

Spouse Employment Status, Age, Cadre and Religiosity as Predictors of Wife Abuse among Officers and Men of Nigerian Police Force

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Abstract

Interest at curbing domestic violence may have been motivated by its negative effects on the productivity of victims of abuse. Despite concerted global efforts at curbing domestic violence, gaps still exist in the scholarly literature on the influence of personal characteristics on domestic violence. The present study extended previous domestic violence literature by examining the relationship between demographic factors and wife abuse among policemen in the Nigerian Police Force. Participants consisted of 212 officers and men of the Nigerian Police Force, purposively selected for the study. The sample for this study was made up of 88 officers and 144 non-commissioned officers. Respondents' age ranged from 28 to 57 years. 143 participants had wives who were employed, while the remainder (69) had unemployed wives. Educational qualification distribution showed that 60 participants possessed senior secondary school certificate, 66 had Ordinary National Diploma, while the remaining 86 had university degrees and postgraduate certificates. Following a critical review of domestic violence literature, three hypotheses were generated and tested using t-test for independent measure and multiple regression analysis. Results indicated significant influence of spouse employment status on wife abuse ($<.01$), such that participants with employed spouse reported lower on wife abuse than participants with unemployed spouse. Both age and religiosity had significant prediction on wife abuse ($<.05$). However, there was no significant influence of participants' cadre on wife abuse ($>.05$). Empowering women to increase their earning power and reduce domestic violence was recommended among others.

Keywords: Wife Abuse, Age, Religiosity, Cadre, Nigeria Police Force

Introduction

In many countries across the globe, violence against women has remained unabated and in fact has been on the increase (Archer, 2000; Black et al, 2011; Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Odimegwu, 2001). Abraham (1999) defined violence against women as acts that includes 'sex without consent, sexual assault, rape, sexual control of reproductive rights, and all forms of sexual manipulation carried out by the perpetrator with the intention or perceived intention to cause emotional, sexual, and physical degradation to another person'. Violence against women elicits concern among stakeholders because of its health and social consequences (WHO, 2002).

Although, the sources of violence against women are diverse, abuse perpetrated by an intimate partner such as a husband is common in many patriarchal societies. This may be due to traditional cultural practices in those societies that allow a man to relate with his wife as a junior partner and permit him to chastise her by abusive means. Having customs, beliefs, traditions and other practices that discriminate against women and promote gender inequality, increase the occurrence of violence against women (Felson & Outlaw, 2007; Grych & Kinsfogel, 2010; Ilika, Okonkwo & Odimegwu, 2002; Josephson & Proulx, 2008; Odujinrin, 1993, Okemgbo, 2002).

Besides the role of discriminatory cultural norms in promoting domestic violence, domestic violence may be increasing among employees of protective service organizations such as Police. Policing is an occupation characterized by the exercise of control over others and the expectation that others would submit to the authority of the policeman. According to the spill-over theory, policemen may have higher tendency to engage in partner abuse – since there is higher likelihood that their work-related attitudes may influence what they expect from their spouse or other intimate partner. Whereas research investigating the relationship between personality attributes of perpetrators and victims is robust and current, there are gaps in local literature regarding the role of personal characteristics as a risk factor of domestic violence, especially among policemen. Because batterers are a heterogeneous group, investigating how personal characteristics of policemen relate to domestic violence is intuitively appealing particularly in an era of increased work pressure for policemen.

Literature Review

Research investigating age - violence against women relationship has yielded relatively consistent findings. For instance, Rodriguez, Lasch, Chandra & Lee (2001) reported an inverse relationship between age and intimate partner violence. The finding suggests a decline in partner violence as an individual grew older. The outcome is supported by more recent finding that found a decline in intimate partner violence with age (Hester, 2006; Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008).

Scholars have investigated the effect of employment status on intimate partner violence, with the findings indicating a significant association between unemployment status and male to female intimate partner violence (Caetano, Vaeth, & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2008; Rao, 1997; Panda & Agarwal; 2005). In a related study, lower income was found to be strongly associated with male to female intimate partner violence (O'Donnell, Smith, and Madison, 2002; Pan, Neidig, & O'leary, 1994). In a similar study, a significant association was reported between annual household income and intimate partner violence among Americans of different nationalities (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002). But, in a somewhat contradictory finding, Rodriguez et.al (2001) reported that non-employed individuals were not more likely than employed persons to engage in domestic violence. However, the authors observed an increased likelihood of domestic violence among employed persons who received welfare to supplement their income.

