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PREVENTIVE APPROACH TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

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The abuse of women in Nigeria is a pervasive issue that is predominately found in relationships between intimate partners. Using the literature review, this study examines factors that contribute to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Nigeria. Society views of women as subservient to men upon marriage, alongside financial inequity, individual temperament, and lifestyle.

The research investigated preventive measures regarding IPV and the role of non-governmental agencies in reducing the phenomenon in Lagos, Nigeria. Therefore, an anonymous semi-structured interview was conducted as a qualitative research method. The theme of the interview focuses on the social factors involved in IPV, gender roles and expectations, beliefs and practices with the community, typical behaviour of the perpetrators and what needs to be addressed to reduce the social problem in the community.

The themes were analyzed with consideration of the key concepts of this research, which are domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and a preventive approach to intimate partner violence in Nigeria. Interviews with professionals who have worked with victims of IPV, Social workers would provide practical methods for spotting and work through relationship challenges. The findings suggest a seminar that would work to deconstruct views of women as mere property and men as dominant figures in their lives. The study proposes that institutions in Nigerian society need to enact, long-term practical measures to prevent the further spread of intimate partner violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Intimate Partner Violence, Preventive Approach to IPV

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1 INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an international health and safety concern. It is a crisis in many nations that have taken the lives of both men and women. The UN (2019) has defined intimate partner violence as "behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours." Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria is increasingly becoming a pandemic threat to the wellbeing of women in society (Solanke, 2018). IPV is pervasive throughout Nigeria and has a profound impact on both individual and the community.

Cohen and Raghavan (2013) define an intimate partner as a "person with whom one has a close personal relationship that can be emotional connectedness, regular contact, ongoing physical contact, and sexual behaviour" (Cohen & Raghavan, 2013). Studies have shown that women are the most vulnerable victims of intimate partner violence. Although, men also experience IPV, in a society where the inequality between men and women is on the high side, cultural norms that support the authority of men over women and "a man's right to inflict violence on his intimate partner" ("WHO", 2019). This thesis will be focusing on women, due to the overwhelming impact that intimate partner violence has on Nigerian women.

According to UN Women (2016), the Nigerian government allocated 2% of its budget, which is approximately three hundred thousand dollars (300,000 dollars), to fight violence against women (VAW). It was stated by the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey that 18.7% of married women in 2018 were exposed to both sexual and physical violence in their marriage (Benebo, 2019).

According to the Domestic, Sexual and Violence Response Team (DSVRT) (2019), Lagos once recorded 667 domestic and sexual abuse cases in three months, not to mention unreported cases. Reports by the United Nations secretary-general reveal that 1 in 4 women experience physical and sexual violence during pregnancy. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the definition of intimate partner violence is any behaviour carried out by an intimate partner that causes psychological, physical, or sexual harm (Benebo, Schumann & Vaezghasemi, 2018). Globally, approximately

38% of women are murdered by a male partner. (Butchart, Garcia-Moreno and Milton, 2010). According to National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), “over 70% of all murders involve an intimate partner and over 90% of the victims of these murders are females” (“NCADV | National Coalition Against Domestic Violence”, 2019).

Much research has been conducted on the impact of intimate sexual violence. Intimate partner violence not only affects victim but the entire family. According to working-life partner, children growing up in an environment where domestic abuse occurs, are more likely to develop cognitive issues, aggressive behaviours, and mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. The World Organization Research data in 2017 reports that "children who grow in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances." A 2013 review showed that "women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience depression and drink problems." The Lawyer Chronicle shows that studies have revealed that there is a greater prevalence of IPV in Northern Nigeria, which consists of 42% of cases. Prevalence of IPV in South West Nigeria was reported at 29%, while the South East and Southern Nigeria were reported at 78.8% and 41% respectively. The social structure of Nigeria that depicts women in IPV as the property of men and therefore subject their rule, contributes to abusive practices. According to the Lawyer Chronicle (2018), these practices are embedded into both the community and legislative practices, with the law enacting harsher penalties for assault against men than women. Nigeria also lacks federal legislation regarding domestic abuse. However, statewide legislative bodies have enacted legal measures to protect women.

Sociological researchers have devised theoretical frameworks to explain the reasons for male-on-female domestic abuse. Researchers argue that violence against women is based on societal inequality and a structure where women are perceived as inferior to men (Benebo et al., 2019). Nigeria's society is embedded in harmful ideologies regarding women and their role in society. The man is viewed as a breadwinner within the home, and therefore has an inherent right to dominate and discipline a woman in an intimate partner relationship. The factors involved in spousal abuse are complex and multifaceted. Many factors influence IPV. Economic frustrations, individual temperaments, and a lack of conflict resolution skills. In Nigeria, violence against women has

long been normalized, creating acceptance of IPV. This acceptance is reflected in the nation's legislation and communities (Benebo, et al., 2018).

This research-based thesis is done in collaboration with working life partner which asked to be anonymous but provide their full support for the research process. Keeping the ethical consideration intact, they will be referred to as “working-life partner” throughout this thesis.

1.1 Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the reasons for intimate partner violence in Nigerian society and create preventative strategies. The thesis will explore preventative measures regarding IPV and the role of both non-governmental and governmental agencies in reducing the phenomenon in Lagos, Nigeria. It aims to further understandings the necessary tools used to educate couples and young people considering marriage, preventing them from falling victim to abuse in Nigerian society.

The research questions of this thesis are as follow:

Research Question 1: What are the factors that influence intimate partner violence in the community?

Research Question 2: What role do the organization and Government play in educating and reducing intimate-partner violence?

Research Question 3: How does gender perception contribute to intimate partner violence?

Individual, social, communal and economic factors all interact with one another to fuel IPV in Nigeria. To challenge the normalization of violence against women, preventative measures must be put in place. The study explores the varying aspects of Nigerian society that produce IPV and creates methods for averting the phenomenon in future generations.

