

PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS PERCEIVED BY WORKING – CLASS FEMALES IN A NIGERIAN CITY

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the patterns of violence against women as perceived by working – class females in a Nigerian City. A total of one hundred and fifty respondents were selected from the target population using the multi-stage sampling procedure. A fifteen-item questionnaire tagged “patterns of violence against women questionnaire” was designed and used to elicit the required responses from respondents. The questionnaire was both face and content validated and the reliability determined using the test retest method. The correlation coefficient between the two administrations was 0.76. Data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) for the demographic characteristics of respondents, while t-test and analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure were used to test the hypotheses. Results indicated that the most common form of violence against women is the physical violence while the least is economic violence. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that there be more enlightenment campaigns on violence against women and women be encouraged to talk about it. Culture has to change in order to eliminate all forms of retrogressive practices against women including violence against women.

Keywords: Violence, Pattern, Perception, Working – Class

Introduction

Violence against women is a global problem which has recently attracted attention internationally; it affects women of various classes and ages. It is viewed as one of the most widespread and common ill against women with a number of causes and consequences for women at all levels

and categories who are being subjected to it. Violence against women is regarded more as a human right issue which affects the socio-cultural and economic fabric of a society. On the international scene, the problem of violence against women has been noted to be a complex phenomenon which might not be easily defined. It is assumed to cover such areas as violence within the family, sexual abuse, physical assault, verbal abuse, emotion and psychological torment, forced prostitution and a host of others. (United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), 2001).

Violation against the integrity of women such as various harmful practices like female genital mutilation is also regarded as a form of violence against women. Since violence against women occurs in various forms and measures in various societies, it is therefore suggested that the phenomenon is better explained within a given context. Thus, in this study the term “violence against women” means any act of gender – based violence which is likely to have a negative physical, biological or psychological impact on women whether young or adult. It is also conceptualized as a multifaceted scourge and its impact on women of various age cohorts.

World Health Organization (WHO) (1998) stated that violence against women is worldwide and cuts across cultural, geographic, religious and socio-economic boundaries. Smith (2012) also stated that about half a million women worldwide die yearly from causes related to violence. The report illustrated that women who experience violence during pregnancy are at a risk of miscarriage and low – birth weight babies than women who does not. According to Harry (2008), the problem of violence against women remains endemic in all countries and regions and prevails despite series actions taken to prevent and eliminate it.

Violence against women is “an extensive human rights abuse” across Europe. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2014) in a survey on the extent of violence against women across the European Union, one in three women across the EU report having experienced some form of physical or sexual abuse since the age of 15. The EU-wide survey was based on 42,000 in-person interviews with a randomly selected sample of women across the 28 EU member states. Women were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence (domestic violence), and also asked about stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women’s experiences of abuse.

The report found that one in 10 women had experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 had been raped. One in five women have experienced some form of stalking since the age of 15, with 5% having experienced it in the 12 months preceding the survey. However, three out of four stalking cases reported in the survey never come

to the attention of the police. One in 10 women has been stalked by a previous partner. Of women in the survey who indicate they have been raped by their current partner, about one third (31%) say they have experienced six or more incidents of rape by their partner. Just over one in 10 women experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before they were 15. According to the survey most violence is carried out by a current or former partner, with 22% of women in relationships reporting partner abuse.

A study was conducted by Yusuf (2000/2001) on the incidence and dimension of violence against women in the Nigeria Society: A case study of Ilorin Township. The subject for the study consisted of 136 women selected from various parts of the metropolis, through a combination of clustering and random sampling methods. A questionnaire was administered to the selected sample to find out factors responsible for the incidence of violence against women and the general attitude of women towards the act as well as the implications to the victims, the family and the larger society. Findings from the study revealed that a large proportion of the respondents reported that they experienced wide-range of violence and that in general men are held responsible for most of the violent acts committed against women.

Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe (2005) examined women's perceptions of wife beating. The data were derived from the 2003 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). Both descriptive and analytical methods were used to assess the net effects of socio-demographic factors on women's perceptions of domestic violence. The study demonstrated that a large percentage of Nigerian women agreed that a man is justified in beating or hitting his wife; 66.4% and 50.4% of ever-married and unmarried women respectively expressed consent for wife beating. Respondents' approval of wife beating or abuse varied by personal attributes such as ethnic affiliation, level of education, place of residence, wealth index and frequency of listening to radio. This paper recommended the raising of public consciousness against it.

According to Haven Wolverhampton (n.d) an organization registered in England for supporting women and children affected by domestic violence and homelessness, Nigeria has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Africa More than two thirds of Nigerian women are believed to experience physical, sexual and psychological abuse at the hands of their husbands. A small-scale study conducted in Lagos and Oyo states revealed that nearly 65 percent of educated women said they had been beaten by a partner, boyfriend or husband, while 56 percent of lower-income market women experienced similar violence.

