

## ***Emotional Abuse and Mental Health of Women in Abusive Marriage in Communities in Gwagwalada, Federal Capital***

### **Pemanfaatan Papan Informasi Digital Sebagai Media Informasi di Wilayah Perdesaan**

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#### **Abstract**

The study specifically examines the impact of emotional abuse on the mental health of women in abusive marriages in communities in Gwagwalada, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. In order to achieve the objective of this study, the cross-sectional research method was adopted for the study. Data for the study was collected from a sample of 600 married women in Gwagwalada aged 18 and above using a self-structured questionnaire. The stratified and purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample from the study area. From the 600-instrument distributed only 594 was return without missing items or mutilation and this was used for analysis. Data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, simple percentage and figure. The correlation analysis was carried using Pearson Product Moment correlation Analysis. Findings revealed that 95.2 per cent (566) of the sample in one time or the other in their marriage have suffered one form of emotional abuse, result also revealed that 93.8 percent of the respondents suffer psychologically as a result of emotional abuse from their spouse. The correlational analysis also revealed a strong significant relationship between emotional abuse and mental health issue among married women. The study therefore concludes that emotional abuse affects the mental health of married women in communities in Gwagwalada, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. the study therefore calls for increase in support service for those in abuse relationship.

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#### **Abstrak**

Studi tersebut secara khusus meneliti dampak pelecehan emosional pada kesehatan mental wanita dalam pernikahan yang "teraniaya" pada komunitas di Gwagwalada, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian ini, digunakan metode penelitian cross-sectional untuk penelitian ini. Data penelitian terkumpul dari sampel 600 wanita menikah di Gwagwalada dan berusia 18 tahun ke atas menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur. Teknik pengambilan sampel bertingkat dan purposif digunakan dalam proses pemilihan sampel penelitian. Dari 600 instrumen yang didistribusikan hanya 594 yang dikembalikan tanpa item yang hilang dan ini digunakan untuk analisis. Data yang dikumpulkan dari lapangan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif seperti tabel, persentase sederhana, dan gambar. Analisis korelasi dilakukan dengan menggunakan Analisis Korelasi Pearson Product Moment. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa 95,2 persen (566) sampel dalam satu waktu atau lain waktu dalam pernikahan mereka pernah mengalami salah satu bentuk pelecehan emosional, hasil juga mengungkapkan bahwa 93,8 persen responden menderita secara psikologis akibat pelecehan emosional dari pasangannya. Analisis korelasional juga mengungkapkan hubungan signifikan yang kuat antara pelecehan emosional dan masalah kesehatan mental pada wanita menikah. Oleh karena itu, penelitian tersebut menyimpulkan bahwa pelecehan emosional mempengaruhi kesehatan mental wanita yang sudah menikah pada komunitas di Gwagwalada, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyerukan peningkatan layanan dukungan bagi mereka yang berada dalam hubungan pelecehan.

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**Keywords:** Type your keywords here in English, between 3 and 6, separated by semicolons Times New Roman 8pt normal.

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## 1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence has become a major global public health issue. According to the world Health Organization (2019) 1 in 3 women have experienced one form of intimate partner violence globally. It is the most common form of violence that has caught the attention of international agencies, scholars and the government of nations. In fact, 30 percent of women who have been in an intimate relationship has suffered one form of violence or the other from a spouse or intimate partner (WHO, 2013). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the figure ranges from 20.2 percent to 78.8 percent (Achor & Ibekwe, 2012). It refers to those behaviors or attitude within an intimate relationship that causes psychological, social and physical harm to one of the two partners in a relationship and it's includes acts of physical aggression, emotional abuse, controlling behavior and social coercion (Tanko, Yohanna & Omeiza, 2016). While both sexes can be victims of intimate partner violence, women predominant suffer as the victim (Cui, Ueno, Gordon, & Fincham 2013).

