Domestic Violence among Married Couples: Psychological Distress, Personality Profiling and Psychological Well-Being as Predictors.

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Abstract: This research investigated psychological distress, personality profiling and psychological well-being as predictors of domestic violence among married couples. The study comprised a sample of 750 Nigerian married couples within age range of 19-45 years as well as mean years of marriage of 15years. An estimated 66.8% of the volunteer participants were Christians, while 33.2% were Muslims. The sampled couples completed the psychological distress, personality profiling, psychological well-being and domestic violence scales. Results following hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that psychological well-being and personality profiling jointly and separately predicted domestic violence and psychological distress. It was observed that psychological distress positively and statistically predicted domestic violence among married couples. Suggesting that there are certain issues or factors among married couples that induced psychological distress and triggered domestic violence such as workload, level of education, level of income, parenting style, unemployment, poor social support, negative life styles among others. Also, high scores on neuroticism and extraversion may be associated with personality disorder (Mark, 2018; Dorahy, Lewis, &Wolfe, 2007). In the same vein, profile of high neuroticism and extraversion predicted risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence (Shariat, &Moshei, 2017; Sefidaran, Hashencias, Moghaddando&Hosseine, 2016). Personality profiling had effect on domestic violence experience among married Nigerian couples.
Keywords: Domestic violence, married couples, personality profiling, psychological well-being, psychological distress.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The United Nations framework for model legislation on domestic violence states " All acts of gender-based physical and psychological abuse by a family member against women in the family, ranging from simple assault to aggravated physical battery, kidnapping, threats, intimidation, coercion, stalking, humiliating, verbal abuse, forcible or unlawful entry, arson, destruction of property, sexual violence, marital rape, dowry or related violence, female genital mutilation, violence related to exploitation through prostitution, violence against household workers and attempts to commit such acts shall be termed "domestic violence"(Etienne, Linda, James, Anthony, & Rafael, 2002.; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, &Zwi,2002).

Domestic Violence among married couples is becoming a very critical and widely reported issue across the globe as well as cut across different races. Psychologists of developing countries over the years had been deeply concerned with trying to study the different sources and factors as well as mitigate the impact of this on married couple's relationship and the psychological well-being of their families. Domestic violence among couples includes behaviourssuch as physical, sexual and psychological and economic harms among close partners (Ribeiro, Silva, Alves, Batista, Ribeiro, Schraiber, Bettiol& Barbieri, 2017).Research results indicate that predisposition towards domestic violence are attributable to wide range of factors which act individually or jointly such as gender, psychological state of individual, parenting antecedents, economic factors, environmental and personality, age, experience and number of years in the marriage, among others (Majde, Sajedia& Sajadi,2018; Rabbani, Qureshi & Rizvi,2008).This study has become a topical discourse as it is possible that because of the wide range of predisposition factors, married couples could have some or combination of those factors which cut across different races, personality, socio-economic backgrounds, religion, gender, academic levels, age, environmental backgrounds, and parental style etc. Hence, there is need to scientifically and objectively establish the major reinforcing factors irrespective of racial or religious backgrounds.Physical

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violence refers to the actions such as attack with a weapon, pushing, punching, slapping, kicking, strangulation, burning and threats with a knife and throwing objects at the spouse; this can happen bilaterally between the couples (Deb &Modak, 2010; Ellsberg, &Heise, 2005).

Sexual violence refers to unwanted sexual acts, harsh sexual behaviours, and the pressure to have sex with others (Abolmaali&Mousazadeh, 2012). Psychological or emotional violence refers to actions, damage or under-mining a victim's self-image or self-esteem, including withholding of emotional support and nurturance, restricting personal space and freedom.Personal factors may explain the risks for as well as experience of domestic violence. Studies abound on personal factors as correlated to domestic violence in developing country settings. This study investigated the relationship between psychological well-being and personality profiling on one hand, psychological distress and domestic violence on the other hand among Nigerian married couples. Hence, this study set out to provide answers to this research question: How may personal factors such as psychological distress, psychological profiling and psychological well-being explain domestic violence among married Nigerian couples?. Psychological distress refers to a symptoms ranging from depression and general anxiety and a forerunner to mental, physical and emotional exhaustion. Couples with psychological distress may carry elevated risk for domestic violence with basic resource (Antai, Oke, Braithwaite &Lopez, 2014; Dorahy, Lewis, & Wolfe, 2007;Bebanic, Clench-Aas, Raanaas&Nes, 2015).For example, researchers have found that social neglect as well as personality profiles predispose perpetration of domestic violence (Carbone-Lopez, Kruttschnitt&MacMillan (2006).

