



Paranoid Ideation And Anxiety As Correlates of Domestic Violence Among Married Police Officers

¹Bernard C. Chine,² Chinenye F. Ifedigbo & ³Cynthia Onyejiaka

Department of Psychology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka^{1,2&3}

ABSTRACT

All over the world, domestic violence is an issue of optimum concern, which has been associated with a lot of factors. This paper investigated paranoid ideation and anxiety as correlates of domestic violence among married police officers. Frustration-aggression-displacement theory seems to capture the most probable explanation on the correlation between paranoid ideation, anxiety and domestic violence. A total number of 124 married people police officers conveniently selected from Police stations in Amawbia and Awka participated in the study. Their ages ranged between 28 to 56 with the mean age of 28.94 and standard deviation of 5.28. The Symptoms Distress Checklist (SCL-90) by Derogatis, Lipman and Covi (1973), and Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) by Hertz and Sitterle (2006) were used for data collection. The result of the Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis very strongly suggested that paranoid ideation and anxiety correlated with domestic violence. The researchers recommended that psychological screening as with other health-based screening be conducted on the intending couples before they are joined together.

Keywords: *Paranoid ideation, Anxiety, Domestic Violence*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, domestic violence is an issue of optimum concern. While some articles of history documented domestic violence as an accepted fact of life in many cultures, it has been identified as a social/legal problem resulting in divorce, children' mal-development in all aspects, brutal handling of a partner leading to injuries and psychological conditions such as depression, suicidal ideation and low self-esteem. In many cases, domestic violence has resulted in the loss of lives (Yusuf, Arulogun, Oladepo, & Olowookere, 2011).

Indeed, domestic violence as social menace is everywhere around us, statistics of which is beyond doubt, involving hundreds and thousands of victims. As reported by the Spanish Ministry of Social Affairs in 2000, in a study of domestic violence involving a sample of more than 20,000 Spanish women, at least 4% of those older than 18 (around 640,000 of the total population) were abused in the home (Koustuv, 2008). In addition to this, studies carried out in the United States vehemently indicated that between 15% and 30% of women undergo some type of aggression in their relationship as a couple (O'Leary & Arias, 1988). There was also a further 12% (around 1,865,000 of the total population) who, although they

did not regard themselves as abused, suffered degrading or humiliating behaviors that are inconsistent with a healthy relationship as a couple (Echeburúa, Fernández-Montalvo, & De la Cuesta, 2001);

In line with the global statistical reports on the prevalence of domestic violence, Nigerian scholars such as (Eze-Anaba 2006; Adekeye, Abimbola & Adeusi, 2011), asserted that Nigeria is not exempted from the occurrence of domestic violence. Although the level of violence in Nigeria remains poorly mapped; pilot studies however conclude that it is shockingly high (Adekeye, et al., 2011). These disturbing figures have led to a greater interest on the part of the scientific community to identify factors that correlate with violent behaviours in the home.

The term violence has been defined as an intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). This definition of violence includes interpersonal violence, which is committed against another person. The WHO also describes that inside the family, interpersonal violence may exist against the child, the partner or older people (World Health Organization, 2005).

Domestic violence on the hand refers to the intentional use of force by one family member or partner to control another. According to Aihie (2009), domestic violence is the intentional and persistent abuse of anyone in the home in a way that causes pain, distress or injury. It refers to any abusive treatment of one family member by another, thus violating the law of basic human rights. In the description of WHO, domestic violence is now more broadly defined, often but not always including "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence" that may be committed by a person who is a family member or a person that has been an intimate partner or spouse, irrespective of whether they lived together (World Health Organization, 2012).

Domestic violence can take the form of physical, psychological, sexual, economic or emotional abuse, intimidation, isolation, and/or exerting power and control by using privilege. It can also include battering of intimate partners and others, sexual abuse of children, marital rape and traditional practices that are harmful to women.

Domestic violence occurs globally. Families from all social, racial, economic, educational and religious backgrounds experience domestic violence in different ways. Tjaden and Thoennes (2002), report that in the United States of America,



each year, women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes while men are victims of about 2.9 million intimate partner related physical assaults. In parts of the third world generally and in West Africa, in particular, domestic violence is prevalent and reportedly justified and condoned in some cultures. For instance, 56% of Indian women surveyed by an agency justified wife-beating on grounds like –bad cook, disrespectful to in-laws, producing more girls, leaving home without informing, among others.

