
FACTORS INFLUENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS MITIGATION STRATEGIES AMONG RURAL FARM HOUSEHOLDS IN IMO STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the factors influencing domestic violence and its mitigation strategies among rural farm households in Imo State Nigeria. Using multi stage and purpose sampling techniques, 120 respondents were selected from the three agricultural zones in Imo State. Data were obtained using interview schedule. The validity of the instruments was determined by experts in the field of rural development and reliability established using test-retest reliability method. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and Duncan Multiple Range Technique and multiple regression model were employed in data analysis. Results showed that the double-log⁺ function was approximately 0.98 and significant at its alpha level. Results also indicate that an average of 46.8% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements while 22.5% agreed, 16.1% strongly disagreed a 14.5% disagreed with the identified effects. The mitigation strategies adopted by respondents had mean values as follows retaliation (3.38), separation (3.40), heavy alcohol intake (3.38) family counseling (2.98) and giving satisfactory sex regularly to intimate partner (2.86). The factors influencing domestic violence was devastating, some variables increasing domestic violence, although family counselling plays important remedial role on livelihoods of rural farm households in minimizing its negative effects on rural farm households in Imo state. The study therefore recommended that there should be public enlightenment through the mass media on the side effects of domestic violence on victims.*

KEY WORDS: influencing, domestic, violence, mitigation, households

INTRODUCTION

Most farm households in Nigeria and beyond are plagued by domestic violence and this social crime has shattered the future of many households. It is a global phenomenon cutting across without national economic, religious geographical, and cultural boundaries. The global dimension of domestic violence is alarming because no society can deem it to be free of it. Domestic violence occurs at all levels between couples' parent-child relationships and between intimate partners' relationships such as marriage, cohabitation, dating and between older and younger siblings in the households (Adams *et al.*, 2008). Mariam Webster's Dictionary, (2000) defines violence as the inflicting of physical injury by one farm household member on another which is in a repeated habitual pattern of behavior. The United Nations (2007) defines domestic violence as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain control over another partner. Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of social class, race, gender, colour, age, religion and can take the forms of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic and psychological abuse.

Domestic violence is an issue of global concern, because every year millions of people worldwide suffer from it. Many women live in fear of injury, and death at home. World Health Organization (2018) estimated that about 35% of women across the globe experiences either intimate partner or non-partner violence. Domestic violence against women have been on the increase in Nigeria, everyday reports of husbands killing and maiming their wives (Alokan, 2013).

Nigeria is basically a patriarchal society where women's place within the scheme is decidedly subordinate because domestic violence is regarded as a means of enforcing conformity with the role of a women within customary society (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMWA), 2007). Traditionally, the beating of wives and children are widely sanctioned as a form of discipline (Ashimolowo and Otufale, 2012). Krug Datilberg and Mercy, (2002) stated that 64.4% of women in work places and 56.6% of market women admitted that they were victims of domestic violence. World Health Organization (2007) stated that intimate partner violence is perpetrated by men towards women although insignificant number of women rarely committed by women towards men. Nigeria Gender of Statistics (2013) shows that 30% of women in South East Nigeria suffer from physical violence while 12% of the victims of sexual abuse are from the South Eastern Nigeria in which Imo State is inclusive (FMWA and Social Development, 2013).

Furthermore, domestic violence has deprived women of security and hindered them from participating in economic and social activities which results in loss of life and property and decreased farm productivity. Ganeshpanchan, (2005) affirmed that women are essential components of rural economy and it is essential that these women take up additional work in farms to make up household income. Ashimolowo and Otufale, (2012) attested that the ability of these women to participate in farm activities depends on their personal security and the security of their landed property. Domestic violence threatens the security of engaging in their daily activities and free movement thereby restricting women's participation in income generating activities and additional responsibilities of providing for the family living.

Gender based violence has resulted in agricultural labour shortage because of its effect on health and high mortality (Villarreal, 2012). Rural households have agriculture as their major source of livelihood. Domestic violence may affect social life and livelihood because it may affect production process. Domestic violence leads to low agricultural production. Ijeoma, (2015) affirmed that rural farm household constitute the greatest share of agricultural labour force but earn low income. Livelihoods are sets of activities performed to live for a given life span. It involves people's capacity, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life. The sources of livelihoods of rural households include farming and non-farming economic activities, local craft work, tailoring, trading, own labour, fashion and designing and hair barbing.

