

## Socio-Cultural Factors Associated with Domestic Violence among Working Couples in Benue State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study was carried out in zone B District of Benue state, Nigeria to examine socio-cultural factors associated with domestic violence among working couples. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The sample size was 235 married men and women selected using stratified simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering research questions 1, 4 and 5 while Pearson Products Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in answering questions 2 and 3. Regression analysis was used in testing hypotheses 1 and 2 while t-test was used in testing the hypothesis 3 at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study identified types of domestic violence among working couples to include hitting, slapping, beating, intimidation, marital rape and fighting amongst others. The results indicated a high social factors associated with domestic violence and also cultural factors and domestic violence. The study identified the consequences of domestic violence among working couples to include divorce, damage of family image, death, child abuse, poor child up-bringing and destruction of properties. Strategies to address domestic violence identified include building mutual trust, encouraging problem sharing culture, encouraging regular family discussion and organizing seminars to working couples on dangers of domestic violence among working couples amongst others. The results of hypotheses one and two indicated a significant relationship between social factors and domestic violence as well as between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples respectively. The third hypothesis of no significant difference between male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B district of Benue state was accepted. The researchers among others recommended that working couples should be made to understand themselves, professional counsellors should organize seminars and workshops and conferences for working couples to sensitize them on the pros and cons involved in working couples relationship and their problems as well as appropriate punishment for the perpetrators of domestic violence by the government.

**Keywords:** Socio-cultural factors, Domestic violence, Working couples

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage comprises one of the most important interpersonal relationships that most adults will experience. Marriage is a

concept that is traditionally and socially acknowledged and approved in both developed and developing countries of the world. <sup>[1]</sup> Samuel defined marriage as an approved union between a man and a woman for procreation in the society. Pelt <sup>[2]</sup> defined marriage as a process in which two persons join themselves in a way that affirms each as an individual and both as a legally constituted pair. The above implies that marriage is a union of two individuals as a couple in the society. Marriage as used in this context is a union of a man and a woman as a couple in the society. The couple may be self-employed or on a paid employment as working couple.

Working couples are in paid employment. Suffice to say, working couples in paid employment are those who receive salary and are paid by some institutions or organizations. The couples who are working outside home have their expected assigned family roles and responsibilities. Naturally, culture and gender assign different roles and responsibilities to husband and wife in marriage. Culturally, husbands are meant to be the leaders of their different homes, providing for different needs of the members of the family. The husbands as the leaders of the family provide for family needs in terms of what to eat, what to wear, training, health needs, as well as educational needs of the members of the family including that of their wives and also ensure family security <sup>[2]</sup>. Culturally, women are responsible for childbearing and rearing, a role ascribed to them by natural law. Women take care of their husbands and children, provide for kitchen requirements and other household needs for the social well-being of the family <sup>[3]</sup>. In some cases, couples cooperatively define certain roles and responsibilities in their efforts to ensure marital peaceful and conflict-free relationship in their marriage <sup>[4]</sup>.

Occasionally, due to societal pressures, working couples often find themselves engaged in conflict arising from non performance of assigned domestic roles in the family. This may be as a result of either of the couples' inability to meet up with one family role or the other. According to Burnett <sup>[5]</sup> such problems may include payment of school fees, health bill, food items or late preparation of family dinner among others. This situation invariably may lead to the use of abusive words, exchange of unpleasant comments between the couples, thus giving rise to misunderstanding that may escalate to violence involving damages to family properties. Such violence if not well handled in the family, can lead to family separation or divorce. The World Health Organization (WHO) <sup>[6]</sup> defined violence as threat against another person, or against a group that has a high likelihood of resulting in psychological harm or deprivation.

Violence is a universal concept that constitutes threat to peace, social harmony and violation of the rights of the individuals whether in the family or the society. <sup>[7]</sup> Violence is the use of force or threat to cause injury which may be emotional, physical, psychological or mental and caused by a person against others which results in injury, pain, humiliation and degradation. In this context, violence is any act capable of negatively affecting the freedom of an individual in any social environment.

