

# Influence of Stress Related Factors on the Occurrence of Physical Violence among Relational Couples in Nakuru County

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**Abstract:** There is a growing concern on violence that is domestically instigated being among the most frequent forms of abuse among relational couples. Intimate partners appear the frequent perpetrators of domestic violence against women. Abuse of Physical nature in relationships that is intimate is often supplemented by abuse of psychological nature and between a third and over a half of cases is made by sexual abuse. Majority of partners especially women that are victims of physical violence in general experience multiple acts of aggression over time. There was need to conduct a study where the objective was to investigating influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County. The study was anchored on social learning theory. The study adopted descriptive research design targeting victims of physical abuse attended to in rescue centers, counselors attending to them and gender officers within Nakuru County. Multistage sampling technique was used to arrive at 146 respondents which was a sample which comprised of 60 physical violence victims, 8 gender officers and 12 counselors. Collection of data was through questionnaires for the victims and Key Informants (KI) interviews. Karl Pearson Correlation test at 5 % levels of significance, the resultant correlation coefficient was 0.819 with a  $p$  - value being 0.000. Pearson Chi-Square test at 5 % levels of significance that yielded  $\chi^2(16, n = 52) = 30.672, p = 0.011 < 0.05$ . The study recommends that couples should work on stress management techniques so as to avoid directing the stress to physically violating each other. All stakeholders which includes the government, church and society should work together to condemn physical violence or any other form of gender violence by coming up with significant intervention measures.

**Keywords:** Stress Related Factors, Physical Violence, Rational Couples in Nakuru County

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a problem that is wide spread within sub- Sahara Africa, it is estimated by the World Bank that rape and domestic abuse account for 5 percent of all healthy years of life lost to women in reproductive age in developing countries. From studies it is shown that one quarter of suicide efforts by women is caused by abuse. Studies show that the young ones witnessing violence might feel many of related emotional and behavioral problems than those physically abused children feel; such as depression, aggression, disobedience, night mares, physical health complains and poor school performance. In a study, done in Malawi it reveals that 25 % out of a sample 3,546 Malawi women experience emotional violence and 18 % reported sexual violence from Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). In Uganda, frequency of acts of IPV by male partner towards a female partner during the year preceding survey; 40% of Malawian experience abuse of verbal nature and 30% were from physical threats or violence.

Study in Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa has shown that the refusal by women for sex is in most cases thought of as a justification for violence. In the same study, interviewed men in the work place in Cape Town factors in a great way were associated with sexual violence including being involved in violence outside home (e.g. brawls of fights in public). Tanzanian violence against children survey states that of the girls questioned, 27.9% reportedly experienced at minimum one incidence of violence related to sex before aging 18. For boys, 13.4 % reported one more incidence of violence in relation to sex. Emotional violence because of abandonment by an adult was reported from 23.3% of girls and 27.5% of boys. In a majority of cases, the adult was a relative. In the report, authors state that persons faced with any form of violence during their childhood are likely to show health, emotional and behavioral problems in adolescent in

their adult age. These include physical health that is poor, aggression, delinquency, abusing of substance, performing poorly in academics, anxiety and reduce self- esteem.

A Kenyan study discloses momentous rates of exposure to emotional (24%) physical (38%) and sexual (14%) abuse, with a majority of the women suffering from reproductive consequences as result of IPV. Statistics provided in 2011 confirms that 460,000 men from Nairobi County and central Kenya are victims of domestic violence which range from both physical, mental and emotional abuse from their wife. A study that took place between February and August 2011 found that out that 310,000 men were not provided with conjugal rights: others were forced in domestic work like babysitting, kitchen work plus bathing children. Women have been so much empowered by the government on equality and gender issues like funds which have empowered women in family to be financial independent and have led to many marriages breaking up due to misunderstanding (Githinji, 2011). The elderly men are more prone to suffering physical, emotional and economic abuse. The study defines emotional abuse as refusing to recognize the man as the head of family and making him to do manual jobs such as cooking, laundry and other domestic chores perceived to be for a woman (Mati. 2013).