2 BACKGROUND

Traditionally, in Lagos State, Nigeria, domestic violence resolution was resolved among the religious or ethnic community. Historical beliefs and laws that informed societies centuries ago, still echo today. While society has made strides in terms of women's rights globally, there are still common beliefs and even language that impact perceptions and treatment of women in the modern world.

Most domestic abuse cases were perpetrated by intimate partners. The organization realized that action was necessary due to cultural beliefs that men have a right to enact violence against women. There is often great societal pressure on young people to marry once they become legal adults. However, this force young people to make commitments that are intended to last a lifetime rushed and frequently poorly thought out. The pressure to marry young often results in marriages that fall apart due to immaturity and beliefs of female inferiority. Sean G. Jefferson and his colleagues convey through their study that interpersonal relationships are often shaped by societal norms and beliefs (Jefferson, Roberts, Kim, Powell, & Gardner, 2017). This complements a view of marriage that is based on societal inequalities, rather than a partnership, which leads to controlling and abusive behaviour on the part of the man.

The working life partner has employed many preventative strategies regarding domestic violence in Nigeria. They provided shelter for vulnerable members of the community whenever physical abuse or threat occurs. They empower their service users through free training to acquire new skills. The effective one according to the supervisor of the working life partner organization, is the entrepreneur fund that helps the victim to start their own business. All these methods are working but did not reduce the rate of intimate violence in the state. Many people, particularly young people who feel societal pressure to marry, are frequently unaware of the warning signs before accepting or proposing marriage.

2.1 Legislation on Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria

The legislative bodies in Nigeria have typically ignored instances of intimate partner violence in the community under the belief that women are inferior to men and must live under their control. According to the Laws of the federation of Nigeria 1990, Criminal Code Act:

Section 353: *“Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any male person is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for three years. The offender cannot be arrested without a warrant.”*

However, in Section 360, states that *“Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults a woman or girl is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for two years.”* (“Criminal Code Act”, 2019)

Nigerian legislation demonstrates the fundamental inequalities in the way men and women are treated. Assault against a man is treated as a serious offence and labelled a “felony,” which is a serious crime. However, assault against a woman is branded as a misdemeanour or minor crime and is treated with less severity than violence against men. The clear disparity, in which the law treats the abuse of women compared to the laws protecting men. The Lawyers Chronicle (2018) reports that the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015 (VAAP) represents a dramatic shift in legislative perceptions of women and violence. The Act prohibits a broad range of practices that were traditionally accepted in Nigerian society. The act includes prohibiting battery, genital mutilation, and removal of children and property.

2.2 Rights of the Victims

Traditionally, the rights of the victims have gone ignored in Nigerian society. The societal view that a woman is the property of a man is still pervasive. According to the Lawyers Chronicle (2018), the Yoruba women, who reside in northcentral and Southwestern regions of Nigeria, use the term “*olowo ori mi* in reference to their husbands,” which translates to “he owns me.” The ownership of women upon marriage is societal normality and violence is viewed as a tool to control and discipline a woman. However,

the Lawyers Chronicle (2019) outlines new legislation designed to address IPV. However, the prevalence of violence towards women has prompted the beginnings of a cultural shift in thinking regarding women and their place in society (Fagan & Maxwell, 2006). The efforts of activists resulted in instituting the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAAP). However, there are far more actions needed to ensure the safety and security of women. The Lawyer Chronicle (2018) reports that there is still no federal legislation that protects women against IPV. However, legislative bodies have created protective legal actions on a state level. Non-government organizations (NGOs) such as the National Coalition for Affirmative Action (NCAA), or to create reforms that uphold women's rights on a national level (Solanke, 2018). Implementing federal legislation against IPV will help promote the equal rights of women and prevent future instances of IPV.

2.3 Services Available

The working-life partner provides much-needed services to victims of IPV. The organization's services include offering shelters, financial support, and counselling. The current services available to victims of intimate partner violence are growing in Nigeria as the stigma surrounding domestic abuse gradually dissipates. The most NGOs that help women in Nigeria are the Domestic and Sexual Violence Team and the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC), who call on the federal government to create more institutions that address intimate partner violence (Usigbe, n.d.). The Center for Health Ethics, Law and Development (CHELD) is an organization that comprises many different factions, including statistics, researchers, social scientists, lawyers, health specialists, therapists, and social scientists. CHELD's provides public health services that include assisting victims of IPV.

3 KEY CONCEPTS

There are many things to be considered while researching intimate partner violence (IPV). The most frequent victims of IPV in Nigeria are women. This is largely due to an unequal society that views married women as property without any sense of autonomy.

3.1 Gender Roles and Intimate Partner Violence

In the year 2000, the term Intimate Partner Violence was used to broaden understandings of abuse that encapsulates a wide range of intimate relationships, which can include both heterosexual and same-sex couples. IPV, according to the United Nations (UN) (2019), “refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviour.” Women are frequently the recipients of IPV because traditional gender roles throughout history have viewed men as providers and women as subordinate and limited to the roles of homemakers and mothers.

In some cultures, in Africa, women were considered the property of the husband. This was reflected in both the law and societal normalities. According to Roman law, a man could legally beat, divorce, or murder his wife for offences she committed, which “besmirched his honour or threatened his property rights.” Under the Northern Nigeria criminal code section 357 and section 282 of the penal code, “A husband cannot be charged with marital rape once the marriage is subsisting and the wife has attained puberty, then sexual intercourse with her is never rape” (Gamawa, 2013). The view of women as property or chattel has a long history. One that echoes today and is embedded into Nigerian laws. While no changes to the laws regarding the treatment of women have been done on a federal level, state and local governments are attempting to change policies. Lagos State, South-West, Nigeria, laws provide protection against domestic violence, which came into force on 18 May 2007. Lagos prohibits all forms of domestic violence. The government also encourages victims to apply for a protection order against the perpetrator (Refugees, 2019). Because federal legislators will not enact laws to protect women, it is the responsibility of state and local government

to provide help to women in Nigeria. Intimate partner violence has threatened the well-being of millions of people over the centuries, and the overwhelming burden is borne by women.

