

Causes and Consequences of Domestic Violence among Married Women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated the causes and consequences of domestic violence among married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Two research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were used to guide the study. The population for the study comprises of all married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State which comprised both Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Area. The population of the study was made of 37,801 married women. A sample size of 554 married women was used for the study. A researcher developed instrument titled Domestic Violence Causes and Consequences Inventory (DVCCI) was used for data collection. The face and content validities of the instruments was determined by the dissertation supervisor and one expert each in counselling psychology and measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Technique with coefficients of 0.82 and 0.92 obtained for the sections on causes and consequences respectively. Mean was used to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-tests and Analysis of Variance was used where applicable. Testing of the hypotheses was done at 0.05 level of significance. The major results from the study were that there is a high incidence of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The major factor driving this problem is the family history of abuse by the partner. This results in physical bruises and injuries. Based on the results obtained, it was recommended that there should be greater awareness on the options available to women who are exposed to domestic violence because when women have a clear understanding of these options and the resources available to them, they are better able to make informed choices and leave their abusive spouses.

Keywords: domestic violence, married women, counselling psychology, awareness.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women, in its various forms is an uprising menace in our modern society and it has assumed a dreadful dimension. Most families are faced with this monster called domestic violence which in most cases leads to broken home, and as such, is one that must be curtailed as it has the tendency to disrupt the peace of families and their children with lasting negative impressions (Sapkota *et al.*, 2019). Violence is the infringement of the privilege of an individual or relatives within the family setting. It is one of the most prevalent and serious human rights violations. Also people who are able to use and manipulate children to either gain or maintain control over partners are not likely to have pangs of conscience in using pets in the

same way. One of the signs of abusive character is being violent or wicked towards human beings (Paola, 2012).

Regularly in Nigeria, there are re-occurring news events on domestic violence at home and all over the place. In recent times, traditional and social media news updates has this news of a lady pouring hot oil or corrosive substances on the spouse, it might be the spouse truly mishandling the wife or going after an under-age young lady. Other times, it could be a developing pattern of children being used for economic activities or a house help harming a whole family by food poisoning. Most Nigerians especially the females are beaten, assaulted and even killed by individuals from their own family for an alleged offense such as

late preparation of food to husband, acceptance of relatives without husband permission. Some females even experience corrosive assaults from their spouses which resulted extraordinary torment, now and then, prompting the demise of the people in question (Ishola, 2016). One incident which threw the Nigeria social discourse space agog recently was death of the popular gospel musician, Osinachi Nwachukwu. While it was initially announced that her death was as a result of cancer, it later became known that she died as a result of cluster of blood in the chest from the kicking she allegedly got from her husband, Mr Peter Nwachukwu (Umeh, 2022). While this story, trended in the Nigerian social media space for months, observations and experience of this researcher shows that the incidence of domestic violence often goes unreported by women until significant damage has been done.

The expression “violence against women” can mean many different things and many different terms are used to describe it. Common terms include domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual violence, rape, sexual assault and harassment. Flood and Pease (2006) noted that each term excludes some forms of violence and is subject to shifts in meaning and also has different cultural interpretations. For example, the concept of rape within marriage may not exist within certain cultures and therefore would not fall within the scope of domestic violence for some people.

During the Fourth World Conference on women which was held in Beijing, China, in 1995, violence against women was identified as one of the twelve critical areas that deserve urgent attention. The conference stressed the importance of participating governments to work towards the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation, trafficking in women, gender bias in administration of justice, cultural prejudices, harmful traditional and customary practices and rape (Okwuobi, 2002). However, about three decades after the Beijing Conference, violence against women does not seem to have abated, instead it appears to be on the increase. Domestic violence is a serious problem in all countries in which it has been studied. Women suffer high rates of violence in the home, including both physical and psychological violence. Such abuse of women in this age may be considered antithetical to development and undermining of the almost universal efforts of governments and public institutions to improve and guarantee the rights of women in all spheres. It is against this background that this study seeks to understand and empirically situate on the causes and consequences of domestic violence among women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Previous research has investigated on the causes of domestic violence against women obviously; more women are exposed to domestic violence. Tilbrook (2010) and Ashimolowo and Otufale (2012)