Personality predisposesmarried couples to perpetration of domestic violence. Five adult personality profiling have been identified: neuroticism (susceptibility to psychological distress, depression and anxiety disorders),extraversion (the disposition sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, activeness and create positive affect or mood, such as happiness and interest), Openness to experience (the tendency towards imaginary, creative, feelings, thinking, ideas, and thoughts, tend to be curious about their inner experiences and external world as a consequence of their behaviour), Agreeableness (the inclination towards sympathy, trust, cooperation and altruism, cooperative, and willingness to help others and have in mind that others will be helpful in future) andconscientiousness (the ability to plan, organize and carry out cognitive tasks, capability, self-orientation and competence, purposeful, strong-willed, motivated, well organized, and determined). Of these, neuroticism and extraversion have significant correlation perpetration of domestic violence (Almedina& Milena, 2014; Sharma, 2011).

Psychological well-being is defined by the prevalence of positive self attributes such as self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery and autonomy (Ryff, 1995). Psychological well-being might be buffer protecting long-term harm from domestic violence (Tuncay-Senlet, 2012;Poutiainen&Holma, 2013;Tuncay-Senlet, 2012).Repeated experiences of interpersonal violence may predispose survivors to learned helplessness (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000) and acceptance of abuse and gendered interpersonal power relationship(Bem, 1984).

Rationale of the Study.
The review of the relevant literature suggests that domestic violence is a very serious social problem and it impairs the mental, physical and psychological health of gender survivors of domestic violence. Risks for perpetrating and accepting domestic violence are high in patriarchal societies. Bowman (2003) reported that by mid 1990s attention had begun to be paid in most African countries to the widespread of domestic violence that is spreading like wild fire. The issue of domestic violence among couples in Nigeria as well as in Africa is far from clear but what is clear is that it is an issue and not much is being done to prevent it through taking pro-active steps by tracing the factors that precipitate its occurrence and how to mitigate its negative consequences on the spouses. In Nigeria, most of the initial researches were intended simply to document the existence of such violence and thus to construct it as a social problem. Although, analysis of the problem of domestic violence among couples is much more recent in African than in the United States, for instance, and most of the writings about it had been undertaken by activists rather than academic researchers.

Previous studies had dwelt on issues such as noky family environment and children, domestic violence and trauma, biological and developmental stages responses and predisposition to domestic violence. Often times, researchers had investigated the types and impact of domestic violence on the well-being of battered women and children but they did not engage in investigating to find out the involvement of personality profiling and how it impacted on the married couples and predisposition to domestic violence. Research results indicate that predisposition towards domestic violence are attributable to wide range of individual, parenting antecedents, economic factors, environmental and personality factors, age, experience and number of years in the marriage among others (Majde, Sajedia&Sajadi, 2018; Rabbani, Qureshi &Rizui,2008).

So far, very scanty psychological researches have been conducted on domestic violence among married couples especially with the view of investigating possible predicting factors such as personality profiling, psychological distress, and psychological well-being. This research has been planned to explore those individual

factors such as psychological distress, personality profiling and psychological well-being and how they individually or collectively act as predictors of domestic violence among married couples.

Goal of the Study.

The main objective of the current study was to examine the prediction of domestic violence through psychological distress, personality profiling and psychological well-being among married couples in Ebonyi State, South- Eastern Nigeria. The study aimed to address the following question: How may personal factors of psychological distress, personality profiling and psychological well-being may significantly explain domestic violence among married Nigerian couples?

II. METHOD

Participants.

Participants were (750) married couples with age range 19-45 years, as well as mean years in marriage 15years. Christians were 501; high school educated 171. They were predominantly from Igbo cultural-ethnic grouping (73.6%) and 39.9% were in polygamous marriage. The purposive sampling technique was used in the present study and participants were identified with the help of men and women activist lawyers. Majority of the sample belonged to middle and lower socio-economic status. As inclusion criteria, only those couples who were made part of the study had legal pursuits going on in courts and ''family law centers'' in EbonyiState, Nigeria. Keeping in consideration the APA ethical issue and fragile nature of the study, Notice of Consent from their lawyers and the court authority were also sought. All the willing participants confirmed their participation in the study by informed consent commitment.

Measures.

The couples self-reported their age at marriage, gender, educational level, number of children, income level and employment status. In addition, they completed the following measures:these demographic factors were selected based upon a review of related literature.

Psychological Distress (PD-K10; Kessler et al. 2002).

