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Nexus Between Domestic Violence And Peace In Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The study was undertaken to establish the nexus between domestic violence and peace in the society, with communities in ONELGA (Ogba-Egbema Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State) as its area of study. The importance of the family as a building block in the society cannot be overemphasized, it is a no brainer therefore that a disorganization at the family level is akin to societal instability. Though domestic violence is perceived as a feminine phenomenon however, this study amongst other things intends to untraveled the bi-sexual nature of victims of domestic violence and ultimately its effects on the society. The study adopted the survey method in carrying out its investigation. a total of 400 respondents across the various communities in ONELA served the purpose of this study. Several questions were posed adequately to the respondents and recommendations are made. Some of these recommendations include; explore the cultural factors that contribute to or mitigate domestic violence. Analyze how cultural norms, traditions, and attitudes towards gender roles influence the prevalence of domestic violence. Develop recommendations for culturally sensitive interventions that promote peace within diverse societies, evaluate the effectiveness of legal measures, including protective orders, law enforcement practices, and court interventions, in promoting peace and ensuring the safety of survivors as well as examining the relationship between economic empowerment and domestic violence. Investigate how improving financial independence for individuals, particularly women might contribute to reducing incidents of domestic violence.
Keywords: Violence, Domestic Violence, Peace, Nexus, Child Abuse, Conflict, Crime, ONELGA

INTRODUTION

Domestic violence has been framed and understood exclusively as a woman's issue. It is a sociological fact that domestic violence affects women, but it also has devastating consequences for other members of the society. Men also can be victims of abuse, children are affected by exposure to domestic violence and formal institutions face enormous challenges resounding to domestic violence in their communities. The effects of domestic violence on victims are more typically recognized, but perpetrators also are impacted by their abusive behavior as hey sand to lose children, relationship are broken, and sometimes face legal

consequences. Domestic violence cuts across every segment of society and occurs in all age, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, sexual orientation and religious groups.

Domestic violence is a 'pattern of cohesive and assaultive behavior that include physical, sexual, verbal and psychological attacks and economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against members of the same household.' (Ganley and Scecher, 1996). Domestic violence is not typically a singular event and is no limited to only physical aggression.rather, it entails use of threats, intimidation, and physical violence by someone who seeks power and control over members of their household. Abusers use a specific tactics or combination of tactics to instill fear in and dominance over their partners. The strategic used by abusers are intended to establish a pattern of desired behavior from their victims.

This form of abuse has many forms including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects) or threats such as sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or dominance; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic derivation (Siemienuk et al, 2010). Domestic violence is not limited to obvious physical violence. It can mean endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnaping, unlawful imprisonment, trespass and harassment (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2011)

The phenomenon of domestic violence occurs in private within the family also in form of rape, acid attack among other. These acts affect the psychological wellbeing of the victim; and as such, they have the tendency to create a problem in behavioral pattern, especially of children in later years. Children of homes that frequently experience domestic violence have the great possibility of exhibiting some domestic violent behavior when such children become adults. Again, children that are abused are very much likely to be violent when they become adults. Some research findings have also shown that men who frequently abuse their wives have borderline personalities (between psychotics and neurotics), which they have developed in their early life (Don, & Sarzomski, 1999).

The developmental and psychological welfare of a child who was exposed to domestic violence is hampered due to the awareness of domestic violence that such children may have faced, it also generally impacts on how the child develops emotionally, socially, behaviorally as well as cognitively.

One of the most tragic outcomes of domestic violence is that well more than half of the young men between the ages of 11 and 22 who are in jail for homicide have killed their mother's batterer. Children growing in violent homes do not need to be physically abused to take to violent and delinquent behavior-it is enough to wines their mother's abuse (Igwe.2010)

There are homes were domestic violence have been perpetuated by the male partners against the wife, 'wife abuse' or that which the violence has been perpetuated by the wife against the male partner, 'husband abuse', or that violence which is congruent between the husband and a wife, 'mutual combats'. The violence could also be perpetuated by either parent against the child, 'child abuse'. The result of such violence most often than not result in broken marriages and subsequently single parenting. children who are therefore exposed to multiple tragedy of domestic violence, broken homes and single parenting becomes risk agents and readily willing medium to vices such as gang banging, kidnaping, armed banditry, assassination, rape etc.

Again, such children who are exposed to domestic violence are likely to develop behavioral problem such as regressing, exhibiting out of control behavior, and imitating behaviors. Other children act out through anger and are more aggressive than other children. Even in situation that do no call for It, children will respond with anger (NCH Fact Sheet, 1999). They may think that violence is an acceptable behavior of intimate relationship and become either the abuser or the abused. Some warning signs are bedewing, nightmares, distrust of adults, acting tough, having problems becoming attached to other people and isolating themselves from their close friends and family. Other behavioral response to domestic violence may be that the child may lie in order to avoid confrontation and excessive attention (Straus, et al, 1980).

Adolescents are in jeopardy of academic failure, school dropout, and substance abuse. Their behavior is often guarded and secretive about their family members and they may become embarrassed about their home situation. These young adults may not like to invite friends over and may want to spend their free

time away from home. Denial and aggression are their major forms of problem solving. (Peled, et ai, 1995)

According to Haavelsrud (1996), 'peace is dynamic social process in which justice, equity, and respect for basic human rights are maximized and violence both physical and structural are minimized. Peace could also be conceived as a situation of tranquility, calm, nonviolence and harmonious coexistence between individuals and groups in a society. it entails the elimination of violence where violence is an act or process which impedes people from realizing their potentials. Peace however does not necessarily mean complete elimination or absence of conflict, but a guarantee of proactive measures in place to avert conflict, and also having institutions that addresses and resolves conflict. Proactively reducing domestic violence as a risk factor to other violence and social vices will engender peace in the society. .

