

THE PERCEPTION OF GENDER ROLES AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR SPOUSAL VIOLENCE IN KADUNA METROPOLIS, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the socio-cultural bases of spousal violence in Kaduna Metropolis. It x-rays the perception of gender roles and the socio-cultural causes of spousal violence within the generic concept of gender violence. Given the dearth of data and the lack of systematic documentation of spousal violence, this study attempts to fill the gap by providing a gender sensitive data through its gender disaggregated analysis. The findings of this study were derived from a survey of 590 respondents, 48.9 % (290) females and 51.1% (300) males using the multi-stage cluster sampling technique as well as qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions and In-depth interviews with key informants in the community. The findings reveal that most people still subscribe to the traditional gender roles though submissiveness of women is increasingly being challenged. Moreover, while violence against women is condoned, violence against men by women is unacceptable. Women therefore retaliate through passive resistance in the form of deliberate sluggishness, refusal to serve food and sexual neglect. Insubordination of women and sex related problem were perceived as causes of violence against women while female violence was attributed to aggressiveness on the part of husbands, sex related problems, neglect of the provider role and interference from mothers in-law. The paper concludes that much of the violence that men and women experience is borne out of the social and cultural prescriptions which often are skewed in favour of men and in line with the findings, appropriate recommendations are highlighted. In particular, in view of the important role religion plays in Nigeria, religious leaders should be involved in changing people's perception on gender roles and attitudes to spousal violence.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Role, Perception, Violence, Spousal Violence and Wife Battering

Introduction

The marriage institution is highly valued in Nigeria and if one is of marriageable age but is single; such a person is looked upon as irresponsible and unworthy of holding any political office. In the case of men, impotence could also be suspected. There is usually a sigh of relief when such persons eventually get married and in Africa, the marriage ceremony is often elaborate. Among the Hausa for example, the celebration goes on for up to seven days with different activities for each day, before the couple is finally left alone. Yet, this esteemed institution is also the site for much violence that men and women experience. Much of this is due to the perception that people have about gender roles and the associated prestige that accompanies gender stratification in society. For the purpose of this paper, spousal violence refers to any threat or actual harm perpetrated by a man against his wife or vice versa. This includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect.

Statement of problem

The gender of a child to a large extent can affect the type of life he or she is subjected to. In Nigeria, male children are preferred because it is believed that they will carry on the lineage. Such Igbo name like “Afemefule”(let my lineage or compound not be lost) is a reflection of the importance attached to the male gender and in such cultures, inheritance of landed property is the preserve of male children. Women generally are less involved in decision making processes in the home and community. This is exemplified by the view of a community leader, when he was asked in an interview about women’s participation in the decision making process of his community. His answer was that, “Women should be content with their family responsibilities and their economic activities of ground nut oil and “dawadawa” (fermented locust beans seasoning) processing and that if they (women) had any contributions on any issue, they should route them through their husbands.”

Women too have come to internalize such low concept of themselves. For example, among the Tiv in the past, if someone knocked at the door and asked “Who is home?,” the women would respond, “There is nobody home, only us!” Although women are increasing beginning to assert themselves as they become more empowered educationally and economically, they continue to be viewed through patriarchal lenses. This probably explains why certain stereotypes on gender roles have not changed much and why spousal violence especially against women but not husbands persists. For example, it is an abomination for a woman to beat up her husband and a

woman is blamed more if she attacks her husband. In the Urhobo tradition, such a woman is made to pay a fine, and causing a man to fall down, calls for the sacrifice of a goat to appease the ancestors. Also, among the Bajju, the *Abvai* Spirit not only prohibits women from eating nutritious foods like beans, egg, chicken, goat and beef but also serves as an agent of social control and sometimes, violence against women (Kantiyok, 1994).

This paper examines people's perception of gender roles and their attitude toward spousal violence in Kaduna metropolis.

Review of literature

Violence is the unlawful use of force or threat on another, irrespective of gender. It is any action, behaviour or attitude against other people based on anger and frustration, which could lead to injury or harm. Thus, beating other people, destroying their property, threatening, harassing, intimidating and forcing people to do what they do not want to, amounts to violence (Akpan, 2004). Shindi (2005), goes on to define violence as "the unjustified use of force." However, acts which have a high potential for injuring the person being hit such as kicking, choking, shooting, stabbing, e.t.c. are considered abusive. Such injurious acts range from minor to severe acts (Gelles, 1979). A further categorization of violence is made between normal and abusive violence. According to Corey (2007:1), "normal violence includes such acts as slaps, pushes, shoves and spankings generally considered acceptable within a family environment". The intention is to show disapproval and not to injure. Where such acts are severe or injurious, then it becomes abusive.

Society accords the two sexes different roles, responsibilities, rewards and presumed worth, with masculinity ranking higher. The differential ranking of the two sexes has further implications for society at large as it determines the different life experiences one is exposed to and to a large extent, determines one's access to education, health, work, skills, life expectancy, sexuality, decisions, relationships, freedom of movement and the position they occupy (Mosse, 1993). Men generally are socialized to be in charge of most vital aspects of life. In the words of Nwanuobi (2001:1) "the Nigerian traditional cultures encourage the members of society to internalize the differences in statuses with the accompanying obligations and expectations from both sexes." This places much more burden on women and is the basis for the violence which women experience globally at household levels (Momsen, 2004).

