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Comparative Analysis of Domestic Violence Between Illiterate and Educated Families in Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos State

Summary. Universally, men and women suffer in relationships before or after marriage which is detrimental to health. This paper examines the percentage of intimate partner violence in both the highly educated and non-educated families to ascertain which one has a higher percentage of violence than the other. It also aims to investigate variations in the causes of intimate partner violence in both family types and to examine the effects of the violence on both families. The study adopts purposive sampling among market women and civil servants in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Victoria Island, Lagos. The techniques used in this study are questionnaires and interviews among these chosen classes of people. The sample size is 200: 100 men and 100 women. The paper concludes that the percentage of domestic violence is higher in the illiterate families, though the causes and effects are slightly different. The paper recommends education to curb domestic violence in the non-educated society.

Key words: literate, illiterate, domestic violence, non-violent, percentage

Introduction

The World Health Organization defines violence as "the intentional use of force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation"[1]. While domestic violence

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[1] *World Report on Violence And Health*, ed. E.G. Krug, L.L. Dahlberg, J.A. Mercy, A.B. Zwi, R. Lozano, World Health Organization, Geneva 2002.

means violent or aggressive behavior within the home, it typically involves the violent abuse of a spouse or partner. This often occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person with the use of force ranging from slaps, punches, and kicks, to assaults with a weapon, homicide, and sexual violence, which may also come in the form of forced sex, or forced participation in degrading sexual acts.

Domestic violence is frequently accompanied by emotionally abusive behaviors such as prohibiting a woman from seeing her family and friends; ongoing belittlement, humiliation, or intimidation; economic restrictions such as preventing a woman from working, or confiscating her earnings; and other controlling behaviors. When this happens, the male partner usually has something bad in store to do to the woman, and so, does not want anybody to come near them so that they will not hint to the unsuspecting woman of his bad intentions. He becomes suspicious of everybody around her because he sees everybody as a potential enemy who might reveal his plans to the woman. He tries to pick on every word, action, or gesture from anyone who is close to the woman, so as to give the woman reasons not to be close to them. Most of the time, the same applies to the woman who does not want friends or family relations around her husband. However, with women, such actions may be because of greed or personal hatred for the other partner's family.

It is pertinent to also state that domestic/intimate partner violence does not discriminate, it cuts across class, ethnicity, age, race, religion, educational status, economic levels, heterosexual couples and same-sex partnerships etc. It is also important to note that even though women are more commonly victimized, men are also abused, especially verbally and emotionally, although sometimes even physically as well. In Nigeria, most often than not, women suffer in relationships before or after marriage which often result in separation, divorce, or death in extreme cases. Ironically, the abusers claim rights and do not see anything bad in what they have done, while some others claim insanity etc., but the overall and sole purpose of domestic violence is to gain and maintain total control over the woman.

1. Statement of Problem

This paper tries to break the stereotype that domestic violence is more common among families that have a low educational background or considered illiterate, than families that are literate and highly educated. One of the common myths states that only poor, uneducated women are victims of domestic violence. However, in reality, victims of domestic violence cut across all social stratas of the society, including age and sex. They can be wealthy, educated, and prominent,

as well as, undereducated and financially destitute. They can live in rural towns, the poorest of the poorest communities, urban cities, highbrow areas of the cities, subsidized housing projects, or in gated communities. As such, this paper is set to investigate the relationships between families' educational background and domestic violence.

2. Objectives and research questions

The objectives of this paper include:
1. To examine the percentage of domestic violence among literate and illitrate families,
2. To explore the differences in the causes of violence,
3. To examine the coping strategies adopted by both types of families.

The research questions are as follows:
1. Which family type has more domestic violence than the other?
2. Can a woman's financial capability influence domestic violence?
3. Does the family or church offer a solution to domestic violence?

3. Scope of Study

The scope of this paper is strictly restricted to the literate and illiterate families. It is also restricted to Eti-Osa Local Government Areas of Lagos State, a highbrow area, partly commercial and residential. It houses many of the rich and affluent people in Lagos State.

