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INVESTIGATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST THE MALE CHILD AND ADULT AND THE IMPACT ON SOME SCHOOLS IN ADAMAWA STATE

Lucky Yohanna Ibrahim^{1*}, Feliwa Clement²

^{1,2} School of Continuing Education Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola

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*Corresponding author: Lucky Yohanna Ibrahim
School of Continuing Education Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate and enlighten the society on the Effects of Gender Based Violence on Male Child and Adult in the Society. Four higher institutions and a secondary school were selected in Adamawa State namely; Federal College of Education Yola, College of Health Technology Mubi, Adamawa State University Mubi, Modibbo Adama University Yola, and Government Day Secondary School Vunoklang, Girei. Fifty questionnaires were administered to each school and were analyzed based on the effects of the gender-based violence on male child and adult considering the strategies to counter such occurrences in due time. The population of the study consists of students of the selected schools and their staff. The study is a corpus-based and descriptive analysis was adopted for the study. It was discovered that many of the male child and adult are subjected to violence every day. Some of this violence meted on the male child or adult can be culturally, politically, socially and so on. Based on the findings, the study recommends regular workshops, seminars and so on to be organized in schools and the community at large to sensitize students and the masses on the effects of gender-based violence meted on the male child and adult. The study also recommends the government to be actively involved in sponsoring experts to educate or create awareness on the dangers of gender-based violence on the male gender. Platforms that will give listening ear to the male child and adult should be created in such a way that the victims will not shy away from telling their stories without being judged by the society. A gender violence free schools and society in the state is the hope and aspiration of all parents and this is what this study focused on. This study investigated into some of the untold stories of the male child and adult in our today's society.

Keywords: Gender Based Violence, Male Child, Male Adult, Sexual Abuse

INTRODUCTION

It is no longer a news that the male child and adult suffers different kinds of abuses and humiliations in one way or the other, depending on where they find themselves or the situation in our today's society or community at large (Blaine, 2016). Gender based violence occurs in every angle, society, region of the world, which also affects so many individuals and families of different beliefs in socio-demographic groups peers and religion. It can simply be term

or seen as a human rights violation that may undermine a person's sense of belonging in either the society or the community at large. This also affects not only an individual physical health or system, but also mental health of someone in different ways as the case maybe. This may as well lead to depression, fear, suicidal attempts, isolation of one's self and psychological or social harm. According to a 2015 UNICEF report, one in ten Nigerian boys experience sexual violence before turning 18. For girls, it's one in four. However, sexual abuse which is defined as "any type of sexual

contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient,” is endemic in Nigeria, especially against children, who are legally incapable of giving consent. Sexual assault is an unacceptable act by individual or individuals in either the society or community which usually occur to anyone, no matter your age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Child or adult who have been sexually assaulted or abused in different categories, may have the same feelings or experiences depends on the reactions of the survivors at a point in time especially when experienced it already (Karen, 2017). Boys and men who have experience sexual assault may be having the same feelings and may face other challenges that are more unique to their experience. However, some men who have survived sexual assault as adults feel shame or self-doubt, believing that they should have been “strong enough” to fight off the perpetrator. Many men who experienced an erection or ejaculation during the assault may be confused and wonder what this means.

The World Health Organization estimates that the lifetime prevalence of childhood sexual abuse against males (under 18) is 7.6% globally (compared to 18% for girls), but other research suggests this number could be anywhere between 3 and 17 percent depending on the country (Daniels, 2017). UNICEF reports that around 15 million adolescent girls between 15 and 19 worldwide have experienced forced sex in their lifetime, but that of boys are also risk, a global estimate is unavailable for them. These discrepancies in data reported by both the WHO and UNICEF are likely influenced by the culture of silence around men and sexual violence as the true number of survivors is vastly underreported.