The 2003 National Demographic Health Survey of 7864 Households linked the perception and attitude to wife beating to women's acceptance of their low status in society. For example, women themselves admitted they could be justifiably beaten if: food is burnt; they do not cook on time (33%); argue with husbands (44%); go out without their husband's consent (50%); neglect their children (50%) or deny husbands sex (38%). There are regional

variations and Northern women, particularly from the North East ranked highest in their negative perception of themselves with over 60% indicating tolerance for violence; in the event that food is burnt, (80%); for arguing with husbands, (83.2%); for going out without husband's consent, (81.1%); for neglecting children, (81.4%) and for denying sex, (73.5%). The least category was South East geopolitical zone with 31.3%, followed by North central with 46.9%.

According to Omonubi- McDonell (2003), the patriarchal setting in which women occupy a low status coupled with their poor economic and educational background worsen the position of women in society; more so in polygynous households (Albert, 1996). As a result, they are more vulnerable to abuse, murder and other social, economic and cultural constraints. In the Arabian world and Asia, spousal violence is justified through the institution of honour and dowry killings (Sadaawi, 1986; Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Jejeebhoy, 2004). The Aljazeera Television Station on 29th May, 2007 reported that as many as 10 suicides by burning are committed in Herat in Western Afghanistan. In response, rather than address the fundamental issues which stifle women's freedom, a new **Burns Unit** was established in the General Hospital for such victims. On the 19th of April 2012, Aljazeera News reported the story of Motan Shama along with other victims of acid bath by Afghanistan husbands and in-laws. There are one or two acid baths every week but most victims never get justice and in most cases, they are forced to return to their abusive husbands. Because of such injustices, many women are increasingly resorting to suicide.

Due to such difficulties, by 1980, the practice of dowry in Bangladesh was outlawed but without enforcement, they are largely ignored (Bates, Shuler, Islam and Islam, 2004). In some parts of Nigeria also, where high bride price is the norm, some women are unable to leave abusive homes because of the economic burden that they would become if their families have to refund the bride price on divorce (Okereke, 2002). The low status of the women explains the acceptance of chastisement for erring wives in the Nigerian constitution (Sec.55d) but not husbands and this extends to other cultural practices such as widowhood, female genital mutilation and early marriage (Osakwe, Madunagu, Usman and Osagie, 2005). In Nigeria, 64.4% of ever married women and 50.4% of unmarried women condone wife beating as normal (Oyediran and Isuigo-Abanihe, 2005). This corroborates the assertion by UNICEF (2001) that beating of a woman and children is a widely sanctioned disciplinary measure.

Methodology

Location of Study

The location of this study is Kaduna Metropolis, the capital of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The name Kaduna, means crocodiles in Hausa

language (Kada, being singular for crocodile), a testimony of the one-time crocodile infested Kaduna River. Another version given by the Gbagyi natives associates it with snails –“eka-duna,” meaning there are more snails found in this river than others (Gandu, 2011). Located in the North Central Geopolitical Zone in Nigeria, Kaduna is between longitude of 30° E Greenwich Meridian and Latitude 0900 and 11 30⁰ North of the Equator. It occupies approximate 48,473.2 sq km (http://www.nigeria.galeria.com/Nigeria/states-Nigeria/Kaduna_state.html; <http://www.kadunastate.gov.ng/>; Agboola, 1979). Kaduna is a melting pot of people from all over Nigeria but the northern part is predominantly Hausa speaking and Muslims while the southern part is dominated by Christians and by indigenous Southern Kaduna ethnic groups. Moreover, while the seat of power (State House of Assembly) is in northern part, the industrial area is located in the south. Most of the people of Kaduna are engaged in civil service, private sector and commercial activities. Kaduna State consists of 23 local government areas, each with its head quarter. It has a population of 6,113,503 million people consisting of 3,090,438 males and 3,023,065 females (National Population Commission, 2006). The local government areas are further subdivided into three Senatorial Districts: Kaduna North, Kaduna Central and Kaduna South. Kaduna Metropolis falls within Kaduna Central Senatorial Zone with the north predominantly Hausa while the southern part of Kaduna is inhabited by several ethnic nationalities which have similar culture and kinship structure hitherto referred to as Southern Zaria. In recent years, the terminology “Southern Zaria” has been rejected because it was imposed by the Hausa rulers. As a measure of asserting their identity, most ethnic groups opted for indigenous names. Thus, the Kaje now call themselves Bajju and their language, Jju; Kaningkom prefer Ninkyop; the Kataf now prefer to be called Atyap; Ikulu, as Bakulu; Ham Chawai now Atsam; Kafanchan, Fantsuan, etcetera. The historical and political development of the Southern Kaduna people is well documented by James (1997).