4. Literature Review

This study was able to identify that all forms of domestic abuse are based on a single purpose which is to gain and maintain control over the victims. The perpetrators use various tactics to gain power over their spouses, partners, or victims, this includes kicks, slaps, pinching, bites, derogatory statements etc.

The US Office on Violence against Women (OVW) defines domestic violence as a "pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner"[2].

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[2] U.S. Department of Justice, *Domestic Violence*, ojp.gov/newsroom/factsheets/ojpfs_domesticviolence.html [29.04.2014].

On the same note, Chemtob and Carlson define domestic violence and emotional abuse as behaviors that are used by one person in a relationship to control the other[3]. This fact explains why the male partners in Nigeria stress the fact that they are the heads of the home, and supposed to be in control most times when an argument occurs.

The review of literature will be summarized under three subtopics which include, causes, effects, and coping strategies adopted by the victims of domestic violence.

5. Causes of Domestic Violence

There are diverse theories as to the causes of domestic violence ranging from psychological to ecological, and sociological theories. The psychological theories consider the sanity and state of mind of the perpetrators, ecological theories consider the environment, while the sociological theories consider external factors in the perpetrator's environment, such as family structure, stress, and social learning.

The ecological model proposes that violence is a result of factors operating at four levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal levels.

The individual factors are: young age; low level of education; witnessing or experiencing violence as a child; harmful use of alcohol and drugs; personality disorders; acceptance of violence (e.g. feeling it is acceptable for a man to beat his partner); and a past history of abusing partners. On the other hand, an increased likelihood of a woman experiencing violence by her partner(s) across different settings include: a low level of education; exposure to violence between parents; sexual abuse during childhood; acceptance of violence; and exposure to other forms of prior abuse.

Relationship factors associated with the risk of both victimization of women and perpetration by men include: conflict or dissatisfaction in the relationship; male dominance in the family; economic stress; the man having multiple partners; and a disparity in educational attainment, i.e. where a woman has a higher level of education than her male partner. This, in fact,is a major determinant of domestic violence that has led to many families being separated, divorced, or wives being killed in Nigeria. It was discovered that in such cases, the women are the financial pillars of the family, had higher degrees than their husbands, and perhaps making more progress than their husbands socially and professionally. Most times, this leads to an inferiority complex in the men and in order to boost the male ego or to prove that they are in control, they end up beating, mistreating, or fighting their

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[3] C.M. Chemtob, J.G. Carlson, *Psychological Effects of Domestic Violence on Children and Their Mothers*, "International Journal of Stress Management" 2004, Vol. 11(3).

wives, trying to make them feel nobody or inferior. At this point, the issue of love is forgotten or set aside and the challenge of relegating her to the background becomes the order of the day. This corroborates Falana's view that people who suffered from abuse may have low self-esteem if they were once confident, show major personality changes, and are depressed, anxious, or suicidal[4].

Community and societal factors are summed up as: gender-inequitable social norms (especially those that link notions of manhood to dominance and aggression); poverty; low social and economic status of women; weak legal sanctions against IPV within marriage; lack of women's civil rights, including restrictive or inequitable divorce and marriage laws; weak community sanctions against IPV; broad social acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict; and armed conflict and high levels of general violence in society. In support of this view, Narayan claims that in many social contexts, domestic violence, whether sexual, physical, or psychological, is supported by social norms such as cultural ideologies which promote the primacy of men over women[5]. Nigeria happens to be one of such countries, therefore there is little wonder that most incidences of domestic violence go unreported or the perpetrators go unpunished. This was also observed by Esere et al. that women are victimized in Nigeria by the violence they endure, and by the government not bringing their abusers to justice[6].

As it is also believed that poverty gives rise to intimate partner violence, it can be estimated that domestic violence between partners is the result of a micro-level, rather than macro-level, factors[7]. As such, one can rightly say that socio-economic status is a reason for explaining the prevalence of IPV. It is further stated that the occurrence of violence between partners cannot be distinguished by "education, employment, or medical insurance status of a woman"[8]. In a bid to further frustrate a woman, or prove male superiority over her, the male partners may even go to the extent of jeopardizing their female partner's financial status by harassing them at work, until they lose their employment[9].