Domestic violence is centered on socio-cultural norms of society. The factors influencing domestic violence such as religion and culture of patriarchy has increased the incidences of domestic Violence. More so, the non-enforcement of the law prohibiting domestic violence against women and maltreatment. Human rights violations such as male child preference, female genital mutilation and attitude to wife-beating show that this practice is unlikely to abate at a fast rate. This is shown by the fact 64.5% of female respondents agreed that at least one valid reason for wife beating, compared with

61.3% of male respondents. Some of the reasons advanced with the highest frequency include going out without telling the husband, (52.8%) for women and 49.9% for men, not cooking on time (63.3%) of women and 17.2% of men, refuses sex with him (37.5%) of women and 33.3% of men (Mgbada, 2010). The law on domestic violence is clearly inadequate especially regarding wife beating for instance. Section 55 of the penal code affirmed that wife beating is allowed as long as it does not amount to grievous hurt. As defined in Section 24 of the penal code, grievous hurt includes; emasculation, permanent loss of sight, facial disfigurement, and deprivation of joint, bone or tooth dislocation. Despite all efforts by governments and non-governmental organizations aimed at gender balance, eradication of wife beating and obnoxious practices against women and children, the issue of domestic violence continues to rage in alarming proportions. It is against the back drop that this study seeks to examine the factors influencing domestic violence on livelihood of rural farm households in Imo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. describe the socio-economic effects of domestic violence on livelihood of farm households
2. examine the factors influencing domestic violence in Imo State; and
3. ascertain the coping strategies used by victims of domestic violence in Imo State.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Imo State, Nigeria. It lies within latitude $4^{\circ} 45'N$ and $15^{\circ}N$ and longitude $6^{\circ} 50' E$ and $70^{\circ} 25' E$ of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bordered by Abia State on the east, River Niger, Delta State to the West, Anambra State to the North and Rivers State to the South. The state has a total land area of 5,530km with a population of 4.8million persons and the population density of 230-1400persons per square km. The state consists of 27 LGAs. The main occupation of the people is predominantly farming. The rainy season begins in April and lasts until October with annual rainfall varying from 1,500mm-2,200mm, an annual temperature above 20c creates an annual relative humidity of 75% with humidity reaching 90% in the rainy season. The dry season experiences two months of harmattan from late December to late February. The hottest period is between January and March. The people speak Igbo language and predominantly Christians. The population for the study consists of all farm households in Imo State. The sample frame consists of 1800 farm households registered with State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD, 2017) Multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques were used to select local government areas, communities and farm households. In the first stage, one (1) L.G.A. was purposely selected from each of the three agricultural zones in the state based on the prevalence of domestic violence victims in the areas. The LGAs were Owerri-North, Orlu and Isiala Mbano. This gave a total of three (3) LGAs. In the second stage two (2) communities were randomly selected based on the proximity and convenient to the researchers. The communities were; Uratta and Emekuku in Owerri North in Owerri zone, Amaraku Thirdly, 20 farm household heads were randomly selected based on the list of sample from the high prevalence of domestic violence, giving a total of 120 household heads that formed the sample size of 120 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was the interview schedule. The instrument made use of pilot testing conducted with 12 copies of the interview schedule administered on 20 household heads selected outside but near to the study area. After computing the scores with test-retest method using moment of correlation coefficient, a reliability coefficient value of 0.75 was obtained. The finding of this study provided the needed empirical evidence of factors influencing domestic violence and its mitigation strategies among