One of the most common intimate partner violence is emotional abuse (Heise, Pallitto, Garcia-Moreno & Clark, 2019). It is also known as psychological abuse. Follingstad and Dehart (2000) maintain that it is the systematic destruction of an individual's self-esteem and sense of safety, often occurring in relationship that has differences in control and power. It is not limited to humiliation, isolation, threat of harm, abandonment and other psychological abusive tactics. The National coalition against Domestic violence (2018) argued 48.4 percent of women in an intimate partner relationship have suffered once in such relationship, psychological aggressive behavior by an intimate partner. 4 from every 10 women have experienced in an intimate relationship one form of coercive control from a romantic partner. Globally, 17.9 percent of women have experienced in an intimate relationship a threat of physical harm from a partner (NCADV, 2019). The study by Henning and Klesges (2003) points out that 95 percent of men who have physically abused their romantic partner also abuse them emotionally. Women who earn 65 percent or more of their family income will more likely be abuse than women who earn less than that figure (Tiesman, Gurka, Konda, Coben & Amandu, 2012).

Emotional abuse takes the form of verbal assault control, dominance, and the use of intimate information to degrade a partner (Follingstad, Coyre, & Gambone, 2005). Emotional abuse in intimate partner relationship is aimed or targeted at the emotional and psychological wellbeing of victims and it is most times the precursor of physical abuse (Karakurt & Silver, 2013).

Emotional abuse can equally be detrimental to the health of a victim as physical abuse (Crozier, 2017). Response to emotional abuse and physical abuse is often similar, but emotional abuse can be difficult to detect and even to escape and people who suffer from emotional abuse get little support to leave the partner abusing them as a result of lack of evidence (Crozier, 2017). With lack of evidence, victims of emotional abuse start to normalize their intimate partner behavior therefore creating a circle of which it is difficult to escape their abusers. Emotional abuse has been associated with a member of mental health disorder (Afifi, 2007; Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmoella, 2002). Existing studies have provided evidence of the correlation between emotional abuse and mental health such as mood swing, depression etc. (Ziaei, Frith, Ekistrian & Naked, 2016, Miun & Fujiwara, 2007).

In Nigeria, the institution of marriage is seen as sacred and a great deal of stigma is attached to a divorcee or anyone separated from their marriage. when it comes to domestic violence, there is a powerful social and institutional stigma attach to anyone reporting violence or worst still, leaving her marriage as a result of domestic violence. In local communities, domestic violence in marriages are mostly perceived as the rights of men who want to bring his wife to order, a woman who disobeys or want to put herself above her husbands (Women for women international, 2017; Odobong, 2018). Available data revealed that up to third of all women in marriages have suffered from one form of abuse in their marriages (demography and Health Survey, 2018; Ojong, Iji & Angioha, 2019; Ukwaiyi, Angioha & Ojong-Ejoh, 2018). The report also maintains that 43 percent of women believe that men are justified in beating their wives (DHS, 2018). The Lagos state domestic and sexual violence response team in their report maintain that women who report domestic violence only want it to stop and don't want to leave their marriages (Udobang, 2018). This is because the Nigerian conservative religious and traditional doctrine reinforce patriarchal practices that supports or

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plays into domestic violence. Cultural stereotypes are attached to women who leave their marriages. Evidence have shown that women who continuously suffer from emotional abuse suffer from experience psychological problems. This study assessed the correlation between emotional abuse and mental health problem in married women in Gwagwalada Area Council, F.C.T Nigeria.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation**

The study adopts the resource theory of Goode (1977). the resource theory argues that force or the threat of force is inherent in all society. The resource theory opines that the more resource (income, social skills, status, education etc.) an individual has the more force he is able to muster. Violence is one of the forces that an individual commends. The theory holds that the more resources an individual has the more power the individual has to call upon. The theory further points out that among the resource an individual has to call upon, violence is the last resort. This implies that the more resources that an individual possess, the less likely he will resort to violence or abuse as a method of meeting his needs. This means that an individual will resort to violence or abuse when other resources are exhausted or unavailable (Allen & Straus, 1979). The theory thus explains that a person with low resources in terms of income status, prestige and educational qualification may more likely resort to violence or abuse to achieve his goals or dominance because it is all he has available (Lawson,2012).