Domestic violence has the capacity and may rise to separation and divorce, separation and divorce in turn gives rise to social disorganization. Social disorganization gives rise to differential association, negative collective behavior and all forms of criminality. Suffice it to state that the vulnerable of domestic violence, especially children most often are catalysts for violence which erodes peace.

Statement of the Problem

Some people believe domestic violence occurs because the victim provokes the abuser to violent action, while others believe the abuser has a problem managing anger. In fact, the roots of domestic violence can be attributed to a variety of cultural, social, economic and psychological factors (NCVC, 1997). As a learned behavior domestic violence is mode led by individuals, institutions and society which may influence the perspective of children and adults regarding its acceptability.

Cultural patterns and practices have done very little to discourage the act of domestic violence. Similarly, formal institutions such as the police have at sometimes added to the dilemma. There are instances where a case of domestic violence is reported and it was met with trivial response or referred to as 'family issue'. The perpetrator's violence is further supported when peers, family members, or others in the community (e.g., coworkers, social service providers, police or clergy) minimize or ignore the abuse and fail to provide consequences. As a result, the abuser learns that not only is the behavior justified, but also it is acceptable.

It is consequent upon these observed variables that enforced domestic violence in the society that this research wants to carry out its investigations and proffer solutions to the problems of domestic violence.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of this study is to investigate the nexus between domestic violence and peace in Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of Rivers State. However, the specific objectives include:

To examine respondent's perspective of domestic violence.

To identify the vulnerable groups that face domestic violence in ONELGA.

To find out the causes of domestic violence in ONELGA

To investigate the effect of domestic violence on peace in ONELGA.

Research Questions

The research questions therefore are:

What are the respondent's perspective of domestic violence in ONELGA?

Who are the vulnerable groups that face domestic violence in ONELGA?

What are the causes of domestic violence in ONELGA?

How does domestic violence affect the peace in ONELGA?

Hypotheses of the study

The following alternate hypotheses will be used to test the research questions.

H1: there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and divorce in ONELGA.

H2: there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and social disorganization in ONELGA.

H3: there is a significant relationship between domestic violence and peace in ONELGA

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Defining Violence

In his book, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*, Hent de Vries (2002: 1) offers a basic and inclusive definition of violence as entailing 'any cause, any justified or illegitimate force, that is exerted – physically or otherwise – by one thing (event or instance, group or person, and, perhaps, word and object) on another'. The definition of violence as 'force', or at least the concept of force as violence, presupposes a relation between more than one, and thus a potential *play*, or worse, *opposition*, of forces. Violence as a condition of possibility is thus presupposed by any act of force. Any *real* violence (physical, psychological, social, etc.) might seem to presuppose an ideal (a priori or transcendental) violence – or even a radical non-violence. Yet the reverse is true as well: the thought of violence seems necessarily constrained by circumstances, contained by history.

Violence has physical and social contexts. This is typified by the World Health Organization's definition which emphasizes both physical and psychological dimensions:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high Likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. (WHO, 2020)

Violence matters wreck and shorten lives, causes pain and suffering, and is often part of rapid social change. The field of violence encompasses war, terrorism, securitization, ethnic 'cleansing', domestic violence, violent crime and hate crime. It has increasingly become a matter for public debate and intervention by states and other actors. The subject of Violence is becoming visibly important for sociology as a discipline, yet has often been dispersed and fragmented into specialist areas of analysis. Sociologists have contributed much to the intellectual understanding of violence as social processes and institutions; there are a multiplicity of sociological theories and perspectives under discussion and subject to vigorous critical debate, at global and national levels. While violence was a theme addressed by classical sociological theorists such as Marx and Engels (1967) and Weber (1968), it became less central after the Second World War (Malesevic, 2010). However, it did not disappear, but rather became fragmented, located in subfields often considered specialist, rather than core to 'theory'.

There have always been those who have analysed violence as central to societal developments and not reducible to other social processes (see Garland (2016) and Wacquant (20019) on crime and Mann (1986) and Shaw (2010, 2015) on war). There is a re-emergence of violence as more central to sociology, partly as a consequence of the greater inclusion of views from the South, from women and minorities, and partly because of the increased visibility and practice of violence in everyday life, governance and inter-state relations. Research on interpersonal violence in relation to inequalities of gender, ethnicity, religion and sexuality, as new forms of violence are documented and theorized (Abraham et al., 2002), and the inclusion of more perspectives from the global South, concerning experiences of postcolonialism, war and conflict zones (Caforio and Kümmel, 2015; Connell, 2017; Fanon, 1990) has raised questions about core issues of sociology.

Violence as child abuse

In homes where Men perpetuate violence against female partners is an issue of direct concern for children (Kitzmann et al., 2013). Almost all children in these families are subjected to the emotional cruelty of seeing, hearing or being aware of violence against their mother (Øverlien, 2007). In an increasing number of countries this form of cruelty to children is defined as child abuse and in current Swedish legislation children witnessing intimate partner violence are even defined as crime victims.

Researchers have pointed out that the notion of children 'witnessing' violence is often too limited to really capture children's experiences when one parent is violent against the other (Eriksson et al., 2007; Hydén, 1995). The concept of witnessing is easily associated with being a distant eye witness. This is a misrepresentation of children's position and it can easily lead to an underestimation of the problems children may suffer from. The impact upon children due to their closeness to both the abusive and abused

parent may be underestimated. Furthermore, the focus on the sense of vision may downplay the experiences.

Children live in the middle of violence and are often involved in some way, for example through attempts to stop the violence (e.g. Eskonen, 2015; Mullender et al., 2012). They can be in the next room or in the same room with their eyes shut. They may not see the violence, but they hear it. They can experience violence after the fact through marks on their mother. Thus children experience violence from one parent against the other by seeing it, hearing it, getting involved in it and/or through the consequences of violence (Edleson, 1999).