Statement of the Problem

According to Julia (2016), it is so difficult or rare to see people or Organizations focusing or discussing on the male child or adult sexual abuses in our today’s community, society or the world at large. For so long, different individuals or organizations have focused their research only on girl child abuse, while neglecting the male child or adult as the case maybe. This is the major factor which is responsible for the rise in sexual violence perpetrating our society of today. In our today’s society or community, there are tremendous unrevealed stories of gender base violence against the male child and adult. Many a times, people tend to ignore it or they think it doesn’t happen because male is not a weaker vessel unlike woman. Such ignorance makes the boy child to suffer in silence and which when he becomes a man, he began to exhibit the aftermaths of the male molestation, harassment etc. This actually will be the experience while growing up.

Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of gender-based violence on the male child and adult in our society?
- ii. What are the reasons for the repetition of such gender-based violence towards the male child and adult despite the various preaching and orientations?
- iii. What are the various strategies to be employed in order to end gender violence towards the male child and adult in the Nigerian society?

Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze the effect of gender-based violence towards the male child and adult in our society.
- ii. To identify the reasons gender-based violence on the male child and adult still happens in the society despite the various preaching and orientations.

- iii. To identify the strategies to be used in order to counter-attack and eradicate gender-based violence towards the male child and adult in the Nigerian society.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gender based violence as defined by Bonello and McIntyre (2014) is the violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. Though men and boys can also suffer from sexual assault, the majority of victims are women and girls, who tend to be the most vulnerable. Unequal power relations create the conditions for gender-based violence to occur, and it can be perpetrated or condoned by relatives, community members, or government actors. Such abuse inflicts sexual, physical, or mental harm, and can take the form of threats, coercion, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or honor killings. Survivors experience a range of physical and psychosocial effects, including injury, sexually transmitted diseases, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, social stigma, rejection, and isolation.

A Treacherous Journey

The rise of gender-based violence stemming from conflict is correlated with the changing nature of conflict itself. In the past, wars pitted countries against one another and had distinct battlegrounds; today, conflicts are largely contained within a country’s borders and are increasingly waged against unarmed civilians. Rape is used as a deliberate military strategy to disrupt communities and instill fear and in ethnic conflicts as a tool for both “cleansing” and social control. Modern conflicts disrupt traditional social structures, leading to an increased risk of gender violence. Ethnic differences, socioeconomic discrimination, and group rivalries can exacerbate these risks. Lack of economic opportunity in societies where males are traditionally the providers can also lead to increased violence at home (Bonello and McIntyre, 2014).

Many women and children make run northward to escape the violence they experienced in their home country, whether by family members or organized criminal groups, including gangs. In 2013, El Salvador had the highest rate of gender-motivated killing of women in the world, with Guatemala coming in third and Honduras seventh. Fewer than 3 percent of these murders are resolved by the courts. Children are also vulnerable to abuse: Out of 96 Central American migrant children surveyed by Kids in Need of Defense, 30 said they had experienced sexual or gender-based violence in their home country, 21 people who reported migrating to escape (Bonello and McIntyre, 2014).

Women often do not report the abuse to police, believing the process to be futile. In a UNHCR survey of women who had demonstrated to U.S. officials a credible fear of being returned to their native country, 40 percent of those who said they experienced sexual assaults, rapes, physical attacks, and threats did not report them to police. (Separately, 10 percent reported the police themselves were the perpetrators.) Owing to the high levels of violence against women in the region, in fiscal year (FY) 2015, 82 percent of women from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico screened at the U.S. border had a significant chance of establishing eligibility for asylum, according to UNHCR.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework to be use for this study is the interactionist perspective developed by Karen (2015) based on his concept of “looking glasses self” and the functionalist perspectives

develop from Parson's model of "nuclear family" of the 1940s and the 1950s. Scholars of interactionism study how individuals act within society and believe that meaning is produced through interactions. According to the interactionist, gender stratifications exist because people act towards each other on the basis of the meaning they have for each other, and that these meanings are derived from social interaction. Cooley's concept of "looking glass self" pose that an individual's understanding of their gender role is based on how society perceive them. Thus, if the society views a man as masculine, he will also perceive himself to be masculine.

