

Risk-Factors Influencing Domestic Violence Against Men and Home Management Strategies in Akure South and Nsukka: Framework for Counsellors

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Abstract

West Africa (Nigeria) is largely a patriarchal dominated society as a result, loud cries of domestic violence (DV) against women are often heard, but we cannot deny the fact that DV against men is a reality. The study will capture the reasons why men are abused by their spouse as well as issues regarding physical and psychological abuse suffered by men in the home. It will also capture some of the factors that influence DV against men from which comparisons will be made between the two areas of study. It will adopt a cross sectional survey research method using the in-depth interview guide in generating data to answer the research questions. The study will be carried out in Akure South and Nsukka due to their patriarchal kinship systems. NVivo package which is a qualitative data analysis software was used for data analysis and was presented in thematic forms (in themes). The findings from the study showed that 95% of the respondents are knowledgeable of what violence against men means. The findings from the study also revealed that the majority of respondents indicated that the major form of DV against men is psychological violence. From the foregoing, a case was made for counsellors who were regarded as the best professionals to deal with the dynamics of DV with a third eye through the application of home management strategies. Literatures were reviewed theoretically and empirically while the frustration-aggression theory served as its theoretical orientation.

Keywords: Akure South, Counsellors, Domestic violence, Home management, Men, Nsukka, Violence.

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Background to the Study

Globally, domestic violence against men is a problem of pandemic proportion (Moradian, 2010). Cases of violence against men have been on the increase in Nigeria. There have been a report of cases of wives killing and maiming their husbands in media. The statistics presented by This Day Newspaper (2011) are daunting to illustrate this, it has been reported that about 40% of men been battered or injured by their wives and 97.2% of them are not prepared to report to the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). Domestic violence is a global issue that cuts across culture, race, age, sexual orientation, educational status, socioeconomic status, religion, gender among others (UNICEF, 2000; Kusanthan, Mwaba & Menon, 2016; Aziz, Idris, Ishak, Wahid & Yazid, 2018). It is a pattern of abusive behaviours by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation (Alokan, 2013). Domestic violence became a topic of interest in the social sciences in the 1960s, when the women movement put the problem of wives being beaten by their husbands on the agenda. With the rise of the men movement in the 1990s, the issue of domestic violence against men has also gained attention (Van Wijk, 2012). Domestic violence also called domestic abuse, spousal abuse, or intimate partner violence often refers to violence in form of physical, emotional/psychological, sexual and economic/financial, by a family member or one spouse against another, but can also include violence between concomitant and unmarried intimate partners (Office of Violence Against Women, 2007; Alokan, 2013; Adebayo, 2014).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research is to examine the factors that influence domestic violence against men in Akure south and Nsukka LGA.

Specifically, this research is:

- (a) To examine some of the reasons behind domestic violence against men in Akure south and Nsukka LGA.
- (b) To ascertain the extent of physical and psychological/sexual abuse suffered by men in their homes.
- (c) To find out the factors that could influence domestic violence against men in Akure south and Nsukka LGA.
- (d) To find out the implication of the findings from this study to social work practice

Literature and Theoretical framework

Review of literatures

Domestic Violence (DV) a mix of physical and coercive behaviours designed to manipulate and dominate another competent adult or adolescent, to achieve compliance and dependence (Adebayo, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the physical and psychological form of abuse will be considered. Oladepo, Yusuf and Arulogun (2011); Benedictis, Jaffe and Segal, (2016) and Womens Aids Organisation, (2017) provided examples for physical and psychological abuse. According to them, Physical abuse includes pushing, throwing, kicking, slapping, punching, beating, tripping, battering, and bruising. Others include choking, shaking, pinching, biting, holding, breaking bones, assault with a weapon such as a knife or gun, burning, murder among others. Psychological abuse on the other hand include

threatening or intimidating to gain compliance, destruction of the victims personal property and possessions, or threats to do so, violence to an object (such as a wall or piece of furniture) or pet in the presence of the intended victim, as a way of instilling fear of further violence, yelling or screaming, name-calling, constant harassment, embarrassing, making fun of, or mocking the victim, either alone within the household, in public, or in front of family or friends, criticizing or diminishing the victim's accomplishments or goals, not trusting the victim's decision-making, telling the victim that they are worthless on their own without the abuser, among others. Psychological abuse which can be verbal or nonverbal abuse of a spouse or intimate partner consists of more subtle actions or behaviours than physical abuse. While physical abuse might seem worse, the scars of verbal and emotional abuse are deep because it pierces the very recesses of a person's soul (Benedictis, Jaffe & Segal, 2016).

