

The Socio-Legal Attitude Towards Rape Victims in Nigeria During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Rape has long been a brutal part of the- human history of forceful sexual intercourse against a person who is weakened, unconscious or powerless of giving valid permission. The documented rise in sexual violence in Nigeria especially people with poor socio-economic legislators and status is not only attributed to excessive drinking and indecent dressing but men superiority or the support of culture and beliefs that rape is a sign of maleness the fear of stigmatization, extortion from law enforcement, and lastly lack of confidence in the judicial system. However, there is paucity of literature on how socio-legal attribute on rape victims in Nigeria. Hence, this study investigated the effect of socio-legal attitude toward rape victims in Nigeria. The study employed survey research design. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 1000 respondents to obtain information on relevant issues through the aid of Google. Results from the study show that majority of the respondents had a negative attitude towards rape victims. There was an effect on gender differences in the attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims based on gender differences with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis. There was an effect in the attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims based on gender differences with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. In conclusion, there is a need for public health education on rape and as well encouragement of victims to report cases with an assurance of their safety. Specialized women's right organizations that should provide capacity building support and logistics services to youths and students in higher institutions and more studies should be carried out to identify the perception of gender-based rape among specific regions in the country and assessment of rape myths and factors that make them.

Background to the Study

Rape is coercive sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetrations against a person that is weakened, unconscious or powerless of giving valid permission. Sexual violence was initially a private matter and there were no widespread of ideological development. Issues of sexual violence were largely met with skeptical response and women were viewed as sexual object of men's desires. However, the second wave feminist movement made sexual violence a public concern concerning sexual morality. This anti-sexual violence movement brought a pivotal shift in the public understanding the term rape, consent and the culture of rape, changing the socio-legal attitude or perception of experience of rape victims. Rape has long been a brutal part of the human history from the Greek mythology of the rape of Chrysippus by Laius and the Roman Empire redefining rape as *Stuprum* (sex crime). (Brown 2011; Molly, 2015; Richlin, 1993)

Rape, an undesirable form of sexual violence affects rape victims especially the mental, reproductive and behavioural health of women's life. Devastatingly pervasive the World Health Organization (2021), asserted that one (1) in every three (3) women globally are subjected to sexual or physical violence by their intimate partner or non-intimate partner. Scholars like Mamun, Hosen and Mamun (2021), has noted the global rise in sexual and domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this COVID-19 pandemic the World Population View (2020), asserted that about 35% of women have been sexually harassed, and also, 40 % of women have been raped while 10% of these women who have been sexually dishonored seek help from the police due to fear of reprisal, fear of family, and the gender attitudes toward rape victims.

Studies have documented that friends, family and legal personnel are frequently been blamed after the aftermath of the sexual violence. (Kunsi, Balley, Prendergast and Gundersen, 2019; Pinciotti and Orcutt, 2021). However, James (2018) submitted that women blame more victims of male 'honor 'violence and that male victims receive less of social support than women Khan (2018) opined that the cultural dimension and the universal; perspectives of man supremacy or predominance motivates perpetrators to commit sexual violence and killings of Western European women and Northern American women. According to WHO and Pan American Health Organization (2012) the support of culture and beliefs that rape is a sign of maleness and pushing the blame on the female victims when raped led to weak sensation and sanctions of perpetrators.

In Nigeria, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Bureau of Statistics (2019), asserted an increase in the percentage of rape incidences reported for women and girls in the country from 2015 to 2017 of 63% in 2015, 72.1% in 2016 and lastly 69.3% in the year 2017. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Umukoro (2020) noted that the lockdown policies caused a spike in rape and gender violence in the country. Toromade (2021), emphasized that over 3600 cases in the country during the period of COVID 19 lockdown. Not only the COVID-19 lockdown policies spike rape cases, Obaji (2020) stated a rape case of a 23 years old victim whose husband had just died two years old was arrested and sexually assaulted by a police office for not wearing face mask.