posited that factors promoting perpetuation of violence against women in Nigeria include, culture, religion, poverty, Nigeria’s discriminatory laws and dismissive police attitude, wife infertility, illiteracy, early exposure of children to domestic violence, which ranges from macro-knowledge of the problem and its root to the knowledge of the idiosyncrasies and particular situations of the individuals who experience it. As stated previously, domestic violence against women is a violation of women’s human right beyond geographical cultural, religious, social and economic conditions. It is also seen as rape and physical assault. As an important public health concern, it has strong social cultural and psychological basis and has devastating physical, emotional, social and financial effects. Domestic violence has been observed to be associated with substance abuse, lower socioeconomic class, unemployment and age disparity of the couples (Ezems, 2019).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceived causes and consequences of domestic violence among married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study included:

1. To investigate the causes of domestic violence against married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. To determine the consequences of domestic violence against married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of domestic violence against married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?
2. What are the consequences of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were used to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence against women based on duration of marriage.
2. There is no significant difference in the consequences of domestic violence against women based on duration of marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Causative Factors in Domestic Violence

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it was found that in more than 80 countries in the world, 35% of women suffer physical and or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a person with no emotional bond. Most cases of domestic

violence occur in their households. Several studies have been conducted to identify the precipitating factors which lead to the cause of domestic violence on women; some of the scholars have attributed some of the causes of domestic abuse from cultural reasons, poverty as a cause, socialization and societal acceptance. Many studies have shown that dependency of women upon men was positively related to domestic violence against women. Women who are not economically independent run greater risk of been abused as compared to those who are dependent on their husbands (Davies, 2013). From many cases observed during my internship, it was observed that many women that reported their husband for battering cases are totally dependent upon their husband. Most of them are purely house wife without occupation, so men take advantage of them in this situation especially in Nigeria according to senior welfare officer in the ministry of women affair.

Generally, across the globe, domestic violence against women is carried out by men, inform of riots and account for the overwhelming majority of fire arm related injuries deaths (Esplen, 2006). Violent against women is often seen as a gender relations product because it is part of the gender specific constraints experience by women mostly although men still experience it but not frequently. Such gender violence includes verbal abuse. Heise (2013) observes that violence against women mostly occur in the service of perpetuating male power and control. And such violence against women includes rape, battery, homicide, incest, psychological abuse, forced prostitution, trafficking in women and sexual harassment.

In looking at the causes of violent against women, Gyuse (2008) observes that, violent on women is considered normal in most cultures around the world for husband to beat his wife's because the wives are mere property to the husband and the husband have the right to control her behavior. And in such society, it is observed that women who challenge that right will be punished and even in some cases such punishment may take place by merely asking their husband of money and children needs. Some factors that resulted to violent against women according to worldwide studies were as follows: disobedience, talking back, not taking care of the children or home, questioning about money or girlfriends, embarking on a journey without permission, sex refusal, refusing to make food for family, and expressing suspicion of infidelity (Heise *et al.*, 2021). According to Shane and Ellsberg (2002), it is noted that in many cases women share the feelings that men have the right to discipline their wives by applying force. Similarly, in rural areas of Egypt for example, 80% of women also agreed that beating was justify in some certain circumstances (Heise *et al.*, 2021).

Similarly, Gyuse (2008), pointed out some major causes of domestic violence against women to be incompatibility of partner, insensitivity, disagreement between couples, continued quarrelling, nagging, excess alcohol, neglects, child rebellion, excess drugs use. Also, per Chukwuma and Osarenren (2001), they also pointed out that the causes of domestic violence against women includes the general perception of people that women and children are men's property and they are subject to men authority and guidance. According to Hughes (2005), it was revealed that the findings of a study conducted some years ago by an American University argues that family as "one of the most dangerous places to be, apart from the war zone or in a riot, is in the home" (Hughes, 2005).

Psychological research has identified several consistent predictors for domestic violence, including temperamental behaviour, substances abuse, gender principles, and exposure to domestic violence amongst others.

Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women

Domestic violence against women is accompany with a lot of consequences. These consequences affect women both social and economic development. Wallace (2005) affirm that, violence against women has received an international recognition to its cumulative effect on societal development. Violence against women has negative implication for agricultural activities in rural areas in terms of food stability and the overall national development (Shahama, 2002). Alubo (2006) maintain that several women suffered series of injuries, disabilities, wounds, and casualties from clashes and many died because of domestic violence against women. As a matter of fact, neither WHO nor UNICEF in Nigeria can accurately account for the number of women that are affected or dead as a result of violence against women. The simple reason is because in the rural areas in Nigeria like in Benue States, it is difficult to get the accurate statistics of women who died because some died without their bodies taken to hospital for record purpose (Alubo 2006).

Ellsberg and Heise (2005) maintain that domestic violence against women is associated with serious health problems that affects both women and their children, including serious injuries are sustained from violence at home, gynecological disorders, adverse pregnancy outcomes, mental health disorders and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Ellsberg and Heise (2005) further affirm that violence can have direct consequences on women's health and it can also increase women risk of future health problems that will have profound effect on agricultural activities and other economic sectors of life. According to (USAID, 2006), the consequences of violence against women can impact negatively on the productivity, health and the well-being of women as well as intergenerational

transmission, resulting to increase poverty thereby undermining development (USAID, 2006).

Also, Social Watch (2009) reported that, violence against women results in both immediate and future consequences, which together results to poverty and undermines entire development. To ascertain the high-level violence in Nigeria, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in the Vanguard (Tuesday January 21st 2014) reported that, Oyo State police arrested a man for allegedly setting his wife and son ablaze. The report revealed that Felicia the wife and the son Gbolahan were set ablaze on the 27th December 2013 at about 4am in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. According to the report, the man in question accused his wife of engaging in secrets affair outside marriage and also the report also showed that the couple had long history of domestic violence. During their disputes, the report also show that the wife also accused the man of been an ex-convict, so the man was very angry and swore that the woman his wife will not see 2014. So, the man locked up his wife and son in the house and set up his house ablaze (NAN in Vanguard newspaper, January 21st 2014).

Similarly, the recent death of popular gospel musician, Osinachi has increased the spotlight on the consequences of domestic violence. The singer is believed to have died of cancer. Following her death, the family of the *Ekwueme* singer denied the reason behind her death, and it was reported that she passed away after suffering from domestic violence from her husband, who has since been arrested. Osinachi's colleagues alleged that the Dunamis International Headquarters' lead singer would often get abused by her husband Peter Nwachukwu. Fellow singer Frank Edwards said in an Instagram Live session that the 42-year old's husband had physically assaulted her numerous times. Similarly, another lady Chidinma Ezego, who claimed to be her friend, mentioned that "she's been dying in silence." The singer was reportedly kicked in her chest and had been on life support for five days before she died. Peter Nwachukwu was arrested by the FCT Lugbe police on April 10, 2022. This comes after Osinachi's brother suspected homicide in his sister's death (Umeh, 2022).

Ellsberg, *et al.*, (2001) maintain that, women who are victims of domestic violence have lower educational attainment and lower income capacity and they are more likely to become isolated and develop symptoms of depression and the consequences for children always start in the earliest stage. For Plichta, victims of domestic violence against women in terms of wife battering tend to deliver babies with lower birth weights and higher risks of prematurity and complications (Plichta, 1992). Plichta further postulated that children who are exposed to abuse are also at risk of being assaulted and developing emotional and behavioral problems. For Plichta it is important to note

that, pattern of violence against women and abuses is passed from one generation to another and with children who witness the violence are more likely to become victims of violence as adults (Plichta, 1992).

Furthermore, Burton, *et al.*, (2000) posited that domestic violence causes a high cost burden on the health care system for the treatment of the physical and mental health consequences of violence. Violence against women reduces women contribution at work place by lowering productivity and frequent absence from work. Wife battering as a violence act against women is thus a major barrier to the economic and social development of women. Children who witness wife battering develop serious emotional, behavioral, developmental and academic problems (Burton, *et al.*, 2000). According to them, children who witness domestic violence from their parents may face the consequence of becoming violent themselves both at home and school and some might develop depression and low self-esteem.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Causes of Domestic Violence based

Stanziani and Coffey (2018) examines the attitudes of intimate violence and compares the prevalence of abuse reported by married and dating participants, by gender and type of abuse. A sample of 3,716 participants, aged 15 to 67 years, filled in one attitudinal questionnaire and a self-report instrument on abuse perpetration and victimization. Attitudinal data revealed a general disapproval of violence use, with greater violence support among males and married participants. When comparing violence in both relational contexts, the scholars found that, in terms of perpetration, more women and dating partners reported physical abuse and severe forms of physical abuse than married partners. This study is similar to the current study in that the focus on attitude of married and dating partners towards intimate partner violence. However, the study is different to the extent that this study is only concerned with married women, while their study is concerned with both married and single women.