Domestic violence is a common occurrence in many families, countries and it transcends social, economic, religious and cultural groups. <sup>[8]</sup> According to Brancalhon, domestic violence refers to the harm caused when an individual physically or psychologically tries to dominate or control another family member. Also Burnett <sup>[5]</sup> defined domestic violence as physical, psychological, economic and sexual abuse as well as attempts to manipulate the victim through the use of his or her children. Burnett further stated that the most common feature of domestic violence is imbalance of power and control.

In this study, domestic violence is physical or emotional abuse arising from misunderstanding on family issues among working couples. Domestic violence occurs in many forms and is of different types. Ganeshpanchan identified three types of domestic violence to include physical aggression that involves slapping, hitting, kicking, beating and battering; psychological abuse includes: belittling, threats, intimidation, humiliation, isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting their access to information or assistance and sexual abuse include: forced intercourse or marital rape, coercion and other practices <sup>[9]</sup>

Cultural factors are often seen as inhibiting factors in marital relationship in some societies. Culture in its simplest definition is the totality of the way of life of the people. Otite <sup>[10]</sup> culture as the complex whole of man's acquisitions of knowledge, moral, belief, art, and custom, technology amongst others which are shared and transmitted from generation to generation. According to the author, other socio-cultural factors that influence marital relationship include widow inheritance, interference by in-laws in marital cases and issues surrounding male and female children in the family. Such factors as observed above are common among the indigenes and inhabitants of zone B area of Benue State.

Zone B senatorial area of Benue state has in recent times witnessed rising incidence of domestic violence among working couples. <sup>[11]</sup> Reported that this situation in the area has led to increased rate of family separation, child abuse and neglect, incessant police cases resulting from break of relationship among working couples in the zone. In most cases infidelity and unnecessary suspicion between married working couples arising from their work places may lead to total divorce. <sup>[12]</sup> Omogun reported that over 75% of cases before Zone B welfare zonal office in Benue is working couples domestic violence-based. The issue is also often reported in the pages of the National Dailies. For instance <sup>[13]</sup> documented a case where a working mother has to poison her husband over a reported extra-marital relationship with a young lady in the man's office. <sup>[13]</sup> Already cited identified

others as sexual abuse, psychological or mental such as verbal abuse and the use of language that involves threats, name-calling and blaming amongst others.

The causes of this domestic violence in the area may centre on either inability of the man or woman to live up to his/her role expectations and responsibilities especially with regard to working class couples in the society. Against this background, this study seeks to examine the relationship between socio-cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in Zone B senatorial area of Benue state and also the strategies to address the problem of domestic violence in Nigeria.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The design was considered appropriate for the study because it enabled the researchers to find out the extent of relationship between social cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State.

The study was carried out in zone 'B' senatorial district of Benue State. Zone 'B' comprises seven local government areas namely; Buruku, Gboko, Tarka, Guma, makurdi, Gwer-west and Gwer-East. The population comprised all the 2,350 married men and women in offices in the seven local government areas of the zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. Available records from the State welfare office indicate that there are 2,350 working couples across the seven local government areas of the zone.

The sample size for the study was 235 married men and women in offices. This figure represented 10% of the population. This figure comprised 160 and 75 working males and females respectively selected across the seven local government areas using stratified simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was developed and titled by the researchers as Socio-Cultural and Domestic Violence Questionnaire (SCDVQ). The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was trial-testing on 20 working couples (both male and female) in Makurdi Local Government Area outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded 0.83, 0.80, 0.89, 0.79 and 0.87 for clusters A, B, C, D and E respectively while giving the overall reliability estimate as 0.84.

Direct delivery method was used to administer and collect the questionnaire from the respondents after completion on the spot. Pearson Products Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer research questions 2 and 3 while research questions 1, 4 and 5 were answered using mean and standard deviation. A Pearson Product Coefficient of 50% and above will serve as bench mark for acceptance for clusters B and C while a mean score of 2.50 and above was served as bench mark for acceptance for clusters A, D, and E while any mean scores below 2.50 was rejected. Student t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

What are the types of domestic violence experienced by working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of the types of domestic violence experienced by working couples

