

CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, AND MANAGEMENT OF RAPE IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

Rape is a universal problem and is regarded as the most disheartening type of trauma, with negative consequences for victims and families. It is widely considered a stressful trauma and often has long-lasting health consequences. The reported cases of sexual rape in Enugu state of Nigeria in recent years have called for an in-depth review of the correlates of rape and the aftermath. Consequently, the reported causes and consequences of rape remain unchanged despite the rising incidence of sexual crime across the globe. The present study aims to review the causes and consequences of rape in the State, and to unravel unique motives and the possible distinct dimension of rape outcomes. The exploratory research revealed an insignificant motivational factor in the rape act. Also, an unclear association was detected between rape and academic relapse. The implications and recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: Rape, Causes, Consequences, Motives, Academic Relapse

Introduction

Rape is a universal problem (Persson & Dhingra, 2021) and is regarded as the most disheartening type of trauma with negative consequences for victims and their families (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020). Rape is considered traumatic and often has long-lasting health costs (Olaleye & Ajuwon, 2019; Oshodi et al., 2020). It is estimated that more than 40% of rape victims develop post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a relatively high statistic compared to other types of trauma (Bragesjö et al., 2020; Covers et al., 2019). The incidence of rape cases is increasing everyday across all cultures, with the number of victims increasing (Mubin & Muhamad, 2021). Rape is an endemic criminal sexual behaviour in Nigeria, and its perpetration violates survivors' dignity and compromises their health and well-being (Ogunwale et al., 2019). Reportedly, women are at a higher risk of being sexually harassed (Daru et al., 2011; Lichty & Gowen, 2021).

Rape entails an infringement on women's rights, privacy, self-preservation, and dignity (Chiazor et al., 2016). Onyejekwe (2008) described rape as a form of violence against women and a crime where the assaulter employs sexuality to inflict humiliation on the victim or exert power and control over the victim. Peters and Olowa (2010) referred to rape as a forceful sexual penetration or any form of sexual contact that lacks the consent of the receiving party.

In Nigeria, incidences of rape are fast assuming a threatening dimension that requires urgent intervention (Chiazor et al., 2016). Reports indicate that about two in fifty cases of global rape are reported in Nigeria (Omoera et al., 2019). An unprecedented dimension of rape has increasingly gained prominence in the recent past in our society. This is primarily sexual abuse of underage girls (Finkelhor et al., 2014). In Nigeria, the cases of rape are frequently making headlines in the pages of news-paper. However, less research has been dedicated to in-depth studies of rape incidence in the country (Idoko et al., 2020). There is a consensus suggesting that the incidence of rape is rooted in pervasive gender inequalities and hierarchical gender relations (Jewkes, 2002).

Although, the incidence of rape has always been with humanity throughout the world extensive literature has highlighted its prevalence in

Nigeria(Egharevba et al., 2013; Ezechi et al., 2016; Muoghalu, 2012; Nlewem & Amodu, 2016; Ogunfowokan, 2017; Olley, 2008; Omoniyi, 2017; Owuamanam, 1987; Uvere & Ajuwon, 2018; Uwaoma et al., 2011). The incidence of rape has severe health implications for the victims, including undesirable pregnancy, miscarriage, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and psychological trauma, extending to the rest of the person's life(Muoghalu, 2012).

Incidence of Rape in Enugu State

The present study highlights the prevalence of rape and determines its causes and consequences in Enugu State of Nigeria. Over the years, rape cases have been constantly reported in every part of the State and are still trending. Observation of newspaper and online reports suggests that Enugu is experiencing a high incidence of sexual abuse comprising all forms of sexual assault. Although research attending to the prevalence and patterns of rape in the state remains minimal, media reports of rape incidence in the state continue to make headlines in the national dailies. Perhaps, it is suggested that rape victims could find it difficult to report sexual abuse (Amucheazi, 2019). Thus, the underreporting of rape crimes in the state may account for the underrepresentation of rape statistics in the state. However, it is worthy of note that the reported cases represent the tip of the iceberg (Aborisade, 2014). The observed wide publicity of rape cases in Enugu state could be attributed to the overwhelming upsurge in rape cases that have defied silence and the increased awareness. However, the media has contributed enormously to creating rape awareness and reporting rape crimes in the state.

The Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre (Tamar SARC) is a center created by the Enugu state government with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Pathfinder International to oversee the incidence of gender-based violence and other sexual related abuses. Recently, the center reported that about 25 rape cases were recorded in Enugu State from January to March 2021, including the rape of an 88-year-old woman, by a 22-year-old boy at Nsukka. Another medium reported the rape of a 47 year-old woman returning from a church program, the gang rape of a 22-year-old girl, and the brutal rape of a 14-year-old girl who was on her way to the stream. The report indicates that 31 cases of attempted sexual assault and that five gender-based violence were also recorded within the same period. In addition, the center noted that some of the cases involved minors and adults within the ages of 5, 24, and 22. Although this report represents lesser than the rape that occurred in the State, it provides insight into the prevalence of rape in the state.

The Present Study

Over the years, the issue of sexual violence has become a ubiquitous part of our social society. The trend has been studied across cultures, and the probable explanation for its occurrence has been given attention. One of the essential questions in sexual violence is "why do people commit such acts?" Extensive literature in Nigeria has tried to answer the question. So far, indecent dressing, peer pressure, sex myth, youth unemployment, lack of reports on rape cases, ritual rape, child labour, economic status, inequality, spiritual manipulation, ignorance, low self-esteem are among the significant reported causes of the crime in Nigeria (see., Abdullahi & Saa-Aondo, 2021; Achunike & Kitause, 2014; Agbo, 2019; Akpan & Oluwabamide, 2010; Balogun & John-Akinola, 2015; Hassan et al., 2016; Manyike et al., 2015; Miller

et al., 2018; Nnadi, 2012; Okunlola et al., 2020; Osewa et al., 2020; Peters & Olowa, 2010). Similarly, knowledge relating to the causes of sexual violence in Enugu state indicates a corroboration with existing literature.

Furthermore, an investigation of the media reported consequential outcomes of sexual crimes such as rape revealed a significant similarity regarding the aftermath of rape on the victims. Thus, reports have implicated a variety of challenges ranging from biological and mental health problems, psychological and social crises, and academic difficulties (see., Aborisade & Vaughan, 2014; Ajuwon et al., 2004; Amole et al., 2021; Amuda, 2021; Bazza, 2009; Egbe et al., 2020; Ilesanmi & Eboiyehi, 2012; Laima et al., 2021; Samuel & Sanusi, 2019; Sule et al., 2019).

Over the years, the reported causes and consequences of rape cases across Nigeria is seemingly similar and static. Therefore, it has created a pathway to conventional knowledge regarding the correlates and consequences of rape in our society. Conversely, we argue that an in-depth investigation of the motivational variable in the rape act and consequent outcomes are imperative in understanding the recent upsurge in the trend in Enugu State. Thus, the study's primary purpose is to explore further the variables that motivate people to commit rape crimes. Also, the study aims to examine the consequences of rape on the victim.

Method

We adopted an exploratory research design because the causes and consequences of rape need to be understood in depth. For the study, we examined the causes and effects of rape based on the reports of the Tamar SARC. They have had enormous contacts with perpetrators and victims of

sexual violence in Enugu state over the last few years. To achieve this, we collaborated with the officials of the centers and had access to documented reports, followed by in-person interviews. The rationale for interviewing with the center officials is to provide in-depth information on the causes and consequences of rape. Also, they can provide meaningful insights that the general public may not be able to provide. In total, 34 reported rape cases in which the perpetrators were apprehended and interrogated were reviewed within the period of this study, and their motives were ascertained. More so, the aftermath of the crime on the victims was examined.