Bunch and Hunt (2018) explores the neighborhood characteristics of domestic violence incidents in the city of Greensboro, North Carolina. The research addresses an important gap in domestic violence research by combining geographic and statistical analyses at the block group level. Geographic data were analyzed using an Optimized Hot Spot Analysis (OHA) along with features selected by penalized Poisson regression model. The OHA was used to identify spatial clusters of high and low values while the penalized Poisson regression model was used to select the important variables from over 7000 candidates. The results of the study revealed that geographic location have a cogent impact on students scholastic adjustment, first the researchers observed that those in the urban schools experience more of domestic

violence due to hardship and inability to pay school fees than those in rural schools and this directly influence the way at which the students in urban area adjust scholastically. While this study focused on location, the current study will considered how educational qualification determines women's perception of domestic violence in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Tjaden and Thoennes (1995) carried out a research on the prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women in Columbia, United States of America. The researchers conducted a telephone survey of 8,000 women and 8,000 men about their experiences with rape and physical assault. The study provides empirical data on the prevalence and incidence of rape and physical assault, the prevalence of male-to-female and female-to-male intimate partner violence; the prevalence of rape and physical assault among women of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, the rate of injury among rape and physical assault victims, and injured victims' use of medical services. From their findings, it was observed that physical assault is widespread among American women; 52% of surveyed women said that they were physically assaulted as a child by an adult caretaker or perpetrator, 1.9% said they were physically assaulted in the previous 12 months. The study showed that approximately 1.9 million women are physically assaulted annually in the United States. The survey indicated that 18% of women surveyed said they experienced attempted rape at some time in their life and 0.3% said they experienced a completed.

Consequences of Domestic Violence

Itimi *et al.*, (2014) investigated on the prevalence of IPV and describe the coping strategies of the victims of domestic and intimate partner violence. A random sample of consenting women living in an intimate partnership for a minimum of 1 year were served with a three part structured questionnaire which sought information on socio- demographic characteristics, the experience of IPV and the Brief COPE Inventory. SPSS version 17.0 software, Microsoft word and Excel were used in data handling and analysis. Means, percentages, standard deviations, and Chi- square were calculated. $P < 0.05$ was considered to be significant. There was significantly high prevalence of domestic violence against women in this study. Hence, routine screening is advocated by family physicians to elicit abuse in order to avoid the more devastating psychological consequences after the incidence so as to institute appropriate treatment as multiple episodes of abuse appears to be cumulative in effect. The reason for violence mainly borders around the argument with husband and finance issues. The coping strategies utilized by the participants minimally involve substance abuse, but more of a religion.

Martinez *et al.*, (2021) compares the problem-focused emotion regulation strategies used by 200 female survivors of intimate partner violence (age: $M = 40.16$, $SD = 11.27$, 18 – 66 years) to cope with violence throughout various stages of change (SOC). It examines the relationship between problem-focused coping strategies and positive and negative affect, and the impact of these variables on the different SOC. Results suggest that victims differ and are flexible in the use of strategies throughout the various SOC. During the initial stages, victims tend to use passive/maladaptive behaviors that hamper change, while in the later stages they use more active/adaptive strategies to leave the abusive relationship.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For this research, the descriptive survey design was used. Ekeh (2003) defined survey research as that is conducted in the field and data are derived from questionnaire to document information from the respondents. The design for this research study is basically descriptive survey design as it serves to describe the causes and consequences of domestic violence in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers state. The estimated population of women in Port Harcourt Metropolis that is Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State was 37,801 (Source: National Population Commission, Rivers State Office).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was made up of 554 married women. This sample size was gotten through the use of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size specification. To get this sample, the researcher adopted the simple random sampling technique. The instrument was administered on a large woman in the area over a two month period using convenience sampling technique.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection is a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence Causes and Consequences Inventory (DVCCI). This questionnaire is developed by the researcher using the four-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was broadly divided into three sections labelled A-C. Section A of the Instrument was designed to elicit response on the demographic characteristics of respondents, while sections B-C were designed to elicit responses based on the causes and consequences of domestic violence. In total, the instrument was made up of 18 items.