Methods of Data Collection

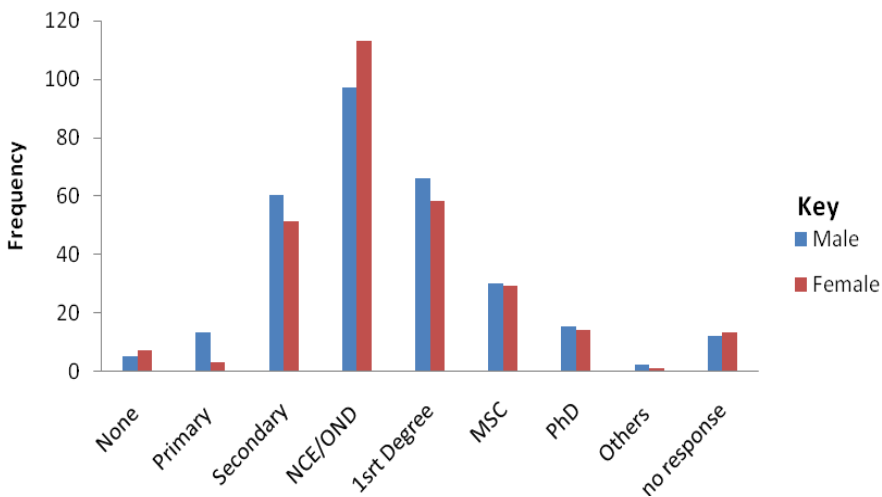
Furthermore, Kaduna Metropolis consists of two Local Areas: Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas (LGAs). Kaduna North Local Government Area has thirteen (13) Administrative Wards which are further grouped into six (6) Districts, each with a District Head. Kaduna South Local Government Area also has 13 wards, 7 districts each with a District Head, and 1Chieftdom, in Television area. A multi-stage cluster sampling technique was adopted for this study. In the first stage, 6 districts were selected. From Kaduna North, Doka, Kawo and Gabasawa districts were selected while Kakuri, Ungwan Muazu and Television were selected from Kaduna South Local Government Area. In each district, a ward was

selected using the simple random sampling. In each ward, a community was chosen and in each community, the major street or area (Ungwar) was chosen in order to ensure that the various ethnic groups were captured. The population of study includes all married couples residing in Kaduna Metropolis. The unit of analysis consists of heterogeneous households while the unit of response was the selected respondents within the households. A total of 622 questionnaires were administered in Kaduna Metropolis but the analysis is based on a sample size of 590 respondents.

Findings

The sample consists of 300 (51.1%) males and 290 (48.9%) females. The majority, 35.% (207) were in their thirties, followed by those in their twenties with 32.% (191) and those in their forties, (19.%). To a lesser extent, older people in their sixties and teenagers respectively were least represented. The dominant religion was Christianity, with about two-thirds of the respondents 68% (400); while 30% (178), professed Islam and only 0.7% (4) were believers of traditional religion. The data also shows that most respondents got married in their late (25-29) and early (20-24) twenties respectively. About 61,2% (3611) of the respondents were in monogamous marriages and 57.3 (338) had between 1-4 children. About 60% had been married for less than ten years; 26% (156), had been married for less than five years but the rest 33% (195) had been married for between five and ten years. Most respondents and their spouses are literate.

Chart 1: Bar Chart Representing the Educational Qualification of Respondents



Both spouses have very high literacy levels as shown by 57% (339) of the respondents and 54% (319) of their spouses. About 40% (212) of the respondents have tertiary education while 33% (192) of their spouses have tertiary education and a good number of the respondents 15% (88) also have

post graduate degrees while 12% (73) of their spouses also have tertiary education. Women were well represented across the different levels of educational attainment; however the majority of those with the National Certificate of Education (OND/NCE) were women, thus confirming the assumption that women are best suited for teaching profession. Moreover, more women compared to men, were found in the least educated categories (illiterate and primary education). Many respondents 46.6 % (275) had relatives living with them, in particular, siblings and to a lesser extent, mothers in-law. This explains why they were indicted in marital problems.

Table 1. Composition of Relatives in Respondents' Households

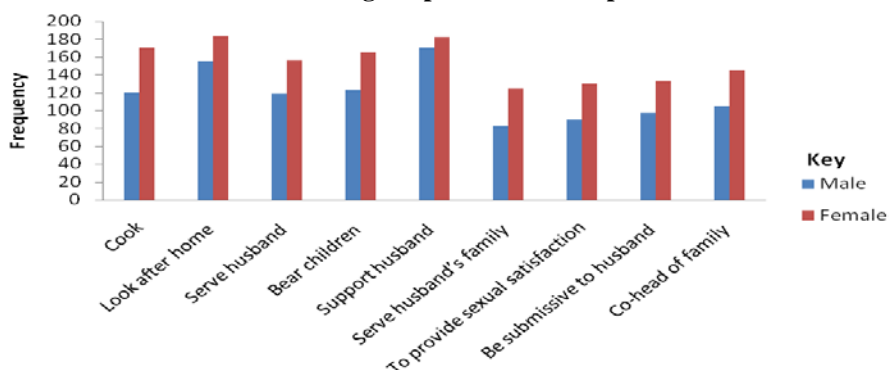
Relatives	Frequency	Percentage
Brothers	78	13.2
Sisters	95	16.1
Mothers	38	6.4
Mothers in-law	34	5.8
Fathers	2	0.3
Fathers in-law	8	1.4
Sisters in-law	56	9.5
Brothers in-law	6	1.0
Others	15	2.5
No response	258	43.7
Total	590	100.0
Size of households	Frequency	Percentage
< 10 people	382	64.7
10-20 people	80	13.6
21-30 people	5	0.8
31-40 people	7	1.2
41-50 people	2	0.3
51 >	7	1.2
No response	107	18.1
Total	590	100.0