Gender based Violence

The gender question here implies that there is a disparity in the victimisation and experience of violence between male and female. While the male are the major perpetrators of this crime of violence, the female are usually on the receiving side. This situation is predominant is societies where patriarchy is cultural like in Africa. In Africa for instance, only in rare cases of women financial or status supremacy over the male or husband can you fine the woman in control within the domestic arena. At point violent can take the form of female against male. According to Cutterman (1991), in his view, states that it is economical, physical, social/mental suffering imposed on women by their gender counterpart, culturally based biases and stereotyping of women" All these are violation of the fundamental human rights of women. Gender-based violence affects millions of women all over the world irrespective of their location, educational, social and economic status and this in turn affect their productivity both in the homes, communities and places of work.

There are different types of gender-based violence, which occur at different levels such as the family, community, local government and state. Domestic violence is the most prevalent form of gender-based violence and this occurs mostly within the families and inside the homes. According to Eze, Olisa and Onunwa in Adekola and Falase (2006) women facing domestic violence often suffer physical and psychological consequences which usually affect their behavior and productivity. Adekola and Falase (2006) also revealed that domestic violence negatively correlates with women participation in community development. Violence against women within the general communities in Ikwerre ethnic nationality include battery, rape, sexual assault, forced treatment and the exploitation and commercialization of women's bodies. The social exclusion of women in some parts of the Ikwerre ethnic nationality is also a form of violence.

Violence against women is one of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action (PFA) on Women at the Beijing Conference in September 1995. In a statement to the Fourth World Conference on Women in that year, the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros. Boutros Ghali, observed that violence against women is a universal problem that must be universally condemned as it would be difficult to find one 58 woman, whom at one time or the other in her lifetime, had not been afraid merely because she is a woman.

For instance, Adekola, Oyebamiji and Ugwu (2009) noted that girls are usually the first to be withdrawn from school whenever the family suffers financial depression. This is based on nothing else except their gender. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least one in every five of the world's female population has been physically or sexually abused at some time (Population Reference Bureau, 2001).

Definitions of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another; also: a repeated / habitual pattern of such behaviour. The term "intimate partner violence" (IPV) is often used synonymously with domestic abuse/domestic violence. Family violence is a broader definition, often used to include child abuse, elder's abuse and other violent acts between family members (Markowitz, 2000). Wife abuse, wife beating, and battering are descriptive terms that have lost popularity recently for at least two reasons:

- There is acknowledgment that many victims are not actually married to the abuser, but rather cohabiting or in other arrangements (Waits, 1985).
- Abuse can take other forms than physical abuse. Other forms of abuse may be constantly occurring, while physical abuse happens occasionally.
- Males as well as females are victims of domestic violence.

These other forms of abuse have the potential to lead to mental illness, self-harm, and even attempts at suicide (Mayhew et al, 1999).

Nigeria and African conception of domestic violence

In Nigeria, women and girls are subjected to multiple forms of violence in the homes. However, the most common form of violence is wife battery ranging from slapping, kicking, verbal abuse, denial of financial resources, rape, and death. Due to a dearth of official statistics; it is difficult to establish the extent of domestic violence. However, it is believed that gender based violence is of "epidemic proportions," (Gender Action, 1997) and is "seldom reported because of fear of reprisal and lack of response from law enforcement officials... statistics relating to this problem would not be available until women are motivated to report domestic and other forms of violence." (Rennison, 2013).

Non-governmental organizations rely on media reports and the number of victims who come to them for assistance for statistics. For example, "No Safe Haven: An Annual Report of Attacks on Women in Nigeria," (Domestic Violence Assessment Policy, 2007) reports a total of 170 cases based on media reports covering the period from December 2014 to November 2015. These do not include incidents reported to the police or to civil society organizations. Obviously, this is just the tip of the iceberg, as hundreds of cases go unreported and undocumented.

Domestic violence cuts across all communities in Nigeria and at times is excused by a woman's actions or inaction. When a woman suffers violence due to failure to meet some socially accepted standard of behavior, such failure is usually an accepted excuse for the violence she suffers, especially within the family context. A woman could suffer violence for refusing sex, nagging, or challenging the man's behavior; for example, if he took a second wife or is an alcoholic. She could be subjected to violence for not preparing meals on time, having, or being under suspicion of having, a sexual relationship outside the marriage, or being accused of witchcraft.

Interestingly, under certain circumstances, women, more than men, tend to justify the infliction of violence. However, violence against women is a term collectively used to refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women basically because of their gender. United Nation General Assembly defines violence against women as "acts or gender based violence that result in physical suffering to women, including threat of such acts coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether accruing in public or private life" (Report of the fourth world conference on women /A/51/322). Gender Action (1996), in its view, states that it is economical, physical, social/mental suffering imposed on women by their gender counterpart, culturally based biases and stereotyping of women" All these are violation of the fundamental human rights of women. Gender-based violence affects millions of women all over the world irrespective of their location, educational, social and economic status and this in turn affect their productivity both in the homes, communities and places of work.

Definitions of Conflict

Careful analysis of these definitions will reveal what they have in common. First, they indicate the inevitability of conflict in human affairs. Second, they reveal key features of conflict situations. Many of the definitions, for example, stress that conflicts involve interdependent parties who perceive some kind of incompatibility between them.

Conflicts are communicative interactions among people who are interdependent and who perceive that their interests are incompatible, inconsistent, or in tension (Conrad, 1991). Conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving these goals (Stutman 1997).

Definition of Peace

Peace is defined as 'a political condition that ensures justice and social stability through formal and informal institutions, practices and norms'. Miller and King (2003). It is dangerously misleading to think that the absence of war means the presence of peace. It is also important to know that simply avoiding conflicts, does not mean peace, but acting in accordance to some of the conditions that must be met to guarantee peace in any society. Balance political power sharing in any region; legitimacy for decision makers and implementers in the eyes of their respective groups, supported by external parties through transparency and accountability; recognized and valued interdependence among the people fostering long-term co-operation during disagreements, agreements, normality and crises; trusted and reliable institutions for resolving conflicts; mutual understanding of incompatibility, and every member of that community must be given a sense of respect and belonging in principle and practice, collectively and individually in accordance with international standards. All these conditions mentioned above come to guarantee positive peace. Peace sought outside the premise of social justice as mentioned above is called negative and it is not true peace.