Intimate partner violence has been linked to both physical and mental illnesses. Victims of domestic abuse are more prone to sexually transmitted diseases (STD), musculoskeletal pain, physical disabilities, and substance abuse. Mental illnesses include depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). According to WHO (2017), intimate partner violence is one of the reasons for major public health problems and human rights violations. These problems not only impact victims of intimate partner violence but the children and families of those directly impacted by the phenomenon.

3.2 Forms of Intimate Partner Violence

There are many interactive forces that create IPV. Domestic abuse against women in Nigeria is endemic and condoned on both a legal societal level. Abuse takes place in many forms, both obvious and subtle. WHO (2019) identified four major forms of violence. These forms include emotional abuse, sexual violence, physical abuse, and controlling behaviours.

3.2.1 Emotional Abuse

In many cases, IPV evolves over time, beginning with emotionally abusive behaviours, such as name-calling and put-downs, humiliation, intimidation, and threats. Threats can include taking away children, necessities, and enacting violence. Withholding and controlling finances from an intimate partner is another common form of emotional abuse. Unlike physical violence, emotional abuse leaves no outward mark. The impact of emotional abuse is a loss of self-confidence and self-worth, creating a sense of dependency on the abuser. Fundamentally abusers seek to control their victims, foster a sense of helplessness in them. Emotional abuse often leads to mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety (Aihie, 2010). Typical examples of emotional abuse include withholding affection, manipulation and gaslighting, which is defined as tricking someone into questioning their sanity ("Survivors on how to spot the signs of emotional abuse and manipulation", 2019). Gaslighting includes denying reality and prompts the

victim to question their perceptions. Emotional abusers will trick their victims and encourage an unhealthy dependence on them through subtler means than physical violence. However, their methods are no less damaging.

3.2.2 Controlling Behavior

Controlling behaviour is a form of emotional abuse. Since men are traditionally seen as authorities within the home that exercise control over every aspect of women and children's lives. Controlling behaviour includes not allowing victims to leave the house or see certain people. Frequently, men will control women's access to money, making wives completely financially dependent on their husbands. Consequently, women are trapped in abusive relationships. ("healthtalk.org", 2019).

3.2.3 Physical Abuse

Emotional abuse is often very hidden. It is mostly ignored due to lack of physical evidence and emotional abuse can often evolve into physical abuse. This form of abuse includes physically lashing out at a victim in some manner. Abusers will slap, beat, strangle, or potentially use a weapon, such as a gun or a knife. Whether the abuser is trying to scare the victim or cause long-lasting damage, this behaviour can result in severe injuries or death. WHO (2019) reports that women are the most frequent victims of this form of abuse because they are often physically weaker than men, they are unable to defend themselves.

3.2.4 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence involves a lack of consent on the part of the victim. Because nonconsensual intercourse in marriage is considered legal according to federal Nigerian law, many women are subject to rape in a domestic setting. According to Executive Director on UNICEF (2019), "one-in-three girls or women will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, and the risk multiplies during a conflict or natural disaster." According to the American Psychological Association (2019), sexual abuse is defined as any violation of the personal autonomy of another human being to forcefully, and often violently enacts intercourse.

3.3 Preventive Approach to Intimate Partner Violence

There is three prevention process of Intimate partner violence; primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. The report of the background paper for WHO expert meeting on primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence on May 2-3, 2007, states that “Primary prevention is reducing the number of new instances of intimate partner violence or sexual violence by intervening before any violence occurs” (*Background paper for WHO expert meeting May 2–3, 2007*, 2019). Primary prevention of IPV is working towards changing the behaviours and belief of the society towards IPV and preventing it before it occurs to prevent initial perpetration. Primary intervention programs include dating violence prevention program which focuses on increasing IPV knowledge and working towards beliefs and behavioural change, media campaigns inform of radio spots, television and posters to create awareness of IPV (*Interventions to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence*, 2019).

Secondary Prevention is the response after the violence has occurred. This process helps to manage the short-term consequences and prevent future perpetration and victimization. Secondary intervention programs according to the e-book written by D.J. Whitaker et al, argues that couples counselling, substance abuse counselling, screening for IPV which involves health care practitioners asking structured questions to determine if one has been victims of intimate partner violence are interventions to be taken when the violence has occurred in order to stop it from happening again. Community-based services for victims include transitional housing and advocacy (social and emotional support), police responses and prosecutorial and judicial responses (*Interventions to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence*, 2019).

Tertiary prevention of intimate partner violence is the long-term responses to IPV after violence has occurred. This process helps to deal with consequences of lasting violence and intervention treatment for both victims and perpetrator ("Understanding Intimate Partner Violence Prevention as Social Change Work | Prevent IPV", 2019). Tertiary prevention of IPV includes counselling, a correctional facility for women and legal advocacy.

Researchers and activists are attempting to prevent IPV by creating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and campaigning for better legislation. “The commitment of both researchers and policymakers to develop robust knowledge to drive policy and practice may explain why, since 1990, intimate partner violence has been the primary or collateral focus of no fewer than five publications of the National Research Council” (Fagan & Maxwell). Lagos is one of the Nigerian states which have enacted laws to prevent domestic abuse. Researchers have suggested over the years on different approaches that would be best in preventing intimate partner violence from occurring. However, prevention methods need to extend much further to change societal views. Understanding the circumstances behind IPV, on a cultural, individual and communal level, can help form a seminar that can act as a preventative measure for young people who are considering marriage.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of literature regarding the abuse and mistreatment of women in Nigerian society. There are many factors that could increase the risk of IPV according to researchers. Anger issues, poverty, relationship conflicts, alcohol, and social norms are all contributing factors to IPV. Methods for preventing IPV will need to examine the central causes and systematically address them. The historical ideology surrounding the roles and responsibilities of both men and women still influences modern-day practices and legislation. Women are the most frequent targets of IPV because of societal norms and the perception that once a man and woman marry, the woman becomes the property of the man. There is an organization, both within and outside the government sphere, that are working to understand and resolve IPV (*WHO expert meeting May 2–3, 200, 2007*)