This paper addresses the influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County. The study is beneficial to the victims of physical gender based violence as it addresses selected psychosocial factors that could be associated with the physical violence experienced in their relationships. The findings and recommendations are helpful to policy makers and might be used to formulate, evaluate and amend policies to curb the occurrences of gender based violence, bringing the perpetrators to book as well as taking care of the victims without stigma. The information adds to the existing body of knowledge therefore benefiting scholars and researchers.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

With worldwide and societal trend of high emphasis on human rights, there is a concern on the way of running family life, viewed and assessed socially. This is characterized by the manifestation of behaviors and events no longer pertaining to the dominion of life which is intimate but in its place, becoming issues of which the society will be required to respond and be involved actively. Most partners especially womenfolk who are victims of physical hostility in general face mixed turns of aggression with time. Universally, studies provide an estimate of between 10% to 71% women suffering from IPV in their lifetime while in Kenya, this number has an estimate of almost half of the women (47%) suffering from IPV in their life time. On average 6 cases of physical violence victims are reported in Nakuru County daily. This implies that in a month an average of 180 cases are reported in the county. It is because of the backdrop above that the researcher purposed to undertake study to find out the influence of stress related factors on physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County.

### **1.3 Hypothesis of the study**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is a significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County

## **II. Literature Review**

The section looks at theories as well as empirical findings that connect to the research.

### **2.1 Theoretical literature**

This study will be anchored on the social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977). What is causing violence of domestic nature has become the subject of heated debate, having been addressed across frameworks that are different theoretically, giving differing explanations about the basis of violence. Of the most common are the theories that focus on behavior, personality or psycho pathological conditions hence predisposing persons towards violence; theory on social learning which holds that men who are aggressive learned to be violent in their families as children; and theories about sociocultural that views violence to be a consequence of the worldwide social structure. Those who receive the abuse tend to suffer from a sense of hopelessness, stigma, and lacking ability of trusting others, inability to contribute towards the development of the community likely to impair normal coping mechanisms of the development, leading to violence. The conjecture is the violence through learned reaction conveyed and strengthened cross ways along generations of family (Carden, 1994). The study will focus of the selected psychosocial factors; drug abuse, stress related factors and family related factors, which the perpetrators of physical violence have acquired through exposure, learning or influence from their family or society.

## **2.2 Empirical Literature**

A study conducted by Keesbury et al (2012) on gender-based violence in Kenya and Zambia revealed that emotional abuse is a psychological abuse or mental abuse. Parts of this type sort of abuse embody threats of victims, isolation, together with public humiliation, observation of the victim's movement, restricting their finances management, education, treatment, criticizing, devaluing and obloquy. Emotional abuse is defined as any behavior that threatens the freedom of victim. In consideration of the Istanbul declaration, psychological violence is the conduct that is intentional for seriously harming psychological integrity of a person through pressure or threats.

Studies confirm that coercion of sexual nature within marriage is made of deception, threats of verbal nature or intimidating a partner psychologically to obtain sex, rape attempt plus forced penetrative sex (Heise et al, 1995). Force marital sex may go together with violence that is physical or emotional (population council, 2004) stress caused through downheartedness in combination with post- traumatic syndrome have considerable co-injuries (having beyond one sickness or condition of health within a person at a given time). They contribute more for the prevalence of mental health consequences for violence from intimate partner (population council, 2004)

Gondolf (1990) explains that the risk of stress from dejection and post- traumatic disorder linked with violence from intimate partner was greater than the one caused by assault of sexual kind in childhood. Depression among battered woman has also been linked to stresses from other life related issues that often accompany DV, like abuse of childhood, day to day stresses and many children shifting of residence, forcing sex with a partner that is intimate, divorce, life situations which are negative plus child behavior challenges. According to Kimuna and Djamba (2008) in a study on how gender based violence correlates with physical and sexual wife abuse in Kenya, a number of women who are battered are likely to have chronic depression aggravated by relationship stress that is violent, but there should be evidence that first episode of depression can be elicited by such violence together with longitudinal signal of being depressed, shrinking with decreasing violence from intimate partner. World health organization (WHO) report that the margin of ladies that ever featured experienced physical plus violence that is of sexual nature from intimate partners had a range from fifteenth % to seventy-one%, majority lying at twenty-nine% to sixty-two%.

National family health survey in India, done in 29 states during (2005-2006), confirmed that a great number of women who are married have been abused physically or sexually by their husbands at a given time in their life. The survey showed that, in the whole nation, 37.2% of women went through violence after marriage. Bihar was indicated to be the most violent, having abuse rate as high as 59% against married women. Madhaya Pradesh (45.8%) in the second position, Rajasthan (46. 3%). Manipur (43.9%), Uttar Pradesh ((42.4%) Tamil Nadu (41.9%) and west Bengal (40.3%) in that order. Violence provides serious penalties on woman's mental and physical health, plus their reproductive and sexual health. These is made up of injuries, gynecological challenges temporary or permanent disabilities, together with depression and suicide.