The PD-K10is a 10 item unidimensional scale to measure clinical range of distress in terms of how often respondents' experienced anxiety-depressive symptoms (e.g., nervousness, sadness, restlessness, hopelessness, worthlessness) over the last 30 days. The item are rated on a 5-point Likert 1 (hardly) to 5 (very much) the total score greater than 16 shown psychological distress. The Cronbach's alpha index score of the scale was 0.96.

Big Five Personality Inventory (NEO-FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1992).

The NEO-FFI isa measureof the five dimensions of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Garousifarshi and Soufiyani (2008) reported internal consistency values of 0.74 to 0.89 in Nigerian sample with 150 respondents. The criterion validity for all forms of personality exceed the suggested value of 0.70, neuroticism(.70), extraversion (.74), openness (.72), agreeableness (.71), and conscientiousness (.71) respectively. The items are responded to on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The coefficient of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale ranges from 0.69 to 0.81.The reliability of NEO-FFI among Nigerian samples was acceptable (Cronbach's Alpha= 0.86).

Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS: Ryff& Keyes, 1995).

The PWS is a42-item measure of six dimensions comprising: self-acceptance (nine items; 0.78), autonomy, social support (nine items; 0.54), environmental mastery (nine items; 0.76), personal growth (nine items; 0.86), positive relations with others (nine items; 0.87), and purpose of life (nine items; 0.81) was used to measure psychological well-being of participants. PWS itemsare scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items sample include: In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live). The total score, ranged from 54 to 270, higher scores indicating that participants have high level of psychological well-being. Scores from the PWS achieved a cronbach's alpha of $\alpha=0.93$ in the present sample.

Domestic Violence Questionnaire (Abolmaali, Saberi, & Saber, 2014).

DVQ is a42 multi-dimensional measure of four domains of domestic violence such as:(1) Physical Violence, (2) Sexual Violence, (3) Psychological Violence and (4) Economic/ Financial Violence. The items are scored on a 5-point response format:Not at all true of my spouse (0); slightly true of my spouse (1); moderately true of my spouse (2); very true of my spouse (3), and extremely true of my spouse (4). The highest score of this

scale indicates the highest level of domestic violence. Scores from DVQ obtained a Cronbach's alpha score of0.92 in the present sample.

Procedure and Data Analysis.

The study was approved by Ebonyi State Ministry of Justice and Family Law Center legal officials as well as counseling and health practitioners in the center. The participant's couples were verbally consented for the study. A total of 750 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the participants, but 18 of the spouse declined to participate in the study and were replaced by other spouses residing in Ebonyi State with domestic violence experience, who volunteered to fill the scale. The couples completed the survey forms anonymously and the purpose of the study of the research was explained to the participants. Data collected were analysed using hierarchical multiple regressions analysis to predict the levels of significance on which personality profiling , psychological distress and psychological well-being impacted on domestic violence among Nigerian married couples.

III. RESULTS

Table 1presents descriptive statisticsand correlation of the study variable.

From correlation, psychological distress is significantly correlated with all the four components of domestic violence -physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence and economicviolence (correlations ranged between r = 0.41 to 0.68, p< 0.01).Psychological well-being is positive significant relationship with physical violence (r = 0.51, p<0.01) and sexual violence (r = 0.67, p<0.01), psychological violence(r = 0.26, p<0.05) and economic violence (r =0.47, p<0.05).

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Between Psychological Distress, Personality Domains and Psychological Well-Being and Domestic Violence Among Couples.

Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Physical Vio	56.23(7.50)	-										
2. Sexual Vio	49.70(7.05)	0.56	-									
3. Psych Vio	69.06(8.31)	0.42	0.32	-								
4. Econ .Vio	48.08(6.71)	0.54	0.34	0.57	-							
5. Psych. Dist	87.09(9.33)	0.68**	0.41**	0.61**	0.49**	-						
6. Neur	68.02(8.25)	0.52**	0.61**	0.35**	0.51**	0.45	-					
7. Extraversion	65.10(8.07)	0.46*	0.48**	0.55**	0.60**	0.13	0.36	-				
8. Open	57.07(7.55)	-0.14**	-0.46**	-0.06**	0.47*	0.53*	0.40	0.33	-			
9. Agree	45.06(6.70)	-0.35*	-0.61*	-0.17*	-0.24*	0.38	0.07	0.43**	0.42	-		
10. Consci	48.34(6.95)	- 0.18**	-0.67**	-0.44*	-0.39 *	0.29	0.41*	0.32	0.31*	0.34	-	
11. Psych. Wb	56.94(7.54)	0.51*	0.67**	0.26*	0.47*	0.33*	0.49**	0.56**	0.38**	0.61	0.49	-

Note: N=75, M = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, Vio = Violence, Econ. = Economic, Psych. Dist. = Psychological Distress Psych=Psychological, Neur= Neuroticism, Open. = Openness to Expression, Agree = Agreeableness, Consci. = Conscientiousness. Psych. Wb. = Psychological Well-being,**p< 0.01 ,*p< 0.05.