S/N		$\bar{X}$	SD
1.	Husband hitting his wife	3.07	0.29
2.	Slapping of wife by husband	3.04	0.25
3.	The husband beating his wife	3.04	0.28
4.	Using intimidation on the wife	3.05	0.23
5.	Subjecting a man to humiliation by the wife	3.01	0.20
6.	Husband committing marital rape	2.82	0.43
7.	A wife fighting her husband	3.17	0.40
8.	Stabbing a wife by husband	2.93	0.39
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	3.05	0.13

Result in table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the types of domestic violence experienced by working couples. Table 1 indicates that the mean values for the items ranged from 2.82 (item 6) to 3.17 (item 7) for the types of domestic violence experienced by working couples. The mean values of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were above 2.50 criterion values. Table 1 equally shows that the cluster mean value was 3.05 and was greater than 2.50 criterion value. This implies that respondents agreed that all the listed domestic violence are experienced by working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### Research Question 2

What is the relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state?

**Table 2:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Social Factors and Domestic Violence among working couples

Variable	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Social Factors	21.95	1.63	235	0.67	0.45
Domestic Violence	24.44	1.02			

$\alpha = 0.05$ , R<sup>2</sup> = coefficient of determination

Result on table 2 is correlation coefficients of the relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples. Results showed that the correlation between social factors and domestic violence among working couples was 0.67. This means there was a high positive relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples. The coefficient of determination associated with 0.67

is 0.45. The coefficient of determination 0.45 also known as the predictive value means that 45% of social factors accounted for the variation in domestic violence among working couples. This is an indication that 55% of variation in domestic violence among working couples is attributed to other factors other than social factors.

### Hypothesis 1

**HA<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis of Social Factors and Domestic Violence among working Couples

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	44.951	1	44.951	18.205	.000
Residual	575.329	233	2.469		
Total	620.281	234			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 1 (HA<sub>1</sub>), regression analysis was used. The result in table 3 shows that an F-ratio of 18.21 with associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This exact probability value of 0.00 was less than 0.05 level of significance set as benchmark and it was found to be significant. The alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state was therefore rejected and inference drawn was that, there is a significant relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### Research Question 3

What is the relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state?

**Table 4:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Cultural Factors and Domestic Violence among Working Couples in zone B Senatorial District of Benue State

Variable	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Cultural Factors	24.23	1.24	235	0.84	0.70
Domestic Violence	24.44	1.02			

R<sup>2</sup> = coefficient of determination

Result on table 4 is correlation coefficients of the relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state. Results showed that the correlation between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples was 0.84. This means there was a very strong positive relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state. the coefficient of determination 0.70 also known as the predictive value means

that 70% of cultural factors accounted for the variation in domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state. This is an indication that 30% of variation in domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state is attributed to other factors than cultural factors.

### Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is significant relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

**Table 5:** Regression analysis of cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	249.470	1	249.470	535.918	.000
Residual	108.462	233	.466		
Total	357.932	234			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 2 (H<sub>02</sub>), regression analysis was used. The result in table 5 shows that an F-ratio of 535.92 with associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This exact probability value of 0.00 was less than 0.05 level of significance set as benchmark and it was found to be significant. The alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state was therefore rejected and inference drawn was that, there is a significant relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### Research Question 4

What are the consequences of domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state?

**Table 6:** Mean and standard deviation of the consequences of domestic violence among working couples

S/N		$\bar{X}$	SD
24	Family separation.	3.13	0.42
25	Domestic violence leads to divorce.	3.20	0.45
26	Damage of family image.	3.28	0.52
27	Domestic violence result to death sometimes either of the couples.	3.12	0.40
28	It can lead to child abuse and neglect.	3.10	0.30
29	Domestic violence leads to destruction of properties.	3.16	0.41
30	Leads to poor child up-bringing in the family	3.21	0.46
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	3.17	0.27

Result in table 6 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on the consequences of domestic violence among working couples. Table 6 indicates that the mean values for the items ranged from 3.10 (item 28) to 3.28 (item 26) for the consequences of domestic violence among working couples. The mean values of items 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 were above 2.50 criterion values. Table 6 equally shows that the cluster mean value was 3.17 and was greater than 2.50 criterion value. This implies that respondents agreed that the consequences of domestic violence among working couples include: Family separation, domestic violence leads to divorce, damage of family image, and domestic violence result to death sometimes either of the couples. It can lead to child abuse and neglect, domestic violence leads to destruction of properties and leads to poor child up-bringing in the family.