Likewise, the rising insecurity in the country have increase this silent epidemic, in which armed bandit rape women every day in Katsina State in 10 local governments out of 34 local government, where victims were kidnapped paid ransom for their release. (Sardauna, 2021). While, Withnall (2016) noted the horrific experience and the stigmatization of Nigerian girls and women who became pregnant and gave birth to 'half a terrorist' after been captured by Bandits or Boko Haram raped and force into sexual slavery. Akinade, Adewuyi and Sulaiman (2010) submitted that people with low socio-economic legislators and status contributes to the spread of sexual violence due to frustrations. On top of the concern, families of the rape victims and their affected are afraid of stigmatization, extortion from law enforcement, and lastly lack of confidence in the judicial system contributes to the rise in sexual violence in the country (Withnall, 2016). Nevertheless, there exist dearth of; literature on the socio-legal attitudes towards rape victims in Nigeria

Nigerian police who are supposed to arrest suspected sexual assaulters, are accused of rape of a 16-year-old girl named Tina in Lagos and some women in Abuja, this shows that the police station which supposes to be a place where rape victims should get help, instead of female rape victims are been vilified for the indecent wearing of makeups, dressing, going out in the night or being at the wrong place and lastly, making up baseless allegations of being raped, these incidences discourage rape victims from finding brick walls at the police stations, courts, hospitals and even the kings' men in the community (Nduka, 2020). The Minister of Women Affairs and social development (FMWASD) emphasized that more than two million Nigerian women and girls are being sexually assaulted yearly while only 28% of sexual violence cases are reported to relevant authority (Kunle, 2019). Burgess (2017) believed they may not properly report the case to the police as a crime which may result in police viewing assault as not being serious or the rape victims may be afraid of the long system of criminal justice. According to Nduka (2020), the legal system in Nigeria makes it so difficult to convict suspected sexual assaulters. Apart from the legal system, scholars have noted that indecent dressing, excessive drinking and societal norms of men superiority discourage raped-victims from reporting sexual violence incidents (Akinadeet al, 2010; Nduka, 2020). Based on these arguments, this study investigated the socio-legal attitude towards rape victims in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement of the Problem

The major problem in this study is that police are supposed to arrest suspected sexual assaulters, but in Nigeria, the police are accused of rape of a 16-year-old girl named Tina in Lagos and some women in Abuja, this shows that the police station which supposed to be a place where rape victims should get help, instead of female rape victims are been vilified for the indecent wearing of makeups, dressing, going out in the night or being at the wrong place and lastly, making up baseless allegations of being raped, these incidences discourage rape victims from finding brick walls at the police stations, courts, hospitals and even the kings' men in the community (Nduka, 2020).

Another problem in this study is that men superiority or the support of culture and beliefs that rape is a sign of maleness by pushing the blame on female raped victims contributed rampant wave of sexual violence. Likewise, the legal system in Nigeria makes it so difficult to convict suspected sexual assaulters and. More so, rape victims and their affected families are afraid extortion from law enforcement, stigmatization and lastly lack of confidence in the judicial system. This led to 28% of sexual violence cases been reported to the authority. Thus, this study investigated the impact of socio-legal attitude towards rape victims in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of Socio-legal attitude towards rape victims in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific objectives are to:

- i) Examine the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims the COVID-19 pandemic
- ii) Investigate the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims during the COVID-19 pandemic

Research Questions

The subsequent research questions were answered in this study

- i. What is the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- ii. What is the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will be tested

- H₀1:** There is no socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims during the COVID-19 pandemic
- H₀2:** There is no socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims during the COVID-19 pandemic