More studies are inspecting the different aspects that contribute to IPV. A study conducted by WHO (2019) identified several factors that generally influence IPV. These include a low level of education, antisocial personality, community norms, the victim's lack of employment, history of violence, and controlling behaviour. Another study conducted in Nigeria by Obi and Ozumba (2007), revealed that the most prominent factor influencing domestic violence is financial discrepancies between partners, the influence of in-laws, and a couple within the same age group. All these aspects complement and fuel the belief that violence against those dependent on the man, should be subjected to violence in the name of discipline (Aihie, 2010). The study also showed how IPV is an intergenerational phenomenon, with older generations affecting attitudes towards the treatment of women.

Increasingly, studies reveal that IPV is a phenomenon that impacts younger people who are influenced by cultural and generational practices. The UN reports that the ministry of women's affairs and social development alongside the United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA), commissioned an investigation into the abuse of Nigerian women (Usigbe, n.d.). The study revealed that 28% of women between the ages of 25 to 29 experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. The study showed that the most common acts of IPV aimed at women involve sexual and physical violence. Another prevalent form of violence women includes traditional practices such as gen-

ital mutilation, socio-economic violence, and psychological violence. A pervasive belief in Nigerian society posits that genital mutilation is necessary to increase a woman's eligibility for marriage (Usigbe, n.d.). Women have traditionally been entirely dependent on their husbands for finances, making them unable to survive on their own. Young women experiencing IPV, frequently do not possess any bodily autonomy or independence due to cultural practices. CHELD's founder and executive, founder, Cheluchi Onyemelukwe-Onuobi, identified economic inequality between men and women as a major factor in IPV, claiming that women have insufficient funds to spread information about inequality through making calls and buying airtime. Within the home, the concept of men as the sole breadwinners prevent women from leaving their abusers. *"Many of the women have been beaten down and prevented from working and earning any income to keep them financially dependent on the abuser"* (Usigbe, n.d.).

The societal institutions that run deep throughout the history of Nigeria allow little personal autonomy. International agencies such as the UN and WHO provide vital services to women suffering from domestic violence.

A study by Bola Lukman Solanke (2018) further examined the relationship between IPV and generational influences. The study explored interparental violence and IPV directed women and was based on data a Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) conducted in 2013. Solanke's study illustrated that interparental violence increases the chance of women experiencing IPV, confirming the study's intergenerational transmission of violence theory (Solanke, 2018). The study showed the interaction of society and personal factors in contributing to the prevalence of IPV in Nigeria. There are no consequences for family violence within communities because it is considered a "family affair" by local law enforcement. After analyzing the survey, results showed that children internalize the attitudes and actions of their parents, which they carry into adulthood, resulting in a cycle of abuse.

Almost a quarter of respondents were in the survey aged 15 and 24-years-old. The majority of these responders stated that they believed it was unacceptable to enact violence against a woman under any circumstances. However, several young women believed that men have the right to use violence on his wife in certain circumstances. Male dominance in the household was defined as control over household decision-making, which included issues surrounding their wife's health, important household

purchases such as a car, and on whether a woman can visit friends or relatives. The study conveyed that while the younger generations are changing regarding attitudes towards women and their place within a marriage, there is still a need for social change. Solanke's study suggests that there are strong intergenerational influences in IPV. These influences are a product of the cultural values of previous generations. The study suggests that social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) is required to help change attitudes (Solanke, 2018).

A study by Wusu (2014), also confirmed that women who marry young are more prone to IPV. The husband's consumption of alcohol and a lack of education for women were also major contributing factors for IPV. The study suggests that Nigerian society should further promote female education and enact policies restriction on alcohol. However, the study's key finding was that the pressure to marry young, often caused young people to make a rash decision regarding relationships and making a commitment before either party was prepared. "The principal policy implication of the findings is that to lessen husband-on-wife prevalence among young wives, it will be rewarding to adopt strategies capable of elevating age at first marriage among young females" (Wusu, 2014). A major factor in preventing IPV is helping to secure women's autonomy.

Research conducted by Fagan and Maxwell also shows that older women with greater autonomy and higher education are less likely to suffer from intimate partner violence. Conversely, women who are younger, living in poor conditions, and lacked education. IPV is directly related to the amount of personal autonomy and financial independence that have over their own lives. However, the primary indicator of IPV was male attitudes towards women in the community. "The cross-level interaction between women's status and men's justification of IPV showed that the protective effect of high women's status could be reversed if men accept violence against women in the community" (Fagan & Maxwell, 2006). Although Fagan and Maxwell's study were not conducted in Nigeria, the results could be considered in Nigerian context. Women who are not dependent on a man are less likely to fall victim to IPV. These results indicate that a cultural shift needs to take place in Nigerian society where women are granted a certain level of independence before marriage. The pressure to marry young before the couple can establish themselves financially results in a greater risk of the

husband exerting control over their wives. Consequently, when children witness unhealthy and controlling relationship dynamics, they are frequently passed on through the generations.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, data analysis will be presented. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the data and it was deciphered and synthesized by thematic analysis method. The interviews and data will be well analyzed below.

5.1 Data Collection

Researchers confirmed that “research methods in social science are an essential project as they determine its success, validity and reliability” (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Research interview is creating a conversation between interviewer and interviewee to ask concise and free questions without biased. According to Jeremy Miles and Paul Gilbert, “research requires formulating questions, understanding of methods, trying to gather and analyze data” (Miles & Gilbert, 2008).