### Research Question 5

What are the strategies to address domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state?

**Table 7:** Mean and standard deviation of the strategies to address domestic violence among working couples

S/N		$\bar{X}$	SD
31	Building mutual trust by couples.	3.45	0.5
32	Encouraging problem sharing culture among couples.	3.11	0.31
33	Organizing seminar for working couples on the dangers of domestic violence.	3.16	0.37
34	Encouraging regular family discussion.	3.24	0.43
35	Avoiding demining behaviours among couples.	3.66	0.48
36	Accommodating individual differences among couples.	3.09	0.28
37	Couples showing concern for the family welfare.	3.25	0.43
38	Couple providing for the family needs	3.14	0.35
39	Couple respecting each other.	3.06	0.24
40	Couple being open to each other	3.09	0.29
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>	3.23	0.19

Result in table 7 shows the mean and standard deviations of respondents on the strategies to address domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state. Table 7 indicates that the mean values for the items ranged from 3.06 (item 39) to 3.66 (item 35) for the strategies to address domestic violence among working couples. The mean values of items 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 were above 2.50 criterion values. Table 7 equally shows that the cluster mean value was 3.23 and was greater than 2.50 criterion value. This implies that respondents agreed that all the listed strategies can address domestic violence experienced by working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### Hypothesis 3

**Ha3:** There is significant difference between mean ratings of male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

**Table 8:** t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

S/N	Items	Male N = 118		Female N = 117		t-cal	df	Sig.	Dec.
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD				
31.	Building mutual trust by couples	3.52	0.50	3.38	0.49	2.05	233	0.42	S
1.	Encouraging problem sharing culture among couples.	3.09	0.29	3.13	0.34	-0.85	233	0.40	NS
2.	Organizing seminar for working couples on the dangers of domestic violence.	3.15	0.36	3.17	0.38	-0.38	233	0.70	NS
3.	Encouraging regular family discussion.	3.24	0.43	3.25	0.43	-0.19	233	0.85	NS
4.	Avoiding demining behaviours among couples	3.73	0.45	3.60	0.51	2.10	233	0.04	S
5.	Accommodating individual differences among couples	3.11	0.31	3.06	0.24	1.38	233	0.17	NS
6.	Couples showing concern for the family welfare	3.35	0.48	3.15	0.35	3.68	233	0.00	S
7.	Couple providing for the family needs	3.21	0.41	3.08	0.27	2.98	233	0.00	S
8.	Couple respecting each other	3.10	0.30	3.02	0.16	2.40	233	0.02	S
9.	Couples being open to each other.	3.11	0.32	3.06	0.24	1.58	233	0.12	NS
	<b>Cluster t</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>S</b>

Result in table 8 showed the t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B senatorial district of Benue state. Result showed that there was significant difference on items 31, 35, 37, 38 and 39. This is because their significant values are less than 0.05 level of significance. However, there was no significant difference on items 32, 33, 34, 36 and 40 because their significant values were greater than 0.05. The cluster t-value of 2.92 with a degree of freedom of 233 and a significant value of 0.04 was obtained. Since the significant value of 0.04 was greater than 0.05 set as level of significance, this means that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between mean ratings of male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B senatorial district of Benue state was rejected. Inference draw therefore is that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

## DISCUSSION

### Types of Domestic Violence

The result of this research question identified the followings as the types of domestic violence experienced by working couples in zone B district of Benue state. They include husband hitting, slapping, beating, his wife, also husband

intimidating their wife and subjecting a man to humiliation by the wife. Others include husband committing marital rape, a wife fighting her husband and stabbing a wife by husband. The results is in agreement with the view of Atolabi [14] who listed physical aggression such as slapping of wife, beating, intimidation as domestic violence. The findings are in line with the opinion of Taiwo [11] who explained that stabbing a wife, marital rape and subjecting a man to humiliation are common types of domestic violence among working couples in zone B district of Benue state.