Most forms of abuse that are verbal and psychological appear moderately harmless at the beginning, then expand and become more menacing over time, sometimes in a gradual form and then subtly. As the affected get used to abusive behavior, the verbal or psychological strategies can get a strong foothold in the mind of victims, making it hard for them to realize the severity of the abuse over time (Witness Justice, MA, USA) over both short term and long term, the physical injuries and mental trouble in women either interrupts or ends educational and career paths for families creating dependence both in poverty and economically. There is disruption of family life which provides substantial effects on children including poverty by (if divorce or separation occurs) and faith loss plus trust in the institution of the family (witness justice, MA USA). United States reports that a total loss is about 6-12 billion dollars in a year and Australian 6.3 billion dollars per year.

Australia (2013) study on safety of persons conducted by the Australian Bureau of statistics (ABS) observed that a lot of men and women have gone through at least one encounter with violence in their life time. The study shows that men are less likely to go through physical violence in the hands of an outsider but a large number of women go through physical attack by a person known to them mostly an intimate partner or family member. Women are much likely to face sexual assault in their lifetime than men. The ABS personal safety survey 2005 in Australia showed that in 12 months prior to survey, 1.3% of women (101600) and 0.3 % of men (42300) had been assaulted sexually and of them 20 % of women (21500) reported that those perpetrating the assault was a previous partner: 8 % (7800) reported that committer was current partner. No males had reported the assault of sexual nature by current or previous partner. Almost 2 in 5

women of between 37 and 40 percent in current behavior stated having experienced at least a type of controlling behavior along their lifetimes, 6 percent experiencing this behavior in past 12 month.

**2.5 The Conceptual Framework**

This section presents conceptual framework that shows the hypothetical relationship between variables under study.

**Independent variable**

**Dependent variable**



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: researcher (2022)

**III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Research Design.**

The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design that involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches focusing on Jimmia Women Rescue Centre in LanetNakuru. This enabled the researcher to establish problems or issues in actual setting, enabling the test of several study variables and most importantly facilitating the application of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Rowley, 2002).

**3.2 Location of study**

The study took place in Nakuru County with a focus on domestic violence rescue centers, a combination of public and private. Nakuru County being cosmopolitan with residents from different backgrounds, it was among significant regions for the study since a lot more citizens from the county itself, neighboring counties and beyond come for essential services. Nakuru County being cosmopolitan with residents from different backgrounds, it was among significant regions for the study since a lot more citizens from the county itself, neighboring counties and beyond come for essential services.

**3.3 Target Population**

The unit of analysis in this study included physical violence victims seeking assistance from private and public rescue centers as the primary subjects for the study. The study also involved some key informants who included 30 counselors attending to the physical abuse victims in the targeted rescue centers as well as the 24 gender officials (that is 2 per sub-county) deployed in the 6 purposively selected Sub-Counties within Nakuru County namely; Naivasha, Gilgil, Molo, Nakuru East, Nakuru West and Kuresoi.

Table 1: Target Population

Target Population	Physical violence victims	Gender officials	Counselors
Naivasha	19	4	5
Gilgil	17	4	5
Molo	30	4	5
Nakuru East	42	4	5
Nakuru west	51	4	5
Kuresoi	21	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>

**3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure**

The study involved multi-stage sampling techniques. Rescue centers were stratified into two strata; public and private. In every stratum, rescue centers dealing with gender based violence victims were selected purposively. The counselors attending to the physical violence victims were also selected purposively. The physical violence victims were selected using snow balling with the assistance and referral by the officials managing the sampled rescue centers. The counselors in every targeted rescue centers that were on duty during the time of the study will be sampled conveniently with regard to their accessibility by virtue of being on duty at the time of the study (Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). The number of respondents sampled in every category were 30% considered to be representative (Mugenda, 2013), arising at a sample of 60 physical violence victims, 8 gender officers and 12 counselors.