There are three forms of interviews; Structured, Semi-structured and Unstructured interviews. Structured interview is a well-standardized interview that allows the interviewer to prepare interview questions and strictly follows it during the interview, Unstructured interview creates a free atmosphere in asking any questions during the interview, which sometimes may be difficult to follow the themes of the interview, semi-structured interview, however, gives a chance for follow-up and it creates an opportunity to ask how or why questions (Bhasin, 2019).

In a semi-structured interview, there is a flexibility to ask and dialogue further on the questions “Semi-structured interview can meander around the topics on the agenda, rather than adhering slavishly to verbatim questions as in a standardized survey which may delve into totally unforeseen issues” (Wholey, Hatry & Newcomer, 2004). The semi-structured interview helps to find out what people think and their experience on the topic. Researchers prefer the use semi-structured interview for qualitative textual data, it offers a balance between the flexibility of an open and close-ended question (Balkissoon, 2019). Fiona Fylan argues that semi-structured interview must be useful, easy to follow and effective. She further states that researchers should be caution in taking semi-structured interview to an extreme to avoid interview taking many directions before the theme is achieved (Miles & Gilbert 2008, (65-66)).

The interview was conducted through a semi-structured interview to allow the flexibility of follow-up questions in order to clarify all the important themes of the research questions. Since the professionals are to be interviewed, semi-structured interview will allow two-way communication between the interviewer and the interviewee.

5.1.1 Description of the Interview Process

The data collection targeted interviewing professionals in the field. The interview involved five professionals. Professionals were carefully chosen according to their experience with the victims of Intimate partner violence over the years. The appointment was made with the help of the supervisor of this research in the organization (working-life partner). To enhance the reliability of the data, a confidentiality form was signed during the internship in autumn 2018. The participants were promised total anonymity to ensure sharing insight information to the research questions.

During the interview, research questions were explored, and the aim of the thesis was examined and later interpret human experience and perspective which the focus of the data collection was. The interview questions explored in the study, create the basis for addressing and suggesting a preventive approach to IPV in Nigerian society. The interview explored the different dimensions of IPV, and the individual, social and communal aspects that impact the treatment of women. The interview also focused on the societal views of both men and women to help form an understanding of the different roles expected of them and how they are carried out. Referring to the experiences of a professional regarding the contributing factors of IPV can help create preventative measures that address how to counsel young couples. It is important to mention that the interview questions were not asked accordingly (see Appendix 1), using semi-structured interview method helps the interviewer to follow up on some important points that are relevant to this research to obtain greater details of the themes.

Researchers advise the use of tape-recording and transcribing interview in qualitative research. During the interview, especially semi-structured interview, the interviewer is advised to be alert to the facts and valuable information as well as following up interesting points made by the participants, furthermore, prompting and probing where necessary (Schostak, 2006). The interviews were recorded using the phone recording while the interviews go on a Skype video call on the laptop.

INTERVIEW TIMETABLE

DATE	INTERVIEW LENGTH	SEX	CODE	MODE OF INTERVIEW
3.9.2019	1hr 10 mins	Female	A	Skype video chat
4.9.2019	1hr 15mins	Female	B	Skype video chat
5.9.2019	1hr	Male	C	WhatsApp video call
9.9.2019	1hr 15mins	Female	D	Skype video call
10.9.2019	60 mins	Female	E	Skype video call

The table above shows how the interviews were conducted. Moderate interview time was proposed to the participants to encourage them in participating in this research. The interviewer work on the participants' schedule which allows them to choose time and date for the interviews. This is agreed, due to the different time zone on both ends since the interviewer will be in Finland during the interview period. The mode of the interview was also decided by the participants to avoid challenges in accessing new application. Code (A, B, C, D and E) is used to describe the participants to respect the confidentiality and anonymity assigned for this research.

5.2 Data Analysis

Using a thematic analysis approach requires recognizing common patterns between responses and critically analyzing them to achieve research aims and objectives ("Data Analysis - Research-Methodology", 2019). There is variety of process in analyzing data, (Kawulich 2019, 101) states that in data interpretations, reviewing the research questions, reviewing relevant theories, comparing insider and outsider view, evaluating the project and considering the audience is very important

Researchers argue that the thematic approach should be the foundational method for qualitative analysis due to the provision of core skills that is useful for data analysis. One of the fundamental benefits in thematic analysis is its flexibility and useful research tools. Though, lack of clear and concise guidelines could lead to what a researcher called "anything goes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since the interviews were

long and provide lots of themes, thematic analysis was used to identify the important themes that are related to the research and helps to provide well-structured approach in handling the data.

According to Braun and Clarke, 2006 6-phase guide of thematic analysis, familiarization with the data. Transcribing the recorded interviews and proofreading the transcript was done after each interview. Secondly, generating initial codes were done with the use of colour-coding and searching and reviewing themes was done by creating coding for all the themes. Also, defining and naming themes, critically choose of professionals in the field from psychotherapists that meet with the victims from vulnerable to recovery level and social workers that support the victims every day and a volunteer in the field. Lastly, the results will be produced in the research finding of this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5.3 Research Validity

Some researchers agreed that video (Telephone) interview allows “extended access” to the participants. It allows wide geographical access, closed site access which means interviewer could have access to people in the close site, in this case, office. The video interview has been proving to be good for people that are not easily accessible and those that work with tight schedules. Opdenakker, Raymond. (2006).

Every interview was transcribed and analyzed immediately by focusing on the relevant points to the research to avoid loss of words or meaning.

Over the last decades, the concept of validity in qualitative research has changed drastically based on the unique contribution the scientific offers to the development of knowledge. Robin and colleagues argue that “developing validity standard in qualitative research is challenging based on the necessity to incorporate rigour and subjectivity as well as creativity into the scientific research” (Whittemore, Robin & Chase, Susan & Mandle, Carol. 2001).

To validate this research, experience professionals were selected for interviews which take minimum of 60 mins each. The first 5 mins were used to discuss the rights and roles of the participants in the research process as well as general discussion before

going into the interview themes. This helps to create a good environment for the interview by eradicating tension throughout the interview process.