rural farm households in Imo state, Nigeria. The study will help to proffer solutions to the perennial problem of domestic violence in order to redirect younger intimate partners on the need to embrace peace and accommodate one another for improved family development.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Objectives i was analyzed using using inferential statistics (multiple regression model). Objective ii and iii were realized using 4-point Likert types rating scale of strongly agree = 4, agree = 3 strongly disagree = 2, and disagree = 1, based on the 10-item statements. Respondents mean scores were computed for each statement by adding the weight, thus $4+3+1+1 = 10/4 = 2.5$. any mean score greater than or equal to 2.5, implied used and otherwise not used. To determine the effect of domestic violence on livelihood of farm households, their responses were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, involving the percentages and tested using the Duncan's Multiple Range test (DMRT) involving the comparison of the largest score with the smallest using the shortest significant difference (SSD) for their relative position to each other at 5 % level of significance (Ogbunike *et al* 2003). While factors influencing the prevalence of violence in Imo State was analyzed using multiple regression model.

The model is implicitly shown

$$Y = F(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_9, X_{10}, X_{11} + e^i)$$

Where

Y = the dependent variable (occurrence)

x₁ = age at marriage (in years)

x₂ = educational level (number of years spent in school)

x₃ = cultural norms (dummy for culture acceptable = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₄ = self-care (dummy for ability to provide for oneself = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₅ = income level (High = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₆ = aggressive/delinquent behavior (dummy for hostility = 0 otherwise = 0)

x₇ = social classification (dummy for conducive otherwise = 1)

x₈ = extra marital affairs (dummy for sexing with another person yes = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₉ = self-esteem (dummy for self-esteem = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₁₀ = relatives/friends (dummy for violent families) = 1 otherwise = 0)

x₁₁ = women stereotyping (dummy for stereotyping = 1

e_i = error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table I: Factors Influencing Domestic Violence Among Rural Farm Intimate Partners in Imo State**

Exogenous Variable	Double Log	Exponential	Semi log	Linear
Constant	16.145	4.877	80.469	24.519
	-3.173	-0.066	-14.894	24.519
Age of marriage (x ₁)	(-5.132)	(-4.908)***	(-5.143)***	(-4.552)***
Educational level(x ₂)	0.340	0.016	1.904	-0.0291
	(3.088)***	(0.860)	(2.120)**	(-0.581)
Cultural norms(x ₃)	-0.148	0.026	-0.604	-0.051
	(-1.687)	(-1.095)	(-1.467)	(-0.773)
Self-Care (x ₄)	-0.092	-0.043	-0.510	-0.87
	(-1.270)	(-1.219)	(-1.505)	(-1.220)
Income level (x ₅)	-0.09	-0.039	0.334	-0.205
	(0.697)	(-1.227)	(1.458)	(-0.012)
Aggressive behavior(x ₆)	0.158	1.58E-006	-0.056	0.002
	(-0.808)		(0.087)	(0.456)
Social Class(x ₇)	0.108	0.109	0.054	2.11E006
	(0.629)	(0.804)	(-0.067)	0.884
Extra-marital affair (X ₈)	0.046	-0.091	0.054	0.359
	(-0.912)	(1.791)	(0.965)	(-1.467)
Self Esteem (x ₉)	0.189	0.246	1.659	-1.659
	(-1.082)	(1.078)	(-2.030)	(-2.030)
Relative/Friends(x ₁₀)	10.197	-0.001	0.471	-1.141
	(-1.015)	(-1.460)	(-3.006)***	(-1.253)
Women Stereotyping(x ₁₁)	-0.100	0.001	-0.127	-2.636
	(-0.462)	(1.116)	(-0.274)	(-0.802)
R2	0.982	0.981	0.977	0.003
R-2	0.970	961	0.964	0.960
F-Value	86.971***	82.800***	70.66***	0.960

Source: Field Survey 2019. Hints: * means significant at 5% level, ** means significant at 1% level, ***means significant at 10% level, values in parenthesis are t-ratios

The result in Table I shows that the double-log⁺ function was the lead equation. The double log F-ratio was R² approximately 0.982 indicating that about 98.2% of the variables were significant. The double-

\log^+ equation shows that x_i (age at marriage) was significant at 1% alpha level, which, implies that it had 95% confidence interval. This implies that rural farm household heads age (x_1) was negatively related to occurrence of domestic violence among intimate partners. This implies that the younger the intimate partners, the more the occurrence of domestic violence. This relationship is significant at 1% level as the t-calculated value of (5.132) is greater than the t-tabulated value. (2.750).