Domestic violence is not only against women but men have also been found to be abused by their partners (Aziz et al., 2018). The existing consensus on domestic violence - that women are its only victims and men its only perpetrators has deep-seated roots in our culture where there seems to be a widespread assumption that no man would ever allow himself to be abused by a woman and conversely, no woman would ever perpetrate abuse on a man (McKeown, & Kidd, 2002). Although a number of studies indicate that physical aggression by men against women is generally seen as socially unacceptable and is less likely to occur where attitudes do not support it, physical aggression by men is nevertheless seen much more negatively than physical aggression by women (Adams, 1999; Anderson, 1999). Estimates have shown that only handful cases of domestic violence are actually reported in the United States and the United Kingdom (Dienye & Gbeneol, 2009). Lower number of reported cases will therefore not be surprising in less developed societies with less attention and less support (Dienye & Gbeneol, 2009). The under-reporting of domestic violence was opined by Watts and Zimmerman (2002) to be almost universal and may be due to the sensitive nature of the subject.

Men have exactly the same rights as women to be safe in their own homes. All statutory services (Courts and social services) have a duty to provide services to all, whatever their gender. Men are protected by exactly the same laws as women - anyone who has assaulted another person, regardless of the gender, can be prosecuted (The national office for the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence [NOPDSGV], (n.d).

The problems in conducting studies that seek to describe violence in terms of gender is the amount of silence, fear and shame that results from abuse within families and relationships (Adebayo, 2014). This is why domestic violence against men remains largely under reported. Gender differences in reporting violence have been cited as another explanation for mixed results (Chan, 2011). According to a 2004 survey in Canada, the percentages of males being physically or sexually victimized by their partners was 6% versus 7% for women. However, females reported higher levels of repeated violence and were more likely than men to experience serious injuries; 23% of females versus 15% of males were faced with the most serious forms of violence including being beaten, choked, or threatened with or having a gun or knife used against them. Also, 21% of women versus 11% of men were likely to report

experiencing more than 10 violent incidents (Adebayo, 2014). According to a report by the United States Department of Justice, a survey of 16,000 Americans showed 22.1% of women and 7.4% of men reported being physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). A 2010 survey of over 21,000 residents of England and Wales by the UK Home Office showed that 7% of women and 4% of men were victims of domestic abuse in the last year (Kevin, Kathryn, Simon & Philip, 2011). Domestic violence against men has been on steady increase in Kenya and its assuming a worrisome dimension. It has been reported that in 2011, almost five hundred thousand men were beaten by their wives in Kenya (Odimegwu, 2012). The rising cases of husband battery are often blamed on increasing female superiority complex (Adebayo, 2014). Punching, slapping, kicking, nail scratching, sex deprivation and killing among others, with men as victims, are realities that occur in Nigeria even though they are under reported (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). The tragedy in an ego inflated patriarchal society like Nigeria (although there are few other places in Nigeria that practice other kinship system) is that men who find themselves in this situation do not open up on their experiences, as talking about it will dent their image and expose them to ridicule in the society. In this society, men prefer to suffer in silence until it becomes critical to the point of likely death because it is abnormal to be abused especially by the weaker sex whom you are supposed to dominate by making sure her world revolves around you (Adebayo, 2014). Once a man opens up on his situation, the society reaps off his masculine identity.

Despite the many literatures on domestic violence, which have been widely explored for decades (Bakare, Asuquo & Agomoh, 2010; Slabbert & Green, 2013; Tenkorang, Owusu, Yeboah & Bannerman, 2013; Kusanthan, Mwaba & Menon, 2016; Aziz, Idris, Ishak, Wahid & Yazid, 2018; among others), some authors have drawn attention to the existing gaps related to domestic violence against men (Corry, Pizzey & Fiebert, 2001; Watson & Parsons, 2005; Horgan, Mühlau, McCormack & Röder, 2008; Dienye & Gbeneol, 2009; Van Wijk, 2012; Adebayo, 2014). For instance, Watson and Parsons (2005) survey on domestic violence carried out for the National Crime Council provided some useful information on the gender prevalence of domestic violence in Ireland. The study found that, 15% and 6% of women and men respectively suffer severe domestic abuse. Also, 29% and 26% of women and men respectively suffer domestic abuse when severe abuse and minor incidents are combined, while 13% of women and 13% of men suffer physical abuse or minor physical incidents. In addition, 29% of women (1 in 3) and only 5% of men (1 in 20) who experience abuse report to the Gardaí. It was suggested that in the region of 88,000 men and 213,000 women in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner at some point in their lives which is similar to that of South Africa where it was estimated that between 40% and 70% of all murder victims were killed by their intimate partners, usually after a long history of domestic violence (Watson & Parsons, 2005; Carstens, 2007). Also notable from the Watson and Parsons study is that, 1 in 16 men have experienced severely abusive behaviour of a physical, sexual or emotional nature from a partner at some point in their lives. 4% of men experienced severe physical abuse, 3% of men experienced severe emotional abuse. Only 1 in 10 men who had been severely abused talked to a counsellor about it. Most men who had been abused were abused by a female partner, 2% of men had to take time off work because of a partner's abusive behaviour, and