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution

Sub-Counties	Physical violence victims		Gender officials		Counselors	
	N	s	N	s	N	s
Naivasha	19	6	4	1	5	2
Gilgil	17	4	4	1	5	2
Molo	30	12	4	1	5	2
Nakuru East	42	13	4	2	5	2
Nakuru West	51	17	4	2	5	2
Kuresoi	21	8	4	1	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>

**3.5 Research Instrument**

The data from the domestic physical violence victims was collected using semi-structured questionnaires. The structured questions followed a five-point Likert Scale format where 1 signified the low end and 5 the high end. Open ended questions were integrated to give the respondents’ room to share more insights that could not be well captured by the Likert Scale format. The questionnaires were used because they increase objectivity, reduce bias, save time, cheap and are easy to analyze. The Key Informants, namely the counselors and gender officers were subjected to a face to face interview so as to gather additional and in depth information related to the psychological factors associated with physical violence among relational couples (Mouton & Babbie, 2001).

**3.6 Data Analysis Techniques**

The study yielded qualitative data from the interviews plus quantitative data from the questionnaires. Data was processed by editing to eradicate errors of both sampling and non-sampling. The analysis of qualitative data was through the use of content analysis techniques where the researcher categorized the responses thematically. Classification and coding of quantitative data was done by the help of a coding book prepared according to the study variables and their indicators. Analysis of data was by the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for windows. Measures of central tendencies (frequencies, mean and percentages) together with the measures of dispersion (standard deviations) were used as part of descriptive statistics to summarize the research findings. The relationship between the counseling and maladaptive behavior management was tested by the use of inferential statistics namely correlation and Chi-square at 5% levels of significance so as to enable study conclusions.

**IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 Correlation between stress related factors and Physical violence**

**Table 3: Correlation matrix**

		Physical violence	Stress related factors
Pearson Correlation®	Physical violence	1.000	0.819
	Stress related factors	0.819	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Physical violence	.	0.000
	Stress related factors	0.000	.

N=52,  $\alpha= 0.05$

Upon the test of the relationship between the stress related factors and occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County using a Karl Pearson Correlation test at 5% levels of significance, the resultant correlation coefficient was 0.819 with a *p*-value being 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This informed the rejection of the null hypothesis “There is no significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County” therefore accepting the alternative hypothesis “There is a significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County.” This implies that there is a strong influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples that is significant at 5 % levels of significance.

**4.2 Chi-Square Analysis between stress related factors and Physical violence**

The researcher performed a Chi-Square test at 5% levels of significance as a confirmatory test to test the influence of stress related factors on occurrence of physical violence among relational couples. The Chi-Square was fit for the study variables since the response rates was arranged in an ordinal scale of five categories as per the 5 likert scale measures enabling cross-tabulation with the determiner being the stress related factors in the row and the dependent variable being occurrence of physical violence in the column. The Chi-Square results is indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Result.**

Variables	Chi-square	df	<i>p</i> -value
Stress related factors	30.672	16	0.011

- a. Dependent Variable: Occurrence of Physical violence
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Stress related factors

The researcher tested on the effect stress related factors on the occurrence of occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County using a Pearson Chi-Square test at 5% levels of significance that yielded  $\chi^2(16, n = 52) = 30.672, p=0.011 < 0.05$ . This informed the rejection of the null hypothesis “There is no significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County” thus accepting the alternative hypothesis “There is a significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County.” This implies that there is an influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples that is significant at 5 % levels of significance.

**V. SUMMARY**

The study established that most of the marriages for the victims of physical violence were undergoing stress related to unfaithfulness. It was evident that most of the marriages for the victims of physical violence were having intimacy problems. It was evident that most of the marriages for the victims of physical violence were undergoing financial strains. Most of the marriages for the victims of physical violence did not have a history of childhood assault. The marriages for the victims of physical violence were undergoing depression as well as work-related stress and burnout. It was evident that there are no adequate stress management measures. However, only a few of the families had stress caused by children.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The test on the influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples yielded correlation coefficient of 0.819, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05 and Chi-Square  $\chi^2(16, n = 52) = 30.672, p = 0.011 < 0.05$ . This informed the rejection of the null hypothesis "There is no significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County" thus accepting the alternative hypothesis "There is a significant influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples in Nakuru County." This implies that there is an influence of stress related factors on the occurrence of physical violence among relational couples that is significant at 5 % levels of significance.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY**

Individuals in relationships should work on stress management techniques so as to avoid directing the stress to physically violating their partners. Couples should be faithful to each other as well as work on improving their intimacy. This reduces the stress and tension levels in their marriage that could lead to physical violence.

## **VIII. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The researcher suggests that there is need for a study to conduct so as to establish traumatic effects that gender violence especially physical abuse among parents causes to their children.

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