Source: Field work, 2012

Perception of gender roles

Role of a Wife: Respondents were asked about their views on the role of a wife. Not less than 34% of the respondents to some extent agreed with the options provided below. However, the majority were more united about their views on the role of a wife, as one who supports her husband and looks after the home as represented by about 60% and 57% of the respondents respectively.

Chart 2: Bar Chart indicating Respondents’ Perception of the Role of a Wife



The traditional role of cooking and bearing of children are beginning to wane as evidenced by about 51% of the respondents each, who objected to these roles as feminine roles. The idea of that a woman should “serve” her husband or meet his sexual needs were frowned upon, which explains why 61% disagreed that a woman should be submissive. Rather, a more egalitarian view is supported by those who disagree with the view that ‘a woman’s role is ‘to cook’, ‘serve her husband’ or ‘be submissive’. Instead, they support the perception of a woman as a ‘supporter’ and to a lesser extent, ‘co-head’. Consistently, more women subscribed to the traditional disaggregated gender roles but ironically strived to assert themselves as co-heads of families probably because they also contribute their own quota to the wellbeing of the family.

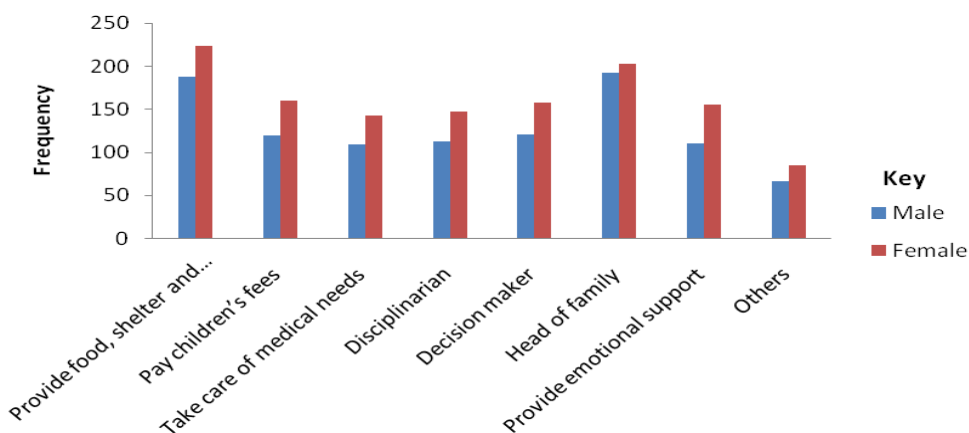
Role of a Husband: Respondents’ views were also sought on the role of a husband. For the man, the traditional roles of provider and head remain largely unchallenged.

Table 2: Respondents’ Perception of the Role of a Husband

Role of husband	Yes			
	Male	Female	Total (N= 590)	(%)
Provide food, shelter and other needs of the family	188	224	412	69.8
Pay children’s fees	120	160	280	47.5
Take care of medical needs	110	143	253	42.9
Disciplinarian	113	147	260	44.1
Decision maker	121	158	279	47.3
Head of family	192	203	395	66.9
Provide emotional support	111	155	266	45.1
Others	67	85	152	25.8

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Chart 3: Perception of the Role of a Husband



As reflected in Table 2.above, about 70% and 67% of the respondents consider the provider and leadership roles respectively as the preserve of the husband. However, over 40% of the respondents opined that the other roles could be shared by their wives. Thus, women should be more involved in sharing medical and school fees; decision making, discipline and emotional support. Respondents’ opinions were sought on the extent to which they subscribed to some issues. Their responses are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3: The Extent Respondents agree with the following Issues

Views of Respondents	Agree			
	Male	Female	Total (N=590)	%
Wife should succumb to husband even if she disagrees	129	133	262	44.4
A good wife obeys her husband	198	224	422	71.5
A good wife cooks her husband’s food	194	220	414	70.2
A woman should be able to choose her friends	151	191	342	58.0
A woman should be able to go where she wants even if her husband disapproves	90	67 67	157	26.6
A woman should not talk back at her husband	159	173	332	56.3
When beaten, a woman should hide her family secret	110	118	228	8.6
A good husband takes care of all his wife’s needs	183	208	391	66.3
A husband should not tolerate his wife talking back at him	98	78	176	29.8
A good husband should beat his wife to keep her in check	77	43	120	20.3

A man can force his wife to have sex if she denies him	70	41	111	18.8
A woman can also force her husband to have sex if he denies her	67	81	111	18.8