5.4 Research Limitation

Kathryn and her colleagues (Newcomer, Kathryn E., 2015), state that despite the advantages of the use of the semi-structured interview. This method of interview also comes with disadvantages, which will be discussed in this chapter. Semi-structured interview was described as time-consuming, labour-intensive and require a lot from the interviewer.

“Interviewers need to be smart, sensitive, poised, and nimble, as well as knowledgeable about the relevant substantive issues” (Newcomer, Hatry & Wholey, 2015). Semi-structured interview in practice was labour-intensive and time-consuming. In my experience, drafting interview questions that cover the purpose of the research is no doubt one of the challenging parts which required feedbacks from my school supervisor to finally work with the themes. Since the interview was recorded, it required more time in transcribing as “BYMAN (2001) states that one hour of tape takes five to six hours to transcribe” Opdenakker, Raymond. (2006).

Semi-structured interview required multiple skills and experience which makes the first interview a learning curve in conducting the semi-structured interview. One of the difficult moments during the first interview was to cover all the themes, lots of time was spent on the participant’s experience. It was hard to stay on the themes due to the method of the interview and quite challenging to think of questions during the interview. A good experience interviewer might get more information’s from the participants.

The initial plan for the interview was to interview the victims or survivors of intimate partner violence but my school supervisor draws my attention to the ethical standard for bachelor’s level thesis which permits me to only interview the professionals. Further literature that supported this claim was an article by Jill Levinson which argues about trauma-informed social work. Jill argues that working among traumatized ser-

vice users, it requires the professionals to be aware and better understanding of interpersonal boundaries as well as the use of power among them. This will create safe and appropriate limits without recreating the oppressive actions (Levenson, 2017).

It is important to mention that since the interviewer was in Finland and participants were in Nigeria during the interview period, the distance was one of the challenges faced by the interviewer. Working on the participants' schedule meant making myself available at the time set for the interview and considering the difference in time zone, it overlapped another schedule. This was virtually managed, and all the interviews went as scheduled.

Finally, all the interviews were conducted on Skype and WhatsApp video, there was an interruption of internet connection during the second and the fourth interview and the audio recording had to be paused until we reconnected and continue the interview. Sometimes, the interview starts with video call and had to end with audio for a better connection. The interviewer was aware of this limitation and this does not affect the research result as there were managed effectively throughout the research period and had no effect on the data collection.

6 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are based on the five interviews conducted with the professionals which focused on the key concepts of the study, using relevant literature as a lens to understand it. The interviews generated three main themes; intimate partner violence, gender role, and preventive approach to intimate partner violence.

6.1 Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence according to the interviewees is a wide phenomenon in Lagos state. In 2018, there was 134 per cent increase in gender-based violence in Lagos state, which the perpetrator is mostly men, states one of the interviewees, mentioning the project done by Joy Ikekhua ("Examining Domestic Violence in Lagos, Nigeria", 2019). The interviewees voice their concern on the on growing social problem and believe the fight against intimate partner violence in the community should start with understanding the factors that enhance it. Factors that are highlighted during the interviews was cultural and socio-economical factor.

"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). The results of the five semi-structured interviews revealed that the position of women in the family according to most culture in the state is to be submissive to her husband and never question him over anything. The interviewees all agreed that most of the victims of intimate partner violence strongly believe that they are doing what is expected of them by their family, friends and the society by not seeking for help in order not to be tagged "The bad wife".

The significant point of the findings under the cultural influence of intimate partner violence was how the community traditionally categorized violence. This has affected how people in the community has considered emotional and sexual abuse acceptable. The interviews indicate that the victims are been shamed in their community if they report an abuse rather than physical abuse. The interviewees explained that women are not allowed to report emotional and sexual abuse as these forms of abuse were not seen as a "big deal" in a relationship. Victims tend to endure due to their traditional

leaders' instruction to manage the situation in their home and since they are not physically abused, they have no right to leave their husband. The interviewees raised concern about developing culturally appropriate intervention programs and they all believed that continuously educating the traditional leaders on the forms of intimate partner violence will make a huge difference in the fight against intimate partner violence in the community.

The interviews further revealed that the socio-economic status of a couple links to intimate partner violence. Although intimate partner violence occurs across all socio-economic classes, the interviewees stated that women who are economically dependent on their husband are likely staying in an abusive relationship and in most times, according to their experience, return to their abusers. Perpetrators often use economic status of the victims as a weapon to continuously abuse them which most of the time leads to controlling and psychological abuse, one of the participants stated. It was gathered that early marriage is one of the causes for lack of women empowerment which makes them dependent economically on their husband. Interviewees believe that women without vocational or proper education are mostly the victims of economical abuse by their partner. "Given the centrality of financial matters to domestic violence, advocates have increasingly made financial capability a component of domestic violence intervention" (Oguntayo, 2019).

6.2 Gender Role

The five interviews indicate that gender roles in micro, meso and macro level in the community are important issues that needs be addressed. Johnson (2019) has described micro, meso and macro-level in a simplified form. Maxine explained that micro-level interactions occur within individual, family and peers in school. It further explained that in micro-level relationships everyone knows each other and "the outcome of these relationships helps to shape and understand one identity, norms of the wider societies and cultures through socialization processes" (Johnson, 2019). The middle level between micro and Macro is referred to as Meso. Meso level is described as a group like community, school, workplace and organizations. Maxine described meso level as "the divisions within societies, how they are organized by roles, income, location and ethnicity" (Johnson, 2019). Macro-level is the largest of the groupings in

society. It covers the large-scale institutions like government, the media and law (Johnson, 2019).

Interviewees believed that gender equality needs to start on the micro-level. Stating that parents treat their male child differently and make them the superior in the family and this has led to controlling behaviour from the man. One of the interviewees gave an example of a case on the difficulties in mediating a situation among couple especially if the perpetrator has the 'men superior' believe. Additionally, most victims believe that they are been corrected by their husband, a belief that was thought by their parents. Most of the perpetrators, according to the interviewees' experience, lack crisis resolution skills which made them result in violence.