The farm household educational level (x_2) had positive influence on domestic violence. This implies that the less educational intimate partners are the more violent than the educated ones (Wilson 1996). This effect is significant at 1% level as the t-calculated value 3.088 was greater than t-tabulated value of 2.750. Household heads cultural norms (x_3), self-care (x_4), income (x_5), delinquent behaviour (x_6), social class, extra-marital affair (x_8), heavy alcohol intake (x_9), self-esteem (x_{10}), and friends and relatives (x_{11}) were all positive important determinants of the occurrence of domestic violence.

The F-statistics which determines the overall significance of a regression were significant at (2.750) the greater than the t-tabulated (360). The result indicates that the variables influencing domestic violence among the farm households were significant in other functions but not in the lead equation. The variables were significant at varying levels. Farm household heads livelihood and domestic violence were both significant at 1% probability level and have a negative relationship with each other. This finding agrees with the finding of Wilson, (1996) who observed that husband's abusers often come from homes that are hostile and harsh in the use of corrective measures such forms of discipline are common features in less educated families. This was supported by Umeh and Ndukuba, (2003) who observed that couples raised in hostile environment may grow up to be aggressive and abusive. Result shows that respondents agreed that poor couples relationship and self-care partners are factors influencing domestic violence. The above finding is in consonance with the assertion of Wilson, (1996) who identified adequate provision of needs as important needs of partners. Unfortunately, most husbands are unable to provide these needs of partners due to modern pressure of work and poor financial status. Ikpeazu (2008) who affirmed that inadequate finances due to husband's inability to provide for their wives need forced wives to learn to provide for themselves. This autonomous role makes partners to be violent.

Ikpeazu, (2008) observed that when wives are not adequately catered for by husbands they manifest abusive behaviors and other forms of anti-social behaviors. Njoku (2011) observed that socio-economic variables such as young age, low education and low income of couples also influence the prevalence of domestic violence among intimate partners. The implication of the study could lead to increase in poverty, increased divorce rates and deaths among the rural farm households with higher domestic violence occurrences.

Table II: Distribution of Respondents by Coping Strategies Used for Reducing Occurrences of Domestic Violence among Rural Farm Households.

Domestic violence coping strategies	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D(1)	Total Score	Mean	Decision
Retaliation	75(300)	25(75)	10(20)	10(10)	405	3.38	Agree
Separation	73(292)	25(75)	15(30)	12(12)	409	3.40	Agree
Heavy Alcohol intake	68(272)	22(66)	20(40)	10(10)	388	2.23	Agree
Family Counselling	48(192)	32(96)	30(60)	10(10)	358	2.98	Agree
Giving Satisfactory sex regularly to partners	38(152)	42(126)	25(50)	15(15)	343	2.86	Agree
Self Care	18(72)	22(66)	60(120)	20(20)	278	2.32	Disagree
Forgiveness	58(232)	32(96)	25(50)	5(5)	383	3.19	Agree
Seeking permission before going out	45(180)	25(75)	35(70)	15(15)	240	2.83	Agree
Participation in family cooking on time economic ...	50(200)	40(120)	20(40)	10(10)	370	3.08	
Participation in religious activities	22(88)	28(84)	55(110)	15(15)	297	2.47	

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Results in Table 2 reveals that a total of ten (10) coping strategies were adopted by farm households in reducing the severity of domestic violence in Imo State. The coping strategies include retaliation (3.38), separation (3.40), heavy alcohol intake (3.28), family counseling (2.98), participating in family economic achievement (3.08), giving satisfactory sex regularly (2.86), self-care/autonomous role (2.32), forgiveness (3.19), seeking permission before going out (2.83), participation in religious activities (2.47) and cooking on time had their mean above 2.5 bench mark. The coping strategies are family sustainability, alcohol intake, family counseling, giving sex regularly and seeking permission before going out, in ascending order of magnitude. Mgbada (2010) who observed that experiencing domestic violence with intimate partner can lead to heavy alcohol intake as a coping strategy. Supporting the above Umeh and Ndukuba, (2003) observed that intimate partners can develop self-care for providing

their own needs. The above finding is in consonance with the assertion of Wilson (1996) who identified adequate provision of needs as important with Ikpeazu (2008) who observed that family counseling and home visit by counseling services and religious bodies is important. The implication of the study can lead to increased number of orphans, hooligans and touts which can result to insecurity as a result of increased criminality in the society