Validity of the Instrument

In order to ascertain the face and content validities of the instrument for the study, the researchers consulted one expert each in counselling psychology and measurement and evaluation who went through the content and structure of the questionnaire. Some items were modified based on experts' advice before the final copy of the instrument was designed.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The copies of the instruments were administered to 20 women in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State who did not participate in the final study. The responses of the women were subjected to statistical analysis with reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.92 were obtained for the sections on causes and consequences respectively. These values indicated that the instrument possessed suitable level of reliability.

Administration of the Instrument

The instruments were administered directly to the married women by the researcher with the help of research assistant. The instruments were administered on the respondents after giving uniform instructions. The instruments were collected on the spot immediately to ensure 100% retrieval.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. For answering the research questions, a criterion mean of 2.50 was used. Therefore, any item with a mean below the value is rejected, while any value above the criterion mean is accepted. For testing the hypotheses, independent samples t-tests was used where applicable. Testing of the hypotheses was done at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT PRESENTATION

Research Question One: What are the causes of domestic violence against married women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Table 1: Causes of domestic violence against married women

S/N	Causes of Domestic Violence	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Alcohol Abuse	2.83	0.73	4 th	Accepted
2	Lack of financial stability	2.53	0.91	9 th	Accepted
3	Family history of abuse	3.14	0.80	1 st	Accepted
4	Mental or psychological instability	2.67	0.77	5 th	Accepted
5	Substance abuse including hard drugs	3.02	0.69	2 nd	Accepted
6	Unemployment	2.60	0.79	7 th	Accepted
7	Poor Educational background	2.57	0.92	8 th	Accepted
8	Possessive or jealous personality	2.64	0.70	6 th	Accepted
9	Religious affiliation	2.35	0.85	10 th	Rejected
10	Financial dependence of women on men	2.99	0.86	3 rd	Accepted

From the result displayed in Table 1 above, it is reflected that married women identified various factors are being responsible for the reported rate of domestic violence. As seen from the mentioned table, the factor identified as the major cause of domestic violence was item 3 (family history of abuse) with a mean rating of 3.14 (SD = 0.80), which was followed by item 5 (substance abuse including hard drugs) with a mean of 3.02 (SD = 0.69), then item 10 (financial dependence of women on men) with a mean of 2.99 (SD = 0.86) before item 1 (Alcohol abuse) with a mean rating of 2.83 (SD = 0.73). A view of the result

displayed above, indicates that the least factor associated with domestic violence against women was item 9 (religious affiliation) with a mean rating of 2.35 (SD = 0.86). Further observation of the results in the table showed that with the exception of religious affiliation, other factors identified were accepted as causes of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What are the consequences of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean rating and rank order of possible consequences of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N	Consequences of Domestic Violence	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Stigmatization	3.07	0.92	4 th	Accepted
2	Depression	3.31	0.87	3 rd	Accepted
3	Physical bruises and injuries	3.59	0.83	1 st	Accepted
4	Child abuse	2.95	1.02	5 th	Accepted
5	Posttraumatic stress	3.40	0.93	2 nd	Accepted
6	Sexual Dysfunction	2.71	0.59	7 th	Accepted
7	Miscarriages or early birth	2.55	0.66	8 th	Accepted
8	Loss of economic opportunities	2.87	0.78	6 th	Accepted

The result in Table 2 shows the possible consequences of domestic abuse against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. According to the result obtained, it is shown that the most endorsed consequence was from item 3 (Physical bruises and injuries) with a mean rating of 3.59 (SD = 0.83), followed by item 5 (Posttraumatic stress) with a mean rating of 3.40 (SD = 0.93) and thirdly item 2 (depression) with a mean rating of 3.31 (SD = 0.87). On the other hand, the least most endorsed consequence of domestic violence was

miscarriage or early birth with mean rating of 2.55 (SD = 0.59). On the whole, it was shown that all items had mean values that were greater than 2.50 which was the criterion mean. It therefore indicates that all the consequences in the said table were considered acceptable.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the causes of domestic violence against women based on duration of marriage?