The Functional perspective – developed by Talcott Parsons model of "nuclear family" in the 1940's and 1950's as seen in Karen (2015) suggests that gender inequalities exist as an efficient way to create a division of labor, or as a social system in which particular segments are clearly responsible for certain respective acts of labor. Though the functional perspective is beneficial in that they contribute to stable social relations, many argue that gender roles are discriminating and should not be upheld.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The descriptive research design was employed in this study. Descriptive research design is considered appropriate and suitable for this study because the study is corpus based.

Sample Selection

The population of this study consists of four tertiary institutions and a secondary school in Adamawa State. The categories of the respondents involved were mainly students and their staff. However, the respondents were selected randomly for the issuance of questionnaires. Lecturers, secondary school teachers and non-academic staff in all the selected schools were categorized as civil servants. The table below sheds more light on it.

Categories of Respondents

LGA	SCHOOL	NO: OF STUDENTS	NO: OF CIVIL SERVANTS
Mubi-North	Adamawa State University, Mubi	39	9
Mubi-North	College of Health Technology, Mubi	25	0
Yola-North	Federal College of Education, Yola	47	3
Girei	Modibbo Adama University, Yola	49	1
Girei	Government Day Secondary School Vunoklang	39	9

Source: field work, 2023

Method of Data Collection

The instruments used for the data collection for this study were the questionnaires. Other sources of data related literature on gender-based violence were utilized. 250 questionnaires were distributed to the five selected schools but 221 questionnaires were retrieved. The questionnaires were filled by the respondents and retrieved as well.

Procedure for Data Analysis

The descriptive method of data analysis was adopted for the purpose of this study. The percentage (%) of each population were calculated and presented in a tabular form. For easy comprehension of the study and also for the purpose of the analysis, the questionnaires were structured as follows;

SA= strongly agreed

A= agreed

SD= strongly disagreed

D= disagreed

NS= not sure

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table1: The effects of gender-based violence towards the male child and adult in the society

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	UD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Gender-based violence has psychological effects on male child and adult in the society.	82 37%	108 49%	11 5%	11 5%	9 4%	4	Accepted
2	Gender-based violence has emotional effects on male child and adult in the society.	97 36%	99 45%	19 9%	11 5%	11 5%	4	Accepted
3	Some traditions have negative interpretation on male child and adult in the community.	64 29%	95 43%	19 9%	24 11%	17 8%	4	Accepted
4	Male child and adult are being abused domestically.	53 24%	97 44%	19 9%	35 16%	15 7%	3.5	Accepted
5	Male child and adult are being abused physically.	66 30%	77 35%	29 13%	31 14%	18 8%	4	Accepted

Source: Field Work, 2023

Table 1 depicts that 37% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender-based violence has psychological effects on the male child and adult in the society. 49% agreed to the aforementioned statement. 5% strongly disagreed, another 5% disagreed and 4% of the respondents were indecisive to the same statement which was confirmed with the mean of 13.84. The table also shows that 36% and 45% strongly agreed and agreed respectively to gender-based violence having emotional effect on the male child and adult in the society. The mean of 10.96 confirmed that because 9% and 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed to the same statement and 5% were not sure. The table also shows that 29% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 45% agreed to the notion that some traditions have negative interpretation on the male child and adult in the society. 9% strongly disagreed while 11% disagreed to the same statement. 8% of the respondents were indecisive that is not sure. This is to say, most of the respondents agreed that some traditions can influence the thinking of our male child and adult in the society negatively. This is also confirmed with the mean of 7.66. Furthermore, the results obtained from the table 1 also depicts that 24% and 44% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the idea of the male child and adult experiencing domestic abuse. 9% of the respondents and 16% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 7% were not sure which gives us a mean of 7.60. In the same vein, 30% and 35% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, 13% strongly disagreed, and 14% disagreed, while 8% of the respondents were not sure respectively to the idea of the male child and adult being physically abused in our society. This was also confirmed with the mean of 6.74.