Countless women and girls in Nigeria are subjected to violence by some members of their families and within their communities, as in many countries throughout the world. Women of all ages and from all socio-

economic groups, living in rural and urban communities, are affected. The lack of official statistics makes assessing the extent of the violence an almost impossible task, but studies suggest levels of violence are shockingly high. More than a third and in some groups nearly two-thirds of women in Nigeria are believed to have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence in the family. On a daily basis women are beaten and "punished" for supposed transgressions, raped and even murdered by members of their family. In some cases, vicious acid attacks leave them with horrific disfigurements. Girls and young women are forced into early marriage by parents and relatives. In many communities, the traditional practice of female genital mutilation continues to traumatize young girls and leave women with lifelong pain and damage to their health (Amnesty International, 2007)

Commenting on the rising violence against women and girls in Zimbabwe Moyo (2013) stated that the Zimbabwean women are no strangers to gender-based violence as, over the decades, they have suffered all sorts of abuse including rape, forced marriage, torture and death at the hands of their male counterparts. In response, many advocacy and rights groups have been working to explore ways of raising awareness in the hope of curbing these abuses. According to him, despite these efforts, reports point to a rise in cases of gender-based crimes across the country, with the highest numbers recorded in Mashonaland Central Province, where politically-motivated violence is also high. In Harare alone over 650 women and girls were raped in between January and October 2013, according to a *Herald* newspaper report. The report also noted that in June 2013, 12 cases of murder were before the High Court, an increase of 60% on year 2012 figures he (Moyo, 2013) added.

On religion and violence against women, Al-Tawil (2012) carried out a cross-sectional study in Erbil Iraq during the second half of year 2011. Two groups were considered; group one (G1) included women residing in Ankawa sub-district (representing Christian culture), and group two (G2) included women residing in Erbil city (representing Muslim culture). A convenience method of sampling was used to select the sample (250 women in each group). Questionnaire was designed to collect information about history of exposure to physical, sexual, and psychological violence, in addition to the related factors. Binary logistic regression was used to determine the independent effect of each factor on the prevalence of violence.

The result revealed that the overall prevalence of violence (physical and/or sexual) in G2 (20.8%) was higher than that of G1 (18.8%). The prevalence of psychological violence was 40% in Erbil, which was significantly higher than the prevalence (24.8%) of Ankawa. The rates of physical and sexual violence were also higher in Erbil (18.4%, and 10.8%

respectively) than rates of Ankawa (16.8% and 8% respectively). Factors found to be significantly associated with overall violence were: culture of Erbil, alcoholic husband, wife working as manual worker (compared with professionals), and having children. It was therefore concluded that violence against women is a serious public health issue and that culture play a significant role in the prevalence of violence.

Macassa, G., Walander, A. & Soares, J. (2013) in their study titled "Violence against women in Stockholm County: does marital status matter?", investigated differences in victimization among single and married mothers using data from 6,388 women from the 2006 Stockholm County Public Health Survey (SCPHS), a cross-sectional survey based on a self-administered postal questionnaire. Results showed higher odds of victimization among lone mothers compared to married ones. Additionally, the greatest odds of victimization were observed among those with low education, low income, and decreased social and practical support.

The World Health Organization, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the South African Medical Research Council on global and regional estimates of violence against women developed a report which identified the prevalence of two forms of violence against women — violence by an intimate partner (intimate partner violence) and sexual violence by someone other than a partner (non-partner sexual violence). The findings of the report which were striking showed that on the overall, 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

While there are many other forms of violence that women may be exposed to, this already represents a large proportion of the world's women. Worldwide, almost one third (30%) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. In some regions, 38% of women have experienced intimate partner violence. (WHO, 2013). This study therefore examined the Patterns of Violence against Women as Perceived by Working – Class Females in a Nigerian City (Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria).

Statement of the Problem

Violence against women has been recognized as one of the common form of discrimination against women as well as a manifestation of historical unequal gender relations between men and women. It is believed worldwide that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development, world peace etc. and it constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women. It adversely affects their security, liberty, integrity and dignity; in other words, it impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms as it endangers their lives and limits their

potential. While remarks have been made about the increase rate of violence against women, it is observed that there is still inadequate information about the magnitude and or impact of the problems and only very limited researches has been conducted on the subject matter in Kwara State Nigeria. Thus, this study sought to explore the patterns of violence against women as perceived by working – class females in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the conduct of the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of age, religion and marital status?
2. What are the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents?
3. Is there any difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of Age?
4. Is there any difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of religion?
5. Is there any difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of marital status?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of age.
2. There is no significant difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of religion.
3. There is no significant difference in the pattern of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of marital status.

