

Domestic Violence Among Couples in Ekiti State: Does Spousal Sexual Satisfaction Matter?

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for the study comprised all couples in Ekiti State. Three hundred married adults were randomly selected from selected local governments in Ekiti State. Two Hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A well-structured questionnaire tagged “Domestic Violence Questionnaire (DVQ)” was administered to elicit responses from the participants. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics. The result revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among couples. It was further revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female responses on domestic violence among couples. The study concluded that sexual satisfaction played a significant role in domestic violence among couples. Based on the findings, the study recommended that couples should cautiously and intentionally be wary of the possible negative impact of not achieving sexual satisfaction and avoid it so as to attain marital fulfilment.

Keywords: Domestic violence, sexual satisfaction, couples.

Introduction

Family is one of the important pillars of the social and moral development. Without controversy, it occupies a non-negotiable role in child development. It represents a social institution which is basically formed by the coming together of a man and a woman. One of the major needs of human is to be loved and cared for which is possible through intimacy and empathy. The family as an institution serves as the only source of these needs. A marriage with existing satisfaction forms the basis for a powerful and stable family. A person's satisfaction from marital life is equivalent to satisfaction from family life and the latter is equivalent to satisfaction from life which could lead to both material and spiritual growth and development of the society, but whenever this satisfaction is not actualized, dissatisfaction sets in and may lead to violence. (Edalati & Redzuan, 2010).

Domestic violence has always been of interest to researchers and experts in the field of women health. Violence against women refers to any form of abuse against women by the spouse or sexual partner and it is divided into three types of physical, emotional and sexual violence. Domestic violence occurs in the family's private environment and usually women and children are victims (Behnam, Moghadam, & Soltanifar, 2008). Domestic violence can also be defined as a general term for violence that occurs between intimate partners, relatives, individuals or co-habitants. It includes physical, sexual or emotional abuse as well as sexual coercion and stalking by a current or former intimate partner.

Domestic violence is the most pervasive, yet least recognized human right abuse in the world (Olatunbosun, 2015). It is believed to be a profound social problem which saps the energy of its victims, compromises their physical health and erodes self-esteem. Considering the indispensable role of women in most families as wives and mothers, any form of violence against them calls for undivided attention and concern. According to studies, about 28 percent of women in developed countries experience physical violence by their spouses at least once during the lifetime and in developing countries the figure is about 18 percent to 67 percent (Ahmadi, Nasery & Shams, 2008). Owuamanam and Akintoke (2013) reported that domestic violence ranks as the leading cause of injury to women, although rarely do men suffer serious injury. The incidence of domestic violence appears to be increasing in Nigerian society. In Nigeria, recent statistics showed that 30% of Nigerian women have experienced some form of violence in their life time. Ibikunle (2004) reported that a husband drowned his wife over an extra-marital affair with a landlord; he further revealed that the mother of five children was bathed in concentrated acid by her husband on their matrimonial bed after the woman had refused her husband's incessant demands for sex. Samson (2017) equally reported that a man was alleged to have beaten his wife to death after the woman declined sexual advances by her husband for the fear of being pregnant. However subtle violence may be, it has no less devastating effect. Domestic violence has been observed to be in most cases, aftermath of aggression resulting from deprivation of sexual intercourse by the woman. Sexuality according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is "The feelings and activities connected with a person's sexual desire". Sexuality is one of the most complex and important aspects of women's life and the inability to meet a man's sexual desire could make the man violent (Samson, 2017).

Sexual satisfaction is considered an important component of sexual health, a sexual right and an outcome of sexual well-being (World Health Organization, 2010).

Sexual satisfaction is defined as the affective response arising from one's evaluation of his or her sexual relationship, including the perception that one's sexual needs are being met, fulfilling one's own and one's partner's expectations, and a positive evaluation of the overall sexual relationship (Offman & Mattheson, 2005). It is a very personalized feeling which may be linked to previous sexual practices and prevailing expectations as well as upcoming desires. The importance of sexual satisfaction has been established in previous

literature that it is positively associated with overall relationship satisfaction (Santtila, Wager, Witting, Harlaar, Jern, Johansson&Sandnabba, 2008). The interaction among sexuality, communication and conflict within the couple has been accounted for in past studies (Gottman & Silver, 2007). In fact, sexual problems reflect difficulties with power management, communication, and conflict within the couple (Metz & Epstein, 2002), which may depict violence. However, its dissatisfaction is one of the causes of divorce and connection difficulties between couples and it is considered to be one of the most significant factors affecting women's health (Tayebi, 2011).