Table 2: The reasons gender-based violence on the male child and adult still happen in the society despite the preaching and orientation.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	NS	MEAN	DECISION
1	Gender based violence is still taking place on the male child and adult despite preaching in our place of worship.	71 32%	99 45%	20 9%	22 10%	9 4%	4	Accepted
2	Some of the reason of repetition of gender-based violence are poverty	75 34%	82 37%	18 8%	26 12%	20 9%	3.5	Accepted
3	People don't understand the orientation given and the negative effect of gender-based violence.	62 28%	113 51%	22 10%	13 6%	11 5%	4	Accepted
4	The preaching/awareness against gender based violence did not reach the targeted individuals in the society.	53 24%	97 44%	26 12%	22 10%	22 10%	3.5	Accepted
5	The people in the society don't take the preaching and the orientations given as a serious case.	71 32%	102 46%	24 11%	15 7%	9 4%	4	Accepted

Source: Field Work 2023

It can be deduced from table 2 that the respondents from the selected schools accepted that gender-based violence towards the male child and adult is still happening in our society despite preaching in our places of worship. This is so because 32% of the respondents and 45% strongly agree and agree respectively to the aforementioned. 9% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 10% disagreed, while 4% were not sure of it. This gives us a mean of 10.29. The table also depicts that 34% and 37% strongly agreed and agreed that poverty is some of the reasons that enhances gender-based violence on the male child and adult in the society. 8% and 12% strongly disagreed and agreed to the statement and 9% were indecisive which is confirmed with the mean of 7.43. Table two also depicts that 28% of the respondents strongly agreed, 51% agreed, 10% strongly disagreed, 6% disagreed and 5% were not sure to the notion that people don't understand the awareness given on gender-based violence and its effects on the male child and adult. It is confirmed with the mean of 10.84. This shows that a large number of the respondents have low understanding of the awareness on gender-based violence and its negative effect. Furthermore, table 2 shows that 24% and 44% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the idea that preaching/awareness talks on gender-based violence did not reached the targeted individuals in the society. Those that strongly disagreed and disagreed were 12% and 10% respectively. While those respondents that are not sure were 10% which is confirmed with the mean of 7.00. Finally, table 2 also depicts 32% of the respondents and 46% strongly agreed and agreed to the notion that people don't take the preaching and the orientations given as a serious case whereby is one of the factors that enhances the continuity of gender-based violence in the society. 11% and 7% strongly disagreed and disagreed, while 4% of the respondents were not sure. This gives us a mean of 10.96 as confirmation.

Table 3: The strategies to be used in order to counter-attack and eradicate gender-based violence towards the male child and adult in the society.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	NS	MEAN	DECISION
1	Strategies need to be changed in order to eradicate gender-based violence on male child and adult in the society.	74 35%	104 47%	15 7%	15 7%	9 4%	4	Accepted
2	Constant workshops, preaching and societal orientation should be given to people so as to eradicate gender-based violence.	88 40%	95 43%	11 5%	15 7%	11 5%	4	Accepted
3	Experts should advice parents to involve in educating their children on the dangers of gender-based violence.	110 50%	77 35%	11 5%	11 5%	11 5%	4	Accepted
4	Government should put interest in sponsoring experts to organize workshops regularly so as to educate the community.	110 50%	79 36%	15 7%	7 3%	0 4%	4	Accepted
5	Government should enact a stronger law on how to punish anyone found wanting of such act in the society.	108 47%	84 38%	20 9%	11 5%	2 1%	4	Accepted