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Chart 4: Respondents' Views

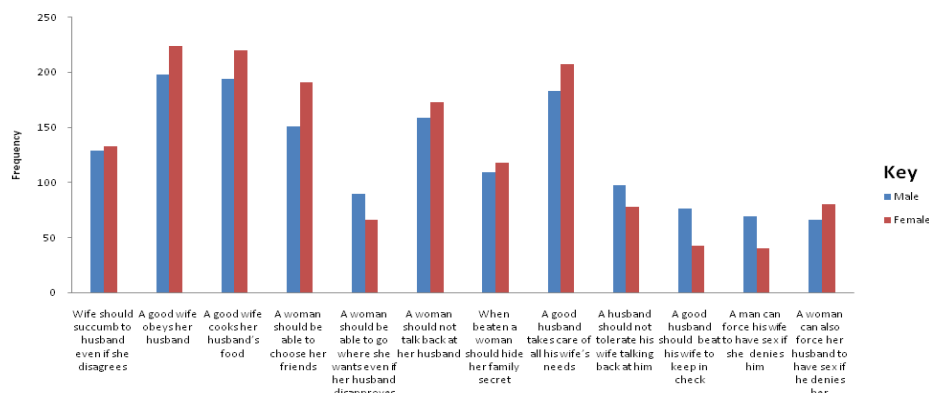


Table 3 above, is consistent with views of respondents on the traditional roles of husband and wife. In general, for the majority of the respondents, a good wife is seen as one who obeys her husband, cooks his food, does not talk back at her husband and to a lesser extent, succumbs to his wishes even if she disagrees with him and therefore should tolerate violence and keep it as a family secret. Conversely, the good husband is one who takes care of his entire wife’s needs, does not beat her and even if she talks back at him, he should tolerate it. Beating is strongly disapproved of by 60% of the respondents so also is spousal rape be it by the man or woman. In terms of numbers, more men than women kicked against physical and sexual abuse and also were more supportive of women’s freedom to go out against their husbands’ will.

The result indicates that the majority generally agreed that a woman should have a voice in the financial affairs of the household in terms of how money is spent and her freedom to do as she wishes with her money. However, many respondents were undecided when it has to do with joint account or whether the husband should have the final say. Only about 40% agreed to such arrangement.

Perception of respondents on spousal violence

From the qualitative data, respondents had no problem identifying spousal violence which in Hausa language captures it as “*cin mutunci tsakani masu aure*”; “*azaba*”(punishment); “*zagi na cin mutinci*” (verbal abuse) and “*Sabani*” (misunderstanding between couples.).They however were quick to go straight into discussing the causes even before they were asked.

The perception of spousal violence is beating of a wife by a husband and rarely vice versa and also neglect of the family. Men often beat with hand and whip and some even keep “koboko” whip for their wives and children. Women also beat men but this is not common, rather a woman is more likely to hold the man’s shirt by the neck (‘jack’) and dare him to ‘kill me’ and if the fighting intensifies, she could attempt to pull his groins.

Only three instances of women beating their husbands were mentioned in the course of the discussions, one by a judge and two cases by social workers. What is common with women is not physical but psychological pain which they inflict in the form of scorn or “verbal flashing” as one man puts it. This manifests in the tone of their voices, mannerism, and actions. Such actions, Kegan and Heaveman (1980) refer to as passive resistance. These actions as identified by discussants include deliberate sluggishness, refusal to serve food, disrespect and pretending to be sick at night. Sex becomes a convenient and easy weapon used to get even with husbands. In the words of a male respondent during a focus group discussion, “Sometimes our wives pretend they are sick and refuse to do things like cooking, sex e.t.c.. During the day she is o.k but at night complains of fever, headache, back ache etc”. As one health worker puts it, “God did not say we should beat or insult men” and added in Hausa language, *in ba karfi, baki saiya rama* (If there is no physical strength, then the mouth will retaliate, meaning if you have no physical power to withstand the man, then the mouth will do so for you).

Tolerance of spousal abuse

As to whether or not violence should be tolerated, most respondents subscribed to a zero level tolerance for violence as indicated by 71% (420) of them. Only 8.% (48) responded in the affirmative, 13% (76) somewhat, while 8% (46) did not respond. This is consistent with findings from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Although spousal violence is a common phenomenon which most respondents put between 60-80%, however, most are against it even though they condone it. Most respondents think that violence is wrong and worse, if it is perpetrated by a woman. In the words of a female participant at a group discussion “*it is ok to slap but women no suppose to beat man lai lai no matter what*”. Another male discussant admitted that “on the average Nigerian men beat their wives but such a person is a mad man. If you beat your wife, you beat yourself. It is not wise to beat a wife but our Nigerian women deserve beating whether by mouth or ‘koboko’. But it is not proper for a woman to beat her husband.” Respondents agreed generally that cultural beliefs and practices do influence spousal violence in particular, the low status of women.