Review of Literature

Rape according to WHO (2011), is a voluptuous act or attempt to obtain any carnal, unsolicited sexual talks or moves to direct against an individual's sexuality using intimidation, by anyone irrespective of their affiliation or rapport to the person been raped in any setting, including but not limited to church, work and home. WHO & Pan American Health Organization (2012). stated that rape is sexual violence which covers a variety of acts like oral aggravation to force penetration and an array of categories of pressure from social pressure and fear to physical force. Besides, Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi and Lozano (2002), opined that rape is sexual violence that has a deep effect on both the physical health of the victim, the perpetrators most times causes physical injuries that result in immediate or long-term sexual health challenges and reproductive health issues on victims involves especially below the legal age of consent or those who have intellectual disability (Smith, 2004). Also, Krug *et al* (2002), stresses rape-effect on mental

health can be so serious as than its physical effects on the victim like death following sexual assault may be as a result of suicide, murder and HIV infections.

Rape has long been a brutal part of the human history in which History.com Staff (2018) documented sexual violence from the ancient Greek in 336 B. C where King Phillip II refused to punished perpetrators (Attalus servants) who sexually assaulted Pausanias who was invited to a banquet by the king's father-in-law (Attalus), the sexual violence of Sabine women in the 8th century in Rome the sexual assault of Boudicca daughters by the Roman soldiers to the rape of numerous of Jewish women in 1903. Historically, sexual violence was family matter in which the head of the paterfamilias or the husband privately arbitrating on issues of sexual misconduct but the second wave of the feminist brought about the early Roman Republic legal development (*Lex Julia de Adulteriis Coercendis*) of punishing adultery (*stuprum*). Sexual offenders were given capital punishment like severing the perpetrators' testicles or gouging out the eyes in Rome because the Romans viewed sexual assault and other sexual violence as sex crime (*stuprum*) within a civil context as crimes against the citizenry or national's body and liberty. The first Christian Roman emperor Constantine redefined sexual violence as a private offense rather than a family matter. Rape during the Constantine's era sexual offence was regarded as elopement or adoption without the head of house hold's permission and any victim that consented (not screaming for help) should be punished along with the offender. Under the Justinian's era punishment for sexual abduction *raptus* changed to shift blame from the rape victim to the offender (Augustine, 2012; Beard, North and Price, 2004; Nguyen 2006). However, during the Medieval Europe, women raped were merely brought for capital punishment or the case will end when the perpetrator pays small monetary penalties Raping marriable women, wives, widows, women of the lower class were viewed less sinful but fulfilling the procreative function of sex than masturbating (Molly, 2015).

Globally, Contreras, Bott, Guedes and Dartnall (2010), stated that about 5% of sexually assaulted Latin American adults report the incident to law enforcement since women who are raped are ashamed, afraid of retaliation, socially ostracized, most times are been blamed and not being believed by the police. In America, Morgan and Kena (2018), stated that nearly 23million women in the country and 1.7 million US men have been sexually assaulted or attempted. Morgan *et al* (2018), also noted that out of 1.7 million Us men and 23 million women who have been raped or attempted, about 23% of these victims reported to authorities Besides, the studies of Chapleau, Oswald and Russell (2008), and Pino and Meier (1999), have shown that victims who are men are 1.5 times less likely to report sexual violence to police than females who have been raped. more importantly, the study of Hancock (2019), shows that male exhibits an indirect punishable attitude towards male rape victims

In Nigeria, girls and women from ages 1 to 28, 67.5% were rape at home, in school and other places. in 2015, 78.7% of girls have been raped at home, 53.8% of girls and women were raped in school and 62.5% women and girls were raped in other places, in 2016 and

69.3% have been raped at home, 56.9% of women have been sexually assaulted in school and 73% of women and girls have been sexually assaulted in other places while in 2017, 69.3% of sexual violence of girls and women at home, 56.9% of women and girls have been sexually assaulted in school and also 54.6% have been raped in other places (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Nduka (2020), stresses that the legal system in the country makes it so difficult to convict suspected sexual assaulters and push the blame on the female victims when raped. More so, rape victims and their affected families are afraid extortion from law enforcement, stigmatization and lastly lack of confidence in the judicial system.