almost 1000 men who were living with an abusive partner and moved out had to rely on emergency accommodation. Although some of the findings above seem to suggest that women and men experience similar levels of domestic abuse when severe abuse and minor incidents are combined, one must bear in mind that the impact and severity of abuse experienced by women is much greater than that by men, particularly for more severe behaviours. That said, men, like women, deserve protection against these abuses.

Similarly, a recent Euro barometer survey aimed to assess the perceptions of EU citizens about gender-based violence found that, 53% of people in Ireland think that domestic violence against men is either very or fairly common. This compares to the Horgan, Mühlau, McCormack and Röder (2008) study on attitudes to domestic abuse in Ireland which found that 42% of those surveyed believed that domestic abuse of men is a very or fairly common phenomenon in Ireland. Other findings from this study with regard to men showed that 21% of respondent reported knowing of a male victim of domestic abuse. On emotional harm as a result of domestic abuse, 36% believed that both men and women suffer equally and 45% thought that the level of fear experienced is also equally bad for both.

A lot of factors contribute to domestic violence. These include, hunger, difficulties with sleep, menstrual cycle mood changes, feelings of frustration and inadequacy, personality disorder, substance abuse (abuse of alcohol), brain tumor, head injury, personality change, and rarely mental illness and mental retardation (Ephraim & Oluwanuga, 2004; Mojinyinola, 2006). Domestic violence may be a factor of individual intolerance, incompatibility, selfish approach to issues, immaturity, lack of moral standard or lack of fear of God. Other causes of domestic violence include, failure to fulfill financial obligations to wife and children, poverty, denial of sexual intercourse, infidelity, disrespect and other social vices (Mojinyinola, 2006). Whatever be the causes or nature of domestic violence, it is imperative for the social workers or other care-givers to acquaint themselves with the consequences of domestic violence, its prevention and management.

In 1939 Dollard, et.al, proposed the Frustration-Aggression Theory of violence. It explains the process by which frustration is linked to aggression. Whenever something interferes with an individual's attempt to reach some goal or end, they feel frustrated and frustration in turn leads to some form of aggression. Aggression includes both physical and verbal behaviour which is intended to hurt someone (Myers, 1996). It is closely related to increased tension and restless movements or feelings of anger that may lead to destructiveness and hostile attacks (Erwstr, 1975). People become frustrated, when they are unable to reach their goal, when frustrated; they tend to strike out at others, in ways that range from tongue lashing to overt violence. They consider verbs like destroy, damage, and torment. Others include retaliate, hurt, humiliate, insult, threaten and intimidate as action of an aggressive nature. Aggression was thus regarded as a response of frustration, directed towards the infliction of injury.

Domestic abuse against men and, indeed against women, is a serious problem for those who experience it. Male victims of domestic abuse report they fear they will not be believed if they

report the abuse. They can feel ashamed to admit to being a victim as these challenges the traditional ideological view of men. Some male victims claim they cannot fight back or defend themselves in case they are accused of being the abuser. Fathers fear if they leave their abuser they will lose access to their children. Furthermore, many are concerned they may have nowhere to go should they leave their abusive situation. No one should feel afraid in their home regardless of their gender. No one should be abused by an intimate partner and no one should feel they cannot talk to someone about it (NOPDSGV, n.d). This brings us to the need for professional help based on the fact that DV is a serious social challenge that social workers have to deal with on a daily basis. Social workers are committed to help vulnerable populations, which include the victims of domestic violence. By law, social workers are mandated to report suspected abuse and neglect of children, women and elderly adults. By their professional code of ethics, they are responsible for being knowledgeable on various aspects of domestic violence, thus enabling them to help victims and their abusers (McClennen, 2010). Implying that social workers must have to extend their scope on DV to include abuse against men. It therefore expected from the social worker to take positive leadership roles, establish linkages with shelter workers to develop more case coordination, increase their knowledge of the correlates and dynamics of family violence, develop resources and support networks, and provide advocacy for families (Schuyler, 1976; McShane, 1979; Kanuha, 1998; Lloyd, Cate, & Conger, 1983; Starr, Clark, Goetz, & Malia, 1979). Home management strategies are also required to avoid domestic violence against men such as both parties discharging their responsibilities and duties in the home diligently with love and patience (Ahmadu, 2012).