Traditionally men are the dominant power in a relationship he is expected to command the income, prestige, status in the relationship. But when they lack this resources that made them command the relationship in terms of income, vocational skills, educational qualification, they must often resort to violence to maintain their dominance over their spouses. This theory best explains the cause of emotional abuse in marriages especially in low socio-economic groups or society such as Gwagwalada Area Council the study area. The imbalance in emotional abuse among income groups occur because those with lower income, prestige, social status or educational status have no legitimate resources to utilize in maintaining power over their spouses or relationship.

## **3. Review of Relevant Empirical Literature**

Studies have been carried out to examine the correlation between emotional abuse and mental health. Ackner, Skeate, Patterson and Neal (2013) carried out a review of publish studies on emotional abuse and its correlation with psychosis. A comprehensive search of studies on the topic was conducted on three peer review data bases. findings from the review of literature revealed that there is a statistical relationship between emotional abuse and psychosis. Tiwari, Chan, Fong, Leung, Brownridge, Lam, Wong, Lam, Chau, Chang and Ho (2008) examined the impact of psychological abuse committee by an intimate partner of the mental health of pregnant women in Hong Kong. The survey method was used to collect data from 3245 pregnant women who visit antenatal clinic in seven public hospitals in Hong Kong using abuse assessment screen questionnaire. Findings from the analysis of data revealed that psychological abuse has a significant impact on the mental health of women post-delivery.

Peatee (2018) carried out a study to examine the relationship between psychological abuse romantic relationship and its mental health outcome. Data was carried from 331 college students attending northwestern university. Results revealed that students who have experience psychological abuse reports symptom of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress than those who have not experience abuse. Straight, Harper and Arias (2003) examined the effect of partner psychological abuse of health behavior and status in college women. An extended literature was revealed to check the extend of the impact of emotional abuse. Findings revealed that psychological abuse positively correlates with illegal drug use, cognitive impairment, negative health perception in college women in intimate relationship.

Chen, Chen, Qiu, Deng, Tan, and Li (2017) assessed the association between emotional abuse and mental disorder among women in a Chinese province. The study adopted a web-based survey method to collect data from 747 married women using a patient health questionnaire containing 9 items. Result revealed that out of the women surveyed 244, representing 27.2 percent wives have been emotionally abused by their spouses and from this number, 141 married women suffer from anxiety, while 162 suffer from various level of depression. The regression analyses revealed that emotional abuse was significantly related to anxiety and depression. Nhi, HANH and Gammeltoft (2018) examined the impact of emotional violence in the mental health of married women in Hanoi, Vietnam. Data for the study was

collected from 20 women living in Hanoi, Vietnam, who reported emotional abuse by their spouses using indebt interview. Findings revealed a significant association between emotional violence and perinatal distress as well as maternal depression.

Islam, Jahan and Hossani (2018) conducted a quantitative study on violence against women and its association with mental disorder in Bangladesh. The study adopted a phenomenological approach in conducting indebt interview on 16 women, 3 informal interview and one focus group discussion. Findings revealed that there exist all form of abuse and violence against women in Bangladesh. The result also found one form of abuse by spouse in women suffering from mental disorder

#### **4. Material and Method**

##### *4.1. Study Settings*

The study setting is Gwagwalada Area Council, located in the Federal Capital Territory located within the Northern boundary of the Guinea Savannah and covers a land area of 1043km. The council is one of the six area council that make up the federal capital territory. The area council is boarded to the north by Niger State, south by Kwali Area Council, Kuje Area Council and to the North East, by AMAC. Gwagwalada Area council holds various socio-economic importance because of its location in the center of the Federal Capital Territory (Omotsho & Akinbi, 2018) The Area Council has a topography with various valley hills and has Zuba hills at the north west of the Area councils.

