29	19	54	49	37
CKB6	22	34	47	39	42
CKB7	20	36	50	47	31
CKB8	25	19	30	46	64

4.3 Reliability and Validity of Constructs

In order to measure the convergent validity, the model analysis of average variance (AVE) and composite reliability were conducted. For composite reliability, Cronbach alpha is employed to assess internal consistency. As shown in table 4.8, the composite reliabilities, Cronbach alpha for all constructs were greater than 0,70 and AVE values are higher than 0.50 which indicate the model's internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 4.8: Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Hypothesis	CR	AVE	CA
GBV	0.912	0.649	0.894
SC	0.816	0.573	0.871
CKB →	0.804	0.519	0.833

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

As shown in table 4.9, there is casual relationship between gender-based violence, social capital and collaborative knowledge building. In order to test the research hypothesis, β , significance and t-value are used. According to Hair et al., 2010, hypothesis is statistically significance when the path coefficient is higher than 0.1, t-value greater than 1.96 and the level of significance of greater than 0.05.

Table 4.8: Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Hypothesis	β	t	Significance
CKB → GBV	.671	4.788	0.00
CKB → SC	.534	4.801	0.00
SC → GBV	.472	5.411	0.00

Thus, the result supported the claim that collaborative knowledge building has an impact on gender-based violence with β score Of 0.671, t-value of 4.788 and 0.00 level of significance. The result supported the claim that collaborative knowledge building has significance effect on social capital with β score Of 0.534, t-value of 4.801 and 0.00 level of significance. The result also supported the claim that social capital has an impact on gender-based violence with β score Of 0.472, t-value of 5.411 and 0.00 level of significance.

5. Conclusion

The study focuses on exploring the impact of collaborative knowledge building and social capital on gender-based violence especially in this era of COVID-19 pandemics. In order to limit the spread of the virus, government have imposed lockdowns, curfews, restrictions, closure of workplaces, cultural, religious, sportive and entertainment centres. As a result of these measures, people are confined at home which increase the risk of gender-based violence as cited by previous studies such as Mittal & Singh (2020), Johnson et al., 2020 and Ruiz-Perez et al., 2020. In order to minimize the cases of gender-based violence, many scholars reported the significant impact of collaborative knowledge building and social capital in form of stimulus packages, loans, palliatives, foodstuffs as some of the measures to resolve the threat of gender-based violence during the pandemic period. However, majority of these studies were conducted in developed countries such as China, Germany, USA, France, UK Australia etc.

As a result of the increase in number of cases and continuous imposition of measures which restricted people's movement and confine them at home in Iraq and the increase of gender-based violence due to the pandemic as reported by other studies, this makes this subject worthy of investigation using Bagdad as a case study. The research questions and hypothesis were developed through conceptualization of the literature review. In order to test the hypothesis, a structured based questionnaire is designed and distributed to 200 respondents in Bagdad through emails and social medial platforms. The data generated from the survey was analysed using statistical tools in SPSS and model fitness was tested based on reliability and validity. The study's findings indicate that 69% of the respondents believe that women are at risk of increase in domestic gender-based

violence due to the pandemic. Respondent's perceptions on collaborative knowledge building and social capital varies significantly. The hypothesis testing has shown that all the hypothesis are supported due to attainment of path coefficient greater than 0.1, t-value of greater than 1.96 and level of significance of above 0.05.

6. Recommendation

According to the result achieved from the data analysis, it is recommended that government should increase their efforts in tackling gender-based violence in Iraq. Compare to other developed countries, Iraq is left behind with limited agencies task with reporting gender-based violence as well as limited mobile hotlines available to support victims of gender-based violence. Moreover, the government need to create a massive campaign of awareness on how to prevent these atrocities and human right violations. In addition, both government and non-governmental organizations need to come up with aid in terms of economic package to poor people and promote collaborative knowledge sharing between organizations, companies, agencies on how to minimize the occurrence of gender-based violence in Iraq.

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