As at 2017 Nduka (2020), noted that out of 2,279 stated incidences of sexual violence, and 1,164 stated incidence of anal sex or 'unnatural sexual violence' 0 convictions by law enforcement and also 1 out of all the states in the country reported not any case of indecent assault. To buttress this fact, the inspector general of police said a total of 717 cases were reported, 631 rape cases are charged in court, remaining 52 rape cases (Olalekan, 2020). The reported cases were between January to June like the case of a fifteen-year-old was sexually assaulted in Benue few days after surgical operation John (2020), a sexagenarian was arrested in Lagos by the law enforcement for sexually assaulting a minor who was sent on an errand (Deji, 2020). Ola (2020) also said that a 21-year-old lady was raped and killed in the church just after some days two (2) students were sexually assaulted in Ibadan. in Delta where police arrested a bishop for sexually assaulting a 19-year-old girl (Francis, 2020) similarly in Edo state, where Uwailia Vera Omozuwa, a 22 years old girl was raped and killed in a church Bukola, 2020). Also, in Southern part of the country, the Fulani tribe have been accused of masterminding kidnapping and forceful sexual intercourse of Yoruba women (Mpi, 2021).

Rape myth is a significant force that sharpens the societal perception of rape victims, they are injurious stereotypes and untrue beliefs on those who are sexually assaulted, perpetrators and or the act of sexually assaulting. (Kassing and Prieto, 2003; Russell and Hand, 2017). More importantly, myths on rape are a form accusing victims as these myths serve to diminish and or validate acts of sexual assault while instantaneously shifting guilt on those sexually assaulted (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1995; Murphey, 2017). Empirically, prior kinds of literature have studied gender differences in attitudes towards rape victims, like the study of Bradley and Sharon (1999) reported that male specialists have exhibited a punitive attitude towards rape victims than the female specialists on mental health but when gender differences were held constant, generally specialists exhibited less punitive attitudes towards rape victims. However, the male undergraduate exhibited a more punitive attitude towards rape victims.

Also, multiple evaluations were carried out to test changes among professionals, undergraduates and lastly, counsellor trainers. The study revealed that male undergraduates exhibited more punitive attitudes than counsellors' trainees while counsellor trainees exhibited more punitive attitudes than the professionals. This revealed that counsellor' training endorses the belief that women are responsible for the

carnal assaults or attempts due to the way they dress or wear makeups or she was the initiator of sex. Similarly, the study of Irina (2009), discovered a male medical student exhibit more punitive attitude towards men that were sexually assaulted than females been raped. However, the study of Jericho, Sara, Cathleen and Donald (2015), asserted that the characteristics of the crime of sexual violence diversely influence both men and women punitive attitudes towards those who were sexually assaulted.

Methodology

Study design

This study would be a non-experimental cross-sectional descriptive study investigating the impact of socio-legal attitude towards rape victims in Nigeria.

Study Area/Setting

This study would be conducted in Nigeria. Officially the federal republic of Nigeria, it is a sovereign country located in West Africa bordering Niger in the North, Chad in the Northeast, Cameroon in the East, and Benin in the West. Its southern coast is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. A federal republic comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, where the capital, Abuja is located. It has a population estimate of 204million and inhabited by 250 ethnic groups with the three largest ethnic group being Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

Study Population

The study population comprises all age groups from 18 and above currently living in Nigeria.

Sample Size

Where the expected response population is unknown, the sample size can be derived by computing the minimum sample size required for accuracy in estimating proportions by considering the standard normal deviation. However, a large data is required so a convenient sampling method was used within 4 weeks to get as much population as possible.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- i. All age range in Nigeria.
- ii. The individual must be living in Nigeria currently.

Exclusion Criteria

A Nigeria who is not present within the shores of Nigeria

Sampling Method

The sampling methodology that would be used would be a convenience sampling method. This would be done through sharing a Google form for individuals to fill, anyone can fill it at their convenience and as long as they have access to their mobile device.

