

## INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF COUPLES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN EKITI, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated influence of religious beliefs and educational level of couples on domestic violence in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A sample of 516 people was selected from all the married people in Ekiti State, Nigeria using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument was a questionnaire designed to collect information on the participants' experience and involvement in domestic violence. The instrument has reliability co-efficient of 0.86 which was established using a test re-test method. The hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of Significance. Analysis of data using (ANOVA) revealed that couples' religious beliefs significantly influence domestic violence ( $F = 26.96$ ) Schaeffe Post-hoc test showed that, there exist a significant pair wise difference between Christian and Muslim couples, Christian and other religion, Muslim and other religion in terms of prevalence of domestic violence among couples. It was also found out that couples' educational level significantly influenced domestic violence ( $F= 2.53$ ) Scheffe Post-hoc test also showed a significant difference in domestic violence between Grade II certificate holders and Ph.D holders and a significant difference between B:Ed/HND holders and Grade II holders. Based on the findings, it was recommended that couples should be compatible in their religion and that, would be couples should consider each other's educational level as an important factor in partner's selection, ensuring that gap in their educational qualifications is not too wide.*

**Keywords:** Religious belief, educational level, couple, domestic violence, Nigeria.

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### Introduction

Domestic violence according to Roxburgh in Owuamanam & Akintoke (2013) refers to violence perpetrated within the home and the family. Marriages that tend to bring joy and happiness during solemnization have been observed to breed sorrow and regret as a result of quarrelling and exchange of offensive words soon after the wedding ceremony. Akintoke (2015) claims that much of the violence within a home is directed and targeted at female members. It is not only women or female members suffer from domestic violence, but also men though on a smaller scale as reported by Ibidapo (2015). Adebayo (2018) as cited by Aina, (2012) reported that domestic violence is an aggressive fighting between two people at home.

Akande (2015) laments that the increase in domestic violence and child abuse cases in the state increased to 2000 cases that were reported to the State Government. She advised that, couples should exercise patience when handling marital or domestic issues. Sholola (2016) reports that the poor state of economy is a cause of increased domestic violence in the country and urged the government to put in more efforts to rescue the situation because, a lot of couples are bottling up many issues. He concludes that, a lot of couples are weighed down by pressure from lack of work, money and inability to meet with family responsibilities which threatens their faith. Wilson (2010) in Owuamanam and Akintoke (2013) report that, domestic violence ranks as the leading cause of injury to women. Although, rarely do men suffer serious injury. The incidence of domestic

violence appears to be increasing in the Nigerian society. In Nigeria, recent statistics shows that 30% of Nigerian women have experienced some form of violence in their life time. Akintoke (2015) reveals that 7% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone a form of sexual violence and half of the women reported that their perpetrators were husbands, partners or boyfriends.

Oladipupo (2016) reports that a wife bathed her husband with acid for having gay partners. Ibikunle (2019) equally remarks that a husband drowned his wife over an extra marital affairs with a landlord. Similarly, Ibikunle (2019) asserts that a mother of five children was bathed in concentrated uric acid by her husband on their matrimonial bed after the woman had refused her husband's incessant demands for sex.

In Ekiti State, reports indicate that many husbands beat and maim their wives. The occurrence of domestic violence in the state and society in Nigeria is thus, a major cause for concern not only to guidance counsellors, psychologists, social workers, parents and clergymen but, also to the general public.

Efforts have been made by some researchers to identify causes of domestic violence. Sholola (2016) identifies poor state of economy and unemployment. Aina (2012) in Owuamanam and Akintoke (2013) listed some causes of domestic violence to include: culture as a strong explanatory variable in understanding gender ideology in Nigerian society. They report that cultural norms have continued to sustain unusual power relations. Akintoke (2008) submits that one common form of domestic violence is "wife battery" as the husband inflicts violence on the wife. He further emphasize that, sometimes, laws and legal procedure condone violence against women, allowing men to act with impunity in the name of exercising a "right" to discipline their wives for corrective purposes. Another incident of domestic violence was reported by Falayi (2020) when in Lagos, a woman was