Research Methodology

The research descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The method entails obtaining a representative sample of a targets population and subsequently drawing inference on the entire population. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting a sample of one hundred and fifty female civil servants in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State Nigeria. A fifteen – item questionnaire titled “patterns of violence against women questionnaire” was designed to elicit the required response from respondents. The questionnaire was both face and content validated and the reliability

determined using the test retest method. The correlation coefficient between the two administrations was 0.76. Data collected were analyzed using the descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) for the demographic characteristics of respondents, while t-test and analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure were used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

The results of the analysis are presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Age, Religion and Marital Status

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 25 years	72	48.0
26 years and above	78	52.0
Total	150	100.0
Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
African Traditional Religion (ATR)	03	2.0
Christianity	68	45.4
Islam	79	52.6
Total	150	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	67	44.6
Married	83	55.4
Total	150	100.0

The table depicts the distribution of respondents based on variables of age, religion and marital status. The result shows that 72 respondents which represent 48.0% of the total respondents were within the age range of 20 – 25 years, while the remaining 78 (52.0%) were 26 years and above. This shows that the majority of the respondents are old enough and should therefore be conversant with the pattern of violence against women. Based on the distribution of respondents by religion, 3 (2.0%) practice African Traditional Religion, 68 (45.4%) Christianity while the remaining 79 (52.6%) practice Islam. This result reflects the distribution of the population of people in Ilorin metropolis according to religious affiliation as the majority of the people in Ilorin are Muslims. On marital status, 67 (44.6%) of the respondents are single while the remaining 83 (55.4%) are married. The distribution of respondents according to marital status proved useful to the study as literature revealed that women of all ages and from all socio-economic groups, living in rural and urban communities, are affected by violence.

Item Ranking

Table 2: Rank order of items on patterns of violence against women

No.	Types of Violence	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Physical	16.38	1 st
2.	Psychological	15.82	2 nd
3.	Economical	8.04	3 rd

The result indicates the rank order of items on the patterns of violence against women among respondents. It reveals that physical forms of violence has the highest mean score of 16.38 and ranked 1st; psychological forms of violence has a mean score of 15.82 and ranked 2nd while economical forms of violence ranked 3rd with a mean score of 8.04. This result is in line with Amnesty International, (2007) who asserted that more than a third and in some groups nearly two-thirds of women in Nigeria are believed to have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence in the family. In the same vein, according to WHO (2013) 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of Age.

Table 3: Means, Standard deviation and t-value of responses on the patterns of violence against women on the basis of age

Age	N	X	SD	df	Critical t-value	Calculated t-value
20 – 25 years	72	72.2	110.68	148	2.24	1.96
26 years and above	78	84.6	98.24			

The table shows that the calculated t-value of 2.24 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96; thus the stated hypothesis was rejected. There is therefore a significant difference in the pattern of violence against women according to age. According to Amnesty International, 2007, women of all ages and from all socio-economic groups, living in rural and urban communities, are affected. The lack of official statistics makes assessing the extent of the violence an almost impossible task, but studies suggest levels of violence are shockingly high.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of Religion.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results comparing the mean score of responses on patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of religion

Source of variance	df	Sum of squares	Mean square	Calculated f-value	Critical f-ratio
Between Groups	2	218.63	72.87	2.98	3.00
Within Group	147	2857.15	24.63		
Total	149	3075.79			

The result shows that the calculated f-value of 2.98 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00, thus the hypothesis was accepted because a significant difference does not exist. There is therefore no significant difference in the pattern of violence against women on the basis of religious affiliation. This finding is in disagreement with that of Al-Tawil (2012) who found out that the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence, psychological violence were significantly higher women residing in Erbil city (representing Muslim culture) than their counterparts residing in Ankawa sub-district (representing Christian culture) in Iraq.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the patterns of violence against women as perceived by respondents on the basis of Marital Status.

Table 3: Means, Standard deviation and t-value of responses on the patterns of violence against women on the basis of age

Marital Status	N	X	SD	df	Critical t-value	Calculated t-value
Single	67	58.32	6.301	148	3.24	1.96
Married	83	62.73	6.164			

The result indicates that, the calculated t-value of 3.24 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96; based on this, hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected. There exists therefore a significant difference in the pattern of violence against women based on marital status. This finding is in agreement with that of Macassa, G., Walander, A. & Soares, J. (2013) who reported higher odds of victimization among lone mothers compared to married ones.

Findings

Following are the findings of the study:

1. Physical forms of violence in form of wife battering, rape, sexual harassment in cost is the most prominent followed by psychological

violence (child marriages, abduction, verbal abuse etc) while the least experienced type of violence is economic violence which includes monetary deprivation, commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking of women and children etc.

2. There exists significant difference in the pattern of violence against women according to age of respondents.
3. There is therefore no significant difference in the pattern of violence against women on the basis of religious affiliation.
4. There exists significant difference in the pattern of violence against women based on marital status.

Conclusion

It is evident from the research that physical violence against women is the most frequently experienced, and that there exist significant differences in the pattern of violence against women according to age and marital status. The incidence of physical violence could be attributed to the perceived cultural practices and beliefs that women are expected to subject themselves to men. It is therefore recommended that since violence against women is a human right issue; there should be more enlightenment campaigns on violence against women and women be encouraged to talk about it. Culture has to change in order to eliminate all forms of retrogressive practices against women.

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