Source: Field Work 2023

Table 3 depicts that 35% of the respondents and 47% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the society need to change strategies in order to stop and eradicate gender based violence on the male child and adult in the society. Those that strongly disagreed and disagreed to the idea were 7% and 7% respectively. Not sure were 4% which was confirmed with the mean of 11.54. Table 3 depicts that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed, 43% agreed that constant workshop, preaching and societal orientation should be given to people so as to eradicate gender based violence. Therefore, the idea is acceptable. 5% strongly disagreed to the aforementioned and 7% disagreed. 5% were not sure and this gives us a mean of 12.00. Table 3 also depicts that 50% and 35% strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the opinion that experts should advice parents in educating their children on the danger of gender base violence. 5% strongly disagree to it and also another 5% disagreed. 5% of the respondents were also not sure which is confirmed with the mean of 13.09. Furthermore, table 3 also depicts that 50% and 36% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that government should be involved in sponsoring experts to organize workshops regularly so as to educate the people and the community as well. This is one of the best strategies accepted by the respondents. 7% and 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed to this idea. 4% were indecisive, thus we have a mean of 14.34 as confirmation. In conclusion for table 3, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed that government should enact a stronger law on how to punish anyone found wanting in such act. 38% also agreed to the same concept and 9% strongly disagreed, while 5% just disagreed to the same idea. The respondents that were sure were 3%. This gives us a mean confirmation of 21.91.

Discussion

From the above results in table 1, it is very glaring that gender-based violence has effect on the male child and adult in our society. It has psychological effect on the male child and adult. It shapes how they behave because is something that has to do with their mental and mind aspect. For instance, if a male child grows up in an environment that only the man can help financially, he will live with that notion and if peradventure he couldn't provide for his household and a woman is in the position to help, he may be skeptical about accepting such help. Some men that accept such help will be traumatized mentally because they think that they have become less manly. On the other hand, those that refrain from accepting did that not because they wanted to but what the society made them to believe. They are lacking and suffering at the same time which will eventually affect their behavior negatively.

The study reveals that some traditions have negative influence on the male child and adult in our society. It is not a new thing that patriarchy is the most common thing in our today's society. Some places especially Africa have traditions that put men in the higher order in almost everything which is not bad but again, it also have its negative side. For instance, in some places, the man is supposed to build or rent a house so that if get married eventually he can take his wife/wives to the house. But nowadays, there are situation where the woman has built or rented a house before getting married while the man in the picture is not yet flamboyant enough to afford such. But because of traditions, the society will frown at the man when he follows the woman to the house she has built or rented but such an act from the man will loosen the financial burden of the family till he is able to bounce back financially.

In addition, the male child and adult are being abused domestically and physically in the society. Domestically in the sense that many male child and adult are sexually abused but many tend to shy away from it because the society will not believe them since men are not the weaker vessels but women. Some young boys are abused sexually by older females while some male adults are abused mostly by their spouses. In some homes, there are men that don't retaliate when hit by a woman not because they are weak but because of their good morals. Such men continue to endure because even if they complain, the society will see them as weaklings. The findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Nicholas, Welender, Yonkova, (2017) whom revealed that Emotional violence which is slightly different from psychological violence is a strong feeling that affects one's mood and relationship with others. Because of the discrimination against the boy child and adult in the society, the male gender will have a feeling that he is to earn more than a woman since he is the man, therefore, such a person will have low empathy for any woman that strives to earn a living, and will believe that women don't have much responsibility so they don't need more income, while in reality different individuals have different problems in life irrespective of their gender.

According to data of the respondents in table 2, it is realized that gender-based violence on the male child and adult is still happening in our society despite the various preaching and orientations. The questionnaires that were distributed were not carried out based on a particular religion but it was randomly. The major religions in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. Therefore, based on the responses, the two major religions preached against gender-based violence meted on the male child and adult in places of worship. This exposes that both major religion frown at such, thus they need to do better for a positive result.