Study Instrument

The research instrument for data collection would be a self-structured questionnaire with a closed-ended question to be administered to Nigerians through Google form. It would be divided into 2 sections

SECTION A: Sociodemographic data of the respondents

SECTION B: Attitude towards rape victims.

Method of Data Collection

For data collection, a structured standard questionnaire was used. Structured English version questionnaire was developed from relevant kinds of literature and due consultation with my supervisor, which was self-administered through Google forms. This is because the respondents are literate and will allow for individual privacy. Each respondent had a maximum of an hour to complete the questionnaire after which the form would close for individual respondent. This is to ensure their true responses were collected.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity

A comprehensive review of relevant literature was carried out. This guided the formulation of research questions and the objectives were also used in the development of the questionnaire for the study. A draft of the questionnaire was constructed, which undergo an independent review from peers and experts in the field of nursing. Supervisor's review was then used to fine-tune the instrument. Special care was ensured to monitor the quality of data collected through supervision during the collection of data.

Reliability

Reliability is the accuracy of a research-measuring instrument. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ascertain its consistency and reliability and to determine whether the questions were clear and simple enough for participants' comprehension. 10% of the sample populations (100) were used for the pre-test and this was done among Nigerians in Ogun State. At the end of the exercise, questions that were not easily understood would be reframed, those that were found to be irrelevant would be removed and adequate spaces will be provided for responses. The reliability of the questionnaire will be determined from the pre-test using Cronbach Alpha. The result was interpreted as reliable with a reliability score of 0.86.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval to conduct this study and administer questionnaire was obtained from the Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC), Ilishan. A letter of introduction and permission from the school was taken to the head of the nursing unit and permission to conduct the study was obtained. The respondents' consent was obtained after the provision of adequate, clear and complete information about what the study entails as listed before filling the form. Written informed consent was accepted by each participant. The ethical standard principle was adhered to to ensure confidentiality.

Participants were informed that participation is voluntary and that data collected were used mainly for research purposes. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses were ensured by not requesting for names or any other personal identifiers from the respondents.

Study Duration

The study was carried out within 4 weeks.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of data. The data collected from the questionnaire was manually sorted out, edited and coded in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. It was thereafter be analyzed using Statistical package for social services (SPSS) software version 21.

Frequency and percentage of tables were generated for the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Statistical significance for association would be tested using chi-square for discrete data with a p-value less than 0.05 considered statistically significant.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Introduction

This aspect presents the analysis of information obtained from a study assessing the impact of gender differences on rape victims in Nigeria. One thousand (1000) questionnaires were distributed; all were correctly and filled giving a response rate of 100.0%. The results of the study were presented on frequency-percentage tables, charts and the hypotheses were tested at 5% significance level using Chi-square analysis.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics (N = 1000)

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	664	66.4
	Male	336	33.6
Age	18-23	247	24.7
	24-29	481	48.1
	30-35	186	18.6
	36-41	47	4.7
	42 and above	39	3.9
Marital status	Single	638	63.8
	Engaged	144	14.4
	Married	194	19.4
	Divorce	24	2.4

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents 664 (66.4%) are females while minority 336 (33.6%) are males, 481 (48.1%) are within ages 24-29 while 39 (3.9%) are aged 42 and above. 638 (63.8%) are single while 24 (2.4%) are divorced.

