

Perceived Influence of Domestic Violence on Family Relationship among Couples in Ondo State

¹Olowolabi Segun, Ph.D
[*segunolowolabi4@gmail.com*](mailto:segunolowolabi4@gmail.com)

¹Sunday Jacob Okiti
[*pastorsokiti@gmail.com*](mailto:pastorsokiti@gmail.com)
¹*Department of Guidance and Counselling*
Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study examined the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The sample for the study was one hundred and twenty (120) couples who were randomly selected from all the couples in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire which was developed by the researchers. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using frequency counts and mean. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study showed that cultural disparities ($\bar{x} = 2.65$), alcoholic involvement by couples ($\bar{x} = 2.94$), lack of faith and trust ($\bar{x} = 2.87$), financial difficulties ($\bar{x} = 3.08$), use of hard drugs ($\bar{x} = 3.27$) were some of the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State. The result also revealed, among others, that there is a significant influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples. It was therefore recommended among others that marriage counselling should be made compulsory for all intending couples as this would help reduce domestic violence.

Keywords: domestic, violence, family, couples, relationship

Introduction

Domestic violence affects both men and women of all ages, ethnicities, faiths, and socioeconomic levels and occurs in all types of intimate partnerships, including marriages, cohabitations, and dating relationships. Since many people think that domestic violence is an internal family affair involving just the affected parties, it frequently goes unrecognized as a society issue. However, those who were once in a relationship with an abuser are not the only ones who can experience domestic violence. The problem seems to be limited to physical violence by the society, it is more than that. It involves a range of different forms of abuse including physical and sexual abuse, threats and intimidation. Bodily assault, sexual harassment/rape, wife battery/torture, and marital insanity are all affected by domestic violence in a household (Kupoluyi, 2020).

According to the Capacity Building Centre for States (2018), domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, is defined as controlling behaviours used frequently to acquire control over a partner. Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behaviours used by one person against intimate partners to establish and uphold power and control (Nwoke & Maxwell, 2020). These behaviours might include physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse. Domestic assault can take numerous shapes and injure someone physically, emotionally, socially, or psychologically, according to Akhmedshina (2020).

Domestic violence refers to harmful acts that take place between intimate partners, such as in a marriage. The manifestation of this pattern of abusive behaviours can take many different forms, such as physical violence or threats (such as punching, kicking, biting, shoving, restraint, slapping, and throwing objects), sexual violence, emotional abuse, verbal dominance or control, intimidation, stalking, passive/covert violence (such as neglect), and financial deprivation (Krstinic & Vasiljkovic, 2019).

In a dating, marriage, or live-in relationship, domestic violence frequently takes the forms of economic, sexual, and physical dominance, as well as abuse, isolation, and threats. Fekadu et al. (2018) claim that domestic violence, particularly violence against women and children, is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights in the world. It is a type of abuse with roots in the oppressive force of prejudice and the socially constructed disparity between men and women. Nwoke and Maxwell (2020) claim that male domestic violence victims, particularly those who are naturally introverted or incapable of taking on responsibility, are assaulted verbally by female partners. What might be regarded as improper in one culture might be valued in another, and as a result, one of the major factors contributing to family violence will be cultural differences. According to James et al. (2013), domestic violence can cause injury such as bruise, welts, lacerations, abrasion, abdominal or thoracic injuries, fractures, broken teeth, damages to the eyes and ears, heads injuries, attempted strangulations and back and neck injuries.

According to Finnbogadóttir et al. (2020), domestic violence goes beyond just physical abuse, in addition to physical and sexual abuse, intimidation and threats, psychological and emotional abuse, and social and economic deprivation are all included in this type of abuse. Emotional abusive behaviour including insults, put-down, intimidation, and threats are the first signs of emotional abuse. The use of violence and the removal of children are examples of threats. Another typical kind of emotional abuse is withholding and controlling money from a close spouse (Forke et al., 2019).