The original inhabitant of Gwagwalada are the Gbagyi people. But with the creation of the Federal Capital Territory, other ethnic groups began to migrate to the area. The population census of 2006 pegs the population of Gwagwalada at 157,770 (NPC,2006). But this figure is now obsolete (Nicholas &Patrick, 2015). According to city population (2018), the estimated population for Gwagwalada as at 2016 stands at 402,000. It is from this figure that the sample size for this study will be drawn from. Administratively, the Area council is divided into ten wards, namely, Zuba, Ibwa, Kutunku, Tunga-maje, Gwako, Ikwa, Paikonke, Quarters and central. The population of this study which are married women, will be drawn from this study area.

##### *4.2. Study Design*

The cross-sectional method was adopted for the study. The design allows a researcher to examine the correlation between two or more variables as it pertains a phenomenon that affects a particular population at a point in time or over a period of time. It is observational and descriptive in nature (Ndem, Angioha & Dike, 2020; Enuhoha, & Angioha, 2019). In using the cross-sectional design, a self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the subjects under study. Questionnaire was designed in a 4-pointLikert scale of completely true, true, completely false, and false and is made of two sections. The first section contains the demographic distribution of the respondents and the second section contains questions on the issue under study.

##### *4.3. Sampling*

The population of the study is 402,000. The sample size used for this study is 600. This was derived from the survey monkey sample calculator at 95 percent confidence level and a margin of error of 4 percent. The stratified and purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size for the study. The stratified sampling was used in stratifying Gwagwalada Area council into ten strata according to the wards that makes up the Area Council from these strata, the researcher purposively selected 5 wards. The wards selected are Kutunku, Quarters, Zuba, Gwagwalada Center and Gwako. From this, purposive sampling technique was used to select four communities each from the selected wards. from the selected communities, the purposive sample was then also used in selecting 30 married women from each selected community.

#### 4.4. Ethical Consideration and Method of Data Analysis

The consent of participants for the study was sought after and each participant was duly informed about the content and aim of the questionnaire been surveyed. Their confidentiality was duly assured. Data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Multiple regression was then used to analyze the relationship between the variables under study at 0.05 level of significance. Out of the 600-instrument distributed, only 594 was return without been mutilated or missing and this number was used for analysis

### 5. Findings

#### 5.1. Demographic distribution of Respondents

The demographic data of respondents for this study as presented in table 1 shows that out of the 594 respondents used in this study, most of the respondents 159 (26.7) are between 18 - 25 years; next in the list 153 (25.8) are those between 26 – 33 years; followed by 151 (25.4) of respondents between 34 – 41 years, while only 131(22.1%) of the respondents are 42 years and above. This trend is a true representation of the composition of members of the society; in which young people are more than the old. A graphical illustration is presented in figure 1. The distribution of respondents base on educational qualification shows that; 67 respondents' representing 11.3% had no formal education, 210 representing 35.3% were SSCE holders, OND/NCE 21(2.5), HND 25 (4.2), 253 (42.6) were Bachelor (B.Sc/B.Ed/B.A) degree holders; 10 (1.7) were Masters (M.Sc/M.Ed/M.A) degree holders, while only 8 (1.3) were holders of (Ph.D). A graphical illustration is presented in figure 2. The distribution of respondents based on religious affiliation revealed that 336 (56.6) were Christians, 227(38.2) were of the Islamic faith and 21 (3.5) practice African traditional religion. A graphical illustration is presented in figure 3. On the income level of respondents, most of the respondents were low-income earners, with 217 (36.5) earning below 50,000. 201 (38.8) earned between 50,001 and 100,000, 98 (16.5) earned between 100,001 and 150,000, 47 (7.9) earned between 150,001 and 200,000, and finally, 31 (5.2) earned above 200,001. A graphical illustration is presented in figure 4.