Early childhood abuse and exposure to violence between authority figures such as parents may influence domestic violence in later life. Research investigating this relationship found that being a victim of child abuse and exposure to parental violence were positively associated with higher levels of violence in intimate relationships in adult life (Aldarondo, & Sugarman, 1996; Ehrensaft, Cohen, Brown, Smailes, Chen, Johnson, 2003; Linder & Collins, 2005, Renner & Slack, 2006; Roberts, Gilman, Fitzmaurice, Decker, & Koenen, 2010).

In a study that highlighted the effect of adolescents' peer violence on intimate partner abuse, Foshee, Reyes, Ennett, Suchindran, Mathias, Karriker-Jaffe, Bauman, & Benefield, (2011) reported that significant prediction of friends peer violence on intimate partner violence. An investigation into the relationship between education and domestic violence suggests that low verbal IQ predicted intimate partner violence (Lussier, Farrington, & Moffitt, 2009). The finding suggests that communication quality may predict domestic violence in intimate relationships.

In an unrelated study that investigated the relationship between depression and intimate partner violence, Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, & Kupper (2009) reported that being low on depressive symptoms was negatively associated with intimate partner victimization.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between religiosity and domestic violence (Ellison & Anderson, 2001; Ellison, Trinitapoli, Anderson, & Johnson, 2007). They found a negative association between regular church attendance and domestic violence. This outcome holds true for both male and female perpetrators, the authors added. Regular church attendance provides the opportunity for members to reflect and be aware of any deviation in their behaviors and the norm of their reference group (Roberts, Koch, and Johnson, 2001).

Hypotheses

- i. Participants with unemployed spouse will be significantly in wife abuse than those with employed spouse
- ii. There will be significant influence of job position as measured by Cadre on wife abuse
- iii. There will be significant relationship between age, religiosity and wife abuse

METHOD

Design: The study was a cross-sectional ex post facto survey. The setting was randomly selected Divisional Offices of the Nigerian Police Force within Ibadan metropolis.

Participants: Two hundred and twelve (212) married policemen were purposively selected to participate in the study. Of this total, 88 (41.51%) belonged to the officer cadre, while the remaining 144 (58.49%) non-commissioned personnel. Their ages ranged from 28 to 57 years. 184 of the respondents were married to one wife, while the remaining 28 had at least two wives. 143 had working wives while the wives of the remaining 69 were not involved in any form of economic activity. In terms of educational qualification, 28.3% had senior school certificate, 30.7% possessed Ordinary National Diploma, with the remaining 41.0% being educated up to Bachelors degree and post graduate level. 141 (66.5%) were Christians and 71 (33.5%) were Muslims. Lastly, 26 (12.3%) were Hausas, 50 (23.6%) Igbo, 122 (57.5%) Yoruba, while other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 14 (6.6%).

Instrument for data collection: Instrument for data collection was done using a well structured questionnaire. Wife abuse was measured with Intimate Partner Abuse scale (Hudson, 1992). It is a 9 items scale that measured physical and non-physical abuse between individuals in intimate relationship. The scale was scored according to 5-point Likert response format with options that ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. In interpreting the scores in the scale, scores above the mean indicated high abuse while scores below the mean

indicated absence of abuse in the relationship. Revalidation of the scale for use in this study yielded Cronbach alpha of 0.76.

Procedure: Permission was obtained from the authorizing officer at the respective at the various police division selected for the study. Thereafter, participants were approached, their consent secured and the research instrument administered on them. Participants were assured that the result of the research would not be used for personnel decision by management. Since the instrument contained just 9 items written in short narratives, they were collected same day as participants were able to complete the questionnaire within 15 minutes.

Statistical Analysis: SPSS version 17.0 was used in analyzing the data collected in the study. Hypothesis 1 and 2 were tested with student t-test for independent samples, while hypothesis 3 was tested with multiple regression

Result

Table1: Summary of T-Test of Independence Showing The Influence Of Wife’s Employment Status On Wife Abuse

Wife Abuse	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Employed	143	9.71	7.50			
Unemployed	69	13.0	10.30	210	-2.63	<.01

The result in Table 1 indicated that spouse’s employment status was a significant predictor of wife abuse. Participants with unemployed spouse reported higher wife abuse (Mean = 13.0) than those with employed spouse (Mean = 9.71). The difference was statistically significant, $t(210) = -2.63, P < .01$. The hypothesis was accepted.