Poverty is one of the reasons that enhance gender-based violence towards the male child and adult in the society. Individuals, government and places of worship can help in this aspect. If the society emphasizes on preaching on equality for both genders in terms of finance, the male child or adult will not shy away from accepting help from the other gender, and also work under and be loyal to both genders. If individuals have this kind of mindset, any gender can help anyone irrespective of which gender is rendering the help.

Our today's society has to be more open in educating people against the gender-based violence meted on the male child and adult. They have to make people understand the negative effect of gender-based violence towards the male child and adult by saying exactly what has happened, and is still happening. They should not refrain from making known to the public some facts about what the male child and adult experienced or are still experiencing due to gender-based violence. By so doing, some of them can freely open up and share their predicaments without thinking about judgments talks from the society.

The finding of the study agrees with the study of Musola (2015) and Harris (2016) whom revealed that preaching and awareness creation against the gender-based violence on the male child and adult has not reached the targeted audience. Individuals, schools, government are expected to make sure that a reasonable number of the male child and adult are attended to in term of orientation against gender-based violence. Workshops, seminars, etc if organized it will surely go a long way in the awareness process thus bring about a positive change.

From the data of respondents in table 3, it can be deduced that the numbers of those that accepted that strategies should be used in order to cope gender base violence in the society is higher than those respondents that didn't accept or were not sure. In order to do so, firstly, strategies need to be changed. That is to say some of the notions held by the society towards the male child and adult needs to change. This can be done by changing the mindset of the society to see that whether an individual is a male or female, at the end we are all human beings and we all feel pains and have emotions. If such strategies are employed, there will be a positive change on the issue of gender base violence towards the male child and adult in the society. Secondly, constant workshops, seminars, societal orientation and so on should be emphasized in our society. This will go a long way in curbing gender base violence against the male child and adult. If people are oriented, it will change the way they view society. And it will also shape their behaviors positively.

The findings of the research study is in consonance with the findings of Lockhart (2017) and McVeigh (2017) to eradicate gender base violence against the male child and adult in the society is by starting from the home. They say home is the first school a child attends therefore, if parents are educated or have awareness on gender-based violence not only pertaining the female gender but also on the male gender it will bring a drastic positive change. If parents are educated on this, automatically the children will be educated as well; therefore a large number of the society will be enlightened on the same issue. This should be handled by experts.

CONCLUSION

The study draws its conclusion from the following findings deduced from the investigation on the impact of gender base violence on the male child and adult in the society.

Gender base violence against the male child and adult is still going on in our society but people are shying away from speaking out due fear of marginalization. Gender base violence has psychological and emotional effect on the male child/ adult which in turn shapes their behavior and relationship with others negatively. Some traditions have negative effects on male child and adult in the society. People should be more open during awareness programs by telling people in plain language what they are supposed to know and be more open about the real negative effects of gender base violence on the male gender. Parents and the general public if educated on the negative effect of gender base violence on the male child, it will go a long way in stopping or reducing the rate of gender base violence on the male child and adult in the society. The study also finds out that gender base violence is preached against in our places of worship but people tend to ignore it as irrelevant. If government are involved in sponsorship of experts to educate people on gender base violence on male child and adult and also create laws that will sanction those found guilty of such acts, it will help to stop and eradicate the situation. Poverty is also one of the reasons why gender base violence is still happening in our society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the studies.

1. Government should help in sponsorship of programs that will alleviate gender base violence against the male child and adult in the society and also enact laws that will curb such acts.

2. Parents should be strongly involved and give listening ear to their wards. Some of these traditions that influence the male child and adult negatively started mostly from the parents.
3. Non-governmental bodies, schools, experts can volunteer to create programs, awareness talks and so on, on gender base violence against the male child and adult in our society.
4. Platforms should be created in such a way that those male child and adult that have experienced gender base violence and those that are still experiencing it can open up and share their stories without seen as a weakling and those platforms should listen to those voices and act on it.

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