It has been observed that gender issues have generated domestic violence in most homes, having the female partners as the victims in most cases. (Gottman & Silver, 2007). Abusers feel the need to dominate and control their partner's behaviour due to difficulties in regulating anger and other strong emotions or when they feel inferior to the other partner in education and socioeconomic background. Most women do experience domestic violence in their homes but the degrees in which it occurs, varies from one family to another. Women tend to shy away and also see violence as a private matter not to be disclosed. They prefer to keep it as personal secrets that should not be known to the public. Few women seem to confide in few friends and relatives but virtually most women would likely not want to be seen as victims of domestic or family violence.

Tjaden & Thoennes, (2000) posited that when violence is measured by acts, women are as violent as men but when violence is measured by injuries men are more violent, several authors have consistently reported higher prevalence figures of domestic violence against females as compared with males (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Coker et al, 2002; Rennison, 2003). Most assaults are relatively minor and consist of pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping and hitting. The major assaults included rape (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000) and homicide (Fox & Zawitz, 2004). Women in their 20's were more likely to aggress than women aged 30 years and more. In Nigeria, the reasons for domestic violence have been identified to include drunkenness, infidelity and financial misappropriation (Ilika, Okonkwo, & Adogu, 2002). Domestic violence against men is culturally regarded as a very serious offence. Instruments considered normal in exercising authority or discipline by a victim include abandonment, refusal of food cooked by the woman, denial or withholding of sex or money for food and divorce. It also attracts punishment in the form of fines with public apology from the perpetrator which is enforced by the victims' peers.

Studies show that violence against women can cause them to develop psychological disorders, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, phobia and panic, which problems can in turn adversely affect couples' sexual function and relationship (Jewkes & Darnall, 2008). Domestic violence can also have a negative impact on the pregnancy hygiene of women and increase the rate of deaths and fertility-related problems and disabilities among mothers, as well as stillbirth and pelvic inflammatory disease (Ismayilova & El-Bassel, 2014). Other physical consequences of sexual violence

for women are injury to the reproductive organs, sexual dysfunction, urinary system infections, infertility, STDs, AIDS, adoption of high-risk sexual behaviour, and a tendency to have multiple sexual partners (Shannon, Kerr, Strathdee, Shoveller, Montaner & Tyndall, 2009). The study of Ramezani, Keramat, Motaghi, and Pur (2015) revealed a significant negative relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction with domestic violence against pregnant women. Yari, Nouri, Rashidian and Nadrian (2013) found that level of sexual desire, woman's pleasure from intercourse, and spouse's inattention to woman's sexual satisfaction during intercourse were statistically significant predictors of sexual intimate partner violence (SIPV).

Domestic violence is a menace that is deeply entrenched in the society and has led to sudden death of many (especially women) across the globe. Supposedly, marriage that tends to bring joy and fulfillment during solemnization has been observed to breed sorrow, pains, discomfort and regret as a result of quarrelling and exchange of offensive words soon after the wedding ceremony. There has been frequent report of cases of domestic violence by media houses in homes with the women and the children at the receiving ends in Ekiti State. In many marriages and families, cruelty has replaced care and understanding among couples and in most cases, women are at the receiving end of this cruel act, some of these women have been turned into punching bags. From the aforementioned studies, it can be concluded that previous researches have focused on domestic violence and sexual satisfaction in other states and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the past studies have worked on domestic violence and its relationship with sexual satisfaction using Ekiti State as a case study. It is against this background that the researcher investigated the relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence as expressed by couples in Ekiti State.

Hypotheses

For this study, two hypotheses were postulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among married couples in Ekiti State.
2. Gender has no significant influence on domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study comprised all married adults in Ekiti State, Nigeria, while the target population consisted of married adults drawn from selected local governments within the three senatorial districts of Ekiti State. It was estimated that there are 927,167 married adults (Bureau of Statistics, 2010) in the state. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select sample for this study. At stage one, purposive sampling procedure was used to select married adults from the chosen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ekiti State based on magnitude of population of married adults in the LGAs. At stage two, proportional

sampling technique was used to select five (5) Local Government Areas across the (3) senatorial districts in Ekiti State based on the percentage proportion of married adults in the ratio 2:2:1 as follows: two LGA's from Ekiti South, two LGA's from Ekiti Central and one LGA from Ekiti North, proportionate to the population of married adults in each LGAs. At stage three, simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents from Ekiti Central, 100 respondents from Ekiti North and 100 respondents from Ekiti South. Thus, making a total of 300 respondents that was sampled for the study. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence Instrument" (DVI) constructed and validated by the researcher. Content validity of the instrument was done with the aid of experts in the field of Counselling Psychology and Tests and Measurement. They all agreed that the instrument covered the domain of interest. The test-retest reliability index was found to be 0.89 after two weeks interval of administration. The instrument consisted of two parts, A and B. Part A was designed to collect information on personal characteristics of respondents. Part B contained items that sought information on the participants' experience and involvement in domestic violence as well as the causes of domestic violence in relation with sexual related matters. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher and research assistants. An adapted four (4) point Likert format scale was used for the respondents to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement. Copies of the questionnaire were retrieved immediately after completion. Data collected were subjected to inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among married couples in Ekiti State.