Theoretical Framework

The quality of the family environment has proven to be an important factor in the identity development of young adults (Markland & Nelson, 1993). It appears that the family structure is not the only factor which may negatively affect the future adjustment of young adults. Divorce is considered to have the most harmful effects for the children involved in relation to future adjustment. Research has supported the presence of family conflict resulting from domestic violence as a factor that may have negative effects caused by the event of divorce (Markland & Nelson). Even if a family's structure is intact, the presence of familial conflict results in reports of a significantly lower self-concept by young adults in the areas of confidence, sexual identity, and body concept (Markland & Nelson). Further, exposure to familial conflict may affect the societal balance and hinder the expectations to development for these young adults, which may damage interpersonal relationships later in life.

Social Learning Theory of domestic violence

The social learning theory provides a broad analysis to examine the individual within the larger social context in which he/she is situated (Barnett, Perrin & Perrin, 2005). The social learning school of thought is of the view that experiencing violence in the family of origin contributes to one's risk of committing wife abuse during adulthood (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, Malla, Mazaheri & Poisson, 1998). Thus, the theory argues that people model behaviour that they were exposed to as children. By the same token, they state that violence is learned through role models provided by the family either directly or indirectly and reinforced in childhood and continued in adulthood as a coping response to stress or a method of conflict resolution (Mihalic & Elliot). Barnett, Perrin & Perrin (2005), state that:

"*Abusive parents provide children with a classroom for learning specific forms of abusive behaviours, particular attitudes, and distinct cognitions that justify violence"(p327).*

In similar fashion, people attend to the modelled behaviour of the significant others, encode this behaviour and integrate it through motor reproduction. Moreover, the amount of observational learning that take place is dependent on a number of factors including, observed and experienced rewarding or deterring consequences of the behaviour and the characteristics of the observer and the individual modelling the behaviour (Loseke et al, 1998).

Bandura (1977) discussed the process of developing behavior through either firsthand experience or attending to another's behavior. Social learning by response consequences takes place when individuals observe or experience behaviors causing either positive or negative responses. Specific behaviors can be chosen or eliminated based on this process of differential reinforcement. As a result, many roles are achieved through response consequences such as passing on knowledge, provoking motivation via rewards, and immediately causing responses to strengthen.

Bandura (1977) stated, "Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p. 22).

Bandura identified four operations of observational learning, including attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation processes, which result in the acquisition of knowledge.

Attentional processes are important because the one observing must be aware of the details of the behavior taking place (Elliott, Kratochwill, Cook, & Travers, 2000). One will be able to imitate this behavior if close attention is paid to the details of the model. Second, an observer needs to be able to form a picture in his or her mind of the behavior being observed. This allows for the observer to retain the behavior so it can be imitated.

Empirical Framework

Societal Responses to Domestic Violence

Many people believe that, the historical inequality of women and gender socialization of females and males contribute to the causes of domestic violence (Pence and Paymar, 1993). Until the1970's, women who were raped or suffered violence in their homes had no formal place to go for help or support (Markowitz, 2001). Shelters and services for victims of domestic violence did not exist and there was little, if any, response from criminal or civil courts, law enforcement, hospitals, and social service agencies. Society and its formal institutions viewed domestic violence as a "private matter." As awareness and recognition of this problem grew, groups of women organized an advocacy movement that focused on addressing the safety needs of victims and the systemic barriers and social attitudes that contributed to domestic violence. The need for safe alternatives for victims of domestic violence is pertinent and transformation needed. it is in this light that the Battered Women's Movement contributed immensely to the survival of victims of domestic violence. In collaboration with feminists, community activists, and survivors of rape and domestic violence, the following goals were aimed at: (1) securing shelter and support for victims and their children, (2) improving legal and criminal justice responses, and (3) changing the public consciousness about domestic violence (Schechter, 2000).

Society's recognition that domestic violence is no longer a private matter, but a widespread social problem, is evidenced in the establishment of approximately 2,000 shelters and domestic violence programs, legislation in every State identifying domestic violence as a criminal act, legal rights to civil protection orders, and Federal legislation that provides funding and national recognition regarding its seriousness.

Effects of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence physically, psychologically and socially affects women, men and their families. Initially, the abuse usually is an attempt by one partner to exert control through intimidation, fear, verbal abuse or threats of violence. Victims of domestic violence may be isolated from friends, family and neighbors and lose their network of social support. With time, the abusive partner, or batterer, may use increasingly severe methods to maintain control. Eventually the violence may lead to serious injury and can result in hospitalization, or death.

Domestic violence robs victims of their fundamental right to maintain control over their own lives. Individuals who are abused live in fear and isolation in the one place they should always feel safe, their home. With tremendous courage and strength, they struggle each day to keep themselves and their children safe. Child abuse and domestic violence often occur in the same family. Researchers have found that 50 percent to 70 percent of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abused their children. (Quoted in Igwe, 2016)

Effects of domestic violence on children

Effects of domestic violence on children, result from witnessing domestic violence in a home where one of their parents are abusing the other parent, plays a tremendous role on the well-being and developmental growth of children witnessing the violence. In 2009 in the Philippines, it was estimated that as many as 7 to 14 million children were exposed to domestic violence with about 3.3 million children exposed to

domestic violence in their homes every year (Women's Work Program, 1994). Children who witness domestic violence in the home often believe that they are to blame, live in a constant state of fear and are 15 times 148 more likely to be victims of child abuse. Close observation during an interaction can alert providers to the need for further investigation and intervention, such as dysfunctions in the physical, behavioral, emotional, and social areas of life, and can aid in early intervention and assistance for child victims.