Table 4.Views of Respondents on the Influence of Cultural Beliefs and Practices on Spousal Violence

Influence of Cultural beliefs and Practices on Spousal Violence			Yes	
	M	F	Total (N=590)	%
a. Considering women as weaker sex	149	163	312	22.9
b. Male preference	139	155	294	49.8
c. Tolerating violence against men	36	38	74	12.5
d. Tolerating violence against women	55	57	112	19.0
e. Cultural practices against women	69	44	113	19.2
f. Cultural practices against men	46	30	76	12.9
g. Widowhood and other discriminating practices	63	29	92	15.6

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Chart 5: Respondents views on the Influence of Cultural Beliefs Practices on Spousal Violence

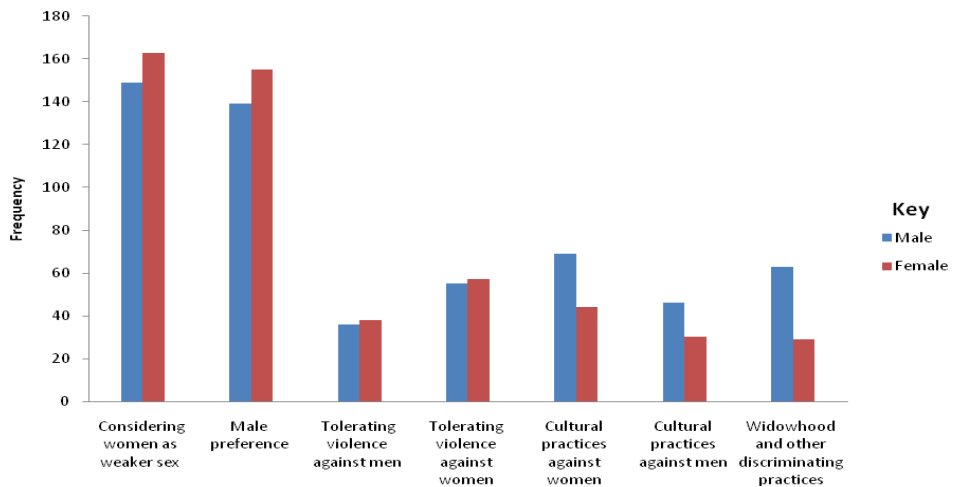


Chart 5 above, suggests that most respondents especially women, accepted the fact that women are considered as weaker sex (23%) and to a lesser extent, male preference (50%) could contribute to spousal violence, fewer women yet, blamed cultural practices that are detrimental to men and women including widowhood practices and female genital mutilation on spousal violence. It would seem that cultural practices even when

detrimental to women are not considered negatively but rather as part of cultural identity.

From the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions there was the general perception that women are the weaker sex. In the words of a Sharia court judge, “women have too narrow brains. Islamically, women are weak so we must understand [that] their brain is too narrow to understand things so it is the duty of the one who has full brain to teach her. Quran gave more strength and intellect to the man so as to be head.” A female Judge captures the concept of weakness in a different way thus:

Talking from a Christian perspective (Eph 5.21-31), woman being submissive doesn't make her weaker but for the sake of orderliness, headship, authority, God made men head. There is no specific role as cooking etc. When a woman subjects herself to a man it is like doing unto God....Submission for orderliness of the hierarchy but customs have been used in Christianity to go a bit further to sit on every woman in everything. Scripture says it must be done with mutual respect and honour. Also, the same husband should love his wife just as Christ loves the church. Christ laid his life for the church by showing love, taking care of the needs, prays for her. He intercedes. Just as the church is to Christ that is how the man is supposed to do. Today, men Lord it over woman without love - that is not Jesus' way. For example, the case of the adulterous woman in the Bible, no man will take that! He should take care of her needs. A man who doesn't take care of his family is worse than an unbeliever!

Respondents were asked about their views on which gender suffers more violence. About two-thirds 62.5% were of the view that women are more prone to suffer from spousal violence. As to why men beat their wives, the major reasons identified by couples include Lack of submissiveness, (73.1%), Refusal of sex (58%), Bad cooking (too much salt paper etc) (44.1) , Lateness in cooking (40.5%), infidelity (50%), Childlessness (46.8%); Interference from in-laws (38.1%), Refusal of wife to contribute financially (33.2%),Poverty (32.2%) and Frustration (32.5%). The implication of gender roles is reflected in the perception of respondents on the causes of spousal violence.

Respondents were asked about their views on why men beat their wives. The results are given below:

Table 5: Views of Respondents on Reasons why Men Beat their Wives

Views on Reasons why men beat wives.			Yes	
	M	F	Frequency	Percentage
a. Lack of submissiveness	208	223	431	73.1
b. Refused of sex	144	198	342	58.0
c. Bad cooking (too much salt paper etc)	119	141	260	44.1
d. Lateness in cooking	109	130	239	40.5
e. Laziness	120	151	271	45.9
f. infidelity	133	162	295	50.0
g. Childlessness	121	155	276	46.8
h. Interference from in-laws	102	123	225	38.1
i. Refusal of wife to contribute financially	87	109	196	33.2
j. Poverty	93	97	190	32.2
k. Frustration	93	97	192	32.5
Others	62	84	146	24.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

The major singular reason for wife battering is insubordination of women to their husbands, with 73% of respondents in agreement. This is followed closely by 58% and 50% of the respondents who indicated denial of sex and infidelity respectively. Although bad cooking and lateness in cooking are significant reasons in over 40% of the cases, childlessness is another issue of serious concern in the occurrence of spousal violence as indicated by 47% of the respondents.