Domestic violence goes beyond just abuse. In addition to physical, sexual and economic deprivation are all included in this type of abuse (Finkelhor et al., 2015). Domestic violence refers to acts of aggression or abuse committed by one person against another when living as a couple or in a shared residence (Graham-Bermann et al., 2017).

Domestic violence is more likely to occur among those who are in severe financial difficulty. Women and children who are homeless are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse. The fact is that victims in poverty frequently lack the means to leave the situation (Lepistö et al., 2017). The foundation of the marriage should be one of trust and faith. However, when confidence is questioned, it can occasionally lead to domestic abuse in marriages. A partner may consider using violence as a remedy of they believe their spouse is betraying their trust and purity of their marriage, according to Voith et al. (2016).

World Health Organization (2017) states that “eliminating structural factors that support inequalities and feminity based on the control of women are likely to make a significant contribution to preventing intimate partner and sexual violence.” Adolescent dating violence is a type of domestic abuse that can happen. Violence is defined by the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention CDC (2020) as the use of physical, sexual, psychological and stalking violence throughout adolescence.

Statement of the problem

The majority of the time, domestic violence is committed by males against women. Even though women can also be violent on occasion, their actions often only make up a small portion of domestic violence that has been documented. Domestic violence puts the children in danger; domestic violence has effects that reach beyond those of the victim and the abuser. Early exposure to domestic violence has a number of negative repercussions on the person, their family, and their connections with their peers. When a youngster witnesses domestic abuse, it can be challenging for them to form positive relationships. For instance, a child may be more likely to experience parental connection problems if there is violence in the family. Thus, the study intends to investigate the influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. identify the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State.
2. examine the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State.

Research questions

1. What are the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State?
2. What is the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender.

Ho2: The perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State is not significant.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The study involved collection of data to examine the influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State. The parents were selected among all parents in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Sample size for this study consists of one hundred and twenty (120) parents in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the parents among all the parents in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

The research instrument for this study is a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researchers. The research instrument for this study is self-constructed titled: Domestic Violent Inventory, which is divided into two parts. The first part contains the introductory part of the research instrument. The introductory part contains the identity of the researchers and the main purpose of the study. The second part is divided into two sections, section A and B. Section A consists of the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B consists of 25 items which were used to answer the research questions. Face and content validity were established for the instrument while test-re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument with a coefficient value of 0.61. The instrument used the Likert-like scale of Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree=1. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, standard deviation, and mean.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What are the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	Cultural disparities may contribute to domestic violence among couples.	27	39	39	15	2.65
2.	Some partners sometimes use violence as a preventative measure for abusive behaviour.	-	24	52	44	1.83
3.	Domestic violence in a relationship may be encouraged by alcoholic involvement.	34	50	31	5	2.94
4.	Sometimes, domestic violence in marriages results from a partner's lack of faith and trust in them.	43	41	13	23	2.87
5.	Couples who are experiencing serious financial difficulties are more prone to experience domestic violence.	58	27	21	14	3.08
6.	Domestic violence may occur in a relationship where one or both partners use hard drugs.	60	38	16	6	3.27

Table 1 shows the mean responses of respondents on the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State. The table shows that the mean scores (2.65, 2.94, 2.87, 3.08, 3.27) of all the items except item 2 were higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. Thus, these items were accepted while item 2 with a mean score of 1.83 was rejected. Therefore, all the suggested statements except one were accepted as the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State.

Research question 2: What is the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State?