### The Relationship between Social Factors and Domestic Violence among Working Couples

The findings from this research question indicated a high positive correlation between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in the area. This finding implies that other factors apart from social factors accounted for domestic violence among working couples. The findings are in line with the result of the work of Mpoto and Boateng who found out that those social factors are predictive in the correlation between working couples and domestic violence [15].

The alternate hypothesis of significant relationship between social factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between social factors and

domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### **The Relationship between Cultural Factor and Domestic Violence among Working Couples in Zone B District of Benue State**

It was found out in this research question that a very high positive correlation exists between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples. The identified cultural factors include domineering attitude of men in the family, inability of a woman to give birth to a male child and infidelity among couples. [16] The result is in conformity with the view of Oladeji who stated that domineering attitude of men in the family, infidelity among couples and inability of a woman to give birth to a male child rank high among cultural factors as causes of domestic violence. Other factors include inability of the man to provide for the welfare of the children, late preparation of food for the family, sending money to parents without husband's consent by the woman as well as poor handling of sex issues among couples are causes of poor relationship among working couples. These findings are supportive of the view of Adewale [17] who posited that poor handling of sexual issues and woman sending money to her parents without the consent of her are among cultural factors that bring about domestic violence among working couple in the society. The findings are also in support of the opinion of Campbell [18] who stated that cultural factors are high predictive in cases of domestic violence among working couples.

The alternate hypothesis of significant difference between male and female working couples on the relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district was accepted. This implies that there is significant difference between male and female working couples on the relationship between cultural factors and domestic violence among working couples in zone B senatorial district of Benue state.

### **Consequences of Domestic Violence among Working Couples**

The findings of this research question identified family separation, divorce, damage of family image and domestic violence result to death sometimes either of the couples. Others include child abuse and neglect, destruction of properties and poor child up-bringing in the family. The findings are in agreement with the view of Johnson [19] who stated that domestic violence damages family image, destruction of properties and poor child up-bringing. Others consequences include child abuse and neglect as well as death of either of the couples in the society. These findings are in line with the result of Oshimolowo and Olufale [20] who found that domestic violence results to child abuse and neglect and death of either of the couples in the society.

### **Strategies to Address Domestic Violence among Working Couples in Zone B District of Benue State**

The findings from this research question indicated that all the listed items such as building mutual trust by couples, encouraging problem sharing culture among couples, organizing seminar for working couples on the dangers of

domestic violence, encouraging regular family discussion, avoiding domineering behaviours among working couples. Others strategies for addressing domestic violence among working couples in Zone B District of Benue State include accommodating individual differences among couples, couples showing concern for the family welfare, couple providing for the family needs and couple respecting each other as effective strategies for addressing the issues of domestic violence among working couples in zone B district of Benue state. [21] These findings are in agreement with the views of Dobash and Dobash who stated that building mutual trust, sharing family problems, accommodating individual differences and couples respecting each other are effective for addressing domestic violence among working couples. The findings are also in consonance with the view of Campbell [18] who opined that couples provide for the family, respecting each other and been open to each other provide strategies for addressing domestic violence among working couples in the society.

The hypothesis of significant difference between male and female working couples on the strategies to address domestic violence in zone B area of Benue state was accepted, thus implying that there is significant difference between male and female working couples on the strategies to address the domestic violence among working couples in the zone.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the followings were recommended:

1. The government should come up with a policy that will enable working mothers to dismiss from the office at least 2 hours before the official closing time.
2. Working couples should be made to understand themselves because it is only when this is done, that the conflict that brings about domestic violence will be reduced.
3. Professional counsellors should organize seminars and workshops and conferences for working couples to sensitize working couples on the pros and cons involved in working couples relationship and their problems in the society.
4. All efforts should be made in the society to ensure that domestic violence among working couples is reduced to the barest minimum through appropriate punishment for the perpetrators of domestic violence by the government.

### **CONCLUSION**

The society is such that is filled with social responsibilities that working couples are exposed. For the working couples to meet up with such responsibilities, each has to understand their assigned roles in the family. The understanding of these roles by the working couples will help them to minimize areas of conflict on family issues with regard to socio-cultural factors that bring about domestic violence among them. It is only when this is done that the incidence of divorce, family separation, beating, stabbing as well as poor training of the

children will be reduced thereby creating room for building a better society for all.

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