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[4] *A Law To Provide Protection Against Domestic Violence And Connected Purpose Women Empowerment And Legal Aid,* ed. F. Falana, Lagos State Government, Ministry Of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation, Lagos 2013.

[5] D. Narayan, R. Chambers, M.K. Shah, P. Petesch, *Voices of the Poor: Crying out for Change*, Oxford University Press, New York 2000.

[6] M.O. Esere, A.I. Idowu, J.A. Omotosho, *Gender-based domestic violence against children: Experiences of girl-children in Nigeria*, "Journal of Psychology in Africa" 2009, No. 19 (1).

[7] J.E. McCarrol, R.J. Ursano, J.H. Newby, X. Liu, C.S. Fullerton, A.E. Norwood, E.A. Osuch, *Domestic Violence and deployment in U.S Army Soldier*, "Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease" 2003, No. 191.

[8] H.M. Bauer, M.A. Rodriguez, S.S. Quiroga, Y.G. Flores-Ortiz, *Barriers to Health Care for Abused Latina and Asian Immigrant Women*, "Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved" 2000, No. 11.

[9] C. Zastrow, K. Kirst-Ashman, *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, Nelson-Hall Publishers, Chicago 2004.

Seltzer and Kalmus pointed out that violence may also be used as a way that some people respond to stress[10]. Stress increases as the pressure from the home increase, and this has an adverse effect on the behavior of partners. Jewkes, also states that couples who live in poverty are more likely to experience domestic violence due to increased stress and an inability to meet their daily needs financially[11]. This is supported in practical terms by daily experiences in the slum areas, where couples engage in domestic violence because of an inability to provide a feeding allowance, children's school fees, and minor expenses in the household. In fact, in the slum areas of Nigeria, it is a daily occurrence that has become the order of the day, and it is not news to anyone in the area. The people there see it as a common occurrence and nobody's business. Everybody goes about their daily lives as if nothing is happening. During this time, the husband may have been able to plead with the woman to bear with him, or the members of the family or neighbours would have intervened to settle the issue at hand. Most times issues about money are settled on a promisory note.

6. Effects of Domestic Violence on the Victims

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service defines domestic violence as:

> patterns of behaviour characterized by the misuse of power and control by one person over another, who are or have been in an intimate relationship. It can occur in mixed gender relationships, as well as, same gender relationships, and has profound consequences for the lives of children, individuals, families, and communities. It may be physical, sexual, emotional and/or psychological. The latter may include intimidation, harassment, damage to property, threats, and financial abuse[12].

Unfortunately, research shows that many victims will not disclose the abuse unless they are directly asked or screened for domestic violence by the physician[13]. Notwithstanding, some cases are still reported which gives us insight into some of the effects of IPV. The impact of domestic violence on victims can result in acute and chronic mental health problems. While some victims have histories of psychiatric illnesses that may be exacerbated by the abuse, others may develop

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[10] J.A. Seltzers, D. Kalmuss, *Socialization and Stress Explanations for Spouse Abuse*, "Social Forces" 1998, Vol. 67, Issue 2.

[11] R. Jewkes, *Intimate Partner Violence: Causes and Prevention*, "The Lancet" 2002, vol. 359.

[12] Domestic Violence Assessment Policy, *Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service*, 13 June 1997.

[13] L.W. Bennett, *Substance Abuse and Woman Abuse By Male Partners,* www.vaw.umn.edu/finaldocuments/Vawnet/substanc.htm, September 1997 [29.03.2012].

psychological problems as a direct result of the abuse. Examples of emotional and behavioral effects of domestic violence include many common coping responses to trauma, such as: emotional withdrawal, denial or minimization of the abuse, impulsivity or aggressiveness, apprehension or fear, helplessness, anger, anxiety or hyper-vigilance, disturbance of eating or sleeping patterns, substance abuse, depression, suicide, and post-traumatic stress disorder[14].

According to Falase, women facing domestic violence often suffer physical and psychological consequences which usually affect their behavior and productivity[15]. This sometimes leads to a loss of pregnancy, and a high mortality rate among pregnant women and women within the child bearing age. The perpetrator's abusive behavior can cause an array of health problems and physical injuries which may require medical attention for immediate injuries, hospitalization for severe assaults, or chronic care for debilitating health problems resulting from the perpetrator's physical attacks[16].