Socio-legal Attitudes towards rape victims in Nigeria

Table 2: Socio-legal Attitude towards female rape victims (N = 1000)

Variables	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Not sure (%)
Forceful sex with a girl or woman is cool	17 (1.7)	5 (0.5)	231 (23.1)	730 (73.0)	17 (1.7)
Forceful sex with my wife is my right	93 (9.3)	124 (12.4)	39 (3.9)	687 (68.7)	57 (5.7)
Forceful sex with a girl or woman with a tight miniskirt is not my fault	48 (4.8)	314 (31.4)	112 (11.2)	463 (46.3)	63 (6.3)
Females like making claims of sexual violence	46 (4.6)	522 (52.2)	207 (20.7)	134 (13.4)	91 (9.1)
Female rape victims are supposed to be blamed for being at the wrong place like going to the night club	505 (50.5)	128 (12.8)	165 (16.5)	165 (16.5)	37 (3.7)
Female rape victims are responsible for their victimization or rape for walking alone in the night	395 (39.5)	206 (20.6)	179 (17.9)	173 (17.3)	47 (4.7)
Female rape victims are supposed to be blamed for their excessive drinking of alcohol	314 (31.4)	224 (22.4)	198 (19.8)	183 (18.3)	81 (8.1)

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents 730 (73.0%) strongly disagree that forceful sex with a girl or woman is cool, 687 (68.7%) strongly disagree that forceful sex with their wife is right, 463 (46.3%) strongly disagree that forceful sex with a girl or woman with a miniskirt is not their fault, 522 (52.2%) agree that females like asking claims of sexual violence, 505 (50.5%) strongly agree that female rape victims are supposed to be blamed for being at the wrong place, 395 (39.5%) strongly agree that female rape victims are responsible for their victimization and 314 (31.4%) strongly agree that female rape victims are supposed to be blamed for their excessive drinking of alcohol.

Socio-legal Attitudes towards rape victims in Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic

Table 3: Socio-legal Attitude towards male rape victims (N = 1000)

Variables	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Not sure (%)
A girl or woman has been alone in a place, justifies rape or victimization	274 (27.4)	162 (16.2)	250 (25.0)	283 (28.3)	31 (3.1)
Men are physically strong to resist sexual violence	657 (65.7)	211 (21.1)	83 (8.3)	31 (3.1)	18 (1.8)
Excessive drinking of alcohol or intake of hard drugs justifies rape	364 (36.4)	211 (21.1)	167 (16.7)	122 (12.2)	136 (13.6)
Reporting rape make the victim less than a man	11 (1.1)	66 (6.6)	23 (2.3)	875 (87.5)	25 (2.5)
The benefit of reporting rape as a man is too low as people will not believe me	683 (68.3)	146 (14.6)	85 (8.5)	66 (6.6)	20 (2.0)
Speaking about being raped as a man is a taboo	487 (48.7)	118 (11.8)	113 (11.3)	47 (4.7)	235 (23.5)
Going to a girls' party, girls' hostel or night clubs justify sexual violence of a male rape victims	54 (5.4)	317 (31.7)	515 (51.5)	93 (9.3)	21 (2.1)
Possession of excessive girl trait as a man justifies rape or victimization of male raped victims	26 (2.6)	491 (49.1)	138 (13.8)	182 (18.2)	163 (16.3)
Handsome justifies sexual violence of male rape victims	87 (8.7)	66 (6.6)	644 (64.4)	176 (17.6)	27 (2.7)

Table 2b shows that majority of the respondents 283 (28.3%) strongly disagree that a girl or woman in a place justifies rape, 657 (65.7%) strongly agree that men are physically strong to resist sexual violence, 364 (36.4%) strongly agree that excessive alcohol drinking justifies rape, 875 (87.5%) strongly disagree that reporting rape makes the victim less than a man, 683 (68.3%) strongly agree that the benefit of reporting rape as a man is too low as people would not believe them. 487 (48.7%) strongly agree that speaking about being raped as a man is a taboo, 515 (51.5%) disagree that going to girls' party justifies sexual violence, 491 (49.1%) agree that possession of excessive girl trait justifies victimization of male raped victims and 644 (64.4%) disagree that handsomeness justifies sexual violence of male raped victims.