Findings

Table 1:

Table showing the reported motives of rape perpetrators

No of the perpetrators	Reported motives
7	blamed the devil for their act
6	reported that the victims dressing tempted them
9	accused the victim of seducing them
3	blamed their sexual urge
6	said that they and the victims were alone and they saw an opportunity
1	blamed the victims for aiding the departure of a fantasized relationship
1	attributed the motive to Facebook comment
1	blamed wife's sexual incompetence
34	

Source: Data from the in-person interview and document examination

Table 2:

Table showing the number of victims and reported outcomes

No of Victims	Reported consequences of the act
32	reported problems are related to previously reported implications in the aftermath of rape
2	among other things, reported academic related

Source: Data from the in-person interview and document examination**Discussion**

The study was aimed to explore the causes and consequences of rape in Enugu state Nigeria. The study assumed that the motives for committing rape crimes and the reported effects of rape on the victims might not have been fully understood. Thus, the findings of the present exploratory study showed that most of the rape cases documented by the Tamar SARC indicate that majority of the rape perpetrator's motives for committing the crime aligned with the widely reported reasons for rape crime as shown in table 1. However, the findings revealed that few of the perpetrators indicated certain unfamiliar motives. For example, one perpetrator reported that the act was committed because of the victim's comment on a Facebook post. More so, a 24 years old perpetrator who raped a woman at his mother's age blamed the woman's daughter for departing the community, therefore making him continually dwell in fantasy. Also, another blamed the wife's sexual incompetence for the sexual stupidity. Although, the uniqueness of the motives compared to the widely reported causes of perpetration does not justify the act. However, it could expand our knowledge in relation to the causes of rape and open a new discourse on rape.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the victims mainly reported the same biological, physical, psychological, and social problems previously

highlighted in rape reports (Aborisade & Vaughan, 2014; Ajuwon et al., 2004; Amole et al., 2021; Amuda, 2021; Bazza, 2009; Egbe et al., 2020). However, one of the victims reported an inability to recall previously learned academic lessons. The victim noted that many weeks after the rape incident, the ability to remember learned materials slightly declined. Thus, this revelation suggests a possible association between the experience of rape and academic relapse. Perhaps, the discussion is exclusively in relation to school-going victims.

The possible mechanisms by which the condition produced by rape can cause academic relapse are unclear. However, it is imperative to understand whether the rape is a specific risk factor for recall conditions or a more general risk factor for psychological dysfunction. The literature on rape has focused chiefly on psychological outcomes like post-traumatic stress disorder, including other conditions such as depression, anxiety, self-blame/hate, etc. There are diverse medical, physical, and social crises observed in rape victims. Although other educational-related conditions often observed in rape victims (e.g., academic achievement, class connectedness, schoolwork engagement) have received less attention. This focus on academic relapse is based on a theoretical understanding of relapse as a unique characteristic arising from distress conceptually different from other disorders that often are seen in trauma survivors. The extent to which this focus on academic relapse as a remarkable outcome of rape is justified remains unclear, given the wide variation in prevalence estimates of rape consequences in victims as described in the literature. Clarifying whether the effect of rape could be associated with academic relapse and could broaden our understanding of the nature of the impact of rape, which may have implications for theory development and the assessment and treatment following assault.

Conclusion

The report of causes and consequences of rape has been similar and static across cultures, thus, suggesting a contradiction, especially in times of rising incidence of sexual violence in society. This study was aimed to examine further the causes and consequences of rape in Enugu State, Nigeria. It was assumed that distinct factors might be associated with the upsurge in rape crimes in the state. The study found a relatively unique dimension of rape motive. Also, an unclear relationship was suspected between rape and academic relapse. Thus, the study provides valuable data to the anti-rape advocates, including the governments, non-governmental organizations, parents, educators, and the general society in the fight against rape. Moreover, the study provided a new discourse in managing the causes and consequences of rape in Enugu State. It is thus recommended that anti-rape campaigners integrate social media posts, marital sexual orientation in their manifestos. Also, educators and counsellors should endeavour to focus on academic relapse as a risk factor in rape.

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