Physical symptoms

In general, children who witness domestic violence in the home can suffer a tremendous amount of physical symptoms along with their emotional and behavioral state of despair. These children may complain of general aches and pain, such as headaches and stomach aches. They may also have irritable and irregular bowel habits, cold sores, and they may have problems with bedwetting. These complaints have been associated with depressive disorders in children, a common emotional effect of domestic violence. Along with these general complaints of not feeling well, children who witness domestic violence may also appear nervous, as previously mentioned, and have short attention spans. These children display some of the same symptoms as children who have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. On the reverse, these children may show symptoms of fatigue and constant tiredness. They may fall asleep in school due to the lack of sleep at home. Much of their night may be spent listening to or witnessing violence within the home. Children of domestic violence victims are frequently ill, and suffer from poor personal hygiene. Children who witness domestic violence also have a tendency to partake in high risk play activities, self-abuse, and suicide (National Institute of Justice, 2006).

Behavioral symptoms

Children exposed to domestic violence are likely to develop behavioral problems, such as regressing, exhibiting out of control behaviour, and imitating behaviors. Children may think that violence is an acceptable behavior of intimate relationships and become either the abused or the abuser. Some warning signs are bed-wetting, nightmares, distrust of adults, acting tough, having problems becoming attached to other people and isolating themselves from their close friends and family. Another behavioral response to domestic violence may be that the child may lie in order to avoid confrontation and excessive attention getting (Straus, et al, 1990).

Adolescents are in jeopardy of academic failure, school drop-out, and substance abuse. Their behavior is often guarded and secretive about their family members and they may become embarrassed about their home situation. Adolescents generally don't like to invite friends over and they spend their free time away from home. Denial and aggression are their major forms of problem solving. Teens cope with domestic violence by blaming others, encountering violence in a relationship, or by running away from home (Peled, et al, 1995).

Emotional symptoms

Children exposed to violence in their home often have conflicting feelings towards their parents; For instance, distrust and affection often coexist for the abuser. The child becomes overprotective of the victim and feels sorry for them. They often develop anxiety, fearing that they may be injured or abandoned, that the child's parent being abused will be injured, or that they are to blame for the violence that is occurring in their homes. Grief, shame, and low self-esteem are common emotions that children exposed to domestic violence experience (Peled, et al, 2016).

Depression

Depression is a common problem in these children. The child often feels helpless and powerless. More girls internalize their emotions and show signs of depression than boys. Boys are more apt to act out with aggression and hostility.[9] Witnessing violence in the home can give the child the idea that nothing is safe in the world and that they are not worth being kept safe which contributes to their feelings of low self-worth and depression (Peled, et al, 1999).

Anger

Some children act out through anger and are more aggressive than other children. Even in situations that do not call for it, children will respond with anger (NCH Fact Sheet, 2000).

Role reversal

There is sometimes role reversal between the child and the parent and the responsibilities of the victim who is emotionally and psychologically dysfunctional are transferred to the child. In this situation, the parents treat their child as a therapist or confidant, and not as their child. They are forced to mature faster than the average child. They take on household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger children. The responsibilities that they take on are beyond normal assigned chores, and are not age appropriate. The child becomes socially isolated and is not able to participate in activities that are normal for a child their age. The parentified child is at risk for becoming involved in rocky relationships because they have been isolated and are not experienced at forming successful relationships. Also they tend to become perfectionists because they are forced to live up to such high expectations for their parents (National Institute of Justice, 1999).

Social symptoms

Children exposed to domestic violence frequently do not have the foundation of safety and security that is normally provided by the family. The children experience a desensitization to aggressive behavior, poor anger management and problem solving skills, and learn to engage in exploitative relationships (Ewing and Patrick, 1989).

School age children exposed to domestic violence present with an excessive worry of possible danger and feelings of resentment towards the perpetrating party. Symptoms include isolation from friends and relatives in an effort to stay close to siblings and victimized parent. Adolescent children present with a difficulty in trusting adults and engage in excessive social involvement to avoid volatile situations at home. The adolescent may display these symptoms by joining a gang or becoming involved in dating relationships that mimic the learned behaviour. Children exposed to domestic violence require a safe nurturing environment and the space and respect to progress at their own pace. The caretaker should provide reassurance and an increase sense of security by providing explanations and comfort for the things that worry the children, like loud noises.

The children should develop and maintain positive contact with significant others such as distant family members. All family members are encouraged to become involved in community organizations designed to assist families in domestic violence situations.(Quoted in Igwe,2016)

Family Conflict

No matter how well a family gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with each other, want different things, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Families also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences.

DIVORCE

Meaning and Understanding of Divorce: Edet Ukpong has defined divorce as, "a legal dissolution of the marriage relation; any formal separation of a man and his wife according to established custom; a complete separation of any kind" (2014:185). The word originally referred to the dissolution of legal marriage, though it is now also being used for the separation of two institutions or situations, one from the other, e.g. the separation of the state from the church or other religious bodies. Worthy of note is the fact that, there is no divorce except there was a legal bond of marriage. Hence, when people who co-habited decide to separate, one cannot speak of them as being divorced because they were not officially married. Divorce is a "recognized datum of modern life, though it is not always socially approved" (Allan Fromme 1969:131). It is anti-social and unlike marriage is not often celebrated – no fanfare, eating, dancing, etc. It is often gloomy and very traumatic because of the reason(s) and the concomitants of divorce. Divorce is never a day's journey, it takes time and in some cases it is very cumbersome. The reason for divorce process being cumbersome is to give the couple time for proper thinking and a re-think about their decision to divorce.

DIVORCE AND CHILDREN

Divorce affects all strata of family and society, because marriage is a social contract. Therefore anything that affects marital bond must advertently or inadvertently affect the society. Since the focus of this paper is on effects of divorce on children, we will limit our work to it. This brings us to the definition of who a child is.

Causes of Divorce: There are several reasons that are adducible to divorce which can range from religionists, economists, anthropologists, medical scientists, sociologists, etc. who proffered cause(s) for divorce, however the interest of this study is sociological variable of domestic violence.