**Table 1.** Demographic data

Variable	Category	N	Percent (%)
Age	18-25 years	159	26.7
	26 – 33 years	153	25.8
	34 – 41 years	151	25.4
	42 years and above	131	22.1
	Total	594	100
Educational qualification	NO FORMAL EDU.	67	11.3
	SSCE	210	35.3
	OND/NCE	21	2.5
	HND	25	4.2
	B.Sc/B.Ed/B.A	253	30.8
	M.Sc/M.Ed/MA	58	9.8
	Ph.D	18	3.0
	Total	594	100
Religious Affiliation	Christian	336	56.6
	Islam	227	38.2
	African Religion	21	3.5
	Total	594	100
Income	0 – 50,000	217	36.5
	50,001 – 100,000	201	33.8
	100,001 – 150,000	98	16.5
	150,001 – 200,000	47	7.9
	200,001 & above	31	5.2

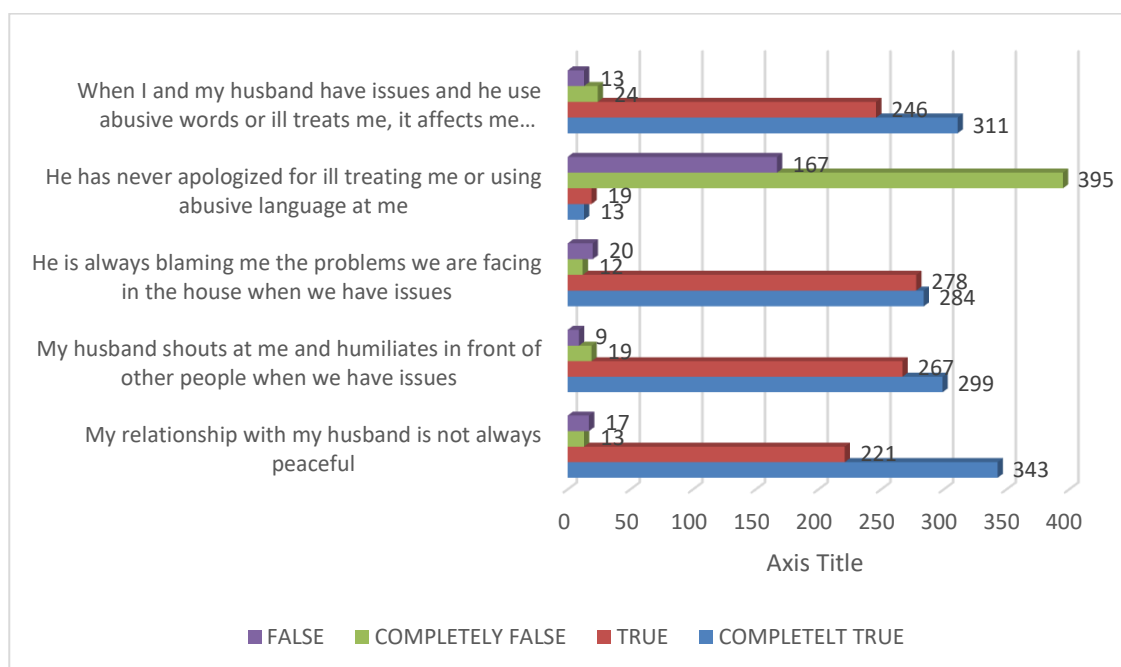
## 5.2. Presentation of results

The results of the study are presented based on the research objective of the study. The questions raised based on the research objective are answered first using descriptive statistics, while correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between the variable

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of respondents' responses to emotional Abuse and mental health of married women

	Items	Completely True	True	Completely False	False
1	My relationship with my husband is not always peaceful	343 (57.7)	221 (37.2)	13 (2.2)	17 (2.9)
2	My husband shouts at me and humiliates in front of other people when we have issues	299 (50.3)	267 (44.9)	19 (3.2)	9 (1.5)
3	He is always blaming me the problems we are facing in the house when we have issues	284 (47.8)	278 (46.8)	12 (2.0)	20 (3.4)
4	He has never apologized for ill treating me or using abusive language at me	13 (2.2)	19 (3.2)	395 (66.5)	167 (28.1)
5	When I and my husband have issues and he use abusive words or ill treats me, it affects me psychologically	311 (52.4)	246 (41.4)	24 (4.0)	13(2.2)