Reports from IRIN (2007) show that 25% of women in Dakar and Kaolack in Senegal are subjected to physical violence from their partners and that very few admit that they are beaten – while 60% of domestic violence victims turn to a family member, in three-quarter of the cases, they are told to keep quiet and endure the beatings. The report also reveals that a law passed in the Senegalese penal code punishing domestic violence with prison sentences and fines is poorly enforced due to religious and cultural resistance. In Ghana, spousal assaults top the list of domestic violence (IRIN, 2007). Amnesty international (2007) reports that a third (and in some cases two-thirds) of women are believed to have been subjected to physical, sexual and psychological violence carried out primarily by husbands, partners and fathers while girls are often forced into early marriage and are at risk of punishment if they attempt to escape from their husbands. In Nigeria, reports reveal “shockingly high” level of domestic violence (AfrolNews, 2007). More pathetic is the revelation of gross under reporting and non-documentation of domestic violence due to cultural factors (Oyediran & Isugo, 2005, AfrolNews, 2007).

Finally, despite the various documentation on violence against women, it is worthy to note that domestic violence can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. However, this research update focuses on male to female domestic violence because it is the most prevalent, but violence can and does occur in other situations including female to male and within same-gender couples.

One of the factors that may correlate with domestic violence is paranoid ideation, defined as irrational fear and avoidance of objects, places and situations (Omoluabi, 1997). This situation is also known as paranoia which is considered a threat belief in which the person perceives that others have intentions to harm them now or in the future with little or no supporting evidence (Freeman & Garety, 2000). These beliefs appear to be accompanied by considerable anxiety, worry, and behavioural avoidance (Freeman & Garety, 2003; Freeman, Garety, & Kuipers, 2001; Freeman, 2007). Such avoidance behaviour may occur in form of aggression and/or hostility, which are part of the factors often associated with violence.

Another factor that may correlate with domestic violence is anxiety, often defined as emotional state in which people feel uneasy, apprehensive or fearful. People usually experience anxiety about events they cannot control or predict, or about events that seem threatening or dangerous. Too little anxiety or too much anxiety can cause problems. People with too much anxiety often suffer from anxiety disorders. According to Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV-TR), anxiety disorders include: Generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, panic disorder, obsessive disorder and post-traumatic stress. However, symptoms of anxiety include: panic attacks, hot and cold flushes, racing heart, tightening of the chest, quick breathing, restlessness, or feeling tense, wound up and edgy, excessive fear, worry, catastrophizing, or obsessive thinking, and avoidance of situations that make you feel anxious which can impact on study, work or social life; and have been indicated as having the capacity to affect a person both physically and mentally.

Perhaps, there is no doubt that the issue of domestic violence has raised a lot of concern among researchers, and has also been researched in many ways. However, literally documentations revealed that scholarly research to identify how factors such as paranoid ideation and anxiety correlate with domestic violence is yet to be fully explored. This present study is an extension of such research that seeks to investigate: paranoid ideation and anxiety as correlates of domestic violence among the married police officers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Frustration and Aggression (F-A) Theory

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the Frustration–aggression hypothesis, otherwise known as the frustration–aggression–displacement theory. This is a theory of aggression proposed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears in 1939. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal

The frustration–aggression hypothesis attempts to explain why people scapegoat (Whitley & Kite, 2010). It attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence, positing that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target.

This implies that if a spouse or other member of a family is disrespected and humiliated at work, but cannot respond to this for fear of losing his job, he may go home and vent his anger and frustration out on his family. This theory is also used to explain riots and revolutions. Both are caused by poorer and more deprived



sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence. According to Yale Group, frustration is the "condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference," while aggression is defined as "an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism (or organism surrogate)." However, aggression is not always the response to frustration; rather a substitute response may be displayed when aggressive response is not the strongest on the hierarchy (Pastore & Nicholas, 1950).

Furthermore, since police work especially in Nigeria at this time is extremely risky with increasing sophistication of criminals, and lack of equipment with which to fight crime adds to the difficulty, non-achievement of seemingly targets may lead to frustration. Frustration creates tension, which through the psycho-neurological system affect perceptual processes, hence chronic frustration may predispose to neurochemical imbalance, which in-turn manifests as psychological symptoms.