This gave birth to this current study, which focuses on risk-factors influencing domestic violence against men and home management strategies at Akure south in Ondo state in the south-west region and Nsukka a major local government area in Enugu state of the south-east region have been chosen for the study due to their patriarchal nature from which comparisons will be made.

Theoretical framework

The study adopted feminist theory as the theoretical framework. The feminist theory of Mary Wollstonecraft (1794) asserts that it examines women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, and chores which focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Feminist theory in DV emphasizes gender and power inequalities in opposite-sex. It focuses on societal message that sanctions a male use of violence and aggression throughout life and the prescribed gender role of how men and women should behave in their intimate relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993). It sees the root causes of domestic violence as the outcome of living a society that condones aggressive behaviour perpetrated by men while socializing women to be non-violence. This theory has also identified that women has some innate powers to abuse men through some physical abuse, denial of sex and other disturbing words rendered on men.

Methods

The study was conducted in two patriarchal areas chosen from the South-west and South-east region of Nigeria, namely: Akure and Nsukka. Both areas have a combined population over 615,409 people (National Population Commission 2010). These areas are largely patrilineal in kinship system though such system seems to be weakening especially in Akure due to the trappings of urbanism; migrants and immigrant of all description as well as the increasing clamours for gender equality in Nigeria as a whole. Both areas have prominent federal universities including Federal University Technology of Akure and University of Nigeria, the influx of students from different part of the country has also contributed to the population diversity in the areas, since some of them stay back to work after graduation and settle down. Both study area is dominated with Christian, Muslims and Africa Traditional Religion. The study also employed cross-sectional study design. The study was conducted on married couple living in Akure city and Nsukka. Male and female couple who were 18 years and above constituted the population for this study, the simple random, accidental and purposive sampling techniques were used in this study. The Purposive and simple random technique was used to select the communities in Akure and Nsukka and any couple who was met whether on the street or in his/he home was administered with the questions by the researcher or the two (2) research assistants. A total of 40 respondents were sampled for the study in consideration of the time and resources available for the researcher. 20 In-Depth Interview (IDI) each were served in both cities and was major instrument for data collection. NVivo package which is qualitative data analysis software was used for data analysis and was presented in thematic forms (in themes) and the data was organized around the research objectives.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the qualitative data was done based on the research questions which were administered to 40 respondents in both cities. The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that male respondents constituted 50% of the population while the female respondents amounted to 50% from the age of 18 years and above. All the respondents (71.2%) were married followed by (14.3%) who were widowed. Also, (96.9%) of the respondents indicated that they have children who have grown to the age of youths. The finding equally indicates that greater percentage of the respondents (58.1%) were traders, (32.9%) were farmers while (9.0%) respondents civil servants and business men.

On the area of knowledge and awareness of domestic violence against men in Akure, A female participant in IDI stated:

I am very much aware of what domestic violence against men is. DV is an anti-social behaviour committed by a man to woman or a woman to a man. It is normally known as physical abuse but now, it cut across a board which means that it can be physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, cultural abuse, psychological abuse among other. It is devilish and demonic for a woman to bit a man or a man to hit any woman (Male trader, Akure south).

An IDI participant in Nsukka LGA stated:

Yes... I am aware of domestic violence against men. Domestic violence is a worldwide problem, though the scourge is particularly difficult to eradicate in Africa, where an unhealthy mix of tradition, inequality and even ignorance conspires against women. Domestic violence 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 in private life." In addition, the term domestic violence refers to "any acts or threats of acts intended to hurt or make women suffer physically, sexually or psychologically, and which affect women because they are women or affect women disproportionately (Female civil servant, Nsukka).

An IDI participant in Akure stated:

Obviously, domestic violence is everywhere in Akure South LGA. Domestic violence is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender. It constitutes a breach of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, and dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination and physical and mental integrity (Male trader, Akure).

An IDI participant in Nsukka LGA stated:

Yes. Domestic violence against men everywhere but it is not commonly pronounced because of the nature of man or how God made man to be. Globally, one out of three women will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, with rates of abuse reaching 70% in some countries and because of these factors, women now abuse men by denying men of sexual gratification, slap men occasionally and render abusive words to them (Male trader, Nsukka).