Personality profiling of neuroticismare statisticallyand significantly correlated with all the four dimension of domestic violence such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence and economic violence (correlations ranged between r= 0.35 to .0.61, p< 0.01) and so is extraversion.

Table 2 presents the results of a stepwise regression analysis to predict domestic violence among couples from their personal factors.

Variables	R	R²	ΔR²	F	ΔF	Df	βeta	t	P
Block 1: Demographics	.12	.03	-	1.58	1.15	4,325			
Age							.05	.09	.01
Gender							.09	1.20	.05
Length of Marriage							.1.01	1.25	.05
Levels of Education							.07	1.01	.01
Number of Children							.06	.07	.01
Income Level							.09	1.31	.01

Employment Status							.08	1.02	.01
Block 2:									
Psychological Distress 0.7	.35	.13	.07	3.23	2.34**	1,243		.17**	3.21
Block 3:									
Personality Factors: .09	.46	.16	.09	3.35	2.48**	4,239		.40 **	6.46 *
Neuroticism .08								.18 **	5.32*
Extraversion .06								.08 **	4.61
Openness to Expression .07								- .06 *	1.32
Agreeableness .32								- .04 **	3.41
Conscientiousness .07								- .05 *	1.52
Block 4:									
Psychological Well-being .03	.51	.25	.24	2.65	8.76**	1,423		.26 **	12.18*

Note: ** *p* < .01. * P < .05.

In block2, psychological distress positivelypredicts domestic violence (β = 0.17, p = < 0.01). In block **3,** results neuroticism personality (β = 0.18, p = < 0.01) and extraversion personality (β = 0.08, p = < 0.01) predict domestic violence. In block **4,** psychological well-being predict domestic violence (β = 0.26, p = < 0.01). Jointly, psychological distress, personality, psychological well-being and demographic information explained 15.8% variance of domestic violence.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Psychological distress predicted domestic violence among the married couples. This finding is supported with those of earlierinvestigators who reported similar results (Hill, Mossakowski& Angel, 2007; Kulkarni, Bell, Hartman, & Herman-Smith, 2013; Antai, Oke, Braithwaite & Lopez, 2014; Dorahy; Lewis, & Wolfe, 2007). Findings may be explained by the fact that from the social factors like parenting, unemployment, poor social support escalate the risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence (Marchand,Drapeau& Beaulieu- Prevost, 2012). Psychological distress arises when couplesevaluate asituation as one that tasks or outstrips his/ her capabilities and therefore seen as threatening. Couples who have high prospects and want to accomplish may be susceptible to psychological distress and domestic violence (Kulkarni, Bell, Hartman, & Herman-Smith, 2013; Hill, Mossakowski&Angel, 2007).

Personality profile of high neuroticism and extraversion predicted risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence (Shariat&Monshei, 2017; Sefidgaran, Hashemias&Moghaddamhosseini, 2016), while openness to expression, agreeableness and conscientiousness portended lower risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence (see also Motevaliyan, Yaacob, Juhari, Mansor&Baratvand, 2014;Ulloa, Hammett, O'Neal, Lydston, & Leon, 2016). High scores on neuroticism and extraversion may be associated with personality disorder (Motevaliyan, Yaacob, Juhari, Mansor&Baratvand, 2014; Ulloa, Hammett, O'Neal, Lydston, & Leon, 2016) which is a risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence.

Couples self-reporting with higher psychological well-being at lower risk for perpetrating or experiencing domesticviolentcompared to those with lower psychological well-being (see also Malik, 2018; Dorathy, Lewis, & Wolfe, 2007; Hazen, Connelly, Soriano, &Landsverk, 2008). This effect for good psychological well-being might mean the couples have access to and provide social support to friends, family members, or spouse compared to peers.

Limitations and Conclusion.

This cross sectional survey design could not establish causality or directionality of the variables of investigation on domestic violence. Another limitation lies in the sample as only the married couples living in Ebonyi State were sampled without comparison with other States in Nigeria. Notwithstanding these limits, the present study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge of literature on psychological distress, personality variables, psychological well-being and domestic violence among married couples in non-western culture.

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