lying in excruciating pain in a room where she was receiving treatment at a traditional orthopedic clinic six days after an attack that left her paralyzed when her husband ran over her with a bus after a dispute. Yahaya, Esere, Ogunsanmi and Oniye (2008) report that religion influences the adherent behaviour. For instance, what an individual does, say, wear, eat and drink may be determined by his or her faith. Therefore, in order to promote marital harmony, stability and to record violence free at home, it is better for the husband and the wife to share a common faith as this arrangement would prevent unnecessary conflict and give the children a common focus. Christopher (2016) opines that abusers of domestic violence may keep their victims from going to church, temple, mosque or other houses for worship in order to prevent them from asking for help from others. He further stresses that other forms of religiosity dissimilarity do appear to heighten the risk of domestic violence. In particular, men who hold much more conservative theological views than their partners are especially likely to perpetrate domestic violence.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2016) argues that "men who abuse often use Ephesians 5:22", taken out of context to justify their behaviour, but the passage (Verse 21-33) only refers to the mutual submissions of husband and wife out of love for Christ. Husbands should love their wives as they love their own body, as Christ loves the Church. Similarly, Owuamanam (2004) in Akintoke (2008) reports that when couples do not have the same religious beliefs, conflicts may arise as to whether the children should follow their father's belief or their mother's. It was equally said that, when husband and wife have different religious beliefs, even where they both share the same belief, problems and disagreement may arise if one of the partners is more religiously committed than the other.

In addition, Sullivan (2011) as cited by Akintoke (2015) stresses that people who are in

higher level of religiosity are more stable in their marriage and record low level of domestic violence as compare to the couples who are in lower level of religiosity.

Moreover, Owuamanam (2017) asserts that couples who pray together tends to reconcile more easily. Spouse who prayed had decreased negativity, contempt, hostility and emotional reactivity toward themselves during conflicts. She concludes that couple who said that religion was important in their lives tended to indicate better quality relationships with themselves. Heaton and Pratt (2019) affirm that in compatible patterns of religious attendance between spouses could cause conflicts regarding how time is spent and contention surrounding the value placed upon religious attendance. They suggested that on the contrary, share religious attendance should positively influence relationships because it could serve as a base for making marriage to be satisfactory. McGrath (1999) in Owuamanam (2017) as cited by Akintoke (2018) observes that it was common in Africa particularly in Nigeria to find the husband more educated than the wife. She emphasized that marriage appears to be happier and devoid of domestic violence where both partners have the same level of educational background as unequal educational level may bring about suspicion and misunderstanding and thus encourage domestic violence.

Efforts are being directed to trace children's outburst of aggression, scavenging at social gathering, kidnapping, robbery, raping, vandalism, street hawking and begging, runaway, premarital pregnancy, abortion, indecent dressing, high attendance of school-aged children at motor parks, viewing centres and political rallies/campaigns are possible social problems arising from domestic violence.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if domestic violence is influenced by religious beliefs and couples educational level.

## **Hypotheses**

The two hypotheses postulated for this study were:

- (1) The religious beliefs of couple will not significantly influence domestic violence.
- (2) Level of education of couple will not significantly influence domestic violence.

## **Methodology**

### ***Population***

The population of this study comprised all married couples in Ekiti State.

The sample for the study consisted of 516 married people who were selected using stratified sampling technique from all the married people in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The respondents were selected from a total number of 43 households located in twelve towns in the state. The age of the respondents ranged between 18 and 60 years.

The data for the study were collected using a questionnaire titled "Domestic Violence among Couples Questionnaire" (DVACO) constructed and validated by the researcher. The instrument consisted of two parts. A and B. Part A was designed to collect information on personal characteristics of respondents such as gender, religion, educational level, local government or origin. Part B contained items that sought for information on the participants' experience and involvement in domestic violence as well as causes of domestic violence. The research instrument was administered personally by the researcher and with the assistance of research assistants. The copies of

the questionnaire were retrieved immediately after completion.

The data were analyzed using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) because those items were transposed to scores. Schaeffe Post- hoc analysis was further applied where necessary.

## Results

**Hypothesis 1:** The religious beliefs of couples will not significantly influence domestic violence.

To determine the influence of religious beliefs of couples on domestic violence, respondents' involvement in domestic violence was compared among three religious beliefs of Christianity, Muslim and Traditional religion they belonged.