Statement of The Problem

All over the globe, domestic violence is a social epidemic, eating deep most marriages. It is a social virus, associated with huge losses on the victims, and the society at large. It has been implicated on most divorce cases, sustenance of serious injuries as a result of ruthless manhandling, psychological breakdown/conditions on the side of the victims and personality maladjustment/development on the side of the children who witness the scenario of violence in the home. However, a lot of factors have been associated with violence in the home and have also been studied in literature.

In the paramilitary, with specific interest in the police officers, it has been perceived that many police officers experience violence in their homes, that divorce is on the increase and that infidelity is also rampant. It has been observed also that many police officers abuse their spouses causing pain, distress and injury.

Although, studies had investigated the antecedents, prevalence and some factors (such as psychological symptoms, perceived stress, and economic status) associated with violence, most of these studies were carried out with population from other walks of life other than the police. Again, in recognition of the degree to which partners' psychological symptoms influence behaviour (Heene, Buysse, & van Oost, 2005), this present study seeks to investigate: paranoid ideation and anxiety as correlates of domestic violence among the married police officers. It is set to find answers to the following questions:

1. Will there be a significant relationship between paranoid ideation and domestic violence among married police officers?
2. Will there be a significant relationship between anxiety and domestic violence among married police officers?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to investigate 'Paranoid ideation and anxiety as correlates of domestic violence among married police officers.'

Specifically, the main objectives of this study are to find out:

1. Whether there will be a significant relationship between paranoid ideation and domestic violence among married police officers.
2. Whether there will be a significant relationship between anxiety and domestic violence among married police officers.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be a significant relationship between paranoid ideation and domestic violence among married police officers.
2. There will be a significant relationship between anxiety and domestic violence among married police officers.

METHOD

Participants

A total number of 124 married officers were conveniently selected from Nigeria Police Stations in Awka and Amawbia, to participate in the study. They comprised of 78 males and 46 females. Their ages ranged between 28 and 56, with the mean age of 28.94 and standard deviation of 5.28.

INSTRUMENTS

Two instruments were used for data collection. The first, the Symptoms Distress Checklist (SCL-90), developed by Derogatis, Lipman and Covi (1973), which was used to measure two aspects of symptom distress of anxiety and paranoid ideation.

Erinosa (1996) reported significant coefficients of concurrent validity between Retirement Stress Inventory, Omoluabi (1996) and SCL-90 Scales which ranged from .26 for Scale F (Hostility) to .47 for Scale J (Neuroticism). Derogatis et al. (1977) reported alpha coefficients which ranged from .77 for Psychoticism to .90 for depression. The one week interval test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .78 for Hostility to .90 for Phobic Anxiety. Also, Anazonwu, Obi-Nwosu and Ifedigbo (2013) reported alpha coefficients of .88 for Anxiety and .77 for paranoid ideation.



The second, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by Hertz and Sitterle (2006), which was used, to measure domestic violence such as psychological and physical abuse.

The researchers adapted 8-item out of 20-item contained in Hertz and Sitterle (2006) Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) after subjecting the scale to factor analysis, using data collected from 50 students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka through pilot test and obtained reliability score of .73.

Demographic variables: gender, age, marital status, level of education and religion were also included in the overall instrument.

Procedure

Officers in the Public Relation Department of the respective stations selected for the study were met by the researchers and a brief description of the nature of the study was made. After that an officer was allowed to assist with the administration of the copies of the questionnaire to fellow police officers who were ready, willing and available at the time of the study. Reaching this consensus, the researchers were asked to come back after three days to collect the questionnaire. Out of 140 copies of the questionnaire administered, 124 copies were properly filled and returned and were used for data analysis.

DESIGN AND STATISTICS

This is a correlational study. It employed Pearson Moment Correlation for data analysis and testing of the hypotheses.

RESULT

Table 1

Showing the correlation between paranoid ideation and domestic violence

Variables	N	R	P	Sig.
Paranoid Ideation	124	.262	.002	S
Domestic Violence	124	.262	.002	S

Result of the table 1 above shows that paranoid ideation correlated significantly with domestic violence among married police officers ($r=.26, p<.00$).

Table 2

Showing the correlation between anxiety and domestic violence

Variables	N	R	P	Sig.
Anxiety	124	.193	.016	S
Domestic Violence	124	.193	.016	S

Result of the table 2 above shows that anxiety correlated significantly with domestic violence among married police officers ($r=.19, p<.02$).