Table 2: Summary of T-Test of Independence Showing The Influence Of Cadre On Wife Abuse

Wife Abuse	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Officer cadre	120	3.67	3.99			
Non-officer cadre	92	3.92	3.22	210	-.51	>.05

As shown in Table 2, participant’s cadre was not a significant predictor of wife abuse. Participants in the officer cadre and non-commissioned officers reported comparable score on wife abuse. The difference was not statistically significant, $t(210) = -.51, P > .05$. The hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing The Predictions Of Age, Education, Number Of Children, Religion And Length Of Marriage On Wife Abuse

Variables	B	SE	Beta	T	P	R	R ²	F	P
Age	.12	.04	.19	-2.67	<.05				
No of children	.62	.44	.13	1.41	>.05				
Length of marriage	-.16	.11	-.13	-1.42	>.05	.27	.06	3.43	<.05
Education	.31	.60	.04	.51	>.05				
Religiosity	2.60	1.23	.14	-2.11	<.05				

Table 3 showed that age had significant independent prediction on wife abuse (Beta = .19; $t = -2.67; P < .05$). Religiosity had significant independent prediction on wife abuse (Beta = .14; $t = -2.11; P < .05$). Length of marriage had no significant prediction on wife abuse (Beta = .13; $t = -1.42; P > .05$). Education had no significant prediction on wife abuse (Beta = .04; $t = 2.11; P > .05$). However, the predictor variables had significant joint prediction on wife abuse, $F(5,206) = 3.43; R^2 = .06; P < .05$.

Discussion

The study investigated spouse’s employment status, age, religiosity and cadre as predictors of wife abuse among officers and men of Nigerian Police Force. It was hypothesized that there will be significant influence of spouse’s employment status on wife abuse. The result showed a significant effect of spouse’s employment status on wife abuse (<.05). The finding indicated that wife abuse was higher among men with unemployed spouse. The finding is consistent with results from previous studies that found positive association between employment status and male to female partner violence (Caetano, Vaeth, & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2008; Rao, 1997; Panda & Agarwal; 2005) and confirms research that show an association between economic power and domestic violence. The increasing financial costs of maintaining the family in the modern era may have contributed to growing expectations of an increased financial contribution from female spouses in the society. The influence of money as a determining factor in domestic violence was further highlighted by Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, (2002) who found a relationship between household income and domestic violence.

In addition, the structuring of social relationship in traditional societies which is based on a norm of male dominance and female dependence may have elevated the social status of men giving them more power over women and may have made it more likely them to be physically assaultive of their spouse (Felson & Outlaw, 2007).

The study found that age significantly predicted wife abuse. The result showed that a negative relationship between age and wife abuse ($<.05$). The finding indicated that as age increased, the tendency to perpetrate wife abuse decreased. The finding indicated that older participants were less likely to abuse their wives, while younger policemen had higher likelihood to perpetrate wife abuse. The finding of this study is not unexpected and is supported by results of past studies which found a negative relationship between age and wife abuse (Hester, 2006; Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008; Rodriguez, Lasch, Chandra & Lee, 2001). Overtime, the gaps between married couples become narrower as they increase in the knowledge about each other. They also become more tolerant and accommodating of the partner. Culturally, in many African societies, wife abuse among older people is a taboo, which many older couples do not want to be associated with.

Also, religiosity significantly predicted wife abuse. The result showed a negative correlation between religiosity and wife abuse ($<.05$). The finding suggests that higher level of religiosity was associated with lower incidence of wife abuse. Many religions condemn domestic violence and believe in the religious tenets may have influenced the views husbands hold concerning violence directed at their spouse.

Finally, cadre the study did not find significant influence of job status on wife abuse ($>.05$). The result indicated that commissioned policemen and non-commissioned policemen were comparable on wife abuse.

Conclusion

The study found that employment status significantly influenced wife abuse. The study also found that age and religiosity were significantly associated with wife abuse. The findings in this study suggest among others the need for government to put in place policies that enhance their ability of women to find jobs as doing this will help to reduce the incidence of domestic violence among married couples.

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