One-Way Analysis of variance was used. The result is presented in Table 1

**Table 1: One-Way (ANOVA) showing the couples' Religion and Domestic Violence.**

		Df	Sum of squares	F-Cal	F-Table
Between Group	8852.434	2	4426.217	26.959	3.00
Within Group	81106.677	494	164.184		
Total	89959.11	496			

Note:  $P < 0,05$  (Significant Result)

From Table 1 above, F-cal value =(26,959) and t-tab value (3.00). The F-cal (26.957) is greater than t-table value (3.00). Therefore, the null hypothesis that says religious practice of couple would not significantly influence domestic violence is rejected. In order words, the type of religious

practiced by couple would significantly influence domestic violence. To find out the pair of groups whose X are significantly different at 0.05 level of significance, Post-hoc test was carried out as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Summary of Schaeffe Post-hoc test of couples religion and domestic violence.**

Religion	1	2	3	4	N	$\bar{X}$
Christian	*				367	60.24
Muslim	*				100	67.42
Others	*				30	74.70

In the above table:

1. Representing Christian
2. Representing Muslim
3. Representing other religion

\* The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level. The result of Scheffe multiple range comparison in the above table shows that, there exist a significant pair wise difference between Christian and Muslim couple, Christians and other religion, Muslim and other religion in terms of prevalence of domestic violence among couples.

**Hypothesis 2:** Level of education of couple will not significantly influence domestic violence.

To determine the influence of educational level on domestic violence respondents' involvement in domestic violence was compared along six educational level to which they belonged. One-Way Analysis of Variance was used for the comparison and test for significance. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: One way (ANOVA) Showing Domestic Violence of couple due to Educational Level.**

	Sum of squares	df	*Squares	F-cal	F-tab
Between Group	2260.97	5	452.193	2.532	2.21
Within Groups	87698.1	491	178.611		
Total	899959.1				

Note:  $P < 0.05$  (Significant Result)

Table 3 shows that F-cal (2.532) is greater than F-tab value (2.21). Therefore, educational level of couple significantly influenced domestic violence. To find which group of education level of subjects experienced violence more. Schaeffe Post-hoc test was carried out in Table 4. Six educational

levels compared were West African School Certificate (WASC), Grade II Certificate (GRD II), Nigeria Certificate in Education/National Diploma (NCE/ND), Bachelor's Degree/Higher National Diploma (B.ED, B. A., B.SC/HND, Master's Degree (M.Ed, M:Sc) and Doctoral Degree (Ph.D).

**Table 4: Schaffe Post-hoc Test of Educational Level and Domestic Violence**

	Qualification	WASC	GRD II	NCE/ND	B:Ed/HND	M.Ed/M.Sc	Ph.D
1	WASC						
2	GRD II				*		*
3	NCE/OND						
4	B.Ed/HND		*				
5	M.Sc/M.Ed						
6	Ph.D		*				

Note: Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference in domestic violence between Grade II certificate holders and Ph.D holders. Also, there was a significant difference between B.Ed/HND holders and Grade II holders.

The result revealed that religion of couple significantly influenced domestic violence. The

finding was in line with Christopher (2016) where he reports that abusers of domestic violence may keep their victims from going to church, temple, mosque, and worship house for worshipping in order to prevent them from asking for help from others. The finding was also in agreement with Owuamanam (2004) and in Akintoke (2018) who reports that when couples do not have the same

religious belief, conflicts may arise as to whether the children should follow their father's belief or their mother's. So also, it was in line with Owuamanam (2017) that together had decreased negativity toward themselves during conflicts. The result also revealed that the level of education of couples significantly influenced domestic violence. The finding was supported by Mcgratt (1999) in Owuamanam (2004) as cited by Akintoke (2015) that it was common in Africa particularly in Nigeria to find the husband more educated than the wife. She emphasized that marriage appears to be stable and domestic violence free where both the husband and wife have the same level of educational background as unequal education level may bring about suspicions and misunderstanding and thus encourage domestic violence.

## Conclusion

The study investigated influence of religious beliefs and educational levels of couples on domestic violence in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was concluded

that couples should be compatible in terms of religion in order to reduce domestic violence. Couple should attend religious activities and pray together to discourage domestic violence. Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. To avoid domestic violence, couple should consider each other's educational level before marriage.
2. The gap between the education of couple should not be too wide for more understanding of themselves.
3. Counselling services should be made available for couples and would-be couples.
4. Enlightenment campaigns should be intensified by marriage counsellors on the evil of domestic violence. Thus, this will give room for couples to be more responsible, responsive and accountable for their actions

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