Domestic violence: Domestic and gender violence accounts for some of the divorce cases. In cases where "violence is meted out on the woman in marriage by either the spouse or in-laws, it may lead to divorce, especially in this age of gender equality and equity" (Eyo 2016:131). The violence can be physical, sexual, verbal, economic, emotional, etc. violence.

Effect of Divorce

The effects children experience as a result of divorce can range from increased coping skills on one end to psychosocial problems on the other end. Schwartz and Kaslow (1997) point out that the effects of divorce on children do not always have to be negative. Some children make the transition from an intact to non-intact home with increased coping skills. On the other hand, even though divorce may be the best solution for failed marriages, it often leaves long-lasting effects on children that may take place in the form of psychosocial problems. One of the possible psychosocial problems may include idealistic or pessimistic future marital expectations that negatively affect relationships and future marriages.

Problems of Adjustment: The children will confront questions from their peers, particularly when they are in primary or nursery school, about why they have only one parent at home. They will have to adjust to a change in primary relationships, and possibly to restricted interaction with one of the parents (mostly the father). Apart from this, "they have to cope with parental conflict, which may continue after the divorce, and with attempts by each parent to gain the child's loyalty and affection at the expense of the other parent" (Lauer 1995:251). It is not surprising then, that children whose parents are divorced are prone to both emotional and physical problems. Those whose parents divorced when they were young adults tend to find the experience painful and disillusioning, and they have a difficult time adjusting to the dissolution of the marriage bond between their parents.(Quoted in Eyo,2018)

Psychological Problems: Divorce tends to affect the children of divorced parents psychologically. Sometimes the children feel withdrawn when they are with their peers, especially when their peers are discussing about their own parents and family life. They may even carry this psychological problem into their own marriages.

Object of Abuse by Parents/Others: Sometimes, divorced parents vent their anger on their children in the absence of their divorced spouse. They transfer aggression to their children. This often than not affects the children's self-esteem who may also become objects of abuse and ridicule by the larger society. Therefore instead of having parental warmth which is expected of a growing child, these children end up having abuses.

Hatred Towards One's Parent: Sometimes children from divorced marriages tend to develop hatred towards one of the parents whom they feel was the cause of the divorce. This is usually based on the information they received, especially when the divorce happened when they were very young.

Lack of Balance Training: Children are normally expected to be trained by both parents – each supplying what may be deficient in the life of the other parent. In the case of divorce, the children will only be trained by one parent. Single parenthood have its own flaws which are easily transferred to the children.

Prone to Social Problems: Lauer rightly points out that, "children from divorced marriages are prone to social problems" (1995:442). With the deficiency in their upbringing, they may decide to join peers and adults outside who may introduce them to vices which are inimical to their lives and that of the society. They may indulge in sexual vices, illicit drugs, alcoholism, robbery, etc. Even though children from unbroken homes may also be involved in these vices, Lauer maintains that the rate is more among

children from divorced homes (444). Children from divorced homes may use the visit of one parent as an avenue of going out to perpetuate evil. This may increase their propensity to social problems. (Quoted in Eyo, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A researcher uses research design to serve as a scheme or a blueprint for data collection, and to help him know the variable will be observed, controlled or manipulated to generate necessary primary data for the study (Asika, 1991)

This exploratory cross-sectional survey research design was used in this study. This method explores the relationship between variables in the population by selecting an unbiased sample and generalizing the findings on the entire population. The method will be suitable for this study, because the study seeks to investigate the relationship between domestic violence and peace in ONELGA. As explained by Asika, one major characteristic of all survey designs is lack of control.

Population of the Study

The population of study is all the communities in ONELGA. As indicated in the appendix, there are a total of 65 communities in ONELGA.

Sample Size And Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study is comprises of sixty nine (69) communities in ONELGA. This is done with a view to ensure that the sample estimate is as accurate as possible and serve as an accurate representation of the population from which it will be drawn. In order to ensure an unbiased sample, every subject of the population will be given an equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample. This will be made possible by the use of systemic sampling technique.

The communities that constitute the population of the study will be serially listed in alphabetical order as will be shown in the appendix. To obtain the sample size for this study the Taro Yamane shaming formula will be applied to the general population of ONELGA giving as 407,400 (National Bureau of Statistics,2022) after obtaining the sample size the respondents are going to be selected from the communities in ONELGA, using the Systematic sampling technique.

The formula for Taro Yamane is given: $n=\frac{N}{(1+N(e)2)}$

Where: n = sample size

N= Population under study

e= margin error.

Calculating therefore a 407,400 population using a margin error of 0.05 gives:

$$\frac{407,400}{(1+47,400\,(0.05)\,2)} \approx 400$$

Data Collection Instrument

Asika (1991) opined that a data collection instrument is a device for collecting the data or measuring the variables, which are used for answering research questions and or testing study hypotheses. This research is going to combine the instrumentality of questionnaire and interview appropriately to the respondents, male and female population from the ages of 10 to 60years. The questionnaires will be structured and unstructured questions to appropriately get the required responses for the testing of the research hypotheses.

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Table 4.1 Demography of Respondent

S/N	Population Category	No_	%
1	Chiefs/Community Elders	63	15.75
2	Women groups	63	15.75
3	Youth Leaders / Students	130	32.5
4	Opinion Leaders	63	15.75
5	Police	40	10
6	Social Workers	41	10.25
	Total	400	100

Research Questions.

Question One*: What are the respondents' perspective/Understanding of Domestic Violence?*

To analyze this variable the following questions were posed to children/youths that constitute the research population.

Please circle how many times your parents did each of these things while interaction with each other.