Gender equality on the meso level is among the significant themes of the interviews. The interviews gathered that the fight against gender equality on meso level will send a strong signal to perpetrators of intimate partner violence by reinforcing the equal rights among both genders. Interviewees stated, that there is a male-dominated profession in labor market which is a wrong signal for gender inequality in the community. Leadership roles are often given to the men due to the belief of been stronger. The interviewees also stated that the effect of lack of women empowerment on the micro-level reflects greatly on women opportunity on the meso level. A report written by Emmanuel Mayah and his colleagues states that due to lack of empowerment women are often offered low-skilled, low-paid jobs which makes them higher percentage of poor people in the community. This has kept women to be "excluded from full participation in economic, social and political life in the community" (Chiara Mariotti (PhD, 2019).

The macro-level of gender role is a big part of the discussion during the interviews. Four out of the five interviewees believed that good policy on the federal level could change the gender inequality on every level. It was gathered that people respond to policy and law of the land quicker and this may influence people's behaviour in the community and the country at large. "The macrosystem may contain norms, which may be formalized in legal controls, that reinforce patriarchy and allow abusers to legitimize and justify their use of power and control over their victims" (Gillum, Doucette, Mwanza & Munala, 2016). One of the participants, participant D argue that

the social problem needs to be addressed through different NGOs with multiple supports for the people in the community. The interviewee further states that, funding for different projects will reach out to a large number of people on gender equality.

It was later gathered that policy on IPV on macro-level is urgently needed to tackle this social problem.

The findings revealed that the perceptions of women as subject to the rule of men are still embedded deep within Nigerian society. Because men are viewed as providers, they are allowed authority over every aspect of women's lives, including finances, sex, and social activities. This issue is frequently compounded by aggression and a lack of conflict resolution skills. Young couples are pressured to marry early are often influenced by in-laws and people within their community. Factors such as financial inequity and traditional practices that include depriving women of a sense of autonomy.

6.3 Preventive Approach to Intimate Partner violence

Preventing intimate partner according to the interviewees is ongoing activities considering the depth of intimate partner violence in the state. The preventive approach mentioned by the interviewees is based on their organization alone. The working-life partner provides mediation support in terms of counselling to intervene in a situation whereby there is no violence involved. Psychotherapy for anger management and emotional healing for both victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, the interviews indicate that there is advocacy support for victims that ask for justice and granting temporary separation in case of violence and treat. All the interviewees described the support the working-life partner provides to the victims of intimate partner violence as a primary and secondary intervention. The interviewees stated that the organization has intervened greatly in the social problem that was ignored by the community.

7 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is a growing body of literature in Nigeria regarding the attitudes and treatment of women. The issue has a major impact, not only on a micro, individual level but on the whole of Nigerian society. Based on the literature review in this thesis (see; chapter 4), the study shows that there are still deeply ingrained beliefs about marriage and the gender roles of men and women. The interviews conducted indicate that the stringent gender roles present in Nigerian society that need to be challenged through a series of actions. Cultural beliefs cannot be easily overturned and require understanding the multiple levels at which beliefs occur and systematically working to address them.

Understanding the patterns of behaviour that are ingrained into the community. The interviews helped in building a more intimate portrait of the violence experienced by victims and that various circumstances and beliefs that contributed to IPV. The interviews delved into their personal experiences and the common patterns that they have witnessed in the situations of the victims and the perpetrators.

The interviews show that attitude towards enacting violence against women have changed drastically with people attempting ways to address what they consider to be a national health and safety risk. While IPV itself is frowned upon, the symptoms which cause the phenomenon still must be addressed. The interviewees expressed a need for overturning acceptable social normality regarding the place of women in the home, and men as the sole providers, along with social pressures to marry young.

These include government support in funding NGO's that help provide the appropriate preventative measures such as educating both men and women on the importance of planning before marriage and not caving to social pressures to marry before both parties are ready and awareness on warning signs. The interviews indicate that policy-makers need to come up with laws that will send strong signals to perpetrators across the country. Majority of the participants believe this will reduce intimate partner violence drastically.

Since IPV is frequently a generational phenomenon, both men and women need to be counselled before marriage. Pressures to marry young must be counteracted early. The pressure to marry young is deeply ingrained in society and in the family, and toxic gender roles that lead to abuse are often an intergenerational phenomenon, encouraged by a woman's in-laws or other family members.

Because men are viewed as providers, they are allowed authority over every aspect of women's lives, including finances, sex, and social activities. This issue is frequently compounded by aggression and a lack of conflict resolution skills. Social pressures to marry young due to societal views of the status (married) as an indicator of social status and influences from family members are also major contributors. Factors such as financial inequity and traditional practices that deprive women of a sense of autonomy.

The preventative measures needed to counteract abuse were determined through the five interviews and research conducted. To help counteract the dehumanization of women, this thesis proposes educational seminars conducted by social workers. The seminars should aim at young people before marriage and provide counsel on their future and issues surrounding societal pressures to marry young. The seminar should help to address the individual and societal factors that contribute to intimate partner violence. The seminar should also look at the economic inequity factors involved in domestic abuse. The social worker should ensure that both parties are financially stable and independent before choosing marriage. A central aim of the seminar is to help ensure that young people are making informed choices regarding marriage, and that societal views regarding the timing and nature of marriage are challenged. Enacting societal changes regarding the treatment of women will need to take place in the younger generations.

8 ETHICAL STANDARDS

This research requires a standard ethical rule because it involves people in vulnerable situations. Ethical standards are essential for researching, data collection and analyzing. “There is a social process that should be acknowledged and thought about carefully because they can undermine the effort at discovery, understanding and knowing” (Miles & Gilbert, 2008, 1-2).