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Their Responses To The Socio Effects Of Domestic Violence On Farm Households

Statements	Frequency Rate of Score					Total
	Strongly (4)	Agree	Agree (3)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Disagree (1)	
Miscarriage and Depressive Problems.	38 (31.7)		22 (18.3)	35 (29.2)	25 (20.8)	120 (100)
Prevents Economic Security and Self-Sufficiency	70(58.3)		28(23.3)	12(10.0)	10(8.3)	120(100)
Reduced Access to Financial Resource	55(45.8)		25(23.3)	20(16.7)	10(8.3)	120 (100)
Fear, Anger and Destroys Public Image of Families	52 (43.3)		28 (23.3)	22 (18.3)	18(15.0)	120 (100)
Low Farm Productivity and Income	75(62.5)		20 (16.7)	15(12.5)	10(8.3)	120(100)
Increase Vulnerability and Poor Condition of Victims	65(54.2)		25(20.3)	20(16.7)	10(2.3)	120(100)
Reproductive Health Problems and Adolescent Pregnancy	53(44.2)		27(22.8)	24(20.0)	16(13.3)	120(100)
Separation/Divorce	49(40.8)		21(17.5)	20(16.7)	30(25.0)	120(100)
Heavy Alcohol Intake and Prostitution	41(34.2)		59(49.3)	10(8.3)	10(8.3)	120(100)
Mean Score (%)	46.8		22.5	16.1	14.6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 identified nine items socio-economic effect of domestic violence on rural farm household in Imo State. an average of 46.8% of the respondents strongly agreed with the item statement, while 22.5% agreed, 16.1% strongly disagreed, as 14.6% disagreed with the socio-economic effects. The socio-economic effects of domestic violence on rural farm household, therefore take the following order: cause poverty, reduce income, low productivity, prevent economic security and self-sufficiency, increases vulnerability and poor condition of victims, limited victims access to financial resources, adolescence pregnancy promotes, fear, anger and destroy public, image of families, leads to separation of partners, heavy alcohol intake and prostitution and result in physical injuries, miscarriage and depressive disorder. These effects are geared towards the need to reduce domestic violence. The observations are in line with the assertions of Wilson (1996) and Alokun, (2013) who observed to the effect that domestic violence destroys families and society.

Although the respondents showed diverse reactions to item statement such as adolescence, low productivity, fear, anger, prostitution and destruction of family public image. They are potential socio-economic effect of domestic violence which are highly reduced in the long run and hence pose a challenge to the welfare of the society. Hence, fighting against domestic violence will bring a lot of succor to the intimate partners with corresponding reduction in the level of violence as the farm households will be encouraged in relations to the domestic problems. The implication of the finding could result in reduces insecurity and low prevalence of domestic violence leading to responsible citizen in the society and increased productivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicated high rate of domestic violence among rural farm households, due to heavy alcohol intake, low education, low income and cultural norms. It was observed that socio-economic effect of domestic violence included low farm productivity and reduced family labour. While coping strategies included separation and heavy alcohol intake.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that counselors should on regular basis organize community counseling programmes where intimate partners will be sensitized to recognize behaviors that constitute intimate partner abuse.

- ✓ An interactive forum should be established for husbands and wives. This will enable them to gain information on adequate intimate partners relationships and roles that discourage abusive behaviors
- ✓ Government at all levels should empower anti domestic violence law enforcement agencies to be effective in dispensing their functions and responsibilities as well as reviewing and implementing domestic violence laws that encourage domestic violence against women.
- ✓ There should be public enlightenment through the mass media on the side effects of domestic violence because it cuts across all socio-economic classes.
- ✓ An interactive forum should be established for husbands and wives. This will enable them to gain information on the adequate intimate partner relationship and its roles.

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