Parents during your childhood

1 = Once
2 = Twice
3 = 3-5 Times
4 = 6-10 Times
5 = 11-20 Times
6 = More than 20
0 = Never

A. Insulted or used abusive words at him/her
B. Threatened to hit or throw something at him/her
C. Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something
D. Threw something at him/her
E. Choked him/her

Table 4.2. Table Response on perspective/Understanding of Domestic Violence

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
								Total
Insulted or used abusive words at him/her			16		20		29	**65**
Threatened to hit or throw something		19		13			18	**50**
Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something		13		22	30			**65**
Threw something at him/her	4	8	13	14	9			**48**
Choked him/her	18	15		6	3		5	**47**

From the table above the first item which ask sample respondents which are students in this instance how many times they witnessed each of their parents Insulted or used abusive words at the other: sixteen (16) respondents summited that they witnessed the action in question twice and rezones this is captured under column heading '2', while twenty nine (29) respondents submitted that they have witnessed the action in question for more than twenty (20) times. This is captured under column heading '6'. The other items such as threatening to hit or throw something, Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something, threw something at him/her and choked him/her are interpreted in like manner.

Question Two: ***Who are the vulnerable group of domestic violence?***
To analyze this variable the following questions were posed to the respondents and varied options were provided for them to choose from**.**

Victims due to Community Services and Societal Values:
•Lack of or inadequate community resources.
•Lack of or inadequate community victim advocacy services.
•Weak punishment for committers of domestic violence.

Emotional and physical impairment:
•I cannot survive without my husband/wife.
•I depend on him/her for financial survival.
•I have an ailment/sickness that he/she is of great assistance
•I have a physical disability that nobody else can assist me.

(C) **Cultural hurdles:**
• Men are superior to women
• Men are the "head of their household".
• Men have the right to use violent or abusive behaviour to control their wives.
• Men have the right to use violent or abusive behaviour to control their children.

Financial dependence:
• Access to any income.
• Prevented from obtaining an education.
• Prevented from obtaining an employment.
• Lack viable job skills.
• Lack of affordable day care.
• Lack of safe housing.
• Lack of health benefits.

Table 4.2. Table Response on vulnerable group to domestic violence

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	Total
Victims due to Community Services and Societal Values	80	120	55	80	**335**
Emotional and physical impairment	68	132	47	88	**335**
Cultural hurdles	130	100	69	36	**335**
Financial dependence	138	92	72	33	**335**

From the table above respondents were asked the reasons and persons who are most vulnerable to domestic violence. the responses from the table indicate that in column one, which is 'Victims due to Community Services and Societal Values' under this heading are options such as Lack of or inadequate, community resources, lack of or inadequate community victim advocacy services and weak punishment for committers of domestic violence. Some of the respondents eighty (80) in particular strongly agreed **(SA**), while one hundred and twenty (120) respondents agreed **(A**) to some of the issued averred as to why people are susceptible and vulnerable to domestic violence. On the disagreement continuum for this question fifty five (55) respondents disagreed **(D)** while eighty (80) respondents strongly disagreed **(SD).** These differences may have originated due to varied cultural, social, economic backgrounds. Similarly the last response which adduced vulnerability to financial dependence, one hundred and thirty eight (138) respondents strongly agreed (**SA**), ninety two respondents (92) agreed **(A),** while on the disagreement continuum seventy two (**72**) respondent disagreed **(D)** and thirty three (33) respondents strongly disagreed**(SD)**

Question three: *What are the effects of domestic violence?*

To analyze this variable the following questions were posed to the respondents and varied options were provided for them to choose from.

How do you think in your opinion that victims of domestic violence will be affected?

Effects of Domestic Violence

•Emotional withdrawal
•Denial or minimization of the abuse
•Impulsivity or aggressiveness
Apprehension or fear
•Helplessness
•Anger
•Anxiety or hyper-vigilance
•Disturbance of eating or sleeping patterns
•Substance abuse
Depression
•Suicide.

Table Response.

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Single Parents/divorcees	19	12	6	4	**41**
Married Persons	12	18	8	2	**40**
TOTAL	**31**	**30**	**14**	**6**	**81**

From the above respondents were required to tick the items in a sale of one (1) to 10(ten) above as indicative as effects of domestic violence. The above table represents the response of the respondents.

The chi-square formula is therefore used to guide the test of the hypotheses.

Formula: $\frac{VT \times HT}{GT}$

$\{x^2 = \sum : \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} = \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} + \ldots\ldots\ldots \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} 8\}$

Where VT= vertical total
HT= Horizontal total
GT= Ground total
O= Observed scores
e=expected scores.

Calculating for (SA) Strongly Agree.

$\frac{31 \times 41}{81}$ = 15.69. $\frac{31 \times 40}{81}$ = 15.30

Calculating for (A) Agree

$\frac{30 \times 41}{81}$ = 15.18. $\frac{30 \times 40}{81}$ = 14.8

Calculating for (D) disagree

$\frac{14 \times 41}{81}$ = 7.08. $\frac{14 \times 40}{81}$ = 6.91

Calculating for (SD) strongly disagree

$\frac{6\times41}{81}$ = 3.03 $\frac{6\times40}{81}$ = 2.96

$x^2 = \sum : \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} = \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} + \ldots\ldots\ldots \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} 8$

$$\frac{(19-15.67)^2}{15.69} + \frac{(12-15.30)^2}{15.30} + \frac{(12-15.18)^2}{15.18} + \frac{(18-14.8)^2}{14.8} + \frac{(6-7.08)^2}{7.08} + \frac{(8-6.91)^2}{6.91} + \frac{(4-3.03)^2}{3.03} + \frac{(2-2.96)^2}{2.96}$$

= 7.31-5.6-5.68+7.09-1.9+2.35+2.25-1.6 =4.21

DF (degree of freedom) 2-1 e.i 4.2- 1 = 3.21

At 0.05 level of significance the critical table value is 1.82, since the critical table value is less than the calculated chi-square value of 3.21 we conclude that there is significant relationship between domestic violence and divorce rate in Rivers state.

Question four: *What are the causes of domestic violence?*

To analyze this variable the following questions were posed to the respondents and varied options were provided for them to choose from.