To test this hypothesis, scores on spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among married couples were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Relationship between Spousal Sexual Satisfaction and Domestic Violence among Couples.

S	N	r-cal	r-tab
Spousal Sexual Satisfaction	300	0.736	0.195
Domestic Violence	300		

From Table 1, the value of r -calculated is 0.736 and the value of r -table is 0.195. Since the value of r calculated is greater than the value of r table, the hypothesis earlier stated that there is no significant relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among married couples in Ekiti State is hereby rejected at 0.05 level of significance. It shows that there is a significant relationship between spousal sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State.

Hypothesis 2: Gender has no significant influence on domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State.

In testing this hypothesis, mean scores of male and female subjects on domestic violence were compared for statistical significance using t -test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
t-test showing Domestic Violence between Male and Female Couples

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab
Male	128	60.88	8.13	298	1.746	1.960
Female	172	62.51	7.96			
P>0.05						

Table 2 shows that female respondents had higher mean score of 62.51 than their male counterparts (Mean=60.88) on domestic violence. However, the gender mean difference on domestic violence is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance on domestic violence. The value of t calculated is 1.746 while the value of t table is 1.960. Since the value of t calculated is lesser than the table value, the hypothesis earlier stated that gender has no significant influence on domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State was accepted.

Discussion

Finding from hypothesis 1 shows that there is a positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State. This finding corroborates that of Ibikunle (2004) who reported that a husband drowned his wife over an extra-marital affair with the Landlord; he further revealed that the mother of five children was bathed in concentrated acid by her husband on their matrimonial bed after the woman had refused her husband's incessant demands for sex. Evidence indicates that women experience more negative impact than men as a result of abuse and sexual dissatisfaction/sexual jealousy which are major factors that trigger such violence between spouses. Sexual jealousy is estimated to spark Intimate Private Violence between 7% and 41% of the times (Barnett, Martinez & Bluestein, 1995). The findings of this study also agreed with the findings of Soltani, Eskandari, Khodakarami, Parsa and Roshanaei (2017)

that lack of sexual knowledge leads to an increase in conflicts and sexual dissatisfaction. The findings of this study negates the study of Ramezani, Keramat, Motaghi and Pur (2015) which revealed a significant negative relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction with most domestic violence recorded against pregnant women.

Finding from hypothesis 2 shows that gender had no significant influence on domestic violence among married couples in Ekiti State. In most cases, women are the victims of domestic violence. This is at variance with the findings of Owuamanam and Akintoke (2013) that domestic violence ranked as the leading cause of injury to women, although rarely do men suffer serious injury. Also, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) posited that when violence is measured by acts, women are as violent as men but when violence is measured by injuries men are more violent, several authors have consistently reported higher prevalence figures of domestic violence against females as compared with males (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Coker, et al, 2002; Rennison, 2003;).

Conclusion

The study concluded that sexual satisfaction plays a role in constituting domestic violence among couples in Ekiti State. Also, gender is a non-potent variable to be considered in the matter of domestic violence among couples.

Recommendations

Based on the finding that sexual satisfaction plays a significant role in domestic violence, the study recommends that:

1. Couples should cautiously and intentionally be weary of the possible negative impact of not achieving sexual satisfaction and avoid it so as to attain marital fulfilment.
2. There is need for development of educational programs and pre-marriage counselling among to-be-couples.
3. The need for intending couples to attend marriage seminars is very important as to be equipped with the necessary information for a successful marital relationship.
4. A major strategy to prevent domestic violence against women should focus on women and their male counterpart, wives and their spouses, in order to participate in educative community level of prevention and intervention programs.
5. Male victims of domestic violence deserve the same recognition, sympathy, support and services as do female victims
6. Considering the outcome of the study, providing handy information about the relationship of sexual activity skills and marital satisfaction during marriage, counselling and consultation is crucial for the stability of the family. This is because it promotes a more harmonious home and marriage.

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