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
7.	Couples who have a history of domestic violence run the risk of developing a number of medical conditions.	50	46	14	10	3.13
8.	Domestically abused victims frequently suffer from stress-related illnesses with their partners.	46	41	20	13	3.00
9.	In an abusive marriage, either the woman or the man may sustain a number of physical wounds.	38	51	16	15	2.93
10.	Forced marriage-related sex can result in sexually transmitted diseases and domestic abuse.	48	44	21	7	3.11

11.	Women who suffer abusive behaviour from their relationships have higher levels of depression, anxiety, and phobias.	51	33	25	11	3.03
12.	Violence against women in any form can result in pregnancy and sex problems.	53	35	19	13	3.07

Table 2 reveals the mean responses of respondents on the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State. The mean scores of items 7 to 12 (3.13, 3.00, 2.93, 3.11, 3.03, 3.07) were higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicates that all the items were accepted as perceived effects of domestic violence on family relationship. Thus, domestic violence has an impact on family relationship among couples.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender.

Table 3: t-test showing the significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t _{cal}	P	Decision
Male	38	23.34	4.41	118	.149	.882	Not Sig.
Female	82	23.21	4.70				

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender [$t(118) = .149$; $p > 0.05$]. This implies that null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender is therefore not rejected. It was concluded that there is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender.

Ho2: The perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State is not significant.

Table 4: Chi-square showing the significant influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	χ^2	DF	P	Decision
7.	Couples who have a history of domestic violence run the risk of developing a number of medical conditions.	50	46	14	10	43.73	3	.000	Sig.
8.	Domestically abused victims frequently suffer from stress-related illnesses with their partners.	46	41	20	13	25.52	3	.000	Sig.
9.	In an abusive marriage, either the woman or the man may sustain a number of physical wounds.	38	51	16	15	30.87	3	.000	Sig.
10.	Forced marriage-related sex can result in sexually transmitted diseases and domestic abuse.	48	44	21	7	37.67	3	.000	Sig.
11.	Women who suffer abusive behaviour from their relationships have higher levels of depression, anxiety, and phobias.	51	33	25	11	27.87	3	.000	Sig.
12.	Violence against women in any form can result in pregnancy and sex problems.	53	35	19	13	32.13	3	.000	Sig.
	Cumulative chi-square					197.79	18		

Table 4 shows that there is a significant influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State. The result of the cumulative chi-square was 197.79, with a degree of freedom (df) of 18 while the p-value of each of the items was less than 0.05 [$\chi^2(18) = 197.79$; $p < 0.05$]. Thus, null hypothesis II which states that there is no significant influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State was rejected.

Discussion of the findings

The result of research question one showed that cultural disparities (\bar{x} =2.65), alcoholic involvement by couples (\bar{x} =2.94), lack of faith and trust (\bar{x} =2.87), financial difficulties (\bar{x} =3.08), use of hard drugs (\bar{x} =3.27) were some of the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State. This result confirms the findings of James et al. (2013). According to these researchers, these factors include cultural factor, self defence, alcoholism, suspicion of infidelity, poverty and unemployment, education, substance abuse, unemployment, mental health problems, lack of coping skills, isolation, and excessive dependence on the abuser.

The result of research question two shows that domestic violence has perceived negative influence on family relationship among couples. The results indicate that those couples who experience domestic violence are at risk of developing a number of medical conditions (\bar{x} =3.13), suffer from stress-related illnesses (\bar{x} =3.00), sustain a number of physical wounds (\bar{x} =2.93) and also have higher levels of depression, anxiety, and phobias (\bar{x} =3.03). Victims of domestic violence tend to experience forced marriage-related sex (\bar{x} =3.11) and other sex related problems (\bar{x} =3.07). The findings agree with Kupoluyi (2020) who revealed that domestic abuse can have an indirect or direct impact on women's sexual and reproductive health. For example, forced sexual activity during marriage can result in sexually transmitted illnesses.

The result of testing hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State on the basis on gender. This result indicates that both male and female couples opined that cultural disparities, alcoholic involvement by couples, lack of faith and trust, financial difficulties, use of hard drugs were some of the causes of domestic violence among couples in Ondo State. This implies that male and female couples have similar opinions on the causes of domestic violence among couples. The similar opinion on the causes of domestic violence could be because the couples might have been victims of domestic violence.