Source: Field work, 2020



**Fig. 1.** Responses on emotional abuse and mental health  
Source: Field work, 2020

### 5.3. Correlation Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to check the correlation between emotional abuse and mental health of women at 0.05 confidence level. the independent variable in this hypothesis is emotional abuse, while the dependent variable is mental health of women. the result is presented in Table 3

**Table 3.** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of emotional abuse and mental health of women

Variables	N	Mean	Stand. Deviation	r	Sig.
Emotional Abuse	594	12.39	2.62	0.327	*.012
Mental Health of Women	594	3.41	2.51		

\*Significant at .05 level, df =592, critical r = 0.113

Source: Field survey, 2020

The result in table 3 revealed that the calculated r value of 0.327 is greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance with 592 degrees of freedom. This result implies that there is a significant relationship between emotional abuse and mental Health of women. By this result we can conclude that emotional abuse leads to psychological health problem among married women in Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory Nigeria. The correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed effect, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect and that values of  $\pm 1$  represent a small effect,  $\pm 3$  is a medium effect and  $\pm 5$  is a large effect.

### 5.4. Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of the data gathered from the instrument distributed. On their relationship with their husband is not always peaceful, out of the 594 subjects who responded to this item, 343 respondents, representing 57.4% indicated completely true, 221 (37.2) indicated true, 13 (2.2) indicated completely false, and 17 (2.9) indicated false. Similarly, on whether their husband shouts at them and humiliates them in front of other people when there is an issue; 299 respondents with 50.3% indicated completely true, 267 (44.9) true, 19 (3.2) completely false, 9 (1.5) false. Again, as to whether their husband is always blaming them for the problems they are facing in their house when there is an issue; 284 respondents representing 47.8% of total respondents indicated completely true, 278 (46.8) indicated true, 12 (2.)) completely false, 20 (3.4) false.

However, seeking to know if their husband has never apologized for ill-treating them or using abusive language at them; 13 respondents representing 2.2% indicated completely true, 19 (3.2) true, 395 (66.5) completely false, 167 (28.1) false. Again, as to whether When they and their husband have issues and he use abusive words or ill-treats me, it affects me psychologically; 311 respondents representing 52.4% of total respondents indicated completely true, 246 (41.4) true, 24 (4.0) completely false, and only 13 (2.2) indicated that the statement is false.

On the correlation analysis carried, result revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between emotional abuse and mental Health of women. This is because the calculated r – value of 0.327 is greater than the critical R-value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance with 592 degrees of freedom. This result implies that emotional abuse leads to psychological health problem among married women in Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory Nigeria. The findings of this study is similar to that of Chen, Chen, Qiu, Deng, Tan, and Li (2017), whose study finding revealed that emotional abuse was significantly related to anxiety and depression. Nhi, H  nh and Gammeltoft (2018) study on the impact of emotional violence in the mental health of married women in Hanoi, Vietnam. Found a significant association between emotional violence and perinatal distress as well as maternal depression. The study of Straight, Harper and Arias (2003) revealed that psychological abuse positively correlates with illegal drug use, cognitive impairment, negative health perception in college women in intimate relationship.

## 6. Conclusion and Practical Implication

The finding of this study has shown that emotional abuse like other intimate partner violence has grievous consequence on the mental health of women especially married women. Based on this finding, there is need for a policy change in the Nigerian society on payment of Alimony for a woman who divorces or leaves a relationship, this is because most women remain in abusive relationship because they will have no means to take care of themselves and their children. There is also need for government to increase funding for support service and the creation of support centers in Gwagwalada. There is also need for the government to put in place swift and proper sanctions for perpetrators of intimate violence and other form of domestic violence

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