As for the reverse - why women maltreat their husbands, the major causes were husbands' aggressiveness, and sex related problems like denial of sex, taking on additional wives, infidelity and sexual dissatisfaction. Financial problems and refusal to fulfill promise also featured prominently. Eghafona and Oluwabamide (2003) identified the burden inherent in polygynous homes when co-wives resort to witchcraft against each other as they compete for attention.

Table 6: Views of Respondents on why Women Maltreat their Husbands

Why women maltreat their husbands	Yes			
	M	F	Frequency	Percentage
Causes				
Aggressiveness on the part of husband	152	179	331	56.1
Denial of sex	141	172	313	53.1
Dissatisfaction with sex life	126	150	276	46.8
Marrying additional wife by husband	139	176	315	53.4
Infidelity	132	161	293	49.7
Money problem	154	157	311	52.7
Refusal to keep promise	148	156	304	51.5
Others	87	126	213	36.1

Source: 2012, Fieldwork

Chart 6: Views on why women maltreat their husbands

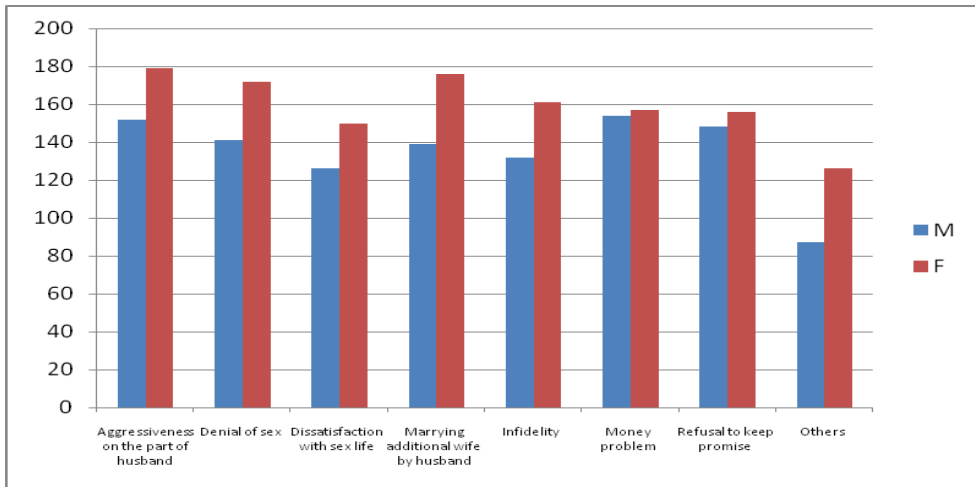
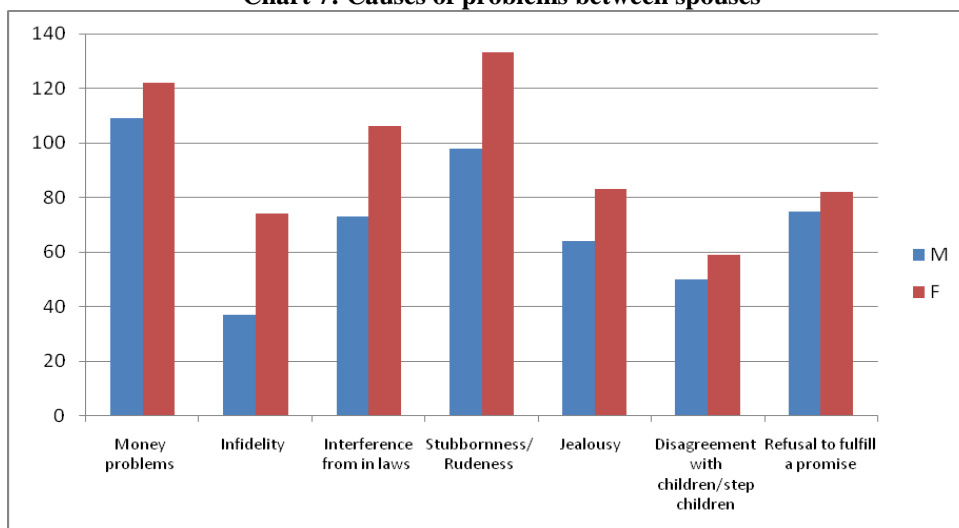


Table 6 above shows that women maltreat their husbands for a variety of reasons however, prominent among these are: husband’s aggression(56.1%), sexual neglect(53.1%) which probably explains the dissatisfaction with their sex life which 46.8% alluded to, as well as taking additional wives by husbands (53.4%).