Ezenwa is also of the opinion that children who were exposed to domestic violence and other forms of abuse have a higher risk of developing mental and physical health problems[17]. According to Krug et al., some emotional and behavioral problems in children due to their exposure to domestic violence are increased aggressiveness, anxiety changes in socialization with friends and family, depression, emotional insecurity, problems with attitude and cognition in school, and a lack of skills[18].

7. Coping Strategies

As the saying goes, to every problem there is a solution. In Nigeria most women stay in violent relationships because of: the fear of retaliation; a lack of an alternative means of economic support; concern for their children; lack of support from family and friends; stigma or fear of losing custody of the children associated with divorce; as well as love and the hope that their partner will change. For this reason, they build up coping strategies which they adopt in living with their violent partners until their children are grown up, or they can earn a living on their own. Some of these coping

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[14] R.P. Dobash, *Violence Against Wives*, Free Press, New York 1979.

[15] A.O. Falase, O. Alatise, *Intimate Partner Violence In Ile-Ife Nigeria Women's Experience and Men's Perspectives*, "Gender Behaviour" 2006, Vol. 4, Issue 2.

[16] S.B. Plichta, M. Falik, *Prevalence of Violence and Its Implications for Women's Health*, "Women Health Issues" 2001, Vol. 11, Issue 3.

[17] C. Ezenwa, *The Role of Medical Practitioners In Dealing With Victims Of Domestic Violence In Legal Defer Nose and Assistance Project (LEDAP)*, Domestic Violence Zero Tolerance, Lagos 2003.

[18] *World Report on Violence And Health*, op. cit.

strategies include: alcohol, making friends outside their homes, taking up manual jobs, keeping quiet when the partner starts shouting, and some even go to the extent of keeping relationships with the opposite sex outside the home just to be happy. They believe this will give them succor and joy for the moment, and some believe it is a way of having revenge on their husbands or wives as the case may be etc.

Despite the potentiality of social institutions such as the family, the church, and the school to encourage peaceful resolution of conflicts and help resist an easy recourse back to violence, this is often disregarded[19]. Some victims take refuge/solace in the church, for it stands as one of the places where such violent acts are discussed and settled. The church therefore plays the role of a mediator between the wife and husband thereby replacing the family by organizing counselling sessions for the couples until an eventual settlement is attained. Nigerian marriages in recent times are turning towards the western culture of individualism; the husband and wife are seen as an one unit, and family members as intruders, so when problems arise, the latter are excluded, except for cases where the couples have kept the family bond alive in their homes/marriages. But this only happens in families that are not educated, living with the extended families (family compound), or living in rural areas.

8. Functionalism and domestic violence

The intellectual basis of the functionalist theory in sociology is the concept of a "system". Functionalism is nothing but the analysis of a social pattern as part of a larger system of behaviors and beliefs[20]. An understanding of functionalism in sociology requires an understanding of the resources of the concept of a "system". A process or set of conditions has a function because it either contributes to the maintenance of the system or it is dysfunctional, in that, it destroys the integrity and effectiveness of the system[21]. Thus, it is the functional reference of all processes to the state of the total system.

Therefore, to understand any part of a system, such as the family or religion, the part must be seen in relation to society as a whole. Parsons' assumption is that it is impossible to adequately understand any single pattern except by referring it to some larger systemic whole. Consequently, Parsons postulated the analysis of the total anatomy of social systems in an effort to identify their constituent elements and relationships.

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[19] T.M. Hesburg, *Terrorism and World Order: A Policy Approach*, Whole Earth Papers, Global Education Associates, East Orange, NJ, October 1983.

[20] A.W. Gouldner, *Cosmopolitans and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles – I*, "Administrative Science Quarterly" 1957, No. 2.

[21] E.C. Cuff, W.W. Sharrock, D.W. Francis, *Perspectives in Sociology,* London-New York 2006.