Summary of Findings

At the probability level of $p < .05$, it was discovered that paranoid ideation correlated significantly with domestic violence among married police officers. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that 'There would be a significant relationship between paranoid ideation and domestic violence among married police officers,' was accepted. This suggests that the more the symptoms of paranoid ideation the more domestic violence, which implies that increase in abnormal behaviour, which obstructs one's daily activities in terms of action; thoughts and feelings in married people engender domestic violence.

Similarly, at the same level, the second hypothesis, which stated that 'There would be a significant relationship between anxiety and domestic violence among married police officers,' was also accepted. This also suggest that increase in symptoms of anxiety guaranteed increase in domestic violence, which implies that the more exposed married people are to the feeling of uneasy, apprehensive or fear, the higher the chance of domestic violence.

Discussion

The study investigated 'Paranoid ideation and anxiety as correlates of domestic violence among married police officers. From the result table, it was discovered that hypothesis one, which stated that 'There would be a significant relationship between paranoid ideation and domestic violence,' was accepted. This is in agreement with the summary of the American Psychiatric Association (1994) FACT sheet on violence and psychopathological symptoms. It is suggested that some psychological symptoms increase the risk of violence. Furthermore, as indicated in literature on paranoid ideation symptoms as relating to faulty belief, frustration and anger, that appear to be accompanied by considerable anxiety, worry, and behavioural avoidance (Freeman & Garety, 2003; Freeman, Garety, & Kuipers, 2001; Freeman, 2007), leading to avoidance behaviour that may occur in form of aggression and/or hostility, which are part of the factors often associated with violence; one may not be wrong to assert that outcome of the symptoms of paranoid ideation may have increased the chance of domestic violence among the studied population.

In the same vein, hypothesis two, which stated that 'There would be a significant relationship between anxiety and domestic violence,' was also accepted. The findings of this study is somewhat related to the assertion of the National Crime Victimization Survey, between 2001 and 2005 that occurrence of domestic violence may be related to the experience of depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and low self-esteem. This may be copiously explained or linked to the symptoms of anxiety, which include: panic attacks, hot and cold flushes, racing heart,



tightening of the chest, quick breathing, restlessness, or feeling tense, wound up and edgy, excessive fear, worry, catastrophizing, or obsessive thinking, and avoidance of situations that make you feel anxious which can impact on study, work or social life. It is very plausibly to assert that the economic state of the studied population may have created room for the feeling of excessive fear, tense and worry that led to the displacement of aggression (violence) on their intimate partners. This could also be interpreted in line with earlier theoretical argument that frustration preludes irrational thoughts and behaviour.

Implication of The Study

This study has revealed the correlation between paranoid ideation, anxiety and domestic violence among married police officers. This exposes the need for trained psychologists in the police corps, to help in protecting the mental health of the police officers to avoid the effects of some psychological symptoms on the vital aspects of their lives, which may in turn affect their jobs rigorously.

Recommendations

This study has shown that paranoid ideation and anxiety correlated with domestic violence. Therefore, the researchers recommend that policy makers should include psychological health check-ups for police officers and their spouses. They also recommend that relaxation and sporting activities should be increased to reduce tension and effects of work related frustration.

Furthermore, they recommend that marriage therapists, marriage counselors, and clergy should key into this study in order to assist their clients better. They suggest that psychological screening as with other health-based screening be conducted on the intending couples before they are joined together. This will go a long way to increase marital satisfaction and save thousands of lives lost always as a result of domestic violence.

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that:

1) Paranoid ideation correlated with domestic violence among the married police officers and 2) Anxiety correlated with domestic violence among the married police officers.

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Biography

Dr. Chine B.C. is a senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. He specialized in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. His research interests include leadership

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styles and turnover intention. E-mail- bernardchine16@gmail.com Phone Number – 08064030515

Ifedigbo C.F. is a Psychologist and Research Associate with Nnadiiebube Pan-African Academy of Philosophy, Religion and Cultural Research (NPAAPRCR). She is currently engaged with Postgraduate Studies in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. E-mail – angelcitas63@gmail.com Phone Number – 08037446263

Onyejiaka, C.N., is an assistant lecturer in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She specialized in Clinical Psychology. E-mail – cn.onyejiaka@unizik.edu.ng Phone Number: 07032335587