Table 4: Respondent's overall socio-legal attitude towards rape victims

Value	Score	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Mean score = 7.6±2.3	<8	520	52.0
	≥8	480	48.0
Total		1000	100.0

Figure 1: Respondent's overall Socio-legal attitude towards rape victims

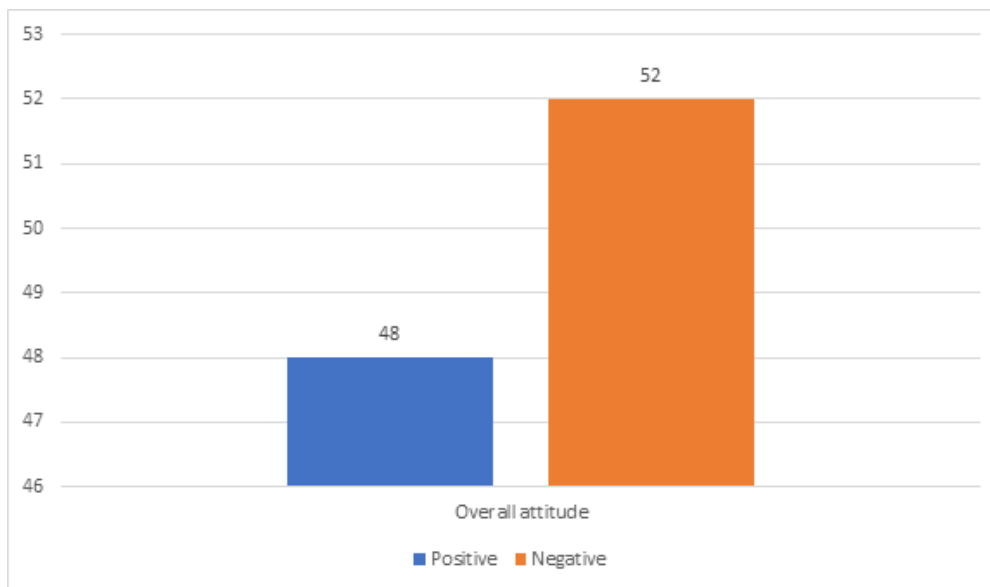


Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents 520 (52.0%) have a negative socio-legal attitude towards rape victims while 520 (52.0%) have a positive socio-legal attitude towards rape victims.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims based on gender differences

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims based on gender differences

		Socio-legal Attitude towards male rape victims		d.f	X ² -value	p-value	Remark
		Good (%)	Poor (%)				
Gender	Female	188 (68.4%)	476 (47.6)	1	197.307	0.000	Significant
	Male	250 (58.1)	86 (8.6)				
	Total	438 (43.8)	562 (56.2)				

Table 5 above reveals that there was an effect of socio-legal attitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two: There is no effect of socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims based on gender differences

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of the socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims

		Socio-legal Attitude towards female rape victims		d.f	X ² -value	p-value	Remark
		Good (%)	Poor (%)				
Gender	Female	412 (41.2%)	252 (25.2)	1	18.955	0.000	Significant
	Male	160 (16.0)	176 (17.6)				
	Total	572 (57.2)	428 (42.8)				

Table 6 above reveals that there was an effect socio-legal attitude towards female rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Answering Research Questions

Research question 1: What is the effect of socio-legalattitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic?

This can be identified from table 5 which shows that there was an effect of socio-legal attitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis.

Research question 2: To what extent is the effect of socio-legalattitudes towards female rape victims in Nigeria during COVID-19 pandemic?

From the analysis of findings, table 6 reveals that there was an effect socio-legal attitude towards female rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Sociodemographic findings

The result of the study has shown that majority of the respondents 664 (66.4%) are females while minority 336 (33.6%) are males, 481 (48.1%) are within ages 24-29 while 39 (3.9%) are aged 42 and above. 638 (63.8%) are single while 24 (2.4%) are divorced.