Table 3: Independent samples t-test of causes of domestic violence among women based on duration of marriage

DOM	n	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
1-10 Years	308	3.08	0.71	552	3.87	0.001	
Above 10 Years	246	2.81	0.93				

An independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to ascertain the difference in the causes of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage with the result displayed in Table 3 above. Based on the result obtained, it was shown that a t-value of 3.87 was obtained at 552 degrees of freedom with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. Since the obtained p-value was lesser than 0.05 which was the chosen alpha guiding the study, it therefore suggest that

there is a significant difference in the causes of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the consequences of domestic violence against women based on duration of marriage?

Table 4: Independent samples t-test of consequences of domestic violence among women based on duration of marriage.

DOM	n	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
1-10 Years	308	2.83	0.75	552	0.92	0.355	
Above 10 Years	246	2.89	0.77				

An independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to ascertain the difference in the consequences of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage with the result displayed in Table 4 above. Based on the result obtained, it was shown that a t-value of 0.92 was obtained at 552 degrees of freedom with a corresponding p-value of 0.355. Since the obtained p-value was greater than 0.05 which was the chosen alpha guiding the study, it therefore suggest that there is no significant difference in the consequences of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

early births. Furthermore, the result did not yield any significant difference on the consequences of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the results obtained from the study, the major findings are summarized as follows:

1. The major cause of domestic violence against women was family history of abuse while the least cause was religious affiliation. However, it was shown that there is a greater incidence of domestic violence among women with lesser duration of marriage than among those with higher duration of marriage.
2. The major consequence of domestic violence against women was physical bruises and injuries while the least was miscarriages and

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Causes of Domestic Violence against Women

The result of the findings as shown in Table 4.1 indicates that there were different factors responsible for the incidences of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. From the stated result, it was shown that while the most cited cause was family history of violent abuse, other causes such as alcohol abuse, lack of financial stability, psychological instability, unemployment, poor educational background, jealous personality, and financial dependence of women on their husband. It was rejected that religious affiliation was a determinant of domestic violence. This result suggests that violence against women cuts across religious divides. In addition, the result showed that women who had a longer duration in marriage reported a significantly lower rate of domestic violence than those who are recently married.

The findings of this result is similar to that of Taminu *et al.*, (2016) who found out that religious affiliation was not a significant determinant of the pattern and correlates of intimate partner violence against women in Kano, Nigeria. On the contrary, the result from Ellison and Anderson (2001) showed that religious involvement was inversely related to domestic violence among couples in the United States. The difference in this finding could be attributed to the locality where both studies were conducted. While the present study was conducted using sample drawn in Nigeria, Ellison and Anderson's study was done using samples drawn from the United States of America. In addition, their studies was conducted using both male and female couples, in the present study, the sample was drawn using only female respondents.

Consequences of Domestic Violence

From the answer to research question two and the corresponding null hypotheses, the result showed that the major consequence of domestic violence against women was physical bruises and injuries while the least was miscarriages and early births. Furthermore, the result did not yield any significant difference on the consequences of domestic violence against women based on the duration of their marriage. This result is expected and not surprising because most times when women are exposed to physical violence, they are less powerful than their male partners who inflict them with physical harms. However, with the result also showing that posttraumatic stress is a byproduct of violence against women, it is possible that most women who go through intimate partner violence, experience shocks and distortion from reality as a result of the experience.

The findings of this result is similar to that obtained by Koolee, Bagherian, and Rahmatizadeh (2018) who reported that women who experience domestic violence reported a significantly higher level of stress than those who do not. Also, the United Nations (2015) reported that physical injuries is common in more than 80% of domestic violence in the world, with more of these occurring in low income countries including Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The major conclusion drawn from the study was that there is a high incidence of domestic violence against women in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The major factor driving this problem is the family history of abuse by the partner. This results in physical bruises and injuries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Violence against women, especially domestic violence, should be made a criminal offence in

order to deter violent partners from taking advantage of women.

2. There should be greater awareness on the options available to women who are exposed to domestic violence. When women have a clear understanding of these options and the resources available to them, they are better able to make informed choices and leave their abusive spouses.
3. There should be a multi-stakeholder approach towards addressing domestic violence against women. Therefore, parents, religious leaders, government agencies and international donor organizations should work collaboratively to ensure that violence against women should be minimized.

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