The theoretical strategy in functionalism requires that all parts of the whole system be constituted in an "ex cathedra" manner. Radcliffe-Brown stated that the concept of function applied to human societies is based on an analogy between the social life and the organic life[22]. He further recognized the existence of social structures where individuals are the essential units, and are connected by a definite set of social roles in the integrated whole. The process of social life maintains the continuity of structures. The social life of the community is the functioning of the social structure[23]. Vogel and Bell saw tension and hostility of unresolved conflicts between the parents being projected on the children as a factor that mars the primary socialization process, which in turn affects the society as a whole since it leaves the children with fear of the unknown among others[24].

Domestic violence is something that affects the whole family, especially the children. The family as a social unit includes the father, mother, as well as the children, and when anything happens to the mother, in case of death, separation, or divorce, everybody suffers. Though the men may hide under the male ego by marrying younger women, deep down, they are not happy but cannot tell anybody. Therefore, they suffer with the thought of the loss of the first woman till death or eventual settlement. The woman as well may have such regrets, but the situation may have gone too far to be settled, or maybe she would have remarried, had children with the new husband, and so, going back to the previous situation may be impossible. The most affected will be the children who cannot change their situation but have to adjust to their present state. Krug et al. also observed, that some emotional and behavioral problems of children are due to their exposure to domestic violence, thereby exhibiting habits such as increased aggressiveness, anxiety changes in socialization with friends and family, depression, emotional insecurity, problems with attitude and cognition in school, and a lack of skills[25].

9. Methodology

The targeted families were selected from the population of Victoria Island, Lagos State: market women, civil servants, and bankers. The questionnaire which was used to gather information from the respondents was divided into sections to determine the demographic characteristics such as age, religion, sex, and educational background of respondents.

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[22] A. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses*, Free Press, Glencoe, IL 1952.

[23] Ibidem.

[24] E.F. Vogel, N.W. Bell, *The Emotionally Disturbed Child as Family Scapegoat*, in: *A Modern Introduction to the Family*, ed. E.F. Bell, N.W Vogel, Free Press, Glencoe, IL 1968.

[25] *World Report on Violence And Health*, op. cit.

A sample size of two hundred (200) respondents was used for the analysis. Purposive sampling was adopted and used to create the frequency table, percentage, as well as, the cross tabulation of variables for necessary relationship validation.

10. Results

Table 1 revealed that 38% of the educated respondents strongly agreed or agreed that domestic violence is higher in the educated families. While 62% strongly disagreed or disagreed that domestic violence is higher in the educated families. On the other hand, 62% of the respondents from the uneducated families strongly agreed or agreed that domestic violence is higher in uneducated families. While 38% of respondents from the uneducated families strongly disagreed or disagreed that domestic violence is higher in the uneducated families. This result revealed that domestic violence is higher in uneducated families than the educated families. Even though it did not rule out the fact that domestic violence still does exist in the educated families, like has been mentioned before, the percentage is the difference. So many things could be responsible for this, perhaps the availability of finances to carry out most of the expenses that need to be paid, having to spend long working hours in the office, everyone wanting to just get home to relax and get ready for the next days of work thus not having any time to argue and fight over trivial issues. Unlike the uneducated family where trivial matters are given priority because of frustration and unavailability of finances to do most things that need to be done.

Table 1. Research question 1: Which family type has a higher percentage of domestic violence over the other?

Answer	Educated	Uneducated	% E	% U
Strongly agree	48	89	24	44.5
Agree	28	35	14	17.5
Strongly disagree	70	40	35	20.0
Disagree	54	36	27	18.0
Total	200	200	100	100.0

Table 2 revealed that 33% of the educated respondents said "yes" to finance being a major determinant of domestic violence (the other 67% said "no"). On the other hand, 66% of the (in comparison to 34% answering "no" to the same question). This result shows that the educated families do not see finance as being a major

cause of domestic violence probably because they can meet their basic needs and pay their bills which may be the source of their peace. Whereas finance seem to be the major cause of domestic violence to the uneducated families according to the result. This also shows that their inability to meet their daily needs may likely generate anger and violence within the families which corroborates with Jewkes opinion that couples who live in poverty are more likely to experience domestic violence due to increased stress and inability to meet their daily needs[26].