What do you think in your opinion is the reason for the use violence in relationships.

Sensitive nature of one's job..

•When a wife makes excessive demand from her husband.

•High temperament.

•Low self-esteem,

Social effects

•Socialization from friends.

•Watching or seeing a neighbor or relative use violence.

Resources

•Family where only one partner provides the needs.

•Where both partners provide the problem of control and power may provoke conflict.

•**Alcohol and Drug use.**

Table Response.

	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**TOTAL**
Police/Social workers/	19	12	6	2	**41**
Opinion holders/ members of public	13	17	8	4	**40**
TOTAL	**32**	**29**	**14**	**6**	**81**

From the above respondents were required to tick the items in a sale of one (1) to 10(ten) above as indicative of possible causes of domestic violence. The above table represents the response of the respondents.

The chi-square formula is therefore used to guide the test of the hypotheses.

Calculating for (SA) Strongly Agree.

$\frac{32\times41}{81}$ = 16.19. $\frac{32\times40}{81}$ = 15.8

Calculating for (A) Agree

$\frac{29\times41}{81}$ = 14.7 $\frac{29\times40}{81}$ = 14.32

Calculating for (D) disagree

$\frac{14\times41}{81}$ = 7.08. $\frac{14\times40}{81}$ = 6.91

Calculating for (SD) strongly disagree

$\frac{6\times41}{81}$ = 3.03 $\frac{6\times40}{81}$ = 2.96

$$x^2 = \sum : \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} = \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} + \ldots\ldots\ldots \frac{(Oi-ei)^2}{ei} 8$$

$$\frac{(19-16.19)^2}{16.19} + \frac{(13-15.8)^2}{15.8} + \frac{(12-14.7)^2}{14.7} + \frac{(17-14.32)^2}{14.32} + \frac{(6-7.08)^2}{7.08} + \frac{(8-6.91)^2}{6.91} + \frac{(2-3.03)^2}{3.03} + \frac{(4-2.96)^2}{2.96}$$

= 6.10-5.08-4.90+5.86-1.99+2.35-1.60+2.25 =2.99

DF (degree of freedom) 2-1 e.i 2.99- 1 = 1.99
At 0.05 level of significance the critical table value is 1.82, since the critical table value is less than the calculated chi-square value of 1.99 we conclude that there is significant relationship between domestic violence and divorce rate in Rivers state.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the pervasive issue of domestic violence poses a formidable barrier to the attainment of peace within society. The cycle of abuse perpetuates not only physical harm but also erodes the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals, disrupting the harmony essential for a peaceful coexistence. Addressing domestic violence requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses legal reforms, robust support systems, and comprehensive education to challenge ingrained societal norms. By fostering a culture of empathy, awareness, and intolerance for violence within the home, societies can strive towards a more peaceful and harmonious future.

Achieving lasting peace in society necessitates the recognition that domestic violence is not merely a private matter but a pervasive social ill that demands collective intervention. When individuals, communities, and institutions unite to condemn and combat domestic violence, a ripple effect is created, contributing to the establishment of a society where respect, equality, and non-violence are paramount. Prioritizing the eradication of domestic violence becomes an integral step towards building a foundation for enduring peace, where individuals can flourish free from the shadows of fear and abuse, and communities can thrive in an environment that champions justice, equality and compassion.

In conclusion, addressing domestic violence is not only a matter of safeguarding the well-being of individuals within the confines of their homes but also a pivotal step towards fostering peace in society at large. The pervasive nature of domestic violence ripples beyond the immediate victims, contributing to a broader atmosphere of fear, mistrust, and instability. By prioritizing comprehensive prevention strategies, robust legal frameworks, and support systems for survivors, societies can break the cycle of violence and

pave the way for a more harmonious and peaceful coexistence. Achieving lasting peace requires a collective commitment to dismantling the deeply ingrained societal norms that perpetuate domestic violence, fostering empathy, and promoting education on healthy relationships. As individuals, communities, and nations come together to challenge the roots of domestic violence, the foundations for a more peaceful and just society can be laid, where every individual can thrive in an environment free from fear and oppression…

RECOMMENDATIONS

Certainly, domestic violence is a critical issue that intersects with various aspects of society, including peace and well-being. Here are six research topic recommendations related to domestic violence and its impact on peace in society:

1. **Long-Term Effects of Domestic Violence on Children and Society:** Explore the lasting consequences of domestic violence on children and how these effects ripple through society, influencing factors such as mental health, education, and future relationships. Investigate potential interventions to break the cycle and promote peace.
2. **The Role of Economic Empowerment in Reducing Domestic Violence:** Examine the relationship between economic empowerment and domestic violence. Investigate how improving financial independence for individuals, particularly women, might contribute to reducing incidents of domestic violence and fostering a more peaceful society.
3. **Community-Based Approaches to Domestic Violence Prevention:** Focus on the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in preventing domestic violence. Explore the role of grassroots organizations, support networks, and community education programs in creating a culture of non-violence and fostering peace within local communities.
4. **Technology and Domestic Violence: Implications for Peace in the Digital Age:** Investigate the impact of technology on domestic violence dynamics. Examine how digital tools and social media can be both a resource and a risk factor in cases of domestic violence. Propose strategies to leverage technology for prevention and support, ultimately contributing to societal peace.
5. **Cultural Perspectives on Domestic Violence and Peace:** Explore the cultural factors that contribute to or mitigate domestic violence. Analyze how cultural norms, traditions, and attitudes towards gender roles influence the prevalence of domestic violence. Develop recommendations for culturally sensitive interventions that promote peace within diverse societies.
6. **Legal Responses to Domestic Violence: A Comparative Analysis:** Compare and contrast legal frameworks and responses to domestic violence in different countries or regions. Evaluate the effectiveness of legal measures, including protective orders, law enforcement practices, and court interventions, in promoting peace and ensuring the safety of survivors.

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