On the factors of DV against men in both cities, the finding revealed that majority of the respondents stated that sexual, physical and psychological violence are the major forms of violence against men. On the area of the above factors of domestic violence against men in Akure, A female participant in IDI stated:

Sexual abuse or denial of sex is one of the major forms of domestic violence against men. Most times, women complain of sickness pretentiously so that the man will not sleep with her. People also see sexual abuse one that can take many forms and take place under very different circumstances. We had a case where a woman denied her husband sex and before she could wake up, the husband who was suffering from hypotension died. Infact is the major form of violence against men (Female trader, Akure).

This finding is not in agreement with the findings of Ndungo (2004) who found that the major factor contributing to violence against men is poverty. The author opined that when

the productive power of a man is being lowered and the women tend rob him the power to participate in decision making, within the socio-economic and cultural sphere of life, there is bound to be violence in the home especially against the men.

An IDI participant in Nsukka LGA stated:

Men perceive DV as more of physical abuse which involves scratching, biting, grabbing, shaking, shoving, pushing, restraining, throwing, twisting, slapping, punching, choking, and/or use of weapons (e.g., household objects, knives, guns etc) against the men. The physical assaults may or may not cause injuries (Male trader, Nsukka).

The finding of Okemgbo et al (2002) did not support the above finding which found that the major factor that contributes to violence against men is cultural background and the norms that have permitted the notion of women's submission to male authority which is seen as permission for men to subjugate women. To this end, women adopt confrontation against men as a defense mechanism to protect themselves and will sometimes use harmful object on men.

On the factors influencing DV against men in both cities, the finding showed that majority of the respondents stated that lack of policies and laws, cultural acceptability of domestic violence and inadequate laws and system of enforcement are the major factors influencing violence against men. On the area of the above factors of domestic violence against men in Akure, A male participant in IDI stated:

Some men's social status is very low due to illiteracy, poverty and cultural practices. Thus men lack knowledge of awareness of existing laws and policies for the protection of right and well-being. Even those who are aware are afraid of social stigma of being called victims of violence while they suffer in silence (Male farmer, Akure)

An IDI participant in Nsukka LGA stated:

That if a man cannot establish his authority intellectually or economically, he would tend to do so physically. Another cause is the image created by the society which portrays a man to be viewed as being strong, educated, creative, and clever while a woman is the opposite of all these traits. The way parents bring up their children, which create disparity between boys and girls, also is a source of gender-based violence in later life. When a boy grows up, knowing that he is not supposed to wash his own clothes, cook or help in the house, if he grows up and gets married to a woman who comes from a home where duties are equally shared between girls and boys, this can create tension that might lead to violence.

An IDI participant in Nsukka LGA stated:

The Nigerian law has not helped the causes or the factors against the elimination of DV as only a few states have signed in the "violence against

Women prevention, protection and prohibition Act, 2002 but not was formulated for the protection for men (female teacher, Nsukka).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the risk-factors influencing domestic violence against men and home management strategies in Akure south and Nsukka: framework for counsellors. From this study, it can be said that DV is an age long problem that has been existing in both which has to be addressed. It is an obstacle to peace, progress and a threat to the objective of equality; they appear as traditions, customs and religious practices that lower the status accorded to men. The scourge of DV if not properly handled will be difficult to curb or eradicate especially in the rural areas where the people so much believe in cultures and traditions. All the ill practices that treat men unfairly in the name of tradition should be put to an end for the betterment of the society. Men should also recognize the importance of their wives and therefore should resist battery or assault of any kind as this is not only unfair in the eyes of the society but also ungodly and uncalled for. There is also need to encourage victims of DV to speak up. This is necessary because most victims are either ashamed or afraid of disclosing what happened to them because of government not responding to their complaint, fear of being hurt more by the abuser, fear of social stigma attached to such abuse like rape and so on. This should be championed by social workers, and those in-charges of social welfare agencies. Nigerian government should as a matter of urgency, formulate Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Men (CEDAM) and all other international instruments on men's rights which she has ratified. The non-discriminatory provision of the Nigeria 1999 constitution is inadequate. The domestication of these international instruments is imperative in view of the fact that section 12 of the Nigerian constitution has expressly rendered these international instruments non-justifiable except they are domesticated as part of Nigerian municipal law. General public enlightenment about the ills of DV against men is necessary because an enlightened society is an informed one whose activities are reflective of the information at its disposal. The essence of public enlightenment should be facilitated by schools, churches, mosques, mass media, town union, age grade, social clinic etc. this is for people to see the account of what has been happening on this issue and how this very act has destabilize men and also let them know that it does not hold anything for us in the future.

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