The result of testing hypothesis two showed that the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples in Ondo State is significant. This result indicates that victims of domestic violence are at risk of developing a number of medical conditions, suffer from stress-related illnesses, sustain a number of physical wounds and also have higher levels of depression, anxiety, and phobias. This result is supported by the findings of Kupoluyi (2020) and James et al. (2013), which revealed that domestic violence can cause a variety of physical injuries, such as bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions, abdominal or thoracic injuries, fractures, broken teeth, damage to the eyes and ears, head injuries, attempted strangulations, and back and neck injuries.

Conclusion

The study concluded that cultural disparities, alcoholic involvement by couples, lack of faith and trust, financial difficulties, use of hard drugs were some of the causes of

domestic violence among couples in Ondo State. Also, the perceived influence of domestic violence on family relationship among couples is significant.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Couples should desist from engaging in infidelity behaviour and imbibe the virtue of faithfulness to their partners. This will go a long way in curbing the rate and incidence of domestic violence in their relationship.
- 2) The government is encouraged to make and implement strict laws that would prevent couples from abusing each other or their children.
- 3) Marriage counselling should be made compulsory for all intending couples as this would help reduce domestic violence.

References

- Akhmedshina, F. (2020). Violence against women: a form of discrimination and human rights violations. *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal*, 1, 13-2.
- Capacity Building Centre for States (2018). *Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence (2nd ed.)*. Washington, DC.: Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S Department of health and Human Services. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/domesticviolence2018.pdf>
- Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention CDC (2020). *Preventing teen dating violence*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence>
- Fekadu, E., Yigzaw, G., Gelaye, K. A., Ayele, T. A., Minwuye, T. & Geneta, T. (2018). Prevalence of domestic violence and associated factors among pregnant women attending antenatal care service at University of Gondar Referral Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia. *BMC Women's Health*, 18(1), 138.
- Finnbogadóttir, H., Baird, K. & Thies-Lagergren, L. (2020). Birth outcomes in Swedish population of women reporting a history of violence including domestic violence during pregnancy: A longitudinal cohort study. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, (1), 183.
- Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, M. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2015). Prevalence of childhood exposure to violence, crime, and abuse results from the national survey of children's exposure to violence. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(8), 746-754.
- Forke, C. M., Catalozzi, M., Localio, A. R., Grisso, J., Wiebe, D. J., & Fein, J. A. (2019). Intergenerational effects of witnessing domestic violence: health of the witnesses and their children. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 15, 100942.

- Graham-Bermann, S. A., Cater, A. K., Miller-Graff, L. E., & Howell, K. H. (2017). Adults' Explanations for domestic violence during childhood and associated effects: childhood beliefs about domestic violence. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 73*(6), 652-668.
- James, L., Brody, D. & Hamilton, Z. (2013). Risk factors for domestic violence during pregnancy: a meta-analytic review.
- Krstinic, D. & Vasiljkovic, J. (2019). The forms of domestic violence. *Pravo-Teorija I Prakska, 76*, 273-286.
- Kupoluyi, J. A. (2020). Assessment of contraceptive use by marriage type among sexually active men in Nigeria. *BMC Women's Health, 20*(1), 128.
- Lepistö, S., Ellonen, N., Helminen, M., & Paavilainen, E. (2017). The family health, functioning, social support and child maltreatment risk of families expecting a baby. *Journal of Clinical Nurse, 26*(16), 2439
- Nwoke, P. L. & Maxwell, E. (2020). Personality Factors as Correlates of Domestic Violence among Married Couples in Rivers State Nigeria: Implication for Counselling. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development, 8*(1), 17-27.
- Voith, L. A., Topitzes, J., & Reynolds, A. J. (2016). Violent victimization among disadvantaged young adults exposed to early family conflict and abuse: A 24 year prospective study of the victimization cycle across gender. *Violence and Victims, 31*(4), 767-784.
- World Health Organization (2017). Fact Sheets on Spousal Abuse. Global Health Observatory Publication.