Examine the Socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims during COVID-19 pandemic

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents 562 (56.2%) have a poor attitude towards male rape victims while 438 (43.8%) have a positive attitude towards male raped victims. There was also an effect of with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis. A study by Abeid, Muganyizi, Mpembeni, Darj and Axemo, (2015) is in tandem with this study having associations between the gender of the respondents and their attitude towards male rape victims. It was also observed that men were more likely than women to express a non-accepting attitude towards sexual violence. A study by Alarape, and Lawal, (2011), also identified that attitudes of young adults toward rape were found to be different based on gender and parental family structure; male young adults had more positive attitudes toward rape than their female counterparts ($t = 2.02$, $df = 318$, $p < .05$). Results from a study by Mittal, Singh, and Verma, (2017) indicated that compared to male respondents, females hold lesser rape myths but have a more negative attitude towards victims of rape.

Investigate the Socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims during COVID-19 pandemic

The study has shown that majority of the respondents 572 (57.2%) have a positive attitude towards female rape victims while 428 (42.8%) have a negative attitude towards female raped victims. There was also an effect in gender differences in attitudes towards female rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. A study by Opekitan, Ogunsemi, Osalusi, Adeleye, and Ale (2017), identified that females had a better attitude towards victims of rape than males. Females also had a more positive attitude toward female rape victims. Alarape and Lawal, (2017), identified female young adults have a negative attitude towards rape compared to the young male adults. Results from a study by Mittal, Singh, and Verma, (2017), also revealed the significant effects of social category and gender on causal attribution for sexual violence.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to male rape victims during COVID-19 pandemic

The study revealed that there was an effect of gender differences in attitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two: There is no socio-legal attitude of Nigerians to female rape victims during COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed that there were socio-legal attitudes towards female rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Summary of Findings

Summarily, the study was carried out to investigate the socio-legal attitudes towards rape victims in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents had a negative attitude towards rape

victims. There was an effect of gender difference in attitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 197.307$). Therefore, we failed to reject the alternate hypothesis. There was an effect in gender differences in attitudes towards female rape victims in Nigeria with a p-value < 0.05 (0.000, $X^2 = 18.955$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Implication of Findings to Nursing

This study has shown socio-legal attitudes of Nigerians towards rape victims, there is a need to improve the awareness about speaking out about rape situations especially among youths. The results also revealed the significant effects of social category and gender on rape victims. The result is important in improving our understanding of the attitudes young adults hold towards rape and rape victims and present a need to develop strategies to dispel negative stereotypes that individuals hold about victims of rape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study discovered that majority of the respondents had a negative attitude towards rape victims. There was an effect of gender difference in attitudes towards male rape victims in Nigeria and there was an effect in gender differences in attitudes towards female rape victims in Nigeria. There is a need for public health education on rape and as well encouragement of victims to report cases with an assurance of their safety. Specialized women's right organizations that should provide capacity building support and logistics services to youths and students in higher institutions and more studies should be carried out to identify the perception of gender-based rape among specific regions in the country and assessment of rape myths and factors that make them accepted.

Recommendations

- i. Gender-based sexuality education can play an important role in providing information and prevention regarding rape, and that young adults from the polygamous family should be the target populations for such programs in Nigeria.
- ii. There is a need for public health education on rape and as well encouragement of victims to report cases with an assurance of their safety.
- iii. Psychological management of children who have experienced rape to prevent them from being perpetrators of rape in adulthood.
- iv. Young women should be enlightened about the health implication of nonconsensual sex, irrespective of their emotional attachment to the offender.
- v. Higher institutions in the country should establish anti-sexual assault/rape units within the campuses to educate and counsel students about sexual victimization and safe sex.
- vi. Specialized women's right organizations that should provide capacity building support and logistics services to youths and students in higher institutions.

Suggestion for Further Study

- i. More studies should be carried out to identify the perception of gender-based rape among specific regions in the country.
- ii. Further studies should assess rape myths and factors that make them accepted.
- iii. Studies are important to assess changes in rape attitude over time among different gender types.
- iv. Further studies should assess the factors affecting the difference in rape acceptance across different countries in Africa.

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