The ethics of this research are based on the six principles of the Economic and Social Research Council. According to ESRC, these principles must be addressed whenever applicable. Firstly, ensuring the integrity, quality and transparency of a research must be met to validate the research result. All the participants must be aware of their role in the research process and they must be informed about any risks involved if any. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants must be respected. Also, all participants must be voluntary as any coercion could jeopardize the authenticity of the data collection. Any harm against the participant must be avoided at all levels and any conflicts of interest must be avoided (Hunter, 2008).

In this study, interviews were conducted with professionals who have worked with victims of intimate partner violence. The interviewees were informed on the purpose of the thesis. There were all aware of the purpose of this research and they voluntarily showed interest and agreed to an online interview which mostly takes an average of 60 minutes. They asked for total anonymity which was respected throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Their names and professions were not mentioned and with the suggestion of the thesis supervisor, they are referred to Participant A, B, C, D and E consecutively.

The thesis contract was sent and received through email during Autumn, 2019. It was signed by the thesis supervisor in the working life partner organization. Working-life partner asked for anonymity of their name and that was strictly respected throughout the thesis writing.

Working life partner read the thesis before submission and shows their satisfaction with the findings of the research. It was agreed that the audio recorded during the interview and the transcribed sheets should be destroyed immediately after publication and this will be done accordingly.

9 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Before the opportunity to work on this research, my previous knowledge of research findings, data collection and data analysis were limited. One of the skills that were learnt during this process is ability to narrow down a research topic to make it realistic. The process has helped to intensively research on relevant literature for better understanding about the research topic which during this process, I learnt to search for articles, books, e-books, websites, and previous thesis that is related to this topic. Learning about different types of research methods was interesting but this is the first extensive qualitative research I was able to accomplish.

The thesis process has helped me to further develop some of the competencies set for graduates of the bachelor's degree in social services. During the data collection, data analysis and finding, are the learning curve of this entire process for this study. Ability to know who to include in the interview and how his or her contribution is important for this research is the part the I took very seriously before the interview invitation and scheduled was agreed.

Analyzing data is totally new to me and this process has helped me to learn how to professionally and ethically analyzed data for a research-based thesis. During research findings, I learnt how to use the data collected to answer the research questions which is very important in justifying the purpose of the research. I learnt ethical principles and guidelines for qualitative research methods which made me improve in ethical competences in research.

10. CONCLUSION

The research questions for this thesis are; What are the factors that influence intimate partner violence? What role do the organization and Government play in educating and reducing intimate partner violence? And How does gender perception contribute to intimate partner violence?

The thesis is based on literature review and interviews, participated by professionals, which posits that there are many different factors that interact to contribute to intimate partner violence in Lagos State, Nigeria. These factors include lack of conflict resolution skills, communal pressures to marry at a young age, and societal views. Intimate partner violence is a phenomenon in many nations and is regarded as a major societal crisis. Domestic abuse is a pervasive issue globally. Young women often perceive themselves as subordinate to men and marriage as a form of enslavement. Conversely, men see themselves as providers and authority figures who must use physical force to discipline their wives and maintain order. The messages that men are leaders of the household who can exercise authority over women with impunity is still deeply ingrained into Nigerian society, which is reflected in their practices, law, and even language. The federal law does not protect women against domestic abuse, deeming the assault of men as a more serious crime than an assault on women. However, states have instituted laws designed to protect women. Those states include Lagos, which has penalties for all forms of domestic violence against men and women.

However, there is still no federal legislation regarding the domestic abuse of women. Emotional abuse is frequently a precursor to physical and creates an unhealthy dependency on an intimate partner. Men will frequently withhold finances from women, threaten to remove children from them, manipulating and gaslighting victims into questioning their own sanity. There are four key elements of abuse, which are emotional violence, physical violence, sexual violence, and controlling behaviour. At its core, emotional abuse is about gaining and maintaining control of victims. Physical violence is the most common form of violence and varies from minor injuries to murder. Sexual violence is defined as forceful and nonconsensual acts. Controlling behaviour involves exerting power over another person's decision and not allowing them choices regarding finances or their social lives. Violence against in Nigeria women is often condoned in communities, societies, and the law as part of Nigerian culture.

Working life partner organization plays numerous roles in the fight against intimate partner violence in the community. Among other services they give to the victims of domestic and intimate violence are mediation, psychotherapy, and shelter.

Few preventative methods have been implemented to address the phenomenon. While a cultural shift in the perceptions of women as merely the property of men upon marriage is taking place, it is still prevalent within Nigerian society. A major contributor to intimate partner violence is intergenerational factors. If a man or woman witnessed IPV in their childhood, they are more likely to carry justification for it into adulthood. The thesis proposes educational seminar. The proposed seminar will help intended couples to make informed decisions about marriage, advising them on if they are ready to marry. Heightened levels of IPV in Nigeria portray a need for systems that help women and men to make informed decisions regarding marriage.

This research was able to reach the set aims through the five interviews by professionals who give their insight to the research questions.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview themes for professionals

1. What are the major social factors involved in IPV?
2. What are the typical behaviors of men who exhibit abusive behaviors?
3. What are the socioeconomic factors involved in IPV?
4. How do beliefs and practices within a community play a role in IPV?
5. What gender role expectations regarding woman, drive IPV?
6. What gender roles or expectations regarding men contribute to the perpetuation of IPV?
7. What are the key attitudes that need to be addressed in couples to help reduce the prevalence of IPV?

APPENDIX 2

Abbreviation:

CHELD = The Centre for Health Ethics, Law and Development

DSVRT= Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team

IPV= Intimate Partner Violence

NCAA= National Coalition for Affirmative Action

NCADV= National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

NDHS= National Demographic and Health Survey

PTSD= Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

SBCC= Social and Behaviour Change Communication

STD= Sexually Transmitted Disease

UN= United Nation

UNICEF= United Nations Children Fund

UNPFA= United Nations Population Fund

VAW= Violence Against Women

WARDC= Women advocates Research and Documentation Centre

WHO= World Health Organization

SSI= Semi-Structured Interview