Table 7: Views of Respondents on what usually causes problems between Spouses

Causes of problem between you and your spouse	Yes			
	M	F	Total (N=590)	%
a. Money problems	109	122	231	39.2
b. Infidelity	37	74	111	18.8
c. Interference from in laws	73	106	179	30.3
d. Stubbornness/ Rudeness	98	133	231	39.2
e. Jealousy	64	83	147	24.9
f. Disagreement with children/step children	50	59	109	18.5
g. Refusal to fulfils a promise	75	82	157	26.6
h. Other	19	32	51	8.6

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Chart 7: Causes of problems between spouses

Women use sex as a weapon against men for not providing family needs. Such women risk being raped as reported by one of the soldiers in the narrative below:

Some women don't want to give their men their body for sex. One of my neighbours used to have this type of problem. For example, whenever he demands for sex, his wife will deny him. The man was patient and did not take any action and refused to tell her anything. But almost all his neighbours are aware of it. One day he came back home to meet his wife. After the normal chatting and playing with his wife, he requested for sex and she refused as usual. Apart from that, she even left the bedroom and went to another room. That day the man lost his patience and followed her to that room and raped her!

Making reference to her labour all day long, under the sun roasting maize or working on the farm, one woman commented, "I won't squat for the sun and later squat for the man (making reference to sex), the work I do in villages around Kaduna, other women don't do such." Also while adultery is condoned for men, in women it is enough to attract violence and even divorce. A female respondent in an FGD captures this succinctly thus:

At times you are in your house and some people will come and tell you that they have seen your husband with another woman. In this situation, you are sometimes left with no any other option than to keep quiet in order to let sleeping dogs lie. On the other hand, if somebody were to go and tell them that they saw his wife with another man, as soon as he comes back, he will start troubling her and even sack her from the house. At this point the question that one begs to ask, are these men more human than women? Are we also not human beings like them? Yes, we are also humans with blood

flowing in our bodies like them. Since he can go out and have sex with other women outside, I too will go out and have sex with another man. You know as women we respect ourselves and endure a lot more than men, that is why we suffer a lot.

Discussion of findings

The majority (60%) support the traditional gender roles where the woman cooks, takes care of her family and the homestead but a good number- 69%, objected to the claim that women should be submissive to their husbands and would rather have a woman who is “co-head of family as represented by 42.2%, thus indicating a growing tendency towards symmetrical roles for both spouses. However, in spite of this, the traditional role of a man as a husband, provider and head remain unchallenged but women are expected to be supportive of their husbands and to chip in their own bit in sharing medical, educational, disciplinary, emotional support and decision making. This is why at least 60% of the respondents supported women’s economic independence. Such supportive roles were reiterated by discussants in the focus group discussion and in-depth interviews irrespective of their sex and social class.

Over 70% of the respondents subscribed to a zero level tolerate for violence yet condone it where it is perpetrated by men. Such thinking is influenced by cultural beliefs which some respondents agreed influenced spousal violence. They include the low status of women, male preference, detrimental cultural practices against women and tolerance of violence against women all of which conspire against women. Sometimes such perceptions are influenced by religious tenets which see women as ‘weak vessels’ or as ‘lacking intelligence’.

Men beat up their wives because of insubordination (stubbornness), refusal of sex, delay or cooking, infidelity and childlessness, and interference from in-law, and refusal to contribute to the upkeep of the family. The fact that stubbornness of wives and interference from in-laws featured repeatedly calls for closer attention to the frustrations women face in the extended family. That women’s refusal to contribute financially was identified as a problem is in recognition that women are becoming more economically empowered therefore should share in the provider role while men retain their authority. Where women are in position to help and they refuse to render such help, this may spell trouble. The recent suicide by Mr. Olubunmi Olademo, husband of Prof. (Mrs.) Oyeronke Olademo, Head of Department, Religious ,Studies University of Ilorin is pertinent. According to the report by Olarenwaju (2012) in the Saturday Sun Newspaper of March 31st 2012, the deceased left the house after his request for money from his wife on Tuesday 30th/3/2012 was turned down. He was found hanging in the

family's uncompleted building at Oke- Odo area of Ilorin the following day. The Professor was detained and subsequently released on bail.

Conclusion and recommendations

In summary, the paper examined the role of socio- cultural perceptions play in encouraging spousal violence in society. Both the quantitative data from questionnaire administered to respondents in Kaduna Metropolis and qualitative data from in-depth interviews and Focus group Discussions point to the fact that the perception of gender roles persists and that such perceptions and expectations of gender roles do influence the way men and women perceive of violence. Thus, men are generally associated with the provider role and women, the nurturing and submissive role. With women generally perceived as weak where they prove otherwise, they considered as insubordinate (“stubborn”). Moreover while a woman is expected to condone violence, she is not expected to be violent toward her husband. Similarly, while adultery is condoned for men, for women, it is not permissible. Moreover that many of the respondents families are extended are extended and polygynous, women have to contend more with siblings step children and mothers in- law, who usually contribute to conflicts between couples.

To conclude, the perception about gender and gender roles especially on women need to improve if spousal violence is to be addressed and the earlier we begin to appreciate women's role and capability, the better we are able to fight the injustices against women.

It is therefore recommended that we begin by early socialization in gender sensitivity as well as through gender mainstreaming in schools and in government policies. Also, in view of their influence, religious leaders should be involved in the campaign against spousal violence. Awareness campaigns in rural areas through radio programmes should also be targeted at the rural dwellers since most people, including women in purdah have access to radios.

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