Table 2. Research question 2: Is finance a major determinant of domestic violence?

Answer	Educated	Uneducated	% E	% U
Yes	66	132	33	66
No	134	68	67	34
Total	200	200	100	100

Table 3 revealed that 64% of the educated respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the church offers a solution to domestic violence. While 36% of the educated respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the church offers a solution to domestic violence.

Table 3. Research question 3: Does the family or church offer a solution to domestic violence?

Answer	Church E	Family U	% E	% U
Strongly agree	70	123	35	61.5
Agree	58	37	29	18.5
Strongly disagree	38	23	19	11.5
Disagree	34	17	17	8.5
Total	200	200	100	100.0

On the other hand, 80% of the uneducated respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the family offers a solution to domestic violence and 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that family offers a solution to domestic violence. This shows that the educated families seek the assistance of churches i.e. relying on their pastors and spiritual heads for assistance, while the uneducated families prefer the family for assistance when the need arises. The introduction and imbuement of western culture of individualism and nuclear family ties could be attributed as the reason for this. The fact that educated families often live in

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[26] R. Jewkes, op. cit.

the urban areas where they are far from their families and believe that the church is there to settle any dispute in the family could account for this. Whereas, the uneducated still stand on that bond of the extended family ties where they believe they can seek advice from the elders in the families whenever the need arises, which has been working for them. This is in line with Hesburg's view that the potentiality of social institutions such as the family, the church, and the school, to encourage peaceful resolution of conflicts and help resist an easy recourse back to violence, is often disregarded[27].

Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that as societies move from being compound to individualistic, families also grow more apart from the traditional family ties seeking solace in religious institutions which have also been of tremendous help, playing both the roles of religion and family.

Recommendations

With reference to the above findings, the following recommendations were made:
1. The Nigerian Government should enact domestic violence laws in all the states of the federation.
2. The domestic violence law should be well publicized and made available to every family.
3. The law should be enforced and erring abusers and perpetrators should be sentenced to a term of imprisonment or pay a fine.
4. The government should create radio and television campaigns for the awareness and eradication of domestic violence in Nigeria.
5. Religious leaders in the churches and mosques should preach and teach about the ills and the effects of domestic violence in order to put an end to it.
6. Educating a female child should be paramount in the Nigerian society.
7. "Empowerment of women" programs should be organized periodically to assist women in violence ridden homes.
8. The citizens in general should be encouraged by the provision of jobs, creation of recreational centers, and old people homes, then perhaps Nigeria will someday grow to a stage where its citizens will enjoy welfare packages from the government like the western countries.

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[27] T.M. Hesburg, op. cit.

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Analiza porównawcza przemocy domowej między rodzinami niepiśmiennymi a rodzinami wykształconymi w Eti-Osa, Lokalnym Obszarze Administracyjnym Lagos

Streszczenie. Powszechnie wiadomo, że kobiety i mężczyźni będąc w związkach, czy to przed ślubem, czy po ślubie, doznają krzywd, co niekorzystnie odbija się na ich zdrowiu. Autorka analizuje odsetek przemocy partnerskiej w rodzinach wykształconych i niewykształconych w celu ustalenia, gdzie ten odsetek jest większy. Bada również różne przyczyny przemocy partnerskiej w obu kategoriach rodzin i jaki ma to na nie wpływ. W badaniu wykorzystano metodę doboru celowego. Grupa badawcza obejmowała kobiety pracujące na targu oraz urzędników państwowych z Eti-Osa w Lokalnym Obszarze Administracyjnym, Victoria Island, Lagos. Wielkość grupy to 200 osób: 100 mężczyzn i 100 kobiet. W badaniu posłużono się kwestionariuszem i wywiadem. Stwierdzono wyższy odsetek przemocy domowej wśród rodzin niewykształconych, choć przyczyny i wpływ tej przemocy są nieco inne. Według autorki drogą do zmniejszenia przemocy domowej jest edukacja.

Słowa kluczowe: niepiśmienny, piśmienny, wykształcony, niewykształcony, przemoc domowa, brak przemocy, odsetek